What Motivates Russian students to study in Finland? : A case study at the University of Eastern Finland

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This paper looks at identifying the motivational factors of Russian students moving to Finland for higher studies, with respect to globalization and academic motivation. Russia is one of the top student source country to Finland. Amidst all the sparks between the West and Russia, the educational sector seems to hold up unaffected. The exchange programmes and bilateral agreements on education between both countries are still in full swing with talks about improving them. But the introduction of the tuition fees means, all non-EU/EEA students will be facing fees from August 2017. The idea behind this research came from the thought that even with ongoing geopolitical issues, sanctions and tuition fees, how motivated are the Russians to choose Finland as their study destination.

In order to clearly identify the reasons, a survey of both undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled at the University of Eastern Finland was conducted with positive results. The findings noted in the thesis are based on questionnaire survey and extensive literature review which in turn is used to compare and analyse the present situation with the results obtained and comment on the probable reasons behind international student migration as a whole.

From this research study it became clear that the present geopolitical issues, though are problematic, they don't affect the educational sector much and are not the source of de-motivation. But the introduction of tuition fees could hamper the number of student applications from Russia as the students feel that there are other countries where there is good career opportunities for future, this is even after considering how good the quality of Finnish education is.

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1. Introduction

When the world transitioned from the much eventful 20th century to 21st, it also embraced the various changes occurred in different sectors of the society. International education was one such industry. We witnessed the dramatic increase in the number of international students enrolling for different programmes in various international universities (Riano & Piguet 2016). This has caused the outflow and inflow of hundreds of thousands of students globally. This increase in student mobility can be seen as the effect of globalization and internationalization. In today’s “post-industrial world” (She and Wotherspoon 2013), highly skilled and highly educated students are seen as assets and economic advantages for the receiving country. One question that initially comes up is ‘why is there such high rate of global student migration?’ One has to find answer to the above question in order to explain the topic further. This is one of the reason why I became interested in the topic.

Finland was a fairly young country when it gained independence in 1917 from Russia, after being its Grand Duchy for over a century. Being part of Germany during the Second World War for a certain period, earned some hostility from the West. But Finland then signed a peace treaty in Paris in 1947 declaring armistice with Soviet Union (Zetterberg 2017). It became a member of the United Nations and the Nordic Council in 1955. The country maintained a neutral status all throughout the mid twentieth century. It was after the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991 that Finland became more global and visible and took initiative in joining the European Union in 1995 (Ibid). One important thing to point out here is that it was during independence that Finland started transitioning from an agrarian society to a more advanced and an educated society (Tuononen 2007).

Today, Finland is considered to possess one of the best educational systems in the world (OECD 2013). But the situations were totally different during the 1980’s, where according to (Salhberg 2011, p.121) Finland was lagging behind the Sweden, United States, England and Germany in almost all the main educational indicators. Moreover, the Finnish educational system was highly influenced or was mostly based on the Swedish system (Ibid). But with good planning and educational policies, Finland became one among the best in education business.

Any research starts with a topic and a quest to understand it. I was drawn to the topic of motivation and students after a deep and thorough literature research on international student migration and motivation. My literature research showed that there was a lack of interest in the studies combining motivation and international student migration and especially, with studies based on the motivation theme focussed between Russia and Finland in English language. This increased my interest in understanding more about this ever expanding and highly important sector of international education.
The question of ‘why’ will give the reason and through the reason I could explain ‘how’. Before explaining about ‘how’, I have to explain about the reason of focussing on Russian students, especially the target group in the University of Eastern Finland Joensuu and Kuopio campuses. The reason for focussing on Russians is because of my interest in Russia and its history. The close proximity to Russia is also another reason of focussing this particular target group. The other question is about motivation. It is the deciding factor in the decisions, we, as humans make. Without motivation, humans are mere robots working upon orders. So what is it that motivates Russian students to study abroad, in this case in Finland, at the University of Eastern Finland?

The dissolution of the Soviet Union saw Russian Federation becoming an independent country. Since then and up until the beginning of Putin administration, there was heavy corruption in the education sector. Though the reform of 1990 was off to a good start, the admission process was still complicated, corrupted and still unreachable for ordinary Russian’s especially the ones from the rural areas (Samedova 2012). To curb the corruption, Putin administration threw away the then university entrance examinations and initiated a new nationwide unified exams.

But as Samedova (2012) explains, though the new system is a good initiative, there are big problems hidden deep inside. Now that everything depends on the central exam scores, regional schools are fighting to be the best out of the rest. It is always good to have competition (positive), to bring out the best in the participants. But the consequences are not always as expected. In the Soviet era, there was no such competition. State wanted to bring down the literacy rates, so education was important, however strict and limited it was. Nowadays, fight to become the best school and so on has considerably lowered the quality of teaching and in turn, is causing the actual process of learning and gathering knowledge to disappear (Ibid), which is a possible reason why many Russian students are choosing to go abroad to get educated.

From this research I would like to bring out the reasons of the student’s choices, be it geopolitical, social or economic. It is highly important to research on this topic and on Russian students because of its impact on migration politics and also due to the significantly lower number of studies made on them (King & Raghuram 2012). According to Roberts (2015), education and student migration is a global phenomenon, the importance of which is more amplified in the present situation, where, this education can turn to permanent settlement.

I have used the word ‘a global phenomenon’ in the previous paragraph. But to answer about migration as a global phenomenon, we first need to understand, how we, humans became global. For that I need to talk about globalization. The globalization is the process where significant changes happened
politically, technologically, and economically. And because of the changes in these above specified spectrum of the society, in Bernhard Seliger’s words “globalization can be understood as a process of the disappearance of borders and the integration of regions formerly separated by technical or political barriers into a “global” economy” (Seliger 2004, p.6). As Keohane and Nye (2000) pointed out, what globalization does is to shorten the time it takes to reach and conduct matters globally. But how is globalization in education connected with the Soviet Union and its subsequent successor, the Russian Federation will be explained in detail in the upcoming chapters.

1.2 Research questions
The main aim of this thesis is to identify the reasons behind Russian student mobility to Finland. Finland shares a long border with Russia, 1,300- kilometre and also a long history dating back to centuries, riddled with conflicts and wars. But the border between Finland and Russia is considered to be the most peaceful border with respect to other borderlands that EU and Russia shares (Eskelinen et.al 2013). There are many reasons why Russian students come to Finland.

When you feel that there is nothing inspirational to look for, nothing motivational to grasp to and few choices, it is apparently evident that you try to find a place where you get all the above and this is what the I believe, the young Russian students are trying to do. It is not that every Russian students are going abroad to study, but yes, a significant amount is doing so every year. There are other possibilities also that are influencing the Russian students to come to Finland, for example co-operation between Russia and Finland in the educational sector. After raising my opinion on the topic, I would like to point out that, it is impossible to point the finger at one issue and say that it is the reason why Russian students go abroad to study. This is what brings me to my main research question, What Motivates Russian students to study in Finland? This is what I intend to find out through this research study.

My sub questions are based on the present situations. Given the present crisis on the Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the subsequent clash with the West, how have the recent geo-political issues affected the Russian student mobility? I also want to know, whether the Russian students would have taken the same decision if they were facing the tuition fees issue while they were applying as a student?

1.3 Methods and ethics
The present study investigates the reasons for and motivation of Russian students to come to Finland for higher studies and this objective paved the way for this research and survey. Though there are many international degree programmes offered in English at many Finnish universities, a major factor
stood out pointing ever upwards, the Finnish language. Because, lack of knowledge in the local language could be a barrier when searching for a job in the future, especially in the case of Finland.

My study focussed on those Russian students who were coming to Finland for higher education and more specifically, the students of University of Eastern Finland’s Joensuu and Kuopio campuses. The method I used is both a quantitative and qualitative research based on questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was formed out of both open ended and closed questions. This format really helped me in getting the right form of answers from my respondents. I am neither fluent in Russian, nor Finnish.

So it was apparent that the medium of communication should be in English. After discussing with my supervisor, I sent an application to University of Eastern Finland student learning services requesting contact emails of the currently enrolled Russian students. I received 142 student email addresses to whom I send the survey invitation. I had also contacted my local Russian friends for their inputs and also requested them to share the survey link with their friends. I received 38 replies.

I used the E-lomake electronic form service offered by the University of Eastern Finland to construct and format my questionnaire. The online software itself is very easy and one of the main reason for choosing this particular service is because it is supported by the university of Eastern Finland and also because I could extract the results in multiple format (excel, spss, csv and xml).

1.3.1 Ethics

As a research scientist, one is supposed to bring out the truth in the subject one is researching on, no matter what comes up. But that brings up the question of privacy, protection and safety of one’s research subjects and whether these factors should be followed and applied strictly?

As Professor Laura Assmuth¹, UEF has pointed out, it is imperative that the researcher should abide by the rules and regulations of country he or she is doing the research in. The research should be done meticulously and with utmost integrity. The researcher should ensure the safety of his or her research subjects, that no mental or physical harm be faced by the subjects because of the sensitive topics or participation in the research project and also make sure that the identity of the participants remain anonymous and the resultant research data about them protected. Finally, the researcher should give due credits to the respective person who did the original work thereby avoiding plagiarism.

Having kept abided by the above mentioned principles, I applied them during my questionnaire survey period and I was able to follow the above mentioned rules and regulations during my questionnaire research period. I believe that my topic is not sensitive, yet for some students, may be,

¹ Professor Laura Assmuth Lecture on Research Ethics (part of the main course Methodological Approaches in Social Sciences) conducted on 17.11.2015
questions about their motives (what are their future plans?...) and questions concerning it could be ambiguous. The questions were formatted in such way, to not intimidate the respondents.

As the topic seems to be not sensitive, I did not see any reason to be worried about bringing harm to my respondents and moreover, the findings could be helpful for future student migrants.

1.4 Structure

The chapter 2, Theory, consists of 2 main sections and 2 subsections, where the focus is mainly on different globalization and geopolitical theories as well as different motivation theories. I will be explaining in detail, the connection between geopolitical and globalization theories, followed by a brief description on motivation as a whole and analysing the different theories that help explain the theme of my thesis. I will finally end this chapter with focus on self-determination theory.

Moving on to chapter 3, focus will be on international education. This chapter will be divided into 4 main sections and 4 subsections, which consists of mainly background details on international education market, the education as an export service and future initiatives. This chapter will also narrate in detail, about the education in Finland, Soviet Union, Russia and the internationalization of education in both countries. This chapter will also give a short glimpse on the background of the University of Eastern Finland.

The chapter 4, results where the main focus is on the survey sampling and the end results.

In chapter 5, discussion section, I will be analysing and explaining the results obtained, justify my approach and then finally, I will be evaluating the entire study on the topic.

