

# Cross-border cooperation in the European North of the Russian Federation: Sociopsychological and cultural aspects (through the example of the Murmansk region)

## Cooperación transfronteriza en el norte europeo de la Federación de Rusia: Aspectos Sociosicológicos y Culturales (a través del ejemplo de la región de Murmansk)

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#### ABSTRACT:

The purpose of the article is to analyze the role of cross-border cooperation in understanding the peculiarities of the development of the northern territories by young inhabitants of the Murmansk region, in understanding the specifics of the vectors that determine the future development of the region. It is asserted that in the era of globalization, the concept of the border, which is perceived not only as a geographical and political concept, but also as a sociopsychological and cultural one, radically changes. The paper presents the perception of the Norwegian-Russian border by young inhabitants of the Murmansk region. As a result of the analysis of the questionnaire

#### RESUMEN:

El propósito del artículo es analizar el papel de la cooperación transfronteriza en la comprensión de las peculiaridades del desarrollo de los territorios del norte por los jóvenes habitantes de la región de Murmansk, en la comprensión de los detalles de los vectores que determinar el futuro desarrollo de la región. Se afirma que en la era de la globalización, el concepto de la frontera, que se percibe no sólo como un concepto geográfico y político, sino también como un sociopsicológico y cultural, cambia radicalmente. El documento presenta la percepción de la frontera entre Noruega y Rusia por los jóvenes habitantes de la región de Murmansk. Como resultado del análisis de los

survey results, it was found out that the border was and remains a certain barrier for Russians, which they want to overcome. Such type of international cooperation as academic mobility will help to change the situation for the better. The growth of phenomena demonstrating the uncertainty of academic mobility in the minds of the Murmansk youth is shown. The overwhelming majority of respondents noted that one of the positive changes in this process is the promotion of the university in the international educational space, as well as the improvement of the quality of education; but only a little more than half of the respondents know certain programs of the academic mobility. The indicator of the effectiveness of academic mobility programs is the competence of students formed as a result of learning; especially the development of the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in practice, which in general reflects a practice-oriented approach in studying abroad, is noted.

**Keywords:** border, cross-border cooperation, regional level, academic mobility of students

resultados de la encuesta del cuestionario, se descubrió que la frontera era y sigue siendo una cierta barrera para los rusos, que quieren superar. Este tipo de cooperación internacional como movilidad académica ayudará a cambiar la situación para mejor. Se muestra el crecimiento de fenómenos que demuestran la incertidumbre de la movilidad académica en las mentes de la juventud de Murmansk. La abrumadora mayoría de los encuestados observó que uno de los cambios positivos en este proceso es la promoción de la Universidad en el espacio educativo internacional, así como la mejora de la calidad de la educación; pero sólo un poco más de la mitad de los encuestados conocen ciertos programas de la movilidad académica. El indicador de la efectividad de los programas de movilidad académica es la competencia de los estudiantes formados como resultado del aprendizaje; especialmente el desarrollo de la capacidad de aplicar los conocimientos adquiridos en la práctica, que en general refleja un enfoque orientado a la práctica en el estudio en el extranjero, se observa.

**Palabras clave:** frontera, cooperación transfronteriza, nivel regional, movilidad académica de los estudiantes

## 1. Introduction

The cross-border region, which unites the Western and Russian segments, presupposes cooperation on the basis of a healthy competition between two systems: on the one hand, the Russian one; on the other hand, there are all other states that are part of the Barents Euro-Arctic region. Undoubtedly, the competition entails both a set of advantages and significant disadvantages. Today, there is a deliberate refusal of competition as a confrontation typical for the Soviet era, where the "Russia-West" antinomy was perceived as completely natural, as well as a refusal of radicalism that entails certain variants of military operations. Such an approach, which underlies the idea of the creation of the Barents Euro-Arctic region, implies an emphasis on cultural and educational resources in the broadest sense of the word, which goes beyond purely ideological or technological types of knowledge, which are in demand in the situation of confrontation of state systems.

