Title
Shifting Skilled Migration Trends in the Global Economy: A Comparative Analysis of International Student Mobility to the United Arab Emirates and Russia

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Shifting Skilled Migration Trends in the Global Economy: A Comparative Analysis of International Student Mobility to the United Arab Emirates and Russia

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of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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by

Karin Annette Johnson

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DEDICATION

To AJ. For all your love.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Dr. Augustine Kposowa, Chairperson

In 2017, UNESCO estimated 4.6 million higher education students were globally mobile for education purposes. Much of what we know about skilled international mobility and its relationship with national policy is based on research focusing on traditional destination countries, such as the United States and United Kingdom. I compared how national higher education internationalization policies shape international student mobility to two non-traditional hotspots: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Russia. I conducted expert interviews with forty-three university administrators and public officials to understand the relationship between strategic plans internationalization on international student mobility.

In terms of internationalization, while Russia's recruitment goals were to enroll students, the UAE policy had attracted foreign institutes to build branch campuses.

Differing outcomes are the results of the composition of international students and state motivations. In both cases, it appeared that a state's intentions to have more globally competitive higher education institutes was a leading policy determinant, which drives a relationship between the state and its universities. This thus dictated student mobility patterns. In contrast to traditional destination countries, expert interviews revealed that an underlying agenda of global political cooperation trumps purely economic intentions. Finally, in a critical analysis of expert interviews in international fieldwork, I concluded that despite practical challenges and methodological limitations, this data collection technique offers theoretical benefits.

This study advances the comprehension of the direction and drivers of one form of skilled migration—international student mobility—to countries, within regions, and in global contexts, especially from a perspective of non-traditional destination countries. It contributes to the theoretical understanding of educational migration as a process and conduit of economic development and social change within the broader global economy. It also provides a comparative study that seeks to reconcile contradictions between interests, goals, and outcomes among individuals, institutions, and the state. Implications from this research may also apply to those interested in improving the caliber of higher education and attracting skilled students in a competitive global economy, such as international students and their families, educators and administrators, non-profit organizations, private businesses, and public universities, as well as policymakers.

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₽	Ruble (Russian currency), denoted RU₽
$	Dollar (currency), US dollar denoted US$
5-100	The Russian government program “5-100-2020,” which aims to have five Russian universities in the top 100 rankings by the year 2020
AEI	Academic Excellence Initiative
ARWU	*Academic Rankings of World Universities*, also known as the Shanghai Rankings (http://www.shanghairanking.com/)
Emirates	The UAE collectively referred to as the Emirates (upper-case E); emirate (lower-case e) refers to one of seven separate sheikdoms in the UAE
Exchange	Short-term circular sojourn; interchangeably used with “academic mobility” and “circular mobility” due to its round-trip nature
Foreign student, International student	Interchangeable terms used to mean a non-permanent degree- or credit-seeking student
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutes
IHE	International Higher Education
IIE	Institute of International Education (US organization)
Institution	Term used interchangeably with “university” and “HEI”

International student mobility

Non-permanent long-term education obtained abroad; High probability of return because of the intention or requirement to depart upon degree completion.

OECD — Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development

QS — *Quacquarelli Symonds* publishes annual *World University Rankings* (https://www.topuniversities.com/)

State — National state; also used interchangeably with nation and country

Student migration

Permanent immigration (settlement) following degree completion

THE — *Times Higher Education* provides annual *World University Rankings* (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/content/world-university-rankings)

UAE — United Arab Emirates, also known as the Emirates

UK — United Kingdom

UNESCO — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

US, USA — United States of America

USSR — United Socialist Soviet Republic; the USSR is also called the “CCCP,” which uses the Latin alphabet for the Cyrillic letters of “Сою́з Сове́тских Социалисти́ческих Респу́блик”; following the collapse of the USSR in December 1991, the Russian Federation was established in January 1992

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As of 2017, there were an estimated 4.6 million globally mobile university students who obtain a post-secondary degree in a country not their own (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018b). Given the interest in attracting international students by non-profit groups, higher education institutes (HEIs), and governments, there has been considerable analysis of why international students make their decisions to study in certain countries over others, and of their experiences (Kahanec & Králiková, 2011; J. J. Lee, 2008; J. J. Lee & Rice, 2007; Marginson, 2006; Park, 2009; Sirat, 2008; Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007). As countries vie to gain and retain competitiveness in the global economy, governments, business, and various other stakeholders design and implement educational, employment, and migration policies to produce, attract, and retain the "best and brightest" talent, such as foreign workers and international students (INSEAD, 2018).

Much of what we know about international student mobility as a form of skilled migration and its relationship with national policy is based on research focused on traditional destination countries, such as the US, UK, or Australia (Czaika & Parsons, 2017; Findlay, 2011; Hawthorne, 2010; Sassen, 1990; Saxenian, 2007). However, in the ten years following the 2008 global Great Recession, developing countries are growing faster economically than developed ones (INSEAD, 2018; United Nations, 2014), and they are garnering more skilled migrants (Chacko, 2017; Ewers, 2017). Some nations with developing economies, such as China, Russia, and South Africa, are also rising top destinations for international students (Institute for International Education, 2017). Knight (2013) calls these emerging international education destinations "hotspots." How do developing, non-traditional countries attract skilled migrants such as international students?

It is against this background that I situate the present study. My research is informed by the intersection of intentional, strategic internationalization policy, higher education as an economic diversification vehicle, dynamic, skilled mobility trends, and overlapping globalization processes. The dissertation examined how and why state-level policies that target increased internationalization of national higher education shape growing international educational mobility to "hotspot" destinations in non-Western, non-traditional states. Non-Western nations—countries classified as part of the "Global South," as "developing," or non-democratic—are countries not considered as major developed, post-industrial economies. They are located in South and Central America, Eastern Europe, Africa, and parts of West and East Asia (United Nations, 2017). Non-Western nations provide an optimal context for examining the phenomenon of growing student mobility. They have recent changes in skilled migration, they are economically growing faster than developed ones (United Nations, 2017), and national strategic development plans augment knowledge-based economic production via higher education.

The purpose of this dissertation was to address the need to examine skilled temporary migration to and within non-Western countries. I analyzed how state-level policy intended to internationalize higher education shapes incoming international student patterns to two non-Western countries, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the

Russian Federation (Institute for International Education, 2017; Knight, 2013). Both countries are rising as top international education destinations. They host more than 50,000 international students on average and receive more students than they send to other countries (a positive net migration rate) (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018b). In terms of policy, the UAE has fragmented emirate-level policy to expand international higher education and has a large number of local, international, and organizational actors involved in managing student mobility, but lacks a coordinated initiative geared toward international students. In contrast, Russia has intentional policy aimed to attract international students and prefers international partnerships via collaboration and dual-degree programming instead of International Branch Campuses. I compared policy, intended aims, and outcomes to explain recent changes in international student mobility to the two case study sites.

Literature Review

Within the sociological literature, immigration research focuses on South-North diasporas of permanent family reunification, refugee, and labor settlement. Yet non-permanent transnational forms of migration, such as return, step, circular, serial, and transient patterns, are becoming more ubiquitous (Castles, 2007; Rodriguez, 2010; Vertovec, 2009). Additionally, there is abundant labor mobility research on low-skilled precariously positioned migrants and "problematic" high-skilled migration, such as brain drain (the emigration of highly educated and/or skilled people from a less developed country to a more developed one). "Privileged, no problem" skilled migrants, such as international students and other temporary migrants, tend to be neglected. They are seen as low-risk and unlikely to cause social disruption or economic threat (cf. Bonvin, 1996; Brettell & Hollifield, 2014; Freeman, 2006; Van Riemsdijk & Wang, 2017). Taken together, we glean that more research can be done on temporary, transnational "no problem" skilled migration.

There are different ways to define migrants by skill level. In advanced knowledge-based (post-industrial) economies, low-, lower-, or un-skilled refers to migrants who are employed in agricultural/extractive or manufacturing-related work. Skilled generally refer to migrants with a postsecondary degree, and high-skilled refers to scientific, technical, engineering, and high-level management workers (Chiswick, 2011; Clemens, 2013). Within skilled migration research, scholars have tried to explain and propose how to retain migrants in their home country, maximize their skill in their host country, and whether circular migration could be an answer to skilled migrants leaving, remitting money to their home country, and circulating democratic ideals within their network (de Haas, 2005, 2007; Hazen & Alberts, 2006; Hugo, 2013; Vertovec, 2009; World Bank, 2006). Temporary, non-immigrant mobility appears to be an ideal solution to fill labor force shortages while reducing the "nuisance" of permanent immigration (World Bank, 2006).

The two largest groups of skilled non-immigrant labor populations are guest workers and international students (Sassen, 1990). International students are considered skilled migrants because they position themselves to bridge between education and work (Yu, 2017). Although there is disagreement as to whether international students should be regarded as migrants instead of visitors because only a portion of them permanently settle

(Hazen & Alberts, 2006). I consider students temporary migrants and define their movement as *international student mobility*.

Although there is no universal term for cross-border student movement, it is widely referred to as international student mobility. For my purposes in the dissertation, I define *international student mobility* as students leaving their home country (physically *mobile*) for the purposes of long-term education with the intention or requirement to return home. Although I view educational mobility as temporary migration, I acknowledge that the term *mobility* is purposefully used by others in direct contrast to *migration*. Mobility infers temporary movement abroad while student migration often indicates that a student has permanently immigrated to the host country upon their degree completion. Likewise, student exchange assumes that students in this category take on short-term circular sojourn (months to a year). In the dissertation, I concentrate on mobile students (rather than permanent student immigrants and short exchanges) and, due to the fluidity of terminology, I interchangeably use two terms when referring to international student mobility, *international students* and *foreign students*. In Chapter III, I discuss variations in terminology I encountered during fieldwork.

Despite contentious rhetoric surrounding international migration around the world, there is an almost universal call by politicians, policymakers, educators, and employers to increase international student mobility (Ruiz, 2013). Skilled migration and international student mobility are highly desirable in terms of national economic development and human capital acquisition (ICEFMonitor, 2014; INSEAD, 2018; Kritz, 2012) and as a tool of national soft power to disseminate democratic ideals by educating middle-class and semi-elite foreign students (Spilimbergo, 2009). Some connotations refer to international students as "designer" or "model immigrants" who are positioned to transition into a local labor force (Hawthorne, 2012; P. Lee, 2015). Others dispute whether students are fully ready to enter the host country's labor force and whether they intend to seek employment upon graduation (Hazen & Alberts, 2006). Moreover, critics argue that international students are only "cash cows," meant to generate revenue for HEIs while their employment outcomes are not a concern (Cantwell, 2015; Choudaha, 2017; Katsomitros, 2013). International students are an essential component of a national economy because they provide capital through consuming higher education and by participating short- or long-term in the labor force as skilled migrants (Findlay et al., 2017; Lowell & Khadka, 2011). With the massification and marketization of international higher education, nations and HEIs actively recruit the "best and brightest" students. Still, they are mindful to only recruit in countries where they believe students have the social and fiscal capital to study abroad (Findlay et al., 2017).

Given the interest in international students by various stakeholders, such as universities and governments, the core of information on international students seeks to understand why they make their decisions to study in certain countries over others and about their experiences (J. J. Lee, 2008; J. J. Lee & Rice, 2007; Naidoo, 2007; Park, 2009; Sirat, 2008). At the macro-causal analysis level, others consider how restrictive policy affects international student flows, especially to the US, UK, or Australia (Ewers & Lewis, 2008; Lowell & Khadka, 2011; Urias & Yeakey, 2009). None to my knowledge focus on international student mobility *to* non-Western nations and how state policy to diversify the tertiary sector in value-added services—including higher education internationalization and growth—affects international student mobility.

In 2000, approximately sixty-six percent of international student mobility for higher education purposes was concentrated in wealthy, post-industrial, democratic nations, such as the US, the UK, and Australia. As such, the bulk of international student research is concentrated on students coming to universities in Western countries (Findlay et al., 2017; Marginson, 2006). However, over the past fifteen years, countries with growing economies, such as China, Russia, and South Africa, garner a larger number of international students (Institute for International Education, 2017). This shift is critical to note because, in the ten years of recovery since the 2008 Great Recession, developing countries are growing faster than developed ones, they are implementing policy to become more competitive within the global economy, and they are vying to attract top talent (INSEAD, 2018; United Nations, 2014). For international migration to eventuate, a receiving country must have economic ability and political stability (Skeldon, 1997, p. 52) to attract migrants. Put another way, migrants come to safe, stable countries with opportunities. For example, Sirat (2008) explains how following the September 11th, 2001 attacks in the US, the Malaysian government recognized the demand for quality international education in a safe environment with transparent visa requirements and set out to recruit Muslim international students. Over the past twenty years, Malaysia has risen as a top international education center, hosting more than 50,000 international students annually (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018b).

Recent comparative international education literature identifies six self-titular "International Education Hubs," all of which are located in non-Western countries: Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Botswana (Knight, 2013, 2014). Some of these developing countries, as well as others, are emerging international education "hotspots" (Knight, 2013). Knight identified three necessary characteristics that define an international education hub: (1) a country self-identifies as an internationalized education hub; (2) a nation has created intentional educational policy to develop the hub, which is related to the last point; (3) an educational hub has a critical mass of international and local actors, such as branch campuses. Drawing from national education policies, Knight classifies hubs using three typologies: innovation, student, or labor. Outcomes vary whether the education hub is oriented toward generating new knowledge and innovation, supplying education and increasing higher education opportunity, or training a skilled local or international workforce. These are not discrete categories, and countries may span one or more types. Notably missing from international educational hub literature is the migrational component, meaning it lacks mention of international students or skilled migration. Only two of the six, Malaysia and the UAE, attract more than 50,000 international students, and Botswana hosts less than 2,000 students annually (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018b). Moreover, even if a nation markets itself as an international education hub, it does not mean that there is formal policy behind it or a critical mass of actors.

We may ask, how is international student mobility linked to national economic development and internationalization policy? Comparative international education literature explains that the rise of international education and of international education hubs in non-Western countries can be attributed to political and economic globalization processes of higher education (Knight, 2013, 2014). International education hubs have emerged as a result of intentional national educational policy (Knight, 2013), but states differ in the ways they manage economic development, higher education, and skilled migration and the associated policy. For example, immigration and education policies are treated separately in the US. The government creates immigration legislation and vets migrants, but it is up to higher education institutions (HEIs) to recruit, retain, and ensure students are satisfied with their stay. As for the student, the onus of future employment prospects falls squarely on that person's shoulders alone. In comparison, New Zealand's ministries of immigration and education work in conjunction to attract and retain international students (ICEFMonitor, 2013), and in Australia, national policies facilitate "two-step migration" to assist students in transitioning into the local labor force (Hawthorne, 2010). This reflects a typical disconnection between national policy aims, institutional goals, and individual migrants' interests (de Haas, 2007; Morgan & Orloff, 2017).

How can national policy that internationalizes higher education be wielded as a vehicle of economic diversification, and what role does the state play in in-bound student mobility? The internationalization of higher education is a burgeoning sector of development, and many non-Western countries are relatively new to the international education scene. As part of schemes to become World Class Universities (WCU) (Altbach & Balán, 2007; Cheng et al., 2014) and highly ranked in global higher education ranking indices, such as the Shanghai *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (*ARWU*), *Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS), Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE),* and the *US News and World Report Best Colleges*, universities and governments will adopt Academic Excellence Initiatives (AEIs) and internationalization policy. Two components of internationalization and development policy are to internationalize externally—such as taking the campus and its brand into the international higher education market[1] at fairs and expos—and internally—to "internationalize" the home campus by hosting more international people. We may default to thinking of having more international people on campus means attracting more short-term exchange and long-term degree-seeking students, but strategy also includes hiring international faculty and postdoctoral researchers.

Internationalization policy motives manifest in other ways, too. Botswana appears to have marketed itself as an international education hub to attract international education companies and HEIs to invest in its tertiary, knowledge-based sector. As a hub, it could increase its regional competitiveness, alongside South Africa and Mauritius (Clark, 2015; Government.bw, n.d.). As mentioned above, at the turn of the twenty-first century, when Malaysia recognized the market to offer international education to Muslim students, it expanded its tertiary sector, diversifying beyond its reliance on extractive resources. Today, Malaysia is an influential educational hub in Southeast Asia, attracting students

[1] The "international education market" is a social structure where transactions occur based on the supply and demand of higher education products and services. Market actors are typically countries, universities, and other organizations that may sell educational services and research products to consumers as well as produce intellectual property. A "market" refers to a country and its specific demographic of students and their families who are looking for non-domestic (international) higher education.

from Asia and the Middle East to attend university and international branch campuses and higher education organizations to invest and build campuses (Cross-Border Education Research Team, 2017). Likewise, the UAE has adopted development policy across the emirates to expand higher education for two principle reasons: to diversify its economy into knowledge-based products and services to reduce its dependence on oil extraction and the oil market; and, to up-skill its local labor population to grow internal innovation, technology, and investment (Fox & Al-Shamisi, 2014; Knight, 2014). Like Malaysia's EduCity, the UAE hosts two free zones for knowledge training and production, the Dubai Knowledge Village (also called the "Dubai Knowledge Park" (DKP)) and the Dubai International Academic City (DIAC), as well as an educational, religious, cultural locus within Sharjah University City. The UAE also boasts universities with outer space technology centers (Anderson, 2018; Shihab, 2001).

In terms of attracting international students, Russia targets to host more than 300,000 by 2020 and more than 700,000 by 2025. In 2013, it launched the 5-100-2020 Academic Excellence initiative to advance five Russian universities into the top hundred global rankings by the year 2020 (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2018). In autumn of 2018, Russia released its plans for the "Export of Russian Education" program, which aims to increase national competitiveness in international higher education by marketing itself to students from the West (ICEFMonitor, 2017; Vorotnikov, 2017). Program measures intend to expand English-taught university programs, improved campus facilities, new scholarships, and streamlined visa processing and citizenship requirements (ICEFMonitor, 2017;

Vorotnikov, 2017). If we take Rodriguez's (2010) macro-structural analysis of the Philippines as a labor brokerage state—a country that arranges the export of its citizens to fill labor shortages in other countries—and apply it to international education, we may ask in what other ways are states involved as an active actor in international migration and economic development? Do states promote themselves as educational brokerage states? The foregoing literature suggests that the relationship among economic development policy, international higher education, and international student mobility lacks in-depth investigation and theorizing.

To review, the gaps across skilled migration, international education, and international student mobility literatures are as follows: First, the literature lacks a comprehensive look at alternative paths to South-North migration, such as South-South mobility. Paths such as these are important to investigate since international migration originates from and stays within non-Western countries and economic growth and recovery is occurring at a faster pace in the Global South (INSEAD, 2018; United Nations, 2014). As evident through the changing international student mobility trends over the past fifteen years that have seen the rise of international higher education destinations outside the West, I argue that there is potential for a long-term shift in international migration flows to follow economic diversification and opportunity in the educational Global South. This area of study needs further study. Methodologically, it would be appropriate to undertake a multi-scalar cross-comparative study to understand the broader macroeconomic processes at work in non-Western countries. Second, despite the recognition that one-step, permanent immigration is not universal and ongoing transnational, temporary, circular, and step forms of migration are increasingly common (Castles, 2007; Rodriguez, 2010; Vertovec, 2009), there remains a dearth of work that investigates non-permanent/temporary types of skilled migration, such as international student mobility. Third, a common theme in immigration literature is the restrictive nature of policy created by developed nations to selectively vet migrants coming from developing countries, which belies claims that increased immigration leads to greater economic gain (Hatton & Williamson, 2005). Despite the contradictions between interests, goals, and policies among individuals, institutions, and state (Bauder, 2017; Hatton & Williamson, 2005; Morgan & Orloff, 2017), few studies look at policies that promote migration and to what extent policies and practices differ. Finally, in light of strategic development policies in non-Western countries that target the expansion of international higher education, the literatures ignore the migrational element. They have yet to conduct analysis of international higher education policy and student mobility. To summarize, not only do gaps exist in the comprehensive understanding of skilled, temporary migration in non-Western countries and the role of the state in cultivating knowledge-based migration, but also the extent to which the state uses international students as a tool of economic diversification and growth.

Research Questions

Against the context of an increasingly post-industrial world economy, the foregoing literature neglects the diversification of the economy through sectors of skilled, temporary migration in non-Western countries. No studies to my knowledge have approached explaining the rise of international student mobility through a macro-causal lens. Specifically, the study investigated the following:

1. How do national higher education internationalization policies intentionally shape international student mobility into non-Western countries?
2. How and why do policy outcomes compare across developing, non-Western, non-democratic countries?
3. With the understanding of potential discordant policy aims, institutional goals, and individual migrants' interests, how do stakeholders interpret policies aimed at international education and international student mobility? What differences are present between policy in-theory and in-practice. How does it impact student mobility?

Through these questions, this study addresses the need for cross-national comparative work on international student mobility in developing countries. It contributes to the gap in the literature on the nexus of knowledge-economy competitiveness, the internationalization of higher education, and international skilled mobility within the context of ongoing global economic development.

Case Site Selection

I bounded cases by fitting countries to my theoretical argument with the goal of analyzing variation on national higher education internationalization policy. Although case site selection may be viewed as restrictive, objectively defined criteria for "strategic research sites" (SRS) (Merton, 1987) lend the researcher the ability to identify possible sites, justify case selection, and eliminate the potential for *ad infinitum* case options (Marcus, 1995, 2011). For me, bounding cases based on a theoretical argument lent methodological rigor to country selection, removed the need to become an expert in one site, and reduced the potential to produce spurious conclusions.

I bound case sites in three steps. (1) To exclude traditional education destinations, I first targeted non-Western countries (non-OECD members classified as “developing” by the World Bank) with high numbers of international students in higher education (over 50,000). I could then analyze the policy of countries with a relatively large international student population. To select such case sites, I downloaded public-use country-level data from UNESCO, years 1996 to 2016, for two longitudinal measures, “Total inbound internationally mobile students, both sexes (number)” and “Net flow of internationally mobile students (inbound - outbound), both sexes (number)” (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018a, 2018b). “Total inbound” is the total count of incoming international students to a host country. “Net flow” is the sum of the number of students who come to the country minus the number who leave the country. I coded five years, 2012 to 2016, to identify countries that hosted more than 50,000 tertiary-level students annually and had a positive student rate (i.e., more students come in than leave the country). This coding scheme identified five countries: Egypt, the UAE, Malaysia, Russia, and South Africa. Taking the five possible cases, I did not want two Middle Eastern countries in the sample and given ongoing sociopolitical tensions in Egypt, I dropped it as a possible case site. (2) I considered the remaining four potential case sites to evaluate variation by their national higher education internationalization policies. In order to compare policies aims, interpretations, and outcomes on educational mobility, I drew on migration-development literature that defines social, economic, and political contexts necessary to eventuate cross-border migration (Skeldon, 1997), and comparative international higher education literature on emerging nontraditional destinations that describes national policies (e.g., Knight's (2013) for measures on international actors and internationalization policy. I operationalized variation as follows: all countries have economic ability (i.e., high- or upper-middle gross national income) and political stability (no recent regime changes), and vary by initiatives to expand national international higher education, especially by attracting skilled talent like international students. Russia had intentional policy aimed at attracting international students, but not a critical mass of international actors. In contrast, the UAE has a large number of local, international, and organizational actors involved in managing student mobility, but did not have policy initiatives specifically geared toward international student recruitment. South Africa also had a critical mass of actors, but policy vets and restricts flows of incoming international students. Regarding international higher education hub growth policy, Malaysia and the UAE have similar trajectories on paper, so I had to choose one over another. Theoretically, it appeared that Russia could be contrasted with either the UAE or Malaysia, while South Africa was different in that it had closed policy toward international students. (3) In the last step, I tapped my personal and professional network to inquire about the feasibility of conducting research in the four countries. I have direct personal colleagues in both the UAE and Russia and indirect recommendations in South Africa and Malaysia. My colleagues in the UAE and Russia readily agreed to host me. For South Africa, through extended networks, I contacted various universities, two of which agreed to host me. In Malaysia, my contact did not pan out because the person would not be in the country to assist me in making connections necessary to conduct fieldwork (I was limited to a six-month time frame during which I could leave home for an extended period to conduct interviews). I decided to compare the UAE and Russia by the presence/absence of policy and actors on international student mobility outcomes.

Ultimately, the UAE and Russia also proved to be excellent comparative cases because—although superficially they appear dissimilar—upon closer examination, they have analogous political, economic, and social characteristics (as needed per the theoretical migration-development argument). They also vary by internationalization policy in terms of international student mobility, which is my variable of interest. The UAE and Russia are two burgeoning non-traditional higher education destination countries, and both are politically classified as autocratic, economically reliant on oil production, demographically dependent on migrants, and educationally, in the last decade, both countries have revamped their higher education systems. Most importantly, they have recently joined the international higher education market in their endeavors to attract foreign institutions, collaborative partnerships, and international students. (See Appendix A for a comprehensive historical background on each country.) Comparisons between countries that are modernizing, oil-rich, and have had recent political regime change are common, and previous political-economic studies have juxtaposed Middle Eastern nations and Russia (McDaniel, 2014; Yergin, 2011). No studies as of yet have comparatively analyzed higher education internationalization policy and educational mobility in the regions, and how policy is related to skilled migration.

In terms of internationalization policy, the two countries differ, allowing for policy comparison. The UAE did not have explicit national policy geared toward attracting international students. Rather, it has liberalized trade policymaking that made it easy for foreign HEIs to open branch campuses across the country. In contrast, Russia had two policies that predicate attracting skilled talent. The first, “Export Education,” aimed to double the current number of international students to about 700,000 by 2025. The second, the “5-100-2020” Academic Excellence Initiative, had similar internationalization outcomes for foreign students, but its main goal was to elevate five Russian universities to the top 100 globally by 2020. Policies between the two countries are at odds, which is fitting for comparative policy analysis on international student mobility outcomes. (For a comprehensive discussion of each country’s historical factors, refer to Chapter II, and for a summary of historical context, national needs, and internationalization policies see Chapter III, Table 3.1.)

Case site selection is not without its limits. Throughout all stages of research, scholars continually recommended to me to include more cases, such as South Korea, the US, or UK. They also commented that they supposed that I arbitrarily made my case site selection. This lined up similarly to critiques of qualitative research that assume that a technique is “not thought out” or “convenient” (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). I acknowledge that if one assumes a researcher chose case sites by hazard, it may seem methodologically appropriate to have chosen a superficially well-matched pair, especially when there are many possible strategic research sites that present desired features (outcomes and contexts). I alleviated this limitation by bounding cases with objective criteria, as described above.

Methods and Data

To address the above-mentioned research questions, I conducted expert interviews with university administrators and public officials to understand what differences are present between how policy is presented and how it is practiced. By interviewing public officials, they gave insight into the interworking of governmental and organizational rationale and processes that are not publicly available otherwise. Next, interviews with university elucidated their everyday interpretation and use of policy with a Higher Education Institute (HEI). The benefit of using these two types of experts was that they were privy to non-public policy and decision making at the state and institutional levels. Their occupational position often meant that they participated in working groups that spanned a university and the government, constituting them as key players in proposing, making, understanding, interpreting, evaluating, and revising internationalization policies in terms of higher education and foreign students.

I completed expert interview data collection in two phases. After arranging affiliation as a visiting Ph.D. student with a university in each country, I spent seven weeks in the UAE from December 2018 to January 2019, then another seven weeks in Russia from March 2019 to April 2019. In both countries, I first concentrated on collecting interviews at one university to have a deeper understanding of national and institutional policy and procedures, then broadened out to experts at other institutions. I conducted all interviews in English with participant names in the following chapters (and published work elsewhere) given under pseudonyms. I met with interviewees in their offices at their workplaces or, in one case, the participant met me at the university with which I was affiliated. In Russia, I arranged Skype meetings when either one or both of us were traveling.

Initial data consisted of thirty-seven interviews with forty-three participants, meaning that although the majority of meetings were one-on-one between myself and the interviewee, in some interviews, I met with more than one person. In the UAE, I conducted fifteen interviews with eighteen participants at eight higher education institutions and two public agencies in four cities: Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. I also interviewed one international student. Additionally, I attended three Open House events and had four campus tours (three given by international students, one by an interviewee). In Russia, I met with twenty-three experts in twenty interviews in two cities, Saint Petersburg and Moscow, at nine higher education institutions and two public agencies. I also had informal conversations with one postdoctoral fellow and three researchers and attended one Open House. Finally, I interviewed one university administrator in the US due to their expertise in establishing higher education portals in various other countries.

I excluded the one interview with an international student in the UAE from data analysis because it did not yield pertinent information for the project, and I subsequently approached speaking with students in an informal, informational way instead of setting up a formal interview. In suit, I did not include any informal conversations with other researchers and colleagues as part of the interview data; instead, I took notes about what we discussed. After exclusions, the final group consists of thirty-six expert interviews with forty-two participants. The first set of eighteen interviewees in the UAE was composed of fourteen men and four women. Of which four men are Emirati, four men and one woman are from Middle Eastern countries, four men and one woman come from either the US or UK, and two men and two women originated from the Indian subcontinent region. (During every conversation, interviewees mentioned their home country origin. One person did not mention their nationality, but when I emailed the ROI, I inquired.) In Russia, the second set of interviewees (twenty-three people) was composed of sixteen women and seven men, all of whom are Russian nationals. Lastly, in the US, the participant is an American White male.

Two techniques I employed to access experts were to draw on gatekeepers (person(s) who control contact to others) and snowball sampling (personal referrals to other group members). I also scheduled interviews after "cold calling" (sending an inquiry email to a general office without any prior acquaintance) universities' admissions and international student offices, as well as attending walk-in Open House events. One caveat must be mentioned— selection was not done haphazardly. Before reaching out to interviewees, I created a list of HEIs and government agencies at which I would have liked to interview experts with the goal of interviewing at various types of organizations. For universities, I wanted different types: federal/public, private, liberal arts, science and technology, and—specifically in Russia—I wanted universities that were and were not 5-100 Academic Excellence Initiative partners. In terms of government agencies, I targeted those that worked on higher education internationalization policy (like the 5-100 initiative), international students, and higher education. However, I knew that access to government representatives would be more restricted to me as a foreigner and an outsider to the agencies. After drafting a list, I then met with my gatekeepers, and we discussed the best way to reach out to potential interviewees to schedule interviews. Often my gatekeepers referred me to people at institutes that were already on my list; a few were not but still proved beneficial. Thinking back, I do not believe that I could have collected as many or as good quality of data without pre-planning and without having the benefit of taking affiliation with a university. This afforded me institutional backing, through which I used professional networks to plug in to the specific research sector.

Gatekeepers were critical in my research because they referred me to potential interviewees. However, this technique had different outcomes in the UAE and Russia as seen in Figure 1.1. In the sample, out of the fifteen interviews collected in the UAE, the first three resulted from my sponsoring faculty person (the primary gatekeeper) sending an email request to a handful of potential participants at the host university. Five others came as referrals from interviewees. The remaining seven resulted from walk-ins, or cold-call inquiries, and one interview I directly arranged myself. In Russia, of the twenty formal interviews conducted, seven came directly from requests sent from colleagues at the affiliated university, and eleven more were referrals from interviewees. Only one interview resulted from an Open House walk-in, and I set up one other interview personally. In other words, about half of the interviews in the UAE came from referrals, and the other half I generated myself. In contrast, ninety percent of the interviews in Russia came from referrals, only two I arranged personally.

As the proportions of interviews that resulted from referrals suggest, I managed non-probability sampling that has a high rate of non-response. During my fieldwork, non-response to interview requests was a real but expected issue (as acknowledged elsewhere, e.g., Rivera et al., 2002; Roberts, 2013). From my prior professional experience working in an admissions office scheduling interviews at a private higher education institute, I estimated that about a quarter of my inquiries would receive a response, and half of those would lead to an interview. Essentially, I anticipated that, on average, about one-eighth of all requests would lead to an interview. Meaning, I expected that if I sent twenty requests, I would secure two to three interviews. For example, notes in the UAE reflect that one weekend I sent twenty-one cold call emails and received four responses over the following weeks. Of the four responses, I scheduled two interviews. Another interviewee responded affirmatively and listed the days and times he was available, but never set an appointment. Coincidentally, after an interview at a building next door, I noticed the address, day, and time and hazarded a call to the reception desk to ask if the person was available (yes). I walked over and interviewed him at his office without having set up a firm appointment before. (This was the only occasion this happened.) Finally, the last conversation of the four responses never led to an interview. Although I did not receive responses from other offices, I noted days and times of their Open House, and I obtained three interviews after attending the event.

In contrast to the relatively positive response to cold-call emails I sent in the UAE, all cold call emails I sent during my time in Russia were ignored. This was expected since, during my initial meeting, the laboratory director and my gatekeeper noted that if a recipient did not know my colleagues or me, they would simply not respond (they thought it was unlikely that they would respond to say decline the interview). Two situations illustrate this point. In Moscow, I sent an email (in English) to inquire about attending an Open House event and conducting an interview but received no response. I attended the Open House presentation (given in Russian) anyway. Upon arrival, the recruitment manager confirmed she received the email and suggested to me to speak with the Program Director (in English) after the event, which I did. In the second situation, an interviewee had referred me to a colleague at another university, but the person had since been promoted to a position in a governmental office. I asked the person who responded if others in the office were willing to meet instead, but the interview was politely declined. These instances show how on the one hand, when a researcher receives no response, it does not mean an interview is not possible, and on the other hand, a response does not always lead to an interview, especially with a known contact. While it appeared necessary to know someone who could provide a referral to another interviewee, this fact was more pronounced in Russia than the UAE.

It is also notable that referrals to experts at other universities were much easier in Saint Petersburg than in all other sites. This may be because administrators personally knew one another. For example, when concluding an interview, a Vice Rector of International Relations asked me how the research was coming and whether I had spoken to someone at a particular university. I responded that the university was on my list, but I had not secured an interview yet. The Vice Rector explained that the network of international education professionals was tight in Saint Petersburg, and they were happy to assist each other. He mentioned that the university he recommended was his alma mater, and he made a phone call on his cell phone to a colleague to request an interview, which I later confirmed via email. This situation was common in Saint Petersburg, whereas in Moscow and in the cities in the UAE, it was more challenging to obtain a fruitful referral. This may be likely because the administrators communicated less often—if at all—with each other. In Saint Petersburg, the referral pattern resembled a wildfire spread—quickly and covering a large area. Whereas in Moscow and the four Emirati cities, referrals were like a transferred coal effect—contained within universities with tentative ties to other universities.

Snowball referrals were good sources of interview leads, and often university administrators were interested in talking because they had a mutual interest in the topic. These experts could be characterized as "easily accessible" experts. However, not all experts were easily accessible. In both countries, all interviews with public officials came from referrals. Of the thirty-six total interviews, four were with public officials, two in each country. In both cases, one government official appeared interested in the project and happy to participate, and the other seemed politely disengaged or cautious. As other scholars have pointed out, establishing rapport with elite experts can be tricky for a researcher (Roberts, 2013). In my case, I presumed that as an outsider, I would be unlikely to get many interviews with public officials because some level of common trust needed to be inherent. I concluded that an international project based solely on elite interviews with public officials would have been nearly impossible without an insider's angle. I observed that because there are fewer people in particular high-level positions, the more constricted access becomes (i.e., moving away from an expert interview closer to an elite interview). Thus, a personal referral becomes necessary. This aligns with Littig (2009), who concluded that elite interviews are part of expert interviews but are distinct due to their power and access characteristics. Access ease is shaped by assumptions about the researcher's position, how they maneuver power negotiation, and lack of barriers, like being an insider or trusted researcher.

In the field, I kept to a regimented meeting protocol to ensure consistency. My protocol was as follows. After scheduling an interview with an expert, I sent an email with two attachments: a project information sheet (the Informed Consent Form that explains the project, provides background, expected outcomes, and contact information should an interviewee have questions), and a twelve-point questionnaire. It had four questions each under three themes: *international students, universities and their partnerships,* and *national policymaking and international higher education* (refer to Templates 5.1. and 5.2. in Chapter V for examples of these two documents). Once meeting with the interviewees, I first introduced myself, described the project, and inquired if they had any questions before we began. I then asked for their verbal consent to be interviewed, permission to audio record, and approval to take handwritten notes. Next, I asked the interviewees(s) to introduce themselves and their work with international education and student mobility. I guided the remainder of the interview following the three-part questionnaire: (1) *international student mobility* in general within the country and specifically to the university; (2) *university partnerships*, establishment of a campus or branch, and accreditation; (3) the relationship between *national policy* (the national strategic plan or specific initiatives), universities, and how internationalization influenced international student mobility currently and over the past ten years or so. We paid special attention to exploring events and situations they described that exemplified their understanding, interpretation, and implementation of policy in their job.

Overall, I collected research data that include hand-written interview notes, audio files, and transcripts for interviewees who agreed to be recorded, a "Reports of Interview" (ROI) for every interview, and associated comments given on an ROI by interviewees. Following each interview, I wrote an ROI and emailed it to interviewees within about forty-eight hours (although on two occasions when traveling, it took me more than a week to write the ROI and email it to the interviewee). When emailing the ROI to each participant, I asked them to review it, redact anything they wished, correct any incorrect information, and add anything else pertinent. Of my sixteen total interviews in the UAE, I received comments on five ROIs. For my Russian interviews, I received comments on eight out of twenty ROIs. This proved to provide another level of data.

In addition to interview data, I collected text and images from public online sources on policies, universities, internationalization, and higher education trends. I also wrote journal-style fieldnotes to record logistical details, such as when certain events happened ("It took 10 days to schedule and conduct the first interview"), the data collection process ("[Colleague A] referred me to [Colleague B]"), and reflections on daily interactions with participants, colleagues, and everyday life ("Didn't get lost going to Pushkin Palace on the minibus" and "In her quantitative analysis, [Colleague] found clustering of internationalization initiatives in HEIs [higher education institutes]").

I initially built my interview questionnaire and collected data with three broad concepts (international students, universities and their partnerships, and the state and its policies) and narrower concepts (e.g., student origins, recruitment, political changes) in mind. While in the field interviewing, I began noticing patterns, which I noted. Upon return home and when coding the interview ROIs and transcripts, I read recursively, meaning I read and re-read ROIs and interview transcripts to group codes by the three broad themes and by more narrow defined categories. I also expected to find unanticipated patterns in the data. I analyzed the data, recorded a coding scheme, and wrote memos using MaxQDA2020 software.

I conducted analysis on interviews in two ways: inductively and deductively. First, as described above, I did several rounds of inductive analysis, which works by scaling from close observations to more broad generalizations to allow for theory testing and building. I used inductive findings for Chapter III. For Chapter IV, because there were specific theoretical underpinnings to explain state motivations toward international student mobility in policy, I performed coding and analysis in a deductive manner, such that I used a pre-set scheme defined by the literature to apply to the interviews. I chose quotations that illustrated and connected the findings for each chapter.

Chapter Structure

The dissertation chapters are presented as stand-alone chapters. Although they link together to create a cohesive story about how internationalization policy shapes student mobility to non-traditional educational destinations, each chapter can be read and understood without reference to the others. Generally speaking, Chapter II presents the historical backgrounds, Chapter III is empirical, Chapter IV is theoretical, and Chapter V is methodological.

The dissertation is organized out as follows. In the next chapter, I present a historical background on both countries and describe what internationalization policies are. Next in chapter three, I comparatively discuss who international students are, and how the policies have shaped international student mobility in the two case study countries. In chapter four, I analyze four theoretical explanations for internationalization initiatives at the national level. I ask whether policymaking is driven by state power or ranking motivations. I discuss how the current international education policies UAE and Russia fall in line with previous literature, where they depart in terms of state motivations, and how these countries compare to other country's approaches to international higher education. Chapter five is a critical analysis of using expert interviews as a data collection method. I offer reflections on the technique's limitations, challenges, and benefits, and strategies that can be implemented by other researchers while conducting international fieldwork. Lastly, chapter six concludes the dissertation. I revisit the research questions, summarizing the findings, acknowledge limitations, and provide suggestions for future lines of research as illuminated by this dissertation.

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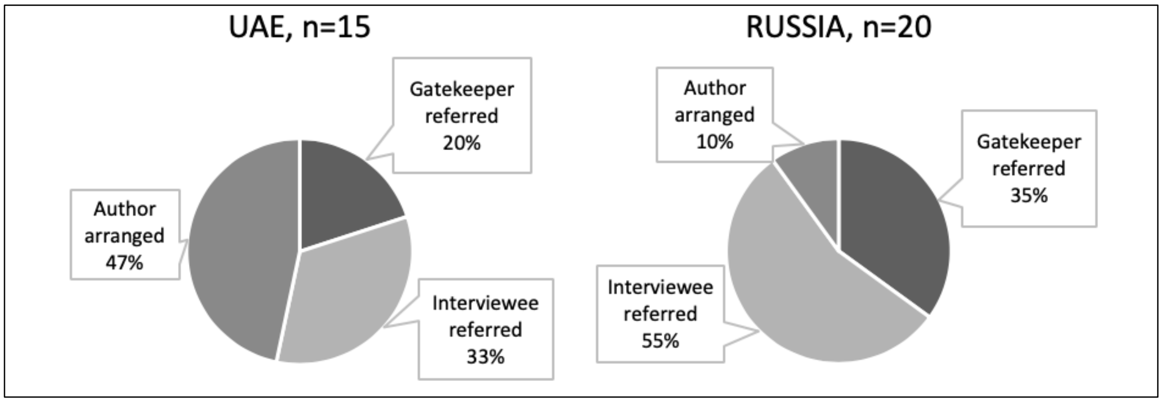
Figure 1.1.