To end with, chapter 6, conclusion, I will focus on the brief summary of my findings, the results I have drawn from my research study and finally ending this section by focusing on about the research relevance of this topic and the future research possibilities.
2. Theory

2.1 Geopolitical and Globalization Theories

One of the reasons why I went with this research study is to understand why young people go abroad for higher studies. What are the reasons that cause this transnational movement? It could be fairly easy to just say that, this student migration is because of lack of opportunities in the home country or desire to travel. But these points just vaguely explains the causes. In order to have a better understanding of why these youngsters make these transnational movement decisions, we have to look deep in to the geopolitical situations and the effects of globalization.

In the coming paragraphs, I will be looking at geopolitical and globalization theories which, from the readings, seems to be interconnected. The political ideologies by the liberals and socialists from the late nineteenth century, suggested at the time about free trade and socialist international (Taylor & Flint 2000). This was also the birth period of the modern political geography (Ibid).

It is understood that the industrial revolution has influenced the globalization factor, though it is not so now, as the rich countries have started to de-industrialize (Taylor & Flint 2000). The birth of globalization can be divided in to two timelines; one during the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century (1830-1914) and the second from mid twentieth century to till now (1950- now) (Gancia et.all 2016). Some researchers call it the first and second waves (Ibid). According to Taylor & Flint (2000), the modern world owes its existence to Europe and its global expansion in the fifteenth century. Researchers like Khrystyna Kyrylych also support this theory of European colonialism and its relation to global economic development (Kyrylych 2013). The reason why one could witness events from any part of the globe in real time is because of this global expansion. The same could be said about global student migration also. There are many who thinks that globalization has created problems like technological isolation.

Globalization has created this ‘shrinking world’ concept, referring to easy accessibility of anything, anywhere and at any time (Murray 2006). But this has created a problem of isolation and financial and economic discrimination. Nowadays, there are huge gaps between rich countries and poor countries. It can also be said that when one part of the world enjoys the advantages of technical innovations, there are places around the world where the technology has not yet reached or is not easily accessible, thereby creating an isolation (Ibid). This can be seen as one of the negative outcomes of globalization.

As Murray (2006) proposes, the outcomes of globalization have direct connection to political changes everywhere (Ibid). Research scientist’s like Murray points that, there are differences in how
globalization affects different regions of the globe (shrinking world phenomena) leading to the creation of uneven geographies. It might be because of these uneven geographies, which forces these international student migration, a situation about which will be analysed deeply in this chapter.

In the previous paragraphs, I mentioned about uneven geographies and financial isolations. An example described by Taylor and Flint (2000) in their book clearly points at an uneven development or uneven globalization. Based on the example, it suggests that in 1996, there were 358 super rich people whose wealth aggregate is same as 2.5 billion poor people (Taylor & Flint 2000). Though the data is 20 years old as of now, looking at how the world stands today, nothing has changed drastically to prove that the conditions have improved.

During the process of globalization, the world witnessed the emergence of new transnational capital where almost every country is forced to be part of the global production system eventually creating a new proletariat class (Robinson 2006). As mentioned by Robinson in his article, Leslie Sklair introduced the theory of global system that explains the emergence of a new capitalist class (Robinson 2007). According to this theory, a transnational capitalist class (TCC hereafter) has emerged that paved the way for the new capitalist globalism. The emergence of new transnational capitalist class meant that only the elites have the most power and the powerful states force their hegemony on the less privileged, developed states. But Robinson suggests that in addition to the TCC, there exists a newly formed structure of transnational state (TNS hereafter). But according to Sklair (as mentioned by Robinson in his article), these transnational ideologies has no connection with state, an idea which Robinson rejects (Ibid). The TNS forms a big dome in which the supranational and national forces comes in to being but heavily controlled by the TNS functionaries (Ibid). With respect to above data, it seems globalization has created more poor people than ever by over privatization of industries and educational institutions (Ibid).

It is been always reminded that globalization would bring homogeneity especially to those in the poor countries with respect to their salaries in comparison to the international market and there was also the statement of reducing poverty (Sunna 2013). But this is far from the real truth. In the study by Sunna (2013), she discusses about how according to researchers like Joseph Stiglitz, Hoo-Joon Chang and Branko Milanovic, global inequality has risen to a new standards by way of new international trade treaties and loans.

The above situation is not just confined to personal wealth, but also affects countries as a whole. There are poor countries and there are rich countries. The term ‘Third World’ emerged during the cold war era to represent the non-aligned nations that had no relations with the ‘First World and the
Second World’ (Pickle 2015). But the developments in Pacific-Asian countries over the past decade or so have rendered the usage of the term ‘Third World’ meaningless, instead a new term of ‘One World’ has emerged (Taylor & Flint 2000). But then again as described above the emergence of ‘One World’ doesn’t mean that we have fully developed countries everywhere, it is uneven development (Ibid). This is totally evident in the way the developed countries dominate and take advantage of their less developed counterparts in Asia and even to an advanced country like Russia, when their economy is highly vulnerable. During the Asian financial crisis of 1997, hedge funds caused the fall of Thai Baht due to speculative purchase (Hirai 2013). The same could be said about the Yeltsin era of Russia, where the Shock therapy method (advised by World Bank economists) was initialized in turn plunging the newly formed Russian state to huge financial crisis (Ibid). As Hirai describes, it is a matter of “quid pro quo” (Ibid, p 30). The developed economies took advantage of the poor economies forcing them in to further failures, depression and debts (Ibid).

According to Khrystyna Kyrylych, one of the main reasons of why there exists the division of developed and underdeveloped and/or developing countries is due to impact of colonialism (Kyrylych 2013). Developed world hegemony on its less privileged world is evident with different trade agreements that in reality benefits the citizens of the developed world (Cox 2008). This could eventually lead to uneven economic development. Cox (2008) evens states that, in order for the developed world to exert their political power on to the under developed countries, there could exist “bourgeoisie allies” who in a way support and/or show the way to exercise their hegemony (Cox 2008, p.6).

As previously described that development happens unevenly in different parts of the world, the case of Russian Federation is a key example of such uneven development. Russian Federation is a huge country extending to European and Asian continents. But as described by Jeane-Robert Raviot, though Russia is considered as a single territory, but in reality it is divided in to multiple territories. Many of Russia’s federal subjects are underdeveloped, compared to the likes of Moscow and St. Petersburg (Raviot 2010).

In the previous paragraph I mentioned about the differences in the development rates of different Russian federal subjects. The accessibility to common day services like internet, it seems, is a privilege reserved only to those high income, modern cities like Moscow (Raviot 2010). Though the report is form 2007, the base issue remain the same that, about 75% of Russia’s internet traffic went at the time between Moscow and St. Petersburg (Ibid). This is more alarming when one understands how big the Russian Federation is and how detached the far Russian cities are.
This is one form of uneven development which is causing many Russian families to move in to major cities with access to all amenities including better education. As Jeane-Robert Raviot describes based on official statistics, cities like Moscow harbours a good percent of the Russian population and the same goes with tax payments (Raviot 2010). As more and more Russians are favouring European style of living (Ibid), it seems their need for good quality higher education also increases.

I have described about uneven development and according to Taylor & Flint, it is an ‘error of developmentalism’ (Taylor & Flint 2000, p.10). The emergence of new capitalist class according to theory of global capitalism, has brought in significant changes in the global economic development. This capitalism has caused and is causing this global uneven development; an end product of contemporary globalization. As discussed by Taylor & Flint (2000), Immanuel Wallerstein describes the system of three-tier through his world systems theory, where he argues the existence of new class in the society, ‘middle class’ alongside capital and labour. This three-tier system defines the hegemony that the dominant capitalist class has, over the other lower group of classes. As Robinson (2007) explains in his theory of global capitalism about the role of states in the development process, Strikwerda (2000) discusses that Wallerstein also argues that the more powerful the state is, much higher will be its influence on “cultural globalization” (Strikwerda 2000, p.337)

From this section we can conclude that, indeed, globalization has caused uneven development, which is in one way causing the global migration of any groups; migration of students in this case. We can see the causes of this student migration through the explanation of political geography and contemporary globalization. But to identify what motivates this student migration, I would like to borrow the theory of motivation from Psychology to further prove my point.

2.2 Motivation

Motivation is a key factor in human development. It doesn’t matter whether the grade of motivation is positive or negative (forced), rather the fact that, there is motivation. Whenever and wherever an action is done by anyone, the end results will in some way showcase the motivation of the people who worked behind it. Motivation gives a complete picture of why someone behaves the way they do and the reason behind it (Graham & Weiner 1996).

So how can we describe motivation? According to experts like William G. Huitt

“Motivation is an internal state or condition (sometimes described as a need, desire, or want) that serves to activate or energize behaviour and give it direction” (Huitt 2011, p.1)
Here in this paper, I am looking at the motivational factors of Russian students that enable them to take decisions about coming to Finland to do higher education. In order to go deeper in to the reasons behind why and how Russian students get motivated, we need to understand the very basics of the theory of motivation and associated macro theories, which will help us decode the technicalities involved.

2.2.1 Theory of Academic Motivation
It is impossible for any researcher to explain the theory of motivation with a simple formula. Though there are a number of theories explaining academic motivation and especially student motivation in this case, according to Timothy L. Seifert (2004), there are presently 4 sub theories that stand out. These are self-efficacy, attribution, self-worth and achievement goal theories. These theories give a detailed explanation on student behaviour in academic settings. In addition to the above details, it is said that though there are many theories that explains academic motivation, one theory that better explains it is the self-determination theory (Heydarei & Daneshi 2015).

Though Seifert (2004) explains about 4 possible academic motivation theories, only three of them stand out to properly explain the basic theme of this research study. They are namely attribution, self-worth and achievement goal theories. This section of the chapter gives an introduction to few other theories related to academic motivation and later ending this chapter by going deep in to and explaining the self-determination theory part which gives us a clear explanation on this research theme, which is motivation.

Attribution Theory
The attribution theory in general, points out the emotional cause of an outcome and how it is analysed by an individual. These outcomes in future, shapes the emotion and character of an individual and their futures performances which is described as motivation (Seifert 2004). This is how one gets motivated enough to take up challenging tasks to build up a better career.

Self-Worth Theory
From the name itself, it is evident about the basic meaning of self-worth theory. One needs to have the feeling of being accepted, loved and respected. This creates a sense of being wanted, which transforms the human behaviour that could perform in a sane manner (Seifert 2004). Researchers suggest that lack of self-worth affects mental health in the long run and affects one’s self-esteem and future decisions (Hulleman et al., 2015). The lack of self-worth also leads to teenage suicides (Seifert 2004). There are different types of student perceptions which can be classified in to high ability and low ability, high effort and low effort. It is said that one’s ability is linked to self-worth. The outcome
determines the worthiness of a person or so it is considered (Ibid). Students always have a failure avoidance strategy to justify the outcome, so that they could keep up their self-worthiness.

