Making mobility meaningful: A study of policy and practices of international student mobility in Norwegian teacher education

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Thesis summary

This article-based thesis presents a qualitative study of how international student mobility as a prominent feature of higher education internationalisation policy materialises in Norwegian teacher education programs. Through document analysis of key policies and interviews with academic staff, administrators and management, the study offers a critical perspective on the significance of student mobility in teacher education in relation to the wider internationalisation process.

Short-term mobility has increasingly gained a more prominent position in European and Norwegian internationalisation policy as a means of quality enhancement in higher education. Following this, higher education institutions are being met with stronger expectations for increasing levels of mobility. Yet, while the existing research on internationalisation and student mobility is abundant, there is a lack of perspectives aiming to unpack the often taken-for-granted meaning(s) of student mobility situated in a particular field of study. Thus, little is known about how the expectations for student mobility play out in relation to the internationalisation processes, and the potential tensions involved in its realisation. In particular in professional programs where internationalisation may take different forms than within "traditional" disciplines of higher education.

The three articles included in this thesis provide rich accounts of the political ideas and discourses framing student mobility, and how policy both shapes and is challenged by the actors involved in the work with student mobility and internationalisation. The articles explore the issue of 'significance' in relation to three different aspects: the political promotion, how mobility is approached in practice, and in relation to how it is perceived as an educational activity contingent on the purpose and mission of teacher education. Article 1 analyses the political discourses used to promote mobility in teacher education and argues that such discourses increasingly instrumentalise both the role of future teachers and the activity of mobility itself for non-educational or non-professional ends. Article 2 analyses the practical approaches to student mobility in teacher education as a form of policy enactment. It reveals an array of challenges to its realisation in the intersection between policy discourse and distinct contextual aspects of three teacher education programs. Finally, Article 3 unpacks how the prevailing Norwegian discourse on student mobility as a means of quality enhancement is made sense of by teacher educators. It shows how mobility comes to represent a challenge to the mission of teacher education which tends to result in a strong emphasis on generic, personal outcomes at the expense of specific educational outcomes.

Based on these articles, the overall argument proposed in the thesis is that the significance of mobility is strong at the surface of policy and practice. It is perceived and promoted as a highly valuable learning activity with professional benefits for the individual teacher student and has a

strong symbolic value for rendering internationalisation visible to an external context. Yet, its significance also emerges as ambiguous, as mobility is embedded in different layers of meaning shaped by academic, professional, and bureaucratic ideas. These layers, in turn, are shaped by the uneasy nature of internationalisation in relation to the mission of teacher education. The multiplicity of meanings creates a range of tensions for how mobility materialises into practice, ultimately found to challenge a meaningful embedding of mobility into teacher education.

In light of this, the thesis contributes with novel perspectives on the nature and role of student mobility in relation to a particular field of study and the conditions and tensions involved in realising this distinct element of internationalisation policy. The thesis advances current knowledge by unsettling taken-for-granted views on student mobility and contributes to more clarity around its meaning, rationales, and impacts. This is important in the current political and higher education institutional setting, where international student mobility is still the dominant activity of internationalisation though undertaken by a minority of students – in particular in teacher education.

Sammendrag

Denne artikkelbaserte avhandlingen utforsker betydningen av internasjonal studentmobilitet innen norske grunnskolelærerutdanninger i policy og praksis. I høyere utdanning har utgående, kortvarig studentmobilitet fått en stadig mer synlig plass i internasjonaliseringspolitikken, og studieprogrammer underlegges sterkere forventinger og krav om økt mobilitet som et middel til kvalitetsheving. Imidlertid foreligger det begrenset empirisk kunnskap om hvordan disse forventninger tolkes og implementeres av aktørene i relasjon til spesifikke utdanningsformål i ulike studieprogram, samt hva slags kvalitet studentmobilitet oppleves å bidra til. Særlig innenfor profesjonsutdanninger trenges mer kunnskap om mulighetene for, og betydningen av, utgående studentmobilitet som en del av internasjonaliseringsprosessen. Denne antas å variere fra «tradisjonelle» disiplinfag som følge av orienteringen mot en spesifikk profesjon innen en (primær) nasjonal arena.

Avhandlingen består av en kappe og tre artikler, hvor betydningen av studentmobilitet utforskes i spenningsfeltet mellom politiske diskurser og institusjonelle kjennetegn og forhold i lærerutdanningen. Artikkel 1 baserer seg på dokumentanalyse og retter blikket mot hvordan lærerutdanning gradvis har blitt inkludert i internasjonaliseringspolitikken. Artikkelen viser hvordan mobilitet på ulikt vis konstrueres som «problem» og «løsning» i relasjon til profesjonelle, utdanningsmessige og samfunnsmessige utfordringer. Artikkel 2 og 3 tar utgangspunkt i intervjuer med vitenskapelig og administrativt ansatte og utforsker hvordan mobilitet forstås og utfoldes som en del av internasjonaliseringsprosessen i relasjon til lærerutdanningens formål og selvforståelse av kvalitet. Begge artikler kaster kritisk lys over hvilke muligheter og utfordringer det knytter seg til realisering av de politiske forventninger i arbeidet med tilrettelegging av mobilitet i praksis.

Samlet beskriver avhandlingen hvordan den nåværende internasjonaliserings- og mobilitetspolitikk er med på å forme og begrense mulighetene for å bli realisert i lærerutdanningskonteksten. Den identifiserer studentmobilitet som innleiret i et komplekst felt av ideer knyttet til personlige, profesjonelle, akademiske og byråkratiske aspekter. Samtidig preges disse ideene av internasjonaliseringens tvetydige rolle i lærerutdanningen. I avhandlingen argumenteres det for at denne idekompleksitet fører til at studentmobilitet får en stadig en stadig mer instrumentell betydning i både politikk og praksis. Dette bidrar til usynliggjøring av den utdanningsmessige verdi av studentmobilitet, noe som ultimativt kan få betydning for hvordan studentene oppfatter og bruker denne aktiviteten. Dermed bidrar avhandlingen til å kaste kritisk lys over viktige dimensjoner av internasjonal studentmobilitet som et komplekst politisk og pedagogisk fenomen med en lang rekke av mulige betydninger og effekter, som det ellers sjeldent settes spørsmålstegn ved.

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Pedersen, Tea Dyred (2022). Mobility for teacher students or teacher students for mobility? Unravelling policy discourses on international student mobility in the context of teacher education. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(6), 761-780. https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041221097202

Article 2:

Pedersen, Tea Dyred (2021). Mobilising international student mobility: Exploring policy enactments in teacher education in Norway. *European Journal of Education*, 56(2), 292–306. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12451

Article 3:

Pedersen, Tea Dyred. Finding the right fit or fitting what is found? Conceptualising qualities of international student mobility in the context of teacher education. *Scandinavian Journal of Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2023.2287451

PART I: Extended abstract

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Setting the stage

This article-based thesis presents a qualitative study on the significance of international student mobility in Norwegian teacher education against the backdrop of public policies for internationalisation of higher education. The thesis engages with the issue from different perspectives but with a particular emphasis on the ideas and discourses which frame student mobility, and how they shape and are shaped by the work with mobility in teacher education. The term 'significance' is carefully chosen in this respect to signify how student mobility is positioned in the thesis, as it implies *"a quality or character that should mark a thing as important but that is not self-evident and may or may not be recognised"* (Merriam-Webster., (n.d.).) Hence, the point of departure for the thesis is that while international student mobility may emerge as important at the top policy level in terms of how it is promoted, incentivised, and supported, its significance as a phenomenon of internationalisation may vary across higher education contexts, and allow for different interpretations and ways of 'practising' it. This issue is studied through a collection of research articles which draw on a range of empirical, theoretical, and analytical resources from public policy studies, discourse analysis, organisational studies, and educational research. The knowledge advanced in the thesis is important for a critical discussion of the role of international student mobility in supporting a meaningful internationalisation of higher education.

This extended abstract serves two main purposes: it outlines and clarifies the foundations of the research and the choices made, and it connects and expands on the key insights and findings developed in the study and disseminated in the three articles. The introductory chapter presents the motivation for studying these issues, the general approach taken, the research questions and an overview of the key findings of the articles and how they respond to the research question.

1.2 Why and how should we engage with the issues of the thesis?

The aims, issues and approach of the research presented in this thesis are motivated by several factors. In part a personal and academic curiosity towards the political prominence of student mobility and its drivers and effects, and an identified need for expanding the current empirical and theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon of international student mobility in the existing literature. Finally, it is motivated by an ambition of generating knowledge about teacher education (and professional higher education beyond) as a distinct and understudied venue for the realisation of internationalisation policy represented by the activity of mobility.

Over the past decades, international student mobility has become a key component of higher education internationalisation policies, strategies and practices across European higher education institutions (Fumasoli, 2021; Proctor & Rumbley, 2018; Teichler, 2019). With changing rationales, different paces, priorities, directions and outcomes over time, the role of student mobility is now firmly established as a key expression and instrument of internationalisation in policy and practice (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Within Europe specifically, outgoing, short-term mobility, which is in focus in this thesis, has come to play an increasingly important role as an activity linked to European social and economic integration and internationalisation (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Van Mol, 2013, 2014). There is ample evidence of its expansion and steady growth, which is often accompanied by a normative view that this is desirable in light of its assumed benefits for students, higher education institutions and societies alike (Almeida, 2020; Teichler, 2017). Spurred in particular by the Bologna Process and EU strategies in education, student mobility has become an uncontroversial and important aim in terms of public and political popularity and legitimacy (Papatsiba, 2006). This is also witnessed by current policy developments in Norway where the aim of creating a 'culture for mobility' in higher education and making student mobility the rule rather than the exception has recently been articulated (Meld. St. 7 (2020-2021)). The prevailing political assumptions on the value of mobility sparked my academic curiosity for understanding how such assumptions have come about, and which effects they may yield in practice. In light of the resources spent on the mobility agenda in Norway and beyond, it seems important to critically assess and discuss the rationales and drivers behind such discourses. This first line of motivation for the thesis is thus reflected in the following quote by Susan Robertson (2010):

"Mobility is being mobilised (and fetishised) by policymakers and families as an essential experience for all learners and teachers. Yet (…), we have limited ways of understanding what is entailed in this experience of academic mobility. There is a great deal at stake, however, for such movements are never, have never been, neutral. The romance of movement and mobility ought to be the first clue that this is something we ought to be particularly curious about" (Robertson, 2010, p. 646).

The second line of motivation for the thesis concerns the state of the art within the existing research on internationalisation and student mobility. While ample scholarly attention has been paid to the internationalisation of higher education which has grown into a distinct research field, student mobility has not been theorised to the same extent (Almeida, 2020). Its function as an activity of academic or professional value is taken for granted in much existing literature where student perspectives on choice, motivation, and mobility experience, or general statistical overviews and accounts, are predominant (Brooks, 2018; Findlay, McCollum, & Packwood, 2017; Lomer, 2018; Ogden, Streitwieser, & Van Mol, 2021). Outgoing, short-term mobility, however, is an activity which

is to a large extent set in motion, shaped and constrained by institutional logics and practices, such as when and where it is possible to undertake a study abroad (Courtois, 2018a). This calls for expanding the predominant perspective on students' decision-making and outcomes. Yet, student mobility is rarely approached in relation to the particular educational context from which it emanates, or as something which may be positioned and practised differently in relation to the process of internationalisation (King & Raghuram, 2013). In particular, the perspectives of academic staff involved with the educational provision of which student mobility forms part have largely been overlooked in the existing literature due to the focus on students (Leask, Whitsed, De Wit, & Beelen, 2021; Paus & Robinson, 2008; Proctor & Rumbley, 2018). Moreover, despite being a phenomenon which is essentially related to a variety of areas such as the academic, economic, political, legal and ethical, there is a tendency for student mobility to be studied through separate frames (Lee & Stensaker, 2021). Against this background, this thesis approaches student mobility as a phenomenon that may be conceptualised, practised, valued, and have different implications across various fields of higher education. In particular, the relationship between outgoing student mobility and the internationalisation process more generally is a key issue in the thesis. This approach makes for an important empirical and theoretical contribution to the growing research field on student mobility which tends to focus on student perspectives and outcomes and position mobility as an activity with self-evident (positive) meaning and effects.

The final major motivation for this study is prompted by an identified need for connecting the grand political and theoretical visions and frameworks for internationalisation with contextualised perspectives from the micro-level of higher education, and to add more nuance and complexity to the dominant conceptualisations and approaches. To pursue this aim, the thesis seeks to use student mobility as a prism to reflect on wider issues of internationalisation in teacher education. Chapter 2 describes how the thesis positions the phenomena of internationalisation and mobility and their relationship in more detail. As reflected in the two other lines of motivation, both policy and research tend to overlook institutional and disciplinary varieties shaping the conditions and needs for internationalisation (Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Leask, 2011). As such, the direction and effects of internationalisation tend to be described as progressing, expanding and taking the same form in all contexts (Fumasoli, 2021; Teichler, 2017). Yet, as witnessed for instance by statistical reports and overviews of student mobility, it is neither an evenly distributed activity globally or regionally, nor academically and individually within a country (Börjesson, 2017; DIKU, 2019; Netz, 2015). Across European teacher education, for instance, overall participation in Erasmus+ mobility has throughout the years been comparatively low (Ballowitz, Netz, & Danielle, 2014; Hauschildt, Gwosć, Netz, & Mishra, 2015). However, in teacher education and professional programs beyond, this issue is rarely

approached in relation to the role and function of internationalisation within the particular study program, and how mobility may feed into this. As argued by Leask (2011), the international perspectives required by different professions will vary according to how a specific profession is affected by social, cultural and global issues:

"(…) while practising nurses, pharmacists and engineers should all be able to recognise intercultural issues relevant to their professional practice and have a broad understanding of social, cultural and global issues affecting their profession, the ways in which they will need to apply their learning, to 'do what they know', will clearly be different. Comparable differences exist between the international perspectives we might want to develop in for example, accountants and teachers"

(Leask, 2011, p. 13).

I take this claim to be a relevant point of departure for exploring how mobility is perceived and utilised in the internationalisation process in professional education. Against this backdrop, a key motivation for undertaking the research presented in this thesis is to advance the existing literature on internationalisation in a more inclusive direction and to critically reflect on whether the political discourses driving current internationalisation policies strongly focused on student mobility provide equal opportunities for engaging with it across higher education institutions and study programs.

These three overall lines of motivation provide the foundation for this thesis. The study is empirically situated in Norwegian teacher education for primary and lower secondary education ('grunnskolelærerutdanning'), which will be described in detail in Chapter 2. Empirically, the thesis draws on a corpus of policy texts and a set of interviews with actors responsible for enabling mobility academically and administratively in three different Norwegian teacher education programs. Analytically, it builds on a four-dimensional framework which suggests *discourse, contexts, agents and temporalities* to be critical dimensions for studying mobility policy (Riaño, Van Mol, & Raghuram, 2018). These dimensions are unpacked with different theoretical tools and concepts across the three articles. Article 1 draws on inspiration from the view on ideas and discourses suggested by discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008), Article 2 draws on the concepts of the policy object (Sin, 2014) and policy enactment (Maguire, Ball, & Braun, 2012), and Article 3 takes Biggs' dimensions of educational quality (Biggs, 1993) as its analytical starting point. A more detailed account of the articles, their research questions and their main contributions is provided in the following section which presents the aims and research questions of the study.

1.3 Aims and research questions

This thesis aims to expand the existing knowledge about the role of student mobility in teacher education by positioning it as a phenomenon with a particular nature and value contingent on the educational purposes it serves within the context from which it emanates and affects. More generally, the study seeks to shed light on the interaction between high-level policy ideas and ground-level practices of internationalisation and student mobility, and empirically unpack the often taken-for-granted meanings, practices and effects of these phenomena. In the pursuit of these aims, the thesis sheds light on different aspects: the goals and the academic, pedagogical and political *ideas* driving contemporary mobility policies, the *translation* of ideas into practice contingent on the context for implementation and its needs and conditions for internationalisation, and the influence of *educational mission* and purpose on how mobility is perceived as a learning activity and as the core aspect of education affected by mobility policy. These dimensions underlie the overall research question which the thesis sets out to answer:

How is international student mobility assigned meaning in teacher education policy and practice, and what is its significance as a phenomenon of internationalisation?

Within and across the three articles the following sub-questions are addressed:

1. *What characterises the discursive promotion of mobility for teacher students in official European and Norwegian policy texts? What are the effects of it?*
2. *How is the enactment of internationalisation and mobility policy described by micro-level actors in teacher education? Which contextual factors shape enactment in distinct institutional contexts?*
3. *How is student mobility made sense of as an educational activity in relation to the nature of teacher education as a professional field of study? In what ways does this reflect prevailing policy assumptions about the contribution of mobility to educational quality?*

These sub-questions are tightly interwoven empirically but focus on different levels of analysis supported by different theoretical concepts. They cut across the specific research question within each article respectively and will be responded to in the thesis in relation to the overall findings of the study. More specifically, they guide the discussion in Chapter 7 which revisits the findings in light of the analytical framework of the thesis presented in Chapter 4. More subtly, the nested nature of these sub-questions is also mirrored in the title of the thesis, *Making mobility meaningful*, as they aim to unpack the meaning of mobility in different ways and shed light on the potential tensions for meaningful mobility in higher education created by this multiplicity of meanings. Table 1 provides a

detailed overview of the three articles, including their research questions, empirical material, key concepts, and main findings.

Table 1: Overview of research questions, data, key concepts and findings of the articles

Title	*Mobility for teacher students or teacher students for mobility? Unravelling policy discourses on international student mobility in the context of teacher education* (Article 1)	*Mobilising international student mobility: explorations of policy enactments in teacher education* (Article 2)	*Finding the right fit or fitting what is found? Conceptualising qualities of international student mobility in the context of teacher education* (Article 3)
Research questions addressed	How and with which ideas are student mobility being promoted in key Norwegian and European policy texts? How do such ideas form discourses which legitimate a particular targeting of teacher education/students?	How is student mobility interpreted and enacted by various policy actors in TE? How do program-specific contextual factors shape enactments?	How is the relationship between student mobility and quality conceptualised among ground-level actors in the context of teacher education?
Empirical material	European and Norwegian policy texts on student mobility and internationalisation (See Appendix 3 for an overview)	Interviews with policy actors in three different TE programs. (Approached comparatively with a focus on variations linked to institutional context)	Interviews with policy actors in three different TE programs. (Approached unitedly with a focus on TE as a professional field of study)
Key concepts	Normative and cognitive ideas (Schmidt, 2008), the institutionalisation of discourse (Lynggaard, 2019)	Policy object (Sin, 2014), policy enactment (Maguire et al., 2012)	Dimensions of educational quality (Biggs, 1993), quality perspectives (Dahler-Larsen, 2019)
Main findings	The study identifies three competing discourses on harmonisation, professionalisation and instrumentalisation. The discourses increasingly frame TE students and the activity of mobility as instrumental rather than professional or educational ends. Mobility is ultimately promoted mainly for 'the sake of mobility' and provides scarce substantial input to its realisation in teacher education, though this is presented as the key challenge addressed in such policies.	The study identifies the 'ontology' of mobility as linked to professional, academic and bureaucratic aspects. These create tensions between aims and approaches to mobility shaping enactment, in particular by imposing a model for internationalisation which challenges TE conditions for it. The level of faculty engagement, resources and infrastructure for mobility differ significantly and impact how mobility is valued and approached.	The study identifies student mobility as mainly linked to personal and professional development as outcomes of quality. Academic outcomes promoted in official policy play a more diffuse role in relation to the professional purpose of TE, resulting in mobility needing 'additional justification in terms of personal and professional relevance. It is argued that the malleable nature of the quality concept results in a somewhat 'anything goes'-stance to mobility which promotes it as being a kind of 'formational journey' at the expense of its educational purpose.

As evident from the table, the articles, and the insights they generate offer an opportunity to reflect on an array of issues related to the phenomena of policymaking and practices in the field of higher education internationalisation and student mobility. A more elaborate description of the articles and their contributions is provided in Chapter 6.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of two overall parts: part one, the extended abstract, which is divided into 8 chapters, and part two which contains the three articles on which the extended abstract builds. The remainder of the extended abstract is organised as follows: Chapter 2 contextualises the study by elucidating the key concepts of student mobility and internationalisation and describing relevant features of the national policy context and empirical context of teacher education. Chapter 3 positions the study in relation to the existing research in a literature review. Chapter 4 outlines and expands the analytical framework guiding the articles connecting it to the thesis as a whole. Chapter 5 presents the methodological foundations of the study, the research design, data generation and the analytical process, as well as reflections on limitations, validity and ethical concerns. Chapter 6 summarises the three articles and their findings and paves the ground for the discussion in Chapter 7, which revisits the research question and sub-questions, as well as the analytical framework, to reflect on the findings. The discussion closes with reflections on the key implications of the study for researchers, policymakers, and teacher education. Finally, Chapter 8 provides concluding remarks on the thesis and elucidates the specific empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions in detail.

Chapter 2: Contextualising the study

This chapter outlines key aspects of the context for the research. It sets out by describing the point of departure for the PhD-project in light of the larger research project of which it forms part. Next, the chapter establishes and delimits what is entailed in the key concepts of the thesis, i.e., *international student mobility* and *internationalisation* and how they relate. Finally, the research is situated against the Norwegian policy context as well as central features of teacher education as the empirical context of the study. These contextual aspects are important for understanding the scope, possibilities and limitations of the analyses and discussions pursued in the thesis.

2.1 The MOBILITY project

The research conducted in this PhD forms part of the research project *International student mobility: drivers, patterns and impacts* (MOBILITY) supported by the Norwegian Research Council. The overall aim of the project is to expand existing knowledge about international student mobility to and from Norway in light of it being a still more important political agenda for higher education from the assumption that it enhances quality. Combining different theoretical, empirical and methodological approaches, the overall project sheds light on the relationships between mobility, quality and internationalisation and aims to provide *"critical reflections concerning why and how ISM is taking place, and the extent to which the patterns and outcomes of mobility are in line with policy goals, and whether this creates relevant outputs for students, Higher Education Institutions and society"* (NIFU, n.d.). In the pursuit of these broad aims, the thesis specifically contributes with a qualitative dimension and perspectives from the program level of higher education. It thereby sheds light on various preconditions, possibilities and challenges for fostering student mobility and handling the still stronger policy expectations for it. Being part of this broader research project has to some extent contributed to delimiting the scope of the PhD project and providing a basic orientation for the research. Yet, I have had full responsibility for developing the project proposal and taking all decisions on the research design, how to carry out the research, and how to write it up in articles.

2.2 Internationalisation, international student mobility and their relationship

The thesis is first and foremost a study of international student mobility. Yet, this activity cannot be meaningfully isolated from the wider process of internationalisation, as this would obscure a major force shaping contemporary higher education and the context of which mobility forms part. They are distinct but strongly related phenomena, and the complex process of internationalisation should not be reduced to the activity of student mobility. Hence, it is important to establish what the two concepts entail separately and how they are related. Thus, before describing how student mobility is approached in the thesis it needs to be clarified how the internationalisation of higher education is understood and how mobility sits within this understanding.

Internationalisation has become one of the core research topics in higher education research and today constitutes a diverse research field with an array of empirical foci. In particular, much scholarly attention has been devoted to defining internationalisation as a phenomenon and concept (Lee & Stensaker, 2021). Being a complex phenomenon linked to other processes such as Europeanisation and globalisation, studying internationalisation unlocks a range of issues, implications and explanations challenging any attempt to provide a simple, clear-cut understanding of the phenomenon. Only a few elements of internationalisation may actually be shared among the key actors in the field (Teichler, 2017). Still, attempts to define it are ample in the existing research (see for instance Maringe, 2010). It has become common to view globalisation as an overarching process of increasing interconnectedness and interdependence between organisational actors across supranational, national and local levels, and internationalisation as a more limited and specific process of creating relationships within the larger 'web' of globalisation (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Scott, 2015).

The definition of internationalisation provided by Jane Knight has had a profound influence on the research field, in pointing to internationalisation as a process rather than a set of ad hoc, unrelated activities of higher education institutions. Her definition states that internationalisation of higher education at the national/sector/institutional level is *"the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education"* (Knight, 2003, p. 2). While it has been criticised for lacking clarity in terms of the relationship between these dimensions (Fumasoli, 2020; Yemini, 2015), and for not including an end goal with internationalisation (Almeida, 2020; de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015), it is useful as an entry point for the approach taken in the research presented in this thesis. It emphasises the broad scope of the various dimensions of internationalisation, its key activities and rationales present at different levels, and implicitly includes the relationship between 'at home' and 'abroad' activities. To expand on this definition, it may be added that the overall aim with internationalisation of higher education is to develop international perspectives and understandings among students which can prepare them for living and working in an increasingly interconnected world (Robson, Almeida, & Schartner, 2018).

From this broad and encompassing definition of internationalisation, student mobility emerges as a key activity and educational experience in the internationalisation process, and as contributing to the overall aims with internationalisation and enhancing the quality of education. Undoubtedly, it is the most visible and concrete representation of this process in higher education, and a highly influential aspect of its realisation socioeconomically, culturally and politically (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Fumasoli, 2020; Teichler, 2017). Yet, in light of the scholarly attention paid to the phenomenon of

internationalisation, student mobility has not been theorised to the same extent but tends to be taken for granted as an activity of academic or professional value (Almeida, 2020; Ogden et al., 2021). Aiming to explore such taken-for-granted aspects, the approach to student mobility taken in this thesis builds on a delimitation in practical and typological terms, as well as more substantial and conceptual aspects. In its most basic sense, international student mobility refers to the physical activity of students going abroad and leaving their country of prior education for study-related activities, whether more academically or professionally oriented (Almeida, 2020). This definition implies an array of mobility types depending on the direction (incoming or outgoing), purpose and duration (i.e., long-term degree mobility or short-term credit mobility), and how it is organised (individually, via commercial agents, higher education institutions etc.).

The scope of the thesis is limited to *outgoing short-term mobility organised and taking place in the context of the study program in which the student is enrolled*, that is, a temporary educational experience undertaken abroad in contrast to pursuing a whole academic degree abroad. International student mobility is the preferred term used in the thesis over related concepts such as education abroad, study abroad, academic mobility, student exchange, or international student migration (Roy, Newman, Ellenberger, & Pyman, 2019). It implies that students can go abroad for both *study-related* and *practice-related* purposes and that mobility does not necessarily involve earning study credits. More specifically, this type of mobility can take place within exchange programs (such as Erasmus or Nordplus which also include opportunities for traineeships and practical experience) or other bi-lateral institutional agreements with institutions abroad, as well as locally organised and supervised arrangements and partnerships with practice schools abroad. Beyond these typological aspects of student mobility, it is embedded in a context shaped by political, ideological, social and historical circumstances, which may, in turn, impact the perceived value and outcomes of mobility (Almeida, 2020; Lee & Stensaker, 2021). These multi-faceted conceptual aspects of student mobility are where it lacks theorisation and as such the key aspect of mobility which the thesis seeks to engage with.

Focussing on student mobility, the intention is not to suggest that it is the same as internationalisation, or the only or most important expression of it. In line with the definition above, internationalisation is a process which is supported both *at home* and *abroad* and may not involve physical mobility at all – in fact, for most higher education students globally, it does not. Due to mobility being a concrete manifestation of internationalisation on which many political and institutional resources are spent, and which is but still the main activity of internationalisation in many higher education institutions (Proctor & Rumbley, 2018), however, mobility does provide a relevant analytical prism through which broader internationalisation processes can be discussed.

2.3 Policy context and considerations of Norway as a case for student mobility

This section outlines and describes some of the key developments as well as the current situation in Norwegian internationalisation policy. The intention is not to provide a comprehensive, historical outline of these issues as already done by others (Elken, Hovdhaugen, & Wiers-Jenssen, 2015, 2022; Wiers-Jenssen, 2019), but merely to position the thesis against the backdrop of the political developments of the past decades.

Though geographically not forming a large part of the world, the Nordic countries make an interesting context for the study of internationalisation and student mobility. In contexts where universities are compelled to compensate for the loss of state funding due to NPM reforms by finding new ways of generating revenue, rationales for internationalisation tend to become commercialised (Courtois, 2018; Robertson, 2010; Turner & Robson, 2007). In contrast, international student mobility in Europe has not to the same extent been primarily driven by economic rationales. The Nordic region in particular has traditionally been characterised as having a distinct welfare state model which influences how higher education is organised, i.e., a strong focus on values of equity and participation (Elken, Hovdhaugen, & Wiers-Jenssen, 2022). Although it has been noted that the rationales for internationalisation in the Nordic region may also be changing in the direction of more strategic and commercial approaches to internationalisation (Alexiadou & Rönnberg, 2022; Elken et al., 2022; Gornitzka & Langfeldt, 2008; Musiał, 2023), the economic rationales for student mobility have traditionally been less prominent in Norway than in other countries (Elken et al., 2022; Maassen & Uppstrøm, 2005)[1]. Quality enhancement is a more predominant rationale expressed in the Norwegian context, thus placing more emphasis on academic and educational rationales (Sin, Antonowicz, & Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). In that sense, while many countries have a strong incentive to attract foreign students *into* the national higher education system, in Norway there is a strong explicit focus on increasing *outgoing* credit mobility from the assumption that it enhances the quality and relevance of education.

The Norwegian policy rationales for internationalisation and student mobility have developed over the years, and it has become an increasingly important policy issue. This development is witnessed alone by the number of official policies directly or indirectly addressing changing governments' ambitions and priorities on the issue (for an overview, see bibliography). Wiers-Jenssen (2019) has identified three periods in Norwegian mobility policy which differ in terms of the dominant

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[1] In December 2022 the Norwegian Parliament decided to introduce study fees for all non-exchange students coming from countries outside of EU/EEA/Switzerland from 2023. While this marks a significant break with former internationalisation policy and may result in other long-term changes, at this point in time it does not seem to have impacted the government's agenda on outgoing exchange mobility.

rationales: *capacity building* in the 1950s-1960s and onwards, as part of a systematic strategy for *internationalisation* from the 1980s and onwards, and as a means of *quality enhancement* from the 2000s (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). In short, the view on mobility has expanded from being narrowly perceived as something which should only support the acquisition of competencies which could not be/of which there was a lack of capacity to acquire at home, towards more appreciation of academic and extracurricular benefits from international experience. Currently, the view is that it should enhance the overall quality of Norwegian higher education and the relevance of students' education. This development implies that whereas full-degree mobility was the dominant type of mobility until the 1980'es, there has been a shift towards supporting the opportunities for all students to take part of their education abroad, in particular, spurred by Norway entering the ERASMUS program in 1989 (Gornitzka & Langfeldt, 2008).

Norwegian policies on higher education and research in general, and for internationalisation and student mobility in particular, are strongly influenced by EU policy and the two key European processes impacting higher education, i.e., the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Process and its associated strategies for education (Gornitzka & Langfeldt, 2008; Sin, Antonowicz, & Wiers-Jenssen, 2019; Stensaker, Frølich, Gornitzka, & Maassen, 2008). Though Norway is not a member of the EU it is an associated member by being part of the European Economic Area (EEA) and through the array of different sectoral agreements and treaties within the EU. In the field of higher education and research, the participatory status of Norway is equal to full-fledged EU member countries, and EU policy in this area has increasingly become relevant for national policy. Yet, Norway does not have voting rights in the Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, or other EU bodies and as such represents a peculiar case for processes of Europeanisation in higher education (Gornitzka & Langfeldt, 2008; Trondal, 2002). It has been argued that this complex relationship with the EU might explain Norway's attention to the Bologna Process, as it is an intergovernmental process formally located outside the frame of the EU, and thereby 'easier' for a non-member country to participate and excel in (Gornitzka & Langfeldt, 2008).

Following the implementation of the Bologna Process with the Quality Reform in 2003, the focus on mobility became strongly accentuated in Norway. Among other things, this reform instated levels of mobility as one of the performance-based indicators for higher education, thus incentivising institutions and study programs to increase levels of mobility (Damşa et al., 2015). While Norway adopted the Bologna aim that 20% of all students graduating from higher education should have had a stay abroad for a minimum of three months in the course of their studies, this was further accentuated in 2017 by stating the long-term ambition of raising the number to 50% (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017b). The latest white paper on student mobility even emphasises the

need for a 'cultural change' in higher education where mobility becomes an integrated part of all study programs, and thereby a rule rather than an exception (Meld. St. 7 (2020-2021)). Consequently, more formal responsibilities have been placed on individual study programs for organising and quality-assuring student mobility. In the latest revision of the Regulations on the supervision and control of the quality of Norwegian higher education (which among other things states the demands for internationalisation), it is stated that all full degree study programmes are required to provide quality-assured arrangements for international student exchange which are academically/professionally relevant and where ensuring that a stay abroad does not lead to a prolongation of studies for students (Keller, 2015; Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). As such, ideally, there are quite favourable conditions for outgoing student mobility, as it is relatively generously supported with national loan support, and generally not associated with additional financial costs for students compared to staying at home (Elken, Hovdhaugen, & Wiers-Jenssen, 2015). In sum, the Norwegian government and its subsidiary directorates today play a very active role in promoting and (financially) supporting the mobility agenda and given that most higher education institutions in Norway are public and funded by the state, national policies exert a rather strong influence on institutional policies and strategies (Frølich, 2008; Stensaker et al., 2008). Against this backdrop, Norway provides an interesting national case for exploring ideas about student mobility and how these materialise into practice and create various effects, thus moving beyond the economic accounts of internationalisation often discussed by researchers.

2.4 Teacher education for primary and lower secondary education: multi-layered governance and position in the higher education landscape

Situating the study in teacher education calls for strong sensitivity towards culturally bounded aspects of both policy and practice, among other things shaped by historical trajectories. Both the content and structure of teacher education are contingent on deep rationales shaped by cultural boundaries, essentially implying a view on both teacher education, teaching, and the policies governing it as highly situated practices shaped by both national and local contexts (Afdal, 2019; Blömeke & Paine, 2008). The empirical context for the research is *teacher education for primary and lower secondary education* ('grunnskolelærerutdanning')*.* While formally organised and governed as two separate study programs (i.e., grades 1-7 and grades 5-10), they share the same fundamental characteristics and are both included in the study. These programs are delivered by university colleges and universities all over the country and have since 2017 been five-year integrated master's programs. Among other things, the extension to the master's level was a response to a continued critique of the state of internationalisation in teacher education and assumed that the prolongation of studies would provide more room for student mobility in an otherwise quite rigid curricular

structure (Skagen & Elstad, 2020). In that sense, the new integrated master's program mirrors the other dominant pathway into the teaching profession in Norway, which goes through discipline-oriented studies in the university. While there has traditionally been tension between these two tracks in terms of academic competence vs. comprehensive competence for school teaching (Garm & Karlsen, 2004), such gaps have now formally decreased. The program is organised around a concurrent model for teacher education where disciplinary content knowledge is taught alongside pedagogical and educational aspects and periods of practical training (Munthe & Rogne, 2016). As such, this causes for a rather fixed structure with many obligatory requirements which are stipulated in national regulations and guidelines.

This teacher qualification path has an old and distinct history and cultural value linked to the Nordic societal model and welfare state ideals about compulsory schooling (Karlsen, 2005). In various forms, the national Norwegian teacher education tradition has existed since the early 1900s. Historically, they were based in particular teacher training colleges and grounded in the seminar tradition, which was tightly integrated with practice and formative aspects of education and distanced from research activities as such. In 1973, teacher education programs became integrated into the existing college structures but remained a distinct and close relation to professional practice in schools (Kvalbein, 2006). Thus, despite having undergone processes of academic drift which have led to teacher education entering higher education with requirements of developing a stronger research orientation alongside teaching and providing students with the relevant knowledge and skills for professional work (Smeby & Sutphen, 2015; Aarrevaara, Wikström, & Maassen, 2017), these teacher education programs have historically had weak relations to higher education and its academic standards (Munthe & Rogne, 2016).

In terms of governance, teacher education holds a somewhat special position in Norway and the wider European context. Formally, it is equal in status to any other sub-field of higher education and has increasingly but to a varying extent become influenced by transnational ideas and developments, (Skagen & Elstad, 2020). While other international organisations such as UNESCO, OECD and the World Bank are also increasingly shaping teacher education landscapes (Nazeer-Ikeda, 2021), the Bologna Process and the EU strategies in education and research have had a particularly strong influence on European teacher education (Biesta, 2017; Hudson & Zgaga, 2008). As such, the teaching profession has been an issue for European policymakers for decades, among other things witnessed by the fact that the quality of teacher education was an explicit priority in both The Lisbon Strategy and the EU education and training work programs 2010/2020 (Sayer, 2006; Wernisch, 2016). Other examples of the intensified European focus on teacher education are the EU documents on *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* and *Common European Principles for Teacher*

Competences and Qualifications (Council of the EU, 2007; European Commission, 2005). While such documents form part of the 'soft' EU governance and do not have legal power in themselves, they are strong expressions of visions and aims for teacher education which shape and influence national policy development (Biesta, 2017; Symeonidis, 2020). As for more recent agendas, the role of teacher education and teachers has recently become reaccentuated with regards to supporting the development of the European dimension of teaching and the European identity in light of urgent European challenges of radicalisation, resilience, and citizenship, thereby revitalising aims of social cohesion which have been obscured by a predominantly economic and employment-oriented focus (European Commission, 2017, 2018; Symeonidis, 2020). Most recently, the EU has made a funding program for new Erasmus+ Teacher Academies aimed at developing teacher education in line with the overall EU vision for the European Education Area (European Commission, 2023).