Methods for Accessing Interviewees



Source: Author

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUNDS OF THE UAE AND RUSSIA

In this chapter, I provide historical background on the political, economic, educational, and demographic context of each of the two countries under study, the United Arab Emirates (also called the UAE or the Emirates[2]) and the Russian Federation. The purpose of presenting the countries' backgrounds is to provide readers with a broad understanding of social change not only in the country under study, but also in the region where it is situated, as well as within the global economy.

Present-day UAE is located on the Arabian Peninsula in the Persian Gulf maritime region. It shares borders with Oman to the Southeast, Saudi Arabia to the West, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait to the Northwest, and Iran to the North (see Figure 2.1.). Russia is the largest country in the world, spanning Europe from the Baltic Sea in the west across Asia to the Pacific Ocean in the east. Russia shares its most northwestern borders with Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine. To the south, Russia is contiguous with Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia. To the far east, Russia borders China and North Korea and shares the Sea of Japan with Japan and the Bering Sea with the US (see Figure 2.2.).

[2] The "Emirates" (capitalized E) refers to the UAE as a whole, whereas an "emirate" (lowercase e) refers to an individual district. One could equate this to how the United States of America is called the "US," "USA," or the "States" (capitalized S), and the state of Texas (lowercase s) refers to an individual district.

The UAE and Russia have parallels that are important for understanding policymaking motivations. Yet, their differences reveal why and how internationalization policy at the state-level explicitly includes attracting international students (as in the case of Russia), or not (in the case of the UAE). The UAE and Russia are both autocratic, oil-dependent regimes that differ in policy implementation and regional leadership, which shaped higher education internationalization policy through economic development.

Polity

It is first important to describe the political backgrounds of each country to understand nuances in how national policy is implemented. The UAE and Russia are relatively new political regimes. In 2021, the UAE will celebrate fifty years of autonomous statehood (ending Britain's quasi-colonial control on December 1, 1971), and, in 2022, Russia will reach thirty years as a federation following the dissolution of the United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR) on December 31, 1991. Because the regimes are young, in terms of policymaking, this means that the states could start afresh while building from well-established foundations. For example, when the UAE government began developing its education system in the 1970s, it utilized existing Kuwaiti, Qatari, and Egyptian curricula that emphasized independent statehood, Arab socialism, and Islamic culture (Kazim, 1996). Today it also continues to maintain British political and public administrative framework structures (Barnwell, 2011). Likewise, in the 1990s, the newly founded Russian Federation inherited a mature education system. It made an attempt to democratize education under the 1992 Law on Education, which allowed private (non-state) education institutes to be opened and pulled the state out of curricular decisions and educational policy control. However, this move toward decentralization did not get far (Nikandrov, 2014; Platonova & Semyonov, 2018). Due to regime change, the UAE and Russia could make policy that draws on the old to achieve the new.

Despite their similarities, a pivotal difference between these states is how policy is interpreted and administered. The UAE is a federal monarchy with one *emir* (ruler) for each of the seven emirates, who together compose the Supreme Council of Rulers. Nominally, Russia is a democratic federation with power vested in the Executive Branch (the President and Prime Minister). In practice, the UAE and Russia are both autocratic, meaning the state is ruled by a single governing body with little or no influence by the populace, party politics, and interest groups. In an autocracy, because of low outside interference, policymaking is a direct tool wielded by the state. The two countries differ in that Russian policymaking and administration are centralized and disseminated by the Executive Branch, which results in a relatively cohesive understanding and application of policy. As compared to the UAE, where policy manifests as administratively segmented due to its true federated nature and shared power among the seven emirates. Emirati national policy is agreed upon by the seven rulers, but how it is achieved is up to each of the seven rulers' interpretation and application of policy within his emirate as he sees fit. For instance, at the federal level, the UAE pursues the strategic plan, "Vision 2021," which puts "innovation, research, science and technology at the centre of a knowledge-based, highly productive and competitive economy," but emirate-based economic strategic policies, such as the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 and the Dubai Strategic

Plan 2015, separately set out how an emirate will reach national goals. It is also common to hear that emirate-level policy and projects reflect the distinct personalities of each ruler of his respective emirate. Whether it be progressive construction initiatives in Dubai by Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum or the development of religious, cultural, and education centers in Sharjah by Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhamad Al Qasimi.

Another critical difference in policymaking is the role the UAE and Russia play in their respective regions' foreign politics. Russia has historically been the regional leader and, although internally isolated under the Soviet regime, has engaged as a major global political player since the mid-twentieth century given its economic and political strength gained during that era. The current 2024 Development Strategy also manifests Russia's regional and global political agenda under three main pillars: to balance power in the international system; to exert influence in the "near abroad" (the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of former Soviet republics); and to broaden export markets to the "far abroad" (outside the Soviet region, e.g., countries in Africa, Asia, and South America, etc.). However, Russia's ongoing incursion into Ukraine since 2014 has deteriorated foreign policy among CIS countries, Western countries, and China (Trenin, 2019). It appears that one of Russia's foreign affairs motives is to hold power in the international system, and policymaking falls in line with this endeavor. Higher education internationalization policy, therefore, can be understood to extend favorable political influence via mobile students not only within the near abroad but to the far abroad, too.

In comparison, the UAE is geographically sandwiched between the two dueling regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Although it is not the leader in its region, it aims to be regional and world leader by its centennial jubilee in 2071. In a historically tumultuous region where unstable political-economic regimes and violence and conflict that are pervasive in neighboring countries, the UAE differentiates itself as a stable political and economic leader, as compared to other states in the region (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq), by using domestic and foreign policy. Internally, the UAE is intolerant of violence and extremism and promotes balanced political systems, as represented by a larger share of women in the government. The UAE also systematically manages its alliances to coincide with broader global interests in the international system. For example, ten years after declaring its statehood, the UAE joined the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a union of six Arab states meant to counterbalance Iran's virulent dominance in the region. More recently, the UAE has increasingly detached itself from Saudi Arabia's foreign politics due to growing tensions arising from diplomatic confrontations in 2018 between Saudi Arabia and Iran and Canada. Since its transformation fifty years ago from a group of highly localized economies with a traditional tribal structure to an industrialized global state that deals with superpowers within the world arena (Fox et al., 2006), policymaking is a means for the UAE to compete within the region and across the world. Therefore, one may infer that internationalization policy will coincide with motives to have the best higher education system and to attract the best talent.

Economy

Next, beyond politically propelled policymaking, it is important to understand economic motives may be at the root of higher education internationalization policy as literature in the above section suggests. Economically, the UAE and Russia are quite similar. Both countries are oil-rich and are moving toward knowledge-based production. (Economic indicators from 1975 to the most recent year are listed in Tables 1.1., 1.2a., and 1.2b.) One the one hand, the UAE has acknowledged the limits of its oil wealth, which became apparent during the 2008 global Great Recession in which the oil, financial, and real estate sectors—the core of the Emirati economy—were hit particularly hard. For the UAE, economic diversification is paramount. In 2016, the Supreme Council launched a post-oil plan to boost its sectors of specialization, such as construction, aviation, shipping, telecommunications, and luxury goods/services. This post-oil attitude is the crux of national economic diversification and strategic plans, such as the 2021 National Agenda ("Vision 2021"), 2030 Plans (in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)), and the Centennial 2071 Plan. To achieve its goals, creating a "First-Rate Education System" is one of six Vision 2021 goals, which is further reflected in the National Strategy for Education 2030 that will work toward a system "desired to be the world's top education model" (Government.ae, 2017).

On the other hand, Russia is described as being resource-dependent (Gaddy & Ickes, 2020) and falling under the "resource curse" (Ross, 2001).[3] It has made small strides toward diversifying its economy beyond oil and gas production. The current 2024 Development Strategy emphasizes technology, more extensive trade, and eased commerce regulations, to balance natural resource production. This policy orientation is

[3] The "resource curse" debate argues whether oil-based economies (e.g., Iraq, Russia, Saudi Arabia) promote authoritarianism, thereby hindering full democracy (Ross, 2001).

intuitive given that Russia has had strong science, technology, and industry sectors cultivated by industrialization policies since 1929 (e.g., Stalin's first five-year New Economic Policy set the USSR's trajectory to becoming an industrial superpower by the close of World War II).

Education

Given that education is centralized under the federal government in both cases, the subsequent direct question we should ask is: How do higher education services contribute to non-oil, non-resource *economic production* in the UAE and Russia? The short answer is very little. Both the Emirati and Russian governments control their higher education sectors and earn relatively little money from them as compared to other sectors such as industry (e.g., Russian defense/arms production) and services (e.g., Emirati tourism). Education is a public good provided by and invested in by the state. Thus, revenue generated by HEIs returns to the state. In both cases, the governments put in more money to selected universities than they receive in return from them. For example, of the eighty-three active licensed HEIs in the UAE in 2019 (*Commission for Academic Accreditation*, 2019), there are only three national universities and various other universities semi-funded by local governments,[4] such as the American University of Sharjah, Sharjah University, and New York University Abu Dhabi. Universities, like the national flagship United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), receive generous funding and are at the center of achieving the six national priority goals. These HEI models rely

[4] There are three types of universities in the UAE: federal, Emirati-funded, semi-government, and private, foreign (Kirk & Napier, 2010, p. 121).

on student fees to support operations, but they are not engaged in capital production in the same way as private, foreign-owned International Branch Campuses (IBCs) that are required to be financially autonomous from local and national governments. In Russia, the higher education sector is monopolized by the state—two-thirds of universities are directly state-supported (Platonova & Semyonov, 2018; Potapova & Trines, 2017). Leading universities—the two National Universities (Moscow State University and Saint Petersburg State University), nine Federal Universities, and fifty research-focused universities—all receive special funding from the government. The remaining one-third of HEIs are private institutes, which are still regularly audited by the state. The higher education market has been and remains closed to international HEIs.

However, if we slightly alter the question to ask how higher education services contribute to *economic development*, the answer is quite different. In both these countries, economic progress could not, and will not, happen without advanced higher education. Russian education is an excellent example of this. Since the founding of the USSR in the 1920s, education was inextricably bound to the economy because productive education and training was a main mechanism employed to develop the economy from agriculturally to industrially based (Ames, 1948). With a strong emphasis on education over the past century, today, Russia fairs comparatively well to other nations in terms of educational attainment. As of 2017, Russia had the second-highest percentage of university-educated population in the world (OECD, 2019). It is likely this tradition will continue because the current development strategy includes plans such as the 5-100 Academic Excellence Initiative that aims to improve the quality and innovation of

Russian higher education so that by the year 2020 five Russian universities will rank in the top one hundred globally.

In contrast to Russian policy that has historically utilized advanced education as a tool to achieve economic development, the UAE has established education *in response to* economic development. The country's development in education mirrored its economic growth. Following the discovery of oil off the coast of Abu Dhabi in 1958, a surge in oil production in the 1970s and 1980s left the demand for educated mid-level employees in the government, manufacturing, banking, insurance, service, and health sectors unfilled (Kazim, 1996). In response, from 1975, the percentage of educated workers grew steadily. In the 1970s and 1980s, the federal government's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research opened four universities (the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), Colleges of Technology, the Dubai Medical College for Women, and Ajman University), founded vocational training for the oil, aviation, and banking sectors, as well as provided scholarships to Emirati students to obtain their university degrees abroad (mostly men). The first international higher education institutes founded in the late 1990s, such as the University of Wollongong in Dubai (1993), the American University in Dubai (1995), and the American University of Sharjah (1997). Today, higher education and advanced training in the Emirates are at the center of strategies to achieve an economy that is based on knowledge-based production, not on oil wealth and revenue. The takeaway for both the UAE and Russia is that national education policy tends in the direction of meeting internal labor needs by training professionals.

Apart from internal national labor force demands, both the UAE and Russia have not been immune to worldwide changes to higher education and have both reoriented their higher education systems to comply with external global standards. It is important to note three critical changes in global higher education policymaking since 2000 have placed pressure on countries like the UAE and Russia to internationalize. (1) In the early 2000s, World Trade Organization (WTO) General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS) committed member countries[5] to liberalize higher educational services (Knight, 2002; OECD, 2002). (2) Although higher education had been offered as a public good by the state, deregulation of national higher education systems separated HEIs as autonomous entities from the state with the goal of removing governmental influence on education and leaving it open to free market forces (Kehm, 2006). (3) National higher education internationalization policies, such as Academic Excellence Initiatives, were adopted to catalyze innovation and scientific production (Salmi, 2016, 2017). In short, these changes have altered higher education such that competition is not solely contained internally within a country. More than ever, nations and HEIs contend to offer educational services and research resources that surpass others.

These changes have had real outcomes for the UAE and Russia. In the UAE, up until the early 2000s, the higher education sector had few HEIs, but the combination of the newly established WTO GATS on Educational Services in 2002 and an influx of migrants following the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US, created a demand for

[5] The UAE joined the WTO in 1996 but is not party to ed commitments on Higher Education Services (Sector 5); Russia became a member in 2012 and has made full unconditional commitments to higher education (World Trade Organization, 2020).

private education at all levels. The UAE—led by Dubai—deregulated national trade policies in conjunction with emirate law to allow foreign universities to establish branches, making it one of the highest ranked countries on international education ease of access (Ilieva, 2017). For example, Dubai Law No. (3) of 2003 established the Executive Council of the Emirate of Dubai, under which Law No. (30) of 2006 founded the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). This agency develops strategy for knowledge and human development and the supervision of its application. Resolution No. (21) of 2011 also allowed the establishment of Higher Education Institutions in the Free Zones of Dubai, which are regulated by the KHDA. It is at that point that the UAE could more adequately respond to the spike in international education demand. Soon the UAE emerged as the worldwide leader in the number of International Branch Campuses (IBCs)—thirty-eight foreign, privately owned and operated universities as of 2017 (Cross-Border Education Research Team, 2017). Over the past two decades, the UAE has developed and marketed itself as one of six International Education Hubs (Knight, 2013, 2014).[6] Yet, upon closer inspection, "Hub" appears to refer to the fact that policies are meant to attract international HEIs rather than international students.

For Russia, these three changes to higher education accompanied the renovation of the higher education system. Up until the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the Russian

[6] Knight (2013, 2014) identifies six self-titular "International Education Hubs," all of which are located in non-Western countries: Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Botswana. Some of these developing countries, as well as others, are emerging international education "hot spots" (Knight, 2013). There are three necessary characteristics that define an international education hub: (1) a country self-identifies as an internationalized education hub; (2) a nation has created intentional educational policy to develop the hub, which is related to the last point; (3) an educational hub has a critical mass of international and local actors, such as branch campuses.

education system was insular, functioning for itself within a single, isolated system. Additionally, in the early 1990s, the quality of education across all levels was questionable, and funding was tenuous (Nikandrov, 2014). Since the 2000s, the federal government has endeavored to reorient itself globally, to integrate and systematize educational legislation to comply with contemporary global specifications. For example, in 2003, it signed the Bologna Agreement, thus becoming part of the European higher education system (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019), meaning that it would offer higher education within international standards. As a result, four years later, Specialist degree programs began being phased out in favor of four-year Bachelor (*Bakalavr*) and two-year Master (*Magistr*) programs (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019; Potapova & Trines, 2017).

To boost its educational competitiveness worldwide, Russia recently launched two education initiatives: the 5-100 and Export Education programs. The 5-100-2020 Academic Excellence initiative, implemented in 2013, set to advance five Russian universities into the top 100 World University Rankings by the year 2020 (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2018).[7] The Export Education initiative, initiated in 2017, aims to triple the number of enrolled foreign students across all Russian universities by 2025 (Government.ru, 2017). These two national policies are predicated on one similar condition: to attract foreign talent.

[7] Per 2019 QS Rankings, there is one Russian university in the top 100 globally, Moscow State University.

Demographics and Migration

This point circles back to the original question as to why nations would want to make higher education internationalization policy to attract international students. To understand the motivations, it is necessary to outline the migrational profiles of each country and their histories of international education. In both these cases, the countries are a leading migration destination in their respective region for educational and labor migrants and—perhaps surprising to people unfamiliar with the countries—the UAE and Russia are economically and demographically dependent on migrants. International student trends in both countries reflect migrational histories, such that foreign students come from the surrounding regions. However, the countries have nuanced differences in intentions to attract students to higher education and retain them in the local labor forces.

Immigration to UAE is mainly temporary (i.e., non-permanent) labor migration that has coincided with oil and construction booms from the 1970s through the 1990s. The current migrational trend is a mix of trade/service manual workers and professional, skill-based migrants. The UAE has the highest migrant stock[8] in the world—eighty-eight percent of the resident population are migrants (World Bank, 2019e)—and migrants compose ninety percent of the labor force (De Bel-Air, F., 2015; Gonzalez et al., 2008; Malit & Al-Youha, 2013). Put simply, the UAE needs migrants to fill labor force demands. Immigrants are stratified between high- and low-skilled work and by ethnicity, nationality, education, employment, and socioeconomics, which tends to favor Westerners over Asians (De Bel-Air, F., 2015; Jamal, 2015; Rhys, 2010). There are three

[8] Migration stock is the number of people residing in a country other than the one in which they were born.

strata of immigrants. The largest group of immigrants in the UAE are low-skilled workers in construction or services/retail who come from Southeast Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). A smaller number of immigrants come from other Middle East and Arabic-speaking countries (e.g., Egypt and Jordan) who offer a mix of skill levels. A relatively small number of English-speaking highly-educated migrants from OECD[9] countries who work in oil, gas, education, and finance/investment (Aljanahi, 2017; De Bel-Air, F., 2015; Malit & Al-Youha, 2013). There is a stark distinction between "worker" and "expatriate" migrants (Rhys, 2010), who are further polarized from Emiratis who are employed in higher-paid public (government) positions (Al-Ali, 2008; Gonzalez et al., 2008).

With a dense migrant stock, issues have arisen. Migration is based on the *Kafala* employment-based visa sponsorship system, which has been critiqued due to concerns about labor and human rights abuses, lack of work protections, and migrants' dependence on an employer (Malit & Al-Youha, 2013). Residence in the country is contingent upon either Emirati nationality or employment. However, a person is not Emirati by being born in the UAE (*jus soli*). Many immigrants and their families have lived in the UAE for generations, having been born and raised there, but remain foreigners. Naturalization procedures are strict (e.g., thirty years residence, lawful source of income, good conduct and a good reputation, not convicted of any amorality, and proficiency in the Arabic language (Government.ae, 2019). Citizenship is limited due to a concern to conserve

[9] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an elite group of thirty-five wealthy, post-industrial, democratic countries that together make up fifty percent of the world's GDP (OECD, 2014). OECD countries are sometimes analogously referred to as "the West" or the "Global North."

Emirati national identity and culture (Habboush, 2013). Disagreement continues over managed circular migration to the UAE because it is seen as beneficial—reducing debt in sending countries through remittances and increasing life quality for migrants and their family, in addition to diminishing the “nuisance” of permanent settlement (World Bank, 2006)—yet the penchant to avoid (or prevent) incorporation is seen as a human rights violation. Although the UAE government has made significant federal reforms to migration policy since the early 2010s to ameliorate the *Kafala* system (De Bel-Air, 2015), one may infer that the UAE government’s preference is to continue to attract skilled, temporary migrants to fill its labor force, especially in private commercial sectors.

Given the lengthy history of immigration, the international student population emulates the temporality of the immigrant populace. In absolute numbers, the UAE hosts a comparatively high number of international students, over 77,000 in 2016 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018b) (see Table 2.4. “Total Inbound International Students”). UNESCO’s Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students (2019) shows that students originate from immigrant-source countries, such as India, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. The bulk of international students are, in fact, “local” international students who reside in the UAE and either immigrated with their family or were born and raised in the UAE. A smaller proportion of “foreign” international students come from abroad for long-term educational purposes or short-term exchange. Local international students with an immigrant-background receive their education at private foreign schools and universities, whereas foreign international students are just as likely to study at a private university as a fully- or quasi-government funded HEI.

A large number of local international students directly contributed to the UAE marketizing itself as an International Education Hub. Specifically, in the early 2000s, an uptick in immigration began in response to new mega-construction projects as well as the September 11, 2011 attacks in the US, after which Muslims from the broader Arab world immigrated to the UAE to seek a more stable, safe environment. In 2002, almost 1.2 million migrants came to the UAE, whereas, on average, about 200,000 migrants arrive annually (World Bank, 2019h) (see Table 2.3. "Net Migration" for the year 2002). There is no explicit unified national plan or coordinated strategy to mature the UAE as an education hub. Rather, the international education hub *esprit* shapes how the country and its individual emirates market themselves as educational hotspots. The UAE has a vibrant international education sector, as marked by the thirty-eight IBCs across the country, but it does not have explicit policy geared toward foreign students.[10] Student enrollment endeavors are left to individual universities and are often one of many strategic agenda Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are reported back to funders. Economic development-*cum*-internationalization policies grow international higher education by attracting top global universities to offer the best education to the existing (immigrant) student base with the objective to keep as many graduates as possible in private industry in the local Emirati labor force.

[10] There are few government-sponsored seats available to foreign students; they usually go to students from allied countries in the Arab, African, and Asian regions.

Russia, like the UAE, is also a leading migrational destination. As of 2015, Russia is globally ranked as the third leading destination country (behind the US and Germany) for international migrants (International Organization for Migration, 2017). A result of porous borders during the USSR regime, immigration from the "near abroad" region (CIS countries) for work or education purposes remains the majority of inbound arrivals. At the same time, "far abroad" migrants are far fewer (e.g., China, Turkey, Vietnam) (Focus Migration, 2010). Despite its historically large, educated, skilled population and high immigration numbers, Russia is experiencing a "demographic crisis." The crisis, in short, is caused by a lack of natural replacement of the current population. The population peaked in 1990 just before the collapse of the Soviet Union (see Table 2.3. "Population" in 1990), but in the thirty years since, the population has withered due to a relatively high death rate, a drop in birth rate, high emigration rates, and stagnating immigration (Moscow Times, 2019; Population Division, 2019).[11] The UN and the Russian Federal State Statistic Service (Rosstat) forecast negative trends without the inclusions of immigration, such that the population could decrease by half by 2100 (Rosstat, 2014, as cited by Stratfor (2019); Population Division, 2019). Put another way, Russia relies on international migration to attenuate its decreasing population size.

The current migration trend is composed of mostly unskilled labor migrants and few skilled professional migrants who mainly come from the immediate post-Soviet region. Since the early 2000s, simplified, visa-free entrance for people coming from CIS

[11] For an overview of reasons for the demographic crisis, see Eberstadt's "The Dying Bear: Russia's Demographic Disaster" (2011).

countries was intended to assist in recruiting highly qualified specialists, but this immigration system attracted temporary labor migration (Focus Migration, 2010). Temporary labor migration has become an issue because many migrants came visa-free, stayed, and now work unregistered (Focus Migration, 2010). It is estimated that half of the temporary migrants do not have education or professional training and are thus constrained to unskilled work (United Nations Development Program, 2009). Moreover, many foreign specialists cannot partake in visa-free movement because they come from countries whose citizens require employment permission and related employment-based entrance visas that must be renewed periodically (Chudinovskikh & Denisenko, 2017). Besides making mobility visa-free for CIS citizens, Russia has also put into effect migration attraction policies, like the 2006 (renewed in 2012) State Program for Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots Abroad (in short, the "Compatriot Program"), to attract new citizens to settle who were already fluent in Russian and Russian culture (Ivakhnyuk, 2009; Vykhovanets & Zhuravsky, 2013). Notably, the Compatriot Program appears to distinguish "compatriots" as desirable, qualified skilled labor as compared to unskilled "migrants" (Myhre, 2017).

Given stagnating immigration, in 2018, the federal government eased citizenship procedures, proposing to allow the right to apply for Russian nationality for those already on a temporary or permanent residence permit, which was meant to stimulate permanent settlement in the Russian Federation (Duma.gov.ru, 2018; Kremlin.ru, 2018). Enacted November 1, 2019, federal law no. 257-FZ allows native Russian speakers to seek citizenship through an application and interview process (Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2019). For others, they may apply for naturalization if they hold a permanent residence permit, have lived in Russia for five years, are employed legally, have a command of the Russian language, and have renounced their home country citizenship. Refugees and those granted a Highly Qualified Professional visa may apply for citizenship after one year (Expatica, 2019). Yet despite its efforts to entice immigration, in 2019, Russia's immigration numbers were at the lowest in the Post-Soviet period (see Table 2.3., differences in "Net Migration" from 2012 to 2017). This is due to political-economic reasons: Migrants from the top sending country—Ukraine—are not coming (Rosstat, 2017) because of Russia's ongoing conflict there, and migrants from former CIS countries are settling further west. It is speculated that Russia could look elsewhere for migrants, but it has little experience overcoming an "ethnocultural gap" to recruit *en masse* from Asian and Middle Eastern countries (Moscow Times, 2019).

In contrast to dwindling immigration rates, educational migration has also been a long-standing source of migration and continues to grow steadily. For instance, since the 1930s, the USSR welcomed university instructors and students from Soviet countries and further abroad under the auspices of educational exchange. By the 1950s, the USSR hosted approximately 6,000 foreign students from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and soviet countries (Frumina & West, 2012). In 1960, the People's Friendship University of Russia was founded to educate students from newly independent African and Latin American countries (Chudinovskikh & Denisenko, 2017; RUDN University, 2019). That year, the USSR hosted 13,500 foreign students, and by 1980, it was the third leading destination for international students, behind the US and France (King et al., 2010). In 1990, the USSR welcomed nearly 200,000 students (Chudinovskikh & Denisenko, 2017; Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019), which was in part due to financial support for foreign students from Eastern Europe (the "near abroad") and countries in Africa, Asia, and South America (the "far abroad") (Frumina & West, 2012). International programs funded by the USSR ceased upon its collapse. In 2000, the Ministry of Education issued an order to reestablish regional and international cooperation for academic mobility (Frumina & West, 2012). Today Russia is the seventh leading host country in the world for university-level international students (Institute of International Education, 2018), hosting about 245,000 foreign students in 2016 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018b) (see Table 2.4., "Total Inbound International Students"). Contemporary student mobility patterns dovetail with the national migrational profile, where the majority of inbound foreign students come from the "near abroad," and students coming from "far abroad" are far fewer (e.g., China, Turkey, Vietnam). However, recent interest and engagement in international higher education, Russia is looking to Asia, then to the Middle East and Africa to expand its market to foreign students.

In an overall assessment of its competitive edge in terms of global higher education, Russia was found to have strong national support for international student movement but needed more federal engagement to come up to par with European countries in terms of transnational education and international research cooperation (Ilieva, 2017). International education is of high importance in Russia because policymakers have emphasized that the higher education industry has the potential to become a key export—along with oil and natural resources—that can bring in billions of rubles and can also lend to an opportunity to exert political influence in those regions (Smolentseva, 2004). As illustrated through its interest in foreign students, it appears possible that Russia may favor skilled, permanent Russophone migrants. Although international student mobility is meant to be circular—the student returns home upon completion of their tertiary degree—one may infer that promoting international student mobility to Russian HEIs may eventuate in adding educated young people to the population as a result of those interested staying to work.

The above contextualization of historical conditions in the UAE and Russia, and each country's needs and policies, are summarized in Chapter III, Table 3.1.

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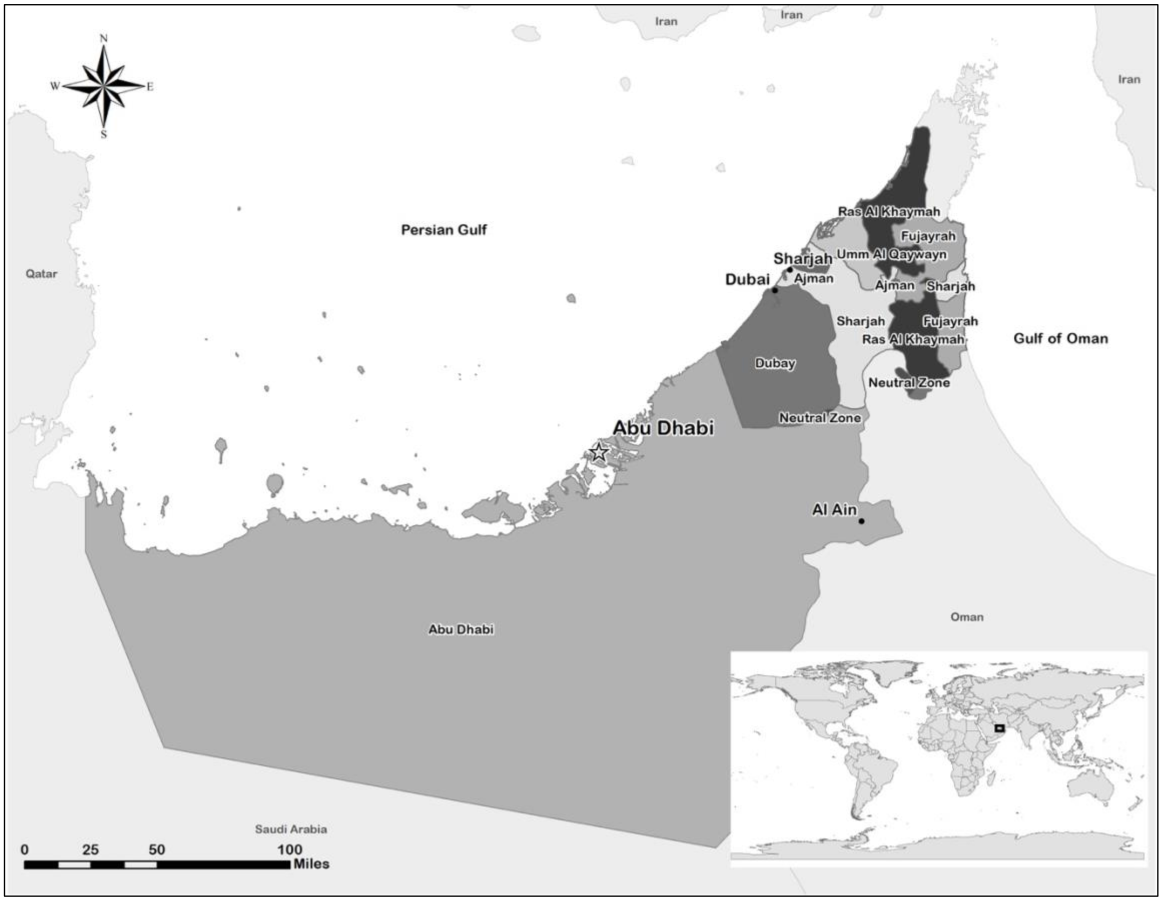
Figure 2.1.

Map of the United Arab Emirates



Sources: (*ArcGIS*, 2019)

Figure 2.2.

Map of the Russian Federation

Sources: (*ArcGIS*, 2019)

Table 2.1.

Economic Indicators, 1975 to present (selected years)

	UAE	RUSSIA
Gross Domestic Product (GDP), current US$		
1975	14,720,672,506.50	nd
1980	43,598,748,449.05	554,713,455,149.50
1990	50,701,443,748.30	516,814,274,021.96
2000	104,337,372,362.15	259,710,142,196.94
2010	289,787,338,325.39	1,524,917,468,442.60
2018	414,178,897,208.99	1,657,553,765,580.67
Percent Change, 1975 to present	2,714%	199%
Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, current US$		
1975	nd	nd
1980	nd	nd
1990	nd	3,440†
2000	31,400	1,710
2010	33,390	9,980
2018	41,010	10,230
Percent Change, 1975 to present	31%	197%
Oil, % of GDP		
1975	41.63	nd
1980	46.50	4.5
1990	36.24	9.68
2000	21.20	14.48
2010	21.69	9.94
2017	13.13	6.43
Percent Change, 1975 to present	-68%	43%
Total Natural Resource Rents, % of GDP		
1975	41.71	nd
1980	46.90	nd
1990	36.70	12.99

2000	21.97	21.69
2010	22.64	15.97
2017	13.69	10.70
Percent Change, 1975 to present	-67%	-18%
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), net inflows, % of GDP		
1975	10.84	nd
1980	10.84	nd
1990	-22.84	0.00‡
2000	-48.53	0.01
2010	0.03	0.03
2018	0.03	0.01
Percent Change, 1975 to present	-100%	110%

Notes: 1990 not available, † reported for 1991, ‡ reported for 1992. 1975 most historic year reported for the United Arab Emirates and 1988 most historic year reported for the Russian Federation (reported under the year 1980). nd = "no data" reported for a given year.

Sources: World Bank Indicators (2019b, 2019c, 2019i, 2019p), "GDP (current US$)," "GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$)," "Oil rents (% of GDP)" and "Foreign direct investment, net inflows (% of GDP)."

Table 2.2a.

Economic Sectors as a Percentage of GDP, 1975 to present (selected years)

UAE					
	Agriculture	Industry	Manufacturing	Services	TOTAL, %
1975	1	74	1	25	101
1980	0	73	4	27	104
1990	1	59	7	40	107
2000	2	49	9	49	109
2010	1	53	8	47	108
2018	1	47	9	52	109
Percent Change, 1975 to present	37%	-37%	879%	106%	
RUSSIA					
	Agriculture	Industry	Manufacturing	Services	TOTAL, %
1975	nd	nd	nd	nd	
1980	nd	nd	nd	nd	
1990	15	45	nd	33	93
2000	6	34	15†	50	105
2010	3	30	13	53	99
2018	3	32	12	54	101
Percent Change, 1990 to present	-80%	-29%	-19%	66%	

Notes: †Reported for the earliest year provided (2002), 2000 not available. nd = "no data" reported for a given year.
Sources: World Bank Indicators (2019a, 2019d, 2019g, 2019l), "Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)," "Industry (including construction), value added (% of GDP)," "Manufacturing, value added (% of GDP)," and "Services, value added (% of GDP)."

Table 2.2b.

Distribution of Employment by Economic Sectors, 1991 to present (selected years)

		UAE		
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	TOTAL, %
1991	8	34	58	100
2000	8	33	59	100
2010	4	25	71	100
2019	4	23	73	100
Percent Change, 1991 to present	-57%	-31%	26%	
		RUSSIA		
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	TOTAL, %
1990	14	40	46	100
2000	12	29	56	97
2010	8	28	65	100
2018	6	27	67	100
Percent Change, 1991 to present	-59%	-33%	47%	

Notes: Industry includes production and manufacturing.
Sources: World Bank Indicators (2019m, 2019n, 2019r) derived from International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates: "Employment in agriculture (% of total employment), (modeled ILO estimate)," "Employment in industry (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate)," and "Employment in services (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate)."

Table 2.3.

Population Indicators, 1960 to present (selected years)

	UAE	RUSSIA
Surface Area (in sq. km)	83,600	17,098,000
Population		
1960	92,418	119,897,000
1970	234,514	130,404,000
1980	1,019,509	139,010,000
1990	1,828,432	148,292,000
2000	3,134,062	146,596,557
2010	8,549,988	142,849,449
2018	9,630,959	144,478,050
Percent Change, 1960 to present	10,321%	21%
Population Density, per square kilometer		
1961	1.42	7.40
1970	3.30	7.96
1980	14.36	8.48
1990	25.75	9.05
2000	44.13	8.95
2010	120.39	8.72
2017	135.61	8.82
Percent Change, 1961 to present	9,455%	19%
Rural population (% of population)		
1960	26.50	46.27
1970	20.20	37.53
1980	19.29	30.25
1990	20.95	26.61
2000	19.76	26.65
2010	15.91	26.31
2018	15.91	25.57
Percent Change, 1960 to present	-40%	-45%

Net Migration		
1962	37,882	(1,387,844)
1972	260,488	(296,861)
1982	184,159	1,100,559
1992	368,126	2,490,121
2002	1,189,616	1,778,101
2012	270,000	1,800,600
2017	200,000	912,279
Percent Change, 1962 to present	428%	166%
International Migrant Stock		
1960	2,194	nd
1970	65,827	nd
1980	718,479	nd
1990	1,306,574	11,524,948
2000	2,446,675	11,900,297
2010	7,316,611	11,194,710
2015	8,095,126	11,643,276
Percent Change, 1960 or 1990 to present	368,867%	1%
International Migrant Stock (% of population)		
1960	2.37	nd
1970	28.07	nd
1980	70.47	nd
1990	72.13	7.81
2000	80.22	8.13
2010	87.84	7.82
2015	88.40	8.12
Percent Change, 1960 or 1990 to present	23%	4%

Notes: "Rural population" refers to people living in rural areas as defined by national statistical offices. It is calculated as the difference between total population and urban population. nd = "no data" reported for a given year.

Sources: World Bank Indicators (2019e, 2019f, 2019h, 2019j, 2019k, 2019q, 2019r), "Surface Area (per sq. km.)," "Population, total," "Population density (people per sq. km of land area)," "Rural population (% of total population)," "International migration stock, total," "Net migration," and "International migrant stock (% of population)."

Table 2.4.

Education Indicators, 2000 to present (selected years)

	UAE	RUSSIA
Tertiary Education Expenditures (% of government expenditures on education)		
2001	nd	23.91
2010	nd	28.47
2015	nd	21.16
Percent Change, 2001 to present		-11%
Total Inbound International Students		
2000	nd	41,210
2010	48,653	165,910
2017	77,463	243,752
Percent Change, 2000 to present	59%	491%
International Student Net Flow		
2000	nd	6,740
2010	40,177	113,695
2018	66,214	186,865
Percent Change, 2000 to present	65%	2672%
International Branch Campuses, in-country		
2017	35	2
International Branch Campuses, established elsewhere		
2017	0	22

Notes: nd = "no data" reported for a given year. The above indicators most historical years reported 2000 or 2001.
Sources: World Bank (2019o) "Expenditure on tertiary education (% of government expenditure on education)." UNESCO (2018a, 2018b), "Total inbound internationally mobile students, both sexes (number)," "Net Flow of internationally mobile students (inbound-outbound), both sexes (number)." Cross-Border Education Research Team (2017) "Branch Campuses."

CHAPTER III

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY AND THE STATE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY IN THE UAE AND RUSSIA

This chapter investigates how countries that are considered nontraditional destinations utilize higher education internationalization policies to attract students from abroad. International students are people who earn their post-secondary degree in a country not their own. Attracting, producing, and retaining skilled student migrants, who represent the "best and brightest," are central to governmental, education, employment, and migration policies (INSEAD, 2018; World Economic Forum, 2018). Much of what is known about international student mobility as a branch of skilled migration and its relationship with national policy focus on traditional destination countries, such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia (Czaika & Parsons, 2017; Findlay, 2011; Hawthorne, 2010). Yet over the past 10 years, developing countries in the Global South have been growing faster economically than developed ones (INSEAD, 2018; United Nations, 2014), and they are garnering more skilled migrants like international students (Chacko, 2017; Ewers, 2017; Institute of International Education, 2017).

Given the interest in attracting international students by national governments, higher education institutes (HEIs), and non- and for-profit groups, there has been considerable analysis of why and how international students make their decisions to study in particular countries over others, and of their experiences (Kahanec & Králiková, 2011;

Lee, 2008; Lee & Rice, 2007; Marginson, 2006; Park, 2009; Sirat, 2008; Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007). An area of equal import studies internationalization—the processes through which higher education players formalize measures to engage with other non-domestic actors (Knight, 2003). Operationally, these manifest as national and institutional strategic development policies, programs, and plans to internationalize higher education (Helms et al., 2015). Hereafter, I refer to them as *internationalization policy*. Yet few studies look at how receiving countries' national policy to internationalize higher education impacts student mobility (Ewers & Lewis, 2008; Lowell & Khadka, 2011; Naidoo, 2007; Urias & Yeakey, 2009). In one exception, Findlay, King, and Stam (2017) conducted twenty-one interviews with university administrators in sixteen international offices in six traditional countries to glean how top-down policy and programming shaped the flow of UK students to those countries. However, no research to my knowledge has focused on how national-level internationalization policy affects student mobility *to* nontraditional educational destinations.

Before moving forward, it is important to acknowledge that terminology and country categorization is non-universal. For example, Global North and Global South classification by supranational organizations, such as the World Bank and United Nations (UN) Development Programme, deviates by economic, human development, and political indicators, among others (see International Organization for Migration, 2013, pp. 41–46). For the purposes of the dissertation, we may infer that the "educational Global North" is where international students traditionally tend to go: Countries with renowned education systems, especially the US and UK (Marginson, 2006). Notably, the asymmetrical higher education hierarchy in the global market is not stratified by individual university success, reputation, or ranking, rather quality and competitiveness are associated with a *country*'s overall higher education system (Marginson, 2006, p. 22). We may simplify Marginson's proposed higher education hierarchy into three segments: the US and UK leading in prestige; a second segment comprising research universities in Canada, Australia, Western Europe, and Japan; and all other lesser status institutions located elsewhere despite their national prestige or competitiveness. Therefore, it is this latter segment, countries not located in the UK, US, Canada, Japan, and Western Europe, which comprises the "educational Global South."

To examine why and how countries' higher education internationalization policy shapes international student mobility to destinations in the educational Global South, I comparatively analyzed two nations that are rising as international education hot spots: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Russian Federation. The UAE and Russia are part of the educational Global South—meaning they are outside the hierarchal segments of prestigious universities in the US and elsewhere. Additionally, the countries typify burgeoning education hubs. They are defined by concerted efforts by a country (zone or city) to build a critical mass of local and international actors to build the higher education sector, expand the talent pool, as well as contribute to the local and global knowledge economy (Knight, 2013, p. 375). Although both nations have historically been leading labor migration recipients in their respective regions, they were not traditional destinations for globally mobile students until the past decade, during which incoming educational mobility grew.