The Barents Euro-Arctic region occupies the part of Europe that lies beyond the Arctic Circle. Now the region includes 13 administrative territories: the Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions, the Republic of Karelia, the Nenets National District, the Komi Republic, and the northern regions of Scandinavia and Finland (Lapland counties in Finland, Troms, Finnmark and Nordland in Norway, Norrbotten and Västerbotten in Sweden, Oulu district in Finland). Since the 1960s, the demographic situation has almost ubiquitously become an acute problem, especially in the north of Finland and Sweden. Aging of the population is everywhere. The ever-increasing flow of young people leaving the North to work or study in big cities dramatically affects the demographic situation in the villages and the economic development of the regions. The modern Barents cooperation is based on close cooperation between the central and regional levels. The Barents region is becoming an important region in the new Europe, combining, on the one hand, the processes of regionalization, and on the other hand, of pan-European integration (Makarov, 2000; Shilovsky, 2008; Haugseth, 2014a, 2014b; Haugseth, & Møller, 2015).

The relevance of this paper is due to the need to analyze ways to improve the quality of education in the North, which will make it possible in the long term to provide the regional labor market with highly qualified specialists motivated for working in the northern territories.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the role of cross-border cooperation in understanding the peculiarities of the development of the northern territories by young inhabitants of the Murmansk region, in understanding the specifics of the vectors that determine the future development of the region.

## 2. Methods

The methodological basis of the research is the synthesis of general scientific (the method of historical and logical unity, the method of induction) and specially-scientific methods (comparative and statistical methods). In addition, various methods of classification and questioning were used.

The volume of the sampling set for the questionnaire included 250 people: full-time students of higher professional institutions in Murmansk.

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## 3. Results

### 3.1. Statement of a question

It seems necessary and expedient to turn to an analysis of the semantic extension of the term "cross-border cooperation" in the Barents Euro-Arctic region. In this regard, the scientific community discusses the concepts of "border" and "cross-border". P.I. Baklanov and S.S. Hansei define the border area as the territory "directly adjacent to the state border, within which political, infrastructural, economic, socio-cultural and some administrative functions of interaction of neighboring countries are realized, the influence of the neighboring state, its economy, and politics for all spheres of people's life" (Baklanov, & Hansei, 2004, p. 28), foregrounding the "influence of the neighboring state" component. The main feature of the cross-border region is "a single ethno-cultural space with a region located on the other side of the border". Cross-border regions can be classified as the regions formed on both sides of state borders, or formed over a long period as regions with a single ethno-cultural space, long-standing ties, and for some reason recently separated by a state border (Gerasimenko, 2005, p. 80); it is a set of cooperating political subjects (small states, administrative-territorial and municipal entities of states), as a rule, bordering each other. The cross-border regions are intensively developed in the context of globalization. At the heart of their formation there are the links between the territories of different countries, and not proximity by any attribute (Korneevets, 2011, p. 17).

As a rule, in modern scientific literature, the cross-border cooperation is a set of common actions aimed at strengthening and developing good neighborly relations between the territorial authorities of the border states, which are implemented through the conclusion of interregional agreements and arrangements. "The cross-border cooperation does not imply that the parties involved are neighboring subjects of the federation, territories, municipalities. At the same time, this type of cooperation extends to the economic sphere, environmental protection, culture, education, demographic regulation, and other areas within the boundaries of a certain cross-border space" (Mezhevich, 2009, p. 21).

### 3.2. Initial data

The most relevant is the interpretation of the term in the line of limology, proposed by I.M. Busygina, who explains the cross-border cooperation as a form of interterritorial, interregional cooperation, international contacts of the border regions (Busygina, 2004, p. 979). Naturally, the cross-border cooperation level characterizes a certain development stage of political and economic integration and assumes a gradual transition from single contacts to a long-term strategic partnership. In separate interpretations, the cross-border concept is associated with the process of socialization and is viewed as a form of socialization of the population of adjacent regions in conditions of cultural diversity and ethnic tolerance, the formation of a multiethnic community within the European regions (Kuzmin, 2006).