Nevertheless, the dominant frame for policymaking and policy development in teacher education remains nationally based. Teacher education is characterised by being more tightly regulated by the nation-state, impacting both curriculum, structure and training methods (Koh, Pashby, Tarc, & Yemini, 2022). Thus, teacher education in Europe can be considered a highly dispersed and complex sub-section of higher education. There is a high degree of diversity in terms of the extent of state/higher education institution/professional control, duration, qualification, curriculum, content and outcomes of the program, as well as teachers' career prospects and status (Caena, 2014). Thus, notwithstanding the attempts to harmonise higher education and increase student mobility via the Bologna Process, teacher education programs possess distinct national traits and structures which have been argued to be one of more barriers to mobility (Elstad, 2020; Zgaga, 2008). In the context of exchange mobility, the number of outgoing internationally mobile teacher students has continuously been identified as comparatively low across Europe (Ballowitz et al., 2014; Hauschildt et al., 2015; Nazeer-Ikeda, 2021; Zgaga, 2008).

Teacher education is characterised by being *double-targeted* in policy, that is, expectations and demands are placed on teacher education in relation to being a part of the higher education sector as well as given their role as future professionals working in schools and the needs of this sector (Wernisch, 2016; Zgaga, 2008). Accordingly, its content and mission may also be described as *multi-layere*d, i.e., serving both academic and professional ends, as well as the long-term intergenerational mission of educating future generations and supporting wider societal aims of democracy, human rights and equity (Niemi, 2022). Thus, there are multiple and sometimes contradictory expectations and demands placed on teacher education in improving the competitive abilities of a nation in the global economy, the purpose of schooling and the responsibilities of teachers, values and assumptions which may be complex to navigate (Cochran-Smith, 2013; Skagen & Elstad, 2020;

Symeonidis, 2020). In the words of Snoek and Zogla (2009): "*Politicians and ministries try to influence teacher education more than any other area in higher education, as the quality of teachers is a key issue in the economic development of a country, in safeguarding a socially coherent society and in conserving the cultural heritage of a country. This holds for not only the national level but also the European level*" (Snoek & Zogla, 2008, p. 25). The double-targeted governance implies that the reform speed in Norwegian teacher education is quite high; it is changed *both* due to reforms in the primary and secondary education and training system *and* higher education. Generally, changes to teacher education arising from reforms of the school system tend to concern its *content* (courses, professional orientation etc.), while reforms in higher education usually imply *structural changes* (degree structure, quality assurance, student learning etc.) (Askling et al., 2016; Karlsen, 2005).

2.5 Summing up

This chapter has outlined key aspects of the context for the research presented in this thesis. The preceding account of the surrounding national and European policy and governance context of teacher education, as well as some of its key characteristics in terms of content and mission, is assumed to both *impact* the process of internationalisation in teacher education and *reveal* something general about it as well. It may be argued that other sub-fields of higher education (professional programs in particular) share many of the characteristics outlined above; for instance, most professional programs include a large practice component, are subject to some degree of national regulation in terms of legal qualification requirements, and largely qualify for a national labour market. Thus, while teacher education should not be considered a *unique* discipline within higher education, it is reasonable to say that it is embedded in distinct contextual factors which at least makes it an *atypical* case for researching student mobility, given that much of the existing research implicitly assumes academic disciplines to somehow be inherently international by nature (Leask & Bridge, 2013).

Chapter 3: Literature review

In the preceding chapter the context for the study was described, situating the key issues of the research in relation to the national policy context and the field of teacher education. Exploring issues of internationalisation in teacher education (and professional education more generally) against the backdrop of general higher education developments is an important but largely missing topic in the existing literature (Zgaga, 2013). This assumption and the nature of the research question call for a review of literature from multiple strands and perspectives, as well as careful consideration of the applicability and relevance to teacher education specifically.

To this date, much has been written about the internationalisation of higher education; its roots, meanings, implications and consequences, trajectories and future developments. Student mobility has been correspondingly discussed as part of the broader internationalisation context and analysed in terms of numbers, figures, policies, patterns and consequences. As such, the existing literature on both phenomena is abundant and includes theoretical and empirical contributions, and perhaps most dominantly, general writings and reflections including attempts at definitions, opinion pieces and practitioner perspectives (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016; Lee & Stensaker, 2021). These contributions come from various disciplines and scholarly communities such as sociology, pedagogy, public policy, economy and migration research, higher education and curriculum studies (King & Raghuram, 2013). In light of this, the thesis finds itself in a balancing act between walking the scholarly paths of various disciplines and traditions, as well as the abundant writings they have produced, and placing its contribution somewhere in between. This calls for a literature review scope which is specific enough to support and critically assess the particular findings of the research, but broad enough to discuss these against more strands and kinds of literature. In that sense, the following literature review is not meant to be exhaustive, but to map central features of the 'terrain' in which the author situates the research (Montuori, 2005). The following review is narrowed by a focus on literature which respectively: a) approaches and discusses student mobility as a phenomenon of internationalisation beyond 'facts and figures' but with particular political and pedagogical underpinnings, b) analyses the implementation of internationalisation and mobility policy in higher education as a dynamic interplay between high-level ideas and ground-level practices and perspectives of academic staff, and c) sheds light on aspects and characteristics of professional higher education, and teacher education in particular, as distinct sites for the realisation of mobility and internationalisation policy.

3.1 Development of the literature review

The development of the present literature review can be described as moving between an open-ended, explorative approach (concerned with the overall topics and concepts of the thesis) and more systematically oriented reviews (supporting each of the three articles). The entry point to 'reading

my way into the field' was the seminal contributions on the internationalisation of higher education which contributed to establishing and shaping the research field from the 1990s and onwards, including the work of scholars such as Jane Knight, Hans de Wit, Ulrich Teichler, Barbara Kehm, and Betty Leask. These represent some of the 'canonical' contributions in the field to which much contemporary literature refers, and acquiring a good sense of the original sources was therefore key to further reading and understanding of the field. Next, more specific searches were undertaken in databases such as Web of Science, Eric, Google Scholar, Oria and ResearchGate to identify other key contributions on topics such as (in various combinations): higher education internationalisation policy(ies), international student mobility policy(ies), short-term student mobility, implementation of internationalisation in higher education (with focus on the role of academic staff), internationalisation of/student mobility in teacher education, and internationalisation of the curriculum via student mobility. This search resulted in a vast body of literature which was then sorted according to years since publication, national/regional context etc. Priority was given to more recent literature (2000 and onwards) as well as empirical work rather than theoretical/practical reflections. From this search, references in the various publications were additionally followed, allowing for the identification of both key policy texts in the field as well as reports, books etc. Throughout the process, texts deemed relevant had their reference file downloaded to EndNote and were noted in OneNote with title, keywords and a short description which continuously allowed the author to search the evaluated literature, as well as building up the library with new publications.

While one should always be careful with transferring and comparing findings across national contexts, higher education systems and research methodologies, this challenge is arguably even more pertinent with regard to teacher education-specific literature due to the strong influence of national context and cultural boundaries on teacher education governance, organisation and curriculum (Afdal, 2019; Blömeke & Paine, 2008). As such, a major part of the existing literature originates from Australia or the US where teacher education internationalisation and mobility may arguably take on different forms and hold different purposes compared to the European context (Larsen, 2016). However, in light of the general lack of Norwegian/European research on the main topics of the thesis, and bearing the challenges of transferability in mind, it is reasonable to argue that the benefits of including studies from different national contexts outweigh the challenges in the sense that it may enable identification of the cultural sources affecting local (i.e., Norwegian) teacher education practices and issues in relation to internationalisation.

3.2 Mapping the existing research
3.2.1 Perspectives on international student mobility beyond facts, figures and outcomes

The thesis foregrounds short-term student mobility as a distinct element of internationalisation policy which is infused with meaning across political and pedagogical spheres. To this date, the dominant approaches to studying student mobility are generally characterised by a) focusing on overall policy, statistical reports, trends, patterns and directions, or b) focusing on student motivation, experience and outcomes (Findlay et al., 2017; King & Raghuram, 2013). Despite being an issue which is essentially related to a variety of areas such as academic, economic, political, legal, ethical etc., there is a tendency for student mobility to mostly be studied through separate frames (Almeida, 2020; Lee & Stensaker, 2021). A common approach to studying the ideas behind student mobility relates it to the political and institutional rationales for internationalisation, i.e., social/cultural, political, academic and economic (Knight, 2004). Others have added technological, educational and pedagogical rationales to this list (Maringe, Foskett, & Woodfield, 2013). The rationales point to different justifications and motives for adopting internationalisation as a strategy and to different contexts and policy levels (international, national, institutional). The overall rationales are generally argued to overlap with those for international student mobility specifically (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019).

While internationalisation strategies and policies often build on a mix of these rationales, analytically they provide an entry point for exploring specific priorities and goals with internationalisation and their development over time (Elken et al., 2022). In that sense, a common observation is that the rationales for international student mobility have gradually developed from social/cultural and academic rationales into the spheres of economy, emphasising aspects such as employability and competitiveness. As an implication of mobility becoming still more interwoven with economic aspects and detached from purely educational or social values, more researchers argue that mobility has become institutionalised as a non-controversial issue, its value taken for granted and its implications left unquestioned (Almeida, 2020; Brooks & Waters, 2011; Dvir & Yemini, 2017; Papatsiba, 2006; Robertson, 2010; Teichler, 2017). This normative stance to mobility seems to characterise much research literature (Dolby & Rahman, 2008), which has been described by Kehm and Teichler (2007) as *"(…) so much driven by normative assumptions of the authors that they hardly offer any enlightenment to persons not sharing this normative umbrella. More research in this domain is needed which breaks such a circle of narrow normative reasoning"* (Kehm & Teichler, 2007, p. 237). As such, this normative tendency also perpetuates the view that the (positive) experience and benefits of mobility are distributed evenly among all students, backgrounds, and study fields irrespectively (Courtois, 2018a, 2018b). As a potential effect of this, there seems to be a lack of focus

on academic dimensions of learning in both policy and existing research, which may limit the transformative possibilities associated with mobility (Nerlich, 2021; Sidhu & Dall'Alba, 2017).

The normative view on mobility is intricately interwoven with how internationalisation is promoted and practised, as mobility (levels) is often represented as a proxy for internationalisation (success). Some researchers have argued that mobility discourses are characterised by being technical and implementation-focused, and avoiding both ethical and political dimensions of engaging internationally (Buckner & Stein, 2019) and that this kind of rationalistic discourse obscures the local dimensions of higher education and its quality (Patel, 2017; Wihlborg, 2009). In particular, the prominence of economic rationales for internationalisation tends to detach it from the wider aspects of institutional life and questions about preconditions and resources for realising it (Hunter & Sparnon, 2018). Most scholars caution against reducing internationalisation to mobility because it renders internationalisation to be a superficial phenomenon, highly visible in numbers and figures, but not enhancing the transformative potential associated with it (Turner & Robson, 2007). In practice, however, mobility is still often the main focus of many institutional approaches to internationalisation and functions merely as one of more fragmented and unrelated internationalisation activities (Castro, Woodin, Lundgren, & Byram, 2016; de Wit, 2018; Green & Whitsed, 2015).

This development has been related to the 'easily administered' nature of mobility as an activity of internationalisation which can be added as an opportunity for the individual student in the existing curriculum (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010b), as well as the 'attractivity of numbers', i.e., the fact that *"mobility is easy to translate into numbers, percentages and targets"* (Green & Whitsed, 2015, p. x). As a potential consequence, Courtois (2018a) shows how the massification of student mobility is associated with a shift towards more easily manageable institutional practices and detachment of mobility from an academic focus (Courtois, 2018a). A similar point is made by Almeida (2020) in arguing that the academic value of studying abroad is often taken for granted and obscured by the strong focus on quantitative imperatives in international and national policy discourses (Almeida, 2020). Cairns and França (2021) argue that the quality of the learning experience may be at risk in the wake of increasing commercialism and de-intellectualisation of mobility approaches which focus on *"processing rather than educating students, with needless pressure put upon staff to sustain an unsustainable level of student circulation"* (Cairns & França, 2021, p. 14). In a less critical manner, Wernisch argues that the strong institutional focus on mobility may be related to the fact that the benefits of mobility are more clear and comprehensible for staff and students than the general and more abstract benefits of internationalisation (Wernisch, 2016).

The emerging critical strand to the study of internationalisation and mobility policy provides a timely correction to internationalisation research which has traditionally been more top-down oriented in their analyses of overall policy and institutional strategies (Kehm & Teichler, 2007). Rather than treating official policy as prescribing goals and activities of higher education institutions, its discursive impact in terms of shaping and narrowing the space for action available to individuals is emphasised. It is assumed that the language and concepts used within official policy texts will likely become part of the dominant and taken-for-granted discourses about mobility (Lomer, 2017, 2018), which implies a view on policy as a key means through which those who provide and promote mobility contribute to give meaning to this phenomenon and shape the patterns of student mobility (Brooks, 2018; Findlay et al., 2017). While the critical research strand to mobility policy has a lot to offer in terms of understanding the drivers and effects of student mobility, much of this literature originates from the Anglo-American context where student mobility is a far more commercialised activity compared to Norway, and comparison should be performed carefully. Moreover, its way of approaching discourse is largely not concerned with the context of practice to which policy refers and is addressed. As such, there is a lack of perspectives on how the actors ultimately tasked with putting policy into practice understand the constraints, possibilities and effects of mobility policy, and subsequently how they enact it.

3.2.2 Realising internationalisation and student mobility: The role of academic staff

In general, calls have been made for more research into contextual factors and structuring forces underlying students' motivations and patterns of mobility. The role of local policy initiatives and institutional cultures represented by a specific study program provides a potential entry point to this (Chankseliani & Wells, 2019; Findlay et al., 2017; Haru, Bryntesson, & Börjesson, 2022; Van Mol & Timmerman, 2014). In particular, academic staff represent one aspect of such structuring forces for mobility, as their attitudes towards and general encouragement of mobility have been found to impact students' choice to go abroad (CIMO, Swedish Council for Higher Education, & SIU, 2013; Paus & Robinson, 2008). Moreover, they have a key role in integrating students' learning outcomes from mobility with the curriculum (Giedt, Gokcek, & Ghosh, 2015; Leask & Bridge, 2013), and practical responsibilities for coordination, developing partnerships, and setting up exchange agreements (Toporkoff, 2014). To take on these roles, and in particular for ensuring that student mobility functions as an integrated part of the study program and not an extra-curricular add-on benefitting the individual student only, more studies have pointed to the importance of appropriate knowledge, competence and values among academic staff (Dias et al., 2021; Giedt et al., 2015; Leask, 2011; Leask et al., 2021). In the wider context of internationalisation, academic staff are seen as key to realising internationalisation, being closest to the core aspects of which it affects, i.e., research, the

curriculum, and the teaching and learning processes taking place in higher education. While their engagement, understood as individual interpretations, actions and attitudes to internationalisation, is argued to be key for its realisation, most studies also identify this as a significant challenge in practice (Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015; Childress, 2009; de Wit, 2018; Jones, 2016; Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Leask, 2011; Leask & Bridge, 2013; Renc-Roe & Roxå, 2014; Stohl, 2007; Wihlborg, 2009). There may be more explanations for this, some having to do with the level of skills and knowledge among academic staff (Leask et al., 2021), or balancing the ambiguous demands "*of the discipline and the institutional aspiration to educate graduates for a globalized labour market*" (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016, p. 93). Additionally, internationalisation may be perceived as something which takes away valuable time from focusing on the academic discipline, resulting in it being an activity which is often undertaken by a small number of academics, or undertaken as separate modules or workshops (Jones & Killick, 2013). Finally, it may not be seen as an academically rewarding or recognised activity compared to research or teaching tasks (Courtois, 2019; Friesen, 2013).

In both policy and the scholarly literature, these challenges to engagement tend to portray academic staff as resistant to change, uncompromising, unmotivated or lacking knowledge and competence about internationalisation (Leask et al., 2021). Yet, the 'gap' between vision and practice in relation to internationalisation often identified may also be related to the inconsistency and ambiguity lodging within overall internationalisation policy and the diverse needs and preconditions for internationalisation within various institutional contexts and disciplines (Castro et al., 2016; S. Fischer & Green, 2018; Stensaker et al., 2008; Wihlborg, 2009). In light of the positive symbolic power and trust associated with the concept of internationalisation, it is also a concept which has the potential of being*: "deployed in multiple and contested ways across a wide array of discourses from the macro/exo-systems level to the micro-level of individual actors. As such, it does not exist but rather "becomes""* (Whitsed & Green, 2014, p. 116). Hence, existing research into the role of academic staff for internationalisation processes on the one hand emphasises their key role, but on the other hand, finds a variety of challenges to its realisation in practice.

3.2.3 Characteristics of professional higher education shaping internationalisation

It is widely acknowledged that internationalisation policy is filtered, shaped and contextualised according to institutional and program-level conditions and needs, and how this relates to the market and society more generally (Brooks & Waters, 2011; de Wit, 2013; Huisman, 2013; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). Given that academic disciplines have distinct cultures and values, practices of knowing, doing and being, their approaches to internationalisation will also differ (Clifford, 2009; Leask & Bridge, 2013). Yet, the existing literature tends to approach internationalisation from the

perspective of traditional disciplines often found in research universities and the assumption that such institutions are 'international by nature' in terms of their international cooperation across borders (de Wit, 2011). While the 'level of internationalisation' should probably be viewed on a continuum rather than as a dichotomy, it is reasonable to say that some professional programs (nursing, teaching, social work etc.) which were previously located outside these universities, do not share a similar international tradition (Wächter, 1999). Thus, while teacher education, along with other fields of higher professional education across Europe have undergone processes of academic drift or universitisation (Zgaga, 2013) over the past decades, which have fully integrated it into higher education, such programs are relatively 'young' in the higher education context (Smeby & Sutphen, 2015). Though embedded in the same context of global trends, professional programs and the institutions in which they operate do not always engage in the global higher education market in the same way as the top-ranked prestigious comprehensive research universities, simply because their fundamental missions differ (Elken & Røsdal, 2017). While the latter are characterised by an orientation towards what is considered central within a specific field of knowledge, professional higher education has a distinct orientation towards specific professional goals or needs linked to the context for future professional practice (Mausethagen & Smeby, 2017).

In relation to the definition of internationalisation proposed by Jane Knight presented in Chapter 2, in the context of professional higher education, the *intercultural* dimension thus seems to occupy a particularly prominent position as a rationale for internationalisation by being linked to how professionals might apply their international perspectives in their future professional work. Hence, the international perspectives required by different professions will vary according to how a specific profession is affected by social, cultural and global issues (Leask, 2011). This, in turn, frames the demands of increasing internationalisation in the institutions where future professionals are educated (Leseth, 2013), and generally makes it distinct from other discipline-based fields of higher education, where academic and economic rationales are more strongly emphasised (Koh et al., 2022). Thus, internationalisation is more narrowly linked to issues of the nation-state becoming more multicultural, and how this poses new challenges for especially the welfare professionals who interact with a more culturally diverse and socio-complex group of clients. The prominence of intercultural aspects may also have implications for how student mobility is conceptualised and valued by staff, for instance by a stronger emphasis on practically oriented types of mobility in contrast to studying abroad (i.e., academic/semester mobility) (Knight, 2012; Mellors-Bourne, Jones, Lawton, & Woodfield, 2015). These characteristics of professional higher education are key to understanding the preconditions and processes of internationalisation. Arguably, the general frameworks for internationalisation do not do full justice to describing or analysing

internationalisation in professional higher education contexts; yet, this issue is highly under-researched (de Wit, 2002).

3.2.4 Perspectives on the internationalisation of teacher education

As for teacher education in particular, the relatively scattered research literature can be broadly distinguished as taking either an *internal* or *external* perspective to studying internationalisation and mobility. While the former approaches internationalisation in relation to pedagogical and intercultural aspects internal to teacher education (i.e., largely isolated from broader higher education context), the latter perspective tends to treat teacher education comparatively as any other higher education discipline, that is, as largely decontextualised, and often resulting in a problematisation of its engagement with internationalisation. In both cases, however, the activity of mobility, in particular, seems to play a key role as representing internationalisation. The vast majority of research on the 'promises' of internationalisation explores how teacher students may develop intercultural competencies and global understanding (or various notions hereof) and the ability to transform this into future professional work in schools (Abraham & von Brömssen, 2018; Baecher & Chung, 2020; Cushner & Mahon, 2016; Helleve, 2017; Kissock & Richardson, 2010; Klein & Wikan, 2019; Sjøen, 2021; Steele & Leming, 2022; Townsend & Bates, 2007). The type of mobility investigated in this strand of literature is often international practice teaching, where teacher students go abroad for a shorter period of time (1-3 months) and are often small-scale practitioner studies. They can be considered linked to internal teacher education issues because of their strong orientation towards a specific element of professional development and finding pedagogical responses to the increased societal socio-complexity. They are thus rarely placed in a context of broader internationalisation frameworks, policies or higher education developments. Notably, even studies of exchange/academic mobility for teacher students focus almost exclusively on intercultural and professional aspects rather than academic aspects otherwise assumed to be a dominant rationale for this type of mobility, such as improved self-confidence, language and problem-solving skills as well as developing a more inclusive perspective on cultural difference (Baecher & Chung, 2020; Bracht et al., 2006; Krammer, Vogl, Linhofer, & Weitlaner, 2016; Santoro, Sosu, & Fassetta, 2016; Walters, Garii, & Walters, 2009).

As for the external perspective on the internationalisation of teacher education, the most prominent issue studied concerns statistical overviews and reports. These have repeatedly demonstrated that students of teacher training and education across Europe are underrepresented in exchange mobility compared to other students in higher education. Common explanations for the low mobility rates are (inflexible) structure of teacher education programs, lower incentives for going abroad (education for a national labour market) organisational provision and obstacles for recognition of mobility in the

domestic program, age and life stage conditions and financial burdens associated with mobility, language barriers, as well as parental higher education background (Ballowitz et al., 2014; DIKU, 2019; Jaritz, 2011; Netz, 2015; Vögtle, 2019). Such studies and reports tend to be characterised by a 'diagnostic' perspective where the low mobility rates are taken as indicating a weak institutionalisation of internationalisation in teacher education but provide a limited explanation of why or what to do about it. Important as such reports are for shedding light on (inequal) participation opportunities in mobility, they leave open empirical questions about the influence of the core mission of the study program and how it frames mobility beyond the explanation of its 'national framing' or inflexible structure.

However, a notable exception to this is the research conducted by Wernisch (2016), who finds that the policy-practice gap concerning mobility and internationalisation in teacher education is (re)produced by several policy/organisational aspects. For instance, a disregard for internationalisation and the resources required for it in overall teacher education governance and policy, and a general view on student mobility by staff as an add-on to the program for individual benefits rather than as something benefitting the study program as a whole (Wernisch, 2016, p. 272). One of the important conclusions is that *"under conditions of reform competition, internationalization is assigned lower importance and remains a nice-to-have in the teacher education sector"* (ibid., p. 271). The findings and conclusions of Wernisch's study provide important comparative perspectives for the exploration of the significance of student mobility in teacher education pursued in this study.

3.3 Review summary

This review of existing research illustrates how mobility is entrenched in different political agendas which extends it beyond its educational purpose, and the potential effects, challenges and tensions created for those responsible for putting policy into practice. Moreover, the literature review elucidates perspectives on internationalisation in professional higher education contexts, showing how contextual aspects and educational mission may affect how internationalisation and mobility are interpreted and realised. In combination, the perspectives outlined shed light on important aspects of the significance of student mobility as a phenomenon of internationalisation as well as understudied aspects of the issue against which the thesis is positioned.

In general, the review identifies a need for advancing our current understanding of staff engagement and how carrying out the political intentions on student mobility as a distinct element of internationalisation policy is both enabled and constrained by the limitations and possibilities set by educational context and policy discourse. Additionally, studying these issues in relation to (professional) study programs working on 'special terms' in relation to internationalisation is

important for developing higher education internationalisation research in a more inclusive direction. It provides important nuances to the existing literature which tends to approach internationalisation of higher education and mobility in a somewhat normative and teleological manner. While the existing literature generally recognises these aims as important scholarly endeavours to pursue, there are still important gaps to be filled in this area. Hence, the research presented in this thesis contributes to advancing the existing research to filling some of the gaps identified in the literature review, in particular with regards to approaching student mobility as a multi-level issue spanning various political and pedagogical agendas, using educational context and mission as a conceptual lens for studying how internationalisation is implemented, and finally, foregrounding micro-level actors as crucial capacities for the implementation.

Chapter 4: Analytical framework and key concepts

This chapter describes the theoretical perspectives and key assumptions constituting the analytical framework of the thesis. As evident from the literature review, there is a need for expanding the view on student mobility and internationalisation to capture their nature as multi-level and multi-layered phenomena in higher education policymaking. In particular in relation to how these phenomena are made sense of and realised contingent on the conditions, needs and values in particular academic contexts. The overarching analytical framework which binds the elements of the thesis together is a multi-disciplinary, critical approach to policy guided by a four-dimensional framework for studying mobility policy developed by Riaño et al., suggesting *discourse, contexts, agents and temporalities* as critical dimensions which need to be included in research student mobility policy (Riaño et al., 2018). This frames the thesis as a multi-level study of the interaction between high-level ideas and ground-level practices of internationalisation and student mobility.

From this starting point, an eclectic approach to theory is enabled, where the strengths of a variety of concepts can be drawn on in policy research (Vidovich, 2013), and where theories can be used as 'lenses' or sensitising concepts to study the stated issues rather than adhere strictly to one specific set of theoretical assumptions or paradigm (Blumer, 1954; Bryman, 2008). The value of this general approach is reflected in how the three articles shed light on different aspects of the policy process, i.e., ideas and discourse, and aspects of local reception, interpretation and enactment. However, this overall approach also comes with challenges in terms of ensuring that the analytical framework is both *specific* enough to capture the key issues, and *dynamic* enough to handle *and* retain the complexity involved in the phenomena under scrutiny, and more specifically, how to balance aspects of structure and agency in the analysis of macro and micro features of internationalisation policy. The chapter introduces the key analytical perspectives and describes how they have informed the analyses and expands on them in terms of their usefulness for the final discussion of the findings in the thesis. More specifically, building on the four-dimensional framework, the chapter presents the discursive view on policy (Ball, 1993; Durnova, Fischer, & Zittoun, 2016; F. Fischer, 2015) which is the analytical backbone of the thesis and subsequently relates this to *policy enactment* (Maguire et al., 2012) as its version of implementation. Finally, *educational ideologies* (Trowler, 1998, 2002) are introduced as an entry point to explore the relationship between enactment and student mobility as an educational activity linked to particular expectations in specific educational contexts. The chapter closes with a summary and an illustration of the analytical framework showing how the designated perspectives support each other in analysing the research questions.

4.1 Point of departure: critical dimensions of policies for international student mobility

To study the significance of student mobility as a phenomenon of internationalisation in teacher education across different levels and actors, it is necessary to somehow operationalise or stabilise the analytical viewpoints for capturing the phenomenon. Clearly, there are many different well-established approaches for studying policymaking which all include a range of different assumptions concerning the level of analysis, which questions they pose, and the ways and methods they draw on to approach these questions. However, actors, ideas and structures are generally assumed to *"form the common ground where all policy theories converge"* (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009, p. 48). These critical dimensions are thus also reflected in the four-dimensional framework for studying mobility policy which foregrounds *discourses*, *contexts*, *agents* and *temporalities* (Riaño et al., 2018). Arguably, it connects key aspects of policymaking which are often studied in isolation in internationalisation and student mobility research into a complex and comprehensive perspective. These four dimensions are described in what follows.

Discourses denote a view on policy which expands the view on policy as not only being instruments for managing and controlling mobility, but as creating broader discursive frameworks for how it can be legitimised and put into work in practice. As discourses develop and shift over time, they are malleable rather than stable, which may lead imply a variety of ambiguities and tensions when implemented. *Contexts* refer to the various arenas which shape public policy translations formally and informally, ranging from global, national, institutional to local contexts. While mobility policies may be somewhat convergent at a global scale, they are highly diverging at the local scale as a result of the role of context(s) where public policy is framed, negotiated and implemented. *Agents* refer to the different agents involved in the policy process, which may be both more abstract actors within a state and specific individuals, such as frontline workers. The role of agents is critical because they are in powerful positions to effect change in policymaking and draw on different ideas to push forward their own interests regarding mobility policy, though agency is also meditated by the other dimensions and should not be misread as completely free and unrestricted. Finally, *temporalities* concern the historicity of mobility policies, their shifting nature and continuity over time contingent on a given country's history. In that sense, temporality may indeed be argued to form a crucial underlying aspect of the other three dimensions. I.e., the same ideas may be promoted within different discursive frameworks, contexts have a history which shapes their current nature, and agents are also themselves shaped by history, culture, traditions etc. (Riaño et al., 2018).

While originally developed in the context of migration studies to study student mobility in the intersection between migration and educational policies, its analytical value for identifying key aspects and tensions of policymaking has also been important in this thesis. For instance, a key

tension across the findings is that internationalisation and student mobility in teacher education are framed by an uneasy strait between professional and academic discourses. This strait is created and sustained by both the 'triple-targeting' of teacher education in primary school, higher education, and teacher education policy (Article 1), and the prevailing academic rationales underlying higher education policy promoting models of internationalisation unsuited for the needs of teacher education (Article 2 and 3). Hence, the framework has served as a valuable backbone for engaging with the overall research question of the thesis, though it is not explicitly addressed in any of the articles. Rather, its heuristic nature allows it to be expanded and operationalised with a range of different theories and concepts, supporting the aims of an eclectic use of theory described above.

4.2 A discursive view on public policy

A key analytical assumption underlying the thesis is that *ideas* and *discourse* matter for social action such as policy implementation; not by *determining* action and behaviour in a structuralist sense, but by shaping and being 'reflected' in social practices, which can also, in turn, transform discourses (Durnova et al., 2016). Ideas and discourse are separate (but interdependent) concepts; within neo-insitutionalist approaches to policy analysis, ideas are assumed to be held by individuals and: "*shape how we understand political problems, give definition to our goals and strategies, and are the currency we use to communicate about politics. By giving definition to our values and preferences, ideas provide us with interpretive frameworks that make us see some facts as important and others as less so*" (Béland & Cox, 2010, p. 3). In that sense, ideas may be seen as *"the 'atoms' enabling the production of a discourse"* (Lynggaard, 2019, p. 38), thus providing policy discourse with substantive arguments which form part of the *"discursive struggle to create and control systems of shared social meanings"* (F. Fischer, 2003, p. 13) which is essential to the discursive view on policy and policymaking.

Policy ideas provide valuable analytical resources in article 1, where elements from discursive institutionalism are used to unpack the underlying ideas of the political promotion of student mobility with focus on the 'meaning context' in which ideas and discourse make sense. In this thesis, however, ideas and discourse are reconciled into a more overarching interpretive and deconstructivist approach to the *nature* of policy as being discursive, that is, as including *both* policy intentions and how it is put into practice. This provides an entry point for unpacking the relationship between structural and agentic aspects of the policy process as an ongoing mutual feedback process linked to interpretation across policy actors – thus also on the part of the researcher (Ball, 2013; F. Fischer, 2015; Trowler, 2002). This is reflected in how the three articles shed light on different aspects of the discursive nature of policy, i.e., the policy expectations and their discursive effects (Article 1), the accounts of policy enactments at the micro-level of teacher education and how the

same policy intentions are carried out differently and have different effects contingent to local contexts (article 2), and how situating student mobility in relation to specific educational and pedagogical ideas reflects the highly malleable nature of the quality concept which underlie the prevailing policy discourse (Article 3).

An inherent aspect of the discursive view on policy is that it assumes great variation and complexity in the policy process, both due to official policy intentions being *representations* of compromises, intentions and expectations which may not be as consistent and clear as the final policy text would have us believe, and the potential for multiple interpretations to be made in enactment (Gornitzka, Kogan, & Amaral, 2005). Thus, from a discursive point of view, it is these inherent values, inconsistencies and tensions in policy processes which should be analysed rather than worked around or obscured. Approaching policy as being mainly top-down administrative processes which can be analysed in a non-normative way involves a risk of over-simplification or overlooking important factors, or misinterpretation of social behaviour which would be counterproductive for exploring policy issues where much complexity and instability can be expected (F. Fischer, 2003). These assumptions fit the nature of the research questions pursued in this thesis and how it approaches student mobility very well, given that it aims to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about student mobility and provide nuances to how it may be understood as a phenomenon of internationalisation to be implemented in higher education contexts. Thus, as argued in the literature review, student mobility may be linked to very different expectations between stakeholders in and around higher education and should not be perceived as a 'neutral' activity though it is framed within a sense of obviousness politically (Papatsiba, 2006). Ignoring such normative aspects of this phenomenon would likely result in a rather limited or flawed analysis of how it is enacted.

4.3 Policy enactment as a version of policy implementation

The thesis seeks to shed light on the interaction between policy ideas about student mobility and how they are made sense of in local contexts. To do so, it draws on different analytical resources to shed light on the dynamic process of "travelling", whereby ideas undergo processes of interpretation, translation and re-contextualisation as they circulate within/between different institutional contexts. In essence, this is a matter of policy implementation, which concerns whether and how reforms translate into change, and how far expectations and results correspond (Gornitzka et al., 2005). In the most general sense, current approaches in implementation research differ in terms of how they perceive of top-down vs. bottom-up aspects of implementation processes, and the role of agency and structure respectively (Sabatier, 2005; Trowler, 2002). By foregrounding *enactment* as a way of engaging with how actors construct and modify public policies as an inherent

part of the discursive view on policy, the thesis is positioned in relation to what may be coined under the umbrella term 'policy in practice' research, i.e., taking a bottom-up perspective on implementation while simultaneously emphasising the role of context, structure and institutions as both constraining and enabling factors (Trowler, 1998).

Rather than focussing on how well implementation matches the stated intentions in policy ('delivery') as suggested by classical implementation theories, it assumes a considerable potential for variation and deviation between the stated aims and what plays out in practice (Brøgger & Cort, 2017). The key idea in enactment is that policy materialises in the practices of ground-level actors situated in specific contexts and involved in everyday practices of teaching and organising education (Maguire et al., 2012). Policy enactment reconciles a view on structural and agentic dimensions by using *context* as a conceptual lens through which policy is studied, thus foregrounding how the actors responsible for "implementing" policy interpret and translate it against the background of the institutions, structures and practices which both enable and constrain agency and interpretation as the key analytical question (Maguire et al., 2012). In that sense, the analytic tools developed with policy enactment contribute to understanding the complexity of what is going on within a specific educational context, rather than making presumptions about it, as critical education policy approaches otherwise tend to do (Singh, Heimans, & Glasswell, 2014).

In Article 2, enactment is used explicitly as an analytical tool to shed light on the realisation of mobility policies both in terms of their formal dimensions (rules and regulations), as well as their discursive dimension (how they narrow the space for possible action and simultaneously leave room for creative and sophisticated enactments). The enactment perspective proved particularly valuable for analysing and comparing contextual dimensions of the three teacher education programs studied. It reveals how aspects such as history, teacher commitments, resources, strategies, infrastructure and external demands and pressures shaped and constrained different interpretations of, and approaches to, student mobility. However, enactment is also an important overarching concept for engaging with the research questions in this thesis, as it allows for generating *"a grounded account of the diverse variables and factors (the what), as well as the dynamics of context (the how) that shape policy enactments and thus to relate together and theorise interpretative, material and contextual dimensions of the policy process"* (Maguire et al., 2012, p. 20). Based on its ability to support analyses of the complexities involved with the implementation of student mobility as a discrete element of broader internationalisation agendas, the enactment perspective has served as the backbone of the research design. It has inspired both the nested nature of the different analytical levels and objects in the research questions, the specific questions and themes in the interview guides, and the general point of departure for the empirical analyses performed in the three articles.

4.4 Expanding the view on enactment of student mobility: the role of educational ideologies

The analytical perspectives presented above are valuable for shedding light on key aspects of student mobility as a policy idea linked to a range of purposes and expectations with effects beyond the activity itself (Article 1), and as a *'policy object'* (Sin, 2014); a specific element embedded in a broader policy agenda to be enacted in a specific educational context (Article 2). However, further analytical perspectives are needed to unpack it as an *educational activity* situated in the core activities of teacher education. While Article 3 approaches the educational and pedagogical aspects of student mobility more directly by analysing *quality perspectives* on mobility, the thesis seeks to expand on this by adding analytical perspectives on the discipline, and more specifically the role of academic staff representing, them as key to understanding how intentions on mobility are carried out in practice. More specifically, the thesis draws on theoretical inspiration from Trowler's concept of *educational ideologies* (Trowler, 1998) combined with perspectives on internationalisation of the curriculum to enhance the final discussion about the significance of student mobility in relation to the discursive nature of policy and enactment as described above.