To engage the international higher education market, the UAE developed itself as an International Education Hub (Knight, 2013), and Russia adopted two national higher education initiatives. Specifically, the UAE did not have explicit national policy geared toward attracting international students. Rather it has liberalized trade policy to make it easy for foreign HEIs to open branch campuses across the country. Its policies to improve education are found in national strategic development plans. In contrast, Russia had two explicit policies. The first, “Export Education,” aimed to double the current number of international students to over 700,000 by 2025. The second, the “5-100-2020” Academic Excellence Initiative (AEI), had similar internationalization outcomes for foreign students, but its main goal was to elevate five Russian universities to the top hundred globally by 2020. A policy comparison between the UAE and Russia suggests that for these two countries in the educational Global South, they intend to attract international students from an expanding market of countries and that cohesive national policy and selective funding initiatives can assist recruiting foreign talent, like international students.

The chapter is organized thusly: In the following section, I describe participant access, data collection, and inductive analysis procedures. In the third section, I justify country case selection, contextualize historical background conditions, then outline internationalization policies of interest for each of the two countries. In the fourth section, I divided the findings into two subsections. I first identify who potential international students could be, from where they may come, recruiting schemes, and challenges. Second, I evaluate state-level policymaking endeavors and determine that policy can either target Institutional or Student recruitment. Finally, I conclude that internationalization policy to attract foreign students is multifaceted, functioning not only as a mechanism of higher education but also as a tool of economic diversification and foreign policy.

Methods, Data, and Analysis

I implemented fieldwork in two stages, spending seven weeks each in the UAE (December 2018 to January 2019) and Russia (from March 2019 to April 2019). I interviewed higher education experts—university administrators and public officials—about how they interpreted and used national internationalization policies, and how this affected incoming student flows. The benefit of using these two types of experts was that due to expert's technical competencies as related to their position, interviews gave insight into the interworking of governmental and organizational rationale and processes that are not publicly available otherwise. As compared to personal biographical interviews, expert interviews use key points from narratives as nodes to construct knowledge, test hypotheses, and build theory (Bogner et al., 2009; Meuser & Nagel, 2009).

Two techniques I employed to access experts were to draw on gatekeepers (person(s) who control contact to others) and snowball sampling (personal referrals to other group members). I also scheduled interviews after "cold calling" (sending an inquiry email to a general office without any prior acquaintance) universities' admissions and international student offices and attending walk-in Open House events. In both countries, I first concentrated on collecting interviews at one university to have a deeper understanding of national and institutional policy and procedures, then broadened out to experts at other institutions. About half of the interviews in the UAE came from referrals, and the other half I generated myself. In contrast, ninety percent of interviews in Russia came from referrals, only two I arranged personally (see Figure 1.1. in Chapter I). While it appeared necessary to know someone who could provide a referral to another interviewee, this fact was more pronounced in Russia than the UAE. Upon reflection, I do not believe that I could have collected as many or as good quality of data without pre-planning and without having the benefit of affiliation with a university. This afforded me institutional backing, through which I used its professional network to plug into the higher education sector.

Data consist of thirty-seven interviews with forty-three participants, meaning that although the majority of interviews were one-on-one between the interviewee and me, in some cases, I met with more than one person. In the UAE, I conducted fifteen interviews with eighteen participants at eight higher education institutions and two public agencies in four cities: Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. I also interviewed one international student, attended three Open House events, and had four campus tours (three given by international students, one by an interviewee). In Russia, I met with twenty-three experts in twenty interviews in two cities, Saint Petersburg and Moscow, at nine higher education institutions and two public agencies. I also spoke informally with one postdoctoral fellow and three researchers and attended one Open House. Lastly, I interviewed one international partnership expert in the US. I conducted all interviews in English with participants identified in the following excerpts (and published work elsewhere) with pseudonyms and position titles.

I guided semi-structured interviews following a three-part questionnaire: (1) *international student mobility* in general within the country and (when applicable) to the university; (2) *university partnerships,* the establishment of a campus/branch, programming, and accreditation; (3) the relationship between *national policy* (the national strategic plan or specific initiatives), universities, and how internationalization influenced international student mobility at that time and over the past ten years or so. As mentioned in Chapter I, I developed these themes from the comparative international higher education literature (Knight, 2013) as a way to understand relationships between actors (e.g., the state, para-national agencies, and HEIs) and their interpretation and implementation of internationalization policy. I developed a fourth theme throughout the interviews as to how international students enter the local labor market and the role of industry in career outcomes for international students. I paid special attention to exploring events and situations participants described that exemplified the expert's understanding, interpretation, and implementation of policy in their job.

I collected various types of data: publicly available text and images, hand-written interview notes, audio files for interviewees who agreed to be recorded, as well as a "Report of Interview" (ROI) document I wrote after each interview, and associated comments given by some interviewees on their ROI. I attempted to write each ROI within 48-hours of the interview (aiming for no more than a week if I were traveling). I then emailed a copy of the ROI as a Word document to interviewees for their approval and feedback (a review and comment period is a common practice in public administration, and I adopted this procedure since many interviewees are civil servants). I also annotated some but not all ROIs, a version of memo-writing (Charmaz, 2006).

For this chapter, I conducted an inductive analysis, which scales from narrow observations to more broad generalizations. I used MaxQDA2020 software to analyze data, record a coding scheme, and write memos. To code the data, I read in a recursive manner. I read and re-read ROIs and interview transcripts to group codes by the three broad themes (international students, universities and their partnerships, and the state and its policies) and by more narrow defined concepts (e.g., “Who are they?”, recruitment, challenges, labor market, political-economic factors), noting unexpected findings that emerged from the data. By conducting analysis this way, I generated conceptual categories and drew connections among them. I chose quotations to illustrate and connect findings. To avoid erroneous inference of situated behavior, verbal accounts, and attitudinal fallacy (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014), I paid attention to instances where discrepancies arose in participants’ understandings of policy (conceptualization), what actions they actually took (behavior), and their attitudes toward policy.

Background and Policies: The UAE and Russia as comparative case studies

For a summary of historical factors, national needs, and internationalization policies as described below, see Table 3.1. at the end of this chapter. For a comprehensive discussion of each country’s historical context, refer to Chapter II and its associated Tables.

Historical conditions.

As compared to traditional destinations in the educational Global North that have either seen their international student market wane, such as the US, or remain stagnant, such as Canada, the UK, and Germany, nontraditional destinations in the educational Global South, like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Russia, are garnering more students and rising as educational hotspots (Johnson, 2020; Knight, 2013). Comparisons between countries that are modernizing, oil-rich, and have had recent political regime change are common, and previous political-economic studies have juxtaposed Middle Eastern nations and Russia (McDaniel, 2014; Yergin, 2011). No studies as of yet have comparatively analyzed higher education internationalization policy and educational mobility in these regions, and how policy is related to skilled migration.

The UAE and Russia were fitting cases because although they superficially appear dissimilar, upon closer examination they have analogous political, economic, and social characteristics, and vary by internationalization policy in terms of international student mobility, which is the variable of interest. Besides the UAE and Russia both being fairly young countries that are politically classified as autocratic and economically reliant on oil production, demographically, both countries are leading migration destinations in their respective regions and are migrant dependent. For instance, population density in the UAE had increased exponentially, growing over a hundredfold (World Bank, 2019b) in the 50 years since 1968 when oil was discovered off the coast of the Abu Dhabi emirate. The UN Population Division (2017a, 2017b) estimates that of the 9.7 million residents in the UAE, over eighty-eight percent are non-Emirati (World Bank, 2019a). Today, ninety percent of the labor force is composed of non-Emirati immigrants (Bel-Air & Françoise, 2015; Gonzalez et al., 2008, p. 108; Malit & Al-Youha, 2013). Like the UAE, Russia has been a primary destination for labor and educational migrants from the region (Chudinovskikh & Denisenko, 2017) due to porous borders among former Soviet republics and current policies designed to welcome “compatriots from abroad.” With a population of over 142 million, about eight percent of its population is composed of migrants (World Bank, 2019a). However, Russia is facing a “demographic crisis” (a rapid population decline) and needs migrants to attenuate a possible decrease by half by 2100 (Eberstadt, 2011; Population Division, 2019). Educationally, in the last decade, both countries have revamped their higher education systems (described in the following section). The internationalization of higher education is also a burgeoning sector of non-resource development strategy. These two countries, among others, have recently joined the international higher education market by adopting internationalization policies, immigration reforms, and academic excellence initiatives at the national level to attract foreign institutions, partnerships, and students.

In terms of internationalization policy, varied types of efforts give nations a competitive edge in attracting students from abroad. Migration-development literature asserts that for international migration, i.e., cross-border mobility, to eventuate, a receiving country must have economic ability and political stability (Skeldon, 1997, p. 52). Put another way, migrants are attracted to safe, stable countries with opportunities. I contend that these two macro-level factors are necessary, but not sufficient, to the precipitation of international migration. Separately, comparative international education studies claim that two requisite characteristics for emerging educational hotspot destinations are: (1) a nation has created intentional policy to develop the education sector; and (2) educational hubs have a critical mass of international and local actors, such as branch campuses (Knight, 2013). However, international students and any other form of cross-border migration in the latter typology is neglected.

Given that economic ability and political stability are two key development factors needed to attract migrants, which both the UAE and Russia bear, it is important to unravel how two higher education factors, intentional national policy, and a critical mass of international actors shape incoming student mobility. These two countries differ. The UAE had an abundance of local, organizational, and international actors and partnerships, but no specific internationalization policy coordinated among the emirates. Russia had two intentional internationalization policies but lacked in-country actors and is in the process of establishing international partnerships. In both the UAE and Russia cases, national development strategy intends to progress post-industrial, knowledge-based economic production through national investment in higher education, whereby innovation and advancement will boost global competitive advantage. Similarities and differences between the two countries' policies are at odds, which set a fitting foundation for comparative policy analysis on international student mobility. The remainder of this section describes Emirati strategic plans and the two Russian initiatives, 5-100 and Export Education.

National-level internationalization policies.

The United Arab Emirates.

The UAE, not counting its three-year national strategy plans, had two main agendas: the 2021 National Agenda ("Vision2021") and the Centennial 2071 Plan.[12] They had the same aim: to cultivate economic development toward a diversified post-industrial, knowledge-based economy via progress in education, innovation, and technology. The seven-year Vision2021 Agenda targeted seven national priorities: competitive knowledge economy, first-rate education system, world-class health care, safe public and fair judiciary, sustainable environment and infrastructure, cohesive society and preserved identity (Government.ae, 2018b). These indicators dovetailed with the UAE's Post-Oil Strategy, launched in 2016, which works to develop "vital non-oil sectors" and "national talents to lead these sectors" to "strengthen the competitiveness of the current economic sectors, as well as gradually introduce new sectors, which will… boost competitiveness and ensure [the UAE's] sustainability in accordance with the highest international standards" (Government.ae, 2018a). The strategic plans reflected an overarching goal: to be number one in the region, and ultimately the world leader (Government.ae, 2017), in terms of subjective wellbeing and development measurements, such as Happiness Index, Gross Domestic Product, and Gross National Income.

The UAE is a relatively young nation—officially established in 1971—and its higher education sector is also quite new. There are three federal higher education

[12] The "Vision2021" Agenda and the Centennial 2071 Plan are set to respectively coincide with the nation's Golden Jubilee and Centenary.

institutes (HEIs): The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) (1976), the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) (1988), and Zayed University (ZU) (1998). All other HEIs are public or private, with many being internationally-based and foreign-owned (Kirk & Napier, 2010). Before 2000, international education matured slowly. After 2000, it grew exponentially. This is a consequence of two factors. First, the high immigrant population meant that university-aged non-Emirati students needed postsecondary education. Second, the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US led to a surplus of students and faculty in the country. The excerpt below from an interview with Hassan, an Administrator in an Office of the Provost, highlights this point.

> International student mobility to the UAE changed after the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US…. After 9/11, the composition—changed because more students enrolled as a result of people who had children in the US brought their children back to the region, and those who were thinking about sending their children abroad did not. Particularly, the attacks happened in the fall, and so it happened that enrollment increased for the following semester 300%. Additionally, Arab faculty came back to the region for safety reasons. Consequently, [universities] accepted the students and hired the faculty to teach…. With the growth, the Dubai government realized it had a surplus of children from well-off families, and it wanted to capitalize on that. Hence the growth of international campuses in Dubai following 2001.

In response to these two forces, the UAE—led by Dubai—liberalized national trade policy in conjunction with emirate law to allow foreign universities to establish branches. Deregulation made the UAE one of the highest raked countries on international education ease of access (Ilieva, 2017), and with the influx of foreign HEIs to accommodate higher education for the existing populace, the UAE became an International Education Hub (Fox & Al-Shamisi, 2014; Knight, 2013). As a hub, the UAE is the leading country for International Branch Campuses (IBCs), hosting thirty-eight in 2017 (Cross-Border Education Research Team, 2017). To name a few, in Abu Dhabi, there are branches of Paris Sorbonne (France) and New York University (NYU) (United States) and, in Dubai, there are branches of Amity University (India) and the University of Wollongong (Australia).

Although Vision2021 goals were to develop a first-rate education system and to internationalize, there is no specific unified national plan or coordinated strategy to collectively mature the UAE as an education hub beyond the Dubai emirate. Rather, the international education hub *esprit* shapes how the country and its individual emirates market themselves as educational hotspots. Likewise, there is no specific policy to recruit students from abroad for higher education purposes. Student enrollment endeavors are one of many institutional strategic agenda Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are reported back to funders, and recruitment is up to individual universities. My meetings with university administrators revealed that federally sponsored and legacy IBCs tended to have the means, desire, and need to attract international students from outside the UAE. What this means is that nationally the UAE has a critical mass of local and international actors, but it does not have an internationalization policy geared toward attracting foreign students.

The Russian Federation.

Russian national strategic development policy, like the UAE, broadly aims to advance non-resource post-industrial production and economic diversification. In contrast to the UAE that did not have cohesive internationalization policy at the national level, Russia adopted two higher education initiatives to internationalize: the 5-100 and Export Education programs. The 5-100-2020 Academic Excellence initiative, implemented in 2013, planned to propel five Russian universities into the top hundred globally ranked institutions by the year 2020 (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2018).[13] The goal of the Export Education initiative, introduced in 2017, was to increase the number of enrolled foreign students across all Russian universities to 710,000 by 2025 (Government.ru, 2017). These two national policies aligned with national strategic plans to balance resource production with knowledge-based services. Both were also predicated on the same condition: to attract foreign talent. Put another way, Export Education explicitly set out for all HEIs to double or triple the number of foreign students by 2025, but the 5-100 project did not demarcate recruitment in the same manner. Instead, KPIs for the twenty-one member universities involved rising in global ranking through academic publishing and quality teaching and increasing foreign student numbers by offering courses and programs taught in English and establishing more international partnerships with scholars and universities. Larisa, Head of International

[13] Per 2019 QS Rankings, there was one Russian university in the top 100 globally, Moscow State University.

Cooperation Office at a 5-100 partner university, explained the difference between the projects:

> The current [university] strategy through 2020 does not have explicit goals to internationalize or to recruit a specific number of foreign and international students. The idea is that this should be a natural process. The point is not that the university needs foreign or international students for money, [the university] wants to attract foreign students as a normal function of a global university. By having an international learning environment, students will be prepared for a global academic setting, and international work…. [I]nternational cooperation helps everyone to speak the same language across academia.

Historically, Russian higher education was insular—performing to compare against other Russian universities and to attract Russophone foreign students from Soviet republics and China. Higher education policies adopted in the past ten years aimed to break the isolation by adjusting the Russian system to international higher education standards (e.g., changing the previous five-year bachelor's and three-year Ph.D. degree format to follow a four-year bachelor's, two-year master's, and three-year Ph.D. format). Notably, it has a smaller proportion of private education institutes and a relatively small international higher education market (in 2019, there were only IBCs) because higher education is a public good managed and funded by the state. Nikolai, a Vice Rector on International Relations, described how student mobility changed over time:

> Modern international student mobility…. started after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. At that time, international cooperation was low, and there was some

> mobility between other Soviet countries for exchange purposes. The traditional approach was oriented as "Societies of Friendship," where larger groups were organized, and programs would have students spend half a year in the home country and the other half in a host country…. In 2000, the market opened to more countries.

In the last thirty years, the Russian Federation has revamped its higher education system intending to integrate it within the global market. For instance, in 2003, it signed the Bologna Agreement, thus becoming part of the European higher education system (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019). In 2012, Russia became a World Trade Organization (WTO) General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS) signatory member, and currently, it has made full unconditional commitments to higher education services (World Trade Organization, 2020). Ultimately, the national policies meant that for Russian universities under Export Education, they were encouraged to grow their foreign student population as a social obligation, and the 5-100 program could attract foreign students by improving their standing across all academic areas in top global rankings.

Overall goals are to maintain the national migrational profile, where the majority of inbound foreign students come from the "near abroad" (the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of former Soviet republics), and steadily grow its political influence and international education to foreign students in the Asia, Middle East, and Africa markets (the "far abroad"). International education serves two needs: to attract, educate, and retain skilled migrants, and to diversify non-resource, knowledge-based economic production and trade.

Findings

International Students

Who? Identifying international, foreign, and mobile students.

In 2016, the UAE hosted over 77,000 international students, and Russia hosted over 240,000 foreign students (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018). With the large number of students from abroad studying in these two countries, the first part of the puzzle I had to parse out was to determine who these students were. Among organizations and universities in the educational Global North, cross-border student movement is generally defined as migration (permanent immigration following degree completion), exchange (short-term circular sojourn), and mobility (students who leave their home country to seek education abroad for long-term study and/or work with the intention and/or requirement to return home). The term most ubiquitously used in academic scholarship and among international organizations is "international student mobility," referring to the latter type of movement—non-permanent education obtained abroad with a high probability of return (King et al., 2010).

Within the first few days of arrival in each country, I discovered that these terms were inconsistent with definitions used by the experts I interviewed. In the UAE, outside of the three federally funded universities, the vast majority of students are international (as reflected by the above UNESCO estimations). However, this is deceiving. For example, throughout an interview, the participants and I would clarify to whom we were referring when we spoke of international students, either “foreign” international students from abroad or “local” international students who are non-Emirati and either immigrated with their family or had been born and raised in the UAE. UNESCO’s Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students (2019) showed that students originate from immigrant-source countries, such as India, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. Due to the high immigrant population, the bulk of international students are local residents as compared to a smaller proportion who come from outside the UAE for long-term educational purposes and short-term study abroad and exchange. The UAE requires visas for stays longer than thirty days. It offers longer-term residency and shorter-term study visas. Looking at residency visas alone, local and foreign international students become indistinguishable. I had not expected that the number of “foreign” international students was so sparse given the relatively high statistics reported.

Elias, a Student Recruitment Manager at an international branch campus, further described the potential population of students: each year about 30,000 students graduate from high school in the Emirates, of which about a third return to their home country for work or higher education, a third (mostly males) go abroad to obtain their post-secondary degree, and the final third stay in the UAE and seek out quality, private, foreign higher education. Neta, a Deputy Registrar, and Fatima, an Office of Institutional Research Manager at a foreign branch, acknowledged the limited pool of potential undergraduates, saying that students made a decision as to what country they would attend university based on their family finances. I extrapolated that international students were more likely to be local students who were enrolled at a foreign-based higher education institute.

Emirati nationals favored attending one of the three federal universities (mostly females) because their education would be government-sponsored, or a university somewhere abroad (primarily males). Among my interviewees, they commented that, on average, about ten to fifteen percent of their student body (twenty-five percent at a maximum) were foreign international students. One IBC's Chief Executive Officer, Stephen, remarked that their campus was exclusively international students, with zero Emiratis enrolled, but, still, about ten percent were foreign students who came to the UAE from abroad. These students who went to the UAE tended to be upper-middle-class families from the region (e.g., Iran and Saudi Arabia) who demanded high quality international, private education. Their intended outcome was either to position the student to enter the local Emirate labor force or to use foreign education as a stepping stone to immigrate to countries like the US, Canada, and Australia.

In Russia, interviewees often began our conversation by asking me whether I was interested in long-term degree-seeking "foreign" students or short-term exchange visitors who are considered "mobile" students. Depending on the type, this could describe student characteristics. For example, foreign degree-seeking students are almost exclusively Russophone and originate from the post-soviet region and China (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019). One of the major reasons for this composition is that Russia inherited a tradition from the USSR of setting aside government-sponsored "quota" seats that pay for a student's education (tuition, a maintenance allowance, and dormitory accommodation) for students from former Soviet republics. The number and area of study assigned to quota seats are determined by the Ministry of Education based on the estimated number of people needed in certain workforce sectors in the coming years. For instance, I was told that quota seats used to favor economics and social sciences, but now there is a sufficient number of people in those professions. Because technology, mathematics, and engineering are in demand, quota seats are held for those fields of study. Today, the scheme is relatively unchanged, except that there is a more extensive set of countries with allocated quota seats. In 2018, the state reserved 200,000 seats for foreign students, and in 2019 it granted 15,000 government-sponsored scholarships, increased from 10,000, with plans to raise the number of scholarships to 20,000 in coming years (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019a; Vorotnikov, 2017). All foreign students are eligible to apply for this scheme, even students who come from countries that do not require a student visa (e.g., Abkhazia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Southern Ossetia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan) (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019b).

As such, within the past several years, foreign students come from a broader market to Russia to obtain a higher education degree. One draw for degree-seeking students is less expensive, high quality, industry-driven technical education in cities that offer good quality of life with relatively lower costs of living. Degree programs are popular for foreign students but are often only taught in Russian. Temporary exchange programs that feature English/Russian or English-only language, culture, politics, international relations, and energy sustainability classes draw students from Latin America and Africa, as well as from the US and countries in Europe. “Academic mobility" (temporary student exchange) is also promoted via informal faculty collaborations, which sometimes results in formalized Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) agreements between departments or universities. In short, like the UAE, the majority of degree-seeking students come from immigrant-sending neighboring countries, while students from further abroad enroll in short-term exchange programs.

Interestingly, it appeared that there was a universally understood base definition of international student, which follows closely to King, Findlay, and Ahrens' (2010) definition: a degree- or credit-seeking student who is a non-permanent migrant—but, the terminology to capture variations of mobility and migration was imprecise and non-universal. It is possible that terminology imprecision was due to cross-language translation and regional variation. However, these inconsistencies also exist in scholarship by native English speakers. I suggest that terminology is adapted to best fit the given context of non-native students within a given country. Furthermore, I would not propose any alteration to the definitions to identify international, foreign, and mobile students, or international student mobility. The reason for this is that the inexactness of term nuances actually enabled experts and me to more accurately specify about whom we were speaking or interested. As highlighted by differing terminologies I encountered in the field, there was an implicit connection between migration and higher education that linked national origin, migrant status and visa requirements, and intended programmatic outcomes by students, institutions, and the state (e.g., language learning, permanent migration, or post-university career positioning). It is feasible to speculate that definitions used in academic scholarship and international organization reports that come out of the educational Global North do not always match usage in the educational Global South and therefore have implications as to who counts as an international student and who does not. Throughout the remainder of the dissertation, I use the terms “international” and “foreign” to refer to degree- and credit-seeking students.

What? State and institutional recruiting schemes.

Once I determined that international students at both case sites were mostly people originating from immigrant-sending countries in the region, my next step was to determine how the shared goal to attract foreign international students from further afield was achieved. I sought to identify who was recruited, from where, and by what means.

First, I needed to ascertain who state and institutional recruiting schemes targeted, and I gleaned one similarity: both the UAE and Russia wanted to attract English-speaking foreign students for shorter-term programs, such as master’s degrees, from Asia, Africa, and Europe. Based on my interviews with university administrators in the UAE, a profile emerged of who their ideal student population would be. Building from the existing population of degree-seeking “expat” children and short-term students academically interested in Middle Eastern Studies and Arabic Language Studies, universities looked for English-speaking master’s- and doctoral-level students who could produce research or could pay for their program. The phrase “academically able and financially capable” concisely summarized the potential student profile.

Like the UAE, Russia’s target profile for potential international students were English-speaking foreign students from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America who sought short-term programs. Interviews uncovered that the profile of incoming students had changed over the past ten years. As mentioned above, due to the quota seat program, foreign degree-seeking students came from countries "along the lines of former empires" (Roman, Deputy Director and Professor). Roman explained further:

> Roman: So, in Russia, naturally, the majority of the students, your foreign students are from the countries of former Soviet Union. They're from the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries. However, during last 10, 15 years, especially last 10 years, the market of these mobile students has been radically changed.
>
> Karin: For the mobile students or for degree seeking students as well?
>
> Roman: Mostly for degree seeking students. So, I think that the mobile students became to look at other directions. But new popular study destinations emerged. So, for example, China which was mostly sending students and is still sending, but it's increasingly attracting students and not only from Asia, but from the US, from European union, etcetera, etcetera. So, increasingly popular study destination as well. Other countries are trying to compete for these new shares of this cake.

Administrators across my interviews noted that in the previous years, more students started coming from not only former Soviet republics and China, but from everywhere, especially Asian, African, and Western European countries. Moreover, there was not only an uptick in the number of students enrolling in longer-term bachelor's degree programs but also in short term semester, year-long study abroad, and master's programs.

Recruitment initiatives intended to exploit the new non-Soviet markets, especially Europe.

To follow 5-100 policy requirements, member universities developed English-taught bachelor's and master's degrees, summer sessions, specialty courses, and dual-degree certificate programs coordinated with sister universities worldwide. English-taught courses were deliberately designed to attract non-Russian speakers. Sofia, International Office Head, raised the issue of this type of recruitment:

> I would say that actually what they're facing now is some kind of shift in the markets. We do receive students because, of course, so, the majority of students still are coming from former Soviet republics and, of course, this sounds logical because they speak Russian and they could come and study in Russia. But with this launch of English-taught programs or, I mean, it's always worked and it's still working the same way, when Russian universities offer pre-foundation course of one year, one-hundred forty students from non-English speaking markets come, they learn Russian for one year, then they enter the full degree in Russian. But I will say that this launch of English taught programs, because this happens like this in most universities, not only in Russia, but also like it's a kind of trend in Europe, and they also discussing if they're losing their identity or they don't, so there's lots of discussion of this kind. But Russian universities, yes, it's the same as well and English taught programs are developed. So here I would say that we have about 30% of our programs taught in English…. But, if you're talking about this shift, so this launch within these taught programs makes this Russian

> [inaudible] just more attractive from, I would say, more far markets than former Soviet republics and even so they are quite good presented also in Asia in—we are promoting in Indonesia, in China, in Vietnam, and even for former Soviet republics it's pretty popular to come and to study in English here even if they know Russian. And also, I would say that we started to receive more students from south not South Africa, South America, like Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, they mostly come to study English as well.

This excerpt from my interview with Sofia highlights three important points: (1) how English-taught programs created under Russia's internationalization policy puts into question national identity by not teaching exclusively in Russian; (2) short English-taught courses and degree programs open educational opportunities to non-Russian speakers without having to take the one-year preparatory foundation course offered to students who want to study in Russia but need to improve their language skills; and (3) Russian education becomes accessible to a broader market of international students.

Preference for graduate students in both countries resulted in differences between the recruitment efforts of undergraduate and graduate students. Across institutions in the UAE, I inferred that there was a small number of undergraduate foreign students as a function of a limited number of seats available to them. A university would often offer these students full or partial scholarships to cover tuition, textbooks, transportation, and a maintenance stipend. Undergraduate international students were an expensive cost for universities. During a campus tour by a foreign international student, I asked Isabelle why she chose to come to the UAE. She responded that a combination of not wanting to stay in her home country, the prestige of the university, and a generous financial aid package attracted her to the UAE for her post-secondary degree. She then planned to use her education from an American-based IBC to pursue graduate school in the US.

The UAE's shift to recruiting graduate students meant universities could get a three-fold return on investment: intellectual production, payment, and human capital. Ahmad, a College of Graduate Studies Vice Dean at a federal university, explained that moving forward the college would award a handful of scholarships to graduate students and the decision would be based on a student's potential to bring in research grants and produce research and other Intellectual Property. For those not awarded a scholarship, they should have the ability to pay. This approach was also assisted by plans to offer part-time master and doctorate programs in some disciplines. For students who had been sponsored, the ambition was that they stay in the local labor force. Ahmad was clear in the intention to recoup a return on investment in human capital, thereby linking skilled foreign talent recruitment and the intention to retain them as migrants:

> The country has attracted and is attracting international students and employees, and so on. Mainly students and immigrants, basically. But, to maintain them after they go through, after we train them, and they get their degree, master's and Ph.D., and now they are ready to contribute to the economy, that has to basically improve so that they don't go to other countries. We have trained them. We have invested in them. We are providing assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships, and then, at the end, if they leave, then we haven't benefited.

Interest in recruiting graduate students reflected the then-present makeup of the Emirate's higher education system where some institutions targeted undergraduates and others—primarily foreign HEIs in Dubai—only offered master's and Ph.D. programs in one particular area of expertise, such as business, education, or engineering. This delineated universities as those that educated youth and those that served to upskill already employed professionals. I found foreign HEIs exploited a certain niche to maintain enrollment numbers—whether it be recruiting via high school or corporate visits, offering tuition discounts to civil servants, or acting as a steppingstone to immigrate elsewhere.

This approach was not without drawbacks. Administrators recognized that graduate education was more unstable than undergraduate education. In one case, Omar, Director of Strategy and Marketing, and Amir, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, commented that they had recruitment projects in Asia and Africa because one of the university's goals was to increase the percentage of undergraduates. The rationale was that because everyone needs a bachelor's degree to get a job, enrollment would be less susceptible to employment shocks related to the economy and oil prices in the UAE. As a legacy foreign IBC whose student population was divided fifty-fifty between undergraduates and post-graduates, they observed that when the world economy was bad, fewer post-graduates enrolled because they already had a job and did not need to further their education. Foreign IBC Chief Executive Officer, Stephen, echoed these trends. Despite the UAE's move toward non-oil based economic growth, he observed that higher education, student enrollment, and educational mobility were linked to the oil economy and broader political conditions. In 2016 when oil prices dropped from US$140 to US$30 per barrel, enrollment declined forty to sixty percent across the UAE. Student intake was lower because oil recovery was slow, and people were rehired only after prices reached US$70/barrel. This, in conjunction with political issues and generalized violence in the region, meant it took at least two years for oil prices—and therefore the labor force and student enrollment—to recover.

Changes to immigration policy also supported endeavors to keep youth already residing in the UAE and to attract students from further abroad. The month before my arrival, the UAE Cabinet updated the residency system such that “outstanding students” with a 3.75 grade point average (GPA) or 95/100 overall grade in public schools could be granted a five-year visa (visa applied to family in the UAE, too), as well as investors, entrepreneurs, specialists in the medical, scientific, research and technical fields, could apply for a ten-year residency visa. The Cabinet’s goal of these immigration amendments was to “facilitate business and create an attractive and encouraging investment environment” in the country (as cited in Nagraj (2018)).

Like the UAE, English-taught master’s programs were a key tool for Russian universities to recruit students who could pay for their program or receive a government-allocated quota seat. As compared to bachelor’s programs, developing master’s programs that appealed to international students were less risky because they cost less (two-year curricula with only specialized classes as compared to four-year year bachelor’s degrees that require general education classes) and the university could be more sure of an advanced students’ education level and academic abilities (Roman, Deputy Director and

Professor). Although desirable, many universities in Russia did not have sufficient capacity to take on large numbers of international students. As such, competition was high for places in master's degree programs as compared to bachelor's study. Mikhail, a Director of International Admissions, noted that for one master's program with thirty available seats, his team would receive about three-hundred applications annually.

Among my interviews, a commonality emerged that English-speaking master's students who studied in Russia came from a wider variety of countries while English-speaking bachelor's programs attracted students from the CIS region. Because of this composition, Mikhail related that his recruitment team had different recruitment techniques for undergraduates and graduates. He observed that Russian- and English-speaking master's level students were self-sufficient and found pertinent information, the application platform, and government scholarship website on their own with little help needed. Undergraduates and their families needed more one-on-one dedicated service, and so the team spent more effort with those students. Unlike the UAE, international students were not as costly to a university—students either paid their way or the government transferred funds to the university for its quota students.

Internationalization not only cost money to attract international students, and in the case of 5-100 members, internationalization policy paid off. Across the board, all 5-100 universities used funds allocated from the government to achieve internationalization to attract international students. For instance, Maria and Viktor, two officers responsible for Admissions and International Education Programs in an Office of International Development, described that a few years back, the university had no structure for international students. With the 5-100 funding, the university trained lecturers in English, made the campus and website more useable to international students, such as posting signs on walls in English and Russian, increased the number of available spaces in dorms, and created an international student services office that helps students with medical insurance, how to use the health system, and other day-to-day questions.

From where?

Next, it was clear that both nations targeted similar international student markets: Asia, Africa, and Europe, and to a lesser extent, Latin America. A lexical search showed that in almost every single interview (fifty of fifty-six analyzed documents), my participants mentioned the "market." The market had shifted such that more students in absolute numbers come from a larger number of countries. For administrators who had or were planning recruitment initiatives, they described targeted markets as "emerging" or described their projects as "developing" certain markets. Initiatives to broaden recruiting campaigns beyond usual areas are what I understood as *expanding the market*.

For the UAE, because higher education is taught in English, incoming foreign students had to have a good command of the language. Recruitment efforts targeted English-speaking Asian countries, predominantly India and Pakistan, as well as countries in Africa, especially those with large youth populations like Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya. University administrators and public officials mentioned that China was another upcoming market, but it was riskier because they could not be sure of students' English ability. Excellent English capability was critical because across the universities I visited, pre-enrollment English preparatory or English as a Second Language (ESL) courses were not prevalent. I came across one instance in my interviews. Patricia, an International Exchange Office Director, described how her university used a bridge program to not only help students improve their English but as a recruitment instrument.

> Patricia: Good high schools that will give us the results. Because—we also have very high enrollment requirements. You have to be in the top 15% of your class and have very strong English skills, and not everybody can get in. But we do have a bridge program also to help students increase, improve their language skills, and to learn some basic college prep kind of things.
>
> Karin: Describe the bridge programs.
>
> Patricia: Bridge programs, it's called the Academic Achievement Center. And it has about 200 students, and it's for—
>
> Karin: And are those high school students?
>
> Patricia: No, they're in between high school and university. So, they've graduated high school, but they couldn't pass the [exam] high enough to get in, so they go into the bridge program, and they take college prep courses, basic English, and math, and how to be organized…. So, we have a whole program of teachers who teach them, and then they keep taking the [exam] until they pass. And then they enroll as university students here. Not all of them, not 100%, but many of them.

Interestingly, for the UAE, the English-speaking Asian market was a competitive space. Hassan (an Office of the Provost Associate and international education scholar) pinpointed Malaysia—another International Education Hub—as the UAE's direct rival. He observed that since the 2008 recession, foreign student applications declined throughout the UAE because students went to other countries with lower living and education costs, like Malaysia. He explained where the UAE fell in the international education market hierarchy and how it shaped which students go where. Royal Emirati family members and the wealthiest do not stay in the UAE, they go to the UK because they want top-quality higher education (that is quite expensive), to be treated well, and have no motive to immigrate there. Upper-middle-class families who have immigration aspirations and the financial means to afford costly higher education will send their students to the US, Canada, or Australia (not to the UK because the British immigration regime makes it difficult to gain permanent residency). For those who cannot afford expensive higher education, they will either send their children back to the home country or to a good university in the Philippines, India, or Pakistan. Lastly, it is families who originally come from the Arab or Asian region, want to keep their students close to home (especially females), and can afford foreign, private higher education who send their children to an HEI in the UAE.

Russia had a broad market that spanned Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Europe. China was a leading source market because it had already been sending Russophone students for decades. Nikolai (Vice Rector of International Relations) related to me that China was a good market for Russia because pupils there studied one foreign language—either Russian or English. Hence, quality educational programs drew Chinese students no matter the language of instruction. A new Asian market was India, and English-taught courses targeted potential students from the Indian subcontinent area. For example, one task Mila, a Department Chair, and her colleagues were given by her university administration was to begin the process to establish bilateral academic mobility partnerships with Indian universities. Although her university was not a 5-100 member, all universities were required to take up social responsibility tasks embedded in state policies like Export Education. Making connections and establishing working relations with international universities presented challenges because they did not know a lot about Indian higher education, its student mobility and exchange, and which partnerships would work best. Emilia, an Education Training and Advising Center Director, acknowledged the difficulty of marketing Russian higher education to markets in Asia, like India, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Emilia: [They say,] “Because it’s far away. It’s cold there. It’s minus 40.”

Karin: It was only minus seven when I arrived.

Emilia: You need to explain that. They also asking me, “Oh, do you have a snow in summer?” I said, “No, we—”

Karin: It’s like plus 30[14] in the summer. Come on.

Emilia: But you need to explain all these things.

I was surprised to discover that one method used to generate student inflow was Russian foreign relations. For example, in the Middle East, Russian testing commissions and delegations of university representatives went to Syria and Libya to attract students from conflict zones by extending higher education opportunities to them (Natalia, Director of International Relations Office). I was also told that China and Russia had “signed a strategy that there should be 30,000 Chinese students studying in Russia in the

[14] Temperature conversions: -40ºC = -40ºF. -7ºC = 19ºF. +30ºC = 86ºF.

next three years" (Nikolai, Vice Rector of International Relations). Anatoly (independent expert) described another agreement:

> Two weeks ago, we signed a few agreements with the Venezuelan government on the high level to let the universities in Russia [inaudible] potential professionals from these countries to study in, then work at the Russian universities. What else?—And they have looking for migration opportunities as well. So, it's the coin with the two sides. Of course, these people to receive the opportunity to study and live in Russia, but nobody can promise that they will back go back.

Besides Asia and other smaller markets, it appeared that one of Russia's most active markets was Europe. As described in the above section, English-taught master's degree, semester-, and year-long study abroad programming specifically targeted Western European students. Russia had made a number of moves toward taking advantage of this market. In 2003, it signed the Bologna Agreement, thus becoming part of the European higher education system (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation., 2019), meaning that it would offer higher education within international standards. In 2007, Russian-based Specialist degree programs began being phased out in favor of standard four-year Bachelor (*Bakalavr*) and two-year Master (*Magistr*) programs (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019; Potapova & Trines, 2017). In 2012, it joined the World Trade Organization and made full unconditional commitments to higher education services (World Trade Organization, 2020). In 2018, Russia became an Erasmus+ partner, allowing short-term mobility from Europe for students, researchers, and staff (European

Commission, 2019). For Anatoly (independent expert), Europe seemed a “natural” market because it had similar culture, languages, and no significant barriers to prevent students from coming to Russia, like distance or expensive fees. The draw of being an Erasmus+ partner is that universities can obtain external funding and enjoy the associated benefits (Roman, Deputy Director and Professor).

In response to my question about the expansion of future markets, Anatoly ranked them as follows for Russia: (1) Europe (Germany, Italy, France, Finland, Poland); (2) Middle East and East Asian (China, India, Iran, and Iraq); (3) African countries (Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Namibia, Egypt, and South Africa); (4) due to the current civil unrest in central and South American countries (Nicaragua, Brazil, Venezuela). He reflected that he would like to see more American students come to Russia. He felt that due to the news, US students may become more aware of Russia and could weigh the pros/cons as a potential study destination. In contrast, Russia was not a popular option for students coming from the UK.

Like the UAE, Russia saw itself as a “middle-tier” country. Using an example of Chinese students coming to Russia, Nikolai (Vice Rector of International Relations) situated where Russia fell in the international education market hierarchy.

> We can roughly divide Chinese educational market or Chinese students in three groups. Well, it will be hard to translate in English the Russian word, but—Okay, so there’s a group of children of party elite that have to study in China. They have no other choice. They have to study in China, they have to study in the best universities, they have to be the best students, otherwise they will not enter in

> these universities, and they are there. Then, there is a group of—let's call them merchants. The rich, wealthy Chinese. These students most likely will go to the US, UK, maybe Australia. Some Anglo-Saxon world.
>
> The biggest cohort of students that are not able to study if there are not enough seats in Chinese universities, their level of education is not good enough to pass the national test of the secondary school, to study free of charge in China. And, they don't have enough money to go to US. These students go all around the world, everywhere. Russia, Germany, France, India, anywhere.

Nikolai went on to explain that the Export Education policy made it more difficult to maintain quality education when universities feel pressure to accept students, who may not be academically or linguistically ready, to comply with government regulations. He observed clear links between government policies and public higher education institutions—especially for 5-100 members—because if universities do not comply, perform, or provide complex data to the Ministry of Education, they do not receive funding.

How? Recruitment instruments.

In terms of recruitment, one of the first things that I noticed in both countries particular to efforts to attract international students was the recency of these endeavors. For instance, in the UAE, four of the eighteen participants (twenty-two percent) were new to their role that year, and their position was directly linked to international recruitment: Enrollment Dean, Student Affairs Officer, Strategy and Marketing Director, and Student Recruitment and Admissions Director. In addition, one national university had adopted a new approach to manage administration and fund students separately from the undergraduate student population to focus on attracting master's and doctoral graduate students (Ahmad, College of Graduate Studies Vice Dean). The trend of recently established international offices was the same in Russia. Nine of my twenty-three interviewees (thirty-nine percent) were new to their posts. Sofia, an International Office Head, described that because of the sheer ramp-up of international student programs at her university within the year she had been there, the staff in her office increased from five to fifteen people. Numerous times I was told that recruiting had not existed—or was not thought to be worth pursuing—in prior years, and it had only started between two and four years ago.

In some cases, I was told a new international affairs office at the university had opened weeks or days before my arrival. One difference that I noted was that in Russia, increases in staffing and international programming, as well as additional physical infrastructure were a direct product of 5-100 funding or adopted to comply with Export Education requirements. As representatives of the state, all universities without exception had a working internationalization strategy. As opposed to universities in the UAE at the time of my visit, national and quasi-funded universities were in the process of hiring staff and undertaking changes to administrative services and recruitment schemes but did not yet have separate physical spaces for international student recruitment offices. I interpreted this to suggest that the UAE and Russia were in different stages of international student recruitment. National policy in the Russian case had demonstrably moved student recruitment forward.