Achievement goal theory

As the name suggests, every study, work and whatever we do, we aim for high achievements. Students have same attitude, when they apply to a university, start a course or prepare a thesis. The point I am interested in this theory is learning goals (mastery). Students who fall in this category are those who tend to focus on learning and achieving goals (Seifert 2004). They feel that effort is the basis of success and these students fall into the category of self-determined who are able to take decisions on their own and be responsible for it. As will be explained in the next section, students who are positively motivated and self-determined tend to be more success in their academic and career life.

To conclude this section of the chapter, according to researchers and my readings for this chapter, the above theories form the basis of one’s positive motivation and they tend to be self-determined which helps them take positive and good decisions in life.

2.2.2 Self Determination Theory (SDT)

Two research scientists Richard M. Ryan (University of Rochester) and Edward L. Deci (University of Rochester) formulated the theory first. Self-determination theory is a macro theory that focusses on human behaviour and their psychological needs SDT focusses on not just motivation as a whole, but go deep in the subject to further explain the different types of motivation. People get motivated by different means. They can be by way of external forces like rewards, grades, presents or others who are motivated by their inner passion (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Motivation is divided in to intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). There are people who does things because they have interest in it and have passion to do the work without an external push and they belong to intrinsically motivated group. Intrinsically motivated people are autonomous. The extrinsic motivated are those who are controlled and regulated by an external source. The people those belonging to this group, engage in a work because of fear of punishment or the temptation of getting rewarded. The extrinsic motivation is further divided in to external, introjected, identified, and integrated (Ibid). The external motivation defines an activity, which is controlled by and external source, for example rewards. The introjected motivation characterizes someone who follows the norms of the society and whose acts are controlled by the society. The identified motivation is similar to intrinsic motivation but differs from one important factor that such people are attracted by the possible profit from the work done, not because it is interesting for them. The integrated motivation is the most confusing as it is exactly what intrinsic motivation is, that means
people are autonomous. But it differs from one factor though, the expectation of an achievement. One last type of extrinsic motivation is *Amotivation*. It characterizes someone who is not motivated at all by any sources (Maloshonok et al. 2015).

Self-determination theory further suggests that, in order to form such behavioural changes, there needs to have another factors controlling it. They are competence, autonomy and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). People get motivated by many factors. I say that the birth of motivation in one’s life starts very early in one’s childhood. By very early I mean, when a baby reaches two plus years of age. I have noticed in real life, how a child so young, can get motivated and the opposite also (how not to get motivated) and I have witnessed it first-hand. The growth of motivation starts form home. The elderly in the household (parents in most cases) form the very base of this development.

As Ryan and Deci suggests, people get motivation from different factors and mediums. These mediums control, organise and formulate the type of motivation one grab in to. To be positively motivated, one needs to have an urge, interest and passion from deep down and something that should not be regulated and controlled by an external source. As I have explained before, this leads to personal satisfaction and stress free life (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Positive motivation or intrinsic motivation on itself generates energy, determination and persistence that people always end up with great experiences in their lives. Intrinsically motivated people tend to be more creative, passionate and excited (Ibid). Children who are intrinsically motivated from an early age, in general, tend to be more successful in their future endeavours. This is because they have had the opportunity to be autonomous, they had freedom of thought in their life while growing. This positivity can be attributed to those parents and teachers who were supporting the kids to be on their own, make their own decisions, work through it and making sure that they reach their goals.

We make decisions in our lives mostly based on our experiences and secondary support. So if we have experienced positivity in our lives, we get motivated to do better and aim for being the best. There is a common feeling that, tangible rewards (plus other factors as deadlines, goals) can undermine intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). But, I have a feeling that this is not true. It is true that stress and over pressurization could devalue intrinsic motivation. But from what I have understood from Ryan and Deci’s statements, when one is being rewarded for the work done, they tend to lose their positive motivation. This is not the case often. I believe this differ from person to person. Sometimes, tangible rewards could, on the contrary enhance intrinsic motivation, not because they would expect similar approach in the future. But because, for some people, they get this feeling
of being recognized for the good work done. Coming to theme of this research, so what are the key factors engaging in creating the academic motivation of the Russian students?

The question about, what is the need to study about academic or general motivation of Russian students arise from the fact that the study of motivation is not much popular or rarely used in Russia. It is purely ‘theoretical’ or ‘empirical’ (Maloshonok et.all 2015). This gives an inspiration for this researcher to go deep into the subject, study, understand and gather as much as information from the Russian students. In Russia, researchers consider motivation as, either internal or external. But the lack of a single theoretical model makes it extremely hard for Russian researchers to apply it on the study of motivation (Ibid).

In Russia, the way students feel about why they study and for what purpose, is almost similar to that of India (Maloshonok et.all 2015). Some Russian students are motivated by the future prospects the education could bring in, while some study just to have an education. They just want to pass the degree. Some even think that the future job they might be doing will be totally different from their field of study. There is also the factor of social status (Ibid). Some students are motivated by extrinsic rewards like study allowances. So the base of getting motivated is pretty much same everywhere, though I have seen some differences in the approach by Finnish students here in Finland.

After talking with my Finnish classmates and observing other Finns in the university environment, the factors that motivate them differ much from their counterparts from the rest of the world, or at least while taking about Russia, India and United States of America. I have seen much older Finns, some between the ages of 40-60, coming to university for education. This clearly shows the determination and value, they have for education (not that students from other countries don’t value education). It is true that study allowances (extrinsic rewards) also play a role in the Finnish higher education system, but very few Finns attend school just because of that.

Motivation to study is not a regional, national or a continental phenomenon. We are always told to follow a certain path that could lead to a great future. But the fact of the matter is, there never occurred a thought even for a moment, whether the children want it or not, or in the case of an organisation, the employee wants it nor not. From my research so far, I have found that there exists a need for autonomy in the psychological sense for a better personal development (Philippe & Vallerand, 2008) from a very early age. Autonomy in the Russian context is very different from the Western concept.

Coming back to Russia, Chirkov & Rayan (2001) pointed out that Russian culture has always been authoritarian and very controlling. When one talks about autonomy support both at home and school, Russia is the last place that comes to mind. But compared to United States of America for example,
the value of education, it seems is elevated. The self-determination theory is considered by many scholars as a Western culture oriented (Ibid), because to the Western society, other cultures are mostly strict and controlled, like Russia and Asian cultures, to name a few.

According to Julian Elliot & Jonathan Tudge (2011), education in Russia is considered highly important and is highly valued by most of the students and parents, the effects of which are reflected in the survey results of 2001, 2005, which pointed out that, of all the questionnaire that was distributed among all American (Kentucky) and Russian (St. Petersburg) parents, the Russian parents stood out at 72%, whereas only 33% of American parents replied. This shows how different cultures value education. Though there appears to be lack of autonomy support in Russian context, the value of education is very high (Ibid).

The Russian students see education not only as a medium of increasing and developing knowledge, but also self-growth. It seems the advantage of future economic growth has less importance there (Elliot & Tudge 2011). No matter how the Russian students are motivated and the supposed lack of autonomy support, it seems most students tend to have self-determination for taking up challenges (Ibid).

Nonetheless, as per self-determination theory, autonomy is universal (Chirkov & Rayan 2001). This is what enables a human to be themselves, gain experiences and carve out a life on their own. But from the Russian experiences and cues from other cultures, lack of autonomy should not affect educational growth. Autonomy it seems, is highly influenced by cultures and traditions. In Russia, students are mostly controlled by their parents (Ibid). But this ‘heteronomy’ (Ibid) might affect the mental health of students and eventually their future (Ibid).

This is because when a child grows in an autonomy supportive environment that exposure, gives them an extra edge, more sharpness in life to move forward, make good decisions and more specifically be satisfied and lively with their lives. So, as explained so far, the path to get motivated starts from a very early age. This means that parents play a great role in shaping the motivation in their children, so does childhood teachers and friends circle. We are affected by the factors that circle around us, our environment to be specific. In order to have highly motivated actions and feelings, there needs to have autonomy. This can only be achieved by similarly supportive environments. So it is important that we as parents, teachers and other entities, support the children and show them the right path to success.

To conclude this chapter, I have made use of three major theories to systematically construct a base that meticulously explains the basic theme of my research which are the reasons of international
student migration and motivation. As explained in the geopolitical-globalization section of this chapter, a new wave of capitalism is dictating the next phase of globalization which in turn has created/is creating the instability and economical differences between countries. The theory of academic motivation and self-determination theory shows a clear picture of different forms of motivation, how, we humans are influenced by various factors in the society on the basis of which, we make decisions
3. International Education

3.1 Background

According to UNESCO, international education could be described as branch of education that broadly defines the meeting point of different cultures, exchange of knowledge, human rights and mainly for international understanding (Feith 2004). As described by Hayden (2006), international education can be interpreted in many ways such as developmental and comparative education, though both concepts have totally different purposes.

The international education market has grown significantly since the 1980’s and 1990’s. It is been said that the number of student population abroad has increased from 2.1 million in 2000 to just about 5 million in 2014 (Oxford 2015). The rate of overseas students has increased three fold since 1990. This increase in inflow is mainly due to the highly globalized world, we live in today (Ibid). The economy in many of the Asian countries have grown steadily over the past few decades, thereby fuelling the expansion and investment in higher education systems (Ibid).

With respect to above statistics, around 53% of all the international students are from major sending Asian countries like China, India and South Korea (Oxford 2015). This is an astounding figure, but other developing countries are also following this student export trend; countries like Ghana (around 20,000 enrolments to United Kingdom) and Nigeria, to name a few. According to OECD statistics, the rate is significantly going to increase to about 8 million in 2025 (Ibid).

But the education market had no significance at all and was not even included in the services sector in the decades succeeding the Second World War (Mazzarol 1998). According to Tim Mazzarol (1998), the education sector was considered as intangible back in the days. According to analysis done by, now non-functional, Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) of Australia, the revenue generated from full-fee paying international students in 1993 was $1.4 billion which rose to about $1.9 billion in 1995. The same could be said about the United States, which being one of the world’s most favourite study destinations, the revenue was a staggering $6 billion in 1993 (Ibid). Though the data is almost 24 years old, the results are still relevant in today’s international education market.

3.1.1 Branding and marketing of education as a service

The education market has become so important that its significance not just span the export sector, but also the cross-border relations between countries. The Finnish-Russian Student and Teacher

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2 The state of international student mobility in 2015, monitor.icef.com, 5 Nov 2015
Exchange Programme (FIRST) programme between Russia and Finland is a great example (Jänis-Isokangas 2017).

In order for a successful institution to attract international students, the respective universities need to offer good academic opportunities, specialized courses in English and an opportunity for employment. According to a report by Hanover Research done in 2014, the university is in itself a brand. So just like any other brand, there is a strong need to market it with good strategies as there is abundant supply of competition globally (Ibid). An institution needs to market their products (courses), study environment and future career opportunities.