Ultimately, how expectations and intentions on internationalisation and mobility are carried out in practice, concerns how they become translated into practice – teaching and learning (Wihlborg, 2009). Evidently, *"both globalisation and internationalisation can be considered at the core of 'learning issues' in HE, raising questions of what to learn, how to learn, and why these contents and modalities could be regarded as relevant from an international and/or global perspective, in relation to any education at all"* (ibid., p 118). This is essentially an issue of internationalisation of the curriculum, which is typically linked to internationalisation *at home* as opposed to internationalisation *abroad*, of which student mobility is a prominent activity (Leask, 2015). However, given that student mobility is an activity which is expected to enhance the quality of education, curriculum perspectives are also relevant for unpacking how it is interpreted in relation to the purpose of the education and questions about how to develop relevant (international) knowledge, skills and attitudes among students as operationalised and stated in the curriculum. These aspects (ideally) shape how mobility is planned, organised and assessed (Altbach, 2004; Dias et al., 2021; Messelink, Van Maele, & Spencer-Oatey, 2015). While the thesis does not engage directly with actual teaching and learning practices, it aims to relate teacher educators' perspectives on their discipline and their pedagogical considerations of the educational activities supporting it, to student mobility more generally. In that sense, it takes a more general perspective on the educational provision of teacher education as an analytical entry point to explore how expectations and intentions on internationalisation and mobility are carried out in practice.

Trowler's concept of *educational ideologies* (Trowler, 1998) provides a relevant entry point for unpacking the micro-level of policy processes in relation to the educational core but beyond teaching practices as such. It refers to a *"framework of values and beliefs about social arrangements and the distribution and ordering of resources which provides a guide and justification for behaviour"* and more specifically *"to those aspects of ideology which relate to the nature and purposes of education"* (Trowler, 1998, p. 65). Hence, at the most general level, educational ideologies respond to the fundamental questions about education: *"'what exactly should we do?', 'why should we do this?', and 'how should we do it?'"* (ibid., p. 75), i.e., the aims, content, and processes of education. More specifically, educational ideologies reflect a coherent system of values and beliefs related to different issues such as the nature of knowledge in the discipline (for instance, theoretical or practical), academic standards and changes to them, and views on the importance and relevance of different types of skills (ibid., p. 76). In relation to internationalisation specifically, such educational ideologies will likely shape how internationalisation is made sense of and enacted and thereby embed it in different 'layers of context', altogether resulting in *"variation in interpretations of its meaning in different disciplines and institutions within the same national and regional context"* (Leask & Bridge, 2013, p. 84). As such, disciplines have *"their own way of seeing the world, understanding the world, shaping the world and coping with the world"* (ibid., p. 85). The overarching paradigms in which discipline communities work therefore, to some extent, constrain both ideas and practice and lead to a strong continuation of practices of teaching, knowledge construction and general views on the world and how to practice a profession more generally (ibid.). Yet, while the concept of educational ideologies include the role of the discipline, it is not confined to it; rather, it foregrounds academic staff as key actors carrying and representing it and thereby assumes that educational ideologies will likely differ, even in the same discipline, because academics position themselves differently in relation to "*a story about the demands of their discipline in terms of how its content can, and cannot, be sequenced and presented when it is taught in the university"* (ibid., p. 73). As ideologies represent sets of attitudes and values to the nature of education, they are an important part of education policymaking because they work as an interpretive 'filter' which shapes ground-level interpretations and responses to policy, thus impacting how it is implemented (Trowler, 2002).

 In the context of teacher education, educational ideologies provide a highly relevant entry point for studying the enactment of mobility and internationalisation policy, because while teacher education, may be unified by its professional purpose, it consists of several subjects and 'paradigms'. *Educational ideologies* is a more overarching concept than discipline only, for understanding the role of beliefs, values, and behaviours of academic actors, shaping policy enactment. In particular, it provides an analytical entry point to address the critical dimension *agents* in the policy process, i.e.

individuals with different capacities and placed in different positions to effect policy change in relation to mobility and act not only as receivers of policy but as critical and reflective agents of change (Leask & Bridge, 2013; Riaño et al., 2018; Trowler, 2002). Unpacking the agentic dimension of student mobility policymaking more in-depth, then, contributes to crystallising the dominant paradigms and existing ways of knowing and doing which are confronted in the process of internationalisation (Bartell, 2003), and in turn advances the findings and discussion in the final chapter of the thesis.

4.5 Summary and illustration of the analytical framework

The overall aim of the analyses presented in this thesis is to unpack the significance of student mobility in teacher education by way of exploring how it is infused with meaning in policy intentions and enactment, and in relation to contextual/institutional and educational/disciplinary aspects. It aims to identify both variations and similarities in relation to these aspects, and how these may relate to sustain or change prevailing assumptions about student mobility as a phenomenon of internationalisation. As evident from the three articles and the discussion provided towards the end of the thesis, the combination of the analytical perspectives described above offers a valuable prism for expanding current knowledge about these issues. Focussing the overall analytical lens on *discourses, contexts, temporalities* and *agents* as the critical dimensions of student mobility policy supports the multi-level and multi-dimensional aims of the research. As illustrated in the literature review, student mobility forms part of broader policy agendas on internationalisation and quality enhancement and can be linked to an array of rationales and outcomes. Approaching it both on the level of ideas and practice across these four dimensions has been valuable for capturing the complexity and tensions underpinning this relationship. While the four dimensions are implicit in the articles, they have helped draw attention to different aspects of student mobility policymaking by allowing for being further theorised and operationalised. Figure 2 below illustrates how this 'analytical backbone' relates to the specific analytical tools and perspectives employed in the articles.

It is important to note that while the analytical framework outlined above describes the overall assumptions guiding the thesis, the intention is not to offer strong or causal predictions about the findings. The eclectic use of theory as 'sensitising lenses' is neither capable of nor interested in, making such deductive inferences. Rather, the stance to policy in general, and student mobility a specific element in it, is grounded in a multifaceted and comprehensive approach to policy which does not give primacy to agency or structure or assumes policy to represent either a stable text or contested discourse (Ball, 1993). Thus, rather than aiming for one clear and consistent description which may over-simplify or over-state the nature and implications of the phenomenon, the analytical

perspectives have supported the thesis' overall aim of analysing policy in a way which can unpack the taken-for-granted aspects of mobility and showing its contingency to specific educational contexts.

Figure 2: Overarching analytical framework: Key dimensions of student mobility policymaking and practices

- Key assumption: "Policy" is *both* official intentions and how they materialise into practice. Discourse shapes behaviour, but does dot determine it.
- Key concepts: Policy ideas, a discursive view on policy

Discourses

Contexts

- Key assumption: Context mediates possible responses to policy
- Key concepts: European/national policy level, policy enactment

Agents

Temporalities

- Key assumption: Actors are both receivers and constructors of policy. Their beliefs about TE influence how they grant meaning to mobility
- Key concepts: Educational ideologies, academic discipline

- Key assumption: Time forms an important element of all dimensions by pointing to their historical embeddedness
- Key concepts: layers of context and changing expectations for TE

Chapter 5: Research design, data and methods

Given the overall aim of exploring the meaning and significance of international student mobility in teacher education policy and practice, the research is founded on a qualitative research design aimed at generating in-depth knowledge about these issues. This chapter presents the overall methodological approach of the thesis and its value and limitations for pursuing the aims of the study. Due to the limitations posed by the article genre, the methodological aspects of the research have been somewhat scarcely reported in the articles. Therefore, the chapter devotes much space and detail to elaborate and reflect on methodological issues.

Committed to the scientific ideals of qualitative research, the following description provides a transparent and comprehensible account of the choices made and their implications in a way which ultimately aims to allow the reader to assess the quality and validity of the research. First, the research design and its epistemological and ontological underpinnings are described. Next, the context of the research, selection and generation of the empirical material, the analytical strategy and process are described. The chapter closes with reflections on the limitations and challenges of the methodological approach, the scientific quality of the research, and ethical considerations.

5.1 Research design

The research builds on a qualitative design focused on unpacking the phenomena of student mobility and internationalisation in the context of official policy and the institutional context(s) of practice and identifying tensions and challenges between them. Both the dominant types of data and the methods used to generate and analyse the data are qualitative, i.e., document analysis and interviews. As outlined in the preceding sections, the overall approach to student mobility is to add nuances and complexity to established ways of studying it. Rather than attempting to stabilise and constrain its meaning, the aim is to unpack variety and potentially conflicting perspectives on its significance. A key element in the research design therefore, is to approach student mobility as both a *multi-level* and *multi-issue* phenomenon spanning different policy contexts (European, national, institutional, ground-level study program), and different areas such as the political, the economic and the socio-cultural and educational (Lee & Stensaker, 2021; Vukasovic, Jungblut, Chou, Elken, & Ravinet, 2018). To add breadth and depth, complexity and rigour to the inquiry, this approach necessitates triangulation of multiple empirical sources, methods and theories, which the qualitative design offers (Denzin, 2012). As argued in the preceding sections, this involves an eclectic use of theory, a combination of textual and oral material and an emphasis on different units of analysis across the three articles. Moreover, empirical and analytic depth and richness are supported by comparative perspectives across levels *and* between the three teacher education programs employed as empirical cases in the study. Comparison and identification of similarities as well as

differences are not only an essential component of scientific reasoning, but a key qualitative tool for handling *"questions that require complex and combinatorial explanations"* (Palmberger & Gingrich, 2014, p. 3).

Thus, flexibility is a key element in the research and is illustrated by how the three articles build on each other and hold a nested nature as described in Chapter 1. Hence, rather than uncritically following the initial assumptions and research questions posed, the findings of the preliminary analyses have influenced the approach and themes of the subsequent analyses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For instance, the project did not initially set out to do an isolated comparative document analysis of European and Norwegian mobility discourse (Article 1), but in preparing the grounds for the work with Article 2, it was found that such analyses would be useful for both my own research ahead and of value to the research field more generally. In that sense, document analysis came to play a more central role in the thesis than anticipated but turned out to work as a fruitful way of doing triangulation combined with the interview material.

5.2 Ontological and epistemological assumptions

The theoretical attraction to ideas, discourse and enactment described in the preceding sections places *meaning,* as constructed in a social space and embodied in the language and action of social actors, at the heart of research, and positions the research within an interpretivist paradigm (Schwandt, 1994). Meaning - as both the object and the 'product' of research - cannot be treated as a solid and given entity waiting to be uncovered by the researcher in search of 'the true meaning'. It must be seen as a *construction* of meaning which can be interpreted by the researcher, who can ultimately offer no more than a construction of actors' meaning construction. This epistemological stance implies that 'reality' and all possible knowledge about 'reality' is socially constructed and culturally and historically embedded (Berger & Luckmann, 2000); how we understand and create meaning about the world can only ever be indirect and partial. However, this constructivist stance is of an epistemological, not ontological kind; that is, it is not a rejection of the existence of a physical world beyond how it is constructed by individuals or the social group. Clearly, there are powerful *"gritty realities out there"* (Apple, 1999, p. 70) shaped by structural conditions which cannot be reduced to social constructions. Yet, from an interpretivist stance, the researcher cannot remove oneself from these 'gritty realities' being studied and just observe and readily produce 'data' and knowledge about it; elements of this world are infused with meaning through social processes, such as ideas and concepts (Collin, 2012).

Accepting these ontological and epistemological terms necessarily implies building on a broad repertoire of strategies and concepts to study phenomena 'out there' and develop knowledge about

it 'in here' (Ashwin, 2009). These fundamental assumptions underpin the eclectic approach to theory in the thesis to qualify the interpretations and inferences made. Ultimately, the 'lenses' through which internationalisation and mobility in teacher education are studied represent my qualified construction of the issues under scrutiny. Given the premise that things *could* have been done differently and thereby produced different results, there is an even stronger demand for showing what has *actually* been done (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). The following parts of the chapter attend to critical moments of the project's methodology, premises and assumptions, which allows the reader for making own judgments about the interpretations, inferences made, and knowledge generated by the research.

5.3 Studying international student mobility in times of a global pandemic

A key distinguishing feature of qualitative research compared to other types of research is that it is *contextual;* social phenomena cannot be isolated from their context but must be understood within it. The qualitative researcher has a responsibility for describing and reflecting on the contextual circumstances of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). An important contextual backdrop for this thesis concerns *time,* more specifically the dramatic events taking place in the middle of the project period with the outbreak of the coronavirus. The pandemic and its consequences for society in terms of lockdowns impacted not only the practical circumstances for doing research (in particular interviews) but on the context for student mobility as my research object altogether – at least temporarily. While some social constructivists would claim that qualitative research is not able to make inferences beyond the particular temporality of the situation altogether (Clift et al., 2021), the aim here is merely to reflect on how *time* impacts the decisions made in the research and address potential concerns about why issues related to the pandemic are not more present and explicit in the thesis.

As for the practical circumstances for the research, the pandemic affected it in more ways. For instance, a new Norwegian white paper on student mobility (Meld. St. 7 (2020-2021)) was to be announced in the spring of 2020, which was assumed to be highly relevant for the research in terms of outlining the Norwegian mobility policy for the coming years. However, it was postponed to late autumn as the Government felt it would be inappropriate to announce it in the middle of a crisis. Moreover, the series of planned interviews which were just about to be undertaken collided with the pandemic and necessitated a shift to digital rather than physical interviewing with methodological implications for the interview situation (this issue will be further elaborated in the section on interviews specifically).

As for the phenomenon of student mobility more substantially, the crisis also crystallised challenges and vulnerability in the existing ways of thinking and doing student mobility in policy and practice.

First of all, the uncertainty of the situation initially installed a 'before and after' of student mobility which influenced both my assumptions as a researcher, interviewees and policymakers. For instance, it accelerated my critical curiosity about the meaning of mobility as the main activity of internationalisation; what happens to internationalisation when mobility is not possible? Are we over-relying on the role of mobility? What is the alternative? Similarly, many interviewees wondered if the pandemic marked the end of student mobility in its current form, and the new Government white paper anticipated that student mobility would be impacted by the pandemic for a while before 'normality' could be re-instated (Meld. St. 7 (2020-2021)).

While it is beyond the scope of the research to assess these concerns in relation to the 2023 situation, they clearly had an indirect impact on the research. It is highly likely that this external shock brought about reflections which would not otherwise have surfaced during an interview. Thus, while the planned themes for the interviews concerned existing practices and perspectives on the role of mobility in teacher education, and it was premature to speculate about what the future would look like, it was evident that interviewees' 'usual' tasks concerning mobility changed dramatically. For instance, they had to contribute to planning how to bring students safely back home and come up with solutions on how to continue the semester for the students who had to abruptly terminate their exchange stay. Moreover, some interviewees reflected on whether the use of virtual mobility, which was already an idea under development before the pandemic, would be a relevant substitute for physical mobility in the future. Hence, an unexpected benefit of the changing circumstances and call for reflections among interviewees may likely mean that interviewees gained something from participating as well and that the interview involved a learning process on both parties (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

5.4 Generating the empirical data

5.4.1 Policy texts

Policy texts on international student mobility play a key role in the thesis, as document analysis is used to investigate and discuss how student mobility in teacher education is constructed and framed as a political issue over time and contexts. As proposed in the analytical framework, policy is *"more than text"* (Lingard & Sellar, 2013), and in light of the constructivist epistemology, policy texts clearly cannot be seen as transparent representations of an underlying social reality. They are produced and preserved by the will of political elites and represent the outcome of political struggles for meaning, which makes them particularly valuable for the study of political discourse (Duedahl & Hviid Jacobsen, 2010; Lynggaard, 2019). This view on policy texts runs through the three articles and the thesis as a whole, though their analytical status varies, serving as main empirical data in Article 1, and as more of a contextual backdrop for Articles 2 and 3 and the thesis as a whole.

As noted above, policy texts came to play a more significant role in the research than initially anticipated, as Article 1 ended up being a pure document analysis comparing European and Norwegian policy discourse. The gradual movement of policy texts from 'backstage to centre stage' in the research called for an even more careful, detailed and systematic way of engaging with them analytically, in particular concerning how they were sampled and selected for analysis. The selection of documents for analysis in Article 1 was guided by the aims of the study, as well as more specific criteria concerning topic, author/source, type/status and timeframe as reported in the article. This sampling process led to an archive of 22 policy texts selected for analysis. An overview can be found in Appendix 3.

Though all documents are used for the same purpose and thereby hold similar analytical status, i.e., mapping the European and Norwegian policy discourse over time, it should be noted that they represent highly different types of policy documents. Thus, the white papers which serve as the key Norwegian political documents are reports initiated by a ruling government to outline the political will at a given point in time, but they are usually written by bureaucrats in the administration. They provide the basis for a parliament discussion on the stated issues, and in turn signal the parliament's views to the government, after which they may be used for future legislation or other follow-up activities (Neumann, 2021). Thus, in and of themselves, white papers are not legislative documents, but expressions of a political will at a given time, making them useful for uncovering development discursive developments over time. The European policy documents analysed in Article 1 also represent different types of documents such as memoranda, green papers, council conclusions, reports and recommendations. As the education field is generally governed via the 'open method of coordination' as a form of 'soft governance' rather than formal supranational regulation at the EU-level (Walkenhorst, 2008), these policy texts are used as different sources to engage with historical and current trends, discussions and rationales for student mobility at the European level, not their legislative status or impact as such. In addition to the policy texts analysed in Article 1, a range of other policy texts form a backdrop for the study but have not undergone systematic document analysis. These are mainly policy texts which concern the past and present of Norwegian higher education at large and can be found in the bibliography of the thesis.

5.4.2 Study programs and interviewees

Articles 2 and 3 draw on a set of interviews generated from three different teacher education programs for primary and lower secondary education. In light of the dual ambition of shedding light on situated and contextual factors for enacting policy, and on common/general aspects of educational ideology in teacher education, a comparative perspective is assumed to be valuable compared to, for instance, a more extensive case study within a single program. Though the

interviews were designed with a comparative aim in mind, the comparative aspect is less emphasised in Article 3, where the aim was instead to look at how interviewees interpret and relate student mobility to the core mission of teacher education.

The three programs were selected based on criteria such as national reports on mobility levels, size (number of students), geography, and institution type (university and university college). These are all factors which have been demonstrated to influence the institutional approach taken to internationalisation in Norway (Stensaker et al., 2008). In sum, the final selection reflects some degree of variation in contextual factors and mobility levels, which is assumed to contribute to shedding light on how the programs enact mobility. The selected programs thus include both urban and remotely located programs, small and large programs in terms of the number of students, and programs with high and low levels of mobility. Yet, the final selection should not be misread as suggesting to cover all relevant differences between the selected programs, or to be representative of all Norwegian teacher education programs. Table 2 provides an overview of key characteristics of the programs and the interviewees in a highly general manner due to the protection of anonymity.

Table 2: Overview of study programs and interviewees

	Program A	Program B	Program C
Geographical location	Urban	Remote	Remote
Size (student numbers)	Large	Small	Medium
Levels of exchange mobility (relative to the number of students/similar TE programs)	High	High	Low
Levels of international teaching practicums	App. similar to exchange levels	App. similar to exchange levels	Much higher than exchange levels
Interviewees	Four teacher educators International coordinator (academic) International coordinator (administrative) Head of studies Faculty advisor (total: 8)	Four teacher educators International coordinator (academic) Adviser, international office Dean (total: 7)	Four teacher educators Head of studies Adviser, department of education (total: 6)

As for interviewees, the main selection criterion was that they were more or less directly involved in the work with internationalisation and mobility on a day-to-day basis. The recruitment of interviewees was based on snowball sampling, where mediators in the various programs were initially approached and facilitated contact with other colleagues in the program (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015). Thus, in one program I coincidentally became acquainted with the academic international coordinator via a research group, in the others I contacted the person listed as academic

international coordinator on the webpage. While the initial plan was to conduct 5-6 interviews with academic staff in each program and include teaching staff who were not involved in internationalisation as such, it quickly became clear that it was indeed the individuals most engaged in internationalisation in the programs who were most willing to participate. They were described by colleagues and themselves as most knowledgeable on the topic, and as it turned out, many of the interviewees found my research project to be important and necessary and were keen to contribute and learn more about it. In that sense, the actors who were ultimately interviewed may be said to be "colourful characters" rather than representative types (Wynn, 2011). That is, they represent a selected group of dedicated 'internationalists', a role which also emerged as an analytical key to understanding more general issues of internationalisation in TE during the analytical process. However, a likely impact of this selection may be that particularly distanced or critical voices may have been missed in the study, which could have contributed to painting a more nuanced picture. Some of this challenge was overcome by posing critical questions and making interviewees reflect on their own practices.

While the perspectives of academic staff are positioned centre stage of the research, the ambition has been to provide an account of the academic practices at micro-level with a meso-level perspective on the organisation from both administrative staff and leadership at/above the program level. Thus, in each program, an interview was conducted with a person in the management of the program (one dean, two heads of studies), as well as a person in the study administration responsible for teacher education. These interviews supply the perspectives of the actors who perform the core tasks of education with insights on the overall ambitions, priorities and approach taken to internationalisation and mobility, as well as the 'facts and figures' of student mobility in the programs. Although these interviews are not very explicitly represented in the findings, it has been a crucial source to contextualise the cases and the findings.

As evident in Table 2, the final selection resulted in a slightly different number of interviewees in each program, which is more than anything a reflection of how the three programs work with internationalisation. Thus, the number of interviewees within each program varies because the number of staff members engaged in internationalisation varies greatly across the programs. Yet, as reflected in the rule of 'decreasing outcome' where the level of additional knowledge gained via interviews will naturally reach a point of saturation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), similar patterns in responses gradually emerged as the number of interviews increased. Both similarities and differences between the three programs and interviewed staff are generally considered to be well represented in the final set of interviews, thus allowing for an in-depth analysis of the interview material. Therefore, the variation between the number of interviews is not considered to represent a

severe methodological challenge. It should be noted that in any case, drawing on the voices of individual actors to explore the programs' enactment of mobility policies can only ever be a 'snapshot' of a given reality, which may or may not be shared collectively. I.e., representativeness is not possible in this case. However, the transparent outline of the procedures and difficulties related to selection is my attempt to critically assess the impact of the final selection on the possibilities for generating knowledge from the interviews (Andrews & Vassenden, 2007).

5.4.3 Other supporting materials

In addition to policy texts and interviews, both Articles 2, and 3 and the thesis more generally are supported by data on institutional and program-specific plans and strategies for internationalisation, as well as the official websites and info pages on international student mobility in each of the three programs. Most of such material is publicly available, while some were provided to me personally. These kinds of data are analysed as artefacts pertaining to the enactment of internationalisation and mobility policies and thereby treated as material translations of policy into practice, which also give symbolic value to policy (Maguire et al., 2012, p. 45). Though not explicitly represented in any of the articles, the analysis of these supporting data provides important background knowledge for contextualising the case programs and the findings. For instance, analysing the programs' websites with information about mobility for students revealed some interesting differences with regards to how much, how detailed and how updated information is provided, as well as the ways in which mobility is promoted (for instance oriented towards lifestyle, education or personal development). Such institutional artefacts were analysed as an integral part of the dynamics of daily practice (Maguire et al., 2012), that is, as the institutions'/programs' self-representations of their commitment to, and view on, internationalisation and student mobility. Finally, analysing internationalisation plans and strategies provided a way of triangulating the data generated from the interviews by shedding light on the relationship between "rhetoric and reality".

5.4.4 Doing interviews

The interviews were semi-structured and based on an interview guide with planned themes and questions but with an open and flexible structure allowing for following the path of direction of the given interview situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). English translations of all interview guides can be found in Appendix 4-6. The interview guides were slightly adapted to the organisational role of each interviewee (academic, management, administrative), but the themes remained the same. For instance, the questions for the managers were more oriented towards strategic priorities, and more towards practical matters and "facts and figures" for the administration. However, there were significant differences in how directly the administrative staff was involved with teacher education

which impacted the questions asked and how much relevant information I was able to get from these interviews.

The aim of the interviews was both to elicit perspectives on the meaning and significance of mobility in teacher education, how it is organised, and contextual characteristics of the program. Therefore, the interview guide moved interchangeably between descriptive and reflective interview questions, and between curious and challenging follow-up questions. As for descriptive questions, all interviewees were for instance initially asked to describe their involvement in internationalisation in the program, as well as how the work with internationalisation/mobility is organised. Reflective questions concerned how they perceived of the relationship between internationalisation and mobility, whether they thought the outcomes they associated with mobility could be achieved without physical mobility etc. Follow-up questions were both elicited in the interview guide and emerged spontaneously during the interview. The variation between different types of questions and techniques for asking them created a dynamic conversation rich in meaning, information and reflections, as also highlighted in the literature as one of the features of a high-quality research interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Also, the keenness of the interviewees to share their experiences and contribute to my project often resulted in a long talk after the recorder had been switched off. While these conversations do not form part of the data as such, they provided me with valuable contextual knowledge.

As described above, the dramatic events of the pandemic changed the context for the interview situation in more ways. While a few interviews had already been undertaken face-to-face before the outbreak of COVID-19, most had to be conducted digitally (Teams/Zoom) or via telephone. I experienced that the most profound impact on the interview situation had to do with the interpersonal dimension and dynamic of the interview, which both created challenges and new possibilities. As discussed by Oliffe et al. (Oliffe, Kelly, Gonzalez, Yu Ko, & Wellam, 2021), some of the obvious challenges of distance interviews concern the possibility to have eye contact, to observe facial expressions and body language, as well as technical disturbances and delays in sound and picture etc. Also, given that most interviewees were at home, there were physical interruptions such as kids and dogs, or a doorbell ringing. In that sense, the general flow of the interviews was slower and more abrupt than could be expected in a more formal physical setting. For my own part at least, constantly seeing myself on camera also led to an unusually high degree of self-awareness which felt disturbing though I tried to keep focus on the interview guide and the interviewee. It is highly likely that interviewees felt the same sense of heightened self-awareness and that this might have mitigated the situation.

My clear impression was that these challenges were largely outweighed by the benefits of the online situation: besides the reduced time costs of not having to travel to do interviews, the asymmetrical relationship which generally characterises the interview situation and places the researcher in the most powerful position (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) seemed to be somewhat mitigated by the sudden sense of human community fostered by the dramatic events around us ("we are all in the same boat"). The situation established a certain intimacy between us ("hope you and your family are OK", "what's the situation in your city" etc.), which was furthered by being "invited" into interviewees' homes (and they into mine), altogether calling for a more relaxed and informal setting than the usual interview setting. As wittily noted by Oliffe et al.: *"there's no place like home"* (Oliffe et al., 2021, p. 3), in this case meaning that the unusual interview setting called for both a sense of naturalness and spontaneity, as well as involved the 'real-life disturbances' as described above.

Before an interview started, I asked interviewees if they had read the information about the project which I had sent in advance and whether they had any questions about the project or their participation. Next, I asked them to sign a consent form stating both their willingness to participate and the right to withdraw at any time during the research process. As for the interviews undertaken online, I asked interviewees to verbally repeat their consent after the recording had started, a form of consent accepted by the Norwegian Data Protection Agency (NSD). All interviews lasted around 60 minutes and were conducted in Norwegian, meaning that the interview guides in the appendix have subsequently been translated into English with respect for the original phrasing. They were all recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Any extracts and quotes used in the articles are therefore also translated from Norwegian into English.

5.5 Analytical process
Essentially, qualitative data analysis is about reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of them; a process of meaning-making whereby the researcher reduces data to a story and its interpretation (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2017; Timmermans & Tavory, 2019). Thus, it is a process of 'seeing' something in our data. To see something, however, we need an idea about what to look for; our analysis of data is always shaped by placing them within a certain frame of reference (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). These assumptions about qualitative data analysis place a great responsibility on the researcher for bringing this 'seeing process' into the open and reflecting on how it has *shaped* the interpretations and findings of the research. The descriptions and reflections on the analytical process reported in this section are committed to such ambitions.

As accounted for in the preceding sections and in the three articles respectively, the empirical analyses draw on different theories and analytical resources, or *sensitising concepts*, to generate their findings. Article 1 uses discourse and ideas as sensitising concepts, Article 2 policy object and

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policy enactment, and Article 3 quality perspectives. Yet, they all follow three somewhat similar general analytical steps which will be summarised in the following, first in text and subsequently in Table 3 for overview. Given that coding was the overall analytical strategy for analysing both policy texts and interviews, the following outline of the analytical process revolves around the key coding steps. It should be read as an attempt of providing a clear and comprehensible account of an essentially iterative and messy process, and not as suggesting a rigorous series of methodological steps which can replace interpretation as the key approach to meaning and rich textual detail (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Harding, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Law, 2004). In that sense, given the constructed nature of qualitative data (Flick, 2014), it may also seem artificial to isolate "the analytical process" to one stage of research; yet, for clarity reasons, I limit the perspective on the analytical process to concern the steps taken *after* the data has been prepared for systematic analysis in the following description.

5.5.1 Steps of analysis

The first step of analysis after preparing the data (transcribing, ordering and classifying in Nvivo) was to become re-familiarised with the material by subjecting it to several readings as openly and inductively as possible. Next, I began coding them based on the dominant themes and ideas in each text, i.e., what the policy texts were about and what the interviewees talked about. Clearly, this step was not completely inductive, as an analytical first-order perspective had already informed both the selection of texts and the development of the interview guides. Also, I had a fairly general idea about the purpose and role of each article in the final thesis, which clearly implied that an initial analytical framework for each article was already under development before embarking on the analysis. Yet, the aim with the first-order coding was to identify broader themes emerging from the texts and interviews which went beyond the initial assumptions (Boyatzis, 1998).

For instance, the first-order coding of the interviews resulted in a broad range of themes which somehow cut across all interviews, such as the pedagogical importance of internationalisation in TE, the (often un-recognised) time-consuming nature of working with internationalisation, conflicting aims of mobility, the relation between academic and administrative responsibilities for mobility, a conceptual distinction between internationalisation and mobility which in practice often was conflated during the interview, a lack of resources to support the work with internationalisation, and the impact on student motivations for how the work with student mobility is approached. As for the policy texts, examples of such broad cross-cutting themes were wide-ranging benefits of mobility (individual, education, society), obstacles and barriers for mobility, the responsibility of higher education institutions, teachers' professional development through mobility, and quality as both the input and outcome of mobility.

Next, these broad themes were related to the specific research question and analytical framework with the aim of refining these categories in a second-order process of coding (Boyatzis, 1998). For the policy texts, this concerned a textual close-up on specific words and concepts assisted by the analytical tools of ideas (normative, cognitive) and discourse. This second-order coding led to the emergence of three overall categories, or sets of ideas constituting a discourse, harmonisation, professionalisation and instrumentalisation as discussed in Article 1. As for the interviews, this step focussed on overall meaning and meaning relations beyond their immediate appearance in the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), and was assisted by the analytical tools of policy object, the four contexts of policy enactment and quality perspectives. This led to the development of different typologies, such as academic, professional and bureaucratic ontology of mobility (Article 2), and individual vs. collective quality conceptualisations related to mobility (Article 3). Thus, while the key typologies developed in the research emerge from the empirical data, they are clearly also theoretically informed and qualified. In that sense, the typologies represent a sort of third-order coding, where the categories generated in the second-order process are ordered into themes in a more systematic way, which enables identification of patterns in the data (Boyatzis, 1998). In light of the aims of the research of challenging the dominating ideas which shape things as we understand them today, the approach to pattern-searching aimed for problematisation and fragmentation rather than finding easily recognisable patterns (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). That is, continuously questioning the well-known and self-evident aspects of both policy, existing literature and my own data.

Moreover, comparison was a key element of the second-order coding of the interviews pursued by mapping key similarities and differences between individual interviewees and the three programs more generally. Thus, the units of analysis compared relate to the contextual aspects outlined in the policy enactment framework (situated, professional, material, external); the unique aspects which characterise the three programs respectively. More specifically, such differences include the degree of formalisation of the role of academic staff in the organisation of student mobility, the historical relationships with different international institutions and currently prioritised partners for exchange, and their experience of institutional push and support for internationalisation. Similarities concerned how internationalisation was linked to individual and professional development, how the structure of teacher education complicates the work with student mobility and the key role of individual members of academic staff for internationalisation. The comparison also allowed for categorisation into key themes such as degree of formalisation in the work with mobility, external pressure and internal needs for internationalisation etc. This second-order coding process also involved an initial mapping of keywords and quotes which were illuminative of the emerging themes in both

documents and interview transcriptions. Such excerpts and quotes were re-assessed in the process of writing the articles to select those best suited to illustrate an analytical point rather than those having an interesting "journalistic value" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Table 3: Summary of general analytical steps across the articles

Steps of analysis	Overall approach	Analytical tools	Aim
First	Inductive; focus on data.	Exploration and description; mutual process of de- and re-familiarisation with data. Orientation towards linguistic features, words, and concepts	To let the data talk and map their key ideas and themes
Second	Deductive/inductive; putting theories to work, qualifying themes and categories from first order analysis	Specific analytical frameworks, Pattern-seeking, Orientation towards meaning, connections and inconsistencies in meaning	To identify patterns across data as prevailing discourses and practices; paying particular attention to unanticipated or puzzling breakdowns
Third	Comparative, reflexive	Opening up and considering alternatives, Orientation towards similarities and differences	To enable critical conversation between data, theory and existing scholarship. To qualify own interpretations. To de- and re-construct existing concepts and categories

5.6 Limitations

Some of the methodological limitations of the study have already been discussed in the preceding sections, in particular challenges linked to selection of texts/interviewees and representativity and the changing contextual circumstances for the interviews. This section adds to these caveats of the study by reflecting on methodological challenges linked to the research design more generally and their likely impact on the analysis and findings. Overall, the research design provides a useful way of investigating how a broad (European) policy idea influences teacher education as a ground-level context, and for making sense of how it is interpreted and practiced by policy actors. Yet, a major challenge of the design concerns the relationship between the overarching analytical framework and what the various data generated in the study *represent* (Ashwin & Smith, 2015; Lamont & Swidler, 2014). As for the interviews, the policy enactment framework emphasises both accounts and

practices ('what is said and what is done') as key to understanding enactment, while this project draws on interviews (accounts of practice) only. This represents a classical sociological challenge concerning the empirical relationship between attitude and behaviour, i.e., the extent to which what people think and say actually informs their actions (Cerulo, 2014; Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). However, while it is possible that the analysis and findings in Article 2 (and to some extent Article 3) paint a picture of an 'ideal reality' rather than an 'actual reality', I have no qualified reason to doubt that how interviewees make meaning of mobility somehow correspond to what they do in practice, such as, how they discuss it with colleagues, how they promote it to students, or how they write up exchange agreements. Not least because they seemed both nuanced and critical towards own practices. For instance, while most interviewees had an idea about the 'formal aspects' of quality in relation to exchange mobility, more of them also admitted that, in practice, most ended up being accepted to accommodate students' (often less academic) aspirations for mobility. Yet clearly the interviews could have been supported with observational data from some of the social situations in which they engage in mobility work. This would, however, also cause challenges in defining such social situations, given the broad perspective on mobility in the thesis as spanning both administrative and teaching/research activities. More importantly, while individual meaning-making and action must necessarily be the starting point for analysing policy enactment, the aim is to provide a 'collective account' of enactment, and not the individual action as such. Asking several interviewees in the same program the same questions thus also works as a way of comparing and 'triangulating' what the individual says and constructing a "collective account" of action.

In light of the analytical commitment to discourse analytical perspectives, a general challenge has been how to analyse policy in a way which does not generate knowledge via 'suspicion and paranoia' (Stern, 2012). To avoid this analytical pitfall, I have attempted to outline my assumptions and steps of analysis as transparently as possible. Also, I have been careful not to impose *my* reading of the discourses circulating in policy texts (as represented in Article 1) on the interviews and be presumptuous about "*the stuff that happens*" (Schmidt, 2010, p. 21) in real-life institutional contexts. This underlines the value of the research design combining document analysis and interviews as a multi-method type of triangulation which makes it possible to capture different aspects of the issue under scrutiny, which combined contribute to the overall narrative of the research (Flick, 2004).

5.7 Validity of the research

In order for the overall quality and trustworthiness of the research to be assessed, this section turns to a discussion of validity. While recognising the contested nature of the concept of 'validity' in qualitative research, I use it as an entry point to reflect on the usefulness, credibility and legitimacy of the accounts and ways of understanding constructed from the research. Thus, "*Validity, in a broad*

sense, pertains to this relationship between an account and something outside of that account, whether this something is construed as objective reality, the constructions of actors, or a variety of other possible interpretations" (Maxwell, 2002, p. 5). This notion of validity does not concern the end product of the research isolated but uses it as an inherent form of quality assurance which runs through all phases of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In that sense, the preceding sections have aimed to support the overall validity of the research by providing a transparent account and reflections on the strategies and processes involved in generating findings from the empirical evidence throughout the whole research process. By this kind of transparency, I have laid the premises of the research forth for the reader to assess its overall quality. In the following, I add to these reflections by considering other aspects of validity and in what ways it is possible to generalise from the research.