In terms of recruitment techniques, unsurprisingly, both countries used similar marketing instruments. Administrators in both countries utilized: in-country commission-based agents; email and online marketing; social media; chatbots; education fair information booths, exhibits, and expos; scholarships and competitions; high school and corporate presentations and visits; and word of mouth spread by former students to others. Russia also had a centralized, consolidated online information and application platform, “StudyInRussia.ru.”

Admittedly, one marketing technique I did not understand at the time was a suggestion made by Omar, Director of Strategy and Marketing, and Amir, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, who thought that in the future the UAE could promote itself worldwide as an International Education Hub through the Tourism and Economic Authorities. Not until I met with Emilia, an Education Training and Advising Center Director at a research university in Russia, did their proposal make sense. Emilia cited that at that time of our interview, the Russian government had three separate education brands: Study in Russia, Soviet Study, and Made in Russia. As a marketing expert, Emilia said this made it difficult for potential international students to navigate and to get the correct, pertinent information about their desired program. Instead, she recommended synergy and the promotion of one stable, singular brand of Russian higher education by the government. As Omar and Amir suggested, a centralized marketing message from the national government about higher education services and international student mobility opportunities would be an effective method. In line with their recommendation, my data suggest that when the task to recruit international students remained solely individual universities' responsibility, it became a daunting task because admissions teams had to continually reinvent marketing techniques. Recruitment efforts benefit from government backing and its internationalization policy.

While we may assume attracting international students is a natural growth process for universities, in reviewing my interview data, I noted that international student recruitment was not present in all universities, particularly in the UAE. Broadly, national, quasi-government, and legacy IBCs were the institutes who at that time were taking on recruitment initiatives. I reflected that this could be because the higher education sector primarily served the in-country population and recruitment was targeted toward local high schools (bachelor's programs) and businesses (master's and doctorate programs). It is also possible that national universities had directed their funds toward innovation and research endeavors and hiring the necessary talent in those areas, instead of undertaking expensive recruitment schemes. It is also plausible that at the time of my fieldwork, the need for foreign students was not yet on all universities' radars. In response to my question as to what he thought the future of international student mobility would be like in the UAE, Stewart, a Director of Strategic Affairs at Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), replied that the Emirates was reaching a threshold of universities. From there, institutions would want to increase the number of students they enroll because the Emirati and non-Emirati population is finite. HEIs would have no choice in taking up recruiting students from abroad.

> Several of our universities have set targets for themselves of—I know several have set a target of 50%. They want to grow their student body by 50% of

international students by 2025, whatever it is. What they mean is students they recruit from overseas to come to Dubai to study…. At the moment, the average number of students, the percent of students who come to Dubai to study, and we get this from our census data from the universities, is on average, 25%. Some of our universities are at 30, and they're targeting Africa, Asia. China. Kazakhstan, you know, and so on. And many of them have a goal, an aspiration of getting to 50%. Because that's how you offset the growth of institutions and people competing for the local population, the local expat population.

Patricia acknowledged a palatable shift in the market and the subsequent change in attitude about international student recruitment.

> Patricia: We're tuition driven; we don't really have a lot of other options. Now the board recognizes that and is trying some different things to deal with it. But for now, that's what we're dealing with. So, we have to keep a high level of students. And so that's just kind of what we have to do in order to stay in business…. You have to start looking—and honestly, I think for a while we were resting on our laurels. Like when I first came, we were the biggest, the best private university. The most well-known, oldest, and we had all these accreditations that nobody else had…. We didn't try that hard to get new students. We kind of just figured they'd come. We assumed we'd always be in that position. Well, for the past few years, things have changed. And all these other universities are getting accredited, they're all getting these—they're catching up to us. And we haven't done a lot—I feel that we haven't done a good job of keeping at the head of it. And so now we

> suddenly had to wake up and realize, okay, we need to really up our game here. We're losing students—
>
> Karin: Like catching up in terms of what you're offering as a university? Or—?
>
> Patricia: Not what we're offering, but how we're going out and recruiting new students and attracting them, and how we're differentiating ourselves, and I feel that we really shot ourselves in the foot and that we're having to really catch up with that. Our admissions department hasn't—I went to study abroad, or to fairs, recruitment fairs, where they just, nobody was even manning the booth. They didn't take it very seriously. And I think now there's a huge, there's a lot of pressure. I think they've realized that was a big problem, and they're really putting a lot of pressure on enrollment management to up their game and everything.

I suspected that this sentiment was also held by other university administrators because, as mentioned above, I ran into the same thing on other occasions. For instance, in Russia, Oleg (International Office Coordinator) explained that his university is known as one of the leading technical universities in the region and had not historically recruited and previously had had no plans to attract foreign students. In 2005, foreign students began enrolling because of research collaborations with university or industry partners. National policies changed their recruitment approach because, as a 5-100 member, the university began to cultivate partnerships with universities, secondary schools, and companies to attract foreign students. It did this by hosting Olympiad competitions in physics, math, and computing, providing scholarships, as well as putting funds toward infrastructure renovations, such as refurbishing dorm rooms.

Comparatively speaking, promotional instruments and marketing investment was more active and prevalent in Russia. I would argue that this is because of the presence of policy as opposed to lack of it in the UAE. Russia appeared to be in a more advanced stage of recruitment schemes. This was not by hazard. My interview with Eva, a Program Manager at a nationally sponsored think tank, she highlighted that reports her team published in 2015, 2017, and 2018 showed that Russian universities were poorly prepared with their webpage and social media accounts to attract and accommodate foreign students. Government funding assisted ameliorating the conditions in order to develop the higher education sector with an underlying purpose of increasing overall national economic competitiveness.

Overall, an internationalization agenda appeared present in many institutions. However, there were some nuances. In the UAE, national and quasi-government funded universities received funding to establish centers of research and innovation. These same institutions also had institutional policy that aligned with national policy, and as such, they were the institutes that were in the process of taking on international student recruitment. Generally speaking, at the time of my fieldwork, the UAE as a nation was not actively recruiting international students as a whole, it was a more piecemeal, institution-to-institution approach.

Meanwhile, internationalization and international recruitment were more coordinated in Russia. Under Export Education, all universities were obliged to attract and enroll at least double the number of international students. For universities selected under the 5-100 initiative, government funding had granted them the ability to open international offices, renovate their websites and curricula, develop new English-taught courses and degree programs, train and hire more staff, and fund research and collaboration. In sum, I inferred that the UAE had passed from a stage where deregulated trade policy had attracted foreign HEIs, to one where establishing research and innovation institutes was its top goal. Some universities were beginning to look for sustainable sources of student enrollment as well as skilled migrants to stay in the local labor force. Russia, not having the option to partner with foreign HEIs due to its centralized political regime, its national policies were laid out to boost the global visibility of its higher education system. To become more competitive, universities introduced programming, like English-taught courses, to attract and—more quietly—retain the best individual students.

Why? Intentions to attract international students to the country.

Intuitively, the next question I sought to answer was: Why were international students desirable to the UAE and Russia? What were states' intentions to attract international students as skilled migrants to each respective country? To answer these questions, I present a comprehensive theoretically based argument in Chapter IV in which I examine three types of position and power motivations: economic gain, ranking improvement, and institutional and national political cooperation. I conclude that ranking initiatives and their associated policies are highly visible but, as compared to scholarship produced in and on international student mobility in the educational Global North that favors an economic rationale, analysis of my case studies showed that partnerships and political cooperation are key driving motives.

Challenges.

Attracting international students was a component of internationalization strategy, but it came with varying challenges for administrators and public officials in both countries. My interviewees in the UAE and Russia similarly experienced difficulties that arose from newness and inexperience as a global player in the international education market, along with broader political-economic issues beyond their control. Separately, universities in the UAE were dealing with different types of degree accreditation. In Russia, administrators worked to combat misinformation but also faced frustration with complex immigration procedures and inadequate capacity.

Unremarkably, interviewees commented on challenges that came along with their recent engagement as a global player in the international education market. For example, several interviews with administrators at an Emirati federal university suggested that institutional changes had created a vacuum that they had to address. The university experienced a drop in international student enrollment because it had discontinued a "special admission" program, replaced it with an open application, and fee-paying spaces, but had not sufficiently assisted potential foreign students. The change, in part, was also a result of student funding coming from the university and not the government. Ibrahim (Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs) relayed,

> Ibrahim: You will see more and more of international student joining this institution and I don't think it's going to be an easy job or easy task. First,

probably because we haven't perfected the recruitment system. And that's where we're working on it, and there's a team now, and there's even a unit that's in charge of—It was not identified better. Before, there was no ownership for international students.

Now we have a unit that responsible for internships to recruit international students and have another unit to take care of the international student within the student affairs section. So, in addition, there is a challenge. There's a lot of competition within the country for the international students. So, we have—

Karin: Among the universities?

Ibrahim: Especially the private university. There's more than 70 university in this country. And we are new into the market. But I believe if we do it right, I really do believe if we do it right, I think we can get more than what we need in terms of number of international students because this university is a flagship.

For non-federal HEIs, establishing new markets in countries where they have not had a presence before (e.g., Africa) was a big obstacle because it took time and effort to cultivate good relationships (Elias, Student Recruitment Manager). Others, like Patricia (International Exchange Office Director), sensed the urgency in keeping student enrollment up from local sources, in addition to pressure on her team to recruit foreign students: "I think it's a similar problem around the world, but we're finding it harder and harder to keep our numbers up and bring new students in and we're having to constantly reinvent our marketing techniques and who we're going out to bring in."

My interviewees in Russia experienced identical hurdles. Although the USSR had a long history of hosting international exchange after its collapse, the tradition was "Gone. Totally destroyed. The whole system was destroyed. The scholarships were given. They were very small. Russia was not attractive for, I think, dozen years, a decade" (Nikolai, Vice Rector of International Relations). Having had to recommence its efforts to garner international students from beyond the post-Soviet region, Vera, a Senior Specialist at the Russian Academic Excellence Project 5-100, noted a particularity for Russia, "For a country where English is not a native language, it's very difficult to become a global player attracting students." The long-range goal of the Export Education and 5-100 policies was to boost the visibility of Russian higher education and attract foreign talent.

The question was, were universities prepared to attract and host international students? Per reports that Eva (Program Manager at a nationally sponsored think tank) and her colleagues produced over the past five years, universities were underprepared with the services and information available to international students. Mikhail (Director of International Admissions) gathered that about ninety percent of all Russian HEIs could not adequately respond to the Export Education obligation to double or triple the number of international students by 2025. Universities were working toward this goal but acknowledged their inexperience sending out and accepting students, transferring credits, working in English (Irina, Executive Director of International Programs, and Ksenia, Director of International Programs), and establishing new partnerships with uncharted countries and unfamiliar universities (Mila, Deputy Dean of a Faculty of International

Relations and Political Studies). Others wanted to form partnerships with universities in the US, Canada, and UK, but they were hindered due to distance and disparate program costs (Anatoly, international education expert; Renata, International Coordinator, Faculty of Social Sciences; and Maria and Viktor, two officers responsible for Admissions and International Education Programs in an Office of International Development). Europe was the most promising market for Russia. Universities could capitalize on the new European higher education requirement for an “international” term, but this too brought about the same issues mentioned above.

While administrators countered these problems, broader political-economic issues that negatively affected student inflows were beyond their control. I previously hypothesized that external political-economic stimuli are important factors to shaping student mobility, and regional and global forces can be as equally powerful as recruitment and attraction measures by dissuading or blocking students from a country (Johnson, 2018). I did not ask a question specific to this point, but it arose time and time again during my interviews. For instance, in the UAE regional politics meant that students from certain countries were blocked from student visas (e.g., Qatar, due to a diplomatic crisis between itself and other Gulf Cooperation Council members; Syria, due to its ongoing civil war; and Yemen, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq because of generalized violence and political instability). Some universities saw opportunity in the region’s volatility. For example, when Saudi Arabia had a spat with Canada in August 2018 over envoy issues and it pulled thousands of its students out of Canada, universities in the Emirates communicated to the Saudi government that they would willingly take the students. This way, the students could continue their post-secondary education without interruption.

Not only was the UAE subject to political shocks, economic busts directly impacted foreign student enrollment. The 2008 recession pushed potential students to seek out higher education in countries with less expensive options, like Malaysia (Hassan, Office of the Provost Associate, and international education scholar). The 2016 drop in oil prices saw a decline in enrollment between forty to sixty percent across the UAE, and it took at least two years for oil prices and student enrollment to recover (Stephen, foreign IBC Chief Executive Officer).

My interviews in Russia revealed that political-economic forces also shaped international student mobility. As mentioned earlier, foreign relations with China and Venezuela led to bilateral agreements for Russia to host these countries' students. Russia's continued offensive into neighboring countries, like Ukraine, have deterred Ukrainian students as well as potential students from other countries. Interestingly, administrators commented that Russian students were wary of going to the US and UK because of expenses and respective internal political tensions arising from the Trump administration and Brexit. These same political issues did not deter incoming students. Mila's interview brought up an interesting paradox. On the one hand, political and economic pressures dissuaded Russian students from going abroad to European countries or the US because having a Russian passport made it difficult to open a bank account in some places, and the Euro and US dollar were often stronger than the ruble, which meant students' funding did not go as far when converted. On the other hand, foreign students were interested in experiencing Russian politics in real life, currency conversion was favorable, and they could learn the Russian language from natives while residing in a beautiful city.

Despite similarities between the countries in their challenges, they had their own peculiarities. For the UAE, because each emirate had the authority to create and implement policy, there was not one universal degree accreditation. As a non-native researcher, I was perplexed by the differences between degrees and programs that were accredited by the Emirates’ Commission For Academic Accreditation (CAA), Dubai’s Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), and licensing and accreditation granted by higher education bodies in Australia and the US, such as Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Recruitment staff and public administrators could understand my confusion, and some agreed with my recommendation that accreditation should be “cleaned up.”

Russian administrators had their own distinct challenges to attracting international students. An ongoing task was to correct misinformation: Russia was not perpetually cold and snowy (Natalia, Director of International Relations Office; Emilia, Education Training and Advising Center Director) and people from certain countries (especially in the Middle East) could get visas (Mikhail, Director of International Admissions). Other issues were more serious, such as navigating in-country agent corruption. Nikolai (Vice Rector of International Relations) explained how universities worked with intermediary agents in China:

This is a very corrupt story in China itself. Nothing to do with universities here.

Agents are strongly bribing local authorities, and local authorities are bribing agents, and that's why if [inaudible] university to the Chinese market, nobody will allow you to go to secondary schools to advertise university unless you have an intermediator who already was bribed, and bribed someone. Otherwise, people will just not let you in. The good thing is that, in this case, any universities entering markets, working with agents, are not bribing anyone themselves, so that's not about us. That's how their system works…. They are doing it themselves. Otherwise, they will not be able to be—Okay, differently, the head of my international office speaks Chinese fluently, so he can go to China, and he will go next week. He can go to secondary schools, and talk to children, and talk to parents, but this is still an autocratic—okay, totalitarian society, so everything is controlled by party…. You can't find a way out of the system. So, to come to a school, you have to have permission of the original educational body that should have permission of the ministry level, and so on and so on. If you are just people from the street, they will just not let you in, in any case….

It doesn't mean we pay anyone any bribes. It means that local government wants all agents working on their territory to bribe them, to pay them, and vice versa. They are only working with those who pay them, and that's it. It is inter-Chinese market of bribes, and, again, as my head of international office speaks Chinese, he understands what they are discussing at the table, who says what to whom….

> But, again, I believe in the open market. I think that students are choosing education according to their needs and perspectives, and they are investors, and their parents are investors.

Another obstacle to recruiting international students was frustration with complex immigration procedures. Two issues administrators lamented were only being able to issue short, three-month visas. More generally, administrators were frustrated with immigration protocols that required students to register *every single time* they relocated to a new residence location, such as their dorm or apartment, hospital, hotel, and so on. If students did not register, they could be levied a RU₽900 fee, but for each infraction, a university would be charged a one million ruble fine.[15] Universities worried about students who rented private apartments. A student may not think to ask to register, or the landlord may neglect registration or become overburdened by the process if a student traveled. Students may also try to conceal their "change of residence" (e.g., male students who rent hotel rooms for a weekend to have a private space to take their love interest). If foreign students stayed in Russia for three to five years and incurred many infractions, the university could accrue substantial debt. As a foreigner who registered upon my arrival to Saint Petersburg (by my private apartment landlord) and Moscow (by dormitory staff), I could attest that the immigration procedures were cumbersome. One subtle characteristic of the immigration regime was that it appeared to favor "comrades" from the region by not requiring visas while imposing more restrictive procedures on

[15] RU₽900 equals approximately US$12; RU₽1,000,000 equals approximately US$12,750.

foreigners from the "far abroad." This penchant advantaged some students to stay in Russia for work while making the education-to-work path more circuitous for others.

A solution to immigration problems was also the source of another problem. Many administrators saw a potential answer to mitigating student domicile registration was either to modify immigration legislation to allow long-term visas with less stringent registration requirements or to have the government fund dormitory construction. At the present capacity, not all potential international students could be housed in dorms without displacing Russian students. Alternatively, long-term students could be granted long-term visas with annual domicile registration. But, as Roman (Deputy Director and Professor) observed, government funding was not bottomless, and putting discretionary funds toward international education could raise questions; "If you invite more and more international students, the taxpayers and the community would ask you, 'What are you doing there? Why you provide education for foreigners with the taxpayers' money?'"

Challenges were inescapable and mediated as best as possible by my interviewees in both countries. In Russia, multiple administrators expressed to me their skepticism about the effectiveness of the Export Education and 5-100 policies. Nikolai critiqued the policies, giving the allegory that if the Russian government worked on polishing and refining the spearhead (the best universities) but neglected to straighten the shaft, the spear (all of Russian higher education) may not fly straight. In general, my interviewees agreed the policies had progressed internationalization, increased foreign student attraction, and raised awareness of the Russian higher education market. The attitude that raising a portion of the overall higher education system was beneficial was captured in another allegory described by Stewart (Director of Strategic Affairs at Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)): "In truth our feeling—my feeling as well, is—You know what? If it's Dubai which raises the—if it's Dubai which raises the tide level, all boats float." For Russia, moving forward, Emilia (Education Training and Advising Center Director) recommended that to be more productive in its endeavors to raise visibility and competitiveness in the international education market, the Russian government could work toward launching a cohesive, clear brand. This appraisal could be an opportunity for countries, like the UAE, who are in the process of rolling out international student recruitment schemes.

The State

By understanding the international student composition, recruitment instruments, challenges, and the case nuances therein, it informs the second part of my puzzle: how internationalization policies shape incoming student flows. State's internationalization policy (or lack thereof) produced demonstrable differences between the two cases.

National policy and international student mobility.

I inferred that the UAE and Russia had similar approaches to internationalization but had two distinct differences in how policy impacted international student mobility. The UAE and Russia are alike in that they historically drew international foreign students from their respective regional pool and were both new to global competition in the international higher education market among other "middle-tier" countries for foreign students. The UAE and Russia also had similar markets they were looking to expand—particularly Asia. At the time of my fieldwork, interviews elucidated that administrators utilized identical recruitment techniques, such as online and email marketing, education fairs and expos, high school and corporate information sessions, and university partnerships. My data suggested that internationalization campaigns to attract international students across universities in these two countries were in the beginning stages. Universities were interested in attracting long-term, degree-seeking students, like masters-level students, as well as short-term semester- or year-long study abroad exchangees. Another ear marker of internationalization was the recent establishment of institutional International Offices.

Despite these similarities, internationalization policy impacted how states and institutions implemented international student mobility schemes. In the UAE, because there was not a centralized, coordinated policy, recruitment initiatives varied by emirate depending on how the ruler interpreted national strategic plans. Not all universities recruited from outside the Emirates. Select institutions that did were government-backed. National universities and selected quasi-government funded and legacy foreign HEIs were sites of active recruitment and marketing schemes. Arguably, federal immigration policy allowing long-term student visas and the possibility to stay for work purposes assisted efforts. In general, universities were left to their own devices, but those who excelled had governmental help. Russia was the reverse—cohesive national policy had set out to internationalize the country at a faster pace than before and to boost the visibility of its higher education sector. Under the Export Education policy, all universities were obliged to recruit and enroll international students. Because the majority of universities are public, they receive their operational subsidies from the government and must comply with state policy. Like the UAE, select government-backed institutions that received funds under policies like the 5-100 project, led the way in attracting foreign and mobile students and other internationalization endeavors. Interviews indicated that some administrators were suspicious of the potential policy effectiveness. Still, they conceded that Russian higher education had indeed become more visible and present in the global international education market.

The UAE and Russia diverged in two ways: partnership goals and migration outcomes. The UAE, although it did not yet have policy targeted toward degree-seeking students, it had deregulated legislation to attract foreign partnership via physical IBCs. Separate emirate-level policies were designed to internationalize the higher education sector by drawing top global universities to offer the best education to the existing student base. In other words, policies had targeted attracting and recruiting foreign HEIs, not students. Open national regulations and provisions facilitated cross border education and international program and provider mobility. As evidenced, in 2017, the UAE ranked third worldwide in Transitional Education Engagement (TEE) due to its deregulation policies (Ilieva, 2017). National and emirate strategic plans concentrated efforts toward branding the Emirates—particularly Dubai—as a higher education destination, because it is safe, clean, and offers education from quality, top-ranked universities.

This contrasted with the few IBCs in Russia. As Roman (Deputy Director and Professor) observed: “There is no place for joint ventures” in Russia because higher education is managed by the state. Instead, Russian policy favored establishing working partnerships—with other institutions, industry, and states. My interviews showed that national policy to internationalize generated an abundance of emerging university relationships. The purpose of these cooperative agreements was mobility—physical exchange of students, faculty, researchers, and staff. I anticipate that this is one area that will continue to grow through the establishment of on-campus international curricula partnerships and dual-degree and exchange programs.

Lastly, the connection between internationalization and migration appears at first glance to be dissimilar: the UAE unquestionably aims to attract and retain skilled migrants, and Russia makes no such claims. In the Emirates, higher education is a direct link to the local labor force because IBCs provide higher education to students already employed or intending to remain in the local labor force. The Emirates needs to retain its population in higher education and skilled work rather than losing this human capital resource to other countries. Russian policies do aim to recruit students, researchers, and other skilled migrants, but international student mobility should be circular—visa requirements mandate students' departures upon degree completion. Therefore, there is no apparent intent for foreign students from the far abroad to remain in the labor force (but students from the near abroad do not face the same restrictions and often stay to work). However, because Russia is confronting a demographic crisis and needs and wants skilled migrants, a quiet component of these internationalization policies is to retain some international students in Russia to work in necessary sectors. The contradiction is discernible. On the one hand, to paraphrase Mikhail (International Admissions Director): Russia aims to enroll international students, not international citizens. On the other hand, others commented, "The brightest will find a way" to stay to work if they so choose.

My findings showed that both countries looked to increase the number of international students, whether they be foreign degree-seeking students or temporary academic exchange students. Due to differences in political structure, state-level internationalization policy was created and implemented in a segmented (Emirate policy interpretation by each of the seven emirate rulers) or unified (Russia's central state policy) manner.

To take up the question, how do internationalization policies shape incoming educational mobility to the UAE and Russia? The short-term answer is, "We shall see." With the fairly recent implementation of the policies as mentioned above, results are trends, and it is too early to definitively conclude effects. I would recommend further research on this topic, rephrasing the question to ask: *how* ***effective*** *are internationalization policies in shaping student mobility to the UAE and Russia?* In the long run, it is possible that the UAE and Russia, "middle-tier" countries or as I call them "the educational Global South," could accelerate their endeavors to attract international students and even hypothetically keep them in the respective national labor force. For European countries, they can take advantage of requisite "international" terms for their university students, but we may consider that universities in the Global North, like the US, UK, Canada, and Australia, may further rise in ranking, the same processes may be pushing them out of the global market in international higher education. I anticipate that in the next five to ten years, educational mobility and skilled migration will look differently in the UAE, Russia, and other middle-tier countries as a result of internationalization policies and efforts. The question then becomes, how will they rival countries and institutions in the educational Global North? What will be the role of higher education internationalization policy, and how could it divide countries between those that need to attract skilled workers to advance a post-industrial economy and those that don't?

Policymaking: Attracting what versus who?

In both these cases, policy broadly appeared top-down (from the government to institutions to institutional staff), but when I probed my interviewees about this state-institution relationship, their responses conveyed that policymaking and implementation was a recursive dialogue. A common trend that I encountered was that government personnel and university administrators often sat on the same working groups that were responsible for evaluating, designing, and creating national and institutional policies. For example, in the UAE, one ruler was the President of a university's Board of Trustees, and in Russia, many administrators participated in working groups and consulted for the government. Roman, Deputy Director and Professor, exemplified how policymaking resulting from state-institution commingling.

> [The university] became a member of so-called 5-100 program, and an association had been created, the association of the global universities in Russia. This is the association of the universities which are involved in this 5-100 program, and we created a club of vice presidents, international, of these 21 universities. I became head of this club. So, for some years, I was steering the activity of the vice president in West Russia university. So, we were discussing those things related also to the mobility and attracting degree-seeking students to Russia. Because of

> that, I was also attached somehow to Russian Ministry of Education in this capacity of international relations person, and at some point, I became interested in half as a scholar, half as a practitioner.

National policymaking required cross collaboration because educators like Roman provided their feedback as to what policies were feasible and in what ways universities could achieve them.

I surmised that dialogues were also expected to evoke a sort of symbiosis. Policymaking processes were supposed to create feedback among national and local governments, HEIs, and industry, which would then extend into the economy by filling out the labor force. But this did not always function smoothly. Emilia (Education Training and Advising Center Director, Russia) highlighted that sometimes one party or another questioned joint efforts.

> Karin: I've been wondering about it and asking people about the synthesis, I guess, between government, higher education, and industry. If it's a dialogue, or if it's a top-down, or how does it inform? So maybe—
>
> Emilia: It's tried to be a dialogue. It's not gone from the top to down…. Because the government sees the perspective of cooperation, but the business, they are not understanding why they need to cooperate, because we're mostly talking about their professional education, or about the master's degree. My idea was that we need to grow the future employees, in different countries, meant that we need to cooperate together with the business.

I argue that a state-institution relationship was present and necessary in these cases to attract international students. On account of state relations driving policymaking, I next asked what were the aims and intended outcomes of internationalization policies? Who—or what—did states want to attract? I would summarize the Emirate's policies as targeting *what* (attracting foreign higher education business) and Russia's policies as drawing *who* ("free moving" individual foreign students). The difference is the cross-border mobility of institutions or of people. I propose a two-part typology of internationalization policy models: *Institutional*, illustrated by the UAE, and *Student*, represented by Russia. I present the typology in Table 3.2. at the end of the chapter.

In an Institutional type of internationalization policy, countries like the UAE have legislation that privileges the physical establishment of foreign branch campuses. As noted in prior literature (Altbach & Knight, 2007) and in my interviews (Roman, Deputy Director and Professor), states like these may import higher education to fill university insufficiencies in educating the existing population. This typology reflects and accurately describes an International Education Hub (Knight, 2013)—a condensed geographical location for foreign HEIs. The aim is to provide higher education to local international students. By attracting partnerships with the highest-ranked universities worldwide, it is possible to offer a version of top-level education. However, as I mentioned in the preceding sections, the lack of universal accreditation is one challenge to Institutional policymaking countries. I also assert that the quality of local and foreign primary and secondary education must be equalized (as evidenced through the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) reports), and for international education to be equitably successful, it should draw both local and foreign students. Lastly, during my fieldwork, I wondered whether the UAE would hit a critical threshold of HEIs, and when that point was reached, what was the next step in policymaking? My meeting with public official Stewart (Director of Strategic Affairs at Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority), he implied that the UAE had potentially met this point. Some universities were looking to invest in research and innovation as well as were interested in expanding their international student market.

Countries like Russia with a Student type of internationalization policy are characterized by having policy, programs, and initiatives that favor attracting individual foreign students instead of physical IBCs. This directly contrasts with prior literature because scholarship on International Education Hubs (Knight, 2013) focuses on institutional mobility, which neglects migration and human movement. This typology is defined by projects, capacity, and legislation to recruit foreign degree-seeking, short-term study abroad, and even on-line course students. Here the goal is to not only provide higher education to native students but also to expand the reach of national higher education and its brand influence on students in the immediate region and further abroad. Partnerships facilitate dual-degree programming and academic collaboration. Interview data also intimated that initiatives to found partnerships and work in concert with leading universities worldwide could improve university and national higher education rankings. Although not directly connected, as I describe in the following chapter, administrators anticipated that better rankings would attract more international students. Russia faced a myriad of difficulties, such as cumbersome immigration procedures, insufficient teaching and dormitory facilities. My interviews elucidated that administrators were working to mitigate challenges, such as meeting with country delegates to market Russia as an attractive educational destination to students from the far abroad. Finally, Russia had shifted to international higher education degree standards. It was poised to take advantage of partnerships with Europe, but it was not clear whether and how credits, degrees, and certificates would be recognized beyond the Soviet region and Europe.

The utility of the Student-Institution typology is that we may apply it to other countries and their internationalization policies. Countries that could potentially be categorized as an Institutional typology policymaking regime are Malaysia and Botswana. Malaysia has a high number of foreign IBCs and fits Knight's classic definition of an International Education Hub—having a critical mass of international institutions. Botswana poses a compelling case because it does not have many international students, nor does it have a critical mass of institutions. In my cursory research on Botswana, it—like other countries in the southern African region—seemed to solicit foreign education investment and the establishment of IBCs. It is less important that these countries' policies attract and retain skilled students, faculty, and researchers because foreign institutions are the object.

Under the Student policymaking typology, possible countries could be Singapore and South Africa. Per Knight (2013), Singapore's government policies are geared toward attracting foreign talent as a means to produce innovation and research. This would suggest that Singapore already had the infrastructure in place and wanted to recruit and retain migrants as skilled laborers. Africans are the most mobile youth population in the world, and their leading destination is South Africa (Bhandari et al., 2011). South African internationalization policy may not encourage inflow *per se*. Rather it is designed to restrict and vet incoming students and restricts them from remaining in the country to work following the completion of their post-secondary degree. In the Student typology cases, it would be necessary to disentangle and then reconnect how these policies shape migration, innovation and research production, and international student training and education. In Chapter VI, I bring these topics together to propose a Matrix of Internationalization Policy typologies. I take into consideration the presence or absence of state policy in combination and the desired outcome to either have students stay in the local labor force or to require them to leave upon degree completion. As opposed to the Institution-Student topology, the matrix is fluid and allows for a multidirectional gradient of these components.

Discussion

I sought to make several contributions in this chapter. I took an analytical position that pivoted away from studying internationalization processes that affect institutions and practices, toward one that examined processes and policies that change incoming student trends. I also compared how the UAE and Russia—two autocratic oil-rich, people-poor countries in the educational Global South that are considered nontraditional education destinations—utilized higher education internationalization policies to attract international students. Findings from my inductive analysis of interviews with forty-two experts suggested that the absence of formal internationalization policy in the UAE and the presence of two national policies in Russia impacted the success of increasing the number of incoming foreign students. Cohesive national policy and selective funding initiatives meant that Russia was in a more advanced stage of recruiting foreign talent, like international students. In comparison, in the UAE, some emirate governments were in a phase of investing in research and innovation, and some institutions were in the beginning stages of student recruitment from abroad. I argued that the differences in policy produced either an Institutional or Student typology, in which policies respectively attracted business or student mobility. Despite the implied differences, the countries are "middle-tier" countries that were new to the international higher education market, and both intended to attract all types of international students (degree-seeking, temporary, and online) from markets beyond the immediate region. English-taught courses and programs, as well as partnerships with universities, industry, and nations, are linchpins to success. Policy establishes a state-institution relationship, which ultimately improves endeavors to attract students.

From here, we may revisit the migration-development assumption that asserts that for international migration to eventuate, a receiving country must have economic ability and political stability (Skeldon, 1997, p. 52). As I argued earlier in the chapter, I hypothesized that these two macro-level factors are necessary but not sufficient for the precipitation of cross-border student mobility. I then looked to comparative international education studies for potential explanations. Knight (2013) claimed that for nations that emerged as educational hotspots had created intentional policy to develop the education sector and had reached a critical mass of international and local actors, such as branch campuses. Superficially, the UAE meets all these requirements: economic ability, political stability, and a mass of international actors that compose an International Education Hub. But, arguably, it does not yet have a large number of foreign international students.

By including international student mobility in my analysis, I slightly pivot from the definition of an international education hub. Using the UAE as an example, I posit that hubs are geographically concentrated areas of foreign higher education actors—not people—that result from national economic liberalization policy not from ones that target internationalization. In contrast, Russia does not have a large number of foreign higher education actors present within its borders but has a lot of foreign students. Its internationalization policies are meant to attract people, such as international students, researchers, faculty, and staff, and not IBCs. I agree that migrants are indeed attracted to safe, stable countries with opportunity and, as such, the UAE and Russia are two rising educational hotspots for international students. However, as evidenced in this chapter, I argue that it is the kind of policy that a country implements that can give it a competitive edge in attracting students from abroad. This finding also supports prior research that has shown that developing countries in the Global South are garnering more skilled migrants like international students (Chacko, 2017; Ewers, 2017; Institute of International Education, 2018). National policy is one conduit through which this process happens.

Finally, we must consider a paradox that these two cases present—are states' higher education internationalization policies a mechanism of economic production and diversification or of power and influence? My analysis of how student mobility is approached, whether a state uses tangible national policy or not, suggests that higher education internationalization policy is multifaceted. It functions not only as a way to improve higher education and increase enrollment, but also as a tool of economic diversification, foreign relations, and migration. In both cases, national strategic plans aimed to advance post-industrial, knowledge-based economic production through national investment in higher education, whereby innovation and advancement boost global competitive advantage. Higher education is also pursued as a means to diversify the national economy by generating non-oil-based revenue. For example, bringing in and sending out students, faculty, and researchers, and creating Intellectual Property (IP) like patents, products, and publications, accumulated material benefits. We may even perceive that the collective national higher education system is an economic development actor, wielded both autonomously from and synergistically with the national government. My interview data also suggest that internationalization policy is employed as a means of state relations. Specifically, internationalization as foreign policy cultivates favorable state alliances. While nations compete to gain more international students in comparison to their competitors, they look to build mutually beneficial and strategic relationships with interested actors. Exchanging students can be a sign of goodwill. Finally, while international student mobility is usually supposed to be circular in nature (coming for educational purposes and returning home upon completion), internationalization policies can be an instrument to encourage permanent migration. In the UAE, a migration goal was apparent—keep students who already reside there and attract others into the labor force, but in Russia, migration was not overtly advertised as a desired policy outcome. In sum, we may conclude that internationalization policy and the associated concerted efforts to attract international students circuitously reconcile ostensible different interests among the state, universities, and individual students.

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Table 3.1.

State-level Factors Driving Internationalization Policies to Attract Foreign Students

UAE	RUSSIA
Historical Factors	
Polity • State 50 years old in 2021. • **Autocratic**, federal monarchy. • Nation policy interpreted and implemented within each emirate by its ruler (**segmented administration**). • Vying for regional leadership.	**Polity** • Regime 30 years old in 2022. • Official democracy, but **autocratic** in-practice. Power vested in Executive Branch. • **Centralized administration** of national policy. • Regional leader, vying to extend political influence.
Economy • **Oil-rich**. Post-oil diversification plan launched in 2016. • Liberalized policies opened economy to foreign investment, partnerships. • **Moving toward knowledge-based economy**.	**Economy** • **Oil- and resource-rich**. Possible resource dependence. • Liberalizing trade policy to ease doing foreign business and increase global competitiveness. • **Balancing resource production with knowledge-based services**.
Population • Leading temporary migration destination in Gulf region. • **Highest migrant population** (88% of residents) in the world. • Strict naturalization process, limited citizenship (to conserve Arab identity, Emirati culture). • **Potential preference for non-permanent migration.**	**Population** • Leading migration destination in Soviet region. • **Demographic crisis**, migrants lessen population decline. • Liberal naturalization process, esp. for Russian speakers and highly skilled/educated. • **Potential preference for skilled, permanent migrants**.
Education • Majority HEIs are foreign; 3 national universities, 38 IBCs. • **International HE launched in 1990s.** • Liberalized policy encourages foreign HEI establishment.	**Education** • Majority of HEIs state-funded; private HEIs began in 1992. • 2 IBCs in Russia, 22 Russian IBCs in other countries. • **HE system adjusted to comply with global standards**.

Foreign Students • In 2018, ~65,000 students. • Due to high immigrant population, large number of local non-Emirati students classified as "foreign" or "international" students.	**Foreign Students** • In 2018, ~250,000 students. • Due to historical regional mobility, majority of degree-seeking students come from Soviet republics and China.
Needs	
• **Attract high-ranking HEIs** to provide HE services to: (1) Large local international student population; (2) Emiratis. • Oil-rich, HE can diversify and develop knowledge-based economic production. • Become regional HE leader. • Expand international education to new markets.	• Migrants attenuate natural population decrease. **Attract highly educated, skilled talent.** • Oil and resource-rich but looking to diversify economy, exporting HE is one way to increase non-resource revenue. • Expand international education to new markets. • Extend political influence in near and far abroad.
Policies	
• **No explicit policies** to increase the number of foreign students. • **Economic liberalization policies** (esp. in Dubai) encourage HEI establishment. • UAE markets itself as International Education Hub, but this is not national policy, rather promoted by the Dubai emirate.	• **Export Education**. All HEIs are obliged to recruit and increase their foreign student population by two- to three-fold. • **Academic Excellence Initiative 5-100-2020**. Improve HE rankings. By 2020, 5 universities to rank in the top 100 globally. Universities competed for state funding; 21 HEIs participated.

Source: Author's analysis of historical factors.

Table 3.2.

Typology of Internationalization Policies, Illustrated by the UAE and Russia

<table>
<tr><th>INSTITUTIONAL
(UAE)</th><th>STUDENT
(RUSSIA)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description</td></tr>
<tr><td>Attract foreign HEIs.

• Liberalized emirate law facilitated the establishment of foreign HEIs.
• Foreign HEIs must be financially autonomous and provide curricula.
• HE infrastructure provided, maintained by partner (local government or private firm).
• Accreditation granted by various local, international bodies (e.g., UAE’s Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) and the US Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)).
• Academic programs taught in English, follow 4-year Bachelor and 2-year Master format.</td><td>Attract individual foreign students.

• Recruit foreign degree-seeking, short-term study abroad, and on-line course students.
• Students may apply for state-sponsored scholarship (quota seat) or pay full fees.
• Programs taught in Russian, some fee-paying Bachelor and Master programs at high ranking universities offered in English.
• Programs must follow updated 4-year Bachelor and 2-year Master format.
• Public HEIs financially supported by the state.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Aims and Intended Outcomes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Provide HE to local international students.

• Attract partnerships with highly ranked HEIs as IBCs.
• Working to expand international education beyond current student base from Arab world and Southeast Asia to Asia, Africa.
• Goals to attract more foreign international students (esp. master’s and Ph.D. students).
• Aiming to improve regional, global HE rankings and become the HE leader in region (ranks behind Saudi Arabia, Lebanon).</td><td>Attract foreign students to all HEIs.

• Regional HE leader.
• Historically attracted, continues to attract international students from soviet republics (“near abroad”).
• Working to expand international education beyond current student base from the near abroad to the far abroad (Asia, Middle East).
• Establishing partnerships with highly ranked HEIs for dual-degree and short-term programs.
• Aiming to improve global HE rankings.</td></tr>
</table>

Challenges	
• Lack of universal accreditation across Emirates and recognition of degrees outside of each emirate (e.g., Dubai). • Must improve educational quality of local primary and secondary education. Disjunction between local and international schooling. • Reliance on attracting and retaining talent to supply local labor force with skilled, educated people. Emiratis concentrated in public sector work. • Potential threshold of foreign HEIs reached(?).	• Restrictive immigration policy that allows students only short stays and requires registration at every new location. • Capacity issues: (1) Not enough dormitory space for a large increase in international students; (2) Need for English-speaking faculty and staff. • Recent shift of HE programs to international standards. • Recognition of degrees outside of the Soviet region. • Marketing the country as attractive to students in "far abroad" and working with countries' government delegates.
Potential Other Applicable Cases (non-OECD countries)	
• Malaysia: Attracts foreign HEIs for base of international students. • Botswana: Wants to attract foreign HEIs, has few international students, but a growing youth population in need of education.	• Singapore: Attracts foreign talent for educational, labor purposes. • South Africa: Attracts international students, but restrictive on retaining them in local labor force.

Source: Author's analysis.

CHAPTER IV

POWER, POSITION, AND POLICYMAKING: STATES' MOTIVATIONS TO ATTRACT FOREIGN STUDENTS THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY

Worldwide, the higher education sector has not been immune to globalization processes. Higher education actors must cope with a global agenda (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Marginson, 2006; OECD, 2014), meaning they can no longer focus solely on internal affairs. They must include international components in strategic plans, too. Internationalization has become unavoidable, and, as (Altbach, 2013) contends, internationalization policy is fundamental to university missions. Policies, programs, and plans to internationalize higher education, hereafter referred to as *internationalization policy* (Helms et al., 2015), formalize measures to engage with other non-domestic actors (Knight, 2003). Institutional internationalization policy has given rise to various forms of international education initiatives. These range from promoting out-bound short-term exchanges, establishing university Global Portals in other countries for recruitment and alumni support purposes, as well as attracting in-bound foreign students as degree-seekers. This chapter focuses on one component of international engagement: national-level policy to attract inbound foreign students to its higher education sector.