We have talked about strategically marketing the education as a service. There are several ways in which universities are marketing their products and themselves, nowadays. With the advancement in information technology, organizations are fully relied upon it (Hanover Research 2014). Many universities now has very intuitive website designs that makes it easy for a potential user. Another way that many universities are making sure to get noticed is by being on the top search list in google (Ibid). By this way, any future student searching for a favourable study destination could promptly click on the link and be a client of the respective university. More and more universities are in to social media to further broaden their reach to global student population.

But another important factor to be mentioned here is that, just by marketing and advertising will not attract students. According to Hanover research (2014), potential universities should be very meticulous and patient in creating a public image of their own, if not, the repercussions could be catastrophic in the long term. Universities should provide good quality of education which can only be achieved by high quality teaching staff (Hanover Research 2014 & Mazzarol 1998).

Like in any organization, the educational institutions should also maintain a good organizational culture. There is a strong need to focus on the behaviour of staffs and students, the way the communication inside the premises are handled and should follow and maintain certain values and uphold it (Mazzarol 1998, p.166). In addition to above mentioned parameters, should also take note on how their career could be further developed and grown by studying in a particular institution for which innovation plays a huge part. The study environment should support innovation and innovative endeavours, thereby increasing the brand value and the competitive strength of not just the university, but also the growth opportunities of its student population (Ibid). Students mainly choose a study place which will be beneficial for them academically and professionally in future. The universities and governments should focus on policies and programmes to attract international students.
3.1.2 Initiatives to attract international students

Universities all over the world are competing to export their education market to potential buyers. But what have been done by the governments and universities to attract international students and market their brand value? According to an Oxford university report (2015), Germany, Russia and United States have launched three major initiatives to attract international students. In order to increase the participation of international students and faculty in the Russian universities to 15% and 10%, respectively by the year 2020, Russian government initiated the ‘5/100’ project (Ibid). The project is also aimed at bringing at least 5 Russian universities under top 100 rankings (Ibid). These types of initiatives are what is needed to attract the global student population.

It is not just programme initiatives that attracts international students, but also relaxed visa and immigration policies also make a country and its respective universities more desirable. Canadian and Australian immigration policies are thought to be more favourable to international students than the policies of United States and United Kingdom (Gopal 2014). According to researcher Anita Gopal (2014), in order to overcome the possible labour shortage problem the Canadian government has initiated and implemented many programmes that would make the visa application process more easier and also has implemented more programmes that will enable the international students to stay and work in Canada even after graduation. On the contrary, United States, after the wake of 9/11, has opted for a more stringent student visa laws and part-time jobs. But the United States still remain to be the favourite study destination, owing to the diverse nature of total international courses offered (Ibid).

There are other ways to attract international students. The Indian government, in 2016 has taken up initiatives to increase the seats in its top universities to attract about 10,000 international students (Siegmund et.all 2016). China is also following on a similar path to attract more international students by offering more courses in English. It is also allowing foreign universities to open up branches in China (Ibid).

The international education market has become highly competitive over the years. The institutions and their respective governments are implementing many policies that are international student friendly and their increasing their brand value as a favourite study destination. But researchers like Anita Gopal (2014) points out a probable issue that could hurt the Canadian educational system in the future, which it seems is also applicable to all the major education export destinations. Though Canada has become a favourite study destination with it highly flexible immigration policies, the universities still lack in offering competitive study programs to the students. Gopal warns that, if no
initiatives are taken up to improvise the selection and quality of courses offered, it will be reflected on its international student population application rates and eventually on Canada’s economy (Ibid). This is not just the case of Canada, rather, I believe that every other major education export countries will face such issue in the future.

As we have seen from the discussion we had in this section, the international education is getting bigger and bigger with new host countries like China, being added to the list of possible study destinations. According to ICEF Monitor, back in the early 2000’s China was not considered to be part of international student host country. It is the booming economy that has sent countries like China in to the list of host countries (Ibid).

All the international student host countries and their respective institutions are trying different ways to market their products to make them more visible, easily accessible and highly productive and advantageous. According to the international trade administration, countries like the United States, are organizing live student fairs as well as virtual, trade missions and counselling for both agents and students (Sieg mund et.all 2016, p.11). The same could be said by Finland, where it also organizes student fairs and utilizes alumni networks to attract international students (Cox 2012).

So, being a billion dollar business, the education service sector has carved out a niche market of its own over the past few decades and in order for this status to be maintained, all the international recruiters (host countries, institutions) should look at simplifying and crafting policies favourable enough to attract the international students, by which they could have a dual economic gain; financial growth from incoming money and also the brain gain.

3.2 International Education in Finland and Co-operation with Russia

Finland is considered to possess one of the best educational systems in the world (OECD 2013). Finland has risen and grown from a country which was in one way or the other, influenced (educational systems) by her neighbour Sweden to having adopted and shifted to a system that is highly recognised and sought after (Sahlberg 2011). The most important factor here to note is that, Finland succeeded this ground-breaking achievement in a very short time (Ibid).

One of the reasons why Finland has high success rate in the education sector is because of rigorous and strict policies for teacher education and recruitment and funding (Scott 2015). It doesn’t matter if you have posh school buildings and luxury facilities, if the quality of teaching population is below par, then everything else remains stagnant. The quality of the teaching staff in Finland is high, which

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3 The state of international student mobility in 2015, monitor.icef.com, 5 Apr 2017
in turn reflects on the education quality and finally on the students. This is one of the reasons what attracts the students from the international community, but it is also because of the programmes that is offered in English language (Cox 2012).

In Finland, all the policies related to education is overseen by the government (Cox 2012). The policies are aimed at bringing Finland as major player in the international education export business (Ibid). The policies also aims at increasing international co-operation with BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries that could increase the intake of international students (Ibid).

Over the years, Finland has established co-operation and bi-lateral agreements with EU and nations from other continents (Cox 2012). It is part of the Copenhagen process, the Bologna agreement, UNESCO and OECD (Ibid). The higher education co-operation with Russia is a great example. According to Korteniemi (2011), there are different co-operative projects between Finland and Russia, among which we will be focussing on the educational sector. CIMO (the Centre for International Mobility), the Academy of Finland and the Finnish National Board of Education all played a major role in developing and maintaining this educational relations. There are couple of co-operations programmes, but one of the most important I believe is “Russia Action Plan” launched in April 2009. It was initiated by Finland to encourage the mobility of teachers, students and researchers between both countries (Korteniemi 2011). I think these programmes have considerably made it easy for the Russian students to choose Finland as their study place. The FIRST programme, which started in 2003 by CIMO, is aimed at faculty and student exchange programme between Finland and Russia (Jänis-Isokangas 2017, CIMO 2014). There are other programmes that is aimed at increasing international co-operations like the north2north programme between Nordic countries, Russia and North America.

There are other co-operation programmes in the neighbouring regions between Finland and Russia overlooked by Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Korteniemi 2011). An agreement was signed by both parties in 1992 where there wold be cooperation in the North-West Russia (Republic of Karelia, the Leningrad and Murmansk oblasts, and St. Petersburg). Though this programme focusses primarily on economic cooperation, education cooperation is also part of this project (Ibid).

The universities in Finland are also doing their part in making Finnish higher education more attractive and accessible to the international student crowd. The University of Eastern Finland (UEF), for example is making every effort to internationalize the university even more. According to a European policy report by UEF (2012-2020), as of 2013, there has been bi-lateral and Erasmus agreements with about 450 universities spanning the entire globe (UEF 2013). The UEF offers paid
international degree programmes that are well crafted to help maintain the credibility of the institution and to export the product successfully to the international market (UEF 2012-2015).

It is the measures and policies mentioned above that stand out in the global market and help to grow successfully and gain the education export market share. So far Finland has been successful in maintaining its reputation and will be aiming to be among the top education exporters in the near future.

3.2.1 University of Eastern Finland (UEF) and Background

The University of Eastern Finland (UEF hereafter) is the outcome of the merger done between two universities in the Eastern Finland Region; University of Kuopio and University of Joensuu in 2010. Prior to this, both the universities remained separate.

The University of Joensuu was formed in 1969 and the University of Kuopio in 1972. The University of Joensuu was earlier known as Joensuun Korkeakoulu and was changed to Yliopisto in 1984. The University of Kuopio also shared the same titles Korkeakoulu and Yliopisto. It was during the 1980’s that, the university of Joensuu shifted from a teacher training perspective to an institution focussed in providing education in other streams. The University of Kuopio focussed mainly on medicine, Biochemistry and physics. The preparations to form a new integrated university started in 2006. The earlier plan was to form a Federated University, but was cancelled due to the merger of the universities of 2007. By 2010, amidst tight schedule, the University of Eastern Finland started its operations.

The UEF, a multi-disciplinary university, currently accommodates around 15000 students and 2800 staff members across the two major campuses of Joensuu, Kuopio and a smaller campus in Savonlinna. The university provides training for more than 100 major subjects and has concluded bilateral agreements with over 100 universities across the globe (Ibid).

The UEF is famous for its research in forestry, photonics, medicine and border studies, to name a few. The university is also part of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) ensuring the availability and support of a clean nature. (Ibid). The UEF offers teaching in wide range of international study programmes in English, aimed at degree and non-degree studies. At the same time, UEF also maintains its global status as a leading university, which is evident in the world university

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4 History of the University of Eastern Finland; http://www.uef.fi/en/ita-suomen-yliopiston-historiaa
5 University of Eastern Finland. http://www.uef.fi/uef/introduction
rankings (QS, Shanghai) according to which, the university holds the 35th position when compared to other universities established under 50 years.

3.2.2 Introduction of Tuition fees in Finland, present situation and challenges

It has been debated for a long time whether to introduce tuition fees for students from non-EU countries. According to a new legislation unanimously backed by all the Finnish parties, from January 1st 2016, all the universities in Finland has been granted permission to introduce tuition fees for international students from outside EU (ICEF Monitor 2016). But this legislation also states that it is not effective immediately but has a deadline till 1st August 2017 (Ibid).

There were considerable amount of opposition from the student body and few from the political arena (Sen 2017). According to them, this change could affect the enrolment number in international students and could also lead to introduction of fees for citizens in the future (Ibid). Nevertheless, the legislation went ahead and at the time of writing this thesis, any new incoming students from outside EU should pay the university mentioned fees in order to secure admissions.

3.3 Education and Mobility during the Soviet Era

Education is the centre point of growth in human civilization. It is a key factor in creating values, beliefs and virtues, which then becomes the structure of a human being. I believe that it has no borders and limits. It also plays a major role in eradicating unhealthy and inhuman practices and make the better out of a human, though in some cases the opposite happens. Russia is a land rich in history, traditions and unrest. Just like in many societies around the world, education plays an important part in one’s life in Russia, which also affects the social status of a Russian citizen.

