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BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

My research interest is primarily related to environmental management practices. After obtaining a Master-degree in environmental sciences at the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands – with public management as my major topic of interest – I moved to Norway and received my PhD in political science from the University of Tromsø in 2013. My dissertation illustrates first of all how international financial institutions, environmental NGO’s as well as public authorities put pressure on international oil companies after their violation of environmental norms and regulations. Secondly, the dissertation illustrates how foreign actors understand law enforcement practices in the Russian Federation, and thirdly, the changing relationship between the oil-producing state and oil companies during a specific political era characterized by President Vladimir Putin’s first two presidencies. This third perspective is especially interesting due to the rising oil prices during that particular period. Besides my academic work, I gained experience in the field as enforcement official and as consultant in the private sector where I implemented and monitored environmental management systems. This valuable practical experience was and still is helpful in my contemporary work where I try to understand and explain the world around me.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AS PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

I illustrate not only how environmental regulations are enforced in practice, but also how regulations turn out to be a tool for public managers to make sure that particular objectives are being made. The sanctions that the Russian authorities imposed on international oil companies and their motivations for doing so – as illustrated by describing two conflicts between the Russian authorities and oil companies where the former were effectively able to pressure the latter to give up control over major oil and gas projects – are examples of such practices discussed in my dissertation.

NORRUSS: UNDERSTANDING COOPERATION BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE BARENTS REGION.

I am currently involved in two research projects. My contribution to the NORRUSS project, financed by the Norwegian Research Council is aiming to study cooperation between higher education institutions in the Barents Region. This is partly based on the findings of my PhD: how foreign actors understand the rules of the game in Russia and that Russian society, as many other societies, is a system of interconnected formal (including the formal decision-making process of education institutions) and informal levels in which the informal level is regarded as dominant. Formal and informal contacts between representatives of higher education institutions are often a result of years of close cooperation with regard to student exchange, research projects and joint academic programs. Informal networks, however, are assumed to be understood different in Russian society compared to Norwegian society. Understanding different theoretical concepts with regard to informal networks is, I argue, a first essential step before identifying informal networks across education institutions in the Barents Region and valuable if we seek to explore the outcomes of such networks or identify its participants in an international perspective. Informal networks are interpreted differently because of the impact formal structures have on daily lives of citizens and institutions; whether we speak of complicated legal structures or hierarchical procedures as discussed in my contribution to the NORRUSS-project or enforcement practices as outlined in my PhD-dissertation.

'GREEN MINING' IN THE ARCTIC?

Regarding the 'Green Mining' project, I analyse the degree to which environmental norms are established within the Norwegian mining industry. Like most companies operating in environmentally sensitive industries, mining companies are struggling to meet the rising demands by society in terms of transparency and corporate social responsibility. Mining companies, especially those operating in the Arctic, are by society no longer regarded as "responsible" as long as they make a profit and avoid sanctions for breaking the law. Nowadays, society demands compliance with environmental norms that go beyond legal obligations, for instance, by disclosing the ecological footprint of production processes or a well-functioning – and by third parties certified – environmental management system based on international standards. The aim of my contribution to this project is to examine whether such developments have taken place in the mining industry in Northern Norway. Could we, for instance, speak of a green development of the Norwegian mining industry, 'legitimizing' business or simply 'window-dressing'?