Four primary motivations have been identified as drivers for why foreign student mobility is vital to individual countries' internationalization policy goals and outcomes: economic power gains; relative position competition via status and ranking; soft power influence; and symmetrical power relationships (Altbach & Knight, 2007; de Wit, 2002; Marginson, 2011; Nye, 1990, 2005). In other words, these are reasons why nations want to attract international students to their higher education institutes (HEIs).

Yet much of what we know about internationalization policy and its relationship to international student mobility has three major shortcomings. First, there has been considerable analysis of how internationalization has increased cross-border mobility of higher education institutes (HEIs), but it neglects student mobility (e.g., Knight, 2014). Second, few studies look at how institutional or national policy impacts student mobility (Ewers & Lewis, 2008; Lowell & Khadka, 2011; Naidoo, 2007; Urias & Yeakey, 2009). In one exception, Findlay, King, and Stam (2017) conducted twenty-one interviews with university administrators in sixteen international offices in six developed countries (Australia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, and the US) to glean how *institutional* internationalization policy shaped the flow of UK students to those countries. In terms of *national* policy, moving a state's higher education sector forward through the processes of internationalization is primarily focused on competitive pressures. These include striving to boost quantity over quality and improving HEI rankings, which again overlook international student mobility as part and parcel of internationalization (Crăciun, 2018; de Wit et al., 2015; Helms et al., 2015). Third, the above-mentioned lines of research are based on student mobility *to* traditional destination countries in Europe, the US, Australia, and other English-speaking, high-income OECD countries. Little work is done outside these regions to explore how other countries attract foreign students. In sum, we lack research on non-traditional destinations and their state-level internationalization policy—as opposed to institutionally (university) created and administered policy—that targets international student mobility. This chapter advances research on student mobility, national policymaking, and non-traditional destinations.

To investigate why and how national-level higher education internationalization policy contributes to international engagement by attracting foreign students[16] as long-term matriculated degree-seekers or short-term exchangees in non-traditional destinations, I compare the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Russian Federation—two countries that are rising as international education hotspots. Prior studies have juxtaposed nations that are modernizing, oil-rich, and have had a recent political regime change, such as Middle Eastern countries and Russia (McDaniel, 2014; Yergin, 2011). No studies yet have comparatively analyzed higher education internationalization policy and educational mobility in these regions.

The UAE and Russia as case studies allow a comparison between two countries with similar characteristics that vary by internationalization policy in terms of international student mobility—the variable of interest—thus allowing for policy comparison. One the one side, the countries' commonalities help to understand why and how state government policy is created and implemented. Even though the countries have historically been leading labor migration destinations in their respective regions, incoming educational mobility markedly grew over the past two decades. Since the late 1990s, the countries revamped their higher education systems. Since the 2000s, they

[16] I interchangeably use "foreign student" and "international student" due to the fluidity of terminology I encountered in the field. Please refer to Chapter III for more detailed information.

joined the international higher education market in their endeavors to attract foreign institutions, partnerships, and international students. They typify burgeoning education hubs, which are defined by concerted efforts by a country (zone or city) to develop a critical mass of local and international actors to build the higher education sector, expand the talent pool, and advance the local and global knowledge economy (Knight, 2013).

Beyond international education and student mobility, both countries are politically classified as autocratic, which means that power is centralized within the state. However, the UAE and Russia differ slightly. The UAE is a federal monarchy composed of seven member emirates, of which each is led by its absolute monarch with its own *emir* (prince). Notably, each ruler has significant individual power over his emirate. This means that national policy can be interpreted and implemented in a number of ways as per the vision of each ruler for his emirate. In contrast, Russia does not have fragmented implementation of state policy because although a nominally federated democracy, it is centrally governed from the Kremlin in Moscow by the Executive Branch, the President, the Premier, and appointed deputies and ministers. Policy is diffused through one vein, not multiple ones.

Economically, both the UAE and Russia are leaders in crude oil extraction, and production and reliance on natural resources are visible in their strategic policymaking and planning. For example, in 2016, the UAE adopted a post-oil plan to reduce dependence on oil and transform the labor-intensive economy to a knowledge-based one (Government.ae, 2018). These efforts reduced the proportion of oil GDP from more than thirty percent on average, to less than fifteen percent after 2016 (World Bank, 2019c).

Non-oil based economic production is especially prominent for emirates with little oil, such as Dubai. Russia has been described as being resource-dependent (Gaddy & Ickes, 2020) and—unlike the UAE—future policy appears to continue exploiting that area. Although Russia has not fully diversified its economy beyond oil and natural gas production, it is working toward it. For instance, Russia's 2024 Development Strategy (Center for Strategic Research, 2018) emphasizes technology, wider trade, and eased commerce regulations, in addition to natural resource production. The importance of economic production via natural resources is vital to understanding how strategic state-level policymaking functions in relation to burgeoning areas of non-resource output, such as services and trade.

For the purposes of this study, a critical characteristic of the UAE and Russia is that they are demographically dependent on migrants. Worldwide, the UAE has the highest immigrant stock as a percentage of the population, over eighty-eight percent in 2015 (World Bank, 2019b), and its labor force averages over ninety percent non-nationals (Gonzalez et al., 2008, p. 28; Malit & Al-Youha, 2013). Russia is experiencing a "demographic crisis" such that the population has shrunken due to a relatively high death rate, a birth rate drop, high emigration rates, and stagnating immigration. The UN estimated that the population could decrease by half by 2100, and to attenuate its decreasing population size, Russia needs international migrants (Population Division, 2019). In other words, both countries lack people, as such policy is one mechanism used to create pathways to attract migrants.

At the time of the research, the two countries differed in their national approach to internationalization policy. The UAE policy to improve education was found in national strategic development plans. Instead of having an explicit national policy geared toward attracting international students, it offered liberalized trade policy to ease foreign HEIs to open branch campuses across the country. As a result, the UAE developed itself as an International Education Hub (Knight, 2013). In contrast, Russia adopted two national higher education initiatives. The first, “Export Education,” aimed to increase the number of international students to about 700,000 by 2025. The second, the “5-100-2020” Academic Excellence Initiative, had similar internationalization outcomes for foreign students, but its main goal was to elevate five Russian universities to the top hundred globally by 2020. I compared the absence of internationalization policy to attract international students in the UAE with the presence of student-targeting policy in Russia. Because the policies between the two countries seem at odds, they are indicative of national policymaking motives.

My comparative analysis shows that political motivations and responses to demographic needs spur the desire to attract international students. I conclude the following: Consistent with other countries, in the UAE and Russia, ranking (as demonstrated through relative positional power) is publicly displayed as a leading policy motivation. However, I argue this is only the tip of the iceberg such that state relations are the larger underlying agenda in the case of these two countries. This finding diverges from approaches in traditional destination countries that favor economic motivations as the main explanatory factor for nations—and institutions—to attract international students. Finally, although not directly sanctioned as an outcome of internationalization policy, recruitment and retention of international students appear to be a circuitous conduit to bolster both countries' skilled labor forces. This last result suggests that the four main drivers missed one key element: national population and migrational needs.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. The following section lays out each of the four theoretical arguments (economic gains, relative ranking position, soft power influence, and symmetrical cooperation) and operationalizes each to infer discrete, yet fluid, hypotheses as to why nations adopt internationalization policy to attract international students. Next, from interviews conducted in the UAE and Russia with forty-two university administrators and public officials, I deductively ascertain how nations' position and power motivations shape policymaking to attract university-level international students. I reconcile the data with hypotheses related to each of the four drivers and discuss how they support, refute, or pivot from the claims.

State Motivations to Attract International Students

Recognizing that international student mobility is complex and geographically nuanced (King & Raghuram, 2013) and national policy is not monolithic (Crăciun, 2018; Helms et al., 2015), I argue that internationalization policy is not just a university mission (cf. P. G. Altbach, 2013), but fundamental to national strategy, too. De Wit (2002) identified four drivers of country-level internationalization policy for the United States of America and Europe: academic, economic, political, and social/cultural rationales. Beyond the US and Europe, comparative international education and student mobility literature also identified four primary motivations as to why foreign student mobility is important to internationalization policy goals and outcomes: economic power gains; relative position competition via status and ranking; soft power influence; and cooperative symmetrical power relationships (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Marginson, 2011; Nye, 1990, 2005). I operationalize the theoretical approaches as *power* and *position* motivations, as described below.

Economic Gain and Competition

A leading rationale as to why nations want to increase the quantity of international students is to make money (financial gain) from charging steep fees. Anecdotally, people have related to me that they believe the objective of international student recruitment is to gain profit to subsidize domestic students' university tuition and fees. This aligns with the view that international students are "cash cows" exploited to generate revenue while their post-educational employment outcomes are not the main concern (Cantwell, 2015; Choudaha, 2017; Katsomitros, 2013). International students are an important component of a national economic value because they produce quantifiable capital accumulation for HEIs by consuming higher education and for the local economy by participating short- or long-term in the labor force as skilled migrants (Findlay et al., 2017; Lowell & Khadka, 2011). For example, the NAFSA[17] Association of International Educators, a US-based non-profit, *International Student Economic Value Tool* estimates that in the 2017/2018 academic year, foreign students contributed US$39 billion to the US economy (NAFSA, 2019b), which represents 0.19% of the total US economic

17 NAFSA's original name was National Association for Foreign Student Advisers. In 1990, members formally renamed the organization to "NAFSA: Association of International Educators" (NAFSA, 2019a).

production that year. Indeed, higher education has shifted from a social relation as a public good openly available to all to a commercialized, marketized service liberally traded among countries (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2003; Marginson, 2011).

Burnham (1991) observed power is found in capital relations, i.e., economic (material) gain, as opposed to state relations. Therefore, the economic gain and competition motivation stance is predicated on the assumption that international higher education is a commercial market that "sells" services and research products and produces intellectual property (Marginson, 2011). In this case, the collective national higher education system is an economic development actor, wielded both autonomously from and synergistically with the national government. One process by which the sector produces capital is through internationalization—bringing in and sending out students, faculty, and researchers, thus accumulating resulting material benefits. Nations compete to gain the most in comparison to their competitors. Altbach and Knight (2007, p. 292) summed up the argument: "Earning money is a key motive for all internationalization projects." For power to be gained and maintained via economic production and the *economic gain and competition* argument to hold, internationalization policies that include or target foreign student initiatives must have explicit capital gain and competition motives, such as increasing the number of international students to reap more money from levying fees that can be higher than those of domestic students.

Relative Positional Power

In contrast to economic power that is based on capital gain, positional power is couched within state relations, such that power is relative to the position an actor holds. A position is valuable to some on the condition that others do not have it (Hirsch, 1976). This element of "social scarcity" has been applied to higher education access and attainment as a positional good (Frank, 1985, 2001; Geiger, 2004) because, as Hollis (1982) explained, having the positional good (education) when others do not is more powerful than all actors having it. Individuals, HEIs, and nations are socially more powerful when they hold top positions. However, positional power is a zero-sum game where only one actor can possess the highest-rated university system; all subsequent positions are less valuable in descending order.

Global competition in higher education has resulted in a segmented, hierarchical positional market led by English-speaking research-intense elite universities in the US and UK (Marginson, 2006). In the international education market where the demand for international students is higher than the supply, student attraction and selectivity are paramount. On the one hand, disparate resources and social prestige can generate one-way foreign student flows toward high-income English-speaking countries (traditional educational destinations). On the other hand, developing countries import in higher education services from these countries through distance learning, branch campuses, etc., to gain prestige, improve educational quality and student body composition, and to increase the number of international students (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Marginson (2006) considered relative differences in position and concluded that international student decision making as to where to go for university education is primarily driven by country choice because students associate quality with a country and its education system, not on a specific institutional quality or reputation.

Nations vie for positional power in the international higher education market by competing for status via rankings in relation to one another. Formerly, countries' HEIs compared among each other within the same country (e.g., Russia (Froumin & Povalko, 2014; Guriev, 2009)) and Germany (Kehm & Pasternack, 2009)), but now national policies strategize to increase quality to gain prestige to compete with analog universities around the world. The end goal is to rise in global higher education ranking indices, such as the Shanghai *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (*ARWU*), *Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)* World University Rankings, *Times Higher Education (THE)* World University Rankings, and the *US News and World Report Best Colleges.* Critics observe a national and institutional preoccupation with rankings (Taradina & Yudkevich, 2017), arguing that ranking measurement indicators are useful, but are imprecise and cannot fully capture educational quality (Khomyakov, 2018). Yet gaining a competitive edge in terms of global rankings is a prominent feature in internationalization policy. One strategy nations adopt to improve global rankings is to launch national academic excellence initiatives (AEIs). Under AEIs, universities receive generous government stipends to elevate their status as leading research institutes. As of 2004, thirteen countries had implemented AEIs and, ten years later, thirty-seven countries had done so; but nations that adopt AEIs are concentrated in Asia and Europe (Salmi, 2017). Notably, ranking scales and AEIs have international Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that require a proportion of foreign faculty and students.

To operationalize, a *relative positional power* stance assumes that states driving motivation is to improve overall higher education ranking worldwide, which will then attract foreign students because they equate superior status with better quality. Positional ranking is also an important power motive because by being more selective toward interested international students, nations may increase their competitiveness and quality by accepting only the top qualified candidates. For a positional power argument to hold, internationalization policies must concentrate on rankings, and in some cases, a country will have adopted an AEI. Indirectly, this motive aims to increase the number of international students via their attraction to the quality, prestige, and globally top-ranked position of a country's higher education system.

Soft Power Influence

Soft power shifts away from a traditional "carrot versus stick" model (drawing benefits versus using coercion or threats) to one in which national power relies on attraction and positive influence, being exercised multilaterally and non-confrontationally (Nye, 1990; Samhat & Payne, 2006). Nye (1990) (1990) contended that soft power, as opposed to hard power such as military might, steers political objectives toward having power over outcomes. Intangible forms of power, such as culture, ideology, and institutions, become significant in international power relations by ways of technology, economic, and educational factors. Power translates through policymaking—the ability to set and control the political agenda (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 2005). Today, a nation's soft power resources are valuable in the global sphere (Samhat & Payne, 2006), and international higher education strengthens soft power influence by engaging long-term with foreign populations through learning and cultural exchange, in contrast to short-term propaganda campaigns (Altbach & Peterson, 2008).

International higher education is utilized as a tool to attract foreigners and instill an understanding and affinity for a country through positive influence and experiences and to imbue national ideology through its education system (Altbach & Peterson, 2008; Nye, 2005). For example, Spilimbergo (2009) showed that foreign-educated individuals foster democracy in their home countries after obtaining their education in a democratic country. This suggests that international education is an effective tool to transplant national ideals from one country to another via international students.

In comparison to the *relative positional power* approach that aims to draw students as a means to cultivate and concentrate academic excellence, the main assumption of a *soft power* argument is that a state's motivation is to disperse its ideologies, through which foreign students are the main conveyance: Students are interested in a host country, they complete their education there, and return home to germinate it's principles to others. This position implies that international student mobility must be circular—prohibiting permanent immigration by requiring students to return to their home country upon the completion of their degree. Although similar to the *economic power through gain* position, an economic argument focuses on capital production within the host country during students' studies, whereas soft power comes into play once students return to their home country. For a soft power argument to hold, internationalization schemes may set to recruit as many students as possible with little regard to producing top-tier research and favor a circular model (what I call a "Learn-Return" model) of student mobility. Policy motivations are driven by using a national higher education system to diffuse ideals to as many students as possible.

Cooperative Symmetrical Relations

Marginson (2011, p. 422) argued that another motive to internationalize higher education is to establish a permanent collaborative network of universities whose ends are to cooperate, exchange, partner, and participate together in global consortia that mutually benefit all actors. As compared to asymmetrical hierarchical power and positionality, more cooperative symmetrical relations among states promote circulating and sharing knowledge, as well as enhance student experiences and curricula. Free movement of people and ideas would result in increases in international student mobility as people follow their interests and collegial alliances. Although this imaginary seems utopic, it has real applications. Countries work to import international education to fill educational insufficiencies (Altbach & Knight, 2007) in either capacity or quality. Likewise, recruiting and retaining international talent (faculty, researchers, and students) reduces academic "inbreeding" (Salmi, 2016, 2017).

Markers of symmetrical power motivations are institutional partnerships, such as branch campuses and dual degree programs, two-way short-term student exchanges, and faculty research collaboration. This type of cooperative motivation is unique as compared to the other three drivers because a state cannot independently set and achieve these outcomes. Thus, this type of relationship benefits multiple actors. This argument implies that motivations to boost international student mobility are intrinsic—students study in a country outside their own for the sake of education, knowledge advancement, and collaboration. A cooperative *symmetrical power relations* argument again centers on state relations. Therefore, for this approach to hold, nations' internationalization policies facilitate institutional partnering, knowledge sharing, and relative low entrance barriers to international students interested in partaking in the national higher education system. Student mobility outcomes present in policy should assist in internationalizing a country and its higher education system through the circulation of people and ideas.

Hypotheses.

To recapitulate how each of the above four power and position arguments bears out in internationalization policy that targets inbound student mobility are as follows:

- *Power via economic gain:* Explicit capital gain motives (e.g., increasing the number of international students to accumulate revenue from fees).
- *Positional power*: Global rankings focused (international students attracted to a country's higher education system's quality, prestige, and globally top-ranked position; probable Academic Excellence Initiative adopted).
- *Soft power*: Higher education system utilized via circular mobility to positively extend national influence and diffuse ideals abroad.
- *Cooperative power:* Cooperative institutional partnering, knowledge sharing, and relative low entrance barriers to international students.

Before moving forward, it is important to call the reader's attention to the fact that these four motivations are not meant to be essentializing, discrete, or mutually exclusive, and are not exhaustive. Rather, states' motives should be understood as fluid and complementary. What one may expect is that these four motives are always present but configure differently for nations based on their needs and intended policy outcomes. The key is to ascertain what national policymaking patterns exist.

If policymaking motives are consistent with prior literature on international student mobility, one could expect that economic gain and positional power are leading drivers to attract foreign students. Meaning, one may infer that nations want to make money first and foremost because higher education is an economic market. Ranking position would also be a top interest for nations—wanting to have higher social power. It is also plausible that soft power would be an underlying and not an explicit motive. This may be because, over the past seventy years, student mobility has deviated from a relationship of cultural exchange to one of monetary transactions. Cooperative power may also be an unlikely leading motive unless it mutually benefits one of the other drivers (such as economic gain). However, I am cautious with this line of reasoning. It is based on literature coming from traditional destination countries that already profit from international student mobility and have high rankings. In this sense, internationalization policy may be geared toward maintaining a competitive edge rather than attaining it.

Methods, Data, and Analysis

In two stages of fieldwork, I spent seven weeks each in the UAE (from December 2018 to January 2019) and Russia (from March 2019 to April 2019). I interviewed higher education experts—university administrators and public officials—about how they interpret and use national internationalization policies, and how this affects student mobility. The benefit of using these two types of experts was that interviews gave insight into the interworking of governmental and organizational rationale and processes that are not publicly available otherwise. I first concentrated on collecting interviews at one university to have a deeper understanding of national and institutional policy and procedures, then broadened out to experts at other institutions. I conducted all interviews in English with participants identified in the following excerpts (and published work elsewhere) with position titles or pseudonyms.

I guided interviews following a three-part questionnaire: (1) *international student mobility* in general within the country and (when applicable) to the university; (2) *university partnerships,* the establishment of a campus/branch, programming, and accreditation; (3) the relationship between *national policy* (the national strategic plan or specific initiatives), universities, and how internationalization influenced international student mobility currently and over the past ten years or so. During the interviews, I paid attention to events and situations participants described that exemplified their understanding, interpretation, and implementation of policy in their job. Interview data include hand-written notes, audio files and transcripts for interviewees who agreed to be recorded, a "Report of Interview" (ROI) for every interview, and associated comments given by some interviewees on their ROI.

For this paper, data consist of thirty-six expert interviews with forty-two participants, meaning that although the majority of interviews were one-on-one between the interviewee and me, in some cases, I met with more than one person. Interviews were as follows: In the UAE, I conducted fifteen interviews with eighteen participants at eight HEIs and two public agencies in four cities: Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. In Russia, I met with twenty-three experts in twenty interviews in two cities, Saint Petersburg and Moscow, at nine higher education institutions and two public agencies.

Finally, I interviewed one US university administrator due to their expertise in establishing higher education portals abroad.

For this chapter, I conducted a deductive analysis of interview data. First, I defined four codes from the above theoretical arguments. For *power via economic gain,* I coded comments that were made directly about capital gain motives where the increased number of international students to accumulate revenue from fees was a clear goal. For *positional power*, I coded conversations that focused on global rankings, as well as quality, prestige, and globally top-ranked position, and indicators of Academic Excellence Initiatives. I coded s*oft power* as circular mobility, positive influence, and intentions to diffuse ideals abroad. Lastly, I coded *cooperative power* as partnerships (institutional- or industry-related) and mutually beneficial relationships. I then applied this pre-set coding scheme by assigning codes as I read and re-read ROI and transcript texts using MaxQDA2020 software. By adopting this technique, I saw how concepts aligned with and deviated from, as well as contributed to the refinement of the definitions and usages I recorded. During the coding process, I also took memos using the "Free Memos" function in MaxQDA to annotate connections in the data and to come back to questions that arose throughout the analysis. Finally, I chose quotations to illustrate the findings.

Findings

It should not surprise the reader to learn that the four categories for which I coded were not discrete, and during the analysis, it was challenging to parse out individual codes according to their pre-laid definitions. However, as mentioned above, one result of the deductive analysis was that it became more evident to me how the four motives were interconnected, yet some manifested more prominently than others. The interview data suggest that while economic motives were not the key motivator, intentions to improve relative ranking position was the most overt rationale for creating internationalization policy to encourage the growth of student mobility. Soft power and partnerships coalesced together as more covert motives and arguably appeared to be the driving forces in an agenda for internationalization and development.

Economic Power

Capital accumulation.

Firstly, of the four topics, *power via economic gain* was the least commented on by all interviewees in both countries. In fact, during only one interview, did the participant's discussion match my preset definition of this category in explaining that university leadership had set a strategic plan to increase the number of students for income purposes.

> So, from this academic year on, from September [2019], yes, we have a new leadership and so far, [they] paid most of attention to gaining more in tuition fees and thereby securing our budget. But, of course, this cannot be the only thing we care about. And as far as I understand, well, the new strategy is coming up. (Ksenia, Director of International Programs, Russia)

It should be noted, however, this was a private institution that was not financially supported by the state. It brought in its income exclusively from other sources, such as students. Mikhail, a Director of International Admissions at a state-funded institution in

Russia, summarized a common feeling that was expressed by administrators across my interviews in both countries about international student recruitment when he countered the prevalent view that international students should be an income source:

> Each time when [other universities] ask me how to recruit international students, my first question is, why do you need it? What [do] you want to receive as a result? If you want to receive money, no, you wouldn't receive it. Because, first, if you want to enroll talented students, they wouldn't pay too much for your university because your education should be very high. You need to have Nobel prizes, professors, and good dormitory, good environment, etc. And you need to pay a lot of money for yourself, etc. And from another part, if you want to [increase] internalization, yes, they will help you. Because they change the mind of different peoples.

While Mikhail's comments can be understood that universities' purpose of attracting foreign students should be to improve the quality of education, we must acknowledge that Russia's Export Education policy protocol states:

> The implementation of the priority project should increase the attractiveness of Russian educational programs for foreign citizens, improve the conditions of their stay in the period of study in Russia, as well as increase the visibility and status of the "brand" of Russian education in the international educational market and, as a result, increase the revenue from the export of educational services.
>
> It is necessary to develop and implement a target model of the university's activities in the export of education, including the creation of international

> services to support foreign students, to increase the attractiveness of educational programs for foreigners. This model will be first introduced in 20 universities, and from 2021 in all universities of the country.
>
> The project will develop new forms of joint educational programs and programs in English, develop online education for foreigners, educational tourism routes, and summer training programs for foreigners, as well as create a single Internet navigator for the Russian education system….
>
> As a result of the project, the number of foreign students who study full-time at Russian universities should increase from 220 thousand in 2017 to 710 thousand in 2025[18]….
>
> The volume of funds received from the export of Russian education should grow by more than 5 times to more than 373 billion rubles[19] in 2025. ("Development of the Export Potential of the Russian Education System," Council for Strategic Development and Priority Projects, May 30, 2017, protocol No. 6, English translation from Russian. Footnotes added by author.)

This meant that by the year 2021, all universities are obligated by national policy to recruit international students to meet the state's agenda. Interestingly, as the above excerpts show, some administrators' opinions that students should not be enrolled for income-generating purposes did not always align with the state's explicit goal to increase

18 In my interview with Vera, a Senior Specialist at the Russian Academic Excellence Project 5-100, she explained that the number of students that Russian universities were supposed to attract was amended in February 2019 to a total of 425,000 to "become more realistic."

19 RU₽373 billion equals approximately US$5.153 billion.

non-resource income. As to why this discrepancy happens, Roman (Deputy Director and Professor, Russia) stated:

> For the majority of the universities, it is the numbers. Some of the universities which are trying to safeguard their reputation, their reputation among Russian universities, they don't really build the reputation internationally yet. But they want to build it similar on the basis of very high Russian reputation. Then they care not only about the numbers, not so much of the numbers, they care for the numbers, but they want quality students…. For the government, it is soft power or exports of everything, part of the export education. For some universities, it is recruiting the best students and the best minds in the world. But they also have to comply to the numbers put in from of them by the ministry. It's a complex picture.

It was, however, more common among administrators in both Russia and the UAE to acknowledge that higher education is student-based, meaning that institutions rely on the number of students enrolled for their income, but monetary gain was never cited as a motive to attract international students. Many interviewees explained that earned revenue is invested back into educational services. No matter the institution or country, there was a direct line of accountability that national and institutional funding went toward "improving student outcomes" (Ibrahim, Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UAE).

Recruit at the graduate level.

My analysis uncovered three additional findings related to state-level economic motivations. The first was that although national policy was created to attract international students as skilled migrants, at the university level, the emphasis was not on the sheer number of students. Instead, because universities acted as representatives of their country, they were purposeful about which international students they attracted. Recruitment initiatives favored quality students who could excel in their chosen educational program. A pattern in interviewee's comments suggested that universities preferred to recruit international students at the master's and Ph.D. levels because they would already be trained to a certain quality level and would be valuable assets because they could produce intellectual property (IP) for the university. Moreover, master's students would pay for their chosen program.

> We are really going to increase the number of masters and Ph.D., and especially, the focus is now more on the Ph.D. because we would like to benefit from them, in terms of publications and so on. But, also, professional programs, graduate programs, are also attractive to us, and we are interested in them because that's a source of income for the colleges. (Ahmad, Vice Dean, College of Graduate Studies, UAE)

Attracting international students is a complex matrix of *how many* and *who*, depending on the intersection of mutual goals set out by the state and an institution.

It takes money to make money.

Second, in contrast to the notion that international students were an economic source, the opposite seemed more accurate: it costs a lot of money to attract and retain foreign students. Put more simply, to make money, it takes money. Mikhail alluded to this point in his comment above. This finding opposes anecdotes that people had relayed to me about their belief that the ability to earn income from international students was straightforward, where tuition and fees directly generate income; from the interviewees, it became apparent that the process was not that easy. For example, Anatoly, who spoke as an international education expert independent from his university affiliate (Russia), highlighted that government funds that were made available through the 5-100 policy allowed universities to undertake internationalization efforts that had not been otherwise feasible. The process to attract international students is complex in that it not only requires monetary input but also takes time and effort to cultivate a positive return.

> The 5-100 project funds gave us an opportunity to choose the ways of marketing to fellow international education programs and domestic programs, as well, in Russian and English, and for example, we can afford nowadays the things like [website advertisement], some fairs in Europe and Asia, which were quite expensive for us. Now we get funds specially dedicated to such things because 5-100 funds give us a potential to travel to the strategic countries, like strategic market countries like India, China, European countries, South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Middle Eastern countries, more often than we could afforded like five years ago before 5-100 initiative started. So now we have funds

> to invest into the marketing, because marketing links and tools, they work. They have an accumulative thing which can work like not for the current year, but for a few years more, even four or five or 30 years, we invest a lot of efforts and money and human resources into the websites.

Similarities can also be drawn to the UAE's government funding of internationalization schemes. For example, Russia's 5-100 program allotted funds to top-tier public universities to take on internationalization efforts, and my interviews at a fully federal supported Emirati university revealed the same type of direct government-university relationship. National funds expressly targeted developing the institution as a research center and institutional goals aligned with national strategic plans. My interviews with administrators at quasi-government supported institutions suggested that a ruler could fund universities via emirate-level government acquired fees based on his interest in advancing specific HEIs as research centers (usually ones with which he had affiliation). In the case of one interview at a foreign-owned HEI, the administrator was not even aware of national policy. Political composition manifested itself in policy implementation such that in Russia because the state funds all public institutions, policy and funding are filtered through one central conduit. Whereas in the UAE, although there is one national strategic plan, each ruler delivers internationalization policy informally within his emirate to state-related institutions. In both cases, student recruitment as a part of higher education internationalization would not happen to the same degree without state funds. As to why governments fund internationalization policy, Stewart (a Director of Strategic Affairs, Knowledge and Human Development Authority, UAE) explained that due to international higher education market competitiveness, “making money was secondary to growing the brand.”

Return on investment in human capital.

Third, not only did internationalization policy equate to money invested in ways to attract students and which students to recruit, what appeared to be an important economic factor was a return on investment. In various interviews, participants mentioned how they tracked, measured, and reported Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to know how fees are used, what is produced, and how internationalization components are achieved. In Russia, one way universities aimed to attract international students was through double degree programs, but administrators admitted that it is a money consuming task that takes several years to gain a return (Ksenia and Irina, Directors of International Programs). One interviewee in the UAE described a novel way the university recruited students through a government-affiliated 6-month incubator program. The goal was to prepare students to pitch and launch their business ideas, to cultivate a good experience to motivate potential students to come to the university and to gain a return on investment for the university by having students in the program produce a product, patent, or service (Laila, Professor, UAE).

My analysis also revealed a finding that prior international higher education literature has not previously addressed—return on investment in human capital. Emilia, Director of an Education Training and Advising Center (Russia), succinctly summarized the process of pre-admission marketing and recruitment: The “final decision is, the final KPI, is a student to accept our offer [of admission].” However, I discovered that return on investment in human capital went beyond to how funding educational products and services equated to higher student enrollment. I identified a latent goal of the policies was to retain these high-quality students in the respective local labor force as skilled migrants. Because I knew that both countries are migrant-dependent and looking to bolster immigration of skilled migrants, I asked not only about recruitment schemes but the state's purpose and intentions to increase international student mobility. Interestingly enough, the goal to attract and retain students was expressed differently in the UAE and Russia. Administrators in the UAE unambiguously acknowledged that attracting skilled migrants already existed as an overt national policy target, and international student retention was part of population up-skilling goals.

> I'm sure the country has to deal with [immigration and employment issues] and find ways to attract—not to need to attract, because the country has attracted and is attracting international students and employees, and so on. Mainly students and immigrants, basically. But, to maintain them after they go through, after we train them, and they get their degree, master's and Ph.D., and now they are ready to contribute to the economy, that has to basically improve so that they don't go to other countries. We have trained them. We have invested in them. We are providing assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships, and then, at the end, if they leave, then we haven't benefited. (Ahmad, Vice Dean, College of Graduate Studies, UAE)

In contrast, while Russia needs and wants to attract skilled migrants, this goal was not found anywhere in policy goals. For example, in response to my question about the purpose of attracting international students, administrators commonly answered they wanted quality students. All responded that more than ninety percent of international students would return home to work, and only a few of the best would find a way to stay in Russia to work. Mikhail (Director of International Admissions) stated: “We don’t need to enroll international citizens, we want to enroll international students who want to study, who want to make research and etc.” Yet part of my conversation with Anatoly, an international education expert, illuminated what I suspected was a policy underpinning: to recruit and retain skilled international students into the labor force.

> Anatoly: I saw a picture this morning with the alumnae from MIPT [Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology] who live right now in the United States in Washington, and I was shocked. It was—it’s the leader of Russia—it’s the most talented and gifted people who graduated from one of the best institutions in Russia, STEM institutions. And almost more than 500 people live in the United States. They left Russia after the Soviet Union collapsed. And that picture made me very sad because they are still there, and they invest a lot of the [inaudible] this economy.
>
> Karin: Right. And so just to clarify and make sure I understand, so you’re saying that because of brain drain, Russia is actually somehow wanting the talented minds to stay to work in Russia after they complete their degree?
>
> Anatoly: Yes. That’s, I think it’s a quiet side effect of this program as well. It’s not stipulated anywhere. You won’t be able to find it anywhere, I suppose so.

Other administrators explained that at that time, there was not really support at the national level for students to stay in Russia to work after their schooling. Not only is it complicated to work while a student, but it is also hard to convert a student visa to a work visa. If a student can do this, they must return to their home country and then re-enter Russia (Sofia, International Office Head). The takeaway in terms of positioning themselves to transition into work was that international students, depending on their national origin, were interested in staying to work in Russia or returning home and working with Russian business in some way. The students, too, expect a return on their investment in their own human capital: they seek out the best educational opportunities to favorably position themselves for entry into the labor market.

Improved Ranking Position

Throughout the interview data, where economic motivations were least commented on, gaining positional power by improving global ranking in higher education indices was the most discussed topic. This suggested that true to its definition, internationalization policies focused on global rankings. I argue that because administrators and public officials talked about rankings and KPIs, this inherently made them more visible, but perhaps not more important than other motives. Roman (Deputy Director and Professor, Russia) explained why rankings were so important in the global market of international higher education.

> The market is changing. On the one hand, new study destinations, on the other hand, you have these huge amounts of the students on the market. The universities now are busy competing with each other and hence all this business of the

> university rankings, hence all these fights with each other on different places…. The use of rankings is kind of justified, even if I don't like them. It's justified because on global scale we live in the situation, which has been called by some people, academic revolution…. Rankings are trying to put order in this very new disordered world, disordered situation. Just to give some guidance, very poor guidance. But some guidance to the prospective students, [for example] to Chinese students who cannot tell apart Saint Petersburg from [inaudible] or whatever. Where they should go, just very simple ranking system.

Russia's creation of the Academic Excellence Initiative (AEI), the 5-100-2020 project, was designed around one goal: to elevate five Russian universities into the top 100 by the year 2020.[20] My interview with Vera, a Senior Specialist at the Russian Academic Excellence Project 5-100, showed clear intentions in AEI policymaking.

> This project was designed in collaboration with experts, and it included international experts. The [university] team for example, as far as I know, made a huge impact on the design of this project. It was [colleague A], who was scientific advisor of the Institute of Education at [university], and [their] colleagues and Director of [university], [colleague B], they advised the government on the design of this project. Because these people have already done research on the excellence initiatives around the world. They knew what was going on in China, in Germany, and in some other countries, how the government supported the development of

20 In 2019, there was only one Russian university in the global top 100, Moscow State University, which is one of the two elite public National Universities.

world-class universities. So, they started the best practices, sending forums to government on how to deal with the principles of this project.

The aim of the government is to make universities internationally competitive. And the objective criteria to measure whether they are performing well is to measure them by international rankings. The strategic development of these universities was informed by international ranking systems, government officials, and experts. They were well aware that this is not a perfect measurement, but at least it was the best objective criteria according to which we could measure the progress. The government used some ranking objective criteria and put them as a KPI for this project. For example, the share of international students, the share of international faculty at the universities, the citations and research productivity, and basically their criteria of progress assessment in the rankings.

The 5-100 AEI was the most recent initiative in a line of state policies to advance the higher education sector within the global market. The predecessor to the 5-100 program was a project to fund and identify National Research Universities. As I argued in the previous section, the UAE had taken on an informal process of funding universities to improve these institution's rankings. It is understandable that because there are only three publicly funded and a handful of quasi government-funded universities in the UAE, there is no need for a competition among universities to gain government funding through a version of an Academic Excellence Initiative. Instead, I would argue that during the time of my research, the UAE was in a stage of making national policy and providing funding for top universities with the goal of designating them as research centers that would then rise in ranking—akin to the process already being taken by Russia. Another way to describe both countries' interests in improving their respective national higher education ranking and reputation, is that global rankings marketize and raise the recognition of the nation as a leading higher education brand.

Rankings should attract international talent.

In terms of attracting international students, my analysis suggested that beyond merely recruiting foreign students as part and parcel of internationalization KPIs, administrators in both countries conjectured that quality, prestige, and globally top-ranked positions of a country's higher education system would attract international students. For example, in the UAE, improving national and institutional position in global rankings manifested in endeavors to provide quality education and to address specific occupational niche training needs, thus becoming more competitive within the region. During an interview with Omar, Director of Strategy and Marketing, and Amir, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, explained that at their international private university, per national policy, there was recognition for a balanced need to train students in engineering, health, and other emerging areas, so the university reoriented programming in those directions. As a result, the university launched new nursing programs and a partnered degree in Luxury Brand Management. In another interview, Hassan, an Associate in the Office of the Provost, explained that the UAE was attractive for education and work because of education and industry free zones where students could attain a good education in relevant fields in a country with a higher living standard than other countries in the extended region, a better quality of public services, and relative safety as compared to other countries in the region with ongoing civil strife or the US where students and families may feel unsafe.

Hassan’s sentiments that the UAE was a successful International Education Hub and was more successful than Bahrain’s and Qatar’s hubs were also reflected in Stephen’s comments. Stephen, a Chief Executive Officer of a transnational academic group that ran a private university in Dubai, explained that Qatar’s education hub model was not sustainable because they receive a lot of funds to keep it afloat. It does not attract enough students, where universities in the UAE are autonomously sustainable, and there is a good pool of students looking for international education. The UAE attracted students from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Iran, and from English-speaking Asian countries, such as India and Pakistan. Offering quality education to recruit students from the region was necessary because, as Hassan acknowledged, the Emirati government was cognizant that it competes for students with other countries in the region. Malaysia was its direct competitor because, as an International Education Hub, it had a large number of international branch campuses (IBCs) where higher education was less expensive. It was also common for immigrant families to send their university students to the Philippines and India for their university training. It was important for the UAE to retain young people with the local population via higher education so that they would transition into the labor force upon completion of their degree.

My interviews with university administrators and public officials in Russia revealed comparable attitudes that rankings were inextricably linked to quality and addressing specific niches and would, therefore, attract students. However, while the

UAE sought to be more competitive within its region, Russia was already the leader of higher education in the Post-Soviet space. For instance, Russia sought out international talent to extend its expertise in certain fields to other areas of the world. Roman (Deputy Director and Professor) described that the main Russian nuclear energy agency has projects to build power stations all over the world. Russia produces the technology but needs people in countries where the stations are built (e.g., Turkey, Ghana, Vietnam) to maintain the stations. Russia sponsors students from those countries to come to Russia to complete their education to ensure they can read guides, instructions, and manuals in Russian.

Although Russia was a leader in certain fields, internationalization policy created by the state aimed to push it into the international scene. As two officers of International Development at a top-ranked institution described to me, their university's goal was to be the best in their subject areas. Being the best, the university wanted to attract the best students and researchers, no matter from where they come. One of the officers, Viktor, said that he hoped global talent would discover Russia in the next 10 years. Interestingly, while some administrators were skeptical of or critiqued the 5-100 and Export Education policies, the overwhelming conclusion was that whether their university was a participant of the AEI or not, it was stated that having internationalization policy was better than having none. National initiatives brought light to what it meant to internationalize and to be globally competitive (Nikolai, Vice Rector of International Relations). Ksenia (Director of International Programs), commented that the policies had good outcomes, such as helping to understand what it takes to be a top university, what key areas are strengths or need to be improved, how to hire international faculty, and what it means to and how to attract and work with international students. She went on to say:

> And what matters for me the most, is that Russia, basically, during last five years, appeared on the international education horizon. So whenever we go to any kind of international education, big event, it can be European Association of International Education in Europe, or NAFSA in United States, or a quite young comparison, APAIE, Asia Pacific Association for International Education, and you enter a huge exhibition hall where you have all kinds of pavilions like Study in United States, Study in Canada, Study in Germany, Study in Australia, and so on, so forth. You have the Study in Russia, you have the 5-100 project, and it's huge. And usually from 15 to 20 universities are represented. So, people all over the world, at least, start to understand that, "Okay, Russia is also there." Of course, it does help that a Russian specialist in internationalization of higher education, they also have like talks and sessions at this conference. And we basically started to be seen, and by we, I mean Russian universities, as a serious player on this international education scene.

In response to my question about how government policies have changed university internationalization processes and foreign student recruitment, Anatoly (independent international education expert) concisely summarized the interconnections:

> The [Russian] government invests in the top universities in the country. The intention is to cultivate a cluster of leading universities that train in STEM, innovation, economics, biomedicine, and other key areas. The government wants

to create the best domestic market and be competitive in the global market. By raising the quality of higher education, this should attract foreign students.

Rankings benefit from state support.

Although I view the link between ranking and international student mobility as tenuous, interview data implied one caveat: improvements in rankings appear to be conditional on state financial support. In other words, like the experts I interviewed, we may suppose that a nation with a higher overall global ranking of its higher education sector would have a more advantageous relative position because currently, countries with the highest rankings attract the most international students (e.g., the US, UK, and other European countries). However, the fine line may come down to funding. For instance, in the above excerpt, Ksenia remarked that policies drew awareness to Russian higher education, which helped all universities, but it was government money that helped achieve quality international education products. Natalia, a Director of International Relations Office at a technical university, described that because the institution is a 5-100 participant, it is obliged to have required to produce educational products, such as English-taught courses. The government funding also directly developed their internationalization capacity by being able to grant departments monies to create English- and foreign language-taught programs (which included preparing curricula, etc.), organize Master’s degree programs, buy necessary equipment, expand literature access, send people for internships or language programs in the UK, and invite professors and industry specialists from abroad and pay them a stipend during their stay (anywhere from one week to three months). The university also established a language school at the university and a faculty support center to help with English writing and publication. Natalia noted that before the funds became available in 2015, none of this existed; internationalization was in the form of informal faculty partnerships, and international students were those who came and studied in Russian. Unsurprisingly, across all interviews at 5-100 partner universities, administrators acknowledged that without the government funding, creating the educational products to improve their rankings would be “impossible.” Nikolai (Vice Rector of International Relations) observed: “We are not just making money. Money are important, of course. Everything costs money.”