The educational system in the Soviet era was very controlled and structured. During the Soviet times, education was seen as a critical ingredient for a great economic success and also it was politically and ideologically constructed. It was considered that, education (vospitania) could make a Soviet citizen ‘a new Soviet man’, which literally meant someone who had great communist values and world views and also upheld them (Sweeney 1993).

I would like to point out that Soviet education had been very effective and was a major cornerstone in increasing the literacy rate from 24 percent in 1897 to about 81 percent in the 1930’s. Though it was a claim by the Soviet government, but judging by the way the policies were enforced, I am forced to believe that this increase in the literacy level is true (Sweeney 1993). But this achievement was not without its limits. The curriculum was decided by the state and there was hardly any choice. During

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7 University of Eastern Finland profile, Erasmus University Rotterdam.
final decade of the Soviet existence, everything started to fall down. Gorbachev attempted to revive the system with his policies, but lack of unanimity and proper execution led to the catastrophic failure of both, the policies and the Soviet Union itself (Sweeney 1993). But the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of cold war, the economic stagnation and an attempt to transfer from the old Soviet style to the new world order, means different institutions were affected badly. Education was one such institution.

Because of the economic issues, the effect on the educational system was severe. It was actually the teachers who suffered. They remained unpaid for months at a time. The post-Soviet era saw the growth of private sector which was significantly prominent and visible in the educational sector (Eaton 2001). Though Yeltsin initiated Decree no.1 and the 1992 law on education, situations still remained same and even got worse for the teaching staff. There were organised strikes by teachers and it was during this time that there was a move by the teachers to private education sector which affected the state run schools and colleges badly. The situations for many teachers were so bad that they had to take to 2 or 3 odd jobs to keep their family going (Eaton 2001). Yeltsin’s policy called for significant increase in teacher salaries which according to Nikandrov (2014), still isn’t achieved. There was also a change of curriculum since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As explained before, the books in the Soviet era was mainly politically and ideologically inspired. It was focused on spreading and enriching the communist ideas in to the emerging young Soviets. As the post-Soviet period moved in to an open world, so did the education sector. They had to rewrite the history books to more suit the new world. I think these sort of changes and part instability could have affected the children’s and parent’s perception of education and teaching.

One other important point to be mentioned here is the way the Russian society worked during the Soviet era. Everything was closed and secretive during the cold war era as we understood from the news and in part from the movies at the time. Everything was centrally controlled and monitored. There was less or no freedom to express even for the students. The students were taught subjects which the central planners felt good for the state and thus for the kids. This meant that there was no way of knowing what is happening in the world outside and thus remain oblivious to the true facts. As Nikandrov (2014) pointed out, this prohibition meant, the students could never be a critique. There was also the issue of mobility. Everyone who went abroad were monitored strictly and they were checked for anti-Soviet items when they returned back (Nikandrov 2014). This issue of mobility could also be one of other reasons why many of the modern young Russians opt to study abroad.
3.4 Globalization and Education in Russia

This section focusses on the globalization in education in the Russian context. As globalization opens up the gateway to the spread of technology, knowledge and human capital, this has in turn created the opportunity to disseminate the process of innovation (Mingaleva & Mirskikh 2012), which I believe is the core principle of education. Russia is trying to make its education system more international by co-operating with different European Union institutions (Mingaleva & Mirskikh 2012, p.1705).

So how has Russia approached the path to globalization of education? Russia became involved in the Bologna Process back in 2003, where the two-tier system was introduced (Mingaleva & Mirskikh 2012, Gounko & Smale 2007, p. 541). Russia is also facing the problem of shortage of good educators, practical experience and methods (Ibid). On the contrary, Russia, according to some people, is situated between the developed and developing countries (Grigoriev 2014). This lack of resources and lack of proximity to EU regions (considering locations far deeper in the Russian territory), is a hindrance to the globalization of education in Russia (Mingaleva & Mirskikh 2012).

In order for a country like Russia to adapt the international educational systems, there needs to have opportunity to successfully disseminate the educational practices in the European Union or other developed countries (Mingaleva & Mirskikh 2012). Though it is easier for universities in the major Russian cities to be integrated to the Bologna Process, the ones that fall behind are in the far regions of Russia. Steps have been taken to promote teaching and development of research in the regions lying near the EU-Asia border by the creation of Uniting Europe and Asia Centre of EU (UEACEU) (Mingaleva & Mirskikh 2012).

But the implementation of the Bologna Process is seeming to be a big problem at least some of the Russian universities (Esyutina et.all 2013). Up until the introduction of Bologna process, the Russian universities followed the 5 year system which, they were forced to change to four years of bachelor degree and two year of master degree cycles (Ibid). There were other concerns too. As Russians were used to the ‘specialist’ qualification, the two tier was very hard to understand, at the same time the teaching staff were reluctant to adapt to this new system, which was followed by the uncertainty of labour market acceptance (Ibid). These above stated concerns were raised by many universities against the implementation of Bologna Process and there is resistance from some universities also. In order for a university or a country to have globalization education, there exist the need to provide and promote more international programmes.
Even since the fall of the Soviet Union, reforms were undertaken to improvise the education sector. According to Smolentseva (2015), Russian education and research sector still needs to go far ahead to be competitive and truly internationalised. The lack of autonomy in the education sector is a great hurdle in the development of higher education institutions. The research activity at the Russian universities is lagging behind due to funding and brain drain that happened during the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This is especially problematic when the Russian education sector is aiming to grab a place in the world university ranking lists (Ibid).

In order to have a global recognition and quality, in 2008, government initiated the process of developing and creating a new class of institutions called as world-class universities (Smolentseva 2015). These are called as national research universities (Elite institutions) focusing on research and innovative development that could ensure Russia’s position among the world’s leading universities. But even in this case, as Smolentseva (2015) explains, the allocated funding is just not enough to focus totally on research work alone. When it comes to research and publication of articles, Russia lag behind the top BRICS countries like China. The lack of freedom and autonomy among various sections of the Russian bureaucratic sector is a major drawback in creating successful international institutions. Academic freedom is known to bring out the best in research (Ibid).

From the readings done for this particular section (Mingaleva & Mirskikh 2012, Grigoriev 2014, Gounko & Smale 2007, Merry 2011 & Smolentseva 2015) it seems like, though there is a positive move by the Russian authorities to improvise and internationalize the educational system in Russia, there are lot of improvements to be done. In my quest is to find out why Russian students go abroad (Finland) to study, I happened to read an interesting article where it was written that, though there are many educated Russian migrants who wants to be back in Russia, they want their children to be educated in the West, in Europe or other developed countries (Merry 2011). I believe this could be an inspiration or influence to those Russian students who venture in to the process of attaining international educational experience.
4. Results

The best part of any research are the results. It is when you analyse the results that one gets either a whole new idea on the topic that is being researched or about the similarities with previously released and published documents. This is the same in this case too. Though there have been many other surveys and interviews done by other researchers on this particular subject (student migration), very few had been based on Russian students and to make matters more interesting, again very few research attempts had been made on Russian students going abroad, Finland in this case. The only books and articles I focussed on was in English. Even then, not much has been researched about Russian students, their motivation to go abroad for higher studies and why they chose Finland. These factors alone made researching about this topic very interesting, which eventually was very fruitful. The results that I have got, though are interesting and fresh, but not surprising. Following are my findings based on the questionnaire survey that I did. As the statements recorded and highlighted are directly from the respondents, grammatical mistakes have not been corrected.

With the help from the University of Eastern Finland student learning services, I was able to distribute my questionnaire to 142 Russian students. Interestingly, I got 38 replies out of the 142 that I have distributed. The answers were varied and important at the same time. All of my respondents, I believe answered to the point and gave valuable insight in to the topic. The majority of the respondents were females.

As a matter of fact, 60.53% of the respondents were females, while males stood at 39.47%. A total of 23 questions were forwarded (Appendix A) and asked to be filled in by the participants. All of the participants responded professionally while one or two participants gave very vague answers for couple of questions. As one question was not straight forward, few of the respondents had trouble in figuring out exactly what is being asked. They were asked a yes/no question and were told that if their answer was yes, they need not answer the next sub question, but if their answer is no, then please check all applicable from next sub question. But it ended up in such a way that everybody answered the sub question, regardless of the type of the answer they gave previously (yes or no). Though it appeared to be trouble at first look, the answers I received are something new and also opens up a new window for a future research.

The age groups of the respondents were also different and surprising in a way. While designing the questionnaire, I did not specify any age groups for the participants. Though majority of the participants were in the age group of 20-30, there were participants who were in their mid and late thirties. I was rather surprised when I saw the age of one of the participant. She was 59 and after
further analysis of the data, I understood that she came to know about the doctoral studies at the University of Eastern Finland during a summer school, where she met her first supervisor.

When it came to the native town/city/village of the participants, it also gave a new insight to understand my research better. 14 of the respondents were from St. Petersburg, few of them were from Moscow, Petrozavodsk, Sortavala and Republic of Karelia region. It is important to note here that all the previously mentioned places are pretty much closer to Finland, an exception being Moscow. There are others who were from further regions of Russia, one as far as from Yakutsk, Sakha Republic, Russia.

For the question what is the highest degree that you have been awarded? 63.16% replied their previous degree as bachelors, whereas 36.84% were master degree holders. There was no students from Russia, who were doing their bachelor degree in Finland. At the time of this survey, 55.26% of the respondents were pursuing master degree at the University of Eastern Finland, while 28.95% of the respondents were in to their PhD programme and 15.79% were exchange students (both Joensuu and Kuopio campuses combined).

For the next question what factors influenced your choice of Finland? I gave the choice of check all applicable so that, I could get more in-depth answers. All the respondents answered all the questions. So the answers are the combined percentage rate of all those who answered. 57.89% of them replied that they chose Finland because of familiarity of have been there. 39.47% of the respondents said they were influenced to come to Finland because it was closer to their home. Finland’s reputation as a safe country contributed to the next question, as 34.21% of the students replied that they chose Finland because of its safety. Another factor the respondents answered to was, relative cost of studies. 44.74%, almost half of the respondents said it was because of low study and living costs compared to other favourable countries, which influenced them to come to Finland. Finally, it was not a surprise when 81.58% of the respondents commented that they chose Finland because of its high quality of education.

The next question focussed on the influential part of the decision making if the respondents. For the question who influenced your decisions?, all the respondents answered all the questions as, check all applicable option was given to them. From the analysis of the report, it is understood that 55.26% of the participants said that no one influenced their decisions. 28.95% of the participants responded that their decisions were partly influenced by their parents or relatives. Very few participants, 7.89% of them responded by saying that their decisions were influenced by friends and/or acquaintances. 15.79% of them responded that they were influenced by their teachers or by other sources. The
interesting factor to note here is that the majority of the participants who were influenced by their parents and/or relatives were not influenced by other sources. Very few also said that teachers had a role in their decision making. Another most important finding is that more than 50% of the respondents said they decided on their own and no body influenced them.