In the aspect of the stated topic, from our point of view, it is important to turn to a multidimensional interpretation of the "border" phenomenon. In connection with globalization,

new theoretical approaches to the concept of "border" were discovered. First, today it is impossible to study the border only at the state level. Secondly, the boundaries cannot be studied in isolation from the problems of identity, that is, the self-identification of a person with a particular social and/or territorial group, primarily ethnic one (Kolosov, & Mironenko, 2001, pp. 313-314).

The processes of globalization create new identities. Thus, in the opinion of the founders of the regional construction concept, one of the main factors for the successful functioning of the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation and the region as a whole is the formation of images of a common northern identity, international sense of unification. The factors for such unity exist, namely: the common natural and climatic conditions, characterized by a harsh climate, vulnerable nature, considerable distance from national centers, low population density, and the common historical and trade contacts between Norway and Russian Pomorie, as well as the genetic affinity of the Finnish and Karelian ethnoses.

In past, the borders were divided into "profitable" and "unprofitable", "natural" and "artificial", which often served as the basis for territorial claims and even aggression; now the progress of European and North American integration led to another extreme that is the emergence of the myth of the state borders abolition. However, according to Russian scholars, the internationalization of public life will never lead to an "unlimited" world, or a world without borders. On the contrary, the success of this process directly depends on the fact that the world space is divided by state borders into countries, since for capital movement a "potential difference" between territorial units is needed. (Kolosov, & Mironenko, 2001, p. 320).

For all researchers, the fact is undoubted that under the influence of globalization processes, the barrier function of borders is reduced, and the contact function of borders contributes to the activation of foreign economic activity of border regions and enhances the innovative component in the socio-economic development of border areas. The indicator of the increasing contact function of borders is the visa-free regime.

Referring to the borders of the Russian Federation, it is necessary to mention that the Russian Federation is the largest state in the world in terms of area. The length of the state border of the Russian Federation is 61,089.56 km. At present, Russia borders with 16 states on land and sea. Most of the subjects of the Russian Federation are borderline, and more than 13,000 kilometers of the Russian state border are new. The length of the land border with Norway is 195.8 kilometers, with Finland – 1271.8 kilometers. Russia borders with 12 countries by sea. The length of the sea border with Norway is 23.3 kilometers (the Barents Sea), with Finland – 54 kilometers (the Gulf of Finland) (Dmitrieva, 2008, pp. 30-31). The border of Russia with the countries of Northern Europe includes the Russian-Finnish and Russian-Norwegian sites. The border of Russia with Norway is 196 km and passes through the territory of the Murmansk region.

The place of passage and the legal status of the border of the Russian Federation with Finland and Norway did not change during the 1990s, but in the neighboring states significant changes took place. So, in the Soviet era, the Soviet-Finnish border was the longest border between the capitalist country and the main socialist state, and represented a closed ideological frontier. With the end of the Cold War, its status changed (for more on the Russian-Finnish border see (Passi, 1999)). The Russian-Norwegian land border was established for the first time as a border between Russian and Swedish possessions. In 1920, according to the terms of the Soviet-Finnish (Yuryev) Peace Treaty of 1920, the Soviet Republic gave Pechenga, the border area with Norway, to Finland, and the Russian-Norwegian land border ceased to exist. It was restored in 1947 after the end of World War II and the return of the Pechenga region to the USSR (for more on Russian-Norwegian relations in the border region see (Viken *et al.*, 2008)). In the 1990s, the social characteristics of the border changed. The border has become more contact: the level of the cross-border cooperation grew; the flow of passengers across borders increased.

The cross-border cooperation issues can largely be resolved with the introduction of the visa-free regime. Since May 29, 2012, for residents of Nickel, Pechenga, Zapolyarny and Korzunov that are the border towns and villages of the Murmansk region the visa-free regime was imposed for travel to Norway, primarily to the border Norwegian city of Kirkenes. As a result, Norway expects to increase the influx of tourists, and the Russian borderland wants to get a chance to develop infrastructure.