The case was similar for the UAE. When discussing a cohesive government strategy versus emirate-level plans, Stewart (Director of Strategic Affairs, Knowledge and Human Development Authority) observed the necessity—and challenges—of government funding in developing the Emirates as a higher education hub.

> I would say the growth of research in the higher education sector, just keep it as simple as that. Most of the universities have only been here for a decade or less. You can’t create a—you can’t really create research capacity like that in that period of time. But increasingly, as you know, PPPs start developing and continue to develop. You know Private, Public and what was it?—Part private, part public? Whatever it is. I think more money will become available for research. The problem, the challenge is, that as a private institution you do not get any federal government funding. Basically, all the funding for research in universities goes to the federal institutions. Like UAEU [United Arab Emirates University].

My overall takeaway on gaining power through improved ranking position is that universities are the representative face of internationalization. They are tasked with recruiting and enrolling international students—as well as attracting faculty and specialists from around the world—and top-ranking undeniably promotes the country and universities. Despite positional ranking not being a direct motive to increase international student mobility, I argue that improvement to rankings, and therefore the expansion of opportunities that appeal to international students would not be possible without national policies to internationalize higher education. In analyzing formal (as in the case of Russia) or informal (as in the case of the UAE) policy and funding, I posit that if a country's goal is to attract more international students, policy must exist.

Mutually Beneficial Political Cooperation

After analyzing the interview data, I decided to assess soft power and cooperative power motives together as political cooperation instead of analyzing them separately. I made this adjustment for two reasons. First, the data did not entirely fit the preset definition of *soft power* and *cooperative power*. The data coincided with only half of both definitions. For example, *soft power* manifested as circular mobility and desires to extend positive national influence abroad, and not was perceived as the diffusion of ideals abroad. For *cooperative power*, collaborative institutional partnering, and knowledge sharing as part of circular mobility was key, but neither case had a universally low entrance barrier for international students. Per the definitions, my *soft power* code heavily skewed in the direction of the "circular mobility (exchange)" subcode, then to "positive influence/interest/services" subcode, with only a handful of citations of the "ideology dispersion" subcode, but usually in referring to other another country (Iran) or previous regime (USSR policy). Curiously, in Russia in four interviews, participants actually cited Russian state "soft power" as a motive behind internationalization and student attraction. *Cooperative power*, on the other hand, was almost exclusively dominated by discussions of partnerships. Second, as a result of the way the interviewees talked about these two motives, I viewed them as fluid. For instance, interviewees perceived talent exchange and institutional, industry, and state partnerships as "political." My interviewees did not provide a concrete context of what they construed as politics. Broadly, I understood it to mean that political action was cooperation realized for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Extending positive state influence.

In terms of mutually beneficial political cooperation, my data revealed three findings as to what motivates states to create policy to attract international students. First, soft power did not materialize as the state using foreign students as a tool to disseminate nationalistic ideals, rather policy was meant to extend a nation's positive influence via quality education and a welcoming environment. However, both countries faced the challenge of expanding their pool of potential students beyond their region.

Providing a warm reception was not new to the UAE, and this attitude extended throughout its national policies. For instance, due to its economic deregulation, the UAE is already home to global financial and business services, is a leading travel destination due to its safety and luxury of hotels, cultural sites, shopping, and beaches, and it's free zones make it a top country for "ease of doing business" (World Bank, 2019a). During my fieldwork, in January, the government rolled out its annual mission, which for 2019 was named the Year of Tolerance, geared toward promoting coexistence while condemning extremism. Notably, the UAE also has a Ministry of the State for Happiness and a Happiness Agenda. After a visit with a colleague to the Ministry of Education one day, I noticed a placard outside that asked guests to rate *how happy*—not *how satisfied*—they were with their experience at the government services complex. Although some have debated as to how well the UAE's missions do, it was clear the national government was serious about building a positive image for itself. Being a safe, clean country with good politics that was welcoming to foreigners directly contrasted to tumultuous civil strife in Iran, Iraq, and Egypt, and was designed to distance the UAE from Saudi Arabian politics that had become increasingly volatile at the time.

This positive-attraction approach was also applied to international students. John, a Dean of Enrollment at one of the national universities, noted that he was interested in finding international students who were looking for safety, respect for or identity with Muslim culture, and good customer service. He felt that in his thirty years of experience in international student recruitment, treating students well is the best marketing technique. A number of interviewees mirrored this sentiment. But Emirati policy went beyond superficial positive experiences. Yousef, an Advisor to the Ministry of Education, described that the government was working toward a transferable national framework so that it could develop the populace of students and employees in the UAE (whether already living there or having moved there) through higher education and have their training, skills, and qualifications recognized within the country and abroad. Transferable training was important because beside attracting foreign students from the Arab region

(Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Oman, and Jordan), students also originated from African and English-speaking Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Sudan, Nigeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, with fewer coming from Korea, Japan, and China. At that time, national policies did have a noticeable influence on international students. For example, Patricia (International Exchange Office Director), noted that when speaking with potential students,

> I can tell them like if you're interested in the Gulf Arab world or in the Arab world, come here, and you're exposed to the full range in a very safe environment. This is such a safe country, safe and stable and tolerant, and you get exposed to the full range of the Arab Islamic world without the scary bits, you know? Yeah. And the downside is not everybody, I mean everybody speaks English even though Arabic is technically the language of this country. Not everybody speaks Arabic, but for sure everybody speaks some level of English, and you don't have to learn Arabic to get by.

Even Patricia's reflection that although not everyone spoke Arabic, it could be construed as a positive, especially since higher education is taught exclusively in English (excepting Arabic law and language studies). Omar, Director of Strategy and Marketing, and Amir, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, observed that for the future, the UAE could leverage its good standing to promote the UAE worldwide as an International Education Hub through the Tourism and Economic Authorities.

Russia, on the other hand, was in the process of improving its representation of higher education. Russia's higher education is undoubtedly the best in the region and draws on its influence to bring talented students from former Soviet republics. For foreign students attracted from further afield, the same sentiment administrators had in the UAE was present in Russia—quality training, treating students well, assisting them, and making them comfortable was the best tool of recruitment because via word of mouth as "brand ambassadors" who would tell others about the positive experience they had. Mikhail, a Director of International Admissions, described how he adjusted his office's projects after doing workshops in the US, Italy, the Netherlands, and Germany.

> I understand that we need to change here a lot. Because, for example, about people. As soon as I come back from US, I've changed a lot of in our campus, because I understand that people should be more friendly for international students. Because, for example, as for me, everybody in campus was very friendly for me. From staff in dormitory to some different services. And nobody think, "Oh my God, he's from Russia," or, "No, I wouldn't talk with him." Actually, nobody. And it was very friendly, and it was very comfortable for me. Because of that, as soon as I come back to my university, we [retrained dormitory staff] because they hadn't been friendly with international students, and we've changed that.

Like others, Anatoly (independent expert), felt Russia was a good option to foreign students because quality higher education was inexpensive relative to European countries, and much less than the UK or US, and offered a good quality of life. He also knew that "boosting the attractiveness of the whole of Russia itself" was a "huge soft power initiative in the government…. like a PR [public relations] program—project to make Russia very attractive internationally," especially to disseminate information "to attract the internationals brightest minds." One such tactic was to locate the 2018 World Cup ticket points near universities to target the core consumer base of young people. National policy to attract international students was paramount because "Russian influence is fading. So [the] Russian government created first the project of National Research Universities and—federal universities who had their own programs of the developments and—they had to include the programs of the developments in their recruiting strategies" (Roman, Deputy Director and Professor). Ksenia, Director of International Programs, acknowledged, "What happens in Russia, again, politically, or should I say geopolitically, interests people much more than what happens in such things as education and international education."

Yet, both countries had similar challenges to spreading their positive influence: recently joining the international education market to compete with other countries for international students, which meant they faced difficulties expanding their recruitment market beyond their respective regions. Although the UAE had established a positive country image, it was very new to foreign student recruitment. My analysis suggested that two processes were going on in the UAE: Private HEIs primarily catered to—and recruited almost exclusively from—local high schools, and few universities recruited from abroad. Institutions that worked to attract students outside the UAE were federal universities, quasi-government funded universities, and legacy international branch campuses. In response to my inquiries where he saw international education going in the UAE in the future, public official, Stewart (Director of Strategic Affairs, Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)) speculated that because the local and global markets are quite competitive, universities in the UAE will want to grow their share of the international education pie. For the Emirates, this may be difficult because the Emirati and non-Emirati population is finite. He knew that some universities aimed to grow international mobility (meaning, students who would come from a high school abroad) such that international students will make up at least 50% of a study body. These universities plan to target Africa and Asia via offices and agents located in China, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, and other countries throughout the Middle East and North African region. Specifically, Stewart listed that Dubai's KHDA intended to develop the emirate's International Education Hub by growing the non-domestic student market, offering study abroad opportunities to students, emphasizing the UAE's priority areas of study (e.g., IT, health, robotics), and introducing cohesive government strategy.

Like the UAE, the newness of Russia's involvement in the international education market made it challenging to attract foreign students from beyond the Russophone area. Emilia, Director of an Education Training and Advising Center, noted that the Russian government talked a lot about good relations between countries, but it seemed to her that at that time, no one was working on international education topics in the government. When she entered a new market to present on higher education in Russia and her university, no one previously had known about Russia, its higher education system, or universities, which made it a more difficult sell. Other administrators described how they had to combat people's misperceptions about Russia being cold and snowy all the time (Natalia, a Director of International Relations Office, remarked to me during our conversation that it was uncommon to host international researchers like me in the springtime when it was -6º Celsius (22º Fahrenheit) because usually foreigners came only during the warm summer months of white nights). Still, others had discovered more serious problems with corruption with third party agents (e.g., in China), and misinformation about false application fees or the inability for people from certain countries to obtain a student visa (e.g., in Middle East-North African countries). Across both countries, interviewees were optimistic about expanding their market share—although understandably it would take money, time, and effort. Ubiquitously, when the task remained solely in the arena of individual universities, it became daunting because teams had to continually reinvent marketing techniques. University efforts benefited from government backing and its internationalization policy. Emilia (Director of an Education Training and Advising Center) recommended synergy and the promotion of one stable, singular brand of Russian higher education.[21] She also thought that setting up a network across the different ministries and their working groups could be helpful. Another idea she had was to establish one big event where other countries' governments could convene to see what Russia offers, what universities excel at, and how collaboration with Russia could help them to grow their future projects. "So, for our relations between the countries, this [is] what [should] be done."

International exchange and dual-degree programs.

Second, in line with soft and symmetrical power definitions, my data revealed that international exchange and circular mobility were a critical aspect of advancing

[21] Emilia cited that at that time, the Russian government had three separate education brands: Study in Russia, Soviet Study, and Made in Russia. As a marketing expert, Emilia said this made it difficult for potential international students to navigate and get to the correct, pertinent information.

knowledge and improving higher education; it was at the heart of national and institutional policies and strategic plans. Admittedly, when I first began the project, I was interested in degree-seeking students because of my interest in national policymaking and migration. However, as my interviews went on, I realized that short-term exchange (also called circular mobility or academic mobility) was equally as important and sometimes a gateway to returning or going to another country to obtain a degree (a master's degree, for example). The first face of circular mobility was what one may assume exchange is: individual students ("free movers") who study abroad for a temporary period such as a summer or winter session, a semester, or full academic year. Faculty and staff also exchange for informal research collaboration, training, and/or shadowing purposes. The second face of circular mobility was dual degree programs, which were more commonly established for master's programs. Programs like these would split a student's time between a home campus and a sister campus, with the end result being the student obtaining two degrees, one from each institution. Less common were not dual degree programs *per se*, rather international programs taught exclusively at a home university.

In the UAE, my impression was circular mobility was not yet common among students. For instance, when I asked who incoming foreign students at her quasi-government funded institution were, Patricia (International Exchange Office Director) related that the number of international students from abroad at her university was fairly small every semester. They had approximately one hundred in Fall and fifty in Spring. Most of these students came from the Gulf-Arab-Islamic world, and a few came from the US, Canada, European countries, Russia, China, and some Subsaharan African countries.

These students may be children of diplomats or expat parents working in the region, or they may be interested in earning a degree in Middle Eastern or Arabic language studies. Summer students were also not truly “international” or “study abroad” because most of them came from the region, attended university in the US, and usually took classes for credit to stay ahead on their studies while they visited their parents and family during the summer months. Establishing outbound exchange was even newer for some institutions. For James, a Department of Student Affairs Officer at a private international university, at the time of the interview, he had recently begun working to establish new university partnerships and promote credit-bearing study abroad programs. He explained that as a newer institution, infrastructure and programming had not previously existed. His role in creating international student exchange opportunities was part of the university’s “big goal of internationalization” that would emphasize study abroad to students at the school and attract more foreign degree-seekers. James’ main challenges were the university had not yet prioritized this area. Consequently, it did not have a culture of exchange, it took time to build relationships between universities, and students didn’t know study abroad opportunities were possible. He stated, “Getting the word out that this is something that they can do is important to me.”

Although my impressions were that exchanges were not yet common, Stewart (Director of Strategic Affairs, Knowledge and Human Development Authority) anticipated that this was a future direction for higher education. “Universities will increasingly offer international experiences to their own students. Whether it’s a tie-up with another campus of their own brand elsewhere in the world or whether it’s a semester or a year at a different university. Because I think that's what students are going to demand." One quasi-government funded university I visited already had this model in place. During my campus tour with then-student, Isabelle, when I asked her why she chose the university. She replied that she did not want to stay in her home country in Asia and because she wanted an education from a prestigious institution that had programs that allowed students to travel via "global campuses." As a global campus, the university already had a study abroad infrastructure in place. Students are required to complete three January terms ("J-terms") and are encouraged to balance doing local programs with "going global." Students may go abroad for an additional semester or year, and their funding would follow them and course credits they earn transfer among campuses (Saeed, Associate Director of Admissions).

Dual degree programs were also in the beginning stages. Hassan (Associate, Office of the Provost) noted that the public university had no partnerships established at that moment, but they were in talks with a university about creating a dual certificate program. Omar (Strategy and Marketing Director) noted at his campus, management was also in the process of partnering with an international university. Notably, because many HEIs in the UAE are IBCs, arguably, they already have an intrinsic international partnership. As opposed to earning either a local degree or two degrees from two universities through a dual degree program, the difference is that IBCs award a degree from the host country. Stewart (Director of Strategic Affairs, KHDA) explains:

> If you go to an international branch campus, for example, if you go to Holt International Business School, that degree doesn't come from Dubai, it comes

> from the US. It comes from the home campus. If you go to London Business School in Dubai, the degree doesn't come from Dubai, it comes from London. So, for the students, the attraction is you get an international transportable qualification. Whereas if you go, if you pick up—unless you're an Emirati in which case it doesn't matter so much because it's recognized by your own government—but if you go to the Canadian University in Dubai or you go to some of these universities around here, you get a local degree. Which isn't recognized…. anywhere outside the Middle East. It'll be recognized in Saudi Arabia, it'll be recognized in Kuwait, you know, and so on and so on.

Comparatively, Russian higher education was already global. Russia had only two IBCs within the country at the time of my fieldwork but had twenty-two IBCs established elsewhere (mostly in former Soviet republics, as well as in China and the UAE). When I asked why there were not more IBCs in Russia, Roman (Deputy Director and Professor) cited that countries, "like Saudi Arabia or Emirates or China," that had more students than universities had space for "joint venture to play," but because of competition and likely because the state dominates the higher education sector, "I just think that there is no place for these joint ventures."

Russia also had a long history of attracting short-term study abroad students and long-term degree-seeking students. During the Soviet era, in the 1950s, the USSR hosted approximately 6,000 foreign students from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and soviet countries (Frumina & West, 2012). By 1980, it was the third leading destination for international students, behind the US and France (King et al., 2010). By

1990, 180,000 international students were enrolled in various types of educational institutes across Russia (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019). This was in part due to state financial support for foreign students from Eastern Europe (the “near abroad”) and countries in Africa, Asia, and South America (the “far abroad”) (Frumina & West, 2012). However, international programs funded by the USSR ceased upon its collapse. In 2000, the Ministry of Education issued an order to reestablish regional and international cooperation for academic mobility (Frumina & West, 2012). In 2003, Russia signed the Bologna Declaration, thus becoming part of the European higher education system (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, 2019), meaning that it would adopt and offer higher education within international standards. This also opened Russia up to potential Erasmus+ partnerships for student, staff, and faculty exchange (also known as “academic mobility”). In short, although there was a precedence, academic mobility programs were quite new.

Per my interviews, internationalization policymaking by the Russian government pursued two main avenues of international mobility: student exchange and partnering programs. Sofia (International Office Head) described that as part of her university’s comprehensive internationalization of education strategy, they have three approaches: to increase the number of fee-paying foreign degree-seeking students; to bilaterally exchange students via academic mobility for short-term one semester, one year, or weeks-long programs; and to promote short-term programs, such as summer sessions or tailor-made programs to accommodate group requests. Sofia compared these new endeavors to the previous mode of enrolling foreign students, which was quota-driven, meaning students applied to the government-sponsored quota and its associated, but not guaranteed, scholarships. As a result, the majority of students came from former Soviet countries. Her office had recently begun promoting the university at education fairs and exhibits, through on-line campaigns and social media, and with in-country commission-based recruiters. Sofia noticed that these efforts garnered more students coming from Asia, the Americas, and other European countries. Renata, an International Coordinator of the Faculty of Social Sciences, confirmed that her office saw more and more incoming exchange students, especially from Western Europe.

Another administrator noted that institutions did not have to overcome obstacles to facilitate incoming students' ability to take on international study. Mila, a Deputy Dean of a Faculty of International Relations and Political Studies, explained that supranational initiatives like Erasmus+ that fund European students' study programs have been beneficial. Under the Bologna Declaration, Russian universities had been able to apply for Erasmus partnerships with European sister schools and had been hosting more and more students increasingly. Mila's interview brought up an interesting paradox—while political and economic pressures made it difficult for Russian students to go abroad, to European countries or the US (e.g., having a Russian passport made it difficult to open a bank account in some places, and the Euro and US Dollar were often stronger than the Ruble, which meant students' funding did not go as far when converted), political issues did not deter incoming students because they were interested in experiencing Russian politics in real life, currency conversion was favorable, and they could learn the Russian language from natives while residing in a beautiful city. My interviews with Mila and Sofia underscored the contrast between success between programs that did not have government policy, infrastructure, and funding to have a good study abroad experience and those that did. For example, at Mila's university, once a partner's financial support ended, exchanges were effectively disrupted.

Because academic mobility programming was reasonably new and was part of the social responsibility tasks embedded in state policy like Export Education, Mila remarked that making connections and establishing working relations with international universities presented its own challenges. As a Department Chair, one task she and her colleagues were given was to partner with Indian universities.

> For now, I'm not sure how we will build this partnership because—we don't know yet their programs. We don't know yet—anything about their student mobility, so it is a really—now it is—is a first step. It is—actually it is—there's a level of searching information and trying to understand which partner can work. Which partnership can work. Or not.

She also wondered how exchanges could work, how could the university get Russian students familiar with destinations like India that were perceived as exotic. She considered that this was the case for study abroad to and from China 10 years ago, which now is no longer an unknown place, but a familiar location.

Mila's interview highlights the importance of establishing partnerships to facilitate academic mobility. National initiatives like the 5-100 project oblige its participating universities to develop joint degree and dual diploma programs, but this task was omnipresent across all Russian universities I visited no matter whether they were a 5-100 designated university or not. Irina, an Executive Director of International Programs at a private university, explained that their leadership favored dual degree programs over academic mobility for two reasons: the university would gain international students, and students would not leave for another country. This sentiment was echoed by Emilia (Director, Education Training and Advising Center): “For Russians, yeah, it’s very attractive, but for the foreigners, they come here to study in Russia, they don’t need to have a double diploma.” Other universities also used dual degree programs to offer international education at home. For instance, Larisa (Head, International Cooperation Office) described one successful program her university hosted: a franchised program where students can earn a degree from the international university partner without leaving Russia. Larisa noted that this program is unique in that it is an international education product without the mobility component. As a result of the program’s success, the university launched similar bachelor’s and master’s degree programs that were exclusively fee-based, English-taught, and good value because the educational quality is guaranteed, and costs of living are lower in Russia than abroad.

Institutional and political collaborative partnerships.

Third, the data showed that one of the most important ways internationalization efforts came about was through institutional and political cooperation. For instance, the success of academic circular mobility and dual degree programming is predicated on drawing on or creating new university-to-university partnerships to attract skilled talent, such as international students, as well as researchers and faculty. Institutional policy can be broadly dichotomized between external and internal internationalization. External internationalization seeks to take a higher education brand or services to non-domestic partners to engage with them. An example of this type of internationalization is when universities host information booths at fairs, expos, and recruitment events to advertise to, attract, and establish connections with potential students, university partners, and government delegates. Internal internationalization refers to the processes by which institutes bring in non-domestic engagement to attract, accommodate, and collaborate with international faculty, researchers, and students.

In the UAE, since the first developments of an International Education Hub in the Dubai emirate, attracting autonomous foreign-owned HEIs was paramount. Because the UAE is a fairly young country, federated in 1971, and it officially has three national universities (the United Arab Emirate University (UAEU), Zayed University, and the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT)), the Emirates depends on international partnerships to provide essential higher education to its large immigrant-based population. Deregulated economic policy and education free zones in Dubai paved the way for international HEIs to bring a branch campus to the UAE. However, there are different models. Stewart (Director of Strategic Affairs, KHDA) explained:

> Stewart: There are 35 international universities in Dubai. The others around the Emirates are from a very different model. So basically, for example, the Sorbonne and NYU and Zayed are bankrolled by Abu Dhabi. No university is bankrolled by Dubai.
>
> Karin: Yeah, so they're all autonomous.

> Stewart: They're all on their own… Yeah, sorry. When I say autonomous, I mean self-funding.… They have to be business; they have to be viable business models. That's how it started. It's been very, very successful. We have seen, we have seen both an increase in the number of institutions and the number of students over the last 20 years, and as we said earlier, mirroring the general demographic, the population growth in Dubai.

Whereas international partnerships bring physical campuses to the Emirates—as mentioned above—university-to-university partnerships at the time of my fieldwork were still very much in the works. I suspect that this facet of internationalization will also develop in an informal manner as internationalization policy has before it. Another partnership area that may also come to fruition over the coming years is possible partnering with industry partners.

> Stewart: The [Dubai] government is beginning to look at, "Is there some kind of model we can come up with?" Or, sorry, they're trying to broker—sorry let me rephrase that. They're interested in someone brokering a model whereby private industry contributes to a kind of research foundation that will be available to private universities. So, they're not talking about contributing to it themselves.
>
> Karin: Yeah, if you imagine like a gas or an oil company or an electric company or the water company and that if they invest and then they're training people. Yeah. I follow you.
>
> Stewart: At the moment it's sort of piecemeal. You know they [the companies] sponsor 20 students here, or 40 students there and so on…. But trying to raise it

up to the next level where it's not looking, you know, it's not looking at the specific individual student who is going to come and work for us, it's looking at—

Karin: Sponsoring the higher education—

Stewart: Correct, building the research capacity across the city. Which will have, which hopefully will benefit us anyway.

In Russia, the vast majority of HEIs are state-funded, so it approached partnerships in a very different way. In contrast to the UAE, Russia does not have IBCs. It has created policy that relies on university staff to foster international partnerships for the sake of academic mobility and dual degree programming. Equally so, as Stewart alluded to above, university-to-university partnerships in Russia are part of sharing research and collaborating across academia. Due to national policy, I noted endeavors to create institutional collaborations. As to industry partnerships, I observed these connections at technical universities. During an interview, Oleg (International Office Coordinator) explained that his university had not historically recruited and previously had no plans to attract foreign students. In 2005, foreign students began enrolling, usually because they came from research collaborations with university or industry partners. Oleg acceded that it is really difficult to get admitted, and it is known as one of the leading technical universities in the region. The national policies changed their recruitment approach because, with the adoption of the 5-100 program in 2013, the university started to work with universities, secondary schools, and recruitment companies to attract foreign students. It did this by hosting Olympiad competitions in physics, math, and computing, providing scholarships, as well as helping with infrastructure renovations, such as refurbishing dorm rooms.

As Oleg mentioned, international collaborations are important for attracting foreign students. For instance, upon my arrival at two different specialty universities (one in Saint Petersburg and one in Moscow), they were hosting career and industry fairs in their lobbies. The universities' strong ties to industry and practical training attract foreign students. Oleg cited that a European student came specifically to work with Yandex (Russia's Google). Practical training with industry partners can translate to an offer of employment upon graduation. However, across interviews, administrators acknowledged that the Russian state seeks to train foreign talent (e.g., nuclear facilities in Turkey, Vietnam, or Ghana). At the same time, there are cases where foreign students cannot work for private Russian government sectors for security purposes.

Roman (Deputy Director and Professor) concisely listed five primary motivations as to why collaborative partnerships are a cornerstone of the Russian state's internationalization policy: (1) To participate in grants (e.g., Erasmus+) to obtain external funding and enjoy the associated benefits. (2) To exchange students and faculty as part of a strategic plan to compete globally and to provide an international environment. These partners do not have to be of the best caliber but need to be willing to exchange. (3) To enhance a university's reputation by connecting with a strong partner so that the value of the program goes up. (4) To develop joint degree and dual diploma programs to increase the value of education. Strategic partnerships are based on more selective processes to seek the best school with the most appropriately matched subject areas. (5) To foster connections for political reasons. For example, BRICS countries work jointly to strengthen ties.

While Roman verbalized that internationalization and attracting international students are politically motivated, my data suggest that mutually beneficial political collaboration is at the root of both economic motivations and rankings. Although the UAE does not have formal internationalization policy, its strategic plans clearly demonstrate that the country wants to excel economically and distinguish itself politically as being more stable and sympathetic than other countries in the region. Arguably the Emirates' efforts are carried out in a piecemeal mode in different emirates and could benefit from a cohesive international higher education initiative. In contrast, Russia wants to improve its political influence with other countries. A common theme among my interviews in Russia was that partnerships—whether they be institutional, industry, or bilateral—were politically motivated to benefit both parties. For instance, in two separate interviews, I was told about bilateral state agreements that were made between Russia and other state governments. Nikolai remarked, China and Russia "signed a strategy that there should be 30,000 Chinese students studying in Russia in next three years," which put pressure on universities to accommodate them in classrooms, dormitories, etc. Anatoly (independent expert) described another agreement:

> Russia is positioning itself as a country full of good opportunities for citizens from [Latin American] countries. For example, two weeks ago, we signed a few agreements with the Venezuelan government on the high level to let the universities in Russia [inaudible] potential professionals from these countries to

> study in, then work at the Russian universities. What else?—And they have looking for migration opportunities as well. So, it's the coin with the two sides. Of course, these people to receive the opportunity to study and live in Russia, but nobody can promise that they will back go back.

On the one hand, I understood the Emirati strategy being less about attracting international students and cultivating positive state relations within the international community and, on the other hand, more about attracting long-term foreign direct investment (FDI) from international businesses. Higher education was one business targeted in the deregulated policy. On the other hand, Russia is statist in its economic approach and favors improving state relations through collaborative partnerships and agreements. Overall, I would argue that partnerships and cooperation are much more political and that higher education internationalization policy, therefore, toes the line in becoming indistinguishable from foreign policy (i.e., policy to manage relations among and between countries).

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to elucidate why and how non-traditional destination countries create national-level higher education internationalization policies to attract foreign students. I compared the UAE and Russia to assess four motivations: economic power gains, relative position competition via status and ranking, soft power influence, and cooperative symmetrical power relationships. Despite the absence of formal internationalization policy to attract international students in the UAE and the presence of two national policies in Russia that target increasing the number of incoming foreign students, findings from the deductive analysis of interviews with forty-two experts suggested commonalities in terms of economic and ranking motives (*position*) and a degree of difference in terms of political cooperation (*power*).

Experts' comments on economic motivations at first glance appear to produce mixed results. Administrators claimed that increasing income by enrolling students was not the main motive. Rather a driving factor was to recruit the best-prepared students with expectations to receive a return on investment in the students' human capital (via Intellectual Property production or remaining to work in the local labor force). These types of comments were made by people at universities whose international student mobility goals aligned directly with the state's strategy as a requirement to receive governmental financial backing. Their approach differed from institutions that were beholden to enroll a certain number of students as per policy obligations (e.g., Russia's Export Education policy) or relied on increasing revenue through student enrollment. Upon closer examination, two patterns rang true. With or without government support, the higher education sector is moving toward attracting more fee-paying foreign students to increase profits, but to make money, it takes money. Therefore, in direct contrast to the hypothesis that purports that material gain is "a key motive for all internationalization projects" in the international education market (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Marginson, 2011), I suggest that capital accumulation is not a leading driver but a secondary motive in creating national higher education policy that includes measures to attract international students. I argue that the focus on the economic value of students (Findlay et al., 2017;

Lowell & Khadka, 2011) neglects the point that successful attraction schemes are more financially dependent than economically motivated.

Next, my analysis suggested that positional power—operationalized as attaining a competitive edge attributed per relative position in global institutional and national higher education rankings—held true to its definition and hypothesis. In line with prior literature, my findings are consistent in that they show gaining competitive advantage via rankings is a prominent feature of internationalization policy. Across my interviews, university administrators and public officials indicated the importance of rankings, internationalization KPIs (such as raising the proportion of international students), selectivity of incoming students, and how—in the Russian case—an Academic Excellence Initiative (AEI) policy improved the general visibility of its higher education brand. This translated to administrators' assumptions that the better a state's overall national higher education system ranked worldwide, it would attract foreign talent because students equate superior status with top quality. In both cases, the countries' institutions targeted KPIs to engage in research and innovation and focus on teaching and practical training in niche fields, such as health and technology. For the UAE, the country's strategic plans set it to overtake its competitors in the region to be a leader in higher education, economic production, and political stability; future plans set the Emirates to rise as one of the world leaders in these areas. Russia, on the other hand, is already a regional leader in these areas, so policies aim to bolster waning influence as well as to extend it to the "far abroad." I stress that rankings are especially salient for countries vying to gain social power by moving up within the international higher education market and the global economy. However, in contrast to Frank (1985; 2001) and Geiger (2004), I argue that relative position in the international education market is not zero-sum. No matter a position, countries reap economic and social benefits from foreign talent (international students, researchers, and faculty) they attract.

I assert that ranking position is the most conspicuous motivation for creating higher education internationalization and foreign student attraction policy. Rankings could be illustrated as the visible tip of the iceberg with other motivations composing the bulk underlying it. The high visibility of ranking motives is intuitive. Nations make policy to improve its overall global ranking, and AEI and policy goals to have highly ranked HEIs are palatable to the general populace because a country should excel in higher education. In terms of international education, leading HEIs can gain prestige. Thus, higher education obtained from that country may become more valuable, and, as Marginson (2006) suggested, international students may prefer to take on their university education in that country. While I concede the importance of rankings and their usefulness as measurement indicators, I am sympathetic to Taradina and Yudkevich's (2017) and Khomyakov's (2018) critiques that there is some degree of rankings preoccupation across higher education worldwide. I would also add that gains in ranking position do not result from effort alone—efficacious ranking initiatives stem from government policy with financial support.

Lastly, my analysis of soft power and symmetrical relations themes suggested that these processes are tightly entwined as mutually beneficial political cooperation. Specifically, I contend that motives to establish symmetrical cooperative relations (e.g., permanent collaborative networks and institution, industry, and state partnerships) are a mechanism of soft power. My interviews demonstrated that international higher education policymaking aligned with theoretical intentions to strengthen positive influence through multilateral and non-confrontational engagement in long-term learning and cultural exchange (Marginson, 2011; Nye, 1990; Samhat & Payne, 2006). Endeavors to influence favorable outcomes reached extending the international education market beyond their respective immediate regions—to countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America. Furthermore, institutes in the Emirates and Russia were active in—and managed challenges that came along with—meeting country delegates, encouraging faculty research collaboration, hiring international faculty, staff, and researchers, establishing dual degree and certificate programs with sister universities, and attracting long-term foreign degree-seeking and short-term bilateral exchanges (circular academic mobility). Yet my findings slightly pivot from the soft power and symmetrical relations hypotheses. Increasing foreign student mobility as a mechanism of enrolling a sheer number of students to have them return home to diffuse and transplant national ideology was inconsequential. Rather, my interviewees suggested they recruited purposefully, paying attention to attract those who already had an interest (e.g., respectful of Emirati Muslim culture, ability to speak Russian). State relations also intrinsically trump individual desire to study abroad because immigration legislation is still restrictive, thus remaining a high entrance barrier to overcome. For me, the biggest take away was that international partnership cooperation is a broadening component of internationalization and is an effective tool of power and influence when wielded adeptly. The two countries differed in that it appeared that deregulated policies in the UAE favored cultivating physical business presence, which manifested as the importation of high quality foreign educational brands as branch campuses to fill local educational insufficiencies, and Russian policy preferred to pursue building foreign relations to boost its influence.

As such, I argue that political power motivations arguably are the more significant underlying driving force in a national internationalization and development agenda. As I counter-hypothesized, state relations are an obscure but fundamental motive. It is plausible that this is because historically, educational mobility was rooted in a tradition of cultural exchange. Remarkably, symmetrical relations are necessary, but not a sufficient explanation of policymaking motives on their own because they indirectly affect rankings and attractiveness. My findings imply that mutually beneficial cooperation works best in conjunction with another motivation, which I suggest is soft power, not economic gain. In practice, inter-state and -institutional relations are (foreign policy). Diverging from the literature that emphasizes individuals, I find that because students are not legal actors able to make and change law and regulations, it is universities and states that are key political actors in creating and effectuating internationalization policy.

These conclusions are not without their limits. As per my analysis of two non-traditional countries that are rising as educational destinations, economic gain may not be *the* leading motive in these cases given that their higher education sector is centrally managed by the state, but internationalization initiatives benefit from cohesive policy and financial support. For instance, increasing income, ranking position, and political cooperative power drive state policymaking motivations to attract foreign students, but their success depends on economic ability. Namely, to earn money from students, rise in rankings, and to boost competitiveness, a state and its institutions need to invest money, time, and effort in brand advertising, rankings strategies, and establishing political liaisons across universities, industries, and states.

From here, we must consider alternative explanations as to why my findings partially support prior literature's preset definitions and hypotheses. First, as earlier conjectured, the four drivers may privilege a Western perception of its higher education market because previous research principally studies student mobility to countries in the educational Global North (Johnson, Forthcoming; Marginson, 2006). In these traditional destination countries, higher education is detached from the state and is a neoliberal model that relies on student-generated capital. We may recall, for instance, the US's NAFSA website emphasizes the billions of dollars brought in, then nods to cultural contributions foreign students offer. In contrast, for countries with state-supported HEIs, like the UAE and Russia, politically motivated cooperative relationships can be more significant than income because they do not need to follow a strict business-like profit-making approach. In this sense, Russia presents an intriguing case because, at the time of my fieldwork, it seemed to straddle two worlds of higher education. One in which education is historically a public good that is the responsibility of the state and a liberalized one in which selling higher education services is paramount (e.g., the Export Education policy that clearly lays out one motive is to attract more students to make more money). While I understand the Russian government's need to expand non-resource revenue (per its 2024 Strategy), I view these efforts as moving its higher education sector toward a model that resembles a Western one. Alternatively, brand promotion could become more important than generating money.

Second, for countries in the educational Global South, as opposed to *maintaining* a competitive edge in the international education market (e.g., the US or UK), it is possible that internationalization policy is geared toward *attaining* it. Countries may also take on educational reforms to become more competitive, such as realigning higher education to comply with international standards, as in the case of Russia, and undertaking in/formal projects to spur research and innovation (e.g., Academic Excellence Initiatives). Yet internationalization can be at odds with these newer programs. For instance, Mila, a university administrator in Russia, expressed that achieving new educational standards was more urgent than internationalization efforts. I speculated above that the Russian case could move toward a service-providing model, and I would venture to assert that, comparatively speaking, the UAE is in a responsive stage right now. The Emirates' most weighty challenges are to provide quality, regulated, comprehensively accredited higher education to its immigrant populace, and to ramp up innovation and research at flagship national universities. Its domestic policy goals are to boost it to the regional leader, but its educational system could shift too due to high volumes of imported foreign talent and having to balance internationalization goals to be globally competitive. For these "moving middle" (semi-peripheral) countries that are not currently leaders but that are positioned to move up in the global economy and have economic ability and political stability, effective policy is critical.

Lastly, it is tenable that these four motivations prioritize the internationalization of higher education institutions and services but miss a key component: educational mobility—the physical cross-border movement of students, faculty, researchers, and staff. Arguably, at the time of my fieldwork, Russian internationalization policies targeted attracting foreign students as degree-seekers and temporary exchangees, and the Emirates' informal policies favored attracting foreign HEIs as IBCs. (In Chapter III, I discuss the nuances between policies to attract *who* (Russia) versus *what* (UAE)). In both cases, the UAE and Russia looked to recruit foreign students and retain the best of them in the local labor force. Administrators in the UAE were clear in wanting a return on their investment in students' human capital, whereas this was a quiet objective reflected by only a handful of interviewees in Russia. I infer that the motivation to attract international students with a purpose to affect permanent migration is starkly different from a Westernized understanding of student mobility that is temporary and circular, a "Learn-Return'' model, as I call it (see Chapter VI for a full discussion of and matrix outlining various Internationalization Policy Typologies). In short, the benefit of a Learn-Return student mobility model is that students are satisfied to obtain education services they sought and the nation and its HEIs accumulate economic and rankings gains without the need or responsibility to integrate students into the labor force because they are required to return home (e.g., students who come to the US under non-immigrant F (academic), J (exchange), and M (vocational) visas). I stress—an assumption that a country has sufficient native workers and would not use internationalization and its associated policies to recruit, train, and retain foreign students through higher education is simply not true, especially for countries that depend on migrants to attenuate a declining population and fill out the local labor force. Migration motivations vary by national needs. I would be remiss to neglect the semblance that the UAE prefers long-term non-permanent migration—especially for people originating from the educational Global North—and Russia's inclination toward skilled permanent migration—particularly by Russophones and Russophiles.

Ultimately, it is conceivable that as international education advances in the UAE and Russia, it could eventually follow the traditional trend in the educational Global North where international student mobility is circular (there-and-back). At present, both countries need skilled migrants and using internationalization policy to increase inflows of foreign students can be a practical way to garner needed immigrants while at the same time upskilling the native population. Where the population is a finite resource, an important—but ancillary—policymaking motivation may indeed be to attract, vet, train, and keep skilled foreign talent though higher education while simultaneously bolstering research innovation and knowledge-based economic production. An effective way to encourage student mobility growth is through a cohesive national policy that covers institutional funding.

Implications are threefold. (1) Parsing out motivations can assist nations looking to gain a competitive edge in increasing international student mobility to determine how policymaking should address economic gain, global rankings, and political motives to cultivate state relations, business and industry partnerships, and institutional academic collaboration. (2) Understanding nuanced motivations is equally important for policymakers in traditional host destinations who are looking to maintain their competitive advantage in the market. (3) For states looking to increase skilled migration in a controlled, vetted manner, national policy that creates infrastructure and funding for higher education internationalization may be a useful tool.

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CHAPTER V

CHALLENGES, LIMITATIONS, ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND BENEFITS OF EXPERT INTERVIEWS: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES LEARNED FROM INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

The use of expert interviews in qualitative research across disciplines is becoming more prevalent, found in publications ranging from Business and Medicine, and shared among comparative political studies in social sciences, such as Sociology, Political Sciences, and Public Policy. Collecting data via expert interviews gained traction in the 1990s and, given the relative recency in the adoption of the technique, much methodological literature has focused on epistemological concerns, such as employing expert interviews as a research instrument (Bogner & Menz, 2001; Gläser & Laudel, 2010), reliability and validity (Dorussen et al., 2005), who experts are and who decides who they are (Bogner & Menz, 2009; Meuser & Nagel, 2009), and the difference—if any—between expert and elite interviews (Littig, 2009). Building from that foundation, this chapter pivots from an epistemological to a practice-oriented approach to critically reflect on expert interviews in an international research context.

Researchers conduct interviews with experts as a data collection technique to gain inside knowledge on specific social phenomena and processes as interpreted from an interviewee's professional position (Littig, 2009). As compared with biographical interviews, expert interviews differ with regard to objective and methodological design in that narratives about an expert's professional activity that generate explicit, tacit, specialized or occupational knowledge become the key point to theorizing and reconstructing social behavior (Littig, 2009; Meuser & Nagel, 2009). Therefore, as I have argued elsewhere (Johnson, 2019), experts are individuals found in closed privileged populations, such as government officials, public administrators, lawyers, and others who occupy social spaces closed to outsiders. The people and the spaces they occupy are not hard to reach in an anthropological sense of accessing populations in locations that are difficult to physically reach, nor are they hidden in a sociological sense where people purposefully conceal themselves. On the one hand, the people and spaces are quite public, but on the other, access to them is restricted.

Bogner, Littig, and Menz (2009) cite expert interviews as an advantageous method of data collection because they are economical, efficient, and yield good results. Scholars who used the technique have experienced challenges ranging from difficulties accessing experts and negotiating rapport and position with interviewees to determining the extent of researcher involvement and the anonymity of participants (Obelené, 2009; Pfadenhauer, 2009; Roberts, 2013; Vainio, 2013). To my knowledge, prior literature has not yet addressed how researchers maneuver challenges, limitations, ethical considerations, and benefits that come from conducting expert interviews during international fieldwork.