To make matters more clear, the respondents were requested to explain briefly on the question if someone else influenced your decision, what was their reason based on? The responses were varied, interesting and still expected. Of the 38 participants, 29 of them responded to this question correctly. Only one participant replied as no additional information. The remaining 7 participants chose not to answer this question. I would like to directly quote some of the answers here. Many said that it was their own decision and not influenced by someone else. Some of the participants were either influenced by their colleagues or classmates, as one participant said

“The laboratory where I worked at my home university had been collaborating with UEF, and my colleagues from UEF suggested me to do a PhD here. I had not planned to do a PhD before, and I did not choose UEF from a list of other universities - it was just a yes/no decision”.

Another participant said,

“My potential supervisor at that time said: let's start working together”.

Some of the participants said that they chose Finland because they were influenced by their partner or fiancée or wanted to be closer to their loved ones. As one respondent said,

“To live and study together with my wife which lives and studies in Finland”.

Another participant said,

“Fiancée - she also wanted to study in Finland and found the above-mentioned factors relevant (as well as the experience of living and studying abroad in general)”.

Another participant said,

“My husband is working at the UEF”.

And lastly another participant responded by saying that,

“My boyfriend (nowadays, my husband) influenced on me to make this decision. He wanted that I will continue my education in very good university and get experience of living in other country”.

The next question was meant to understand the sources of their information through which they became aware of Finnish education and especially, University of Eastern Finland. The question was
formatted as why you chose the University of Eastern Finland. What sources of information influenced your decision to study here? The check all applicable option was given to the respondents here also, so as to gather more in-depth information from them. Nowadays almost everything happens through social media. So it was not a surprise when 31.58% of the participants responded by saying that they got the information through social media like Facebook. But none of the respondents got any information through television media. Nevertheless, 23.68% of the participants said that they got information through education fairs. In the previous paragraph, though only 7.89% of the respondents were influenced by their friends and/or acquaintances, for this question 26.32% said that they got information from their previous students/friends. Thought the format of approach is the same, 23.68% (same as education fair) responded by saying that posters/brochures at their former universities were their major sources of information.

Next the respondents were asked are they happy with their choice of the University of Eastern Finland? What do they think are the positive or negative aspects of their studies here? All the participants responded to the question and majority of them were happy about their decision to come to Finland. Many participants praised about the international community and the atmosphere here in Finland. One participant said,

“I was on practice at UEF. I liked the atmosphere. I'm satisfied with my choice, but study in Finnish is hard”.

But there were students who shared some negative aspects of studying here in Finland. One participant responded,

“Yes, i am happy. Positive: high level of education; without tuition fees; international community; close to home country; inspired teachers. Negative: no opportunity to part-time job”.

One participant, a PhD student, talked about demotivation caused by lack of financial support. The responded replied,

“I was looking for the research group to join in a field of my interest. Finally I found this group in UEF. Then I've got a 10-month's grant and I became a PhD student. So, my defence planned at the next week. I am happy :) Positive thing - education was free. Negative thing - I had to found money not from UEF, that was hard and decreased my motivation”.

It was rather surprising when a participant commented on the quality of teaching at the University of Eastern Finland. The participant commented,

“yes. +quality of education -mismatch of the level of education and teaching”.
Though only few respondents commented on the quality of teaching, all of them had positive reviews about it, an exception being the above participant.

Finally one participant commented on the co-operation between Russia and Finland. The responded replied,

“cooperation between universities in Russia and Finland”.

Another important segment asked was the problems and troubles the participants faced during their daily life and also about the present geo-political situation in Russia. As in all the previous questions, all the respondents answered the question and the outcome is rather straight. Apart from few respondents, the majority said that they did not think that the sanctions had any effect on their education process. But few of the participants replied that the they do believe that sanctions and the current geo-political situations have affected the exchange rate making it highly expensive for them, especially while currency exchange from rouble to Euros. Some participants commented,

“I think the current political disagreements will not affect my studies. For newcomers it will be more expensive (because of tuition fees, weak rouble etc.)”.

Some participants are either not aware of the situations in Russia, or they are not interested. One participant replied,

“Not at all in my opinion. However, I do not live in Russia since 2012, so I cannot reflect in a good way regarding that matter. I might say, that for other Russian students drastic exchange rate difference made some negative impact”.

Another participant said,

“I think, there is no any effect on my study. May be because I am not interesting in it at all”.

As described above, few participants were worried about the exchange rates that was heavily affecting their present and future plans. One participant commented,

“yes, due to EU sanction the currency exchange is very bad”.

Another participant replied,

“Yes it affected me financially. As the rate of my home currency went down, it became more expensive for me to live here. Also my friends and relatives can not visit me because it is too costly”.
Being a student in Finland brings in the challenge of a new language. Though most Finns are good English speakers, sometimes we end up in a situation where, a little knowledge in Finnish would go a long way. So keeping that in mind, my next question focussed on their skills in the Finnish language. The question was formatted as “How well do they speak Finnish in their opinion?” All respondents answered to this question and the outcome was outright surprising as you can see from the figure below.

How well do you speak Finnish in your opinion?

Relative distribution of the replies

Figure 1. Finnish language fluency of Russian students

The number of students who said could hold simple conversations is equal to the number of students who are not at all fluent in the Finnish language. 42.11% of the respondents could hold simple conversations, while the same amount, 42.11% respondents said they don’t understand the Finnish language at all. Of the total participants who replied, only 15.79% were totally fluent in the Finnish language.

The next question is a continuation to the previous one. It was asked whether their ability to speak Finnish affect their daily life? As usual, almost every participants responded, except one. The reply was left as blank. The participants who replied that they were not fluent in the previous question, commented here that because most Finns spoke English, there was no reason for them to learn Finnish, though some respondents wanted to find time to learn Finnish because it was polite to speak Finnish in Finland. The respondents who said that they could hold simple conversations in the previous question commented here that, though they could survive with little Finnish they knew, it
was not necessary and it did not affect their lives here in Finland. But the little knowledge in the Finnish language helped them at many times in supermarkets, doctor’s place and other offices.

“It doesn't. Finnish is a nice supplement in Finland, but you can survive for years without Finnish”.

Another participant replied,

“Yes, of course. Since I started to speak Finnish, I feel myself more "IN" then before. I can communicate with another peoples on their own language in the children garden (day care), in the school, in market place, anywhere. I can go to the doctor, can call by phone. I feel myself more confident”.

Another important point raised by one participant was about the minor subjects offered at the University of Eastern Finland campuses and the importance of fluency in the language. The participant replied,

“Yes it helps me to communicate with people in Finland. They trust me more I think. Also because I speak Finnish I am able to study minor subjects here. This is something one can do only having Finnish skills because most of the minors are in Finnish”.

The next question is very important owing to the situation present at the moment. The participating students were asked Next year Finland brings in a new law forcing non-EU/EEA students to pay tuition fees. If this law had been in place when you were deciding on studies, would you have still come to Finland?

The most of the replies I received were somewhat expected but some was different and surprising. There were many participants who thought that fee introduction would have seriously affected their decision. Though the question was intended at bachelor and master degree students, the doctoral students also answered. I would like to point out here that there are no fees for doctoral studies as it is considered as an employment in Finland. This was most evident among the respondents who were pursuing their master degree programmes and more specifically in English language. One participant said,

“I don't know if this law will affect PhD students. If I would had had to pay so much that my PhD student salary wouldn't had been enough for living, I wouldn't have come to Finland”.

One respondent replied,

“No, I wouldn't. I know that in some programmes the tuition fees will be around 8 000 eur, which, in my opinion, is too high price to pay. Also I personally believe that education should be free, and
Finland for long time has been a role model in this regard. Besides, even now being a student in Finland and studying there for free, I still don't receive any grant or scholarship, thus even though the studies are free for me, I still pay a lot for the living costs. Even though, with introduction of fees some universities will offer scholarships for non-EU/EEA, but apparently not all students will be covered, thus regarding quite high rates of living costs in Finland, I am quite sure that not that many students who previously could afford studying in Finland, will be able to do the same starting from the next year”.

There was one respondent who was fluent in Finnish and replied,

“This law only applies to students who are study in english in Finland so that do not apply to me”.

But there were couple respondents, according to whom, the tuition fees are not expensive. But I would like to point out that only two respondents shared this thought. There is one respondent who was an exchange student at the University of Eastern Finland and was trying to decide, where to do the master degree programme. But the introduction of fees removed Finland from the list of possible university choices. The participant replied,

“It's in place this very time when I'm making a decision. I was previously enrolled to UEF as an exchange student during the spring term of 2016. And I'm really sorry I cannot quite freely proceed to do my Master's here”.

The next question is directly linked to the previous one about the introduction of tuition fees. All the participant responded with their precious information. The participants were asked do they think that tuition fees will dramatically reduce the number of students from Russia coming to Finland. If no, why will Russian students still come to Finland? Just like in the previous question, the replies were as expected and some a bit different. More than 95% of the respondents think that the fees will dramatically decrease the number of students from Russia and some of them even think that this could also affect the non-Russian, non-EU/EEA students.

This time also, there were two respondents who though that even with tuition fees, students from Russia will still come to Finland.

“No. Russian students still come to Finland because of the good quality of education and living in the campus”.

But majority of the respondents doesn’t share this opinion. One participant said that with the introduction of fees, the parents who afford sending their children abroad for studies could choose countries like Britain.
“In my opinion, definitely. As I mentioned before, drastic change of the exchange rate and high unemployment rate in Russia will limit the amount of Russian students, who will come to study in Finland. Definitely there will be a lot of people, who still would support their kids in studying abroad, but comparing prices in Finnish Universities and for instance educational places in England (with not that big difference after all), I would assume that they will send their kids to Britain instead. Where, by the way, quality of education is on totally different level.”

For many participants, it is already challenging for their families to support them in Finland. One respondent said that some students will still come to Finland to be either closer to their parents who moved here or to re-unite with them.

“I think that it will reduce the number of foreign students on the whole and Russians are no exception. Some will still come to reunite with their families and be closer to their parents who moved to Finland due to the Ingria roots”.

According to one respondent, even with fees, the study could be cheaper when compared to Russia. This was actually surprising to me. The participant said,

“It depends on price. We have both free and paid education in Russia. Most of students from Carelia and St Peterburg come to Finland to get free education, because in Russia the same level of education is paid. But starting from the next year if they need to pay both in Russia and in Finland, they will choose cheaper one. And probably Finnish education can still be cheaper”.

At the start of this questionnaire, participants were asked why did they choose Finland and many replied it was because of closeness of their home to Finland. According to one participant many students from the regions closer to border will still come.

“It will be system of grants and anyway Finland is a closer neighbour of Russia, students from North-West of Russia still will come, I think”.