## 4. Discussions

The "border" in modern science is not only a geographic and political, but also sociopsychological and cultural concept. Borders perform several functions, including barrier, contact and filtering. The processes of globalization create new identities. One of the main factors for the successful functioning of the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation and the region as a whole is the formation of images of a common northern identity.

The progress of integration led to the emergence of the myth of the state borders abolition. But it should be noted that the formation of such myths, especially with the use of the media, is a goal pursued by the neopolitics, noted by Russian scientists Nikonov (Nikonov, 2013; Nikonov *et al.*, 2015, 2016), and Labush (Labush *et al.*, 2015). However, in the opinion of scientists, it is still too early to speak about a world without borders. As a result of the questionnaire survey of young inhabitants of the Murmansk region, it was found out that the border was and remains a certain barrier for Russians, which they want to overcome. Such type of international cooperation as academic mobility will help to change the situation for the better.

Over the years of cooperation, the Murmansk region has managed to accumulate an impressive experience of the cross-border cooperation, including bilateral contacts with the regions of Finland, Sweden, Norway, multilateral project activities in the Barents Euro-Arctic region.

However, many things in the current situation indicate an increase in the phenomena demonstrating the problematic academic mobility in the minds of the Murmansk youth.

The overwhelming majority of respondents noted that one of the positive changes in this process is the promotion of the university in the international educational space, as well as the improvement of the quality of education; but just over half of the respondents know certain programs of the academic mobility. The indicator of the effectiveness of academic mobility programs is the competence of students formed as a result of learning, especially the development of the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in practice, which in general reflects a practice-oriented approach in studying abroad, is noted.

In addition to the purely practical result, students acquire deep interdisciplinary knowledge in the field of regional problems, from history, geography to the specificity of the economic development of the Barents region, comprehend the diversity of northern cultures in their uniqueness, which leads to the formation of a new, integrated and interdisciplinary look at the North.

In this process of learning, both from a meaningful and formal point of view, based on the principle of a dialogue of cultures, on the dialogical nature of the process of cognition itself, a different, more profound and conscious understanding of the problem of "human and the North" is formed. The strong basis, founded in the very nature of the North, in the human nature, in the peculiarities of psychology, contributes to an understanding of the specific nature of the northern territories development, the comprehension of the specifics of the vectors that determine the future development of the region. Thus, the importance of this kind of academic programs goes beyond the actual educational field and carries a serious ideological significance, "rooting" young people living within the northern territories through the formation of the general and regional northern identity.

Our research makes a definite contribution to the solution of the scientific issue, which is of great social and cultural importance, namely, the problem of improving the quality of higher

education that students of northern universities get, the formation of such a student culture, the implementation of which provides a tolerant psychological climate. In the future, it is required to study how to form the worldview culture of a teacher at a northern university and what methods should be used for this.

The state and political elites should constantly fight for the loyalty of citizens, seek out new markers that distinguish "home" from "alien" and constitute the basis of the territoriality of people, since the perception of "home" and "alien" territory is the most important part of their identity. This function of the border, as a separation, consists in differentiating one ethnic, social or cultural group from another, preserving and maintaining differences and diversity (Kolosov, & Mironenko, 2001, pp. 305, 335-336).

Political scientist D. Newman says: "We are all cognizant of the fact that borders create (or reflect) difference and constitute the separation line not only between states and geographical spaces, but also between the "us" and "them", the "here" and "there", and the "insides" and "outsides" <...> The traditional function of borders has been to create barriers to movement rather than bridges enabling contact. But strong fences and walls do create, for the ruling élites, a manageable situation where the "us here" and "them there" line of binary separation is easier to control" (Newman, 2006, pp. 148, 150).

The processes of globalization, integration and regionalization have led to the weakening of cultural, national, and state borders, which results in "the strengthening of sociocultural ties "over" the national borders". The cross-border region is interpreted as "a space where a set of mutually oriented participants operates, coordinating their actions with the actions of the Other". So gradually, with the destruction of borders, the line between "home" and "alien", "us" and "them" is blurred, and instead of nationality, a marginality develops in the culture of the cross-border region. Marginality is not associated with the process of declassification and lumpenization, but implies a person who "lives and consciously participates in the cultural life and traditions of two different peoples" (Trubitsyn, 2011, pp. 132, 134). The feeling of otherness is created when you see that the Other does not do the way you do (Ivanishcheva, 2012, pp. 119-120).