Thematic validation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), or theoretical validation (Maxwell, 2002) concerns the legitimacy of the relationship between (established) theories and concepts and their application in the research. I.e., the *"consensus within the community concerned with the research about the terms used to characterize the phenomena"* (Maxwell, 2002, p. 13). Such validity is supported in the research first of all by building on the research and accumulated knowledge of existing scholarship, as demonstrated in the literature review. Yet, the research also aims for theoretical plurality and sophistication by drawing on various theories and concepts from different fields. Therefore, much attention has been devoted to outlining how I understand the theories I use and operationalising the concepts at work in the research, both in the individual articles and in the analytical framework in Chapter 4. Moreover, due to the inherent complexity of the key concepts of the study (policy, internationalisation, quality etc.), I have continuously attempted to both outline my own understanding of the concepts and maintain their complexity in my discussions. This supports theoretical validation by allowing other researchers with knowledge of these theories to assess the legitimacy of how I have used them.

Interpretive validity concerns the relationship between the research account and the representation of participants' perspectives (Maxwell, 2002), and has been a key concern in the interviews in particular. The main way of supporting interpretive validity was to share my interpretations of what was said during the interviews and use the interviewees' reactions to confirm or change my understanding. It could have been further supported by having interviewees read subsequent transcriptions or analytical excerpts related to their particular interview. While all interviewees were formally informed about this option, no one asked to see how their contribution was treated afterwards. I take this as an indication that all interviewees felt reassured about the purpose of the research, the questions they had been asked, and the analytical direction of the further use of the

interviews. To further support the interpretive validity of the study, I have aimed for continuous communicative validity, understood as testing the findings and knowledge generated in open dialogue and discussion with other researchers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This source of validation has been particularly strong in the process of writing up the research, where data, analyses and findings have been presented in various academic contexts, such as research groups, conferences and meetings with specific researchers with deep knowledge of the field and topic.

In sum, the reflections above represent an attempt of enhancing the overall validity of the study and my credibility as a researcher in several ways. Yet, the question remains whether the validity of the study allows for a generalisation of findings beyond the immediate context of the study. Clearly, it must necessarily be accepted that the credibility and relevance of the findings are limited in terms of context and time due to the nature of the research design and that the findings in each article are contingent on the particular documents, teacher education programs and interviewees in the study. But arguably, some kind of analytic generalisation is possible based on the assumption that the theoretically qualified findings of the study may be useful for making sense of similar situations or issues (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Maxwell, 2002). In that sense, by providing rich contextual descriptions which not only concern teacher education as a discipline, but aspects of external pressure, professional commitment, history and culture and infrastructure and resources linked to internationalisation, I have paved the way for other researchers to assess the potential for generalisability to other similar situations and contexts. While teacher education is the focus of the study, I have provided arguments for the relevance of the findings for other professional programs with similar contextual characteristics across the articles. Also, I have argued that some particular findings raise issues of relevance to the field of higher education as such, as they concern general implications of policy, such as the tensions between qualities and quantities of mobility. In light of this, I also argue that the general questions raised in light of the main findings and theoretical contributions of the thesis are relevant for developing policies which are more inclusive of study programs working on 'special terms', as well as supporting practices which do not uncritically adopt ways of internationalisation unsuited for their educational and professional needs. Both aspects will be elaborated on in the final discussion of the thesis.

5.8 Ethical considerations

Planning, doing, and reporting the research has involved a range of ethical concerns and decisions. In the preliminary stages of the research, the project was reported and approved by the Norwegian Data protection agency (NSD), meaning that it formally meets the formal requirements for ethical research. The research also follows the ethical guidelines promoted by the National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NESH), which include that all demands on

informed consent and confidentiality were implemented, and that all participants received thorough information about the aim, scope, and topics of the research, as well as their right to withdraw at any point during the process.

In the research process, my main ethical concern was related to doing interviews. As such, the topics and issues discussed in the interviews may not appear to be of a personal or sensitive kind, as participants were interviewed in their "job function". Yet, interviewees also bring themselves and their human feelings into the interview situation, meaning that an ethical conduct of interviews which protects participant's integrity is still key despite the apparent non-sensitive topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Being subject to scrutiny and interpretation by others may be an uncomfortable or awkward situation altogether, and asking interviewees to share their reflections on their own practices and perspectives can be sensitive. For instance, more critical interview questions or forthcoming interpretations of their comments can be experienced as criticism of them or their practices. I tried to mitigate this challenge by being as transparent as possible about the research aims and inspiring confidence in the interview situation. For instance, if interviewees seemed hesitant about a question, I elaborated on why I asked the question or specified or exemplified what I meant. Moreover, as the research was conducted in specific institutions and teacher education programs, participants often directly or indirectly mentioned or reflected on the actions or attitudes of their colleagues, management or students. This resulted in more comments of the type *"I am going to be honest with you now…"*, or *"Off the record…"* during the interviews. In general, my response and solution in these situations were obviously to reassure interviewees about the full confidentiality and anonymisation of any direct or indirect information which might expose them, their colleagues or their institution. This is also reflected in how I have described and referred to the case study programs and participants in the articles with numbers and letters only. In sum, the micro-level ethics of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) is enhanced by the considerations made before, during and after the interviews, as well as how I have transparently reported my research and been explicit about the assumptions and choices made across the articles and this thesis.

On a final note, I have also considered the macro-level ethics, i.e., the potential social implications of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). According to NESH, an important aim of research is to contribute to an educated public dialogue, where the role of researchers is to be a critical corrective to authorities and powerful actors in society. Essentially, research must contribute to supporting a democratic society (NESH, 2021). As previously argued, the research has a dual aim of being *critical* and questioning 'things as are', and *useful* in terms of providing relevant insights for improvement of policy and practice. A critical gaze on the political aims, means and resources spent on the mobility agenda, I believe, provides a contribution to a public discussion about our higher education system,

and thereby support democracy. However, a challenge has been to balance the perspective on policy and practice in a way which is neither overly critical, nor 'paranoid' (Stern, 2012), of policy, or overly 'sympathetic' of the people I have interviewed. Being constantly aware of this challenge and actively using it to confront and correct my readings and representations of data has been my main approach to mitigating this challenge, rather than trying to avoid it or pretend it does not exist. I am thus very aware of the reality I contribute to creating in the presentation of my research.

Chapter 6: Summary of articles

This section summarises the three articles produced in the work with the thesis. As both the analytical perspectives and methodological aspects have been reported and discussed in the preceding chapters, the following account mainly describes the key findings of the articles, and how they respond to the sub-questions posed in the introduction. A full-text version of all articles is provided after the bibliography of the thesis.

Article 1

Pedersen, Tea Dyred (2022). Mobility for teacher students or teacher students for mobility? Unravelling policy discourses on international student mobility in the context of teacher education. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(6), 761-780.
https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041221097202

The first article starts with the observation that the international mobility of teacher students has become a prominent European policy issue over the past decades. It explores the discursive construction of this issue in relation to the Norwegian teacher education policy discourse, from the assumption that how mobility is *promoted* has the potential to influence what mobility is *about* in practice. Analysing a range of European level (EU and EHEA) and Norwegian policy texts with analytical tools from discursive institutionalism, it is argued that teacher student mobility is legitimated and promoted with discourses of harmonisation, professionalisation and instrumentalisation. These discourses convey a range of presumptions about the activity of mobility itself, as well as teacher students, teacher education and what it educates for. They construct a 'mobility deficit' in teacher education in different ways and, in turn, suggest distinct 'solutions' on how to 'pave the way' for (more) mobility by linking it to different purposes.

Together they create an ambiguous discursive space infused with tensions around mobility as on the one hand being promoted as a professionally relevant experience for teacher students, and on the other hand, as placing future teachers centre stage for accelerating the mobility agenda in society more generally. That is, a tension between professional and instrumental purposes, which is ultimately argued to obscure why mobility for teacher students should be an issue of particular importance, as initially promoted in policy. The findings of the article contribute to shedding light on the (European and national) policy context and expectations against which the ground-level perspectives and practices of student mobility in teacher education are situated (not determined) and which are analytically pursued in Articles 2 and 3. In that sense, the article responds quite directly to the first sub-question on the political promotion of mobility for teacher students. Moreover, it sheds light on key aspects of the overall research question, in terms of arguing that in the overall policy context, mobility emerges as an activity of great significance for enhancing

individual capacities and agency among teacher students, but at the same time as being a micro-level solution to ambiguous problems and purposes beyond the immediate realm of teacher education.

Article 2

Pedersen, Tea Dyred (2021). Mobilising international student mobility: Exploring policy enactments in teacher education in Norway. *European Journal of Education*, 56(2), 292–306. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12451

The article aims to unpack the enactment of student mobility policies from the accounts of actors who are involved in teaching, organising and managing teacher education. These accounts are generated via interviews conducted in three different teacher education programs. The programs are compared to shed light on the preconditions for, and practices of, student mobility in relation to the overall attributes of teacher education as a (professional) discipline, as well as the distinct local and contextual settings for it. As an analytical entry point for exploring accounts of enactment, the 'policy ontology' of mobility is elicited as being shaped by both professional, academic and bureaucratic underpinnings. These materialise by creating possibilities and tensions which shape and constrain the enactment of mobility. The analysis identifies three key areas where the 'ontologies' of mobility materialise in enactment, i.e., as specific mobility activities and how they are utilised and approached, as enabled largely by being an individualised professional task and responsibility, and as constrained by external demands and student aspirations.

In particular, the findings show that irrespective of how 'well-developed' the infrastructure for mobility is, there seems to be a highly dispersed general sense of professional commitment to issues of internationalisation. This is argued to reflect that internationalisation has an uneasy position between being an external demand and an internal need in teacher education. As for mobility, the implication of this is that despite the limited overall level of participation, the challenges of organising it and being rejected as the only relevant activity of internationalisation, mobility ultimately comes to represent a crucial activity to show that internationalisation is actually taking place in teacher education spurred by how it is financially incentivised by policymakers. This is argued to result in a certain instrumentalisation of mobility where it is appreciated as being valuable in itself rather than in relation to something.

Based on the findings it is argued that official policy discourse promotes a view on student mobility as a key proxy for a one-size-fits-all kind of internationalisation which narrows the space for interpretation in study programs where the value of internationalisation may have a less self-evident nature by being more narrowly defined in terms of its relevance for future professional practice. Thus, the article directly responds to the sub-question about enactment of mobility policy, and more

subtly to the overall research question in terms of demonstrating the complex, and far from automatic, relationship between student mobility and internationalisation in teacher education.

Article 3

The analytical focus of Article 3 was shaped by the analyses and findings of Articles 1 and 2, i.e., an interest in how the dominant Norwegian policy discourse on quality is interpreted against the core characteristics and mission of teacher education. The analyses in Articles 1 and 2 ultimately bring to the fore questions about the educational core and quality of teacher education as the key areas impacted by, and underlying actors' interpretations of, policy discourse, thus sparking an interest in how these aspects frame mobility as an educational activity in teacher education.

The article explores how micro-level actors involved with internationalisation in teacher education make sense of student mobility as an educational activity with assumed potential for enhancing its quality. The study is set against the current policy discourse emphasising the quality-enhancing effects of student mobility and aims to provide empirical perspectives on this largely taken-for-granted assumption. The article employs *quality perspectives* linked to *presage, process* and *product* dimensions of educational quality to identify different conceptualisations of the qualities associated with student mobility. By pointing to connections and tensions between the different perspectives, the article paints a complex picture of the assumed relationship. On the one hand, student mobility emerges as an educational activity shaped by strongly envisioned personal and professional outcomes. At the same time, it seems constrained by ambiguities in terms of which learning process is perceived to underlie such outcomes, as well as the (practical) possibilities for supporting both the process and outcomes. In particular, the article reveals how justifications of personal and professional qualities are reinforced by difficulties in conceptualising academic or subject-specific outcomes, and how this stands in contrast to the emphasis in current policies. The key argument is that the identified tensions reflect how the malleability of the quality concept as a governing principle for student mobility involves an immanent risk of student mobility losing its educational value; both because of the difficulties in explicating what we mean by quality, and the effects of the mutual exchange of uncritical assumptions and about what we can expect from student mobility as a learning experience found in both policies and practices.

Chapter 7: Discussion and implications of the study

7.1 Revisiting the findings

The previous chapters have outlined how the thesis relates to and expands on existing research, as well as accounted for the theoretical and methodological perspectives. Moreover, a summary of the main findings and contributions of the three articles has been presented. These chapters have paved the way for the following discussion which sets out by revisiting the overall research question and how it has been responded to, that is: *how is international student mobility assigned meaning in teacher education policy and practice, and what is its significance as a phenomenon of internationalisation?* Subsequently, the discussion is expanded by revisiting the analytical framework and reflecting on the three supporting sub-questions about policy ideas, enactment and quality. Finally, the central implications of the research for policymakers, researchers and higher education institutions/teacher education programs are discussed.

As stated in the introduction the thesis intentionally circles around the word 'significance' as a way of engaging with the ambiguous meaning of a particular *"quality or character which should mark something as important but that is not self-evident and may or may not be recognised"* (Merriam-Webster., (n.d.).). Hence, questioning the significance of international student mobility as a phenomenon of internationalisation in teacher education is another way of asking *what* makes it important and *why*, *how* the importance is rendered 'visible' politically and practically, and *whether and where* these multiple expectations converge. These questions build on the assumption that while student mobility appears to be an important internationalisation activity, this quality may not be self-evident in practice. The three articles have examined different aspects of 'significance', i.e., in relation to how mobility is politically promoted, handled in practice, and perceived and valued as an educational activity contingent on teacher education purposes. In that sense, the research question has been responded to in the intersection between the four critical dimensions of student mobility policy, i.e., *discourse, agents, context* and *temporality.* The thesis overall paints a complex picture of student mobility as being positioned in a political and pedagogical space infused with meaning, expectations and tensions by policymakers and practitioners across these four dimensions. How student mobility is being strategized politically and institutionally and how it materialises into practice embeds it in different layers of context with different meanings and effects, as discussed across the articles.

As such, the overall argument proposed by the thesis is that while the significance of mobility may appear strong at the surface, it is complex and contested just below. Both in the context of European and Norwegian policymaking and in the context of practice, student mobility emerges as an integral part of the discourse on internationalisation as a tool for enhancing the quality of education,

research and service to society. In particular, the significance of mobility for teacher students is articulated with reference to the being a professionally transformative experience of great value and relevance for their role as future professionals. Additionally, in the context of practice, student mobility has a strong symbolic value for representing, or rendering visible, internationalisation to an external context. From the findings of the study, student mobility indeed emerges as the key element and expression of internationalisation in teacher education, which otherwise appears to hold an uneasy position.

On the other hand, the findings of the study also reveal a range of ambiguities and tensions arising within and across policy discourse(s), contexts of implementation, and agents. Unpacking the general discourse reveals that the 'mobility idea' in many cases tends to work as a proxy for objectives and aims which are not necessarily directly associated with student mobility – or teacher students. Thus, across the findings of the three articles, an overall emerging pattern is that mobility is infused with meaning of a *personal, professional, academic,* and *instrumental* kind, serving interchangeably as both aims for and justifications of, student mobility. Irrespective of the specific ideas that frame it politically or practically, a key finding of the study is that they are connected by a creeping instrumentalisation where mobility is increasingly seen as an end in itself rather than a means to internationalisation (or other ends).

At the most general level, the phenomena of internationalisation and student mobility trigger intricate questions about societal ideals and ideas, the purpose of education and the nature of learning, and the role of individual capacity and agency. In the context of teacher education specifically, these translate into crucial questions about the purpose of teacher education, the role of future teachers in the knowledge economy and the increasingly complex socio-cultural societies, and how to prepare them for the task of educating future citizens who can participate in a society marked by these developments. The thesis identifies how these questions are laden with tensions, in particular spurred by the somewhat 'external' nature of internationalisation in teacher education. This does not suggest that teacher education is 'resistant' to internationalisation, or that there are no elements and activities in place supporting this process. Yet, it reveals how internationalisation is currently governed by political discourses which has the research function of higher education as its epicentre and tends to take for granted that internationalisation enhances the quality of higher education. Based on the findings of the thesis, this relationship is not self-evident in teacher education. Thus, viewed through the prism of student mobility, teacher education seems to be caught up in a struggle between the idealised and ambiguous political visions for internationalisation, and its national and professional educational purpose and knowledge traditions. Student mobility needs significant re-contextualisation and translation to content-specific and professional purposes

to be justified in teacher education. Arguably, this stands in contrast to the more overarching aims with internationalisation promoted in the general higher education policy discourse, where the envisioned role of mobility is less anchored in specific curriculum and content, and more oriented towards overarching competencies and skills (Wernisch, 2016). In this struggle, student mobility comes to play a crucial role by representing an 'easy' or 'manageable' way of internationalising. That is, a valuable *addition* to the program benefitting the individual student. Yet, also highly restricted in terms of the number of students undertaking it and its contribution to internationalisation more generally. Paradoxically, as demonstrated in Articles 2 and 3, enacting student mobility is associated with a range of challenges, and may not in fact be an 'easy way' of internationalising. A key argument in the thesis is therefore that in the pursuit of increasing levels of student mobility in teacher education, the tension between its strong symbolic and unclear practical significance implies a risk that mobility becomes instrumentalised and dissociated from its educational purpose, and thereby a risk that internationalisation remains a superficial phenomenon which does not substantially shape the aims, content and practices of education. Thus, the significance of student mobility in teacher education emerges as complex and contradictious when viewed in the intersecting lines of discourses, contexts, agents and temporalities.

7.2 Revisiting the analytical framework and reflecting on the findings: critical dimensions of mobility policies

The following part of the discussion revisits the analytical framework described in Chapter 3 to reflect on the findings and the three sub-questions which have guided the empirical work across the articles. To recall, the four-dimensional framework intends to foster our reflection around "*First, what kind of discourses are used by political elites and institutional agents to legitimise their policies? Second, what are the different national, international and institutional contexts that shape such policies? Third, which agents are involved in policymaking, and how do the implemented policies affect students? Finally, what are the different temporalities in which policies arise and evolve over time?*" (Riaño et al., 2018, p. 291). The following part of the discussion addresses the findings with particular emphasis on the intersection between these dimensions and the tensions created. It closes by reflecting on the concept of *educational ideologies* and how it may fruitfully advance the perspective on education and mobility policymaking suggested in the framework.

7.2.1 Policy discourses shaping the room for enactment

The first sub-question concerns what characterises the discursive promotion of mobility for teacher students in official European and Norwegian policy. It thus sheds light on the dimensions of discourse, context and temporality and how they contribute to framing mobility within *"frameworks of sense and obviousness with which policy is thought, talked and written about"* … in a way that both

articulates and constrains the room for *"the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment"* (Ball, 1993, p. 44;49). This sub-question is most directly addressed in Article 1, whereas both Articles 2 and 3 focus more indirectly on it by positioning as a discursive backdrop for the practical work with mobility. The articles point to different discursive constructions of the issue and layers of expectations framing the mobility of teacher students. Overall, these are characterised by a strong normative orientation, by how they instate mobility as a proxy for objectives not directly associated with it, and by the multi-layered nature of teacher education policy which ambiguously frames its relationship to internationalisation.

A key feature of the discursive promotion across the European and Norwegian contexts is its multi-layered nature emerging from promotion in the context of school policy, teacher education policy and general higher education policy. As identified by other scholars, though the overarching European aims with internationalisation and mobility may be similar across these contexts, policies in these different arenas also differ in scope, process and means in place to support the aims (Dvir & Yemini, 2017; Fumasoli, 2020; Koh et al., 2022; Wernisch, 2016). The findings of this thesis reveal how this infuses mobility in the context of teacher education with an array of overlapping and ambiguous meanings, aims and expectations. Mapping the discursive development over time reveals that over a relatively short period of time, internationalisation has evolved from being a 'threat' or a 'challenge' to which teacher education should be a counterpoint for mitigating, to an opportunity (and later a demand) for (quality) teacher education. The evolving political significance attached to this issue and the gradual integration of teacher education into higher education at large is argued to place teacher education in an ambiguous position between its core mission of educating for a teaching profession which is strongly nationally governed, and increasingly having to follow the higher education and research logic. The impact of this tension on teacher education curriculum and professionalism has been noted and analysed by other scholars (Biesta, 2017; Krejsler, Olsson, & Petersson, 2018; Wernisch, 2016; Zgaga, 2013). This thesis adds to this by advancing the argument that the targeted political promotion of mobility for teacher students should not only be interpreted as a political ambition of ensuring that future teachers develop relevant professional competencies, or that students across higher education have equal possibilities for participation in mobility; these aims must be critically assessed against their normative dimension and the general higher education policy developments (on European and national level) which frames student mobility in a more instrumental direction. This development has been demonstrated for higher education in general, describing how mobility has become institutionalised as a largely positive and powerful force of (various forms of) social change, and installing the normative view that all higher education students have a rational desire to go abroad (however deep down this desire may be), which can be

stimulated with the right incentives and support from the institution (Brooks, 2018; Courtois, 2018b; Papatsiba, 2006, 2009).

As identified in Article 1, such normative ideas are 're-contextualised' in the context of teacher education to include a range of expectations for mobility which installs a direct link between the individual mobility experience of teacher students and the quality of the education system, European integration and cohesion, and realisation of the knowledge economy. Teacher students are targeted not only as students, but also in terms of their future profession, on the one hand as role models and diffusers of the intercultural values associated with mobility experiences, and on the other hand, as political levers and instruments to raise levels of mobility in schools and society more generally. In that sense, a key feature of the discursive promotion is that in many cases (teacher student) mobility is used as a proxy for extrinsic objectives and aims which are not necessarily directly or intrinsically associated with it. This mirrors the findings of Dvir and Yemini (2017) who argue that European mobility policies tend to take *"an exceptional 'jump' from macro-economic problems traditionally tackled at the government level to micro-level solutions focusing on advancing individual agency and capacity"* (Dvir & Yemini, 2017, p. 205). As demonstrated in this thesis, the presumed role of teachers forms part of this instrumentalisation by positioning them as crucial for realising the overall ambitions of a mobile and flexible population and workforce.

As described in Chapter 2 we may be witnessing a turn in the EU's policies for teacher education and mobility which reinvents the European dimension of teaching and reframes the professional role of teacher education and teachers in relation to social cohesion (Symeonidis, 2020). Accordingly, this may include less emphasis on the employment and economic agendas driving the trends towards instrumentalisation of both mobility and teacher education identified in this thesis. Given the importance of the European backdrop for Norwegian policy in this area, it is reasonable to expect similar developments in Norway. Yet, as discussed in different ways across the three articles, the political rationales and expectations for the internationalisation of teacher education in Norway to a large degree stem from general higher education policy building on academic rationales. As such, teacher education policy rarely addresses internationalisation and student mobility beyond referring to its structural dimension (for instance mobility windows). This illustrates that despite the aims of standardisation of higher education in EU policy, this is (still) a highly complex process in teacher education despite the universitisation and academic drift which has impacted European teacher education over the past three decades (Zgaga, 2008, 2013). Teacher education faces the same tensions around accountability, financing and academic freedom as do the rest of higher education, and simultaneously has to tackle internal issues on student recruitment, retention, and public attention on its quality, not to mention issues around the attractivity and status of the teaching

profession altogether (Niemi, 2022). In relation to internationalisation and student mobility then, policies which recognise these issues and reconcile them with an emphasis on how mobility may support the professional value along the lines of current European policy trends would arguably be more relevant for addressing and tackling the distinct conditions and needs for mobility in teacher education.

7.2.2 Contextual aspects shaping policy enactment

The second sub-question addresses the enactment of mobility policy from the accounts of micro-level actors in teacher education, and in particular, factors shaping enactment in distinct institutional contexts. It thus unpacks the critical dimensions of *context* and *agents* by foregrounding the micro-level of higher education and micro-level actors as key agents of policymaking; not passive receivers but agents whose engagement with policy discourse reflects different values, motives and capacities for engaging with implementation (Trowler, 2002). This sub-question is directly responded to in Article 2, and more indirectly in Article 3 by further unpacking how aspects of the discipline shape the enactment of mobility in teacher education. A key finding across the articles is that the uneasy nature of the relationship between academic and professional orientation in teacher education is a key source of ambiguity shaping enactment.

Article 2 suggests that the programs' infrastructure for mobility is a key expression of how it is enacted because how it is approached practically reveals key aspects of the importance and emphasis assigned to mobility pedagogically and strategically. The article identifies significant differences between the infrastructure for mobility at place in the three programs which relate to the balance between academic/administrative responsibilities, overall aims on which kind of mobility is aimed for, and the resources (money, time and personnel) put into it. In light of this, a key contextual factor for enactment relates to the critical role of a few dedicated people in each program who are willing to take on the 'additional task' of getting involved with internationalisation. These people are not only crucial for fostering internationalisation and mobility, but their particular values, interests and networks significantly shape practices of student mobility and how much effort is put into this work in the program. As an effect of internationalisation largely emerging as an individual 'task' rather than a comprehensive process, student mobility is interpreted in both Articles 2 and 3 as representing a somewhat pragmatic and feasible but also limited way of internationalising the program. Hence, it can be added to the existing program as an opportunity for the individual student but does not require significant changes to what is already in place in the curriculum or particularly strong faculty engagement.

In the existing literature, faculty engagement is repeatedly emphasised as the key to successful internationalisation and for students' participation in education abroad and how they make sense of

their experiences (Leask et al., 2021; Stohl, 2007). Yet, as argued by Leask et al., this discourse is often at least as much about faculty disengagement, and may have constitutive (negative) effects of its own (Leask et al., 2021). This thesis reveals that (dis)engagement is a complex issue, which does not necessarily have to do with a disregard for the learning opportunities for students, but the meaning and importance ascribed to internationalisation relative to other 'struggles' for quality in teacher education. Indeed, the discourse on disengagement may have negative effects on the few crucial agents involved and their dedication to the issue if their work is not recognised. While the findings indicate that there are emerging ambitions of integrating student mobility into existing and future research networks and partnerships, it appears quite challenging to change internationalisation into a more strategic issue in light of the trajectory of the concept in teacher education.

Another key contextual factor shaping enactment concerns the pressures created by national and institutional policy expectations and they are responded to locally and approached as part of the infrastructure for mobility. As described above, the model for internationalisation of higher education promoted in official discourse and the professional how internationalisation is perceived in teacher education differ. As such, the academic/general higher education model presupposes that the value, aims and means of internationalisation are equally distributed and shared among various disciplines and stakeholders in higher education and that internationalisation has already reached a considerable extent (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Within this model, student mobility is installed as a proxy for (the state of) internationalisation. As reflected in current practices of internationalisation in teacher education, these aim at developing the international in the first place. Yet, the general model for internationalisation is argued to shape enactment in a more output-oriented direction, where internationalisation activities to some extent are becoming focused on what 'pays off' in the economic incentive structure posed by mobility grants such as Erasmus+ and the national steering parameters. As an effect, international practice teaching as an otherwise (historically) important and feasible internationalisation activity in teacher education comes to formally hold a lower status in the programs' infrastructure for mobility. Though most interviewees agree that it is unrealistic to expect teacher education to reach the objectives for mobility set by the national authorities, the 'attraction' to numbers nonetheless shapes mobility practices. This illustrates the material effects of the policy discourses identified in Article 1 which suggests that student mobility has come to play an increasingly bureaucratic role in steering, management and standard setting related to internationalisation, and as a means of far more overarching and complex agendas beyond its pedagogical nature. As reflected in Article 2, this instrumentalisation may also be perceived as a dysfunction of the new public management regime in Norwegian higher education, which

incentivises and supports exchange mobility with a minimum duration of three months as part of the national steering parameters for higher education.

Other scholars have also demonstrated the increasing gap between competitive and cooperative imperatives for internationalisation symbolised by (levels of) student mobility (Courtois, 2018a; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010a; Robson & Wihlborg, 2019; Sidhu & Dall'Alba, 2017; Stier, 2004; Turner & Robson, 2007). This thesis demonstrates that while the causes for this gap may differ, the *effects* of it may be similar, i.e., teacher education is an educational context where competitive rationales for mobility are almost completely absent, but where the academic rationales are at tension and put student mobility at risk of becoming instrumentalised and reduced to an aim in itself. While education itself and educational policymaking are by nature ambiguous and *"(…) laden with multiple agendas, values and sets of meaning"* (Trowler, 2002, p. 98) which may be of both instrumental and educational kinds, this study reveals how student mobility is far from the neutral activity it is often promoted as, but represents a 'challenge' to the rather defined educational values and mission, content and structure of teacher education.

7.2.3 Tensions in enactment shaped by the influence of core educational ideas in teacher education

The third supporting question concerns how student mobility is made sense of as an educational activity in relation to the nature of teacher education as a professional field of study, and in particular how this reflects prevailing policy assumptions about mobility as a contribution to educational quality. This question should be seen as a way of unpacking all four dimensions of mobility policy simultaneously from the assumption that the educational dimension is ultimately what is at stake in internationalisation and mobility policymaking (Wihlborg, 2009). It addresses how policy discourses are re-contextualised not only in relation to institutional context but also against the *pedagogical* context in which academic staff at the local level are the key agents. Some aspects of this sub-question are explicitly answered in Article 3 which analyses how the prevailing policy discourse on mobility as contributing to educational quality is made sense of against the pedagogical and educational ideas underpinning teacher education. In the following discussion, however, it is expanded to frame the whole project in a more overarching manner by pointing to the role of discipline as both an important and understudied aspect of internationalisation and student mobility policy which is needed to advance current knowledge about its implementation in diverse contexts of higher education.

While Article 1 and 2 identifies a multiplicity of ideas about mobility, these mostly concern the overall expectations, aims, and assumed outcomes and effects of it. Article 3 adds to this multiplicity by showing how the 'input' of the learning experience associated with mobility, as well as the

learning process involved, can also be conceptualised in more ways. A key finding in the article is that while there is generally consensus about the personal and potentially transformative professional value of mobility for teacher students, there is no uniform view of the conditions and factors supporting its achievement. As reflected by the limited engagement discussed above, it does not appear self-evident that internationalisation enhances the core mission of teacher education, which is shaped by multiple other demands and agendas. A key argument advanced is therefore that while we may have clearly envisioned outcomes for student mobility, the input and process supporting these outcomes are obscured in policy and vaguely conceptualised in practice. This tends to result in an 'anything goes' stance on the educational aspects of mobility and an accentuation of the personal, transformative potential of mobility. Yet, while there are some practices in place to support this transformative potential for the specific activity of international teaching practice, in terms of study abroad, these effects are largely taken for granted as an inherent aspect of what it means to 'travel'.

By implication, though exchange mobility is promoted and formally organised with respect to educational quality, how it is approached in practice, and the effects of it, are also characterised by unclear academic objectives and by being a 'project of self-improvement'. As a potential consequence, mobility may not contribute to realising the grand aims of internationalisation. Similar challenges have been discussed by other scholars, such as Sidhu and Dall'Alba (2017) who argue that greater institutional efforts need to be placed on learning and how to support the assumed transformations and *"connecting academic learning acquired through mobility experiences, both those that take place in-country and overseas, if universities are serious about producing the next generation of citizens to meet the most urgent of global challenges – climate change, sustainability and inequality"* (Sidhu & Dall'Alba, 2017, p. 470). If mobility only represents an operational plan for internationalisation at the level of management rather than a pedagogic or learning-oriented activity as such, the responsibility for creating an approach to student mobility which supports it as an educational activity is pushed downwards to the ground-level practitioners (Castro et al., 2016). While the findings of this thesis do not suggest that mobility practices in teacher education emerge in fully instrumental terms only, they do nevertheless point to critical moments shaping the pedagogical recontextualization of the prevailing discourses on student mobility, and the risk of instrumentalisation becoming reinforced by such practices. Wernisch (2016) argues that short-term mobility is the prevailing approach to and expression of internationalisation in teacher education, in contrast to a more comprehensive (higher education) approach where mobility forms one out of more elements of internationalisation. In a similar way, student mobility, as analysed across the articles of this thesis, in a paradoxical way comes to represent both a very limited activity of internationalisation, and at the same time a crucial activity for teacher education. Its central position

seems to crystallise the additive rather than integrated nature of internationalisation in teacher education, and the corresponding challenging task of mitigating the increasing expectations on internationalisation.

7.3 Reflecting on the findings in light of *educational ideologies*

The preceding discussion about mobility in relation to its political promotion, practical enactment, and pedagogical and curricular implications points to critical moments for understanding how political expectations on internationalisation are carried out in practice. Combined, these perspectives shed light on the significance of mobility in teacher education as being ambiguous – both a strong and limited way of engaging with internationalisation. The following and finishing part of the discussion connects and casts a new light on the findings of the thesis by reflecting on Trowler's (1998) concept of educational ideologies as a way to advance the perspective on policy enactment.

As described in Chapter 4, educational ideologies represent values and beliefs about the nature and purpose of education working as an interpretive 'filter' for responding to policy (Trowler, 2002). As witnessed by the findings of this thesis, internationalisation in general, and student mobility in particular, confront the educational ideologies in teacher education in complex and challenging ways. The findings reveal how fundamental questions about the core aims, important content and important functions taking place within teacher education are confronted by internationalisation, both in terms of dominant paradigms and existing ways of knowing and doing. More specifically, these phenomena trigger questions of *"'what exactly should we do?', 'why should we do this?',* and *'how should we do it?'"* (ibid., p. 75) and demand a response by the relevant actors involved in teacher education.

The findings show that the aims of both internationalisation and student mobility are predominantly related to the professional purpose and mission of teacher education. More specifically, internationalisation is generally viewed as a relevant pedagogical approach to prepare future teachers for professional practice in increasingly socio-complex contexts. In turn, mobility is perceived as a physical, personal and direct learning experience to develop relevant competencies for these ends among students, such as developing intercultural competence or other individual capacities valuable for being a teacher. Such notions are particularly visible in Article 3, arguing that the envisioned outcomes of mobility are strongly linked to this personal and professional frame. However, as for the specific content and learning process perceived to underlie the envisioned outcomes, student mobility (in particular exchange mobility, but to some extent also practice teaching) appears to confront existing ways of doing and knowing in much more complex ways. Thus, being a professional program governed by centrally authorised framework plans stating the national

curriculum, mobility fundamentally represents a 'loss of control' with the national curriculum. It inescapably implies that some of the content which national authorities and other stakeholders in teacher education have decided is important for being a (Norwegian) teacher is lost and replaced with something else. A key question among the interviewees of the study is whether this calls for finding an offer abroad which is as similar as possible (in terms of curriculum and professional ideals), or a contrasting offer which can support the more overall transformative associated with internationalisation. While this issue has traditionally led to a quite strict interpretation of what constitutes a relevant international offer, policymakers currently demand a more flexible approach to this issue in teacher education. As argued in Article 3, this seems to reinforce a view on mobility as a valuable activity in itself irrespective of its content, and an accentuation of the value of the personal experience and generic competencies at the expense of specific academic outcomes linked to content. In that sense, mobility represents a challenge for the educational ideology in terms of content and emerges as needing additional layers of justification to be legitimate in teacher education.

Finally, the educational ideology is strongly shaped by the core function of teacher education – its teaching and professionalisation functions rather than its academic and research functions. This is illustrated by the tension between academic and professional ideas and orientation which cuts across the findings of all three articles. In particular, there seem to be unresolved tensions between the current model for internationalisation promoted in Norwegian higher education policy and how the role of internationalisation in teacher education is perceived internally. Teacher education witnesses still stronger demands for developing its research orientation, and there is an expectation that the expansion of teacher education to master's programs will create more favourable conditions for mobility by integrating it more firmly into the research function (Article 2). Yet, the findings of this study reveal that this is a significant challenge and that mobility, in practice, is still organised as an isolated activity. In light of the relatively stable nature of educational ideologies over time, this challenge may endure in the years to come.

These core aspects of educational ideologies in teacher education fundamentally and intricately impact how policy intentions are taken up and carried out. More specifically, they shape how internationalisation is made sense of and enacted and how the assumed function of student mobility for this is in particular. As argued by Zgaga (2008), in the context of teacher education, the discourse on Europeanisation and internationalisation is not just about enabling opportunities for student mobility but has deep and profound effects and implications for the education itself by demanding flexibility and new ways of organising education (Niemi, 2022; Zgaga, 2008).