The next question was Do you plan to move back to Russia after your studies? During the introductory paragraph of the results section, I mentioned about a question, which I formatted differently in such a way that everyone ended up replying it, rather than the targeted group. The targeted group were those who do not want to go back to Russia. Nevertheless, I got some interesting answers, about which I will explain here.

All the 38 participants responded to this multi part question section. For the first part of the question, 34.21% said yes, that they want to go back to Russia and 65.79% answered that they don’t want to move back to Russia.
As you can see here that majority of the participants do not want to go back to Russia at all. But from the second part of the question it became evident that those people who do not want to go back to Russia, either chose to study/work in Finland or study/work in a third country. Also those who said, they want to go back to Russia, actually wanted to move to a third country either for work or study. But because of the way I formatted the question, I did not get the response of, whether they also expected to find work in Russia (those who were going back to Russia). As mentioned previously about participants replying to both the questions in spite of given choice, there are 13 of them, who said yes and also replied in the ‘no’ section and 25 participants who said no to first question and gave suitable replies in the second question.

To the question, *do you want to continue to study in Finland or find work in Finland?* 34.21% responded by saying that they want to continue to study and find work in Finland. To the question, *do you want to continue to study in a third country or find work in a third country?* 55.26% participants responded by saying that they want to move to a third country for higher studies or future work, while 50% of participants replied that they want to find work a third country. But the surprising and confusing part here is that everybody, regardless of choices given, said they were also not sure about what they will do with their future.

The final part of the survey had two questions concerning exchange students and the possible advantages of having a Finnish degree. The exchange students were asked if they hope to come back to Finland after their studies. The percentage of exchange students participated in the survey was considerable less than other groups. But those who replied either said that they were not sure about it or they do not want to come to Finland. Some participants said because of the new tuition fees introduction they might not be able to afford the higher studies at the University of Eastern Finland and in Finland.

More than 99% of the participants replied that having a Finnish degree will be better for work future both in Finland and in EU. One participant said that Finnish employers give more preference and credit to a Finnish degree than others,

“Yes I think it will make finding employment easier especially if one can speak Finnish. I think they trust the degree from own universities more”.

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5. Discussion

This research study set out to analyse the motivational factor affecting the Russian students to go abroad for studies, Finland to be exact based on this research topic. There have been many research studies on student motivation and migration prior to this research study. But after going through numerous articles for writing this thesis, to my knowledge, up until now, there has been no such research done which specifically focussed on this topic about motivational factors and specifically in English language. This also increases the interest in researching about the topic.

This research study was formulated at a very important juncture. The reason to this is because at the time of writing this thesis paper, Finland introduced tuition fees to all non-EU/EEA students. This means that in addition to all the non-Europeans, students from Russia are supposed to pay the required tuition fees to gain admission to any university in Finland. I would like to add that, because of the given situation, the timing couldn’t have been more perfect for this research to take place. This gave me an opportunity to not just focus on the psychological part of motivation, but also the effects of the prevalent geopolitical situations.

The main purpose of this study was to identify the causes related to motivation factors of Russian students, there were unexpected findings also. Before the beginning of this research I had a preconceived notion of what the answers would be. The questions that I have asked through my survey gave the participants a chance to open their minds about their motivation, decision and also about the present geo-political situation prevailing in Russia with the West. The results corroborated with my preconceived notion that most of the Russians chose Finland because of the high quality of Finnish education. What was unexpected was that majority of all the students who participated in this survey stated that they would not have come to Finland if there were tuition fees implemented at the times of their admission.

There were other interesting findings, about which will be explained in short below. Safety is a major factor when moving to a new place. Finland is renowned for its reputation as a safe country. I was contacted by email by one of the participant to inform that she chose Finland because she could be closer to her partner, not because of safety or other favourable factors. Now this was unexpected. Because from my experience, while choosing a study place or work place, the first thing that comes to mind is, is it safe? A study done by Safakli & Ihemeje (2015) on the motivation of foreign students to study at European University of Lefke (EUL hereafter), proved that it was important to choose a country with low crime rate and that majority of their respondents at EUL replied that this is one of the few important deciding factors (Ibid).
There is lot to go through before deciding which study place to choose from and in most cases, usually, those decisions are highly influenced by different sources like oneself, parents, teachers, classmates and so on. The study showed that a good percentage students feel that it was their own decision to come to Finland. Doesn’t it appears strange? Because most of the students are young, most between the age group of 21-23. Naturally, they might still be under their parent’s roof and are being supported by them. This could point to the factor that these respondents enjoy total freedom in decision making and have high degree of autonomy offered at homes. Deci & Ryan (2000) have said that children who are being given autonomy at homes tend to be more intrinsically motivated, which I guess turn out to be successful in future.

I think the influential factors differs from culture and continents. This could point to the difference between the Western culture and the rest of the world. But to prove this without doubt though, a thorough research combining participants from different parts of the world is necessary to extract true results.

Now, there are many sources through which we gather information about different educational institutions in different parts of the world. If we look couple of decades back, at the time the major sources of information of any sort, especially education, would be television, newspaper and sometimes subject specific magazines or articles. But ever since the dawn of internet and social media, things have changed a lot. Now everything happens through social media and this has reflected in the case of education also. Majority of participants who were part of my research survey said that their major sources of information was through social media, education fair at the home university or elsewhere and previous students. I think, educational fairs are more common nowadays. As universities from different parts of the world compete themselves to get fee paying students from major student sending destinations.

Every year, hundreds of university representatives from US, Canada, Europe, Australia and others organise fairs in Russia in search of students. They also distribute flyers/posters/brochures at the universities to get the information spread among willing students. Finland is also moving to the world of social media to attract foreign students (Yle 2017). This change in the system is highly appreciable and could possibly draw in students. But from the results obtained through this survey (about which I will elaborate a bit later in this section), a shadow of doubt casts over this issue as fee paying students could select UK, Canada, Australia and United States for their higher studies. In addition to the tuition fee issue, are there any other compelling factors affecting the student decisions?
One of my research questions relates to the current geopolitical situation in Russia with respect to its relations with the West. As we know, Russia is not in a good relationship with the West nowadays because of the Crimean and Ukrainian conflicts. So it is quite apparent for anyone coming from such nation could face problems in the West. The participants of this survey were given different questions regarding sanctions, introduction of tuition fees and so on. This section is one of the most important as it gives an insight in to issues prevailing in the present environment and its effects on the future of Finnish education as well.

Ever since Russia marched in to Crimea, the mutual relations which held together the different political institutions of both Russia and West started to fall apart. The West imposed different types of sanctions on Russia which then further created more problems. The participants were asked if the sanctions had any effect on their studies in Finland. I was a bit sceptical about this question as it was a bit too political in my opinion. Normally these sort of questions get best replies when asked to either a politician or a research scientist. Nevertheless, the findings from this research study shows that the sanctions have partly affected as the exchange rate of Ruble has gone down affecting the student finances ever deteriorating EU-Russia relations.

According to one of the participant of this survey, Finns have a very liberal attitude towards Russians and most of the Finns, the respondent had conversation with, were very tolerant. But from my research only part of this statement is true. According to a study for a thesis article by Petukhova (2015) which was focussed on Finnish students, a number of the respondents said that they fear the political situation in Russia and that Russia consider other countries as its “playground”. Some of the participants also mentioned about an anti-Finland propaganda by the Russian government (Petukhova 2015).

According one of the respondents of this survey, who is an exchange student at UEF, students from other parts of Europe also see Russia as offensive, which by the way is mostly due to some of the Western media, a statement I agree with totally. It is hard to say whether Russia is politically correct or not, but when it comes to Russia, the some of the Western media seems to be quite biased. They portray Russia as evil and world conqueror especially after the Crimean annexation and Ukrainian war. As this Guardian reporter wrote “there is little doubt Russian power is on the offensive” and that

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8 The exact excerpt from the survey: “I don't think so because actually Finland is losing from the worsening of relations EU-Russia. Level of trade is falling, less tourists from Russia visit Finland and all Finns I met in Finland understood that, so I didn't feel any anticipation from Finns. ‘However, students from the other countries of the EU sometimes showed their relation to Russia, of course based only on the western mass media, and because of that it was sometimes difficult to have a substantial discussion with them’.”
Brexit in Putin’s mind is a way to divide West\(^9\). But the same could be said about Russia, who equally antagonise and manipulate news against the West with biased views (Robinson 2016). This media interpretation of Russia can literally change the view other people has about the country and this also could affect future educational policies as well.

If we look at the major international student receiving countries like United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, there is one thing in common, which is fees. Any aspiring students’ needs to pay hefty fees to get in to any universities in these countries. One that attracts students to other parts of Europe and Nordic countries are either small fees or lack of it (Muché, 2004). Even when Sweden adopted tuition fees back in 2011, Finland still maintained the free education. This changed from 2017, as Finnish government decided to impose fees on non-EU/EEA students, still free for European students.

According to majority of the participants of my survey, tuition fees will affect the inflow of Russian students to Finland. The results I have obtained are as expected. The majority of participants said that with the tuition fees starting at €4,000 raising to as high as €25,000 (charged by some Finnish universities) (Lungu, 2016), some parents and students will find it better to apply to United Kingdom or United States. Moreover, almost 99% of respondents to this survey said that if tuition fees had existed while they were applying, they wouldn’t have come to Finland or choose Finland as their higher education destination. Though there are scholarships offered to these students, not everyone will benefit from it. Personally I believe that this will, in the long run, seriously hamper the internationalisation of education in Finland. One might ask, what is the real reason/motive behind the introduction of tuition fees? Is it to curb migration or just to commodify education?

When someone makes a move to a foreign country or within the home country, let it be for studies or work or any other reason, it is considered as migration. When it comes to migration, the world has a much differentiated view with respect to the present global situations. Any type of inward movement by a foreign born to the host country, is seen as a future step towards permanent settlement/migration. For this reason I believe, the modern migration laws are being structured in such a way to make the process more complicated which in a way discourages the applicant. I guess this is also one of the reason why the migrants are considered as expendables or pawns, as King (2012) aptly put it.

But the above situation cannot be said about student migration. This is because students are considered as powerful human capital. They benefit the host country in a more financial, economic

\(^9\) Natalie Nougayrède.: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/02/west-weak-russia-putin-threat-kremlin-mi5-nato
and developmental point of view. But if we look at the history of student migration, we can see a pattern emerging. Almost half of the students who moved in to a foreign country for studies, never left. This has casted a shadow of doubt among the policy makers, which resulted in enforcing strict application rules for student applicants. But this hasn’t deterred the new students to apply to their dream destinations or universities. One of the reasons why the students do not want to go back to their home country could be attributed to the push-pull factors. This could be because of lack of future, lack of infrastructure or lack of safety. Another reason could be because of lack of good educational opportunities in the home country (Raghuram 2012). This is true in most of the student migration cases.