In this chapter, I critically reflect on conducting expert interviews in four cities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and two cities in the Russian Federation. Employing the tradition of researcher's reflexivity, I drew on original fieldwork notes, supplemented with data from interviews with forty-two university administrators and public officials in the UAE and Russia, to evaluate the expert interview method. I argue that, in contrast to standard advantages of collecting data via expert interviews (Bogner et al., 2009), an international research context bears out research logistics that do not affect researchers in their home locale in the same ways, which simultaneously complicates and elevates the data collection and analysis processes. These findings contribute to the relatively recent literature on multi-sited international fieldwork, the burgeoning literature on expert interviewing as a data collection technique and methodological tool, and more broadly to the existing research on political-economic development policy in non-Western countries.

I present the remainder of the chapter as follows. First, I outline relevant data collection, analysis, and country background information. Next, I divide the findings section into four subsections. I discuss practical challenges (technology, time, money), methodological limitations (English-language usage, low numbers of experts), ethical considerations (anonymity, involving experts in data collection and analysis, and sharing information and experiences), and benefits (insider-outsider positionality, ecosystem analysis, theory-building) of expert interviews. In each section, I offer strategies on how I overcame these issues. Suggestions proposed in this paper apply to individuals and teams in both academic and professional multidisciplinary research spaces who are interested in implementing expert interviews as a data collection technique and methodological tool.

Fieldwork Background, Methods, and Data

I used expert interviews with university administrators and public officials to understand their interpretation and management of state internationalization policies and to investigate how these policies shape incoming international student mobility. As opposed to research focused on international student policy in the US and UK, my study reoriented focus toward non-Western countries that are emerging as top global education destinations (the educational Global South). The UAE and Russia are illustrative case sites because historically, they maintain long histories of immigration, and today, as growing economies, they attract skilled migrants, especially under the auspices of national strategies to advance knowledge-based, post-industrial production. Higher education internationalization is a burgeoning sector of development and, although new to the international education market, both countries are increasingly competitive for foreign students. For example, in the past decade, the UAE—along with five other countries—identified itself as an International Education Hub (Knight, 2014). Russia adopted two policies: the 5-100-2020 Academic Excellence initiative realized in 2013, which aimed to boost five Russian universities in the top 100 global rankings by the year 2020 (Government.ru, 2018); and the 2017 initiative, Export Education, which initially set out for all universities to triple the number of foreign students by 2025 (Government.ru, 2017).

Besides the relevance to my field of study, the UAE and Russia were excellent sites for research because they offer accessible infrastructure and conveniences, such as public transport and university research collaborations. The fact that the countries are modernized, post-industrial economies but are not totally democratic meant that although they made excellent countries to study in, I had to be prudent about potentially unwelcoming political climates, strained US foreign relations, and my personal safety. Concerns like these expressed to me by dissertation committee members were not unfounded anxieties. In May 2018, a British Ph.D. student, Matthew Hedges, was arrested in Dubai for espionage, sentenced to life imprisonment, and was only released two weeks before my arrival to the UAE in November 2018. Regional tensions were also a reality because, in October 2018, journalist Jamal Khashoggi was killed at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. Plus, political strains between the US and Russia had been ongoing since the 2016 US presidential election as a result of nontransparent behavior between the Russian state and Donald Trump. This climate had material effects on my research, manifesting in practical, methodological, and ethical ways.

I implemented fieldwork in two stages. I spent seven weeks in the UAE from December 2018 to January 2019 and seven weeks in Russia from March 2019 to April 2019, interviewing a total of forty-three experts who were university administrators and public officials. In both countries, I first concentrated on collecting interviews at one university to have a deeper understanding of national and institutional policy and procedures, then broadened out to experts at other institutions. Two techniques I employed to access experts were to tap gatekeepers (person(s) who control contact to others) and snowball sampling (personal referrals to other group members). I also scheduled interviews after cold calling (sending an inquiry email to a general office without any prior acquaintance) universities' admissions and international student offices, as well as attending walk-in Open House events.

While in the field, I collected research data that include hand-written interview notes, audio files for interviewees who agreed to be recorded, "Reports of Interview" (ROIs), and the associated comments given on an ROI by interviewees. I also wrote journal-style fieldnotes to record logistical details, such as when certain events happened ("It took 10 days to schedule and conduct the first interview"), the data collection process ("[Colleague A] referred me to [Colleague B]"), and reflections on daily interactions with participants, colleagues, and everyday life ("Didn't get lost going to Pushkin Palace on the minibus" and "In her quantitative analysis, [Colleague C] found clustering of internationalization initiatives in HEIs [higher education institutes]").

Following the reflexive tradition of qualitative research where researchers think back on their work and position(s) (Berger, 2015; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Watt, 2007), the analysis I present below primarily draws on the latter non-interview notes instead of interview-generated data. They focus on data collection *context,* not *content*. My notes reveal my observations of others' behaviors and comments, and my own positionality, experiences, and contemplations before, during, and after expert interviews.

Findings

Practical Challenges

Hertel and her colleagues (2009) provide a series of recommendations on how to "hit the road running" when doing research in developing countries. They suggest practicalities such as being prepared upon arrival, remaining patient when conducting interviews, giving back, and staying safe. In my case, I confronted and responded to three additional practical challenges: navigating technology, time, and money constraints.

Technology constraints.

In terms of technology, Skype and other simul-cast technologies are popular tools to conduct interviews (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Janghorban et al., 2014). In the planning stage, I planned to use email and Skype to facilitate setting and conducting interviews. In the field, email and WhatsApp (an online messenger application) simplified daily communications, but unexpectedly technology restricted my plans. In the UAE, the national telecommunications company, Etisalat, holds control over digital communication. Skype and other video technologies did not function, and phone calls were expensive. In musing out loud on this point during an interview with Patricia, a Director of an International Student Office in the UAE, she explained to me that her team used Skype to chat with potential students, but they had to log on to a British VPN (Virtual Private Network) for the software to work. While it was possible to work around the video meeting barrier with an international VPN, I could not assume that all interviewees had this option or would be willing to use it. This dissuaded me from using digital communication for meetings, and I thus interviewed all participants in person at both sites.

I reflected upon the unexpected consequences of not knowing about technological restrictions and situated this against how data collection could have occurred had I not been able to go to each country to carry out interviews.[22] On numerous occasions throughout my research, I received unsolicited advice from scholars that I should have either conducted interviews exclusively via Skype or phone or changed case sites altogether. Without having been present in-person to conduct interviews and to engage the community, I estimate that it would have been close to impossible to collect data

22 Restricted worldwide travel that hindered in-country fieldwork became salient in 2020 during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

solely using technology (see Christmann, 2009). If I were to have depended on Skype to interview participants who were abroad while I was in the US, technology restrictions could have made this impractical, as in the UAE case. Likewise, if I would have resorted to interviewing via phone calls, I feel that it is unlikely experts would have agreed to speak with me because they did not know me and could not see me. Meeting interviewees face-to-face established trustworthiness and showed transparency. Therefore, technology can assist researchers in setting up interviews, and Skype can be used to supplement interviews in many locations while still in the field. However, given practical challenges, in an international, non-Western context, in-person interviews were imperative.

Time constraints.

Second, I faced time constraints. I had a total of six months to complete interviews in the UAE and Russia. I received one grant to cover tuition remission and monthly salary for that period, which paid for rent and utility bills at home (the grant did not cover any travel expenses). Thus, all fieldwork had to be concluded over that period. I allotted three months at each site to conduct fieldwork. Logistically, it meant no more than eight weeks in each country and no more than four weeks to decompress and to prepare to go to the next site or to return to teaching. Due to the limited time, while I was in the field, I felt anxious because I wanted to maximize the number of interviews to reach data saturation by triangulating findings. I had initially planned to schedule follow-up interviews via Skype if I ran out of time in the field, but the above-mentioned technological challenges made me realize that I needed to complete all interviews while in-country. I also had to resist the temptation to get sidetracked by deep ethnographic observation or to pursue a holistic approach to collecting data (meaning when one arrives in the field, they want to contact as many people and organizations as possible in an effort to collect "all" the data). I mitigated these issues by working quickly with focused intent to contact potential participants, schedule and conduct interviews, and write a Report of Interview (ROI) as soon as possible after each meeting. I felt I successfully navigated the challenge because I designed targeted research questions, refrained from superfluous interviews (e.g., interviewing international students), and purposefully decided not to take on an ethnographic project. Instead, I contained personal observations to field notebooks.

Monetary constraints.

Third, Bogner, Littig, and Menz's (2009) claim that expert interviews are relatively inexpensive, and I agree with their conclusions that the cost of scheduling interviews, getting to them, and analyzing them (if transcribed personally) are relatively low. It is equally clear that international research is not as economical as compared to doing research within one's own city or nation. For example, when I was in Saint Petersburg, the maximum spent with a transport card to reach interviews was RU₽220 (less than US$4) for a round-trip ride with one transfer each way. Interview-related costs were low, but non-interview expenses were high. I paid for plane tickets, travel fees (such as travel insurance, visas, application photos), living accommodations, transportation, and food/groceries, not to mention I still had responsibilities to pay rent and other expenses back home. I paid for all costs for the two field sites out of pocket, minus the plane ticket to the UAE, which my hosting faculty purchased for me through an external grant.

Because I bared fieldwork costs, I struck a balance between maximizing interviews I took on while limiting the time spent abroad.

In reflecting back on the intertwined impact of technology, time, and funding constraints, I realized the practical challenges went hand-in-hand. Specifically, I observed that external grants that support international research required researchers to be abroad for approximately nine months (an academic year) and to be located in one endorsed country throughout their research with the goal that researchers become “area experts” through the completion of their research. Many grants did not cover multiple study sites and some institutions do not grant funds for research in certain locations flagged by US State Department travel advisories. Superficially, this did not appear to raise problems. However, modern researchers like me do not conform to the antiquated cookie-cutter notion that people in the field are unmarried individuals without children who can easily leave their housing, transportation, and other responsibilities for long periods to conduct fieldwork.

Furthermore, funding that backs research in one site perpetuates the Malinowskian ideal of an area expert instead of moving toward multi-sited research in the world system (Marcus, 1995) in which comparative topic experts produce counterhegemonic knowledge in and on Non-Western countries. To me, the time-funding nexus that could not be overcome via technology reflected academic knowledge (re)production of international research practices in “ideal case sites.” This, therefore, signals that some research and locations are “non-ideal,” i.e., are less worthy of attention and funding. Looking back, I was not cognizant of these constraints during my research and was unknowingly compelled to pursue alternative funding outlets. Yet with planning and flexibility, I collected the expert interviews needed for the project with the time and funding I had available.

Methodological Limitations

I managed two methodological limitations: English-language interviewing and low numbers of experts from which to draw.

English-language interview limitations.

Considering case sites were non-Western, non-native English-speaking countries, the first methodological issue I navigated was to take into account whether conducting all interviews in English limited the research. For instance, multilingual interviewing, *ad hoc* translating, and using translators can create issues due to problems that arise from insufficient communicative competences, reconstrued meanings, differing terminology, and the lack of planning and neglect toward language on the researcher's part (Bogner et al., 2018; Court & Abbas, 2013; Littig & Pöchhacker, 2014; Roberts, 2013). To mitigate problems like these in international research where an investigator and interviewee speak different languages, we use English as a *lingua franca* (also called "English-only" interviews) because both parties are assumed to be proficient enough for an interview. Littig and Pöchhacker (2014) acknowledged that "English-only" interviews can be restrictive because there is no way to assess communicative competencies before or during a meeting, but they provided no further analysis.

Upon reflection, I benefited by planning to only conduct interviews in English for the project. The standard language of communication in international education is

English. For example, university websites have English equivalent pages, courses are taught in English, and official administrative documentation is written in the native language and English. Additionally, due to prior professional experience in international higher education, I knew first-hand that most administrators and public officials speak English fluently or could refer me to someone who did. In the preparation and Ethics Board application stages, I planned for any eventuality. I was prepared to train and use research assistants (volunteer undergraduates from the departments where I was a visiting Ph.D. student researcher) as interpreters when needed. Once in the field, I discovered all experts spoke English well and some were native English-speakers, voiding a need for interpreters. I should also note that I am accustomed to hearing accented English, having been born and raised in a bilingual city. Therefore, I cannot recall an instance where articulation posed any difficulties to interviewees or me. Overall, interviewing and collecting data in English had the benefit of continuity and avoided the need for interpreters, thus averting language, competency, communication, and privacy issues.

One language exception was that there were not always English versions available of government documents. I circumvented this problem when collecting web-based information on policies by using a translate function to read and save webpages in English. In cases where PDFs were available only in Arabic or Russian, and I could not fully translate the information myself, I asked colleagues for help. My listening/speaking language skills deficiency arose as a limitation on one occasion. In Saint Petersburg, I attended an Open House presentation, unexpectedly given in Russian. From what I understood, I took notes. Afterward, I interviewed the Director, Ivan, in English. I made it a point to ask additional clarification questions to ensure I understood his presentation. Otherwise, multilingual problems were limited to my personal everyday life.[23]

I acknowledge that depending on the research topic and location, an investigator may not have the possibility to conduct all, if any, interviews in English. They must, therefore, interview in the person's native language either with or without a translator. I work in a subject area that requires a high level of English language fluency, but at times when I asked for referrals—particularly in Russia—interviewees would pause to think. This may be because not everyone speaks English, or colleagues do not speak English amongst each other and therefore do not know their proficiency level or some people may be more willing than others to participate. While English proficiency may not be a concern in expert interview methods, for those who choose to interview in English, we should be aware of constraining the possible interviewee pool as a result of meeting with only those who are comfortable speaking English.

Limitations of low numbers of experts.

Lastly, in planning the project, I went in knowing that there would be a small pool of interviewees on which to draw. Beside my professional work in higher education, I had also interned at a US federal agency in Washington, DC, where we conducted

[23] I had varying problems reading or speaking the native language. In the UAE, I had no trouble because all public signage is posted in English and Arabic, and everyone with whom I interacted daily spoke English due to the high immigration population. In Russia, I had a bit of trouble. Much of city center signage is posted in Russian, English, and Chinese because the men's soccer World Cup was hosted in Moscow in 2018, but the further from the city center less was posted in English. In one instance, on the way to a university in the suburbs, all signage was in Russian. I "chatted" with a railway worker via a translation app on their mobile to get help, and I used the Google Translate application to "read" signage by hovering my phone over the text to find the machine to stamp my ticket. Overall, my most uncomfortable interactions were at the grocery store. In the UAE, all cashiers speak English, and at one grocery store, a cashier asked me if I preferred to pay in US dollars or dirham. Whereas, Russian cashiers asked a lot of questions that I did not fully understand, which was awkward at first. As I became more adept, I replied.

interviews with experts as a way to audit national programming and policy. From this experience, I knew that there would be few people in a professional role who could act as an informant. I was interested in social processes, not autobiographical experiences, so I designed my interviews to capture knowledge and expertise of people who were doers. These people's quotidian work composed their understanding and interpretation of policy (i.e., they were policy practitioners).

At the same time, I also knew who I did *not* want to interview. I was not interested in elites or heads who were the representative power of an organization or institution (such as a University Director) because it was likely they would not have direct experience in international education management. Likewise, I did not want to interview international students as "experiential experts" because they would not know the innerworkings of the institution they attended—it was not their role or responsibility. One university visit in the UAE illustrates this point. I took a campus tour with an international student, during which I asked questions about the school and her studies. At a stop at a café, Isabelle explained that she received "Dining Dirham" that she used on meals or small snacks. I asked about her government-supported financial aid package and the process of getting it. She shrugged her shoulders; she had no idea how national policy and agreements resulted in money in her pocket. In contrast, after the tour when I spoke with Saeed, Associate Director of Admissions, and asked him the same question, he knew about funding, student aid, and scholarships, the ruler of the emirate's interpretation of national development policy, the political economy of the city and emirate. He gave me a full understanding of student financial packages as they fit with university funding. In short, researchers must go to the most appropriate experts to glean the information they need.

My research revealed two factors that produced a limited pool of experts: (1) there are few people in professional roles who are appropriate interviewee candidates; (2) expert interviews tend to have high non-response rates, meaning meeting requests are ignored. In other words, a researcher must manage a low number of experts in the first place and even fewer who are available and agree to the interview. To overcome the issues, I employed two techniques: First, I relied on non-probability sampling. I depended on interviewee referrals, and when I sent cold-call emails, I estimated one out of every four requests would result in an interview (sending twenty emails may lead to four interviews scheduled). Second, I accepted that I would have a small number of participants. I tried to avoid the ever-present question, “How many interviews is enough?” (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Rather, I aimed to triangulate data among my interviews.

Ethical Considerations

An ongoing debate in social scientific research debates as to whether participatory research, also called democratized and emancipatory research, is beneficial or harmful for the researcher and researched (Bogner & Menz, 2009; Evans & Kotchetkova, 2009; Vainio, 2013). Participatory research gives power to the research participants, not only the researcher. It is enacted through practices such as honoring interviewees’ wishes to be identified (Baez, 2002; Grinyer, 2002; Wiles et al., 2006, 2008) and involving them in analysis (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009), instead of defaulting to anonymity (Baez, 2002) and a researcher's independent interpretation of interviewees' meanings (Vainio, 2013). In terms of interviewing experts, anonymity is particularly contentious because they may be classified as public figures that fall under Institutional Review Board exempt categories. A researcher must determine if experts should be identified due to their position or to anonymize them, and whether or not it is ethical to audio record or take notes (Hertel et al., 2009; Woliver, 2002). Likewise, while at face value experts seem to be prime subjects to participate, it may not always be appropriate to involve interviewees. They may not readily extrapolate to broader contexts beyond their knowledge or lived experiences (Obelené, 2009) because they do not have the same data, knowledge, and understanding as the researcher.

In light of these epistemological concerns, to what extent should and can researchers identify experts, involve them in research, and how collaborative should a researcher be with the experts? How do researchers approach these ethical issues in practice, and how does an international, multi-sited context shape their responses? In this section, I address ethical concerns I navigated in terms of anonymity, giving back, and involving participants in the research process, and how an international, multi-sited context necessitated modification of these practices. In line with Vainio (2013) and Hertel and her colleagues (2009), I concur that it is the researcher's responsibility to manage the anonymity of the individuals and organizations under study, and that—especially in international work—it is equally important to give back as it is to take information. In contrast to prior literature, I find that researchers can involve participants in the data collection and analysis process by adopting transparent reporting practices, such as using Records of Interviews (ROIs), in addition, to interview transcripts.

Anonymity.

I grappled with what to do about anonymity and confidentiality during three stages of the research: during preparations, while in the field, and when analyzing and reporting data and findings. In the research design of this project, I wanted to give interviewees the option to identify themselves, but with further development, this seemed a moot point since it was not the individual and their experiences I was interested in, rather it was institutional and national policy processes. Considering this point, I debated as to whether I should name organizations, and I initially planned to ask the interviewee's permission to identify universities and agencies where they worked. During the Ethics Board process, I had numerous conversations with the officer assigned to my application because there was a worry as to potential problems gaining access to organizations and permission identifying them. The Board approved an institutional access letter template that requested permission to interview employees and to identify the organization, which could be signed by my advisor or a supervising faculty at the university affiliates (Template 5.1.). I prepared a copy of this access letter to send to interviewees if they needed it. This was handy because, in Russia, my colleagues thought I may have needed a formal introduction letter to secure interviews, and I offered the template copy. My colleagues had the letter translated into Russian and planned to have it signed by the university director so I could have formal proof of institutional affiliation if needed. As it were, no interviewees needed the letter.[24] Later, during the analysis stage, I reflected on how not needing to use the letter may have shaped participant access and data obtained.

In the design phase, I also put a lot of thought into whether people I would interview would be categorized as public officials who are exempt from confidentiality. If they were, should I follow this practice faithfully in the field when considering my international research context? I did not blindly assume my participants were public figures and instead erred on the side of caution, deciding to offer them anonymity. Additionally, I considered that the participants lived permanently in the UAE and Russia even after I returned to the US. I built in safety to my consent and confidentiality protocols because I knew political situations could change suddenly, which could put my interviewees at risk even given low risks of a non-sensitive topic. In my ethics protocol, I had all participants verbally consent to the interview and to remain anonymous in published work. For consistency, I adhered to a set of steps for informed consent and anonymity: After the person had agreed by email or WhatsApp to interview, I emailed a copy of the project description (informed consent) (Template 5.2.) and a thematic questionnaire (Template 5.3.); then at the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself and the project, explained the Report of Interview (ROI) process; finally, I asked for verbal consent to interview and permission to audio record and to take notes.

24 I was never asked for an access letter. Only once, in the UAE, I was asked to furnish my research proposal, Ethics Board approval(s), and questionnaire. After conducting the interviews at the university, the participant who was the university research director commented to me that because I had all the required documentation ready and accessible, it made the process of granting an interview much easier for her.

In the data collection stage of the project, I felt some uncertainty as to what to do because all interviewees agreed to note-taking, but some participants declined audio recording altogether, and others agreed to be recorded after confirming the audio file would be used for research purposes by me only. After the first interviews in the UAE that I did not get recordings, I felt that I had failed because I perceived the gold standard in qualitative research was to provide verbatim quotes in published work. I thought my data and final findings would suffer. After transcribing the first recorded interview and writing the ROI using the transcript and my handwritten notes, I realized my notes proved more concise than the transcript. They did not include banter and instead noted discussion points, comments the person made, who was in the room, and afterward, any annotations that felt pertinent to the analysis. As I collected more interviews, it became apparent that it was as common for interviewees to decline as to accept audio recording. What emerged was that my notes and ROIs—on which some experts commented and provided feedback, clarification, and corrections—were just as viable data as audio transcripts. Ultimately, I had many levels of rich data: handwritten notes, audio recordings, paraphrased data in the ROIs, and experts' comments on the ROIs. This suggests that, in addition to scholarship standards that rely on transcript data, qualitative researchers[25] can also produce and analyze multiple forms of rich data.

Lastly, in the analysis and reporting stage, I revisited the importance of who and what was identified and used this to determine whether an organization's or individual's

[25] Interview transcripts are imperative for some types of interviews, such as a person relating their biographical lived experiences where their diction and gesticulation become data to analyze (Meuser & Nagel, 2009, p. 32).

position should be named in my written products. I reevaluated the fact that my informed consent procedure included the participants agreeing to *their* anonymity but not that of the organization for which they worked since none requested or required an access letter. Only once did an interviewee indicate to me that per his press office, he spoke as an independent consultant on the topic, not as a representative of his institution. It was unclear if this was because I conducted the interview with him over the phone while he was traveling abroad instead of at his office, or for another unnamed reason. Therefore, I again decided to err on the side of confidentiality and chose to identify interviewees by pseudonyms and their employment position and not their organization (see Table 5.1. for a list of interviewees by a pseudonym, employment position title, and affiliation type).

I reflected that perhaps in the future participant and organization confidentiality and anonymity could be more explicit in the informed consent protocol. This could make access more difficult because the person being interviewed (e.g., a Director) may not be the same person to grant permission to access the organization and name it in the researcher's work (e.g., a Rector). This may also prolong research time since the letter would need to reach and be approved by an appropriate party before the interview took place. If I were to adopt this practice, I would first return to my previous interviewees and inquire as to how this process would change interview scheduling and if it were a feasible or desirable option.

Involving experts in data collection and analysis.

Participatory research calls to include interviewees in data collection and analysis processes to give them power over what is understood and produced (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). The question arises, is this practice always appropriate (Obelené, 2009)? I will not delve into the debate here. Instead, I asked: what does it look like to involve experts in data collection and analysis? In this section, I discuss how using Reports of Interview (ROIs) (also called "Records of Interview") is one effective method.

Before moving forward, it is essential to recall that employing expert interview methods is driven by an investigator's research questions, which focus on the interviewee's expertise and professional knowledge as a way to infer to larger social processes. A difference between expert and auto-biographical interviews is the research subject. *Who* or *what* is the researcher investigating? An individuals' experiences (*who*) may equate to data in auto-biographical interviews as compared to expert interviews that generate data not on the individual but on broader phenomena (*what*).

Due to this difference, although interview techniques are similar, data can be produced differently. This allows researchers who conduct expert interviews to involve their participants in ways that may not be otherwise fitting. One entry in my notebook about a meeting with a colleague illustrates this point.

> Met with Anya today. She studies international students who come to study in Russia…. [W]e also talked about methods. She explained that she interviewed in Russian and sometimes in English, although she was surprised at the low level of spoken language of some of her participants and wondered how they got by in their studies. She said that when communication was poor between her and a student, she would write questions so they could reply that way. She said it was challenging since her data were primarily transcripts from audio recordings and

notes taken during interviews. All of her interviewees agreed to audio recording. I related to her that not all my interviewees agreed to be recorded, but I took handwritten notes. She inquired what I did about transcripts. I explained that as soon as possible, following every interview, I wrote an ROI, really drawing on my notes and referring to the audio recording when available. I then sent the ROI to each participant, so they had a copy of our conversation and asked them for feedback and corrections, which has proven to be an extra layer of data. I felt transcripts just as important as ROIs. She seemed surprised and said that she would not ask her interviewees for feedback, nor would she show them the transcript.

For each interview, I wrote a Report of Interview (ROI). My ROIs have two components: who attended and what was discussed. I created a template similar to one that I had used while a policy analyst for a US governmental auditing agency. The reason I used ROIs for expert interviews was threefold. (1) I wanted to have *a document* for each interview based on handwritten notes and audio files to capture meetings in a succinct, paraphrased manner that was organized by theme (e.g., “International Students,” “National Policy,” “University Partnerships,” and “Future of International Education”). I found this was a better practice than providing a copy of the audio transcript to experts because long, dense transcripts of audio data may be of little benefit to participants. ROIs are easy to read and understand since much superfluous chatter is eliminated. An ROI is also arguably the first stage of analysis since the researcher is obliged to compile and produce a report from the data a participant related in their interview. (2) *Report review* *and comment* periods are a standard operating procedure in public administration, and I wanted to replicate this procedure given I had worked with an expert population that included people in public agencies. In public administration, the purpose of the review and comment period is to evaluate final reports, but I asked my interviewees to review interview data, not the final analysis. I emailed a copy of the ROI in MS-Word so that participants had a record of the conversation to keep for themselves. I involved the interviewees in the data collection step by asking them to acknowledge the information and to correct, comment on, or add information. This practice also allowed interviewees to request to have something redacted from the ROI or excluded from the final analysis. Although not all interviewees responded, many acknowledged that the ROI "looked good" or added and corrected information.[26] (3) I furnished a copy of the interview as an ROI to participants for safety and transparency reasons. I knew that political climate and topic sensitivity could change quickly so I wanted interviewees to have evidence of the data I would be analyzing so they would not be surprised by findings or quotes and, in the case they needed to ensure their safety, participants could show what was discussed in the interview. Likewise, it was important for me to be as transparent as possible. Including interviewees in data review and the first level of analysis could quell any question of ill intentions (as arose in the 2018 arrest of Ph.D. student Matthew Hedges in Dubai).

26 When I received responses from the interviewees, usually corrections made were to ensure representation was correct (for example, "14" not "40" students). In other cases, an interviewee wanted a specific part of our conversation redacted, and another did not wish to have personal details included in the final written documents.

In terms of involving experts in the analysis stage, Obelené (2009) felt it was inappropriate to try to include experts in analyzing data during the interview. She noted that when she tried this approach, participants told her that she had misunderstood their meaning. During project preparation and when in the field, I had no intention to involve my participants in data analysis beyond reviewing their ROI. I endeavored to remain neutral, not swaying their understandings in one way or another. However, on one occasion, in an interview with a public official at a think tank, I interpreted some of my results and explained them to the interviewee to ask for her feedback. In my field notes, I commented that I felt like it was like a dialogue between colleagues, and it was one of my best interviews. The conversation was helpful to me as a way to member-check my findings to ensure I did not come to spurious results that scholars may be prone to producing when they misinterpret public policy (Hunter et al., 2007).

While my participants were experts on international student mobility and were happy to interview due to our mutual interest in the topic, I noted one condition that would have hindered involving participants in analysis had I planned to do so: many interviewees did not have an understanding of the phenomenon of international student mobility outside their institution. In introducing the project and explaining the expectations for the interview, I invited interviewees to ask questions. Interviewees asked questions during and after the interview. The most common inquiry posed was for me to interpret back the data and my understanding of the high-level processes to them. Interviewees also were curious about what other institutions in the country were doing. I understood this as interviewees asking for a description through a macro lens so that they could better situate their institutional work within the national context. Surprisingly, as researchers, we may assume that the ecosystem in which we work is closed, thus making experts prime candidates to participate in data analysis as an equal partner. Yet I observed that interviewees can be siloed within their institution, which curbs their ability to collaborate meaningfully. Specifically, while collecting my data, I realized that interpretations lay between the lines of what people recounted during their interviews. Interviewees would not be privy to the connections among the data other than their own work. This point underscores Bogner and Menz's (2009) three modes of data collection (exploratory, systematized, and theory-generating), such that a researcher undertaking theory-making and hypothesis-testing questioning cannot effectively involve experts in analysis beyond exploratory or fact-finding data collection.

Sharing information and experiences.

Researchers are encouraged to "give back" to the community from which they source their data (Diver & Higgins, 2014; Gupta & Kelly, 2014; Kindon et al., 2007). Sharing information and experiences is respectful, and a good practice, no matter the research population. Conventional sharing techniques are for the researcher to send digital or print copies of published work, to present findings, to make financial donations to participant organizations, or to engage in community advocacy (Hertel et al., 2009). How do we "give back" to an expert who appears to have a more privileged position than us, and how do we manage our engagement given limited time in the field?

Throughout my fieldwork, I kept a running list of ways I gave back to the research community in my notebooks. Upon analysis of my notes, I categorized my engagement in three ways: I agreed to something an interviewee requested of me (*agree*), I offered something to my interviewee that I could see would benefit them (*offer*), and I asked participants what they needed (*ask*). In other words, I used three methods to give back: *Agree*: “Yes, I’d be happy to do that”; *Offer*: “What can I do?”; and *Ask*: “What do you need?”. It is important to keep in mind that for each researcher, the research context and population shape their responses. Instead of setting rules on how to give back (Gupta & Kelly, 2014), I present examples of how I maneuvered the *agree-offer-ask* model.

First, I found the easiest way to give back was to agree to requests my gatekeepers or interviewees made. My gatekeeper in the UAE asked me to participate in the undergraduate student thesis presentation committee panels. I happily helped out because it relieved pressure on my colleague to find an additional committee member, it allowed me to integrate into the department with other faculty members, and I saw in which topics undergraduate students were interested. Likewise, when a Dean of Graduate Studies asked me if I would be willing to provide feedback on my stay, I willingly commented on what went well and areas for improvement. I intended to improve future visits for myself and other researchers. When in Russia, a Director of the Department of Internationalisation asked me to contribute a piece on faculty and postdoctoral migration to a periodical. This was a way to participate in the department as well as share my research by writing on a topic outside of my direct project.

Next, while it is easy to agree to a request, researchers are experts in their field too (Pfadenhauer, 2009) and are thus in a position to recognize opportunities to offer to give back even when not asked. One way I assisted interviewees was orienting participants who had never been interviewed and did not know what to expect. I developed a technique from my prior professional experience conducting interviews and employed it to obtain the best interview possible. In my work in the UAE and Russia, I emailed the Ethics Board approved project information and interview themes to interviewees beforehand so they could prepare. I recognized that English was not the native language for many of the interviewees and wanted them to be comfortable with discussion points. Some participants printed the thematic questionnaire, jotted notes on it, and had it available to refer to during the interview. Participants who were not acquainted with interviewing indicated as such to me, and I was happy to explain the process and to answer any questions to make them more comfortable before they began the interview. I treat each interview as a friendly conversation between colleagues but follow a semi-structured format (i.e., purposefully discussing certain themes).

Another way I offered to give back was to use my expertise to connect colleagues who share mutual interests. Pfadenhauer (2009) pointed out that expert interviews have two sides—the expert's expertise and the interviewer's prerequisite competencies. In my reflective notes, I remarked that despite their knowledge and experience in the field, in some cases I had equal experience and sometimes more knowledge of the topic than experts I interviewed because I professionally worked in the higher education and public administration sectors and I maintain a network of international colleagues. My position was advantageous because interviews shaped up not only as an exchange of information (as mentioned above) but also as a way to connect interested people to one another. In one interview, a Department Chair and I discussed a project that was spearheaded under federal internationalization policies, and the Chair noted it was challenging because that is in a location that she and her colleagues knew little about (India). I have a good friend at a university in India who is a professor and dean, and when I emailed the ROI to the Chair, I provided the contact information for my colleague and offered to facilitate an introduction. In another instance, a Director of International Partnerships was curious about university exchange templates and making connections to other partnership and exchange offices. From my prior experience—further substantiated by interviews in the UAE and Russia—I knew that sharing exchange document templates is common and is one way universities establish partnership agreements. I collected some information on MOU processes and sent that information along with contact information (who to speak with first in an Exchange Office as opposed to a director). This facilitated that interviewee reaching out to other professionals to arrange to meet them at a large upcoming conference.

Lastly, it may be difficult for a researcher to ask, "What do you need?" but it can be seen as an extension of offering something to your interviewees. The point is that interviewees may not make a request if you do not ask. During interviews, I listened to changes and experiences my interviewees related to me and, using these cues, when I concluded interviews, I could suggest something I perceived they may find useful. In one instance, the day I arrived for an interview, the university was hosting a career fair, and my interviewees and I discussed it. At the end of the interview, I asked if the International Office would like me to do a presentation (in person or via Skype) to their students on researching abroad. In another case, an International Admissions Director managed a lot of revolving projects, and I happily gave feedback. In one text conversation, the Director asked me for thoughts on the wording of a new scholarship program. I asked questions and commented on it.

I continued to give back even after I returned home in an ongoing, dynamic research relationship (Diver & Higgins, 2014). One of the main ways I remained engaged in the community, besides offering feedback when appropriate, is via professional networking. Through networking, my implicit goals are to continually build connections and to collectively share knowledge globally. Connections—both being referred to others and introducing others to each other—are important for a researcher to develop as a professional in the field, but they prove to be equally important to give back. Remaining in contact with experts means that researchers can give a presentation on their findings, invite an expert as a guest lecturer via Skype to courses the researcher teaches or co-authoring together.

I approach all interviewees with an attitude to cultivate a long-term relationship. By remaining "plugged in" to the community, I attempt to move beyond merely sharing written work or extracting information resources then leaving, especially since a researcher is a topic expert themselves and can emerge as a connection node among participants. I keep in contact with people around the globe, it is one of the joys of international, multi-sited work.

These three illustrations show how giving back, reconceived another way, the researcher can return her own time to someone whose time she took for an interview. For me, the *agree-offer-ask* model allowed me to engage directly while in the field instead of waiting months or years until I had published work ready to share.

Expert Interview Benefits

Bogner, Littig, and Menz (2009) highlight that expert interviews have two practical benefits (economical, efficient), and one methodological advantage (yield good results). Collecting data via expert interviews in an international context had three methodological benefits for me: having an insider/outsider position, the ability to analyze an ecosystem, not personal biographies, and using thematic dialogue for hypothesis-testing and theory-building.

Insider-outsider positionality.

As an American in the UAE and Russia, I was an outsider. As a researcher, an "experiential expert" because of my personal experience as an international student, and professional expertise in higher education internationalization, I was an insider. I was also aware that during my fieldwork, I was the subject that I was researching—an internationally mobile student. These juxtaposed positions shaped my fieldwork and the way I approached interviews.

Being an outsider had its benefits. In a conversation over tea with a fellow researcher in Moscow, we were casually talking about research, and she mentioned to me that it must be good to not be Russian because my interviewees may not assume I know everything about the context and actually explain to me more about the particular social processes I'm studying. This was perceptive on her part. Admittedly, I used the "tell me more" technique in interviews so that even when I knew something well, I would elicit further explanations. It would not seem odd that I wanted to know more because, as a foreigner, an interviewee may assume that I may not have all the available information. Moreover, while other researchers (Roberts, 2013) had rapport difficulties because I was an outsider, I felt that I was treated and respected as a guest. The one time I had a problem with rapport was with someone in the US. In the weeks before my departure to the field, I contacted people with whom I could pre-test my thematic questionnaire. One person patronized me, treating me as if I had no expertise in the subject or working abroad. I steadied myself for subsequent interviews to follow suit, but happily, that did not happen in the field. People were friendly and accommodating, offering tea or coffee and sometimes small sweets when I arrived at their office for an interview. I, in turn, presented my interviewees with my business card and a little thank you gift, a sticky note pack with my university logo. Offering a thank you gift is something I learned during my first exchange when I was eighteen years old, and I have carried that practice throughout my travels and research.

Although I was an outsider by nationality, I was an insider by experience, and this position was also advantageous. Over the past twenty years, I have been on numerous short-term exchanges, twice lived abroad as a long-term student for a total of three years, worked in higher education and public policy, and continue to maintain an international network. Following my last interview in the UAE, during the car ride back from Abu Dhabi to my dormitory in Al Ain, I reflected on how these prior experiences informed my understanding of the subject, access, interview data collection, and my ability to give back. For one, I was not only knowledgeable about the subject, but I also could connect people with mutual interests. My positions converged into a ‘third position’ as a not-quite insider or outsider (Carling et al., 2014; Matejskova, 2014), but as a hybrid insider-outsider who shares some experiences with my study population and professional expertise with my interviewees.

Lastly, hybrid insider-outsider positionality does have drawbacks. Pfadenhauer (2009, p. 90) recognized that before engaging in expert interviews, researchers must have a high degree of specialized thematic competence, which is acquired through a long period of socialization. She argues that this socialization process requires students to read and be well-versed in canonical documents, and thus favors theoretical versus practical knowledge and negates prior topic expertise. The academic trajectory may infantilize Ph.D. candidates, and, in my personal experience, it can erase knowledge and abilities that were obtained outside of academia, even when they are in the research area. Researchers become “experts” in their own right after having come back from the field and published their findings in peer-reviewed outlets. It is worth mentioning that researchers may have to follow normative requirements in academia, researching in certain countries due to funding and time limitations, as well as publishing in journals that create privileged exclusion through narrow aim and scope foci (Johnson, 2020). It is a disservice to ignore researchers’ *a priori* positions and expertise.

Acknowledging prior knowledge and expertise is beneficial. As suggested by my fieldwork, experience facilitates participant access as well as establishes an insider-outsider hybrid position. Having expertise also reduces the long academic socialization process. In small strokes, academic circles laud non-academic, multidisciplinary expertise. As colleagues, we can champion fellow researchers in non-traditional areas from multidisciplinary backgrounds. As mentors, we can recognize, cultivate, and help young researchers hone the application of their talents. Institutionally, we can promote research among our colleagues' research in non-traditional sites, as well as work toward funding this type of work.

Analyzing a topic ecosystem.

In social sciences, we can define an ecosystem as a community of interconnected actors and organizations. I found that expert interviews were one of the most appropriate methods to collect data on an ecosystem of interest. The data allowed me to analyze the ecosystem of the topic and field of interest through two mechanisms, methodology and researcher expertise and research context.

First, as opposed to qualitative interviews whose purpose is to elicit individual autobiographical accounts, expert interviews are one method investigators can use to effectively understand social processes that constitute a professional or occupational ecosystem and its associated social processes. In other words, biographical interviews inform at the micro-level about people's personal experiences of social influences on them. In using expert interviews, a participant's professional position shapes their observations, and it is up to the researcher to assemble and understand how micro-, meso-, and macro-levels (e.g., individual, institutional, and national) contribute to and interact among one another. We may, therefore, employ this method to interrogate processes within an ecosystem: what does the interviewee do and how they understand their practices? How do they participate in the organization/institute, and what is the organization/ institute's actions(s)? How does the organization/institute fit into the national agenda? How does the country interface with other nations in the sphere of interest? We must design expert interview thematic questionnaires, data, and analysis to focus on the ecosystem, not individuals.

At this point, we must pause to disentangle what we, as researchers, are reporting and why. If we look to individuals to relate their lived experiences (autobiographical), then transcripts, audio recordings, and notes are essential data (Vainio, 2013). If we want to understand meso- and macro-social processes, data generated from experts are the paraphrased understanding of how they experience and understand social processes, as well as with whom they interact, how they perceive other actors in the ecosystem, and their evaluation of their participation. The strength of expert interviews lies at the nexus between what research questions ask and what the most appropriate method is to answer them. The resulting data and analysis should, therefore, reflect this intersection. For example, a researcher interested in the *sociology of higher education* who researches how international students make their decision on where to study after the adoption of certain federal policies would report data at the micro-level (data are direct quotes from interviewees' transcripts which may include spoken and physical minutiae, such as interviewees' emotional heavy pauses or hand gestures). Her analysis would look for patterns across participants' responses to better understand decision-making processes. For a researcher interested in the *political economy of higher education* who studies the processes of national internationalization policies on students, it becomes less important to report word-for-word (Littig, 2009), and paraphrasing processes, behaviors, responses, and actions in the broader ecosystem become key. Analysis of expert interviews examines patterns and outcomes across social system(s).

Second, in using expert interviews as a data collection technique, researchers must bring their own expertise and specialized knowledge to the research context in which they are directly situated. I found that the matrix of insider knowledge and embeddedness within an ecosystem is crucial to non-spurious analysis. Not only did I have specialized knowledge, but through interviews with numerous experts in multiple sites, I was able to connect isolated interpretations and practices into one cohesive analysis. For example, in our daily lives, we may take something as a given because we do not have a reference point. During my interviews, experts would ask me what I observed and inferred or what other universities were doing. Although we may assume because they are actors in the same system, they would be aware of each other, but more often than not, I found university administrators were siloed unless they had a professional social peer network.