In 2012, 2016 and 2017 with intervals of 4 and 5 years, we conducted a questionnaire survey of young inhabitants of the Murmansk region. The questionnaire consisted of the following questions: What does the city (town, village) in which you live mean for you? Have all your relatives been born here (in the Murmansk region)? Where would you like to travel? Name what comes to your mind when someone pronounces the word "a border". List the Norwegian cities that you know. How would you describe your ideas about the city of Kirkenes? How would you describe the Norwegians? Do you know what the "passport of a resident of the border region", the Barents cooperation, the cooperation of sister cities is? In your opinion, what is the significance of the Barents cooperation for Murmansk? What does the concept "North" mean for you? What does it mean for you to be Russian? What are your plans for future 10 years? Imagine how your city (town, village) will look like in 10 years? In 20 years? In your opinion, would the introduction of a visa-free regime affect the situation in your city (town, village)? In your opinion, what can the government of Russia and/or the Murmansk region do to improve life in your city (town, village)? In addition, an additional questionnaire survey was conducted among this group of students, revealing a strategy or program for internationalization at the university, students' understanding of the role of the internationalization process at the university, sources of information on mobility programs, countries where they would like to study, motivation for this study, specific programs, the most effective methods and forms of study at a foreign university, the effectiveness of academic mobility programs, the main difficulties and opportunities for studying abroad, its differences from education at their home university. This questionnaire made it possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the sociopsychological and cultural aspects of cross-border cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region in the context of the introduced visa-free regime and academic mobility programs.

An analysis of the profiles of young inhabitants of the Murmansk region (from 18 to 25 years)

outlined the priorities of the younger generation.

The questionnaire survey of 2012 showed that for the youth living in the Murmansk region, the North primarily means cold, tundra, polar night and polar day, constant shortage of the sun, hills, northern lights, and the unique northern nature. In the perception of the North by the youth of the Murmansk region, the character of the northern people (people in the North are distinguished by will power, moral stamina) is important. For young people, Murmansk (or another hometown of the Murmansk region) is associated with the notion of "small homeland", but many are not going to stay in it, they cannot stand the cold and lack of prospects. Many realize themselves being not only an inhabitant (of Murmansk, Severomorsk, etc.), but also a Russian citizen, so for respondents to be Russian means to live in Russia, know its history, act for the good of the country, love Russia, protect it and strive for its prosperity, to have Russian parents, to speak Russian, to be part of Russian culture, to know the literature, the geography of Russia, to be a kind, sympathetic, and open-minded person. In Russia, young people note some aspects with which they are not satisfied; they do not believe the government, recognize the contradictory nature of history, but admit to love their homeland, love it the way it is.

Norway, our closest neighbor, attracts the attention of the youth of the Murmansk region. Young people from Murmansk know the cities of Norway (they call the capital Oslo, university towns, mostly Tromsø, the border city of Kirkenes), they would like to travel around Scandinavia (but mostly want to travel around Europe without specifying the country). The image of Norway for our respondents is an image of a civilized fjord country with a measured, calm life; according to the young Murmansk residents, Norwegians are people who love their country, caring about nature, living somewhat apart, trusting their government. Obviously, Norway is the antipode of Russia (we do not trust the government – Norwegians trust; we are not sure of our future – Norwegians are sure; everything is unstable in Russia – life of Norwegians is quiet and calm). Kirkenes is perceived as a cozy compact well-developed city, a kind of intersection of two cultures, a border city, in which a large number of Russian-speaking population lives.

The Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation is thought of by Russian young people as a positive phenomenon: it develops relationships, strengthens trust and friendly ties throughout the territory; the cross-border cooperation contributes to the rapprochement of Norway, Russia, Sweden and Finland. This is an important aspect in the life of the region that has a strong impact on life of Murmansk. According to the respondents, cooperation in the Euro-Arctic region is a chance for the emergence of new opportunities in the key of the dialogue of cultures, economic and political relations. But the border is associated with old Soviet symbols: a checkpoint, a fence, border guards, customs, a visa, a barrier, a border post, control, gates, a man in military uniform, and a German shepherd. Interestingly, on the border with Norway and Finland, shepherds are not at the service of the border guard, but the image of the German shepherd resurrects memories of the war. Only some young Russians named more neutral or modern associations with the word "border": horizon, opportunities, a place that unites. The latter associations are rare. They are found once, but they are seen in a positive light. Due to changes in the field of politics, the border is viewed as a place of unification, not separation. At the same time, the issue of the prospects for the visa-free regime is estimated as negative by the young Russian generation. They say: "A visa-free regime is unlikely to be introduced"; "In Russia they like to ban without special reasons"; "What can change in cities like Nickel? Maybe more people will leave"; "It is unlikely that anything will change, maybe they will build a couple of houses, the roads will be repaired in some places, there will be more Norwegians"; "Nothing will change for the better, that's for sure." But there is also a positive vision: "If they introduce the visa-free regime, the towns of the region and Murmansk will develop, and Murmansk will be landscaped in accordance with European standards."

In 2016, the situation changed. The introduction of economic sanctions against Russia as a result of the escalation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine led to a sharp decline in the tourist flow from the Russian Federation to the EU countries in 2014. Finland can be brought as an example of a European country where there was a sharp reduction in the flow of tourists from

Russia. By the results of 2013, Finland was among the five most popular countries among Russian tourists, and in 2014 it took only the 13th place. From January to September 2014, it was visited by only 295,500 tourists from Russia, which is 491,659 less than the similar figures for 2013. The number of applications submitted by Russians for the visa was reduced by half (from 1 million applications in 2013 to 500,000 in 2014); the number of overnight stays of Russian tourists in Finnish accommodation facilities decreased, and Russian tourists spent less money on the territory of Finland (Ziganshin *et al.*, 2015, p. 20).

Despite the confrontation and the significantly complicated interstate relations, in the regions there is a further development of cooperation, as this is in the interests of their inhabitants. This view was reflected in the events of the 5th European Forum for Cross-Border Dialogue, which took place on November 6-7, 2014 in Nikel (Russia) and Kirkenes (Norway) and was attended by representatives of 14 European countries (Goldin, & Freibeg, 2015).

Part of the current reality in connection with the cross-border cooperation was the problem of the flow of refugees to Finland and Norway across the border of Russia. The flow of refugees from the countries of the Middle East and Africa was recorded in the south of the Murmansk region on the border with Finland. Thousands of refugees traveling to Norway from the Murmansk region crossed the border on bicycles.

On January 29, 2016 in Kirkenes, the 4th Meeting of Working Group on Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation of the Russian-Norwegian Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific-Technical cooperation was held. The parties also discussed the results of the implementation of the previously adopted Strategy Plan for 2011-2015, the main topics of which were the issues of widening the visa-free zone for residents of the border areas due to the inclusion of the village of Neiden. Despite the political changes, the situation in the border region in 2016 does not look completely pessimistic.

Both parties are talking about the importance of preserving regional cooperation. The sanctions imposed in Russia and Europe are directed not against people, but against the political system, so contacts at the level of "people's diplomacy" should be preserved and developed, despite the deteriorating economic situation on both sides of the border.

An analysis of the profiles of young residents of the Murmansk region in 2016 showed a change in the value orientations of the youth: political and economic changes affected mainly the perception of youth country, city, and the prospects for their lives.

The native city for young residents of the Murmansk region is associated with family, relatives and friends, but more respondents noted their desire to go to another city. When asked about the direction of the trip, more answers appeared about the desire to travel around Russia (the Far East, Crimea, Siberia). The patriotic component clearly increased. Pessimism increased in relation to the prospects in life, professional activity. Russia and Norway were usually labeled monosyllabically as "neighbor countries," and the visa-free regime between our cities no longer caused a joyous feeling, rather indifference, and sometimes negative emotions: "Nothing will happen, migrants will come, they can take the job." When they were asked about what the concept of "border" is associated with, negative reactions predominated: a barrier, a face, a division and even quite unexpected "order in the country".

