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My academic background consists of a BA in economics and public relations, a BA in political science, and an MA and a PhD in political science. My employer, FNI, is an independent research foundation engaged in research on international environmental, energy and resource management politics. Our main disciplines are political science and international law, but we also have researchers with degrees in economics, geography, history and social anthropology, and have special language and regional competence on China and Russia. My academic work within this institutional framework has for the most part concentrated on Norway's foreign, environmental, and energy policies in the Arctic region, with a special focus on the bilateral relationship with Russia in this context.

In January 2013, I successfully defended my PhD dissertation at the University of Tromsø, Norway. It is entitled 'Norway on a High in the North: A discourse analysis of policy framing'. The dissertation is a broad and comprehensive analysis of Norwegian foreign policy in the Arctic and how it developed after the Norwegian government declared the High North (the European Arctic) to be 'Norway's most important strategic [foreign policy] target area in the years to come' in 2005. An important feature of the dissertation is its understanding of foreign policy as a bridge between the national and the international. Indeed, the dissertation's analysis makes it possible to understand foreign policy as nation-building on a daily basis because this nation-building creates coherence between – and constitutes – who we are and what we do. The High North and the High North Initiative of 2005 are good cases in point for appreciating this understanding of foreign policy. The High North represents the potential, the optimism, the tensions and the bridge where domestic and foreign policy meet and together constitute Norwegian national identity.

The goal of my dissertation is essentially to facilitate a deeper and better understanding of how the Norwegian High North Initiative has been framed and construed in official and public discourse in Norway. 'Discourse' is understood here as 'preconditions for action at any one time'. Policy discourses are understood and analyzed as public, discursive practices that frame and constrain future political moves. Specifically, the dissertation identifies how and in what ways the dominating discourses act as preconditions for action, setting limits on the kinds of political action that are deemed possible and considered relevant for Norway in the High North in light of this political initiative.

The dissertation consists of five articles published in international peer-reviewed journals, each of which deals with a different aspect of the Norwegian High North Initiative from thematically different angles. These articles rely on different sources of data as well, depending on whether public or official discourses are under scrutiny, but do so from the same theoretical and methodological perspective, anchored within post-structuralist literature in the field of International Relations. My conclusion is that the Norwegian High North narrative is about much more than foreign policy. It is a grand – almost grandiose – identity-building narrative about who we are as Norwegians, who we should aspire to become, and where northern Norway – and indeed the country as a whole – fit into the wider world. Norway is suffering from an identity crisis in the High North, having found it difficult to uphold its identity as an altruistic, credible steward and protector of the vulnerable High North environment – while also earning money

by extracting petroleum in the very same region. When identities come under pressure, they tend to be communicated very actively, in order to survive. That is very much the case when it comes to the colliding identities of Norway as both an environmental nation and a petroleum nation.

This is also where Russia enters the narrative. In the High North, Russia is our significant other. Russia is the *difference* to the Norwegian *self*. Russia is everything that Norway is not. In other words, the othering of Russia in the north is absolutely imperative to the many and often incoherent identities Norway is trying to balance in the North. In relation to Russia in the Arctic, Norway is confirmed as an altruistic, peaceful, environmentally-friendly nation, but the narrative about Norway's identity also constitutes and keeps alive an identity of Norway as a small, vulnerable nation that needs support from its bigger and more powerful friends in the West. Using the case of Norway in the High North and the othering of Russia, I show in my dissertation how identity and policy are mutually constitutive. It is my hope that this study will add texture to the current political literature on the Arctic, which very often adopts a classical political science understanding of politics that takes the constitution of the social as a given, concerning itself more with the outcome of various specific processes, given that the social matrix, so to speak, is already in place.