In that sense, the thesis demonstrates the importance of institutional context and educational ideologies as forming the crucial link between overall policy expectations and how mobility is framed and enabled at the micro-level of higher education. This is key for expanding the current focus on individual strategies and decision-making in the literature on short-term mobility. More importantly, it is crucial for advancing current knowledge about the heterogeneous needs and rationales for, and impacts of, internationalisation in higher education. While the relationship between internationalisation and educational quality is largely taken for granted in current general (higher education) discourse, the thesis demonstrates how this assumption is less self-evident in practice. The 'quality of teacher education' remains a contested issue by enabling a range of different viewpoints depending on who is asked (Munthe & Rogne, 2016). To some extent, internationalisation, as represented by the activity of mobility, appears to be characterised as an element of professionalism from 'above' rather than 'within' in teacher education (Evetts, 2013). Following this, the thesis reveals that teacher education may be at risk of uncritically following a mainstream path laid forth for it which is not viable for catering for its own needs and purposes for internationalisation. To respond to this challenge, it seems that teacher education would benefit from a more active engagement with questions of *why* and *how* to internationalise, and which activities or processes may enhance the quality of the core purpose of teacher education stemming from 'within'.

7.4 Summing up: making mobility meaningful?

The preceding discussion of the research presented in this thesis provides a range of insights into the significance of mobility in teacher education as it unfolds in and between the contexts of influence and practice respectively. Hence, the issues and insights advanced by the research are encapsulated in the title of the thesis: *Making Mobility Meaningful* in a dual sense. First of all, the title indicates the aim of exploring student mobility as a phenomenon beyond the activity itself and unpacking it as a distinct element of internationalisation policy which may be conceptualised, practised, valued, and hold different implications in different contexts of higher education – thus, *infusing* it with meaning. Secondly, the title refers to a key argument advanced from the findings of the three articles; namely that there is an emerging risk for student mobility being instrumentalised by how it is currently promoted, incentivised, and practised. In light of what we know about the potential benefits and educational value of students going abroad, the three articles and the preceding discussion identify a range of challenges to its meaningful embedding into teacher education and thereby lay the ground for a critical public discussion on how we can re-centre attention to how student mobility can indeed be made meaningful for students, study programs, and society more generally.

7.5 Implications of the study

The study has shed light on how interpretation and practices of student mobility are handled in a complex interplay between diverging demands and needs of various stakeholders, such as policymakers, institutional management, internal cultures/academic staff, and students, and the challenges of 'pleasing' all stakeholders in practice. This section discusses the implications of the research for higher education institutions and practitioners working with these issues in teacher education and beyond, policymakers, and researchers, as key stakeholders in the field.

7.5.1 For higher education institutions and practitioners in teacher education and beyond

The study has identified the role of student mobility in teacher education as being both the main activity of internationalisation and a strong symbol of it and at the same time having an additive role and being a somewhat limited way of engaging with internationalisation. Article 2 in particular, also identifies that this is an issue which is acknowledged by management and that changes to the approach to mobility in a more integrated way may be underway in the years to come. Yet, as for the institutional level of policymaking, an important implication of this study relates to how student mobility is strategically and practically managed and utilised. While there may be specific preconditions and barriers for mobility in teacher education, the identification of an under-utilised potential of student mobility has relevance beyond. The increasing output orientation in internationalisation policy (represented by mobility) places academic staff and practitioners in a challenging position of re-focussing attention on the educational and pedagogical opportunities of mobility. Both their agency and resources for engaging need to be recognised by institutional management, as they may differ according to the findings of this study. Following this, the research provides a call for higher education institutions and study programs to develop an institutional narrative about student mobility which places it firmly within the core mission and purpose of education, rather than working as an additive element only.

The political pressure to increase outgoing student mobility is not unique to teacher education, but it seems that the 'emerging state' of internationalisation in this context reinforces the use of mobility as an add-on activity to the program and a way of rendering visible that teacher education is indeed doing something to foster internationalisation. Thus, for teacher education and professional programs beyond, the study has implications for engaging in a critical conversation about the role of internationalisation more generally. In terms of governance, professional orientation and being tied to the needs of a particular sector, professional programs in higher education work on 'special terms' in relation to internationalisation, shaping needs, objectives and ways of engaging. These terms may both be a challenge and an opportunity depending on how they are approached. To benefit from their 'special terms', however, professional programs need to revisit the question of *why* to

internationalise and *how* it can enhance the quality and core mission of the program, rather than blindly accepting and pursuing the academic imperative and model for internationalisation supported and incentivised by policymakers. Developing strategies and practices that are feasible and relevant for a particular professional purpose and finding the appropriate balance between external and internal dynamics of internationalisation requires an active approach to 'what works' (and what does not) in strategizing and realising internationalisation. It is a challenging but necessary process to make internationalisation and mobility matter.

Ultimately, how institutions and particular study programs 'think and practice' student mobility has effects on students. While the study has not included student perspectives directly, it has identified students' aspirations for mobility as a key factor shaping enactment, being an area of tension between institutional/program visions and student motivations. Two important implications can be discerned from this: first, to reduce the gap between (institutional) educational motives and (students) social motives, teacher education programs need to consider how they can support the transformative potential which they assume, and how they can assist students in understanding and articulating what kind of skills or competence they develop by going abroad beyond having had some kind of international experience. If this is not clear to academic staff, it is likely also unclear to students. While the study identifies the ongoing work with pre-approved 'mobility packages' as a feasible approach to this, it appears that more active consideration of this issue is necessary. Second, given that student mobility (both exchange and practice teaching) is already a limited phenomenon in teacher education which benefits a minority of students, *and* which is associated with a range of challenges and tensions in terms of its organisation, there is a risk that teacher education programs put a lot of resources into an activity which has a somewhat limited potential for expansion. This does not seem productive for a more encompassing distribution of (important) international perspectives in teacher education.

7.5.2 For policymakers

The research has important implications for policymakers across the EU and Norwegian levels, both with regard to the current expectations and ambitions for student mobility, and the preconditions for internationalisation more generally. Policymaking at these different levels (including institutional policymaking described above) constitutes the overall framework for considerations and reflections on mobility. EU policymaking in this area is an important backdrop for understanding student mobility and contributes with important frameworks and ideas which support our common understanding of why teacher student mobility is or should be seen as important. The findings of this study indicate that while teacher educators may perceive mobility to be an important personal and (potentially) professionally transformative experience, there may be quite a distance between local

ideas and practices and the somewhat idealised and overly ambitious discourses framing mobility on the EU level. Despite the inclusion of teacher education into general higher education frameworks, internationalisation arguably still represents an initial process of 'becoming' rather than expanding. Hence, an important implication of this study for EU policymakers is to critically consider whether the grand visions for mobility are realistic, and what we can hope to gain from individual mobility. As evident from this study, short-term mobility with a duration of less than 3 months is a highly valued and utilised mobility activity in teacher education currently almost exclusively taking place in developing countries. There may be an opportunity for supporting and promoting such shorter stays (with a duration of less than 2 months) more actively. However, as teacher students across Europe are still among the least internationally mobile groups despite years of attention towards the issue, the EU should also continue to work on supporting models for internationalisation which do not require physical mobility.

The national regulation and framework plans governing teacher education currently seem to provide scarce support for how to integrate an international dimension into the program. Descriptions and justifications of the role and place of internationalisation tend to be delegated to the general higher education regulations and emphasise structural dimensions, thus providing little specific curricular specification related to teacher education. For Norwegian policymakers, it may be worthwhile to consider the increasing emphasis on internationalisation output of which outgoing student mobility is used as one of the proxies. This is a limited approach to support institutions and study programs in successful internationalisation processes and involves a risk of over-simplification of institutional contexts and the internal decisions and outcomes. Policy discourses are not 'only rhetoric' and free and fluid to be interpreted as seen fit; together with the supporting programs, funding and instruments in place in internationalisation policy, current discourse contributes to shaping practices of student mobility in teacher education. As witnessed by the findings of this study, ideas about student mobility are re-contextualised against the core mission and purpose of education, which may thus differ significantly between different fields of education and result in different ways of approaching it. This shows that student mobility is not a neutral activity whose value can be taken for granted, and policymakers should acknowledge the fact that there may be detrimental consequences of over-relying on the promises and outcomes of mobility beyond the experience of the individual student. In particular, the study shows how this may affect considerations about 'quality' in a more instrumental direction disconnected from its educational purpose. In light of this, policymakers should consider whether the desired expansion of student mobility in Norwegian higher education will potentially contribute to further obscuring its educational purpose and result in more tensions and ambiguities for enacting it, rather than supporting a feasible internationalisation process for all

study programs alike. There is a risk that dedicating too many resources to mobility involves 'turning a blind eye' to internationalisation.

The latter argument points to another key implication of the study for policymakers to consider: to what extent do current policies provide the same opportunities for internationalisation in different areas and disciplines in higher education? The findings indicate that the model for internationalisation promoted in official policy is strongly linked to an academic rationale and the research function of higher education institutions, with a distinct view on the role of student mobility. Sub-fields of higher education with a professional orientation, and where the core function is teaching may have different capacities to connect to the academic model. Clearly, higher education policies should be general enough to cover the whole higher education sector, but the findings of the study provide a call for policymakers to consider whether all study programs are indeed provided with the same opportunities to internationalise, and how the activity of mobility feeds into this.

7.5.3 For future research

This section briefly sketches future avenues for research, while the more specific implications of the study for the research field are described in detail in Chapter 8 outlining the limitations and empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of the study.

It has been argued above that it is necessary to expand the currently dominant analytical focus on student choice to a perspective on the institutional logics and practices framing and constraining it, to critically assess the relationship between political aims and realities of student mobility. It would be highly valuable with more research aiming to conceptualise the role of mobility in specific settings, both different national contexts and educational contexts, and how it is becoming re-contextualised as a pedagogical or educational activity against the backdrop of current policy discourse. In particular, comparative perspectives on professional study programs similar to teacher education with limited mobility and fields of study where mobility levels are consistently high (such as business) would be interesting. Such research could provide critical perspectives on the expectations placed on student mobility as the dominant activity of internationalisation, as well as what is required if student mobility should indeed become more closely integrated with the curriculum.

Furthermore, there is a need for more research on student perspectives on the matters discussed in this thesis, and in particular on how policy discourse and institutional practices shape their learning experience abroad. Situating students as policy enactors whose decision to go abroad and the learning experience associated with it may be shaped by a range of factors would be a relevant way

of expanding current views on student agency in relation to mobility. As indicated by the findings in the thesis, there may be significant gaps between political aims and student aspirations for mobility, and it would be an over-simplification to treat them as rational actors pursuing the self-evident benefits of mobility only. More research into students' considerations of going abroad – or *not* going abroad (!) – and in particular what shapes their learning experience and their subsequent use of it, would also be a highly relevant entry point for advancing our knowledge about the aims and realities of student mobility policy.

Chapter 8: Concluding comments

The thesis set out to explore the significance of international student mobility in teacher education as it emerges in policy and practice. The articles and this extended abstract have aimed to address this issue from a multi-level, dynamic and critical approach focussing on *the meaning of mobility*. Rather than focussing on levels of student mobility in teacher education and providing overly simple explanations to them, the research aims to paint a complex picture of this issue in relation to discourses, agents, contexts and temporality as the 'territory' of policymaking and practice in which this process is assumed to take place. Unpacking these aspects with existing bodies of work and the empirical data generated for the thesis has contributed to new ways of making sense of student mobility as a far less neutral and self-evident phenomenon of contemporary higher education than what is often suggested in policy and research. In particular, the thesis demonstrates that student mobility is made sense of in a relational space between political and pedagogical expectations, in addition to a conceptual space shaped by academic, professional, and bureaucratic perceptions of its nature. More importantly, student mobility is embedded in the internationalisation process as both a strong symbol and a crucial practical activity to its realisation, which throughout the thesis emerges as a challenging phenomenon in teacher education due to its nature as a largely external discourse. The research identifies a range of 'creative responses' to policy and challenges to its meaningful embedding into teacher education, which may ultimately contribute to obscure the basic aim of mobility and internationalisation policy – enhancing the quality of higher education. This closing chapter of the thesis provides a concise and final summary of the research by briefly addressing the limitations of the study and identifying and describing its key empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions.

8.1 Looking back and moving forward

While the scope of the research presented in this thesis aims to be broad and to include a variety of relevant aspects to understand the role of student mobility in teacher education, it also excludes an array of other interesting approaches and issues. This section points to such perspectives which the study is limited from making claims about, but which would have been interesting to include in the existing research or in a follow-up project.

First, while it is also a study of internationalisation in teacher education, student mobility has been foregrounded from the fundamental claim that the increasing political resources, expectations and demands placed on this particular activity invite us to critically examine what shapes ambitions and realities on this matter. Yet, internationalisation is clearly about much more than student mobility. Had the study taken a more comprehensive approach to internationalisation, including other ways of internationalising such as international aspects in the home curriculum, or in teaching situations

more generally, another landscape of internationalisation in teacher education would likely have been painted. Yet, the thesis has provided valid arguments supporting the claims made about the role of student mobility in teacher education.

Second, though the thesis does not engage with how policy affects students directly, the perspective on agents of policymaking provides a crucial window to reflect and discuss the impact on students in a more implicit way. The empirical data indeed show examples of gaps between political/institutional aims and student aspirations, how the program attempts to steer students' aspirations, and how large they are in accommodating their demands. It would have been interesting to be able to represent the voices of students more directly than what has been done and analyse how they shape the enactment of mobility policy.

Third, an important limitation to be considered concerns the nature of time and how it impacts the study and its findings. As discussed in the methods chapter, the pandemic had the potential to be a game-changer for mobility, and there is a risk that this study and its findings and discussions are less relevant today than before the pandemic. A similar risk should be noted for the transition of teacher education for primary and secondary lower education into 5 years master's programs which were in its early stages when I embarked on this research. Thus, it is highly possible that the significance of mobility may have changed, and that some of the issues and tensions sketched in this thesis will look differently if studied today. As for the transition to master's programs, the updated national mobility statistics (DBH, 2022) do not show signs of levels of mobility having increased significantly in teacher education. As for the effects of the pandemic, student mobility has almost reached the level before the pandemic (HK-Dir, 2023). However, these statistics do not say anything about whether institutional approaches to and considerations of mobility have changed. As such, this would in itself be an interesting follow-up to the study, and for mobility research more generally.

More generally, we are currently facing severe societal challenges such as climate crisis, large migration and refugee waves, neo-nationalistic tendencies in Europe, war on the European continent and other geo-political issues, and a potential financial crisis, just to name a few. In addition, we are witnessing rapid technological and digital developments which may also bring new possibilities and challenges for current ways of internationalising. Finally, within the Norwegian context specifically, we may be facing a potentially drastic change of policy approach to internationalisation, displacing aims of academic quality with economic ends as described in Chapter 2 (Wiers-Jenssen, Hovdhaugen, & Elken, 2022). All these grand challenges have the potential to impact how internationalisation is strategically managed within existing supranational frameworks for cooperation, nation-states, higher education institutions and the micro-level of study programs (de Wit & Altbach, 2021).

Accordingly, the role of student mobility may also be at a crossroads. Yet, as reflected in the findings and discussions presented in this thesis, such grand challenges affect stakeholders in and around higher education in heterogeneous, complex and unforeseen ways. As argued in Article 2, for instance, while virtual mobility may be considered a good alternative for reducing the environmental impact of physical mobility by plane and as a more inclusive approach to support internationalisation for all students, it is not self-evident that the value currently associated with student mobility (i.e., the personal, bodily experience of immersing oneself in another culture) can be realised via virtual mobility. Hence, this thesis demonstrates the need for strongly contextualised studies of higher education in the discussion of the grand challenges of our time.

8.2 Contributions

The three articles and this extended abstract offer a contribution to the existing knowledge in more ways and of different kinds. Overall, the study contributes to advancing the scholarly knowledge of the prevailing political discourses on student mobility and their ambiguous relationship to the institution of teacher education. Moreover, it contributes with new perspectives on the effects of such discourses in terms of shaping the room for their enactment and the nature and role of student mobility as an educational activity in relation to the core mission of teacher education. In what follows, the specific empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of the study are identified and described.

8.2.1 Empirical contributions

The empirical findings suggest that European and Norwegian student mobility discourses have gradually paid more attention to teacher education and teacher students specifically. Analysing how mobility is discursively promoted in relation to teacher education offers a novel empirical perspective on the still stronger policy expectations framing teacher education, as well as the institutionalisation of the aims of student mobility currently framing higher education policy. These findings contribute to a still expanding critical research strand which problematises the underpinning values, naturalisation and power relations embedded in mobility policy, and which questions the impact of such policies in relation to their stated aims.

While existing literature has continuously cautioned against treating mobility as an end in itself rather than a means to other ends, mobility is still the dominant expression of internationalisation in higher education. The thesis makes an empirical contribution by shedding light on how this kind of instrumentalisation is perpetuated at both the level of policy and practice. Focussing on the relationship between policy and practice and how it positions internationalisation in teacher education, the thesis contributes with important knowledge about the preconditions and capacities of teacher education for enacting it. Thus, what is often portrayed in the literature as a gap between

policy and practice, or ambitions and realities of student mobility, this study approaches in a more fine-grained and nuanced way, by shedding light on the ambiguous nature of mobility as being both a crucial and limited way of internationalising teacher education. A key finding is that neither demands for internationalisation posed from 'above', nor the idealised assumption that it should more or less automatically emanate from 'below', seems to create favourable conditions for supporting internationalisation in teacher education.

Finally, the findings contribute to advancing important and much-needed perspectives on the 'supply side' of student mobility in terms of how those who provide and benefit from it shape flows of mobility. Shedding light on the organisational dimension working as an external force shaping student motivations and decisions is an important advancement of the dominant perspective in current mobility research focussing on student demands for mobility and push/pull factors. Thus, while the organisational framing of student mobility may not determine whether, why, and where students go (as evident in Articles 2 and 3), the study contributes to revealing some of the institutional logics, structures and cultures which ultimately frame the activity of student mobility; not least by showing the malleable nature of how student mobility can be justified by those responsible for organising it. In that sense, the study provides an empirical correction to the predominant political and scholarly portrayal of student mobility as being mainly an individual choice linked to strategic decision-making on part of students, showing both how this decision-making may not be particularly strategic (in terms of students' non-educational motivations for mobility), and how the efforts made by actors in the study program limit the scope of such decision-making. The empirical work in the thesis thus makes for a significant and original contribution to the existing knowledge in terms of understanding mobility as a phenomenon with complex meanings and effects beyond the experience of the individual student.

8.2.2 Theoretical contributions

The study also advances scholarly knowledge by providing various theoretical contributions. First of all, short-term/credit mobility is generally an under-theorised form of higher education mobility which has different rationales and logics which are distinct from the ones discussed in the context of degree/free mover mobility. While students' motivation and strategic decision-making naturally also play a role in short-term mobility, it is nevertheless strongly shaped and constrained by institutional aims and practices, as witnessed by this thesis. Hence, the thesis demonstrates the need for, value of, and potential analytical entry points to, unpack the crucial institutional dimension of student mobility – both in order to advance our understanding of this particular phenomenon, but also to critically assess the relationship between political aims and realities of student mobility.

More specifically, approaching student mobility as a multi-issue area with a range of symbolic meanings and practical effects which cuts across education, culture, economy, policy, legal and ethical aspects, to name a few of the topics in the thesis, also provides for a theoretical contribution to a research field where it tends to be studied through separate frames. Rather than providing overly simple explanations as to why levels of student mobility in teacher education, and potentially professional programs beyond, are limited, the thesis demonstrates that student mobility is made sense of in a space between political and pedagogical aims and expectations, in addition to a space shaped by academic, professional, and bureaucratic conceptualisations of its nature. Combined, these aspects shape the space for enactment and infuse it with a range of tensions. A key theoretical contribution of the thesis, therefore, lies in showing that while internationalisation (and quality) may be the explicit and dominant justifications for student mobility in policy and practice, the multi-layered nature of mobility both supports and obscures its relation to these ends. The use of theory as sensitising lenses rather than pre-determined frameworks has been valuable for tying together theory and empirical data, thereby addressing some of the key issues often raised in the higher education internationalisation literature, but seldomly pursued empirically – understanding internationalisation as a phenomenon which is infused with meaning empirically. Thus, as for the field of higher education research more generally, the study demonstrates the value of approaching internationalisation with greater theoretical flexibility and less predetermined, homogenising perspectives.

Moreover, a related but distinct theoretical contribution concerns the value of actor-centred perspectives as an otherwise largely under-utilised source for understanding issues of internationalisation. Foregrounding micro-level actors as crucial for internationalisation in combination with the discursive view on policy provided a unique lens for studying both structural and cultural challenges and potentials for realising mobility as part of the work with internationalisation in teacher education. In particular, the thesis has demonstrated the value of unpacking this relationship analytically with tools from the policy enactment framework. While originally developed in relation to policy implementation in the compulsory school system, combining policy enactment with educational ideologies developed in relation to higher education provides a novel theoretical perspective for a comprehensive and complex exploration of how internationalisation policy can be put into practice in higher education contexts. The value of this combination of perspectives is that it enables an even more nuanced and complex vision of local context as both shaped by both discursive, subjective, material *and* pedagogical factors as a conceptual lens through which the realisation of mobility and internationalisation policy can be studied.

8.2.3 Methodological contributions

As for methodological contributions, approaching the key issues from a strong qualitative design represents a fresh methodological contribution to the field. The combination of document analysis and semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth and context-sensitive analysis. This is a timely correction to accounts of student mobility which tend to be largely decontextualised and focused on students' motivations and experiences. Moreover, the combination of qualitative methods proved useful for triangulating different empirical sources to shed light on the significance of mobility in teacher education. The value of the combination of the two main methods is not that they can necessarily provide simple or clear answers to the research questions; Rather, that they allow for painting a complex picture of what issues are at stake in this field in combination with the various theoretical lenses employed.

The choice of teacher education as an empirical entry point for the research also provides for a methodological contribution in relation to its nature as an 'unusual' case for studying internationalisation. Not only is there a lack of research on the stated issues in teacher education and professional programs beyond, but based on existing evidence (research literature, statistics and reports), teacher education is assumed to be predisposed differently for engaging with policies and processes of internationalisation. With a continuous comparative perspective on the existing literature and the case at hand, the study confirmed that the professional purpose of teacher education indeed shapes how student mobility is governed with an ambiguous relation to academic ways of internationalising. Thus, in methodological terms, teacher education has proved valuable as a case for exposing inconsistencies, challenges and nuances in internationalisation processes which tend to be obscured in the existing literature, thereby adding value for internationalisation research more generally.

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Appendices

The following six appendices include research approval from NSD, information and consent letter for informants (in Danish), an overview of policy texts analysed in Article 1, and the interview guides for academic staff, management and administrative staff respectively (translated from Norwegian to English).

Research approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). This version is the first approval received, but it has since been re-approved for continuation until 2023.

Internasjonalisering og internasjonal studiemobilitet i norsk grunnskolelærerutdanning – muligheter og barrierer

Referanse
910259

Status
Vurdert

Åpne Meldeskjema | ☰ Vurdering

> Skriv melding her. Vær oppmerksom på at meldingen du skriver blir synlig for din institusjon i Meldingsarkivet og alle som får delt tilgang til prosjektet ditt.

Send melding

Sluttvurdering (planlagt)
31.12.2021 01:00

Melding
29.04.2019 09:36

Det innsendte meldeskjemaet med referansekode 910259 er nå vurdert av NSD.

Følgende vurdering er gitt:

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 29.04.2019. Behandlingen kan starte.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER
Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

nsd.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html

Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 31.12.2021.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp underveis (hvert annet år) og ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet/pågår i tråd med den behandlingen som er dokumentert.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Karin Lillevold
Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

Appendix 2

Information and consent letter for informants.

Information til informanter i ph.d.-projekt om muligheder og barrierer for internationalisering og international studiemobilitet i norsk grundskolelæreruddannelse

Med dette ønsker jeg at informere dig om projektets formål, og hvad det vil indebære for dig at deltage. Nederst finder du en samtykkeerklæring, som jeg vil medbringe og bede dig udfylde før interviewet går i gang, såfremt du er indforstået med formålet.

Jeg er i gang med et ph.d.-projekt ved Nordisk institutt for studier av innovasjon, forskning og utdanning (NIFU), hvor jeg ønsker jeg at undersøge erfaringer med international studiemobilitet i norske grundskolelæreruddannelser, særligt i relation til øgede krav om internationalisering og kvalitet. Jeg er interesseret i at få viden om hvilke strategier og målsætninger for området der arbejdes med på institutionen, hvordan dette indarbejdes i læreruddannelseskonteksten, og på hvilke måder dette opleves at bidrage til uddannelsen. For at opnå viden om dette ønsker jeg at interviewe aktører som arbejder i og rundt læreruddannelsen på forskellige institutioner (videnskabeligt og administrativt personale). Projektet har dermed også et komparativt aspekt, med det formål at det kan bidrage med ny kundskab om drivkræfter, muligheder og barrierer i forhold til international studiemobilitet i læreruddannelsen, som forhåbentlig kan være til gavn for både de enkelte læreruddannelser og den norske uddannelsespolitik mere generelt.

For dig vil deltagelse i projektet indebære at jeg interviewer dig i cirka 1 time på den lokation som passer dig bedst. Interviewet vil handle om dine erfaringer som fagperson på dette felt, og der vil derfor ikke indgå personfølsomme spørgsmål. Interviewet vil blive optaget på diktafon, og efterfølgende blive transkriberet af mig, og vil indgå som anonymiseret data i en række forskningsartikler som en del af min afhandling. Der vil være mulighed for at læse og godkende transskriptionen før den bliver anvendt som empiri. Vælger du at deltage kan du når som helst trække dit samtykke tilbage uden at opgive nogen grund. Efter projektets afslutning (forventet udgangen af 2021) vil alle data blive slettet.

Projektet er godkendt af Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS (NSD) og projektansvarlig vejleder er førsteamanuensis Agnete Vabø ved OsloMet. Hvis du har spørgsmål vedrørende deltagelse eller dine rettigheder er du velkommen til at kontakte mig på email tea.dyred.pedersen@nifu.no eller telefon 90 88 00 58, eller NSD på email personverntjenester@nsd.no eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med venlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig (veileder)   Forsker

(signatur) Agnete Vabø   _(signatur)_ Tea Dyred Pedersen

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Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har modtaget og forstået information om projektet *muligheder og barrierer for internationalisering og international studiemobilitet i norsk grundskolelæreruddannelse*, og har fået anledning til at stille spørgsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ at deltage i projektet gennem interview

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 3

Policy texts selected for analysis in Article 1 (full reference in the bibliography of Article 1).

European policy texts	Norwegian policy texts
European Commission Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community (1991) Green Paper on the European Dimension of Education (1993) Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (2009) Green Paper on Promoting the learning mobility of young people (2009) Supporting the Teaching Professions for Better Learning Outcomes (2012) Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (2020). Council of the European Union Improving the quality of teacher education (2007) On the professional development of teachers and school leaders (2009) Bologna/EHEA Bologna Follow-up Group on Internationalisation and Mobility Report of the 2012-2015 (2015) Yerevan Communiqué (2015)	Ministry of education and research (previously Ministry of Church Affairs, Education and Research) NOU 1996: 22. Lærerutdannning — Mellom krav og ideal (Official Norwegian Report, 1996) Framework plans for teacher education (1994, 1999, 2003, 2010) Quality reform of new teacher education (2002) Internationalisation of Education (2009a) The Teacher - the role and the education (2009b) Quality Culture in Higher Education (2017) A world of opportunities - International student mobility in higher education (2020) National Council for Teacher Education National guidelines for the primary and lower secondary teacher education programme for years 1-7 (2016) Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Norwegian students on exchange (2019a) NOTED Call for applications (2019b)

Appendix 4

Interview guides for academic staff (translated from Norwegian).

Topic	Interview questions	Possible follow-up question
Introduction and background	Can you tell me about your work in this program?	How long have you worked here, which courses do you teach, what are your academic interests?
	How would you characterise this particular teacher education program?	Geography, culture, intake, size, history, etc.
	In your own words, what is internationalisation about? And what in particular does it mean for teacher students?	Purpose, values, professional value? Importance?
	How do you consider your own work as taking place in an international context?	Activities, research networks, cooperation, conferences, publishing, mobility etc.?
Expectations on internationalisation and mobility at institutional and program level	Which ambitions for internationalisation/mobility are expressed at the institutional/program level?	Strategies, aims, cooperation agreements, focus areas?
	Do you feel it is an important agenda in the institution/program? How? Why?	Rationales, resources, the relative importance of internationalisation vs other priorities?
	What do you consider as being the driving forces behind this agenda? Is this something that has changed over time?	External vs internal?
	How is this topic currently being discussed in your faculty? What are the key themes and challenges?	
Specific activities	How do you perceive of the relationship between internationalisation and mobility?	Is it the same? What is the value of each respectively? Can you have one without the other? Alternatives?

	Which student mobility activities do you have in the program?	Long-term, short-term, exchange, teaching practice, geography, etc.
	How are such activities supported and enabled in the program? How have you been involved and what are your experiences with this?	Preparatory courses, language classes, in teaching, administratively?
	Do you experience any challenges to the work with student mobility? How are such challenges overcome?	
	How is mobility promoted to students? Do you contribute to this? How does students respond to such promotion?	Administratively vs academic What arguments are used? Who are the drivers (faculty, administration, students?)
The value of mobility for teacher students	In your opinion, what is the value of some kind of mobility experience for teacher education students?	Professional value, academic value, personal value?
	Do these experiences add value to the specific subject you teach? To the program in general?	
	In which way can students' mobility experiences be used in your teaching?	
	Quality is often articulated as the main rationale for both internationalisation and mobility. What are your thoughts on this claim?	Is it true? Under which preconditions is it true? Are there other more important rationales?
Finishing off, debriefing	Do you have any questions, or anything else you would like to add?	

Appendix 5

Interview guide for management (translated from Norwegian).

Topic	Interview questions	Possible follow-up question
Introduction and background	Can you tell me about yourself and your responsibilities in relation to teacher education? What would you say characterises your institution and the teacher education program in particular? In your own words, what is internationalisation about in the context of teacher education? What is the role of student mobility for this?	Profile, history, location etc.
Strategies and ambitions	How would you describe the institution's current approach to internationalisation and student mobility? Which ambitions do you have on this matter? What do you consider to be the driving forces behind these agendas? How would you describe the status of internationalisation compared to other priorities you have for teacher education? What do you see as the main challenges to fostering internationalisation and student mobility?	Purpose, values, professional value? Importance? Is it a prioritized agenda? How, why? Authorities, institutional management, academic staff etc. Focus and priority, staff involvement, difficulties
Working with student mobility	In your opinion, what is the value of some kind of mobility experience for teacher students?	Professional value, academic value, personal value?

	How can this value be supported and enhanced by the program?	
	Which resources are put into the work with internationalisation and student mobility? How is it organised?	
	What do you see as the main challenges to this work? Can they be overcome? What are the plans for the future of this agenda?	
	Quality is often articulated as the main rationale for both internationalisation and mobility. What is your perspective on this claim?	Is it true? Under which preconditions is it true? Are there other important rationales?
Finishing off	Do you have any questions, or anything else you would like to add?	

Appendix 6

Interview guide for administrative staff (translated from Norwegian).

Topic	Interview questions	Possible follow-up question
Introduction and background	How are you involved in working with internationalisation and student mobility?	Experience Involvement teacher education specifically?
	How is this work otherwise organised? How is the balance between academic and administrative staff?	Who has responsibility for what?
	In your view, what is internationalisation about? How does student mobility relate to that?	Purpose, value, professional value? Importance?
Ambitions	What is the history of the program's work with internationalisation and mobility?	Strategies, aims, rationales, cooperation agreements, focus areas?
	Which ambitions do the faculty currently have for internationalisation/mobility?	Is it a prioritized agenda? How, why? What are the driving forces behind this agenda?
	If you should compare the work with mobility in teacher education with other programs that you are involved with, what would you say are the main similarities and differences?	
	Are there challenges to student mobility specific to teacher education?	
Activities	Which mobility activities are in place for teacher education?	
	How are these planned and organised respectively? How is	

	the international office involved? How are these activities promoted to students? Could you describe some typical situations in which teacher students would contact the international office? What are the levels of mobility for different types of mobility respectively? What are your reflections on this?	Timing, arguments, drivers What do they ask and need help for?
Summing up	Any questions, or something you would like to add?	

Part II: Articles

Article 1:

Pedersen, Tea Dyred (2022). Mobility for teacher students or teacher students for mobility? Unravelling policy discourses on international student mobility in the context of teacher education. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(6), 761-780.

Mobility for teacher students or teacher students for mobility? Unravelling policy discourses on international student mobility in the context of teacher education

Tea Dyred Pedersen [ID]
NIFU - Nordic Institute for Studies in innovation, research and education, Norway

Abstract
Forming part of the efforts to internationalise European higher education, international student mobility has become a key activity strongly supported and promoted by policymakers. In particular, the mobility of teacher students has become a more prominent issue over the past decades. However, to this date there is a lack of research focussing on this specific aspect of higher education mobility policies. Drawing on the analytical framework of discursive institutionalism, this article critically explores policy discourses on teacher student mobility as they emerge in a range of historical and contemporary European and Norwegian policy texts. Subsequently, it discusses how such discourses presuppose the function of teacher education and future teachers in the political agendas on internationalisation and mobility. The study finds that mobility in the context of teacher education is legitimated and promoted with discourses of harmonisation, professionalisation and instrumentalisation, and argues that these discourses are ambiguous and obscure the purpose of both the activity of mobility itself, as well as teacher education and what it educates for, with potential implications for how mobility policies can be realised. In doing so, the article contributes to a critical discussion about the drivers behind contemporary policies for internationalisation and mobility in higher education.

Keywords
Teacher education, higher education, internationalisation, international student mobility, European policy discourse, Norwegian policy discourse, discursive institutionalism

Corresponding author:
Tea Dyred Pedersen, NIFU – Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education, Økernveien 9, Oslo 0653, Norway.
Email: Tea.dyred.pedersen@nifu.no

Introduction

Both in terms of visibility and promotion international student mobility is currently among the most prominent features in the efforts to internationalise higher education across European, national and institutional levels (Teichler, 2017). Symbolised by its crucial role in both the ERASMUS-programme and the Bologna Process student mobility has over the past decades been an activity surrounded by intensifying political interest and promotion at the European level (Papatsiba, 2006). In parallel the mobility of teacher students has apparently become a more prominent issue over the past decades (Zgaga, 2008). Indeed, this was made a priority in the European Higher Education Area in 2015, the highest-level and perhaps most influential European policy cooperation for student mobility, which stated that: '*We also wish to promote the mobility of teacher education students in view of the important role they will play in educating future generations of Europeans*' (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, 2015). Across different national contexts the same observation can be made, as reforms which aim to support internationalisation, and in particular increase student mobility, have been implemented in teacher education (Wernisch, 2016). As for the case of Norway, this is illustrated with the latest reform of teacher education for primary and lower secondary school in 2017, which aimed to increase internationalisation and mobility based on the assumption that it would enhance the quality of the education (Skagen and Elstad, 2020).

Arguably, the strong political focus on mobility contributes to creating effects and contexts for thinking about it (Brooks, 2018; Robertson, 2010), but to this date there is a lack of research which critically addresses potential implications of political ideas and discourses that legitimate the intensified political promotion of teacher student mobility. Drawing on inspiration from the theoretical framework of discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008), this paper explores and compares the development of contemporary European and Norwegian policy discourses on student teacher mobility as promoted in key policy texts over the past decades. It specifically asks *how* and with *which ideas* mobility is being promoted and *why;* that is, how does this form discourses which legitimate this particular targeting of teacher education and teacher students. Analytically these questions are approached through (1) mapping the *ideas* conveyed in such discourses and (2) *discussing* how this presupposes the role and function of future teachers in internationalisation and mobility agendas. In light of the amount of attention and resources currently being paid to student mobility across policy and institutional levels, it is crucial to take a step back and critically examine both the political aims and purposes driving this agenda. Thus, this paper aims to contribute to a critical discussion about the drivers and rationales of contemporary higher education policies for mobility.

Situating the study: Norwegian teacher education context and the policy prominence of international student mobility

The study presented in this article aims to analyse and contrast ideas about teacher student mobility conveyed in European and Norwegian policy discourse. While mapping the European discourse(s) alone would suffice as a way of gaining insight to institutionalised ideas about mobility from crucial policy actors in the field, including a comparative national case is arguably highly relevant with teacher education being the main focus of the study. Although the Bologna Process and the EHEA as well as the EU strategies in education and research influence teacher education and are international by nature, '*(. . .) teacher education policy – related to national systems of pre-tertiary education – remains to a large extent nationally based*' (Zgaga, 2013: 348). Teacher education across Europe therefore cannot be treated as *one* sub-field, and including a national case thus seem relevant to contextualise and contrast the findings on the European level. Specifically the study

concerns Norwegian teacher education for primary and lower secondary school which at the political level is both continuously heavily debated and substantially changed (Expert Group on the Teacher Role, 2016). It is somewhat representative of a Nordic model for teacher education with a relatively strong state regulation aimed at supporting the comprehensive education system which constitutes the Nordic education model (Prøitz and Aasen, 2017: 221). Thus, as a political institution, this field involves tensions around structure, aims, content etc., and hence '*(. . .) different discourses of teacher education as professional qualifying will exist at the same time*' (Garm and Karlsen, 2004: 738).