The expertise-context matrix is also conducive for ecosystem analysis because although I have a working knowledge of current events, political history, International Relations theory, and an intimate understanding of the global international higher education market, I cannot know everything. I created my thematic questionnaire to capture a part of the growing international education market, but it was my interviewees who described the research context in a way I may have never heard about otherwise. For instance, in two different interviews with International Affairs directors in Russia, each told about how their respective universities informally began with internationalization schemes by collaborating with Finnish and German colleagues. In the UAE, three separate interviewees described how over the past twenty-five years, they saw international education move from an inward- to an outward-looking endeavor and how international partnerships were one of the main ways this occurred. On another occasion, an interview in Russia helped me make sense of marketing strategies that were described to me in an interview in the UAE. Likewise, by speaking with university administrators and public officials in the UAE about the country and its strategic policy, I better comprehended the standing and actions of Malaysia and Qatar within the global market, as well as emerging international education actors in Africa. These vignettes represented information I could not find through an internet search. Moreover, it was up to me as the researcher in an international, multi-sited research context to use interview data to compare the ecosystem's similarities and differences in policies, intentions, and actions. Expert interviews showed how the inner cogs of an ecosystem, the international higher education market, work.

Hypothesis-testing and theory-building.

Critiques of expert interviews purport that this technique is rarely thought out and consequentially useful only for exploratory or fact-finding purposes (Bogner & Menz, 2009; Meuser & Nagel, 2009). This denotes that this type of data collection is not appropriate for in-depth analysis. But it should not be the case for researchers who offer their own expertise and knowledge. In line with Bogner and Menz (2009, pp. 68–69), I found that conducting expert interviews using an open-ended thematic questionnaire yielded data beyond an exploratory phase. However, while they suggest *interviewer as* *layperson* and *interviewer as an accomplice* as types of interview approaches that generate theory, I argue that *interviewer as co-expert, expert from a different knowledge culture* are also valid techniques to test hypotheses and build theory. Specifically, I used three procedures in the process: questionnaire design, data coding, and recursive analysis.

A thematic questionnaire is a tool I used to create data via a semi-structured dialogue. Unlike autobiographical interviews where data are spoken or written quotes from participants (Vainio, 2013), data produced by expert interviews are explanations, interpretations, and understandings. In other words, data are the meaning of experts' statements, not their specific words or phrases. As a co-expert, I designed questionnaires as a series of questions to facilitate a conversation based on purposeful themes to get at these meanings. When I began designing the questionnaire for this study, in a spreadsheet, I listed three broad themes based in the literature, which I then broke down into more precise sub-themes. For each of those sub-themes, I wrote questions I wanted to answer, hypotheses, and from where I would source data. I then revised the broad themes and drafted a series of questions, streamlining from the original comprehensive list. My questionnaires had three themes: International Students, Institutional Partnerships, and National Higher Education Internationalization Policy. After receiving feedback from a trusted colleague, I pared down the prompts. I submitted two similar questionnaires (one for university administrators, one for public officials) as part of my Ethics Board application.

In the field, after confirming a meeting, I emailed interviewees a project information sheet (Participation Consent form) and the questionnaire to get them orientated to the subject and potential questions we would discuss. In some cases, my interviewees had printed out the page, written notes on it, and brought it to the interview. In the interview, how does the questionnaire generate data? Given my interest in how national internationalization policies shape in-bound foreign student mobility, I asked related questions under each of my three themes. For instance: Describe who international students are. What is the relationship between the university/higher education sector and the government *vis-à-vis* national policy? How is international student mobility approached in internationalization policy? Following each interview, I wrote a Report of Interview (ROI), which paraphrased the interview from my notes and, when available, the transcript (not all interviewees agree to be audio recorded). I emailed the respective ROI to interviewees and requested their feedback on the document; this also produced another level of data. I used the questionnaires to break down the interview data as the *who, what,* and *how* of social processes.

The next step is to code the generated data. What do we code, and how? I coded interview transcripts, ROIs, and interviewee comments on their ROIs. I conducted analysis on interviews in two ways: inductively and deductively. First, I coded data for its content. I read through each of the ROIs and transcripts. I coded words, phrases, and statements to identify emerging patterns from the interviews. I simultaneously wrote analytic memos to reflect on the narrow patterns I coded. I conducted several rounds of this type of inductive analysis, working to scale from narrow observations to more broad generalizations. I then applied deductive analysis in the case where I had specific theoretical underpinnings to parse out. I went back through the data and coded using a pre-set scheme I defined from the relevant literature. Because each theme in the questionnaire was theoretically grounded, my questionnaire and coding were inextricably intertwined with the literature and my hypotheses. I used themes as section headers when writing up the ROIs, and coding brought me back to identify narrow and broad themes within the data.

The benefit of using these types of analysis allowed me to test hypotheses with deductive analysis and build theory with an inductive approach. For example, inductive analysis scales from narrow observations to broader generalizations to develop theory based on connections within the data. My inductive process was not unidirectional, it was recursive. I began my research with broad themes, then moved to sub-themes for my questionnaires. During coding, I identified narrow themes, then moved back up to broad themes. This recursive nature meant that I could assess my hypotheses—from my analysis, where did they stand, and how did they hold against prior theoretical literature? Finally, because the project had initially been theoretically grounded, I could further advance theory by adding nuance based on my findings. For instance, much of the literature on international student mobility is produced on and by traditional destination countries that are wealthy democracies, such as the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and Germany. However, I found that theoretical explanations for policy determinants in these contexts did not jibe with non-traditional destinations' political-economic motivations. Moreover, I felt expert interviews at multiple international sites produced cohesive theoretically based arguments of social processes within an ecosystem.

I must mention that coding expert interviews is not as straightforward as we may suppose. Some patterns were quite explicit (for example, institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported to the national government for funding purposes operationalized and measured how policies work), but when I was in the field, I realized it was not what interviewees discussed with me, the core of the data was the interconnection to what others related. Rather, it was not something someone said or did, it was the practices together that presented the ecosystem that were meaningful.

Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this paper was threefold: to, more broadly, provide an analysis of the use of one qualitative method—expert interviews—in international multi-sited fieldwork, and to contribute to the evaluation of the method in non-Western contexts; and, specifically, to advance the application of expert interviews as a data collection technique and methodological tool. As I demonstrated in this chapter, expert interviews in international fieldwork offer theoretical benefits, which I argue trump any practical challenges and methodological limitations.

In addition, a post-fieldwork reflexivity strategy had the added benefit that I thought back on the expert interview research process with the aim to share strategies I employed with other researchers so that they may implement strategies to overcome potential issues they may encounter during their fieldwork. I acknowledge that although suggestions presented here are based on the political economy of international higher education, my overall objective is for researchers to find the strategies useful in their own current, ongoing, and future research endeavors no matter the subject. Finally, my recommendations should also help move qualitative social science forward past deficiencies in our disciplines, institutions, and the academy.

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Template 5.1.

Access Letter Template

[University Affiliate Letterhead]

Date

From: [Director]
University
Department
Division

Dear Director,

The purpose of this letter is for Karin Johnson, a graduate student at the University of California, Riverside, and Visiting Ph.D. Student Scholar in residence at [Department, University], to request permission to conduct research at your institution. The project, "Shifting Skilled Migration Trends in the Global Economy: A Comparative Analysis of International Student Mobility," entails interviews with administrators at your organization in order to better understand the interaction of development policy and higher education on international student mobility to [country].

Ms. Johnson requests one 60-minute interview with various personnel at your institution; interviews will be conducted in English. Ms. Johnson asks permission to audio record and take written notes of the interview for research purposes.

Ms. Johnson also requests permission to use the name of your organization in her published work. Naming your organization in published material is not required, and you have the option for anonymity; Ms. Johnson will honor your preference. Ms. Johnson will ensure that all information regarding individual participants will remain secure and strictly confidential at all times.

Following the interview, you will receive a written copy of a “Record of Interview” (ROI) by email. The ROI lists the individuals present, their contact information, and summarizes the main themes and findings from the interview. The purpose of the ROI is for your record-keeping, and record-keeping and preliminary analysis for the researcher. You can review and comment on the ROI and may request that portions not be included in published findings (e.g., private information). Ms. Johnson will share published materials with you via email (e.g., PDF copy of articles).

If you should have any questions, Ms. Johnson is available to you at kjohn033@ucr.edu or by Whatsapp: +1 951 288 ----.

I thank you in advance for your attention and for the institution’s collaboration and commitment to research in higher education.

Sincerely,

Director

Template 5.2.

Project Information Sheet

COMPARING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH
Primary Investigator: Karin Johnson, University of California Riverside
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Augustine Kposowa, University of California Riverside

PROJECT INFORMATION
You are invited to join a research study that looks at how national economic diversification policies are used in governmental agencies, private sector organizations, and higher education institutes and how that shapes incoming international student mobility. The aim is to understand how your organization manages educational mobility.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY? You are asked to participate in one interview with the researcher. If you agree to be interviewed for this study, you will *not* be interviewed as a private citizen. Rather, you will be interviewed as a representative of your organization. Written material published from this study will be reported on behalf of the organization, and no individual can or will be identified.

The researcher will schedule the interview with you at your workplace or via phone- or video-conference. The interview will take about 90 minutes but could last up to 2 hours. In the interview, you will be asked about understanding and perceptions of the organization's strategic agenda as it relates to educational mobility, and whether and how development and migration are connected in that agenda.

The researcher will ask you for permission to audio record the session. Audio recording is not required to participate in the interview. No video recording will be taken. The researcher will ask you if you would be willing to be contacted in the future (by email, phone, or video) to clarify comments/statements from the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The researcher will take the following steps to keep information about you confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage:

(1) The organization for which you work may be identified in written published materials; no individual or their personal information will be part of the study.

(2) You will receive a written PDF copy of a "Record of Interview" (ROI) by email following the interview. The ROI lists the individuals present, their contact information, and summarizes the main themes and findings from the interview. The purpose of the ROI is for your record-keeping and record-keeping and preliminary analysis for the researcher. You can review and comment on interview material and may request that portions not be included in published findings (e.g., private information).

Because interview notes and transcripts pertain to the organization and not individuals, they will be kept indefinitely in a password-protected computer accessible only by the researcher.

RISKS
This study poses minimal risk to you beyond what you encounter in everyday life. If you are interviewed, there is minimal psychological/emotional risk from feeling uncomfortable or upset.

BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY
By participating in this study, you may benefit from the opportunity to talk about economic development, international higher education, and international student mobility and have an influence on the understanding of emerging trends. Benefits may also arise due to the exchange of information and expertise between you and the researcher. Although the researcher cannot guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study, others may benefit in the future from the information found in this study.

COMPENSATION
There is no compensation for participating in this study.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT
Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

If you wish to withdraw at any time during or after the study, please email Karin Johnson with the subject title "Withdrawal from Interview." You will receive an email confirming your withdrawal. Research material will be kept for 30 days after you request to withdraw from the study, in case you change your mind, then deleted and/or shredded.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS
Email Karin Johnson at kjohn033@ucr.edu if you have questions about the study, any problems, unexpected psychological discomforts, or think that something unexpected is happening.

If you have questions about your rights or complaints as a research subject, please contact the IRB Chairperson at +1 951 827 4802 during business hours, or by email at irb@ucr.edu.

CONSENT OF SUBJECT
Please confirm only if you elect to participate. **You must be 18 years old to be eligible.**

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS

Template 5.3.

Interview Questionnaire for Distribution

COMPARING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH
Primary Investigator: Karin Johnson, University of California Riverside
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Augustine Kposowa, University of California Riverside

University Administrators

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

(1) How has international student mobility changed in the past 10 years and what brought about the changes?
(2) Describe recent programs/policy toward international students. How has this changed the number of international students the university attracts/enrolls?
(3) Historically, what other factors influence international student trends?
(4) Who are the intended targets of international education and from where? Who recruits international students (e.g., universities, third party organizations)? How and why does university recruit them?

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

(1) What are some key partnerships with organizations/other institutions/the government does the university have? How were they established? (e.g., branch campuses, twinning programs, or online programs)
(2) In terms of international education, how does a university balance recruiting international students (mobility) versus establishing international education partnerships?

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

(1) Describe the process of how the university is informed about government policies and how it then implements and manages policy requirements on an everyday basis (e.g. programming, threshold goals, student/faculty recruitment, partnerships)?
(2) How does the university achieve or modify the goals laid out in education policy?
(3) With your expertise on the subject, how is intentional government policy that is meant to augment higher education related to international education and student mobility? Trends?
(4) Describe a snapshot of the university's plans for higher education, international education, and international student mobility for the next 10 years.

Table 5.1.

List of Interviewees by Pseudonym and Affiliation

	UAE	
PSEUDONYM	TITLE	AFFILIATION TYPE
Hassan	Associate, Office of the Provost	National university
John	Dean of Enrollment	National university
Khalil	Assistant Professor, Chair of Sociology Department	National university
Yousef	Advisor to His Excellency the Minister of Education	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Ibrahim	Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	National university
Laila	Accounting Professor	National university
Patricia	Director, International Exchange Office	Quasi-national university
Ahmad	Vice Dean, College of Graduate Studies	National university
Stephen	Chief Executive Officer	Foreign university
Elias	Student Recruitment Manager	Foreign university
Rahul	Head of Customer Service	Foreign university
Stewart	Director of Strategic Affairs	Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)
James	Department of Student Affairs Officer	Foreign university

Omar	Director, Strategy and Marketing	Foreign university
Amir	Director, Student Recruitment and Admissions	Foreign university
Neta	Deputy Registrar	Foreign university
Fatima	Manager, Office of Institutional Research	Foreign university
Yenay	Undergraduate student	National university
Saeed	Associate Director of Admissions	Foreign university, quasi-government funded
Isabelle	Undergraduate student, Tour guide	Foreign university, quasi-government funded
Gabriel	Undergraduate student, Tour guide	Foreign university
Zara	Undergraduate student, Tour guide	Foreign university

Russia

PSEUDONYM	TITLE	AFFILIATION TYPE
Sofia	International Office Head	Public university, 5-100 member
Mila	Deputy Dean of the Faculty of International Relations and Political Studies	Public university
Ksenia	International Programs Director	Private university
Irina	International Programs Executive Director	Private university
Roman	Deputy Director and Professor	Public university, 5-100 member

Ivan	Director, Executive MBA Program	Private, foreign university
Nikolai	Vice Rector of International Relations	Public university
Natalia	Director of International Relations Office	Public university, 5-100 member
Tania	Chair of the Department of Sociology, Associate Professor	Public university, 5-100 member
Yaraslava	Programme Coordinator for Student Life	Public university, 5-100 member
Vera	Senior Specialist	Russian Academic Excellence Project 5-100, Moscow
Maria	Office of International Development, Admissions Office	Public university, 5-100 member
Viktor	Office of International Development, International Education Programs Office	Public university, 5-100 member
Eva	Program Manager	Government-sponsored think tank
Renata	International Coordinator, Faculty of Social Sciences	Public university, 5-100 member
Larisa	Head of the International Cooperation Office	Public university, 5-100 member
Mikhail	Director of International Admissions	Public university, 5-100 member
Yulia	Head of International Faculty Support, Office of Internationalisation	Public university, 5-100 member

Anatoly	Independent Expert	Independent Expert
Yana	Coordinator, International Office	Public university, 5-100 member
Oleg	Coordinator, International Office	Public university, 5-100 member
Emilia	Director, Center for Recruiting Foreign Students	Public university, 5-100 member
Galina	Department for International Development	Public university
Anya	Postgraduate researcher	Public university, 5-100 member
Denis	Postgraduate researcher	Public university, 5-100 member
Margaret	Postgraduate researcher	Public university, 5-100 member
Sue	Postdoctoral researcher	Public university, 5-100 member

USA

PSEUDONYM	TITLE	AFFILIATION TYPE
David	Vice President for Global Strategies and International Affairs	Public, land-grant, research university

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to address the need to examine skilled temporary migration to and within nontraditional destinations. I analyzed how national-level policy intended to internationalize its higher education sector shaped incoming international student patterns to two countries rising as top international education destinations, the UAE and Russia (Institute for International Education, 2017; Knight, 2014). I conducted expert interviews with forty-three university administrators and public officials to understand the relationship between strategic internationalization plans and international student mobility. I compared policy, intended aims, and outcomes to explain recent changes in international student mobility to the two case study sites.

In terms of policy, the UAE had fragmented emirate-level policy to expand international higher education and a large number of local, international, and organizational actors involved in managing student mobility, but lacked a coordinated national initiative geared toward attracting international students. In contrast, Russia had two policies aimed at increasing the number of international students, preferring to establish international partnerships via collaboration and dual-degree programming instead of International Branch Campuses. In terms of internationalization, I found that while Russia's recruitment goals were to enroll students, the UAE policy had attracted foreign institutes to build branch campuses. Differing outcomes are the results of the composition of international students and state motivations. In both cases, it appeared that a state's intentions to have more globally competitive higher education institutes was a leading policy determinant, which drives the relationship between the state and universities, thus dictating student mobility patterns. In contrast to traditional destination countries, expert interviews revealed that an underlying agenda of global political cooperation trumps purely economic intentions. Finally, in a critical analysis of expert interviews in international fieldwork, I concluded that despite practical challenges and methodological limitations, this data collection technique offers theoretical benefits.

Research Questions Answered

Through the dissertation, I conceived to fill gaps that prior literature had neglected. Few studies examined how international student mobility related to the internationalization of the higher education sector and the diversification of the economy in non-Western countries and none, to my knowledge, had approached explaining the rise of international student mobility through a macro-causal lens. My research questions addressed these shortcomings across various literature.

The primary research question that guided the dissertation sought to investigate: *How national higher education internationalization policies intentionally shape international student mobility into non-Western countries*. In comparing two cases, one that had policies present (Russia) and one with an absence of policies (UAE), I concluded that formal policies are not necessarily needed to undertake internationalization efforts in higher education, but that national policy can indeed move these projects forward faster and with more efficacy. The UAE did not have internationalization policy, but emirates like Dubai had introduced economic liberalization policies in the early 2000s that had attracted foreign IBCs and resulted in a veritable International Education Hub. Selected universities in both the UAE and Russia benefited from funding and governmental support to advance research, innovation, recruitment, and rankings.

To respond to my secondary research question, I compared *policy outcomes across developing, non-Western, non-democratic countries*. I found that, in the cases of the UAE and Russia, both countries had existing populations of international students who came primarily from the direct region. In the UAE, the majority of students were "local" international students who were non-Emirati nationals who had either immigrated with their family to the UAE or had been born and raised in the UAE. There were, in fact, a much smaller proportion of "foreign" international students from abroad. In Russia, like the UAE, many of the international students originated from soviet republics in the region. More students were coming from abroad, from countries like China and India. Despite the long migrational histories of these countries and extant student populations, the UAE and Russia had joined the international community of attracting students from a global market over the past two decades since the early 2000s. Notably, higher education experts alluded to the fact that they competed with other "middle-tier" countries to attract long-term and short-term students, and they had similar markets: Asia, Africa, and to some extent, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. Unsurprisingly, recruitment tools did not vary widely between the two countries, but they did face their own challenges, such as complicated immigration procedures (Russia) and unclear accreditation (UAE). Through my critical analysis of the expert interview technique, I gathered that we cannot assume that university administrators in similar roles are privy to what other universities are doing, or what government plans are. For example, the most common question administrators asked me was what other universities were doing under the same policy, or how regional or global trends were shaping up. In the UAE, one administrator at an IBC was not aware of the national strategic goals or how they directed the institution's KPIs.

Lastly, taking into consideration possible discord among state policy aims, institutional goals, and individual students' mobility interests, I parsed out differences in *how stakeholders interpreted policies aimed at international education and international student mobility*. I uncovered that divergence between *policy in-theory and in-practice* was not as stark as prior literature suggested. Interviews, particularly with university leaders, such as a Provost, Dean, or Rector, demonstrated that states and universities tried to design measurable and attainable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). When policymakers or educators missed their mark, they would correct. In the instance of Russia's Export Education policy, it initially targeted tripling the number of international students. After determining that goal was too aggressive, the state revised the figure to double for the outcome to be more doable. This was a common theme—educators and policymakers engaged in a recursive dialogue to strike a balance between ambition and feasibility in state policy.

My data reflected that the state, institutions, and individual students did indeed have differing goals, but unlike de Haas (2007) and Morgan and Orloff (2017), I argue that policymaking often was a multitasking tool that could respond to many interests. For example, the state may want to become a regional political leader or extend its political influence further abroad, but this goal had nothing to do with institutes or individuals. States may also want to restrict or vet incoming migrants to favor those that fit the profile of needed professionals, but at the same time, students are more interested in a country when they perceive the immigration system is sympathetic to them. As I stated in Chapter III, state policy can address state interests, such as foreign relations and soft power building, institutional goals, like improving ranking and attracting skilled faculty, as well as meeting students' needs, such top short- and long-term education or permanent migration for work purposes. In sum, I concluded that having cohesive national policy positively *impacted student mobility*. Contrary to Altbach (2013), who argued that internationalization is a fundamental university mission, I contend that it a national one too, as evidenced by purposive state-level policymaking.

Contributions to the Literature

The dissertation contributes to three areas of literature: the temporary, skilled migration and mobility of international students; the development of international education by the state and its institutions in nontraditional destinations; and the role of the state and its policy on international student mobility. My research aligns with, as well as diverges from and expands on previous findings in these areas.

Foremost, my research supports prior claims that, in contrast to contentious rhetoric surrounding international migration around the world, there is an almost universal call by politicians, policymakers, educators, and employers to increase international student mobility (Ruiz, 2013). Skilled migration and international student mobility are highly desirable in terms of national economic development and human capital acquisition (ICEFMonitor, 2014; INSEAD, 2018; Kritz, 2012). My findings also suggest that international student mobility superficially appears as "privileged, no problem" migration (Van Riemsdijk & Wang, 2017) that is an ideal solution to reducing the "nuisance" of permanent immigration (World Bank, 2006). However, as the interviews suggested, circular mobility is a *status quo* expectation in international education (meaning, students should return home upon degree completion), but this is not always the intended desire. Quieter aims of internationalization, economic, and immigration policies in both the UAE and Russia were to attract and retain skilled migrants in their local labor force. We may imagine that states have preferences as to who remains and why. For example, as suggested in Chapters III and IV, Russia may prefer permanent migrants who speak Russian or have an interest in living there, in addition to working in an essential occupation, such as a scientist or engineer. The UAE has a more transient population, dominated by migrants who work in the private sector. It not only wants to attract skilled migrants but to retain the youth that it has trained at the universities around the country.

These subtleties revealed a slight divergence in terminology from other research on international students. In Chapter III, I discussed how, in the field, my interviewees and I used the term "international student" to broadly refer to non-native students. Our definition of international students followed closely to King, Findlay, and Ahrens' (2010) definition—a degree- or credit-seeking student who is a non-permanent migrant. Country nuances existed. In the UAE, "local" international students were non-Emiratis were had already resided there before enrolling in college, and "foreign" students came to attend university from outside the UAE. In Russia, "foreign" student also meant students who came from abroad, but often indicated a long-term degree seeker as opposed to a short-term "academically mobile" student. International students were desirable, but states and their universities had to manage various challenges, from political-economic tensions to misinformation and agent corruption. Across all interviews, my participants' expectations reflected a general narrative about international education across all literature that student mobility would continue to grow exponentially over the coming years.

My conclusions diverged from past research on international student mobility in two distinct ways. First, unlike normative assumptions (and in some cases, anecdotes related to me by others in higher education), the primary motives for attracting long- and short-term international students were not economic (Findlay et al., 2017). The idea that students are mere "cash cows" (Cantwell, 2015; Choudaha, 2017; Katsomitros, 2013) did not hold for my data. In their interviews with me, university administrators did acknowledge that fee-paying graduate students are one area of internationalization they are exploring because, to paraphrase one Deputy Director in Russia, inviting lots of international students and paying their fees with public funds could lead to taxpayers the higher education sector to account for its actions and intents. Apart from economic motivations, my results suggested that national and institutional political cooperation was just as motivated by attracting foreign students as improving institutional rankings and gaining financial revenue. To my knowledge, this is an innovative development that warrants further research.

This research has other unique contributions. Drawing on migration-development literature that asserts that cross-border mobility eventuates when a country has political stability and economic opportunity (Skeldon, 1997), in my cases, I found that policy can facilitate attracting migrants. In other words, policy can boost a country's attractiveness beyond what it offers in ways of political and economic assurance. As for why and how internationalization policy can explain concentrations of international actors, Knight (2013), claimed that "intentional educational policy to develop the hub" are essential and that the ear marker of an International Education Hub is "a critical mass of international and local actors, such as branch campuses." The differing outcomes between physically present IBCs in the UAE and working partnerships in Russia may help define hubs as a geographic concentration of foreign education actors, not of internationally mobile people. In fact, a country may be an emerging international student destination without naming itself a hub or having a critical mass of foreign IBCs, as in Russia's case.

Knight (2013) also identified three hub types: innovation, student, or labor. This typology would be enhanced by an analysis that includes policy. For example, I propose a four-part policy-outcome topology. I present this matrix in Table 6.1. I divide policy between either having policy to attract students or not and desired outcomes as either to keep students in the local labor force or to have students leave after they have completed their post-secondary degree. The four outcomes are as follows.

- *Upskill:* Countries do not have explicit policy to attract international students and intend to maintain students in their local labor force. Students trained in the higher education sector will upskill the labor force. Akin to Knight's *labor* typology. Example: the UAE.

- *Learn-Return:* Countries do not have explicit policy to attract international students and require students to depart. Policies may even restrict the number of international students. Similar to Knight's *student* model. Example: the US, the UK; potential example: South Africa.
- *Recruit-Retain:* Countries have explicit policy to attract international students and intend to maintain students in their local labor force as a means of producing knowledge and innovation. Like Knight's *innovation* typology. Potential example: Singapore.
- *Attract:* Countries have explicit policy to attract international students and require students to depart upon degree completion. Example: Russia.

These four typologies are not discrete, they are fluid, and may lean toward another typology. For instance, although I listed Russia under *Attract*, it is possible that it could become a *Learn-Return* model if it does not renew policy to attract international students. On the same token, it could go the opposite direction, morphing into a *Recruit-Retain* model instead. In the *Upskill* and *Recruit-Retain* types, students are recruited as anticipated workers, whereas the *Learn-Return* and *Attract* models value students as education seekers. This model also spotlights that traditional Western-style student mobility functions as a *Learn-Return* model, like the US. This *status quo* approach assumes mobility should be circular (arrive-and-return), is not connected to labor outcomes, and—most importantly, for my study—is not directed by national policy. I challenge the unquestioned acceptance that this is an optimal model of international education because as I have shown, not one single type of student mobility works for all nations, or for all institutions. The *Learn-Return* model is standard, but I argue that by applying a policy-outcome topology that considers policy, needs, ways to achieve goals, and outcomes could produce more comprehensive results. This matrix is preliminary and needs further investigation to fully fill it out and understand the nuances within each typology. The ultimate take away is that, as I suggested in Chapter III with the *Institutional* and *Student* matrix, outcomes depend not only on intents but what *type* of internationalization is targeted. I detail these future directions of research below.

Policy Recommendations and Implications

The research lends itself to making policy recommendations. I suggest five precise applications and one general takeaway on internationalization policymaking. These could be applied by countries and their universities looking to attract international students.

(1) Intuitively, a higher education system must have the *appropriate capacity*. Capacity refers to both physical facilities, such as classroom space, dormitories, and sufficient seats available in a given program, as well as qualified instructors. Online teaching and distance learning requires technology, such as consistent internet and computing machines (laptops, tablets, etc.).

(2) Next, where not already in place, introducing *English-taught* sessions can make international education accessible to short-term study and long-term undergraduate and graduate work. Obviously, this proposition may be more difficult for countries that

are not native to English, and for universities that do not have readily dispensable money to fund something like this.

(3) Another policy option could be to introduce *universal accreditation that is transferable and applicable* to the country, its region, and further afield. For instance, as I suggested in Chapter III, the UAE's disjointed accreditation across universities and emirates made it confusing to me to understand where a student's degree would be honored. An institute that has accreditation through the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) may risk not being accepted outside Dubai, much less outside the Emirates or region. Optimally, accreditation could conform to global higher education standards while keeping national and institutional autonomy.

(4) *Immigration policy* that is coordinated to facilitate and favor student mobility is essential. Untransparent or cumbersome visa procedures may make it more challenging for students. Again, a balance must be struck between encouraging student mobility and vetting incoming migrants for the sake of national security. For countries looking to retain students as skilled migrants after they complete their post-secondary education, a migrant-friendly policy like the UAE introduced in November 2019 may augment those numbers. This could be more even tailored to specific fields of study or capped at a certain amount of applications (e.g., Ruiz (2013) reported that in 2010 in the US, about a third of approved skilled work visas (H-1B) were transferred from student status (F-1), many of those migrants were graduates from Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields).

(5) Other options that we may consider are whether Academic Excellence Initiatives (AEIs) could assist in improving rankings and, therefore, attract more students. For example, because the UAE already has the physical capacity and offers English-instructed courses and programming, it is possible for it to move from an informal excellence initiative approach to a national one that the emirate governments and agencies could collectively implement.

Overall, for countries interested in attracting international degree-seeking and exchange students, it appears that one effective way to this is to adopt an *intentional, cohesive policy, funding, and branding regime*. I would caution interested parties to scrutinize national motivations as to how foreign students help HEIs meet their internationalization KPIs, in addition to adding to and producing value for a university. Higher education educators and managers can also assess what their particular balance is (what proportion of international students enough?) to monitor and maintain the educational quality offered to all students.

The dissertation has both theoretical and practical implications. The study contributes to the understanding of educational mobility as a process and conduit of social, economic, and political development within the broader global economy. It also advances the literature on migration, principally of a specific group of skilled migrants, international students. It provides a comparative framework that seeks to reconcile contradictions between interests, goals, and outcomes among individuals, institutions, and the state (Bauder, 2017; Hatton & Williamson, 2005; McDonnell, 2017; Morgan & Orloff, 2017). The study is also important for policymakers and educators involved in strategic programming and planning, not only in the UAE and Russia but also in traditional destinations for international students, such as the US. My findings also inform our knowledge of migration processes and suggest that “middle tier” countries competing to attract the best students, could potentially shift student mobility toward these countries that have attractive educational and economic opportunities.

Beyond academia, those interested in improving the caliber of higher education and attracting skilled students in a competitive global economy may benefit from this study. More specifically, the dissertation may be of interest to international students and their families because it can help them understand how educational mobility is managed at national and institutional levels. The research can assist educators and administrators decode some of the reasons behind observed shifts in student mobility over the past ten years and of policies that may further shift migrational trends in the coming years. Similarly, non-profit organizations, private businesses, and public universities who strive to attract and retain international students can draw on this study’s findings as a way to manage international partnerships. Finally, the dissertation can help policymakers form decisions on future programming by comprehending the direction and drivers of skilled migration within country, regional, and global contexts.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

As with all research, the dissertation has its limitations. First, I had practical and methodological constraints to the study. Materially, I faced monetary and time limits. I received external funding for six months, and I completed the fieldwork within that timeframe, although I bore the bulk of the expenses personally. Methodologically, because I spent approximately two months in each site, I worked quickly and with focused intent to contact potential participants, schedule and conduct interviews, and write Reports of Interview (ROIs) for each meeting. I elucidated how I navigated the limitations in Chapter V. Additionally, during data analysis, I began seeing different avenues for further interviews with experts I did not know I should or could have interviewed at the time of my fieldwork. Although this may be seen as a limitation, I approach it as a direction to continuing and revisiting the research at a later point through an alternative lens. Second, the research was limited by a small case number of two countries. Initially, I had designed the study as a multiple-country case comparison to analyze other countries' policies (or lack thereof). However, as just mentioned, I had limited time to carry out my fieldwork and the subsequent analysis. Early on in the research process, I chose two countries that I could feasibly study given the resources I had available.

Despite these limitations, there are several paths of future research. The comparison I took on here examined two countries with similar political-economic conditions with differing policies. They are autocratic oil-rich, people-poor countries, one of which had national policies aimed at attracting international students and other skilled migrants (Russia), and the other (the UAE) did not have comparable policies. As I suggest in Table 6.1., further comparisons could be made with countries that are similar in policy and country conditions, like the UAE and Malaysia, that are both International Education Hubs with a critical mass of IBCs. Another possible area of study is to compare countries with different policy types or motivations. For example, Singapore could also be considered because superficially it has policy meant to attract talent to cultivate innovation. Or, in a different direction entirely, South Africa has a high number of international students, but policy appears to be geared toward vetting potential candidates and reducing the number of students, which could be construed as trying to discourage the attraction of more students from abroad. It may also worth investigating why certain countries take on formal Academic Excellence Initiatives (AEIs), such as Russia, while others approach excellence in an informal manner, like the UAE. Furthermore, based on my findings, research could pursue disentangling how internationalization policies act as mechanisms of foreign policy, political cooperation, and soft power.

Various themes arose in my interviews that could be explored. For one, local labor market entry for international students is an area ripe for further research. For the UAE, one question that could be developed is how and why local international students stay in the Emirati workforce and what similarities and differences can be identified. For Russia, since international education is not a direct path to work, a similar study that assesses individual and country characteristics that lead to leaving back home or staying to work would be illuminating. Because both these countries rely on attracting skilled migrants to their labor forces, this future direction could help inform institutional and national policy not only on higher education internationalization but on immigration policy too.

Another area for future research on higher education internationalization and the diversification of research and innovation could explore how policies shape the hiring of faculty, postdocs, and other researchers, and the intended purpose of producing intellectual property (IP), patents, materials, and products, as well as publications in leading discipline journals. In this case, migration motives may be more clear cut because faculty are hired on a long-term basis, and after tenure and promotion, they may settle permanently in their host country. This path of research may further add to the narrative about the internationalization of the academy through the attraction, recruitment, and retention of foreign migrants for the purposes of political cooperation and of improving position in global competitivity indices, such as the *ARWU*, *THE*, and *QS* annual rankings.

Apart from these suggested areas, there remain general questions that will need to be answered moving forward. Such as: Given the fluctuations and uncertainties of the market, what will the future of international student mobility and of international higher education look like? International students are more diverse than ever, coming from a larger number of origins, going to more destinations, and as such, international education business will have to up its game. For example, states and their universities may reorient toward cultivating globalized education, developing students as "global citizens," and adopting "international term" requirements (especially in Europe). These undertakings may move the needle toward short-term study abroad programming for undergraduates. Master's students may also have new demands as they position themselves for entry into the labor market—the question then becomes where and why? It is also feasible that if international higher education "flattens" competition, making training more accessible, students may "shop around" for the best universities with the best funding packages for the best labor market outcomes despite their locations.

We may then ask: What will be the role of global competition among universities, and how will that further influence international student mobility to countries in the educational Global South? As demonstrated in Russia's case, where policies aim to attract European students, will Western students be increasingly mobile to countries in the educational Global South? Likewise, will faculty and researchers favor teaching and work opportunities in non-Western countries? Will "middle-tier" countries become exclusively competitive amongst themselves, or will they begin to encroach on international student markets that traditionally seek education in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia? Will there be further polarization among the top, the middle, and the bottom countries and their universities?

More generally, we may interrogate the following: How will global stimuli impact the immediate future of student mobility trends? For instance, although my interviews highlighted issues that were present at that moment, such as political and economic tensions, a new pressing global social issue is the coronavirus pandemic. It is estimated to negatively impact international student mobility for the next five years (Stacey, 2020). This prospect is conceivable given my previous research that demonstrated that after the September 11th, 2001 attacks, it took five years for international student mobility visa issuance to recover to pre-9/11 levels in the US (Johnson, 2018).

Taken together, internationalization has become unavoidable within the higher education sector, and internationalization policy is fundamental not only to university missions but to national strategic planning too. Therefore, it is critical for educators, administrators, and policymakers to understand how internationalization policies differently shape international student mobility across the globe—particularly because international student mobility is steadily increasing and is projected to reach eight million students by 2025 (Institute of International Research, 2018; OECD, 2014). Nonetheless, as the dissertation showed, there is still much to be learned and analyzed in the coming years. As Helms and her colleagues (2015) note, “we are not alone” in endeavors to internationalize. Collaborative efforts can produce more effective policies with better education outcomes for all students.

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Table 6.1.

Matrix of Internationalization Policy Types to Attract Foreign Students

Policy Presence/ Absence Desired Outcomes	**No explicit** policy to attract students	**Explicit** policy to attract students
Students **stay** in local labor force	**UPSKILL** *Description*: International education provides HE to existing international student population. *Goals*: Retain students in local labor force. Synergy with labor sector needs. *Country*: UAE	**RECRUIT-RETAIN** *Description*: HEIs are part of knowledge/innovation sector active in attracting, recruiting international talent. *Goals*: Retain talent in labor force to produce innovation advances. *Country*: Singapore (possibility, per Knight, 2013)
Students **return** home (or go on to third country for education or work)	**LEARN-RETURN** *Description*: High demand for HE by international students, low/unequal supply. Policy limits number of international students. *Goals*: Accessible to few international students; students must return home upon completion (low chance of staying in local labor force). *Country*: South Africa (possibility)	**ATTRACT** *Description*: Has existing international student population, wants to attract more. Aiming to improve attractiveness. *Goals*: Attract students who return home after completing their studies. *Country*: Russia

EPILOGUE

IN CONSIDERATION: THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THIS DISSERTATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGES THAT OCCURRED AFTER FIELDWORK DATA COLLECTION

Once a researcher leaves their fieldwork sites, life keeps going. Two significant changes occurred after my data collection stage: the future of Russia's Executive Branch became speculative when the Prime Minister and his Cabinet resigned; and the novel Coronavirus was declared a pandemic. At the time of writing the dissertation and this epilogue, these events are ongoing, with no apparent end in sight. Moving forward, I must consider how these political and social changes—among others—will impact the completed dissertation research. Furthermore, there are implications for me and others who continue doing research on the topic of international student mobility, not only in the countries in the educational Global South but worldwide.

Russian Prime Minister Medvedev Resigned

As I wrote the historical background section of the dissertation, an unforeseen schism occurred in Russia's Executive Branch. On January 15, 2020, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and his entire Cabinet resigned. The move followed President Putin's address to the Federal Assembly, during which he proposed several amendments to the 1993 Russian Constitution. Western media speculated that Medvedev and the Cabinet stepped down to facilitate these overhauls (Dwyer, 2020).

One amendment to the Constitution would reset the current presidential term limit of two consecutive six-year terms to allow an extension for another two more terms. On March 10, 2020, the Duma voted in favor of allowing current President Putin to serve until 2036 (Schwartz & Neuman, 2020). During the session, a popular vote on the proposed amendment was planned for April 22, 2020. However, the next day, the World Health Organization (WTO) declared a pandemic due to novel Coronavirus. The epidemic has indefinitely postponed the vote (Kennedy, 2020). At present, it is unclear what will happen with the vote and the amendment. Still, Putin will likely remain in his position as President at least until 2024, as previously predicted (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019).

COVID-19 Declared as a Pandemic

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) began to crop up in popular media in November 2019. News stories raised a flag about how serious the virus was due to high infection rates in China. In the ensuing months, countries in the Middle East and Europe, such as Iran and Italy, began reporting surging rates of Coronavirus infections. The US soon reported Coronavirus cases in Washington state, California, and New York. The World Health Organization declared a pandemic shortly after. One week later, on Thursday, March 19, 2020, California Governor Newsom announced Shelter in Place orders (ca.gov, 2020). Shelter-in-Place orders were put in place to reduce the possible spread of infections. The California government recommended everyone to stay home and only go out to retailers, restaurants, and other public areas for essential purposes.

Within days of the Shelter in Place announcement, I completed the first draft of the dissertation. At that time, I, and the rest of the world, did not know the extent of the pandemic—nor do we still!

Daily, I continue to think about internationalization policy and the internationalization of higher education. I wonder about and speculate on how some universities and some countries will use the pandemic as an advantage, while others may not fare as well. It is estimated that the pandemic will negatively affect international student mobility for at least five years (Stacey, 2020). In a forthcoming op-ed, I muse as to why social changes associated with the pandemic already exacerbate a softening international education market for the US (Johnson, Forthcoming).

Potential Impacts of Political and Social Changes on This and Future Research

Of the two events described above, it is unlikely that the political changes that may occur as a result of Putin remaining in power will have any substantial effect on my research—past or future. This being because the Executive Branch will remain largely unchanged, and policy will continue to function under its centralized power.

In contrast, the Coronavirus pandemic will have both empirical and methodological implications for my research. My research may now be divided between pre- and post-COVID periods. This could be construed as both a positive and a negative outcome. On the one hand, it could be possible that I revisit the UAE and Russia and conduct interviews as to how administrators and public officials responded to the pandemic using policy they had in place. I could also explore what other policies were adopted and implemented in response to the outbreak. On the other hand, I asked myself about how I would approach conducting interviews in other countries.

I originally designed the research to be a multi-case study. I had intended to continue with research in other countries, such as South Africa, Malaysia, or Singapore. Issues that I must contend with will be how to travel to, live in, and access experts at these sites. Travel bans have closed most international borders (Salcedo et al., 2020). As I discussed in Chapter V, it was essential to my data collection to be physically present in my case sites to conduct interviews. If people did not know me, or could not meet with me, they would not agree to an interview.

I do not yet have answers as to how I will go about future empirical data collection or choose cases in a methodologically rigorous manner. I expect that I will have to wait for at least a few months or a year before I will have solutions to appropriately respond to these social and political changes. One thing is for certain—international student mobility will be different, and any research will be a much needed contribution to studies on higher education.

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