Sabbatical Leave at the University of Oslo

How is it conceptualized and why is it necessary?

An exploratory case-study

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IV
Abstract

This exploratory case-study seeks to understand how sabbatical leave is conceptualized and why it is necessary at the University of Oslo (UiO). Based on qualitative document analysis and interviews with institutional leaders and individual academics from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and Faculty of Social Sciences, this thesis attempts to answer this question by looking into the organization and regulation of sabbatical leave at UiO, understanding how sabbatical leave is perceived and understood, and what the perceived benefits of sabbatical are for both the individual academic and institution. The analytical framework is a dual-perspective framework that looks at sabbatical leave from an institutional perspective based on Scott’s (2014) “Three pillars of institutions” and a disciplinary perspective based on a combined disciplinary typology of Biglan (1973) and Becher (1994). The findings show that sabbatical leave is a well organized and regulated practice that takes into account professional norms, as well as cultural differences. Sabbatical leave is conceptualized by academics at UiO as a right by some and as a privilege by other—but is treated as a privilege that is a necessary part of the academic career. From a disciplinary perspective, sabbatical leave is predictably understood and perceived in line with respective disciplinary differences.
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Lastly, my sincerest gratitude to the tree that gave its life for this thesis—you gave me so much paper and for that I am grateful!
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAUP</td>
<td>American Association of University Professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCCC</td>
<td>Academic Senate for California Community Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher education institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HF</td>
<td>Faculty of Humanities (Det humanistiske fakultet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBV</td>
<td>Department of Biosciences (Institutt for biovitenskap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISV</td>
<td>Department of Political Science (Institutt for statsvitenskap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>Department of Informatics (Institutt for informatikk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Department of Mathematics (Matematisk institutt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (Det matematisk-naturvitenskapelige fakultet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSD</td>
<td>NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Norsk senter for forskningsdata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTNU</td>
<td>Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Department of Psychology (Psykologisk institutt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Question (i.e. Q1=Question 1, Q2=Question 2, Q3=Question 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>Sabbatical leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>Faculty of Social Sciences (Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UiB</td>
<td>University of Bergen (Universitetet i Bergen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UiO</td>
<td>University of Oslo (Universitetet i Oslo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UiT</td>
<td>University of Tromsø (Universitetet i Tromsø)</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>ØI</td>
<td>Department of Economics (Økonomisk institutt)</td>
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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The purpose of this study is to investigate how sabbatical leave is conceptualized and why it is necessary at Norway’s largest research-based university—the University of Oslo (UiO). This study addresses a lack of scientific-based research on the subject of sabbatical leave within the Norwegian context. Sabbatical leave within the Norwegian context has yet to appear in peer-reviewed research as a main object of study. Thus this presents a unique opportunity to bring sabbatical leave to center stage as an object of central focus. As an introductory study, this study takes an in-depth look at sabbatical leave within the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MN) and the Faculty of Social Sciences (SV), as examples of the hard and soft sciences.

Based on qualitative interviews with institutional leaders and individual academics from the MN-Faculty and the SV-Faculty, this empirical study employs a dual-perspective analytical framework. The first perspective is an institutional perspective based on Scott’s (2014) institutional framework—the Three pillars of institutions, which attempts to describe the behavior of actors based on three institutional types: regulative, as based on rules and laws; normative, based on expected behavior; and cultural-cognitive, based on individual interpretation of symbols and mimicry—otherwise known as the ‘taken-for-granted’ pillar. This framework will be used to describe the institutional nature of sabbatical leave at UiO and how actors understand and perceive it. The second perspective is a disciplinary perspective, using a combined typology that uses Biglan’s (1973) hard and soft disciplinary groupings with Becher’s (1994) cultural-cognitive framework of disciplines. This perspective will be used to explain the nature of sabbatical leave at the disciplinary level and to highlight differences within two disciplinary groupings—the hard sciences and the soft sciences. With this framework, I hypothesize that sabbatical leave will take on a more regulative appearance in the MN-Faculty or hard sciences, based on having a politically organized structure (Becher, 1994); while taking on a more cultural-cognitive or ‘taken-for-granted’ appearance in the SV-Faculty or soft sciences, based on a looser structure and an individualistic working style (Becher, 1994).

This study is relevant for four reasons. First, this thesis is interesting because it presents sabbatical leave from both an institutional and disciplinary perspective, which has not been
done before in other studies. In addition, it contributes to how sabbatical leave functions as an institution within higher education in general. Second, this study provides insight into how sabbatical leave functions within the Norwegian context. More specifically, it provides insight into how sabbatical leave functions at UiO and how it functions at a disciplinary level, which can be interesting for actors who are in the position to influence future policies (Sima, 2000). Third, this study would provide a base framework for understanding sabbatical leave at UiO that can serve as a basis for future studies. Boening and Miller (1997) believe that it is important to have a framework for understanding sabbatical leave both in terms of what it can and should do. Finally, this study is interesting because it gives an idea of the importance of sabbatical leave at UiO.