More generally Norway provides for an interesting national case due to the significant amount of resources which has been put into ensuring the opportunity for all higher education students to undertake study periods abroad (Stensaker et al., 2008; Vabø and Wiers-Jenssen, 2014). The still stronger emphasis placed on mobility is evident by the number of white papers, strategies and initiatives initiated by policymakers over the past decades which promote mobility (Meld. St. 7, 2020–2021; Meld. St. 16, 2016–2017; St. Meld. 14, 2008–2009; St. Meld. 27, 2000–2001). Today it is a stated long-term objective that 50% of all students taking a degree in higher education should have had a stay abroad when finishing their degree (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019), and while the reality of this ambition can be discussed, it illustrates the commitment to this agenda in Norway. It thus provides the study with a rich national case for studying ideas about student mobility and their development over time.

Though not being a member of the EU, Norway participates fully in the EU education and research programmes in terms of rights and duties, and it has been argued that its higher education internationalisation policy shares many common ambitions with the European agenda on this matter. This is illustrated by the fact that Norway both joined the ERASMUS-programme and signed the Bologna Declaration in their early stages, and its general keenness to implement the associated changes (Gornitzka and Langfeldt, 2008; Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). This serves as an important backdrop for exploring ideas about mobility specific to teacher education, which has only formally/legally been included in the Norwegian higher education system since the mid-1990s (Garm and Karlsen, 2004). Thus, the comparative temporal analysis of the two discourses respectively allows for a rich analysis of the variety of ideas employed to promote teacher mobility, as well as how such ideas have gained legitimacy and become prominent – on the policy level – in the institutional context of teacher education.

Existing research: Discursively oriented perspectives on mobility policies

The intensified policy focus on teacher students' mobility has been observed and commented on by more scholars (Pedersen, 2021; Wernisch, 2016; Zgaga, 2008). Yet to this date the ideas and discourses supporting it have not been critically explored. In the general higher education literature, a number of studies have attended to the underlying political ideas about student mobility (e.g. Brooks, 2018; Courtois, 2018a, 2019, 2020; Papatsiba, 2009), but for teacher education as a subfield of higher education, internationalisation issues are left rather unexplored (Pedersen, 2021; Zgaga, 2017). Arguably, this is problematic because these issues concern and cut across higher education and the disciplines in general, as well as teacher education specifically, for instance in terms of how to enable teachers to handle the increasing internationalisation in schools. Thus, following the call made by other scholars in the field to approach teacher education from the perspective of higher education at large (Zgaga, 2013), the present study aims to shed light on the discourses specific to teacher education by *maintaining* focus on its position in the broader context of higher education.

Existing studies have demonstrated how policy texts are replete with claims about the benefits and qualities of mobility for the individual student, higher education institutions, society and the economy more generally (Powell and Finger, 2013; Teichler, 2017). It has been argued that policies tend to emphasise the individual competences supposedly developed through mobility such as language acquisition, intercultural competence, and self-confidence, but that these qualities are often promoted within a framework conceptualising them as a useful instrument for the economy and society (Courtois, 2020; Dvir and Yemini, 2017; Papatsiba, 2006, 2009). In this vein, more scholars have argued that the past decades have witnessed a shift in internationalisation policies towards commercialisation symbolised by the focus on student mobility (Castro et al., 2016; Chankseliani and Wells, 2019; Robson and Wihlborg, 2019), as well as an instrumentalisation of student mobility itself, where economic aspects are emphasised at the expense of social, academic and intercultural aspects (e.g. Abdullah et al., 2017; Courtois, 2019, 2020; Dvir and Yemini, 2017; Findlay et al., 2017; Pedersen, 2021; Powell and Finger, 2013).

In the broader context of education policy this discursive shift has also been observed in relation to compulsory schooling, in terms of how the capacities mentioned above can be developed among *pupils* (Dvir and Yemini, 2017). In relation to this the role of teachers become increasingly important, as they are positioned as *responsible* for developing these capacities among pupils, and thereby ultimately for mediating social and economic issues in society (Biesta, 2017; Caena, 2014). By implication, the quality of teachers – and thereby also teacher education – has moved into the political and public limelight, and multiple discourses (both professional and political) compete in constructing a certain view on teachers, their work, their role and their quality (Garm and Karlsen, 2004; Robertson, 2012). In this way, educational reforms and policies discursively draw on positioning teachers in certain ways to support their aims, and thus impose 'professionalism from above' as a way of fostering appropriate (professional) conduct among teachers (Evetts, 2013). As teacher education is both a subfield within higher education at large, and closely linked to compulsory education as the arena for future professional practice, different framings, demands and challenges can be found placed upon it in various policy texts (Wernisch, 2016), and analysing and comparing these may therefore reveal different discursive constructions of teachers as professionals.

As policy meets the context in which they are to be implemented (in this case teacher education, and subsequently schools), such discursive positionings can become challenged, as actors '*are positioned differently and take up different positions in relation to policy, including positions of indifference or avoidance or irrelevance*' (Ball et al., 2011: 625). While it is beyond the scope of this article to analyse the implementation or effects of mobility policies, policy discourses can clearly influence *how* they can be realised in different educational contexts. That is, the language and concepts used are likely to become part of dominant, taken-for-granted discourses which can affect how the phenomenon under scrutiny is thought about in the first place (Brooks, 2018; Saarinen, 2008). That is, although mobility is ultimately a matter of choice and agency exercised by the individual student, it is '*also animated, and set in motion, by external forces*' (Courtois, 2020: 239), meaning that how mobility is *promoted* can in itself influence what mobility *is about*. Thus, the contribution of the present study is both empirical and analytical; focussing on teacher mobility as a hitherto understudied aspect of higher education internationalisation, and approaching mobility policies as a critical window to the surrounding structure for mobility by using discourse analytical techniques

Discursive institutionalism and the role of ideas in policymaking: An analytical framework

The paper approaches the study of mobility discourse by drawing on inspiration from the theoretical framework of discursive institutionalism (Lynggaard, 2019; Schmidt, 2008, 2010). This

framework aims to understand policy in context by linking a perspective on the *communication* of ideas through discourse with a perspective on the *institutional context* in which this communication takes place (Schmidt, 2010: 4). This implies that ideas are seen as '*the "atoms" enabling the production of a discourse*' (Lynggaard, 2019: 38), and discourse as the interactive process through which ideas are conveyed, adopted and adapted by actors within a given institutional context (Lynggaard, 2019: 38). This implies that discourse can be found at many levels and in many forms, and is not about top-down political communication (Schmidt, 2008: 305). However, the present study limits itself to explore the discourses circulated and promoted at the most official level of European and Norwegian policymaking, as it is assumed that the most general formulation of the ideas can be found here.

Within this framework ideas are approached as being crucial for political discourse, because they are seen as shaping our understanding of political problems, contributing to defining our goals and strategies and are used to communicate about politics thereby providing guides for action (Béland and Cox, 2010). When ideas are promoted in discourse, a collective discursive context can be formed, which actors can draw on and act within to legitimate their political choices (Lynggaard, 2019: 12). Inspired by this framework, the present study aims to map ideas about mobility for teacher students across various policy texts, and how they link together in discourses which legitimate the political actions being taken on this issue. To do so, the concept of ideas is operationalised by differentiating between *normative* and *cognitive ideas*; Normative ideas can be seen as 'problem definitions' in policies, as they function as envisions of future development in relation to ideals about what is desired/undesired in an open and uncertain future. Cognitive ideas can be seen as 'problem solutions', by way of introducing the means to various policy objectives, and thus filling out the space for decision-making by providing '*the recipes, guidelines, and maps for political action*' (Schmidt, 2008: 306).

As the two types of ideas can be mobilised at the same time to shape policies, they are not easily separated (Courtois and Veiga, 2020). Analytically, however, they can serve as useful categories for mapping *how* mobility for teacher students is promoted (level of cognitive ideas), and *why* we see this particular targeting (level of normative ideas). Analytically these concepts contribute to shed light on how various ideas have contributed to justify and legitimise the intensified policy promotion of this matter across different policy levels and in different institutional contexts. The 'materials and methods' section provides an illustration (Table 2) of how the study relates these analytical concepts to features of the policy texts under scrutiny, that is, how they are operationalised to support the empirical investigation, as well as examples from the analysis.

Analysing policy texts: Materials and methods

While the paper treats policy texts as a valuable empirical source for exploring the development of mobility discourse, they are not transparent representations of an underlying social reality, but rather *constructed* as data (Atkinson and Coffey, 2011). Therefore, a careful and transparent outline of how texts are selected, coded and analysed is necessary (Ashwin and Smith, 2015). Thus, the material under scrutiny comprises a corpus of 22 policy texts which have been selected based on their ability to provide insights into policymakers' ideas about teacher student mobility. The relevant policymakers in this context are delimited to the European Union and its official subsidiary directorates/agencies, and The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (two main political actors promoting mobility), as well as shifting Norwegian governments and agencies. As for the types of policy texts analysed, this both includes formal policy documents, such as legislation, as well as white papers, reports, statements and other types of communication, which contribute to establishing some kind of justification for policy decisions.

The selection of texts is first of all based on them being publicly available online (EU and national libraries, official government websites etc.) and was supported by active engagement with secondary research literature as well as a range of criteria. There had to be either an explicit mentioning of (a) teacher education/training/students (thus excluding in-service teachers[1]), (b) international student mobility, or related terms such as exchange, study abroad, etc. 'Internationalisation' and 'globalisation' were also included as more general concepts to support the selection. Given that the aim is to map a discursive development, the timeframe is circa 1990-present, which is a period in time marked by a stronger political interest in mobility; in Norway by a more prominent focus on quantitative objectives of mobility (Elken et al., 2015: 65), and on the European level by the launch of the ERASMUS programme in 1987 (Papatsiba, 2006). However, this does not suggest that this is the 'historical origin' mobility discourse, but mainly serves as an analytical starting point. An overview of the analysed documents can be found in Table 1. Though not all cited in the findings sections, detailed information about the policy texts can be found in the reference list. Not all the Norwegian policy texts exist in English versions, but when they do, these are used as references, though their content is often more compact than the original version.

Table 1. Analysed documents (issuing body, title, year. For full reference see bibliography).

European policy texts	Norwegian policy texts
European Commission	Ministry of Education and Research (previously named Ministry of Church Affairs, Education and Research)
Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community (1991)	
Green Paper on the European Dimension of Education (1993)	NOU 1996: 22 (Official Norwegian Report)
Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (2009)	Framework plans for teacher education (1994, 1999, 2003, 2010, 2016)
Green Paper on Promoting the learning mobility of young people (2009)	White Papers from the Ministry of Education and Research
Supporting the Teaching Professions for Better Learning Outcomes (2012)	St. meld. 27 (2000–2001). The quality reform of higher education.
Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (2020)	St. Meld. 16 (2001-2002). Quality reform of new teacher education.
Council of the European Union	St. Meld. 14 (2008-2009). Internationalisation of Education in Norway.
Improving the quality of teacher education (2007)	St. Meld. 11 (2008-2009). The Teacher - the role and the education.
On the professional development of teachers and school leaders (2009)	Meld. St. 16 (2016–2017). Quality Culture in Higher Education.
Bologna Process/EHEA	Meld. St. 7 (2020–2021). A world of opportunities - International student mobility in higher education.
Bologna Follow-up Group on Internationalisation and Mobility Report of the 2012-2015 (2015)	Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education
Yerevan Communiqué (2015)	Norwegian students on exchange (2019)
	NOTED Call for applications (2019)

Analytical process: Mapping ideas and discourse

After the selection process described above, the documents were coded and analysed using NVivo software through a series of steps. Table 2 provides an overview of these analytical steps and how

they were operationalised in the analysis. The analytical process moved abductively and iteratively between the insights gained from the literature review, the analytical framework and the empirical material itself, thus allowing both for using the theoretical backdrop as sensitising lenses, as well as an empirical openness towards unexpected and puzzling findings calling for other theoretical perspectives (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018; Lynggaard, 2019). To substantiate own interpretations, they were continuously discussed with other researchers and contrasted with findings from existing studies in the general context of higher education.

Specifically, the first step of analysis was to map the ideas expressed across the documents, focussing on *normative* and *cognitive* ideas and how they are mobilised. This involved coding any statements about assumed purpose, value, or outcome of mobility (problem definitions), as well as any statements about objectives, instruments or actions to be taken (problem solutions). Next, these ideas were categorised by linking them together in broad common characteristics, which were then treated as discourses (common meaning systems). More specifically, the following examples illustrate this analytical step: ideas touching upon individual and professional aspects, such as intercultural competence, language acquisition and increased self-consciousness, were categorised as '*professionalisation*'. Ideas pertaining to structural aspects of teacher education/higher education such as removing barriers for mobility, standardisation of administrative procedures, as well as aims quality enhancement and fostering more comparability between teacher education and other sub-fields of higher education were labelled '*harmonisation*'. Finally, ideas about mobility in quantitative terms, incentives to increase mobility, and statements promoting mobility itself without further justification (e.g. that teachers are key to fostering a culture for mobility) formed a discourse of '*instrumentalisation*'. A more detailed example of analysis can be found in Table 2.

Hence, the three discourses of professionalisation, harmonisation and instrumentalisation broadly capture crucial features of both the European and Norwegian discourse, though they also differ in some respects. Thus, as the last analytical step, the findings from both respective contexts were compared in terms of the normative/cognitive ideas employed, their temporal development, and ultimately how they presuppose the role/function of future teachers. Focussing on both similarities and differences provided a rich picture of the ideas employed to promote teacher mobility, and thereby contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of how the (seemingly similar) contemporary discourses promoting teacher mobility have gained legitimacy in this particular institutional context.

Table 2. Analytical concepts, identification in the data and example from analysis.

Analytical concepts	Identification in the data	Analytical example
Ideas: the substantive content of discourse (a) Normative (problem 'definitions') (b) Cognitive (problem 'solutions')	(a) Which assumptions about mobility are present in the text? Which challenges/aims are mobility seen as the solution to (on individual, institutional, societal level?) (b) In which ways are teacher education/teachers promoted as a solution/answer to such challenges/aims?	Fostering a European dimension of education contributes to strengthening the internal market/European project (normative) – teacher students should have mobility experiences because they will eventually become political levers for spreading European values (cognitive)

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

Analytical concepts	Identification in the data	Analytical example
Discourse: the interactive process through which ideas are conveyed to articulate and legitimise policy in a given institutional context	• How does ideas identified in a + b link together in producing relevant and meaningful statements about mobility for teacher students?	Mobility as related to aspects of professionalisation: develop knowledge about global issues, language acquisition, increased self-confidence, intercultural competences
	• Which general interpretations of the social world do ideas identified in a + b communicate about the role and function of teachers?	Future teachers are professionals who should be equipped for working in a context marked by increasing cultural and linguistic diversity among pupils

Findings: Teacher student mobility between professionalisation, harmonisation and instrumentalisation

This section presents the findings of the study first by outlining the identified ideas and how they form discourses in the European and Norwegian context respectively. The three discourses labelled *professionalisation, harmonisation and instrumentalisation* convey a range of ideas about mobility as a 'solution' to a number of 'problems' on individual, institutional and societal level, which, in turn, create different links between future teachers and mobility, and hence legitimate political action (e.g. further promotion) to be taken on the matter. This is found expressed in at least three different ways; teachers as individuals who can benefit professionally from mobility experiences, teacher education as a field which lacks quality due to barriers for student mobility and that teachers function as political levers to 'inspire' mobility in society more generally, which will be further discussed after the presentation of the findings.

Mapping the European discourse

Table 3. Ideas and discourse in the European policy texts.

Ideas	Found in (text)	Discourse
Mobility supports the European dimension of education; Teachers need mobility experiences to spread European values in school	European Commission (1991; 1993)	Professionalisation/ Instrumentalisation Oriented towards political aims
Mobility supports teachers' professional development; Teachers need mobility experiences to meet the diverse needs of their pupils	European Commission (2005) Council of the European Union (2007, 2009)	Professionalisation Oriented towards the individual and the school system
Learning mobility should be an integrated aspect of all education; Teachers need mobility experiences to be able to motivate pupils for mobility	European Commission (2009) Bologna Follow-up Group (2015)	Instrumentalisation Oriented towards political and economic aims
Mobility enhances the quality of higher education; Barriers to teacher student mobility must be removed to increase mobility and improve the quality of education	European Commission (2012) EHEA Ministerial Conference (2015) European Commission (2020)	Harmonisation Oriented towards teacher education institutions being part of higher education

In the European context, the promotion of mobility of teacher students is found to have accompanied the general mobility discourse as it accelerated in the late 1980′s (Table 3). The general discourse foregrounded mobility as an instrument to strengthen internal market and support the political project of a single union by fostering a feeling of 'European belonging' among young people (Papatsiba, 2006). In light of this, teacher student mobility is found to be promoted as a way of disseminating European values into schools by providing students with both a European knowledge- and value foundation, as for instance identified in the Green paper on the European dimension of education:

> *"Teacher training is the main tool in the development of teachers' pedagogical practices (. . .) They are therefore the main players in integrating the European dimension into the content and practice of education (. . .) It is therefore crucial to strengthen initial and in-service teacher training. Here again, the accent should be put on transnational cooperation between teacher training institutions, especially in the form of European networks, using the medium of exchanges"* (European Commission, 1993: 9–10).

As indicated in the extract, mobility is both promoted as a 'practical solution' to realising the normative ideas about the European project by drawing on the professional mandate of teachers in relation to the school system, yet, also on a somewhat instrumental idea about teachers as passive political levers for realising political agendas. In a similar vein, in the 1991 Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community, the idea that teacher student mobility could contribute to some harmonisation of the various European education systems is also found to be promoted:

> *"The acquisition of European experience by teachers would also be supportive of the more widespread understanding of the different systems of education and of their aims and philosophies and would help to define the areas of common approach and of possible convergence, which would facilitate catering for the education of a more mobile European population"* (European Commission, 1991: 31).

Thus, in light of education otherwise being outside of formal EU competence, teacher student mobility represents a 'practical solution' to support the emerging aims of convergence between education systems. Arguably, such ideas contribute to the formation of a discourse of instrumentalisation, which instates an ambiguous relationship between teachers' professional practice and overall societal aims far beyond such practice, and in which mobility is both a means and an end. Generally, the instrumentalisation discourse with its ambiguous set of ideas about teacher professionalism, is found to characterise several policy texts, in particular in the wake of the EU's Lisbon Agenda in 2000. With the ambition of 'becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world', enhancing the quality of the European education systems was a crucial aspect which subsequently pulled teacher education into the political limelight (Zgaga, 2013). This is found to shape mobility discourse in terms of a new emphasis on ideas about foreign language acquisition and intercultural competences, which are justified as being an essential part of teacher professionalism in the increasingly multicultural European schools. Such ideas are for instance identified in the Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications, where mobility is promoted as one out of four principles expected to:

> *"enhance the quality and efficiency of education"* by enabling teachers to *"(. . .) encourage intercultural respect and understanding (. . .) have an understanding of the balance between respecting and being aware of the diversity of learners' cultures and identifying common values"* (European Commission, 2005: 3–4).

Yet, this professionalisation discourse is clearly also linked to the lifelong learning discourse in which employability is the ultimate goal and learning mobility a key instrument to achieve it. As for teacher students, this implies that mobility is also promoted as a solution to how to provide young people with skills and knowledge for competing in the global knowledge economy. Thus, while at the level of cognitive ideas, mobility is promoted as essential to teacher professionalism, substantially, this is closely intertwined with ideas about how to support economic success and prosperity in Europe. This instrumentality is found to be further reinforced as ideas about teachers as '*multipliers of mobility*' emerge. With this, future teachers are not only seen as professionals who can promote the qualities and values associated with mobility as such, but the *activity* of mobility itself, as for instance identified in The Green Paper on Promoting the learning mobility of young people:

> *"an enthusiastic teacher (. . .) who has been mobile him or herself, can be an important motivator for young people to undertake a mobility period abroad. Such individuals have the credibility to explain the benefits of and act as an ambassador for youth mobility"* (European Commission, 2009: 7).

Finally, a shift introducing a harmonisation discourse is identified in the wake of the initiation of the Bologna Process and the ambitions of creating a European Area for Higher Education. This discourse conveys normative ideas about the quality of European higher education as supported through harmonisation and in turn, cognitive ideas about student mobility as a crucial instrument to this. Hence, student mobility emerged as both one of the decisive reasons for establishing the EHEA, and at the same time its expected outcome, and as such became a goal in itself (Papatsiba, 2006). Arguably, by instating mobility as a proxy of quality in higher education (among many others), this promotes a view on mobility as an activity with inherent value irrespective of its paedagogical content. In the context of teacher education, this is found to imply a continuous problematisation of structural barriers hindering mobility, which is thus assumed to stand in the way of enhancing quality, however, arguably also for the presumed function of teachers as multipliers of mobility. Thus, as illustrated in the following extract from a report by the Bologna Follow-Up Group, the 'lack of mobility' promoted with the harmonisation discourse is linked with ideas about teachers' multiplier function rather than ideas pertaining to the professionalisation discourse:

> *"High importance should be given to teachers as multipliers and motivators for their students to understand the advantages of intercultural competences, which can only be acquired by personal experience. Fair and transparent recognition (proper credit transfer) is still a problem, and curricula are generally too restricted (. . .) While the mobility of teacher training students carries a great potential for future generations of pupils and students, they belong to the least mobile groups"* (BFUG Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility, 2015: 13).

As such, this also illustrates that the 'problem solutions' promoted in the harmonisation discourse are mostly of a practical character related to recognition and removal of structural barriers. In this vein it seemingly reinforces a view on the purpose of mobility as mobility *itself*, and not as something substantially linked to any educational – or professional – purpose. Hence, it also illustrates the ambiguity between the professionalisation discourse on the one hand, and the instrumentalisation discourse on the other, which the normative idea about teachers as multipliers of mobility come to represent.

Mapping the Norwegian discourse

Table 4. Ideas and discourse in Norwegian policy texts.

Ideas	Found in (text)	Discourse
Internationalisation of society is an external force which challenges national culture; strengthening national identity is a prerequisite for developing an international identity as well	Ministry of Church Affairs, Education and Research (1994, 1999) NOU 1996: 22	Professionalisation (as counterpoint to effects of internationalisation)
Mobility enhances the quality of HE through structural harmonisation; The structure of teacher education is a barrier to harmonisation and mobility	Ministry of education and research (1994, 2003, 2010, 2016) St. meld. 27 (2000–2001), St. Meld. 16 (2001-2002)	Harmonisation Oriented towards institutions for teacher education as part of higher education
Mobility levels reflects level of quality within HE; levels of mobility need to increase in teacher education to enhance quality	Meld. St. 16 (2016–2017), Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (2019b)	Instrumentalisation Oriented towards the quality of higher education in terms of outcomes
Mobility supports development of personal and intercultural competences; Teacher students need mobility experiences to cater the diverse needs in schools	St. Meld. 11 (2008-2009).	Professionalisation Oriented towards the individual and the school system
Mobility is an essential part of all HE and must be supported by developing a culture for mobility; Teachers are multipliers of mobility within education and society at large	Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (2019a), Meld. St. 7 (2020–2021)	Instrumentalisation Oriented towards political and economic aims

Although various policy texts on internationalisation of higher education have been introduced in Norway since the late 1980s, a particular focus on teacher education cannot be identified before 2003, where the Bologna Process was implemented with the Quality Reform. Looking specifically at teacher education policy before this (marked with grey colour in Table 4), there are no references to mobility, and as a normative idea, aspects of internationalisation/globalisation is mainly referred to as an external force which challenges and has consequences for society. In this vein, the 'solution' is to strengthen teacher students' national cultural awareness as part of their professionalisation, and as something which can support the development of an increasingly necessary international identity.

Notably, then, the emergence of a mobility discourse in this context is found to be linked to higher education at large and ideas about structural adaptions, rather than substantial ideas about the educational purpose and content of mobility or teacher students as such. Arguably, this discursive shift is made possible *mainly* in relation to harmonising teacher education with higher education at large, in a way which somehow challenges the otherwise dominant idea about the distinct national mandate. Thus, early on, this is found to draw on the 'problem definition' that the structure (and to some extent culture) of teacher education is a barrier to harmonisation, and thereby a barrier for student mobility. In the revised national curriculum regulations following the Quality Reform

in 2003, an example of this way of legitimising mobility with regards to structure rather than content is identified:

> *"The institutions which provide teacher education shall ensure integration of the international perspective in all subjects and course modules. They must be receptive to ideas from teacher education in other countries, provide more courses held in English and make provisions for student exchange. At the same time, students must become better acquainted with their own culture through contrastive analyses including analyses of the education system"* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2003: 3).

Given that this is the only justification of mobility present in the text, it arguably draws on scarcely substantiated ideas about the purpose of mobility, and also continues to emphasise the national orientation of teacher education. However, in the wake of a new reform in 2008, a shift towards a professionalisation discourse is identified which promotes mobility (and internationalisation more generally) as central aspects to teacher professionalism, as illustrated in the following extract:

> *"More teacher students need knowledge about language and culture and can benefit greatly both personally and professionally from staying in a foreign environment. Internationalisation of teacher education is also important in order to promote multicultural knowledge and understanding in school and society"* (St. Meld. 11, 2008–2009: 26).

Notably, this discursive shift should be seen in light of another parallel white paper (St. Meld. 14, 2008–2009), which outlined a new comprehensive strategy for internationalisation of the education system at whole. This indicates that more substantial paedagogical ideas about teacher mobility are legitimised with regards to the institutional context of the school system and teachers' future professional practice. Yet, the professionalisation discourse is not found in any of the other analysed texts, which rather seem to reinforce the harmonisation discourse, and thus take for granted that mobility in teacher education does not differ greatly from higher education at large. This discourse is found to increasingly convey more instrumental ideas about mobility, such as stronger output-orientation in terms of instating levels of mobility as a proxy for educational quality. Arguably, this marks a discursive shift towards an instrumentalisation discourse drawing on normative ideas about mobility as a 'deficit' in teacher education in the sense that mobility levels are too low, and by implication, the quality of the education as well. This problem definition is found to have become predominant in the past decade and has therefore allowed for continuous political and institutional measures to be taken. This is illustrated by how several of the more recent policy texts emphasise the need to *increase* mobility rates, for instance in the description of a new centralised funding programme for internationalisation projects in teacher education which aims to:

> *"(. . .) improve the quality of Norwegian teacher education and schools. The programme seeks to achieve this through supporting projects that lead to: Increased quality and internationalisation of teacher education programmes in Norway (. . .) Increased student mobility within the framework of strategic partnerships between Norwegian teacher education institutions and partners abroad"* (Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education, 2019b: 2).

Thus, this rather self-reinforcing set of ideas linking internationalisation, mobility, and quality together discursively, draws on a 'problem definition' where *levels* rather than *purpose(s)* of mobility become the overall aim. Interestingly, the instrumentalisation discourse is found to have become even stronger in the wake of the Norwegian policymakers' ambition of 'creating a culture for mobility' in higher education (Meld. St. 7, 2020–2021; Meld. St. 16, 2016–2017), in the sense that mobility should be a natural and integrated part of all higher education programmes. In the context

of teacher education, such ideas reinforce ideas about 'a mobility deficit', yet, the associated 'problem solution' is now not only a matter of structural adaption, but the need for *cultural change* to support more student mobility (cf. Meld. St. 7, 2020–2021: 56). As for the idea about teachers as multipliers of mobility identified in the European policy texts, it is interesting to note how this aspect of the instrumentalisation discourse can also recently be detected in the Norwegian discourse. In a recent report by a government agency, the 'mobility deficit' in teacher education is addressed in the following way:

> *"The transition to 5-year teacher education can lead to higher mobility rates in this field as well. This is important because one out of ten students are teacher students, and therefore the number within this field has a huge impact on the national average. In addition, it is important because teachers are key actors in relation to a future culture for international exchange within the Norwegian education system"* (Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education, 2019a: 17).

Arguably, rather than addressing potential underlying explanations or challenges to mobility in teacher education, the contemporary instrumentalisation discourse seems to allow for continuous political action to be taken on the matter, that is, new pressures, incentives and sanctions can be put on teacher education institutions to meet the aims of increasing mobility levels. The initiation of the new funding programme for internationalisation projects in teacher education mentioned above illustrates this very well.

Discussion

Paving the way for mobility and the 'mobility deficit'

As argued above, the discourses of professionalisation, harmonisation and instrumentalisation can be found in both the European and Norwegian policy texts. Yet, the comparison also shed light on their different trajectory over time and the multiplicity of ideas conveyed. This suggests that despite the apparent similarity and shared ambitions of fostering more student mobility in teacher education present in policy today, student mobility have not always had a self-evident status as valuable in the institutional context of teacher education. Rather, though the study finds a strong interest in the mobility of teacher students on the European level drawing on a wide range of ideas, in the Norwegian context mobility 'found its way' into policy mainly by being justified in terms of the structural adaptions following Norway's implementation of the Bologna aims. As such, it is a common pattern that reforms of teacher education in Norway related to higher education mainly concern general changes, such as degree structures or quality work, whereas changes linked to the compulsory education system revolve around the specific content and work forms in teacher education (Expert Group on the Teacher Role, 2016). Thus, while it is not surprising that the harmonisation discourse 'paves the way' for mobility in teacher education, the analysis sheds light on how this discourse is scarcely substantiated with regards to the educational/professional purpose inherent to the activity of mobility and the potential complexities arising from this.

As noted by Papatsiba (2006) '*In the context of the Bologna process (. . .) The goal of mobility is said to be both important and unproblematic in terms of legitimacy and popularity*' (p. 97). Arguably, as ideas about student mobility became institutionalised in the broader context of higher education, teacher education was 'discovered' as an institutional context where such ideas held less legitimacy, that is, did not necessarily resonate well with existing ideas. In this vein, the policy push for mobility in teacher education in Norway early on was *external* rather internally founded in the purpose and needs of teacher education, and the institutionalisation of the harmonisation

discourse allowed for a new set of normative ideas concerning the undesired 'mobility deficit' in teacher education, and subsequently for continuous political action to be taken on the matter. As argued by Lynggaard (2019), '*in order to produce relevant and meaningful statements and to be accepted as serious and legitimate, political actors must express themselves through a set of commonly recognised ideas*' (p. 38). As the present study has only analysed official policy discourses, it cannot claim that ideas about mobility are not accepted as legitimate in the institutional context of teacher education, or that this explains 'the mobility deficit'. Yet, it is interesting to note how ideas pertaining to the professionalisation discourse were not discernible in the Norwegian context until a few years later and in relation to political changes of the compulsory school system. This points to the complexity involved when it comes to internationalisation of an educational field which is stretched out between the needs of the national school system (and society more generally), and the influence of global ideas and expectations of internationalisation in higher education.

Thus, as argued by Zgaga (2013), in this particular context, there is much more at stake concerning internationalisation than students going abroad; it is a discourse which implies demands about flexibility and other ways of organising education, which can have fundamental implications for the education itself (Zgaga, 2013). For instance, Pedersen (2021) discusses this challenge from the perspective of ground-level policy actors in teacher education and argues that while the predominant understanding of mobility is linked to the professional relevance for teacher students, it increasingly competes with academic and bureaucratic conceptualisations of mobility, that is, resembling the discourses of harmonisation and instrumentalisation. Ultimately, the increasingly instrumental discourse reflects a one-size-fits-all version of internationalisation, where student mobility is the predominant activity and symbol of otherwise complex processes across higher education (Courtois, 2019). It can therefore be further discussed whether the institutionalisation of mobility through discourses of harmonisation and instrumentalisation potentially contributes to obscuring both the purpose and characteristics of teacher education in a way which leaves little room for addressing the preconditions and challenges concerning mobility at institutional ground-level.

Mobility for teachers or teachers for mobility?

While the above discusses how the mobility of teacher students became an issue of interest for both European and Norwegian policymakers in relation to general changes to higher education, another central finding of the study concerns how these changes discursively position teachers as crucial actors for accelerating the mobility agenda. The study finds that the professionalisation discourse, though being the one conveying the most substantial ideas about mobility, is closely intertwined with the instrumentalisation discourse promoting ideas about mobility as something of essential value in *itself*. As an implication, the study finds that the policy texts, put a bit simplistically, ambiguously promote a view on mobility as both something important *for* teachers, and teachers as being important *for* mobility more generally.

Emphasising the need for student teacher mobility can on the one hand be seen as an important contribution to supporting equal access to – and participation in – mobility for all higher education students. However, being linked to still more instrumental ideas, this discourse implies a view on teachers as political levers rather than professionals. Thus, while teacher education is obviously mandated to provide students with the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to prepare pupils for participation in a rapidly changing society at any time, the instrumentalisation discourse contributes to narrowing the purpose of teacher education, and hence future teachers, to being instruments whose function it is to 'deliver' various political agendas (Biesta, 2017; Robertson, 2012),

in this case, fostering mobility. As argued above, this instrumentalisation is currently being strongly reinforced by various ideas about teachers as *multipliers of mobility*, which makes teacher students responsible for realising aims which are basically outside the realm of their future practice through their individual choice of mobility.

This is a discourse which thus construct teachers as 'policy enthusiasts', that is, policy actors who '*embody policy in their practice and are examples to others, policy paragons*' (Ball et al., 2011: 630). The policy discourse expects teachers to uncritically be receivers and champions of the aims of mobility policy by way of imposing it as a form of 'professionalism from above'. In this case, the mobility of teacher students is promoted as a necessity for being a professional in national contexts (and classrooms) marked by increased social complexity and diversity, but in a way where the activity of mobility *itself* becomes the precondition for this aspect of professionalisation – that is, the only viable way to support teachers in developing such qualities. Thus, in a quite contradictious manner, the professionalisation discourse promotes the idea that going abroad *itself* contributes to developing the anticipated professional skills and competences, regardless of students' previous experiences, motivation, etc., and the content of the mobility experience more generally. This implies that the activity of mobility itself, while linked to ideas about experiencing and learning to appreciate European values, is promoted as something not linked to any specific purpose beyond being able to inspire pupils to be mobile themselves; that is, the individual capacity to constantly be in motion, flexible and adaptive in a global labour market (Courtois, 2020). This stand in striking contrast to the normative ideas about teachers as counterpoints of the effects of globalisation found in the earliest Norwegian documents.

As such, it is not surprising that the present study confirms the instrumentalisation of mobility suggested in other studies (e.g. Abdullah et al., 2017; Brooks, 2018; Courtois, 2019, 2020; Dvir and Yemini, 2017; Findlay et al., 2017; Papatsiba, 2006). In a similar vein, the study by Dvir and Yemini (2017) critically discusses how policy texts on mobility often take an '*exceptional "jump" from macro-economic problems traditionally tackled at the government level to micro-level solutions focussing on advancing individual agency and capacity*' (Dvir and Yemini, 2017: 205). Yet, the present study adds to the existing literature by highlighting the field of teacher education as one of the *means* through which the instrumentalisation works, and demonstrating how mobility, although being promoted as something beneficial for the individual teacher, forms part of a discourse substantially aimed at supporting economic and competitive aims. Ultimately, it can be argued that the current policy discourse is not particularly a discourse of substance, but rather one which draws on vague and ambiguous ideas about the appeal of mobility as such. By implication, seen from the level of policy discourse, it is difficult to comprehend why mobility should be of even *greater* importance to teacher students than other higher education students. In this vein, it can be speculated whether mobility policies driven largely by taken-for-granted ideas about its value, irrespective of academic contexts and students alike, risk standing in the way of their own aims and ambitions.

Concluding remarks

This paper set out to explore the hitherto understudied observation that an intensifying promotion of teacher student mobility can be detected in European and Norwegian policy texts, and that this involves a positioning of teachers as central policy actors to the realisation of the political aims of mobility. The study finds that the political promotion of mobility for teacher students draws on a range of ideas pertaining to *teacher students* in relation to their future professional work, *teacher education* as such and in relation to higher education, and *society* more generally. Such ideas are argued to form three overall discourses of professionalisation, harmonisation, and

instrumentalisation, which, in turn, are found to create a range of discursive ambiguities in terms of justifying why mobility for teacher students should be an issue of particular importance. In this vein, ideas about mobility are argued to hold a complex position in the institutional context of teacher education. The comparison of ideas over time and across the European and Norwegian level thus reveals that while mobility *could* have been differently legitimised and promoted, contemporary discourses take the value of mobility for granted, and position teacher education as a malleable instrument, and teachers as passive receivers and deliverers of policy ideas, in this case, for realising and accelerating the political aims of mobility. As such, the study contributes to the existing scholarly debate about the instrumentalisation of internationalisation via student mobility by foregrounding teacher education/teachers as yet another aspect of this instrumentalisation. It thereby provides an imperative for considering whether policies aiming to increase participation in mobility and enhance the quality of (higher) education would provide stronger arguments if driven by more substantial paedagogical and learning-oriented ideas allowing for re-contextualisation across different academic contexts. This ultimately provides a call for researchers to pose more critical questions to the current state of affairs regarding how student mobility is driven at policy level.