If anything unexpected came out of this research study, then it was about lack of interest in staying back in Finland for work. I was expecting that the students would stay back in Finland after graduation considering the present status of Finland in the world economy, technology and culture. This could point towards the lack of post-graduation career opportunity and also language problem. It is necessary to have at least the intermediate level knowledge of the local language to properly integrate in to the local society (Raghuram 2012). As the Finnish education system is considered to be among the world’s best, it is quite natural that the Finnish degree has great value and potential. But lack of knowledge in Finnish language means it would be hard to find a job in Finland in spite of having a Finnish degree. So, with a Finnish degree, the students/respondents could move to a country like United Kingdom or United States to start a new educational or working life.

It is hard to walk over without commenting on the challenges I faced during the survey process, its limitations and the subsequent processing of results. To start with, I believe, one of the major limitations to this survey was the limited number of respondents. Though more than 30% responded from the main distribution list, with the participation of more respondents, the results could have much more precise. It is always better to have face to face interviews, because through this method, the researcher could understand the emotions of the respondent, gather more precise information verbally and most importantly adapt to the situation and improvise the questions.

From this research, I understood that while trying to find answers to certain types of questions, interviews should be the primary source of information, while the questionnaire should be the secondary. Usually not every participants answer the questions properly during a survey, many tend to see it as a pass time (if they even bother to answer). That being said, I am very thankful to my respondents for being committed, responsible and supportive. As I relied on just the questionnaire method, the replies also were limited, but they were precise and important. Another limitation I
encountered later was that some of the questions were not very transparent and there were some options lacking. I had couple of respondents messaging me and saying they wanted to give a particular and favourable answer to a specific question, but as the options were limited and because the questions being choice type, they could not answer it properly. I could also have put in more target specific questions to get appropriate results.

As we reach the end of the discussion section, I would like to stress that future research on this topic could learn from the shortcomings of this research and further develop and interpret the theory and gather more information as the policies are being changed every year, which affects the student migrants. I believe that my findings are very relevant, especially when considering the lack of research done on this specific topic.
6 Conclusion

Over the past few decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of international students going abroad for studies. Researchers see this as a by-product of globalisation. It is true in the case of many popular sending countries as globalization opened up the markets and made it easy for international travel. But in the case of Russia, I believe globalization alone did not factor the reason for international migration, instead it was the collapse of the Soviet Union that made it relatively easy and possible. The change to free market economy and having freedom of thoughts meant that Russians could think of exploring the world to gather new information and move to another country for a better future.

This research started out in finding the reasons behind the choice of Finland as a higher study destination by Russian students. The interest for this research arose from the thought that being a close neighbour, how that have affected the relations between both countries, the bilateral agreements and long historical relationships. But from this research, I have found that being close to Finland was not the only motivation of Russian students to Finland. It was also because of the quality of education and being a familiar country that drew Russian students to Finland. Over 80% of the participants of my survey agreed that it was the quality of Finnish education that made them choose Finland. This also corroborates with my own personal decision and the decisions of other international students to choose Finland as a higher study destination.

Before starting this research, I was under the notion that, it was either our parents, teachers or friends, who motivates us to choose universities and countries for higher studies. But from this research I found that, in case of my survey participants, they had a feeling that the decisions they made were by themselves, or at least their parents made them think so. This also shows the freedom of thought and speech at home and where autonomy is encouraged and eventually the successful consequences of it. This can be pointed to the case of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations as explained by (Ryan & Deci 2000).

The decision made by the participants was not in any way influenced by the geopolitical situations surrounding both Russia and Finland. But to many of the respondents, the sanctions have devalued the Russian currency which made it hard for them, especially while exchanging for Euros. This was actually unexpected. But what wasn’t surprising is that of the finding that introduction of tuition fees would reduce the number of Russian students to Finland. The reason for why this is unsurprising is that, it is quite natural for students to choose a country with a familiar language like English, especially when you have to pay the fees.
From this research, I have reached a conclusion that the reason why Russian students choose Finland as their study destination is because of the high quality education and because of being familiar. The close proximity of both Russia and Finland also plays an important part in the decision to choose Finland. Finland shares a long border with Russia that stretches to 1,300 kilometres (Eskelinen et.al. 2013). The city of Joensuu is an hour drive from the Russian border, making it much easier for the Russian students to come to the University of Eastern Finland. The city of St. Petersburg also lies just few hours from the Finnish capital, making Finland as whole, a favourable study destination for aspiring young Russian students. The tuition fees is a major setback for Russians as well as all the non-EU students and this will dramatically affect the non-EU student applicants in the University of Eastern Finland and the whole of Finland in the long run. The reason for this is because, after analysing the results, I came to this conclusion that the Russians students would not have chosen Finland if the fees existed before. Though it is being argued that scholarships would be a remedy to this problem, the result and effect of which, is to be looked at and analysed in the near future. The current geo-political situations between Russia and the West is at a historical decline. But this has not affected the student population of Russia in Finland and their studies. After analysing all the results, it is understood that though the majority of results were as expected, there were some which was rather surprising and important.

This research has its own importance in the future of Finnish higher education. All the education policies are designed based on the local and international student population and also on the benefit of the host country. This research brings out the disadvantages of introduction of tuition fees and at the same time upheld the notion and give it more proof that quality of education comes first while choosing an education institution, which is what finally, motivates the students. This research study also sheds light on the parameters, the students look up, while deciding their future study place and their future intentions. This is quite vital in properly understanding the nature of student migration both from the researcher stand point and also from the bureaucratic point of view. This research study also focuses on the motivational part of the students as well. It is key to understand what motivates students to make certain decisions. Apart from being motivated by an individual or one’s own dreams, most of the times students categorise universities according to the courses offered to international students. In the case of non-English speaking countries like Finland, the courses should also be offered in English language. The courses should be varied, interesting and well designed. The importance of this study answers many existing questions and at the same time opens up new pathways for a future research.
With that in mind, this research and its future follow up will wide open the facts based on existing circumstances. The introduction of tuition fees is new and further research needs to be done to have a more thorough answer. But keeping that in mind, some questions come to mind for future research which, by the way was unable for me to find about at the time of this research. Is education a commodity? Does this factor demotivate the students to decide against applying for courses? In the case of Finland in specific or other similar nations where education is/was free, did the students chose the study place just because it was free or did they value the quality of education and the country where the study place is located? There are many questions that needs to be answered in future to have better understanding of this topic.

I feel that introduction of fees for international students’ means they might be seen as replaceable commodities. When these international students are paying fees in higher amounts, there should be a system where at least the best of them should be able to find employment in Finland.

If there is a system like one existing in major receiving countries like Canada and Australia, where there is opportunity for a permanent residency for graduates, then this would attract more students. There are Russian students who are willing to pay the fees and come to Finland for higher studies. But, I fear that with the present system in Finland, it is highly impossible for a non-Finn, non-EU and most importantly those who doesn’t speak the Finnish language to find a proper job here in Finland, let alone long term residency. But the Ukrainian and Crimean conflicts have created a much more visible barrier between the Russians and the Western world. I fear that if the present conflict situations prevail for long enough, it might affect the future of Russian students in Finland in the long term. Though these conflicts are something that is not easy to solve, my suggestion is that it should never affect the future of Russian students and that is something the Finnish bureaucracy and university management should focus on.

Finland has the great potential to be one among the major international student receiving countries in the world, owing to its richness in its education and educational system. But untimely and improperly thought out policies could create a missed opportunity as the best Russian students will look for other university destinations and Finland will be losing out on the best brains, who could have contributed to this country’s prosperous future. Because, the more a country wants to be internationalised, the more involvement the country in question gets from the foreigners. But if there are no opportunities for foreigners, then they will move to other favourable destinations.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

What motivates Russian students to study in Finland?

A case study at the University of Eastern Finland.

Dear Russian students,

My name is Deepak Prem, a human geography Master’s degree student from India at the University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu campus) in the Border Crossings: Global and Local Societies in Transition programme. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on ‘what motivates Russian students to study in Finland?’ by conducting an on-line questionnaire among Russian students at the university. With your answers, I hope to understand why so many Russian students come to Finland, and specifically the UEF, to study. I would greatly appreciate it if you could click on the link in this e-mail and complete the short (5-10 minutes) questionnaire – I ask that you complete it by yourself (without help from your friends) by yourselves; without any help from others.

All of the information collected is anonymous and will only be used for my Master’s thesis. No information will be shared with outside institutions or organisations. If you have further questions about the privacy of your answers, or if you wish to send me any comments or suggestions on the questionnaire, please feel free to ask me by sending an e-mail to the address below.

Thank you very much for participating in this questionnaire - большое спасибо!

Best Regards,

Deepak Prem

deeplakp@student.uef.fi
Questions:

Section 1 - Background

1. Sex
2. Age
3. What is your native city/town/village?
4. How many years/months have you been in Finland?
5. What is the highest degree that you have been awarded? (Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD)
6. What studies are you pursuing at the University of Eastern Finland? (Bachelor’s, Exchange, Master’s, PhD)
7. If you are a degree student, what university did you study at previously before coming to the University of Eastern Finland?
8. If you are an exchange student, which is your home university?
9. What is your study programme at the University of Eastern Finland (For eg. Sociology, business studies)

Section 2 - Why did you choose Finland?

1. What factors influenced your choice of Finland?
2. It was a familiar country/visited it before b) closer to home c) reputation as a safe country d) relative cost of studies e) quality of education
3. Who influenced your decision to study in Finland? (no one, parents and/or relatives, friends/acquaintances, teachers and others)
4. If someone else influenced your decision, what was their reason based on?
5. Why did you choose the University of Eastern Finland? What sources of information influenced your decision to study here? (Social media, television, education fair, previous students, posters/brochures at my former university)
6. Are you happy with your choice of the University of Eastern Finland? What do you think are the positive or negative aspects of your studies here?

Section 3 – Problems

1. Do you think that the current political disagreements between the EU and Russia, including the sanctions, somehow affect your studies in Finland? Please explain your answer.

2. How well do you speak Finnish in your opinion? (not at all, basic, can hold simple conversations, fluent)
3. Does your ability to speak Finnish affect your daily life? Please explain your answer.

4. Next year Finland brings in a new law forcing non-EU/EEA students to pay tuition fees. If this law had been in place when you were deciding on studies, would you have still come to Finland?

5. Do you think that tuition fees will dramatically reduce the number of students from Russia coming to Finland? If no, why will Russian students still come to Finland?

Section 4 – Future plans
1. Do you plan to move back to Russia after your studies? (Yes or no).
2. If no to the previous question, what are your plans? I want to:
   a) Continue studying in Finland
   b) I would like to find work in Finland
   c) I would like to continue my studies, but in another (third) country
   d) I would like to find work in another (third) country
   e) I’m not sure yet
3. If you are an exchange student, would you consider returning to Finland in the future to continue your studies? Please explain your answer.

4. Do you think that having a Finnish degree will make finding a job easier? Please explain your answer.