1.2 Sabbatical Leave: Origin and Definition

In order to understand how sabbatical leave functions at UiO, it is important to understand where sabbatical leave originated from and how it can be defined today.

1.2.1 Origin of the term ‘Sabbatical’

According to Bruce A. Kimball’s (1978), the origin of sabbatical leave has roots dating back to before biblical times. The term sabbatical stems from the word ‘Sabbath’, the English form for ‘Shabbath’ (Hebrew), ‘Sabbatum’ (Latin), and ‘Sabbaton’ (Greek). The Sabbath refers to the seventh day of the week as a day of rest and worship for Christians and Jews. As expressed in the fourth Commandment of the Bible, the Sabbath is a day of rest after a period of labor, lasting 6 days:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. On that you shall not do any work” (Exodus 20:8-10, New International Version (NIV)).

Similarly, in Leviticus 25:3-4, the Lord once again demands a period of rest and worship after a period of labor, this time once every seven years:

“‘For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of Sabbath rest” (Leviticus 25:3-4, NIV).

This idea—of a period of rest after a period of work, is the basis for the academic sabbatical that is known today as sabbatical leave.
1.2.2 Academic sabbaticals

Following the religious prescription of a year of rest and rejuvenation once every seventh year after a period of labor, the sabbatical morphed into an academic practice in the late 19th century at Harvard University. After its founding at Harvard University, the practice began to spread across the United States. From the historical documents, it was apparent that these institutions adopted the sabbatical practice for a variety of reasons, believing that the practice would be of benefit either to the professor, the institution, or to both the institution and the professor.

1.2.2.1 Harvard University: the beginning of the academic sabbatical

Professors at Harvard University have been taking leaves of absences from their positions since at least the mid to later half of the 1800’s. This earlier practice of taking leaves often took place at irregular intervals, were sometimes granted without pay, and were taken for a variety of reasons (Eells & Hollis, 1962). In 1880, Harvard University President Charles W. Eliot recognized that this previous system of leaves was unsatisfactory, after series of complaints were made to the University’s Corporation (Harvard, 1880). President Eliot thus deemed it necessary to establish a more concrete, yet liberal policy for taking leaves, one that would allow professors and assistant professors to take a leave of absence at least once every seven years (Harvard, 1880). Thus the academic sabbatical leave was born.

Originally, sabbatical leaves were granted at Harvard for a year at a time at half-pay, for the purpose of “health, rest, study, or the prosecution of original work in literature or science” (Harvard, 1880, p. 20). Members of the Corporation at Harvard believed that granting professors with a sabbatical was advantageous to both the institution and the professor. In the President’s Annual Report from the academic year 1900-01, the President reported that “the sabbatical year [had] been decidedly useful to the University” (Harvard, 1902, p. 13). In fact, within the same report, the President reported that three of the substitutes that were serving for professors on sabbaticals proved to be good enough to be hired permanently at the University (Harvard, 1902). Concerning the benefits of sabbatical leaves for professors, the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences stated in his 1911-12 report that the intention of a sabbatical leave is for the professor, for “his growth and efficiency” (Harvard, 1913, p. 109). In fact, the Dean was so pleased with the sabbatical leave program, that he argued that “the taking of sabbatical leave ought to be made compulsory” (Harvard, 1913, p. 109) or at best not hindered by obstacles such as lack of funding (Harvard, 1913), which was
already seen as a barrier to taking a sabbatical as early as the 1900-01 academic year (Harvard, 1902).

Soon after the inauguration of sabbatical leave at Harvard in 1880, the institution of sabbatical leave began to spread to other HEI’s in the U.S. Before the turn of the century, nine other institutions followed in Harvard’s lead—establishing policies for sabbatical leave, including: Cornell University in 1885, Wellesley College in 1886, Columbia University in 1890, Brown University in 1891, Amherst in 1898, Dartmouth College in 1898, and the first West Coast university—University of California in 1899 (Eells & Hollis, 1962). Sabbatical leave continued to spread to other institutions through the early 1900’s, until arguably the period between the 1920’s and the Second World War when sabbatical programs were either put on hold, or cancelled due to a shortage of staff, financing or even a perceived abuse of the system (Zahorski, 1994). Eventually the practice of granting sabbaticals in the U.S. began to increase again during the 1960’s and 1970’s (Zahorski, 1994). Although it is not known exactly when, sabbatical leave eventually spread to HEI’s outside of the U.S., including Norway. The establishment of the institution of sabbatical leave in Norway will be discussed in more detail in the findings, in Chapter 4.

1.2.2.2 Defining sabbatical leave

In 1959, Good defined sabbatical leave as:

“A plan for providing teachers with an opportunity for self-improvement through a leave of absence with full or partial compensation following a designated number of years of consecutive service” (Good & Phi Delta Kappa, 1959, p. 424).

Just as with the religious sabbatical, this definition illustrates three elements that Eells and Hollis (1962) claim are typical of sabbatical leave: a purpose, compensation, and a period of prior service to the granting institution.