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ORCID iD

Tea Dyred Pedersen (iD) https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8757-299X

Note

1. In the context of the European Union, the professional mobility of teachers formed a key part since the Treaty of Rome, and has been supported in different programmes (Sayer, 2006). Yet, this analysis is limited to teacher education/students only.

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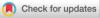
Author biography

Tea Dyred Pedersen has an MSc in Education Science and is currently a PhD student at the Nordic Institute for Studies in innovation, research and education located in Oslo, Norway. Her research focuses on internationalisation and international student mobility in the context of teacher education from the perspective of both policy and practices.

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Mobilising international student mobility: Exploring policy enactments in teacher education in Norway

Tea Dyred Pedersen (ID)

NIFU - Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education, Oslo, Norway

Correspondence
Tea Dyred Pedersen, NIFU - Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education, PO Box 2815, Tøyen, 0608 Oslo, Norway.
Email: tea.dyred.pedersen@nifu.no

Abstract

This article analyses the internationalisation of higher education through the lens of student mobility, by exploring how mobility is realised in contexts that are shaped by different needs, purposes and actors. Drawing on interview data, this article explores perceptions and practices of student mobility as understood and described by a range of actors in three teacher education programmes in Norway. Findings show that mobility is mainly understood in terms of its professional relevance for students' future teaching practice, but that this understanding increasingly competes with both academic and bureaucratic purposes. These different understandings are, in turn, found to create tensions in enactments of mobility, notably with regard to how different types of mobility are approached, how faculty and staff engage with mobility, and how the mobility agenda is constrained by student demands for mobility. The analysis suggests that (a) both programme-specific and more general contextual factors influence the enactments of mobility and that (b) the preconditions for internationalisation may vary across higher education contexts—a point that is rarely addressed by policymakers.

1 | INTRODUCTION

International student mobility is one of many activities subsumed under the broader concept of internationalisation in higher education; yet, a highly visible and politically prioritised activity (Fumasoli, 2020). Mobility has

largely been studied in relation to wider European or national policy frameworks, or in terms of students' motivations and opportunities for participation (Brooks, 2018). Unlike other studies, this article explores mobility as a distinct aspect of internationalisation policies realised through the ground-level practices of those actors who are involved in teaching and organising education. It proposes that mobility is understood and practiced in relation to the specific needs, purposes and actors within particular study programmes. Situating the study in the context of teacher education, this article foregrounds professional higher education as a generally understudied venue for engaging with policies for internationalisation. As such, this is an interesting case, because it has emerged as a field of particular interest for European policymakers over the past decades. In the context of internationalisation and student mobility in particular, policy discourse often assumes teachers to have a multiplier effect for fostering a European dimension in education, and shaping future mobile individuals; that is, teachers who have been mobile themselves can inspire pupils (Zgaga, 2013). Yet, teacher education is also oriented towards specific professional goals linked to the context for future professional practice, which is often national by nature (Zgaga, 2008). This creates needs and conditions for internationalisation which potentially differ from those of the traditional disciplines (Leask & Bridge, 2013), and which may also influence how mobility is approached. Drawing on the framework of policy enactment (Maguire et al, 2012), and interview data, the article seeks to explore (a) how student mobility is interpreted and enacted by various policy actors in these three programmes, (b) how programme-specific contextual factors shape such policy enactments, and (c) how these findings relate to the stated aims of mobility policies.

2 | GROUND-LEVEL ACTORS' PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT MOBILITY

This article is concerned with outward short-term mobility, including credit mobility (taking place within exchange programmes) and international practicums, which are supervised teaching placements at local schools in the destination country. These are the main types of mobility in Norwegian teacher education for primary and lower secondary education (hereafter referred to as *teacher education*). To this date, the drivers and effects of short-term mobility have largely been explored from overall policy approaches (e.g., Dvir & Yemini, 2017; Rivza & Teichler, 2007), or student-centred approaches (e.g., Beerkens et al, 2015; van Mol, 2014). Such perspectives tend to obscure the institutions and actors who also play an important role in processes of student mobility (Brooks, 2018; Courtois, 2018). From this starting point, a range of scholarly contributions on what characterises mobility and how its translation into practice may be shaped by actors and contexts form the backdrop for the analysis and discussion pursued in this article.

There are various rationales for student mobility relating it to both economic, academic, social and cultural as well as political purposes, implying that the intentions and purposes of mobility may vary between students, governments, higher education institutions and teachers (Rivza & Teichler, 2007). Yet, more scholars have observed a drift from academic and socio-cultural rationales towards economic rationales including employability (Brooks, 2018; Courtois, 2018, 2019; Dvir & Yemini, 2017). However, in Norway, the main rationale is to enhance the quality of higher education—a generally academic rationale (Sin et al, 2019). While it is difficult to ascertain clear and specific student outcomes of mobility, much evidence points to short-term mobility as a potential opportunity for *learning from contrast*, which can increase students' international understanding, abilities to reflect, personal confidence and maturity. These benefits may in turn influence students' academic and general competencies (Cardwell, 2019; Teichler, 2017). Notably, for teacher education, much research centres around social and cultural purposes of mobility, and demonstrates how undertaking periods of practice teaching abroad can develop students' intercultural competence, which is often seen as a professional necessity for teaching in increasingly diverse classrooms (Cushner & Mahon, 2016).

How mobility is understood, valued and approached from the perspectives of higher education often leaves the perspectives of ground-level staff unexplored, although they are involved in both counselling, organising and

administration (Courtois, 2019). Just as internationalisation processes are known to be influenced by the engagement of faculty and staff (Dewey & Duff, 2009), it is reasonable to assume that staff who see the value of student mobility will engage in the various tasks associated with it (Bridger, 2015). However, if the administrative burdens associated with internationalisation are too excessive, or if the institutional rationales are experienced as too detached from ground-level needs and practices, it can lead to disengagement among staff (Dewey & Duff, 2009; Hunter & Sparnon, 2018). In this vein, some studies have discussed how practitioners experience an instrumentalisation of mobility, due to how it is being commercialised and approached as part of internationalisation strategies, thus eroding the learning purpose of mobility (Castro et al, 2016; Courtois, 2018, 2019). According to Castro et al. (2016), this entails that it is left up to practitioners to re-position mobility as a pedagogic activity, which can be challenging if this is not being met by institutional strategies (Castro et al, 2016).

Given that internationalisation processes are context-dependent and mediated through "the unique interactions between disciplinary, institutional, national and global contexts" (Leask & Bridge, 2013, p. 96), how mobility is understood and approached will likely also vary across contexts. As for teacher education, its structure and content are known to vary greatly both in Europe and beyond. In Norway, for instance, it is governed through national regulations and guidelines, and is pedagogically built on a rather unique Scandinavian model (Munthe & Rogne, 2016). Such differences are known to challenge the integration of enrolment periods abroad into the home programme. Presumably, this is one reason why students in teacher education across Europe are generally underrepresented in exchange mobility such as Erasmus+ (Vögtle, 2019; Zgaga, 2008). Yet, it is highly likely that more practically oriented types of mobility are experienced as fitting better into teacher education programmes structure-wise and in terms of perceived professional relevance in professional higher education (Knight, 2012).

3 | NATIONAL POLICY EXPECTATIONS FOR INCREASING STUDENT MOBILITY

Since the turn of the millennium, student mobility has been a high priority on the political agenda in Norway, strongly influenced by both EU and Bologna priorities. Hence, Norway is committed to the ambition that 20% of all graduating students should have stayed abroad for a *minimum of three months* (typically through exchange programmes) at graduation in 2020, with a long-term objective of increasing this number to 50% (Ministry of Education & Research, 2017). Recently, it has even been discussed whether mobility should be made obligatory. The ambition to increase this particular type of mobility is associated with the performance-based component of higher education funding. While the dominant policy rationale for mobility is quality enhancement, what this means in practice is rarely articulated by the authorities (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). In addition to this, mobility for teacher students is framed by a socio-cultural rationale for developing students' intercultural competences (Ministry of Education & Research, 2009). As supervised teaching practice forms a considerable part of teacher education, student mobility is also provided as international practicums in addition to exchange mobility. While the Erasmus programme also supports doing teaching practice in another European country, in Norwegian teacher education, such practicums are mainly undertaken in African countries that have English as one of the main languages, and countries where faculty and staff members have personal networks. Hence, at graduation in 2017, more than 15% of teacher students had participated in international mobility, such as practicums (DIKU & NOKUT, 2018). Yet, it is often problematised by the authorities that their participation in exchange mobility is too limited—at graduation in 2017, around 6% of all teacher students had undertaken an exchange stay.[1] Among other things, this has led the national authorities to establish a new funding scheme (NOTED) aimed at increasing internationalisation and student mobility between partner institutions, following the latest reform in 2017 which extended teacher education programmes for primary and lower secondary education to 5-year integrated master's studies.

4 | ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The policy enactment framework (Maguire et al, 2012) was used to guide the analysis. This approach emphasises how policies emerge through the translations made by individuals involved in everyday practices of teaching and organising education. Given that official policy texts on student mobility are generally descriptive rather than prescriptive in nature, this framework takes as a starting point the possibility of complexity and differences in policy implementation, and as such provides useful analytical lenses for exploring how mobility is understood and approached. The study on which this article reports approached mobility from the perspective of what actors involved in its realisation understands it to be, rather than presupposing the existence of an authoritative, official understanding. Mobility is understood as a "policy object" (Sin, 2014). The policy object is "what actors involved in policy formulation and enactment believe it is, highly dependent on contextual circumstances. And what they believe it is influences how they enact policy and its outcomes" (Sin, 2014, p. 437). Hence, this perspective can bring analytical attention to the core concepts proposed by policy texts, which are seen as having no objective existence until they are enacted and embedded in practices. Exploring the policy object as part of the enactment perspective both requires consideration of what the actors understand the policy object to be (the ontology), and what it becomes when being enacted (enacted ontology) (Sin, 2014, p. 437). To explore these *enacted ontologies*, the policy enactment framework proposes that both the *interpretive*, *material* and *discursive* dimensions of policy need attention. The interpretive dimension foregrounds the role of actors with different motivations and responsibilities in "putting policy into practice" (Maguire et al, 2012, p. 49), while the discursive dimension shapes and narrows the room for policy responses through producing certain constructions of what phenomena such as internationalisation and mobility "ought" to be (Maguire et al, 2012, p. 74). The material dimension, the context in which policy is supposed to work, is understood as a set of objective conditions marked by "the different cultures, histories, traditions and communities of practices that co-exist" (Maguire et al, 2012, p. 5) within education institutions. Context thus not only serves as general background which *sets the scene* for policy enactments, but acts also as both constraints, pressures and enablers (Maguire et al, 2012, p. 19). A range of contextual factors are proposed as crucial to this, which relate to *situated*, *material*, *professional* and *external* aspects, including things such as an institution's ethos and mission, location, size and history, material conditions (buildings, budgets), teacher values, and pressures from external context (Maguire et al, 2012, p. 20). These contextual dimensions are employed as analytical tools in the present study in a way that allows for an exploration of both programme specific and general teacher education contextual factors influencing enactments. Table 1 illustrates associations between these analytical concepts and features of interviews and other data analysed.

TABLE 1 Analytical framework

Analytical concepts	Identification in the data
Ontology of the policy object	• What is understood by student mobility? • Which purpose(s) of mobility are described, and to whom/what is that purpose related? (The student, staff members, the program, the institution, schools, society?) • Which contextual factors are being actualised in relation to the above?
Dimensions of policy enactments • The interpretive: actors • The material: context • The discursive: possibilities and constraints	• Which actions does the interviewee perform in relation to mobility? • Which approach to mobility is perceived as supportive of the purpose(s) of mobility? Which approach is described as *actually* taken? • What is the relative influence of the four contextual factors on the approaches to mobility? (professional commitments, mobility infrastructure, resources spent, external demands, types of students etc.?) • What kind of constraints and tensions are associated with enactment?

Source: Author.

5 | METHODS AND DATA

The study draws on 20 semi-structured interviews to explore how mobility is understood and enacted in three teacher education programmes in Norway. These were selected using criteria such as size, geography and publicly available data on mobility. All interviews were conducted between January and May 2020; some took place in person at the institutions, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most took place via online communication from home (Zoom, Teams, Skype). The programmes are anonymised by referring to them as programmes A, B and C; overall characteristics and an overview of participants can be found in Table 2. Interviewees were all involved in internationalisation and mobility activities on a day-to-day basis, most of them as academic staff with teaching and research responsibilities. But policy actors tasked with enacting mobility at other levels of the programme were also interviewed; thus, administrative staff provided background knowledge—facts and figures on mobility— while programme management provided perspectives on strategies and priorities. As it turned out, those most engaged in internationalisation were also keen to participate in the study, which resulted in an uneven number of interviewees across the programmes; as such, this constitutes a limitation to the study, as particularly distanced or critical voices may have been missed.

Following the analytical framework, key questions that guided the interviews and analysis included the following. *How is the interviewee involved in working with mobility? How is the purpose and value of mobility understood? Which approach to mobility is seen as supportive of this, which approach is taken? How does mobility relate to other internationalisation activities? Are there any obstacles associated with this work?* Moreover, the four contextual dimensions were also covered explicitly by asking, for instance, how the work with internationalisation and mobility was organised (situated) and supported with resources (material), experienced support from colleagues to the work of the interviewee (professional), and the impact of national and institutional policy expectations (external).

TABLE 2 Overview of cases and interviewees

	Program A	**Program B**	**Program C**
Type of institution	(New) University	University college	(Old) University
Location	Urban	Rural	Urban, but remote
Size (number of students)	Large (1,000+)	Small (under 500)	Middle size (approximately 500)
Mobility levels/ students per year (relative to other TE programs) a. exchange mobility (official reports) b. international practicums (self-reports)	a. High, approximately 30 students b. Fewer than exchanges, approximately 15 students	a. High, approximately 15 students b. Balanced with exchanges, approximately 12 students	a. Low; a few students b. Significantly more than exchanges, approximately 40 students
Interviewees	Four teachers engaged in internationalisation	Four teachers engaged in internationalisation	Three teachers engaged in internationalisation
	International coordinator (academic)	International coordinator (academic)	Head of studies Head of studies
	International coordinator (administrative)	Adviser, International Office	Adviser, Department of Education
	Head of studies	Dean	(total: 5)
	Faculty adviser	(total: 7)	
	(total: 8)		

Source: Author.

The interview data are presented in detail in the findings. In addition, institutional and programme-specific documents and websites on mobility were also explored for contextualisation and comparison. As a general limitation of the analytical and methodological framework applied, it must be acknowledged that it is ultimately the voices of individual actors which come to represent the enactments of the programme. Thus, any claims made from the interview data should be understood to represent a *snapshot* of understandings and practices as perceived by interviewees at one point in time.

All interviews were conducted in Norwegian and subsequently transcribed verbatim; all extracts were translated into English with respect for the original phrasing. Next, they were coded with NVivo software, with the purpose of identifying patterns of themes, inspired by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence, the analysis moved dialectically between the theoretical inspiration and explorative sensitivity to emerging themes. In line with the analytical framework, initial themes and subthemes were articulated as specific questions to guide the analysis, as illustrated in Table 1. Supported by the existing literature on the various purposes of student mobility, the first step of analysis identified three overall perceptions of mobility which both overlap and differ from those previously identified. Next, the thematic coding evolved around how interviewees addressed the three dimensions of policy, i.e., the role of individual actors, context, possibilities and constraints. As the analysis progressed, further themes emerged from the data on the basis of themes addressed in either a particularly similar or different way, such as: *What is the role of destination for the perceived value of mobility? How do students' motivations and desires for mobility influence the approaches taken? Which considerations guide or should guide how mobility is approached (strategy, staff interests, student desires?).* To structure the presentation of findings in the paper, emphasis is placed on how mobility is understood and what enables, shapes and constrains its subsequent enactments.

6 | FINDINGS

6.1 | Understanding mobility

This section presents the findings of how interviewees understand mobility as a policy object, before turning to accounts of its enactment. Three main conceptualisations of mobility emerge in the data, which are subsumed under the categories *professional*, *academic* and *bureaucratic* ontologies. Their characteristics, what is found to shape them, and their occurrence are summed up in Table 3.

While it is reasonable to believe that mobility could be conceptualised along similar dimensions in other higher education contexts, it is striking that almost all interviewees emphasised how aspects of personal development associated with mobility—almost inevitably—can transform into professionally relevant competences and skills for a future teacher. This can be explained by teacher education being a practice-oriented type of education, in which the purpose of mobility is made relevant in relation to a clearly demarcated context of professional practice. This is illustrated by the following statement from an international coordinator:

> What we see, and what school leaders say as well, they see a difference in those who have stayed abroad, they are often much more comfortable in the classroom, they have another self-confidence... The personal journey, the freeing of oneself, it somehow develops the personal qualifications which a teacher needs. So that is what I tell the students when we try to recruit them to go abroad, that they will become attractive in the labour market, exactly because they become more self-confident and used to make decisions on their own (online interview, March 2020, international coordinator, Programme B).

However, teacher education has also been through processes of academic drift over the past decades, where its integration into higher education has been accompanied by changes in teaching and learning expectations resulting

TABLE 3 *Ontologies* of mobility

Ontologies	Professional	Academic	Bureaucratic
Signifiers in the data	Mobility is a *personal and formative* experience which: • Prepares students professionally to teach in increasingly diverse classrooms. By supporting students': • Independence • Self-confidence • Professional reflection • Intercultural understanding • Creativity	Mobility is an integrated *educational* activity which supports the program/faculty staff by: • Developing relevant research networks/partnerships • Making the learning outcome of mobility transparent. Mobility supports students in: • Getting acquainted with other pedagogies • Taking courses which do not exist at home institution	Mobility is an *indicator* of internationalisation which supports the program and institution in: • Building infrastructure and administrative routines • Setting aims for the work with internationalisation • Rendering internationalisation visible to an external context
Shaped by	Traditions of teacher education • Practice-orientation • Internationalisation as person/project-driven	Academic drift • Stronger research-orientation and international cooperation • Internationalisation as an integrated part of education and research	Internal and external pressures on increasing internationalisation • National and institutional incentives • "Policy language"
Occurrence across the programs	Predominant among all actors in all programs	Mainly in Program A. Largely absent in Program B and C	Predominant among management and administration

Source: Author.

in increased emphasis on academic status and expectations for research (Smeby & Sutphen, 2015). As an implication of this, an academic ontology of mobility seems to have become more prominent, not least with the recent extension into integrated master's programmes. In this view, mobility should not just be an isolated activity undertaken by students, but something which benefits and enhances the quality of the whole study programme by being an integrated part of the international research cooperation. Yet, this understanding of mobility was not widespread, but mainly expressed in Programme A, which is located in an institution which recently went from being a university college to a university, and in this process, responsibilities for mobility were dispersed across the departments in the programme in order to support academic mobility. Hence, professional and academic ontology are clearly also related to which kind of mobility is being discussed, i.e., international practicums or exchange mobility, which are anchored in two competing traditions of teacher education, namely its practice-orientation and its academic function.

Closely related to the academic ontology, yet different in terms of how it presupposes the function of mobility, the bureaucratic ontology conceptualises mobility as an *objectifiable* activity which renders internationalisation visible to an external context. It is shaped by the national policy discourse on increasing mobility, as well as the national and institutional incentives associated with it. Thus, a commitment to increasing the level of mobility in the programmes, is stated in the publicly available strategies of Programme A and B, while in Programme C, the aim is to develop more pre-approved mobility agreements, i.e., ultimately to foster more international exchanges. While interviewees generally agreed that mobility should not be seen as equivalent to internationalisation, when asked about whether the professional value they ascribe to mobility could be realised *without* physical mobility, many were doubtful.

6.2 | Trajectories and tensions in understandings of mobility between professional, academic and bureaucratic perspectives

Drawing on the above findings of policy actors' understanding of student mobility as a policy object, this section turns to their accounts of enactments, from which three patterns emerge across the cases, (a) enactments vary with different types of mobility and how they are approached in the programme, (b) enactments are largely *enabled* through the dedication of a few staff members, and (c) enactments are *constrained* by other institution and programme specific agendas as well as student demands for mobility.

6.2.1 | Ontologies materialising in enactments of different types of mobility

As demonstrated above, professional and academic ontologies are related to the two dominant types of mobility in teacher education. While each programme had a long history with organising international practicums, the programmes now also have to provide opportunities for students to participate in academic exchange mobility. As practicums abroad typically only last for 4–6 weeks, they have been comparatively easier to realise in a rather inflexible study programme. Exchange mobility, on the other hand, is more challenging to integrate into the programme due to different structures and academic calendars, which is further complicated by all three programmes offering just one semester during which it is possible to go abroad. Also, interviewees explained that English-taught courses are generally rare in teacher education in Europe (e.g., of the three programmes, only Programme B provided courses in English). More substantially, while many see a clear relationship between international practicums and their professional value, the link between exchange mobility and academic value seems much trickier to pin down. As courses in teacher education in Norway are structured around school subjects, and not a specific academic discipline, it is challenging to find substitute courses abroad for credit mobility. These concerns were expressed by several participants and are illustrated in the following extract from an interview with a science teacher with international responsibilities:

> I have to approve students' learning agreements and make sure that those courses provide something which we can say is roughly equal to science. We don't always get there. But the students also gain many other competences from going on exchange, so we have to be large with that (online interview, March 2020, teacher with international responsibilities, Programme A).

Interestingly, as indicated above, this means that interviewees discussing exchange mobility often return to the professional value of mobility, emphasising how, either way, standing on one's own feet in unknown territory—also in a university abroad—will be a valuable experience for the individual student, which can be of professional relevance later on. In that vein, the academic content of the mobility experience seems to be deemed less important than the actual experience of travelling somewhere. Yet, as noted, the academic ontology is closely linked with the bureaucratic ontology, which implies that it is exchange mobility which officially adds value to programmes, whereby the tradition of international practicums has come to (formally) lose some of its status as an internationalisation activity. This consequence was particularly evident in Programme C, where the main type of mobility was international practicums, as described by a teacher with many years of experience in arranging practicums:

> When the management, the faculties and the departments have dialogue meetings, internationalisation is always part of the discussion [...] Like, what did you do to foster internationalisation, how many students did you send abroad? And what has been annoying is that mobility under 2.5 months has not counted in the budgets [...] because we have had quite a lot of students on international practicums which have not paid off as a single dime! (Online interview, April 2020, teacher, Programme C).

This example demonstrates that enactments of mobility are both shaped and constrained by the pedagogical traditions and distinct structure of teacher education, which materialise differently in programme specific approaches to mobility. Yet, the bureaucratic ontology which is part of the national and institutional policy discourse also seems to shape enactments of mobility significantly, by narrowing down what is the *right* kind of mobility—which is somewhat different from how it has historically been approached. Clearly, this does not mean that the programmes completely adapt their approaches to the official policy discourse, but that the discourse contributes to concerns to increase the numbers and enforce the bureaucratic ontology, at least on the level of management, and to the frustration of many faculty and staff members. As argued above, faculty and staff can distance themselves from internationalisation if the institutional rationales are experienced as too detached from ground-level needs and practices (Dewey & Duff, 2009; Hunter & Sparnon, 2018). This is potentially a very pertinent challenge in teacher education, where the professional commitment to internationalisation is already largely individualised, as will be elaborated in the following section.

6.2.2 | Enactments enabled by individual actors

Clearly, it is difficult to separate the overall approach taken to internationalisation from that taken to mobility. Thus, while internationalisation has traditionally been project-based and run by a few dedicated faculty and staff members, today all seem to pursue a more integrated approach. Yet, comparing the programmes' infrastructure for mobility, it is evident that despite their different ways of approaching internationalisation, the dedication of a few or more individuals among the staff seems to remain crucial, as they take on responsibilities for organising, supervising and promoting both exchange mobility and international practicums with varying degrees of formalisation. Table 4 provides a comparison between the programmes' overall approaches and how they presuppose the role of individual actors.

Notably, this comparison sheds light on the challenges associated with moving from an individualised to a broad professional commitment to working with internationalisation, as more interviewees across the programmes

TABLE 4 Overall approaches and the role of individuals accordingly

Program	A	B	C
Coordination and infrastructure for mobility	High degree of formalisation; clear division of tasks between administrative/academic staff, including an overall international coordinator with 30% dedicated time and specialised international officer	Moderate degree of formalisation; main responsibility held by international coordinator with 30% dedicated time, some administrative support from general international office	Low degree of formalisation; no formal coordination of mobility tasks, most are coordinated by general study administration or dedicated staff involved in isolated projects
Role of individual actors	Relative; incentivised through formal responsibilities	Important; a few dedicated individuals, the work of international coordinator exceeds the formal workload	Crucial; highly dependent on the voluntary work of individuals

Source: Author.

experienced that their enthusiasm for internationalisation is not always equally shared among colleagues. The professional cultures of the programmes, and programme specific needs, contribute as important contextual factors for articulating how individual roles were experienced by interviewees. For instance, in Programme A, taking on formal responsibility as an international coordinator in a department does not in itself seem to be a very attractive task; more of these actors explain how no one else wanted to do it, but that they were motivated because they glimpsed a potential opportunity to travel and engage in new networks themselves. Yet, they experienced that working with mobility is also an extremely time-consuming task. These tensions are illustrated by the following excerpt:

> I have pulled my hair and thought, oh wow, what a job I took on! In the beginning, it came with strategic funds, so many people actually went abroad and looked into places. I think people found that interesting, but I think they will cut back on the budgets again, and then I don't know how interesting people will really feel it is [...]. (Online interview, March 2020, teacher with international responsibilities, Programme A).

In contrast to this, in Programme C, the university's international office has the only formal responsibility for mobility, which means that within the programmes, the work with mobility is significantly more dependent on a few individuals, compared to Programme A and B. More of the interviewees in Programme C described their work as more or less voluntary, even though their role has gained more legitimacy, as internationalisation has come in more strongly as an external demand, as illustrated in the following:

> Much of this is about a lot of work which you are neither acknowledged for or paid for in any way [...] That is the negative part about internationalisation, there are many who put so much work into it but are never acknowledged for it. On the contrary, they are often met with a sort of suspicion that they are only going to Zambia [destination for practicums] to get a tan for instance [...] So, it has really had a great impact that we have opened more up for internationalisation, or more pressure put on it from above" (Online interview, April 2020, teacher, Programme C).

These two examples are illustrative of how the programmes' approaches to mobility were in practice highly dependent on individuals, but also that the individualised commitment may work as a constraint to enacting policy goals. It can be argued that this reflects the fact that neither internationalisation nor mobility necessarily form part of a

common approach, or commitment, to thinking about teacher education—which is, arguably, what is expected in the official policy discourse that articulates quality enhancement as the main rationale. The findings suggest that there is indeed a locally defined need for internationalisation, and that student mobility was perceived to support internationalisation. However, a range of tensions clearly arise from individualised commitments, as they were found to be a somewhat vulnerable way of engaging with both internationalisation and mobility, yet also crucial for their enactment. However, an ongoing development aimed at fostering broader engagement among staff in all three programmes was observed. Yet, given the ambition of getting more students to go abroad, it would seem that a certain alignment between institutional and programme strategies and staff ambitions is crucial for fostering a long-term engagement in the work with mobility.

6.2.3 | Enactments constrained by other agendas and student desires

As part of their approaches to mobility, each programme had some sort of strategy or priorities regarding which destinations for mobility were encouraged. These, in turn, are influenced by factors such as the national and institutional policy discourse promoting intra-European and intra-Nordic (Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland) mobility, institutional commitments to reducing environmental impact, and for some, academic concerns about relevant research partners. While such priorities work as constraints to how mobility is enacted, priorities are also shaped by how students respond to them. Thus, a common experience in all programmes was that student demands for mobility do not always correspond with the ambitions of programme leadership nor faculty and staff. This is illustrated by the following statement from a dean:

> First of all, there are funds in the Erasmus+ programme, and it is study credit rewarding. So, economically, this is quite important for us. Second, something which has become more prominent in the past years is that we have to think more about the environment... But it is a dilemma, because first of all, we want students to go abroad, and we are very happy with everyone who go abroad, but we see that most of them travel to exotic places like the US and Australia, and that makes a huge CO_2-imprint. So, we do succeed in getting students to go abroad, but at the same time we don't succeed in terms of thinking more green [...] (Online interview, March 2020, Dean of faculty, Programme B).

Several interviewees indicated that students often desired specific destinations where English is the first language; however, this was also seen as motivated more by social aspects rather than educational purposes. This seemed to be a tension that was experienced by several study participants. Adding to this tension, it was not clear whether the professional value of mobility legitimised any choice of destination, or if the interviewees should take a clearer position on where it would be beneficial for students to go, for instance by developing pre-approved offers for mobility. While all three programmes aim to do the latter, more interviewees suspect that if the currently most popular destinations were to be excluded, mobility levels would in turn decrease. Moreover, the vast majority of teacher students never actually go abroad, which participants described as linked to general student characteristics; they are often very tied to their home and family relations, and not taking much risk. This is reflected in that teacher education is considered a "safe" educational choice. In this vein, some interviewees felt that any destination is as good as the other, as long as students go abroad. As such, students were perceived— as a contextual factor—to constrain how mobility is enacted. Such tensions are illustrated in the following excerpt:

> People say that I speak on behalf of the students, I am kind of a student representative. Because I think that if we are to increase mobility, we must ask ourselves, what is it that the students want? Because they want to go far away! We can be adults and say 'you learn a lot from going to Sweden

as well!', but I think that we need to have an offer which is in demand, you know (Interview, February 2020, international coordinator, Programme A).

Hence, while interviewees on the one hand insisted on the professional relevance of mobility, it can also be argued that a certain instrumentalisation of mobility is discernible, which stems from an appreciation of the mobility experience *in itself,* and not necessarily *in relation to something* besides its professional relevance. As such, this points to a fundamental tension between whether mobility should be understood to serve a means to other ends, or whether it is wanted just for the sake of mobility, as also discussed by Courtois (2018, 2019). Notably, the analysis suggests that this tension is very pertinent in the context of teacher education where students do not frequently aspire to mobility, and the actually mobile students are therefore particularly valuable in relation to the more instrumental understanding of mobility.

7 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

By approaching internationalisation through the lens of student mobility, this article has shed light on how mobility is understood, approached and constrained by students, staff and faculty at three teacher education programmes in Norway. The analysis found competing understandings of mobility, which evidently position it—as a part of the internationalisation process—somewhat complexly between being an external demand and an internal need of teacher education. By suggesting that mobility lends itself to many interpretations related to the needs for internationalisation, the article contributes to expanding our understanding of higher education internationalisation processes and potential challenges associated with it.

Given that the official policy rationale for mobility in Norway is to enhance the quality of education, it is striking how individuals mainly associate mobility with personal experiences that can transform into professional development; or, what previous literature suggested as the opportunity to learn from contrast (Cardwell, 2019; Teichler, 2017). Evidently then, quality is not necessarily only about what students learn academically or professionally when going abroad but can be achieved through the mobility experience *itself*. In the interplay with a bureaucratic understanding of mobility, it is suggested that there are indeed factors leading to what could be called a mobility drift—a promotion of mobility for the sake of mobility, as also found in other studies (Castro et al, 2016; Courtois, 2018; Teichler, 2017). Yet, the present study suggests that actors contribute somewhat to this instrumentalisation by promoting an idea according to which all or most mobility is good mobility, as long as teacher students, who are perceived as less inclined to engage in mobility, actually go abroad. More generally, however, it is suggested that an increasing bureaucratisation of mobility can have critical implications for teacher education, where commitment to, and responsibility for, internationalisation largely relies on individual faculty and staff members. In light of Bridger's (2015, p. 51) point that increased participation in mobility requires the engagement of all academic staff, this could thus be an even more pertinent challenge in teacher education in order to enable enactments of mobility.

Hence, while the findings suggest that it is indeed possible to foster exchange mobility in teacher education, its integration into the programme seems to require institutional support and resources (time and money), the prioritisation of which for internationalisation may not be possible in programmes with smaller numbers of students. Thus, to actually realise the aims of increasing mobility (intra-European in particular) would presumably require more staff engagement, more resources, and more discussions of how to support quality in mobility experiences. As such, it can be speculated whether this would in turn lead to a displacement of focus on outward mobility at the expense of internationalisation activities which benefit all students. In sum, on the basis of the study on which this article reports, it is proposed that enactments of mobility are both shaped and constrained by (a) how mobility is prioritised and supported with resources as part of the overall approach to internationalisation, as well as (b) the professional culture of commitment to internationalisation among faculty and staff.

The relationship between destinations to which programmes can support student mobility and students' preferences for destinations also constrain enactments of mobility. In this vein, intra-European mobility was not a very common phenomenon, despite being a stated aim in both national, institutional and programme strategies in all three programmes. Besides issues of different structures in European teacher education, language is clearly also a challenge which is rarely explicitly addressed by policymakers. Student demand was focused to destinations where English was spoken which constrains the ambitions for European mobility. Evidently, there could also be a missed potential of providing opportunities for teaching practice placements within the Erasmus programme. In addition to associated opportunities for funding and reduced environmental impact, European teaching placements could presumably also ease some ethical concerns about arranging practicums in developing countries—several interviewees addressed concerns regarding how to maintain equality between partners in these practicums.

Yet, European school systems are also very different in terms of curriculum, professional requirements for teachers etc. (Zgaga, 2008). In particular, the challenge of language could also be a barrier to this, as not all pupils in lower secondary and primary education have sufficient language skills to be taught in English. This may make it more difficult for a Norwegian teacher student to undertake teaching practice in school systems beyond the Nordic countries, compared to, for instance, a business student doing an internship in an international firm. However, it may be argued that for future language teachers, it might be particularly relevant to have teaching placements within Europe. While a policy solution might be to support language courses for teacher students, there is a risk that this might prolong students' education, which would presumably in turn be a barrier to mobility. Thus, it seems that policies aimed at supporting a European dimension of education need to be aligned with more practical concerns of the various languages and structures in education systems, if this type of mobility for teacher students is to be supported. Moreover, this would require new forms of cooperation between European teacher education institutions in order to provide opportunities for student supervision, which again may not be similar across Europe. Thus, despite the stronger policy push for intra-European mobility, this study sheds light on some challenges associated with it, which are not easily solved.

Furthermore, the current national policy discourse in Norway strongly incentivises and promotes exchange mobility as desirable, which is argued to contribute to making other ways of engaging with internationalisation, which may be closer to the needs of teacher education, invisible. In line with this, it can be argued that policies seeking more students to go abroad from a rationale of quality enhancement should consider how to allow for definitions of quality in relation to a particular field of education, and how this can be aligned with an increase in mobility levels. This article contributes to a critical discussion about whether higher education student mobility should be a means to other ends, whether personal, academic or professional, or if mobility is wanted just for the sake of mobility, which is what official policy discourse seems to currently promote. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that without such discussions there is a risk that the pedagogic and formative opportunities associated with mobility may get lost along the way.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ORCID

Tea Dyred Pedersen 🆔 https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8757-299X

ENDNOTE

[1] For comparison, the average level in social science and law was 23%, in business and administration 20%

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Article 3:

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Finding the right fit or fitting what is found? Contextualising connections between international student mobility and quality in teacher education

Tea Dyred Pedersen ⓘ

Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU), Oslo, Norway

ABSTRACT

The political promotion of international student mobility in the Nordic countries is underpinned by claims about its contribution to quality enhancement in higher education. Yet, this link is scarcely elaborated and is an understudied issue empirically. This article presents the findings of an interview study exploring the recontextualisation of this policy discourse by micro-level actors in Norwegian teacher education. Analytically, it employs *quality perspectives* to unpack the ideas that underlie the planning, learning process and envisioned outcomes associated with mobility. The article finds that quality is associated with clearly envisioned personal and professional outcomes of mobility; yet, it is also shaped by unclear notions about the learning process involved and constraints set by the practical possibilities for organising it. The article argues that the malleability of *quality* and the uneasy nature of student mobility in teacher education involves a risk that mobility becomes instrumentalised and loses its educational value.

Introduction

Over the past decades, increasing the levels of international student mobility has received significant political attention in the Nordic countries and Europe beyond. Short-term student mobility has developed to become a key activity in higher education (HE) internationalisation processes and has in particular been spurred by the launch of the Erasmus-programme in 1987 and the Bologna Process in 1999 (Papatsiba, 2005). While rationales for mobility vary across institutional, national and international contexts, historically the main European rationale for stimulating student mobility has been associated with European identity formation and economic ideals about creating a unified European labour market (Papatsiba, 2006). In the wake of the Bologna Process, a prevailing rationale concerns the role of student mobility as a key dimension in HE internationalisation and serving as a means of quality enhancement through compatibility and competition (Rivza & Teichler, 2007). The emphasis on quality is also reflected in the Nordic countries. However, quality in this context is often more explicitly linked to educational and cultural rationales than the economic and competitive rationales prevailing in many other European countries (Sin et al., 2019).