A year later, in 2017, there was a detachment in the perception of Norway and Kirkenes: "I do not associate Kirkenes with anything at all. Just city in a foreign country"; "I have never been to Norway. Neither travel, nor on vacation. Not at all. And the further it gets, the less I understand the mass enthusiasm of the Murmansk residents regarding Norway"; "Kirkenes is a city that Russians often visit."

The Barents cooperation in 2017 is still perceived by the youth of the Murmansk region as a positive phenomenon: it is an opportunity to exchange experience, solve various problems and implement useful projects at the international level. In occasion of the Barents cooperation there are also such responses: "This cooperation is important for Murmansk, but very few people know what it is for. But it is never too late to establish new ties and support the old



ones."

But the border is associated with customs, visas, barriers, fasting, and restrictions more than in 2012. On the visa-free regime, we received the following answers: "A visa-free regime will allow our region to develop in terms of tourism"; "More people will come. Perhaps not only tourists, but also migrants. I would like to see some control from the states"; "If you mean the visa-free regime with neighboring countries, then most likely, more people will move to a permanent place of residence from the region to these countries"; "I admit the visa-free regime only with the countries of the Barents region and people of the same nationalities. That would be great! If the borders are open to everyone, I'm afraid there will be too many migrants from Asia and the East"; "If they impose the visa-free regime, the government will try to make the region for foreign tourists more convenient. For people living in the region, life can become more difficult. For example, they will raise prices."

Thus, a comparative analysis of the questionnaire survey in 2012, 2016 and 2017 showed that illusions about the future of the visa-free regime and cooperation between Norway and Russia were dispelled, at least among young people. Young people have become more practical, close to the problems of their own region, country and family, are concerned about the socio-economic problems of their country. There is no pessimism, but there is a sober awareness of one's possibilities.

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## **5. Conclusion**

In such a situation, an important aspect of cooperation in youth policy is academic mobility.

Migration of academically oriented youth is the central link in the world system of higher education. Many researchers believe that this process will continue to gain momentum, even if the annual increase in the number of students will decrease.

As the practical experience of participating in various programs shows, the model of the regional academic mobility in the Barents space, integrative in nature and cross-border by dominance, is not static. Domestic universities in the northern region with a certain degree of correction effectively use elements of the Finnish and Norwegian models of academic mobility, taking maximum efforts to increase the influx of foreign students. The emphasis on regional issues in the content of education makes it necessary to rethink the entire educational process in the Barents region. It is the North that becomes the basis for international educational cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region, determines its content and vectors for further development.

The most popular direction of the internationalization process is improving the quality of participation in international and regional organizations, projects and programs: more than 70% of the respondents indicated the importance of this direction. Almost every second respondent noted the importance of attracting foreign teachers and increasing the mobility of students and graduate students (53%). Slightly less than half of the respondents (45%) indicated the importance of such directions of internationalization as attracting foreign students and the introduction and implementation of various programs in English. The next question allowed us to analyze the ideas of student youth about the role of the internationalization process at the university. The overwhelming majority of respondents noted that one of the positive changes in this process is the promotion of the university in the international educational space (72.4%), as well as the improvement of the quality of education (66.3%). Every second noted such positive "effects" as the introduction of new innovative forms and methods of teaching and increasing the motivation of students to receive quality education (52-55%). One third of respondents believe that as a result of the internationalization, the level of qualification of the teaching staff is increasing. Every fourth and fifth sees opportunities to improve the quality of research conducted at the university on the basis of integrating science and education.

The importance of the ongoing processes of internationalization is reflected in the awareness of students of the need to spend "one semester abroad" (77.6%). At the same time, every tenth respondent noted indifference to this form of studying, not seeing the need in it. 13% found it difficult to answer definitely.