Yet, as has been observed by more researchers, the quality rationale for student mobility is often shaped by "circular" arguments; quality acts as both the main rationale for internationalisation and mobility, as well as its most important outcome in terms of increasing international cooperation in

CONTACT Tea Dyred Pedersen ✉ tea.dyred.pedersen@nifu.no 🖂 Postboks 2815 Tøyen, 0608 Oslo, Norway

education and research; sometimes as a problem to which mobility is the solution, sometimes as a justification in itself (Alexiadou & Rönnberg, 2022; Elken et al., 2022; Lomer, 2017; Papatsiba, 2006; Pedersen, 2022). We currently have little knowledge about what kinds of quality mobility may actually be perceived to bring about by those involved in its provision at the micro-level of HE institutions. Given the prominent political and institutional focus and resources devoted to increasing student mobility from the claim that it enhances the quality of education, there is a need for exploring how the ways in which mobility is "practised" ground-level relate to current policy ideas framing this agenda.

The study presented in this article aims to unpack how the policy discourse on the value of student mobility for quality enhancement in HE is recontextualised at the micro-level of HE. The study is situated in Norway and analyses a set of interviews with actors involved with internationalisation in teacher education for primary and lower secondary education (TE) to illuminate these issues. As such, TE both serves as a general case of the work with mobility in HE, and as a somewhat deviant case due to the generally limited nature of internationalisation and mobility within it. Educating mainly for a national labour market may shape how mobility is seen to contribute to educational quality, for instance by linking it to specific professional needs rather than more generic competencies (de Wit et al., 2015; Leask & Bridge, 2013). While TE shares these features with other short professional programmes (such as nursing, social work or engineering), it also stands out as a deviant case in terms of its role as a key societal institution of importance for the whole education system. It has increasingly become a battlefield for competing visions and discourses on quality and how to achieve it (Cochran-Smith, 2013; Trippestad et al., 2017). This issue is highly visible in how the internationalisation of TE has repeatedly been singled out in national and European policies as a critical issue in need of improvement over the past decades (Pedersen, 2022).

Drawing on *quality perspectives* (inspired by Dahler-Larsen, 2019) and Biggs' dimensions of educational quality (Biggs, 1993) as an analytical framework, the analysis identifies a range of tensions underlying how student mobility is made sense of as an educational activity relating to quality in TE. While the outcomes of mobility are clearly envisioned in terms of linked to personal and professional aspects, mobility also emerges as an ambiguous learning experience linked to ideas about learning from complementarity in relation to the national aims of TE. Based on the analysis, the article advances the argument that the malleability of the quality concept as an overall aim in organising student mobility, involves a risk that all mobility is accepted as being of quality, thus obscuring key aspects of its educational purpose.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: the next section contextualises the study by outlining key concepts, national policy context and the case of TE, before moving on to a review of existing literature. This is followed by a presentation of the analytical framework and methodological design, and subsequently, the findings are presented and discussed against the backdrop of the current policy discourse.

Contextualising the study

The article focuses on outgoing short-term mobility of which credit/exchange mobility (via Erasmus+, NORDPLUS, or other institutional agreements) and teaching practice abroad (via Erasmus+ or specific programme partnerships) are the most common in Norwegian TE. While they clearly represent different learning activities, both are included in the study from the assumption that they can expand our understanding of quality perspectives associated with student mobility. The underlying political rationales for credit mobility are typically related to educational and cultural ideas, whereas degree mobility (mainly incoming) is associated with economic and competitive rationales and attracting talent (Elken et al., 2022). Additionally, other short-term mobility activities, such as trainee/internships may be related to professional rationales (Cuzzocrea & Krzaklewska, 2023).

Aims of increasing student mobility have been a highly visible policy priority in Norway for several decades, but with changing underlying rationales; From being mainly a matter of a lack of capacity in the national HE system, the Quality Reform in 2003, which implemented the Bologna Process, implied a stronger emphasis on short-term mobility linked to quality enhancement (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). While all the Nordic countries generally place a strong emphasis on educational rather than economic rationales for mobility, it has been identified as particularly prominent in Norway (Elken et al., 2022).[1] However, this assumed relationship is scarcely substantiated by policymakers and has for instance been linked to both the personal development of the students, an overall increase in the educational quality of the study programme and Norway's adaptability and competitiveness globally (Meld. St. 7, 2020-2021). The strong focus on outgoing mobility is witnessed by still higher political ambitions on increasing it; currently, the aim is that 50% of the student population should have had a stay abroad at graduation, with the long-term objective of creating "*a culture in higher education where student mobility becomes the rule rather than the exception*" (Meld. St. 7, 2020–2021). Following this, the responsibilities of study programmes and academic staff for organising and quality-assuring exchange agreements have been strengthened (DIKU, 2019).

Over the past 30 years, challenges to fostering internationalisation and student mobility in TE have been identified, discussed and attempted tackled by Norwegian and European policymakers alike (Pedersen, 2022; Wernisch, 2016). In Norway, mobility levels in study fields such as teacher education and pedagogy, and shorter bachelor programmes in health, social work and engineering, are averagely lower than in longer discipline-based programmes. A report from 2019 showed that the total share of students in TE and pedagogy who had undertaken an exchange stay abroad at the time of graduation was 6%, compared to 10% in shorter health programmes, 20% in business and administration, and 23% in social science and law (DIKU, 2019). These differences are quite consistent over time, and as for TE, these numbers also mirror the general European picture (Ballowitz et al., 2014; DIKU, 2019; Vögtle, 2019). Nonetheless, the political expectations for it remain high. For instance, when teacher education programmes for primary and lower secondary education were extended to 5-year master's programmes in 2017, one of the arguments was that it would allow for a more flexible structure with more room for student mobility in the programme (Skagen & Elstad, 2020). TE is centrally governed by national regulations stating both the educational purpose, learning outcomes and aspects around its structure (Ekspertgruppa om lærerrollen, 2016). These aspects have been found to narrow the possibilities for exchange mobility, which is the preferred type of mobility at national policy level (Pedersen, 2021). However, reports have demonstrated that other types of mobility, such as international practice placements, are very common and are a valued learning activity in TE (DIKU & NOKUT, 2018; Sjøen, 2021).

Arguably, then, TE and other short professional programmes in Norwegian HE share some common conditions and challenges for fostering student mobility in terms of national labour market orientation and how they are regulated. This may position them as somewhat deviant cases for studying the stated issues of this paper, as internationalisation and mobility may be perceived, practised and valued differently than what research based on more traditional HE disciplines tends to depict. For TE in particular, its nature as a key institution in society and how it is discussed in public may also shape the work with mobility and how it is perceived to contribute to quality in distinct ways. Choosing a deviant case of HE in the context of this study first of all provides an empirical contribution focussing on an understudied sub-field of HE. Additionally, the deviant case may also have analytical value for shedding light on unexpected views and challenges of student mobility and be rich in information about the assumptions, challenges and preconditions for implementation underlying current political discourse (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

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[1]It was recently decided to introduce student fees for incoming non-EU citizens to Norway from 2023. This reflects a stronger orientation towards financial rationales. However, as this concerns incoming student mobility, it is beyond the focus and scope of this paper to discuss further.

Literature review: student mobility and educational quality

Quality is an inherently vague concept and studying it inescapably forces us to operate in grey zones (Wittek & Kvernbekk, 2011). Student mobility can relate to quality in several ways depending on which aims are set and which outcomes are assessed, and the expectations surrounding this may vary significantly between actors in and around HE (Papatsiba, 2006; Pedersen, 2021). Notably, while mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+, may associate quality with academic aspects, such as academic skills, enhanced subject knowledge and language competence, in national policies, institutional practices and research, personal dimensions, cultural awareness and future employability are often foregrounded as key outcomes of mobility (Cardwell, 2019). Research has provided more potential explanations for this: it may be because academic outcomes are less tangible for researchers and practitioners than personal or cultural outcomes (Pedersen, 2021), or that the emergence of mass mobility programmes altogether moves focus away from academic aspects to more administrative issues and issues of participation (Courtois, 2018). Finally, the prominence of personal/social outcomes of mobility may also indicate that policy expectations about more systemic impacts of individual short-term mobility (such as enhancing educational quality) are over-stated and require a stronger degree of involvement by academics and HE institutions than what is assumed by policymakers (Frølich et al., 2016; Halvorsen & Faye, 2006; Papatsiba, 2006).

Existing research tends to take the perspective of students in analysing aspects of quality in relation to student mobility and often links quality to outcomes, such as professional, personal, and social aspects, and long-term effects on employment, career and personal development and broader societal aims (Cardwell, 2019; Roy et al., 2019). In the context of TE and international practicums specifically, additional outcomes such as the development of intercultural competencies and global understanding are also highlighted (for instance Abraham & von Brömssen, 2018; Cushner & Mahon, 2016; DIKU & NOKUT, 2018; Klein & Wikan, 2019; Sjøen, 2021). Valuable as these findings are for understanding aspects of quality, the student-centred strand also tends to obscure the fact that outgoing short-term mobility is an activity which is strongly influenced by institutional logics and practices and practical possibilities related to when and where it is possible to undertake a study abroad (Courtois, 2018). As such, research into the quality dimension of internationalisation in HE necessarily implies a perspective on how the expectations for internationalisation and mobility become translated into practice – in terms of *what*, *how*, and *why* to learn in specific learning contexts (Wihlborg, 2009). Academic staff have a key role in ensuring that the offer abroad is academically or professionally relevant for students in relation to the aims of the domestic study programme (Toporkoff, 2014). The viewpoints of academic staff involved with educational provision in HE (teaching and research) and tasked with organising mobility in relation to the aims, content and pedagogical processes in the study programmes are therefore key to exploring issues around the contribution of mobility to educational quality. Yet, their perspectives on the relationship between educational aims and the role of internationalisation and student mobility in supporting them are often overlooked in research (Cairns & França, 2021; Green & Whitsed, 2015; Hunter & Sparnon, 2018; Leask et al., 2021). However, the study by Frølich and colleagues for instance reported that academic staff generally perceived individual student mobility to be less relevant for quality within a study programme compared to aspects such as staff mobility or institutional cooperation, and that its perceived relevance is highly dependent on the quality of the exchange partner abroad (Frølich et al., 2016; Halvorsen & Faye, 2006). These findings demonstrate that the value and quality of mobility must necessarily be understood *in relation to* something, otherwise, it is at risk of becoming a detached element in the study programme (Nerlich, 2021). The study presented in this article aims to fill out some of the gaps identified in this review to shed light on the presumed relationship between student mobility and quality enhancement in TE.

Analytical framework

The overall analytical approach to exploring how mobility relates to educational quality in TE builds on multiple sources of inspiration. The study foregrounds the study programme level (micro-level) of HE as the sites where quality "is practised" contingent to the particular context and situation at hand and in relation to ideas and practices about teaching and learning. However, micro-level ideas and practices about quality cannot be analysed in total isolation from structural (macro) and institutional (meso) level quality ideas; indeed, a key assumption in the study is that despite its lack of specificity, the ways in which current policy discourse employs the concept of quality has effects in terms of shaping how ideas about, and practices of, student mobility can be legitimised at the micro-level of HE institutions (Pechmann & Haase, 2021).

To capture the complexities of educational quality from a micro-level actor perspective, the analytical entry point is to capture different *quality perspectives,* that is, "*a way of seeing and talking about quality that conceptually highlights a particular aspect*" (Dahler-Larsen, 2019, p. 47). More specifically, the analytical framework borrows inspiration from the contexts for quality identified in the "3P model" (Biggs, 1993) as an interpretive frame for transforming fragmented elements of reality into a meaningful whole (i.e., quality perspectives). Biggs distinguishes between *presage, process, and product* as three key components of the educational process and suggests that educational quality is not only a matter of output but is relative to the compatibility and interaction between the three components. *Presage* involves student context (individual characteristics such as prior knowledge, expectations, aspirations, etc.), and teaching context (contextual characteristics such as teachers' beliefs about teaching and students, curriculum and course structure, teaching methods etc.). *Process* concerns the approach to learning and what goes on in the learning process (for instance pedagogical programmes, modes of learning etc.), and *product* refers to the learning outcomes of the process (Biggs, 1993; Biggs & Tang, 2011). While originally intended to provide a framework for quantitatively estimating the relationship between the variables in particular learning settings (Gibbs, 2010), this article merely adapts the model as an analytical heuristic and relevant vocabulary for identifying and categorising quality perspectives in the interview data, as well as potential tensions between them. The original 3P model focuses mainly on students, but part of the adaption in the present study implies that student experience is only indirectly analysed as it emerges in the accounts of academic staff.

In light of the notorious challenges involved in handling the quality concept analytically and empirically, *and* the study's aim of using its complexity productively rather than constraining its potential meanings, the analytical framework aims to balance the needs for flexibility and precision. To do so, it utilises the 3 P's as analytical keys for categorising the variety of perspectives on the relationship between student mobility and quality among interviewees. In the interviews it appeared that it was difficult to discuss quality as an "end goal" without including perspectives on the preconditions for it linked to planning and quality assuring mobility (before), and on the learning process involved as such (under). Put simply, how quality is perceived and "handled" before and during a stay abroad has implications for how the quality-enhancing potential of mobility may be realised. The value of the 3P model is that it contributes analytically to opening this black box and points to the complexities involved in supporting and realising the ambiguous aim that "quality" represents. In sum, these analytical assumptions are brought together to analyse the interview material and are operationalised and exemplified in Table 1 below.

Materials and methods

Academic staff play a key role staff in the educational provision and as resources for understanding issues around educational quality. Therefore, the present study is designed as a qualitative interview study aimed at eliciting in-depth perspectives on the assumed relationship between student mobility and quality. A total of 20 interviews were conducted with micro-level actors in TE by the author

Table 1. Quality perspectives, operationalisation and empirical example.

Quality perspective and key features	Operationalisation in relation to mobility	Identification in data and empirical example
Presage: the student and teaching context existing before the teaching and learning take place	Aspects involved in organising and quality-assuring mobility: (a) Practically: which considerations underlie its organisation? (curriculum, strategies, etc.) (b) Staff and student factors: other ideas about "quality" framing mobility (academic relevance, destinations, duration of stay etc.)	A key issue in organising mobility concerns what constitutes a relevant exchange offer for Norwegian TE: "We approve students' learning agreements and make sure that those courses provide something which we can say is roughly similar to the subject we teach here … We don't always get there" (Interview A5).
Process: what is going on in the actual teaching and learning process	What is involved in the learning experience supported by mobility? What supports or hinders this process? (How) is it being assessed?	The personal experience of going abroad is key to the learning process: "The physical experience of being in an unknown territory, the new smells, sounds and emotions you are confronted with being there … Students mature from this confrontation, and this is what enables them to actually acquire new perspectives, to learn … " (Interview C3).
Product: the outcomes of the educational processes	What are the envisioned outcomes of mobility for TE students?	Personal development is a key outcome of mobility and influences other areas of learning: "You grow as a person by studying abroad, you gain new perspectives which can contribute to your academic achievements" (Interview B2)

in the early spring of 2020, some face-to-face, but most via online communication due to the pandemic. Interviews lasted around 1 h and were all recorded with the consent of participants and subsequently transcribed verbatim and anonymised with regards to any exposing details.

The participants are all (directly or indirectly) involved in the work with internationalisation and student mobility in three teacher education programmes: most as academic staff, and some by holding administrative and management positions. An overview of interviewees can be found in Table 2. Their involvement varies from informal or "voluntary" based on personal motivation and interests (such as participating in projects which include mobility) to having formal responsibilities and dedicated working hours for it (such as academic international coordinators). Due to quite different levels of involvement in internationalisation issues in the three programmes respectively, the number of interviews in each programme varies (from 5 to 8). Clearly, the final sample of interviewees in any study impacts the possibilities for generating knowledge (Andrews & Vassenden, 2007). On the one hand, the interviewees are highly experienced and knowledgeable about the topic and thereby have valuable perspectives to illuminate the research question. But they clearly also represent a highly selected group of dedicated people likely to have a (more) positive attitude towards student mobility than others and in that sense may not be representative of indifferent or critical attitudes. However, in light of their different institutional affiliations and varied degrees of involvement, the

Table 2. Overview of interviews.

Programme	A	B	C
Interviewees	Four teachers International academic coordinator International administrative coordinator Head of Studies Faculty adviser (Total: 8)	Four teachers International academic coordinator Adviser, international office Dean (Total: 7)	Three teachers Adviser, international office Head of Studies (Total: 5)

data represents a multiplicity of perspectives which contribute to a way of triangulating the data (Flick, 2004). In any case, the research design does not allow for suggesting that the findings paint a representative picture of all TE, let alone a whole institution or study programme; rather, it aims for analytic generalisation in the sense that the theoretically qualified findings of the study may be useful for making sense of similar situations or issues in and across TE (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Maxwell, 2002).

All interviews were based on semi-structured interview guides informed by the analytical framework. All interviewees were explicitly asked to reflect on how they perceived the presumed relationship between student mobility and quality enhancement. Other questions unpacked issues around quality more broadly and implicitly (e.g., "what do teacher students gain from going abroad?", "what are your considerations when finding exchange partners abroad for your students?", or "what are the main challenges to your work with organising mobility?"). This dual way of unpacking issues of quality in combination with the overall categories provided by the analytical framework was supportive for shedding light on the intricate relationship and tensions between different aspects involved in conceptualising something as being of (educational) quality.

Analytical process

To capture patterned responses related to the three key dimensions of the analytical framework, as well as opening up other interesting or surprising themes, the analysis of the interview transcriptions was based on an eclectic approach inspired by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step of the analysis was to become re-familiarised with the material and develop initial ideas about broader themes beyond the assumptions in the analytical framework; (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006); essentially letting the data "talk" as much as possible. Next, coding was performed assisted by Nvivo software, in a dual process of systematically mapping the entire material against the three quality perspectives (presage, process, product), as well as other interesting features of the data which did not immediately fit into these categories. For instance, an unexpected recurring theme concerned how interviewees often experienced a gap between their ideas about quality and relevance in the stay abroad, and students' aspirations and motivations for it, which was often linked to a particular geographical destination. The coding process resulted in several themes and sub-themes which were reviewed and refined against each other to make sure they provided a comprehensive account of the whole data set. The key themes identified structure the presentation of findings in the following and concern (a) a clear vision of quality as linked to individual and professional aspects; (b) an ambiguous conceptualisation of the learning experience underlying the outcomes, and (c) constraining contextual aspects impacting on its organisation and perceived value in TE.

Findings

This section presents the findings of the analysis in relation to the three dimensions of the analytical framework. Table 3 provides an overview of the key findings and the various quality claims and perspectives which are discussed in the article.

Product: envisioned personal and professional outcomes of mobility

The product quality perspective refers to students' learning outcomes after having completed the teaching and learning process (Biggs, 1993). In relation to student mobility, this perspective includes the underlying justifications for, and purpose of, this particular educational activity, and the *envisioned* outcomes from it. When directly asked how they considered international student mobility to contribute to quality in TE, most interviewees provided answers related to the overall purpose or outcomes of mobility, whether for the individual, the future professional, or the

Table 3. Overview of findings.

Quality perspective	Key findings
Product	(a) The prevailing explicit conceptualisation of quality across interviews
	(b) It relates quality to the purpose and outcomes of mobility
	(c) Direct personal outcomes and transformative/professional outcomes are foregrounded; academic outcomes are relativised against these
Process	(a) The learning experience is key for supporting the achievement of outcomes (i.e., quality)
	(b) The learning experience builds on a pedagogical idea about complementarity between domestic/abroad programme
	(c) Complementarity is itself an ambiguous idea that relativises educational quality to cultural/social aspects associated with particular destinations for mobility
Presage	(a) The preconditions for supporting the envisioned outcomes of mobility are challenged by structural and cultural aspects
	(b) Organising/quality assuring mobility is shaped by varied interpretations of the aims of TE and how mobility "fits" within
	(c) … as well as more non-educational considerations such as institutional strategies

programme more generally. While perspectives on the purpose of student mobility may differ from the actual outcomes in practice, the point is here that the most direct and prevailing conceptualisation of the relationship between mobility and educational quality among interviewees concerns the *product* dimension of it. In particular, interviewees' reflections on potential outcomes from mobility include direct effects on, for instance, students' level of self-confidence, maturity, abilities to handle stress and empathy. Moreover, all these personal outcomes are perceived as having more indirect transformative effects on students' professional competencies, such as confidence in managing the classroom, abilities to differentiate teaching, and general respect for cultural differences. Outcomes relating to specific subject competence or language development were rarely highlighted as aspects of quality by interviewees. Rather, more of them expressed the view that the academic dimensions of mobility were less tangible compared to the personal or professional dimensions. Notably, interviewees' reflections on the product dimension are closely intertwined with the learning experience supporting it, as the personal experience associated with immersing oneself in another country and culture is foregrounded as the prerequisite for the outcomes of mobility. The following extract is very illustrative of this general idea:

> "I think the most important outcome of student mobility is about being outside one's comfort zone, travelling, experiencing another culture … It is useful for the ability to reflect in new ways about what we do here, new thoughts on our practices, what and why we do it … And that is also what students say when they return home, they are more self-confident because it was crazy scary being on your own in that way! It is a powerful way of getting to know yourself and to reflect on what is different." (Interview A3)

As evident, there is a shared belief that the personal experience of going abroad and "standing on one's own feet" can have transformative effects on students' professional competencies. As such, this is the prevailing notion of how student mobility contributes to quality, irrespective of whether exchange mobility or international practicums are being considered. However, the "transformative" outcome is *particularly* clear when interviewees reflect on practice teaching abroad. It often takes place in developing countries, where students are confronted with different education systems and conditions for practising as a teacher. The following extract is a good example of how the specific outcomes of undertaking practice teaching abroad are described among interviewees:

> "It is very clear when students have been abroad, they communicate and lead the classroom differently than before. Maybe they had to handle 200 pupils at the same time, and how do you organise teaching then? Well, you have to be very clear, speak differently, you have to use your body because you can no longer hide between a PowerPoint! It is things like these I think students benefit from, although the subject as such may not be in focus, or where they learn the most. But it is in fact in their role as a classroom manager" (Interview B3)

It is interesting to note how the interviewee here makes a distinction between enhanced *professional* competence and *subject-specific* competence as different outcomes of mobility. This distinction is invoked by more interviewees and seems to be crucial for how they justify the value of student mobility in TE – even in relation to exchange mobility, where one could expect other more academically oriented outcomes, such as improving subject competence, to be more prominent. This is reflected in the following extract where an interviewee describes the underlying considerations of finding a relevant mobility offer for TE students:

> "To support students in going abroad, we have to be a bit flexible in how we do things in relation to the academic aspects … We consider which content and courses will be relevant in relation to being a teacher, and some places may be very similar to our teacher education, some very different, but still relevant … I mean, besides the academic competencies and perspectives students gain from studying or doing practice teaching abroad, you grow as a person. You gain new perspectives which will affect your academic performance" (Interview B2).

As evident from the extract, compared to the personal and professional outcomes, academic outcomes emerge as fuzzier and more difficult to determine. The analysis reveals several examples of how this challenge leads interviewees to further emphasise personal and professional justifications for mobility as a sort of "pragmatic" approach to what can be expected from it. In particular, this appears to be related to difficulties in determining what constitutes a relevant (international) substitute for Norwegian TE, that is, aspects pertaining to the *presage* quality perspective. Additionally, it apparently has to do with *how* the envisioned outcomes can be achieved, i.e., what kind of learning experience mobility represents. Thus, as indicated in the extract above, whether the quality of the learning process abroad (practice teaching or exchange) is supported by providing a *similar* or *different* experience from that at home, emerges as a somewhat contested issue. This will be further explored in the following section.

Process: student mobility as a learning experience building on ambiguous ideas about complementarity

The *process* quality perspective refers to the quality of what is going on in the teaching and learning process and how it impacts students' learning (Biggs, 1993). From the analytical adaption in this article, this perspective involves the learning experience more generally in terms of the pedagogical considerations which frame mobility as an educational activity. As described in the preceding section, the prevailing conceptualisation of quality relates to the envisioned outcomes of mobility, which is intimately linked to the physical and personal experience of removing oneself from the familiar learning context at home to a different environment – not only in terms of the educational setting (such as a university or a school), but culturally, socially, or linguistically. In relation to this, a recurring theme in the interviews relates to the pedagogical function of *complementarity* as key to the learning experience, meaning that the quality of student mobility in terms of outcomes, is supported by the configuration of the learning experience abroad as *different* but *useful* in relation to the home programmes' curriculum. When interviewees were asked to reflect on what they considered to be supportive factors for achieving the envisioned outcomes from mobility, an array of ideas about complementarity was prompted. More implicitly, then, the idea of complementarity also presumes different ideas about educational or pedagogical quality in an offer abroad in intricate ways. It involves ideas about the relative degree of similarity/difference between the home programme and the offer abroad, both in terms of *content* (curricular aspects) and *context* of mobility (destination). In that sense, interviewees' considerations about what supports the learning process associated with going abroad are both shaped by educational aspects linked to the quality of the offer abroad as such, as well as their imaginaries about culture, pedagogical traditions, and school systems beyond the Norwegian borders.

An illustrative example of the ambiguity of the pedagogical idea about complementarity concerns Australia as a destination for mobility – not in the sense that the quality of the Australian

HE system is questioned, but in terms of its contribution to complementarity being evaluated against other destinations. For a long time before the Covid pandemic (and thus also at the time interviews were conducted), Australia has been among the most popular destinations for student mobility from Norwegian HE institutions, including TE (HK-Dir, 2023). Yet, its value for complementarity, and thus for supporting the quality of the learning process, is contested among interviewees. The analysis reveals that arguments about cultural *differences* and cultural *similarities* can be invoked as different justifications for a particular destination for mobility. In the following extract, the interviewee expresses the view that cultural *difference* is key to the learning process associated with mobility and that the relative cultural similarity between Australia and Europe makes it less interesting as a destination for student mobility:

> "It is an experience which is not significantly different from the experience you would get in Europe. I mean, if students are indeed going to travel far away, I think they should have a much more exotic experience. Then you should go to Korea or Japan, right? And experience a completely different education system. But I don't think you get that in Australia. So, I encourage people not to go to Australia." (Interview B1)

The interviews contain more examples of similar points made in relation to practice teaching abroad; the more different the school system and culture are from the Norwegian system, the stronger the potential for learning and pedagogical reflexivity will be. Yet, there are also more examples of the opposite viewpoint, as more interviewees emphasise *similarity* as the key to supporting the learning process, and as an argument for staying closer to Norway (in particular within the Nordic countries with similar TE models). Describing the programmes' overall strategy for student mobility, an interviewee says:

> "We focus strongly on the Nordic and European cooperation. There are several reasons for this, I mean, with everything you can learn from studying abroad within Europe, maybe you don't have to go to Australia if you can have the same here?" (Interview A2)

In contrast to the relatively similar views on the envisioned outcomes of mobility, the above examples of considerations of Australia illuminate the complexity involved in conceptualising qualities of the *learning process* enabled by student mobility. While complementarity appears to be key to understanding the process and how it contributes to quality, it also seems to be shaped by social or cultural ideas and less by purely educational aims of TE. Moreover, students may also be guided by such cultural imaginaries in their choice of destination, and more interviewees for instance claim that students' motivation for going to Australia is often strongly shaped by social or leisure-oriented motives such as the climate, the opportunity to travel far away, language etc. In that sense, another challenge illustrated by "the Australian case" is that there may be significant gaps between ideas about educational quality in mobility held by academic staff and students respectively. In many instances, this seems to reinforce the situation where those organising exchange mobility justify the exchange stay with reference to generic outcomes at the expense of the educational content.

Presage: student mobility with an uneasy position in TE

The *presage* quality perspective involves the "input" of the learning process, such as aspects of teaching context related to resources, curriculum and regulations. These aspects contribute to framing, enabling and constraining the process and outcomes (Biggs, 1993). Adapted and applied to student mobility, it involves how mobility is organised and planned in accordance with the aims and structure of TE – how mobility "fits" within TE. While the preceding sections have described envisioned outcomes as the prevailing quality perspective, and complementarity as the main supportive factor for it, aspects pertaining to the presage quality perspective were articulated by interviewees when asked how they go about planning and quality assuring student mobility. Many interviewees reported that though they may have specific ideas about the envisioned outcomes and ways to support them, their work with mobility is also shaped by aspects

pertaining to the presage quality perspective; that is, aspects such as institutional aims and strategies concerning environmental issues (reducing climate impact associated with air travel), or economic incentives (such as specific funding schemes). Moreover, the course structure, curriculum, regulations, and culture in Norwegian TE influence their work with "finding" quality abroad. In short, the analysis uncovers a range of tensions between how quality is perceived from "within" and in relation to educational aims, and its role as a more externally imposed management concept to direct this work ground-level.

As such, most interviewees agree that models for TE around the world differ greatly and that this makes it challenging to find an equivalent to Norwegian TE abroad. As for the destination of mobility, this invokes a challenge of conceptualising how the idea of complementarity may become productive in finding an "educational fit" abroad. Notably, according to more interviewees, the quality of a stay abroad has traditionally largely been conceptualised along the lines of what counts as *domestic* quality, and not linked to the offer abroad as such. This means that if the outcomes of the stay abroad differ too much from what students should have learned at home, it has not been accepted as adding value to TE. This tension is well described by an interviewee with a long experience of organising practice teaching abroad:

> "I think teacher education is a bit normative in the way it perceives of what is not a part of its core purpose, everything that doesn't fit within the box is just noise in the system. For instance, if it is a goal for students during practice teaching to do parent consultations and they don't do that because they are abroad … Well, there are two ways to handle this: either you say, well, then you just write a paper about parents' role in that school system, or you say, no, you can't pass this practice period, because you haven't done parent consultations. There has been quite a strict attitude to what teacher education should be, which I think has been damaging to practice teaching abroad, it is not accepted as a positive thing." (Interview C1)

The interviewee describes a culture in TE characterised by a rather narrow interpretation of the overall goals, and where a perceived lack of relevance, or similarity, associated with mobility, has been viewed by some as detrimental for students in terms of achieving the centrally authorised competence goals for TE stated in the framework plan – and thereby the quality of TE. A similar reflection is raised by an academic international coordinator explaining the challenges of preparing students' exchange agreements:

> "When the programme is so pre-defined, it is difficult to find something which amounts to our way of doing teacher education. Now we have found a sentence in a governmental circular which states that we must be very flexible when sending students abroad. For the last three years, we have been quite strict in trying to make sure that students get something similar to what our framework plans state, especially when we have asked specific subject teachers for help because we don't know their subject, they have been even more conservative than us … But now we will stop with that! Now we will just send them abroad and say that almost anything amounts to it, very few restrictions … So, that should no longer be a hindrance for us." (Interview B1)

As evident from the two extracts, a significant tension underlying the organisation of student mobility concerns the relevance of the learning opportunities students are offered abroad in light of what they should be learning at home. Beyond the common agreement that the physical experience of going abroad is key to the learning experience involved in mobility, the tension sketched above demonstrates a basic challenge of describing the nature of this learning experience, i.e., what and how we expect students to learn, in relation to how we envision the outcomes. Whether the opportunity for students to learn from complementarity is a matter of difference or similarity to the domestic study programme may therefore be a relevant question for all actors in HE involved with sending students abroad. Yet, in professional programmes such as TE, where the purpose and learning outcomes are quite defined, this question may result in an uneasy positioning of mobility as an "uncontrolled" learning activity, where justifications for its contribution to quality need reinforcement by emphasising the generic outcomes (i.e., personal and intercultural development) at the expense of academic/TE competence more specifically.

Discussion: international student mobility as an ambiguous learning experience in the pursuit of malleable aims of educational quality

Biggs' original 3P model emphasises the *compatibility* and *interaction* between the three dimensions are crucial constituents as key to supporting educational quality; not only must they be of quality themselves, but must also somehow be consistent and aimed at the same goal – the quality of students' education (Biggs, 1993). Based on the nature and design of the study, it is beyond the scope to assess the alignment between the three quality perspectives and whether educational quality is in fact achieved by current practices. Rather, conceptualising relations between quality and student mobility within the three quality perspectives has allowed for a complex account of how mobility is made sense of in relation to the educational aims of TE. As the study is situated against the current Norwegian policy discourse on quality, the analytical framework has proven valuable for unpacking how the seemingly straightforward concept of quality promoted by policymakers involves a range of challenges and complexities in the recontextualisation of it which takes place at the micro-level of HE institutions.

However, the heuristic nature of the analytical framework also poses limitations for distinguishing clearly between the different elements involved, and for unpacking other potentially relevant dimensions of educational quality. In particular, given the findings that the culture and traditions in TE (here analysed as part of the presage dimension) play a key role in interpreting the goals and purpose of the education, and thereby the role of mobility for quality, a relevant avenue for future research would be to employ analytical resources that could shed more light on this dimension. Thus, more focus on the unifying elements of a discipline and its educational ideology (Becher & Trowler, 2001) would be relevant for showing what happens when quality as a political/management concept meets educational practice and the structural conditions around it. Situating student mobility in relation to quality work and "*the various kinds of organisational processes and practices that are undertaken under the quality label*" (Elken & Stensaker, 2018, p. 190) may yield interesting analytical possibilities for unpacking the impact of disciplines on the issues studied in this article.

A key finding of the study is the prominence of personal and professional justifications for student mobility and, in particular, how they are reinforced by distinguishing them from academic or subject-related aspects of mobility. The challenges in conceptualising equivalent academic TE content often lead to a "pragmatic" justification of mobility as something which will, all other factors aside, contribute to the personal and professional development of the student. That is, a framing of student mobility as a pedagogical activity with generic benefits in terms of a transformative potential for all students (Nerlich, 2021). In the introduction, it was argued that TE is a deviant case for studying issues of student mobility and quality. On the one hand, the challenge of conceptualising the academic contribution of mobility may reflect that Norwegian internationalisation policy is framed by an academic discourse linking mobility to broader cooperation and research aims which may hold a less self-evident status in contexts of professional HE (Pedersen, 2021). In that sense, the nature of the ambiguous relationship between academic and professional aspects in TE contributes to *crystallising* some issues arising from the encounter between current policy ideas and practices of student mobility. Thus, current Norwegian policy discourse emphasises that academic quality and relevance should be the guiding principle for mobility and that generic outcomes are important but cannot alone serve as a justification for it (see for instance Meld. St. 7, 2020-2021). At the same time, professional programmes in HE are asked to display a less strict attitude towards what counts as a relevant mobility offer, and rather evaluate it against the generic competence achieved by going abroad (Meld. St. 7, 2020-2021, pp. 56–57). It is interesting to note how a (too) narrow interpretation of what constitutes educational quality from a domestic perspective is seemingly in the process of being replaced with a more broad and generic approach to what is considered relevant mobility in TE.

On the other hand, insights from other studies suggest that this may be a far more general issue cutting across HE, irrespective of the levels of mobility. For instance, Courtois argues that the

massification of student mobility programmes has led to a devaluation of academic aspects and an over-emphasis on the social and professional value of going abroad, that is, generic outcomes (Courtois, 2018). Indeed, the *indirect* academic effects linked to increased self-confidence, maturity and study motivation facilitated by the stay abroad may be stronger than the *direct* academic effects, such as improved knowledge base, acquiring relevant skills etc., and therefore also likely more tangible to describe (Cardwell, 2019). The challenges and risks identified in this article concerning how student mobility is at risk of becoming somewhat detached from the study programme and end up being perceived and promoted as mainly a kind of "educational tourism" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), are arguably relevant beyond TE. As such, more contextualised perspectives on the micro-level effects of the largely taken-for-granted policy assumptions about the quality-enhancing effects of mobility *and* their recontextualisation in practice are important for aligning current policy expectations and practices in realistic and feasible ways.

Arguably, the findings of this study illustrate the malleability of using the quality concept as something which can be used as a "solution to all problems" in policymaking (Pechmann & Haase, 2021). While it is neither desirable nor possible for policymakers to operationalise what educational quality is, the findings of this study are in line with those of other researchers who have raised critical questions about what (collective benefits) we can realistically expect from individual mobility experiences (Cairns & França, 2021; Frølich et al., 2016; Papatsiba, 2006; Pedersen, 2022). Though the envisioned outcomes of mobility may be strong, the preconditions and processes underlying them are complex. Hence, the article provides a call for all actors involved in the work with student mobility in TE and beyond to contribute to a critical discussion about current policies and practices, and what we can (hope to) achieve by sending our students abroad instead of (unintentionally) reinforcing a taken-for-granted view on mobility as *automatically* implying quality.

Concluding remarks

The article points to a range of connections and tensions between quality perspectives which underlie the planning, learning process and envisioned outcomes associated with mobility. On the one hand, quality is predominantly understood in relation to envisioned personal and professional outcomes, but at the same time constrained by ambiguities in terms of which learning process is perceived to underlie such outcomes, as well as the (practical) possibilities for supporting both the process and outcomes. The study reveals an immanent risk of student mobility losing its educational value as an effect of uncritical assumptions in both policies and practices about automaticity in what we can expect from it as a learning experience. The article contributes with much-needed empirical perspectives on a largely taken-for-granted policy issue and points to the need for conscious reflection among practitioners and policymakers alike about for which purposes and under what conditions student mobility may contribute to (different kinds of) quality.

ORCID

Tea Dyred Pedersen 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8757-299X

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