The involvement of Murmansk students in the internationalization process is expressed in the fact that slightly less than half of the respondents (45.1%) are familiar with academic mobility programs, a little more than a third are interested and would like to receive information. In this case, the fifth part is not involved in the internationalization process: 19.5% of respondents are not familiar with academic mobility programs and are not interested in them.

Specific academic mobility programs are familiar to 138 people, which is slightly more than half of the respondents (55.6%). The most famous programs of academic mobility are the following: "North to North" (51.4%) and "Barents Plus" (41.3%). A quarter of respondents are familiar with the North Plus Program, every sixth or seventh pointed to the Quota and Erasmus Programs (18%).

The vast majority of those who know the academic mobility programs receive information about them through the Internet (67.7%), a third part receive it through the recommendations of teachers and the international department of the university. Every fourth is familiar with the programs through the mediation of friends who have studied abroad. Handouts are not a popular source of information on the mobility programs (one person indicated).

In addition, the paper presents data on the desire to study in specific countries and cities in Russia. Thus, the majority of respondents would like to study in the USA (56.2%). Scandinavian countries (53.7%) are quite popular in academic mobility. Slightly more than a third of respondents are oriented to study in Canada and Russia (39.3% and 37.3%, respectively).

A rating of the Russian cities is quite interesting. The centripetal movement of youth in larger, including the capital cities was quite expected. As it turned out, the most preferred direction of academic mobility is St. Petersburg (70.7%), with a large margin ahead of Moscow (32.0%). Perhaps belonging to the North-West region, manifested in the form of a macroregional identity, causes a greater attraction of Murmansk youth to the northern capital.

The main reason for studying in Russia for the majority of respondents who answered this question (61 people) is the high quality of education. In the second place, the social motive is the desire to make new friends (39.3%). Every fifth person expressed a desire to get acquainted with the rich Russian culture applying the academic mobility programs (19.7%).

The overwhelming majority of respondents who answered the question do not have experience in participating in the academic mobility programs, but are generally focused on its acquisition (82.5%). Currently, less than 5% (9 people) are participating in such programs, 28 people participated in the past.

The next questionnaire unit was addressed only to those who have experience in participating in the academic mobility programs (14.9%). Here you can find information on specific academic mobility programs and their geography, on the ways of organizing the educational process at a foreign university (system, forms, methods), on the results of educational activity abroad (competence).

The most popular forms of study in the academic mobility programs are "one semester without degree" and "a full degree program" (40% of participants each). Every third respondent involved in the internationalization process took part in summer and/or winter schools, every fourth took part in a short-term program at a foreign university (1-2 weeks), every fifth participated in scientific and scientific-methodological seminars and/or conferences abroad.

The indicator of the effectiveness of the academic mobility programs is the competence of students formed as a result of studying. Thus, the majority of participants (21 people) noted the development of the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in practice, which in general

reflects a practice-oriented approach in studying abroad. Also, more than half of the respondents indicated that the following competences were formed in the foreign higher education institution: information management skills (the ability to extract and analyze information from different sources) (20 people); understanding of cultures and customs of other countries (19 people); ability to lead a discussion (18 people). This unit contains data on the main difficulties and opportunities for studying abroad, its differences from education at the home university, as well as on the role of the international department of sending and receiving universities in the development of the academic mobility. In addition, there is an opinion on the opportunities and obstacles to study at a foreign university of all respondents, regardless of experience in participating in the academic mobility programs. Linguistic and financial difficulties are of major importance for the development of the academic mobility (more than 60% of respondents noted). Significant factors hampering the development of the academic mobility, according to many respondents, are the difficulties associated with the lack of full comparability of educational programs (45.6%); the complexity of adaptation in a different cultural environment (39.3%); separation from the family (34.5%); difficulties associated with the foreign diploma admission in their home country (30.6%); separation from friends and the usual circle of communication (30.1%). Every fourth or fifth respondent noted the difficulties associated with the need to participate in new forms of studying organization (including extracurricular activities), and also pointed to such a problem as political instability in a particular country. In general, we see that, as a rule, the respondents selected several options for answering the question, which indicates the uncertainty of the academic mobility in the minds of the Murmansk youth.

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