Historically, sabbatical leaves have been used for a variety of reasons, including rest and health reasons. However, it is apparent in Eells and Hollis (1962)’s study that this may have been more of the exception than the rule. Many of the institutions included in Eells and Hollis’ study, required that the sabbatical be used for advanced study, professional work, or travel—usually abroad (Eells & Hollis, 1962). As an example, the purposes as indicated in the 1911-1912 Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Report (HU, 1913), include:
“A most valuable feature of many American universities has been the sabbatical year, with its opportunities for travel, intellectual refreshment, and productive work” (p. 109).

Professors were usually allowed to take a full year at half-salary or a semester at full salary, with some variation in compensation amongst some of the institutions (Eells & Hollis, 1962). Similar to the religious sabbatical, the academic sabbatical also calls for a period of prior service before a sabbatical is granted, which is usually between six to ten years of service to the granting institution (Eells & Hollis, 1962).

In addition to these three elements, Eells and Hollis (1962) pointed out a fourth element that was not apparent in Good’s definition—the return of the professor to the original institution (Eells & Hollis, 1962). Eells and Hollis argue that it is not appropriate to say that a HEI has a ‘system’ of sabbatical leave without this fourth element (Eells & Hollis, 1962). Following Eells and Hollis’ study, in this thesis a sabbatical is characterized by at least these four elements. However, based on the evidence from historical documents that were included in Eells and Hollis’ (1962) study, one could argue that the definition of a sabbatical leave includes a fifth element, a belief that there is a return on investment. As one of the earliest fringe benefits (Eells & Hollis, 1962), many institutions saw sabbatical leave as an advantage to either the institution, the professor or both the institution and the professor. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities) made this point quite clear in their ‘Statement of Principles on Leaves of Absence’:

“Leaves of absence are among the most important means by which the teaching effectiveness of faculty members may be enhanced, their scholarly usefulness enlarged, and an institution’s academic program strengthened and developed. A sound program of leaves is therefore of vital importance to a college or university” (AAUP, 2015, p. 317).

Beyond these common defining elements, I propose that there is yet another way to view and define sabbatical leave, which has not been taken into consideration when defining what sabbatical leave is and that is as an institution; an institution that provides the individual academic with an experience—one that begins at the initial idea of taking a leave to at least the point of return of the academic to their home institution. This experience begins with an idea of what to do during the leave and what the academic foresees as the outcome(s), and ends with some sort of new knowledge that can be passed on to others both professionally
and in their personal lives. How sabbatical leave qualifies as an institution will be discussed further in the second chapter.

1.2.2.3 **Sabbatical leave today**

The purpose of this study is to understand how sabbatical leave is conceptualized and why it is necessary at UiO, from its inception until today. Given this historical picture of sabbatical leave as it existed in the U.S.—its history and defining elements, it will be interesting to see how sabbatical leave as an institution compares to the institution of the past.

1.2.2.4 **Substitute terms for ‘sabbatical leave’**

In the English-speaking world, the most common substitute terms used for sabbatical leave are: ‘sabbatical’ and ‘research leave’. Depending on which of these two terms is used, one might be reminded of a period of rest—as it relates to the religious ‘Sabbath’ or of the actual function of research. While in Norway, the most commonly used term to describe a sabbatical leave is ‘Forskningstermin’ (= research leave/period). Other terms found within the literature and documents include: forskningsfri (= time off for research), forskningsår (= research year), FoU-termin (= research and development leave), forskertermin (= researcher leave), and sabbatsår (= Sabbatical Leave). Given the choice of terms used in Norway, it is apparent that the function of a sabbatical leave is closely tied to that of research.

### 1.3 Literature Review

The aim of this review is to present literature on sabbatical leave, as it relates to sabbatical leave policies and practices, how sabbatical leave is viewed and treated, purposes, and benefits to the individual academic and institution. For this review, there are two main sets of literature—U.S. based literature and Norwegian based literature. Combined, the literature comprises scholarly studies, conference papers, featured stories in popular science journals, and articles in university news publications.

On the whole, the published literature has a lot of gaps—that is, the literature is wide-ranging; yet irregular and lacking in much depth. The literature ranges from very specific and narrow topics to more broad studies, including: sabbatical leave from a (U.S.) tax perception, sabbatical leave in the private sector, public perceptions of sabbaticals, sabbatical leave planning, effectiveness on faculty development, sabbatical leave policies, purposes and benefits, as well as personal narratives. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it does give an impression of the wide-ranging topics covered with regards to sabbatical leave.
Peer-reviewed studies on sabbatical leave in the Norwegian context, as previously mentioned, appear to be lacking. The existing literature is limited to newspaper articles and popular science journals, including The Norwegian Association of Researchers’ trade union journal ‘Forskerforum’ (Researcher Forum, in English), and reports that mention sabbatical leave. The existing popular science articles focus on a few distinct themes, including personal experiences with sabbatical leave, advice for taking a sabbatical, and the state of sabbatical leave and how it is changing at several of the major universities in Norway. It is worth noting that very little has been written about sabbatical leave at UiO; in fact, reference to the University only appeared at the end of one article\(^1\), concerning changes to sabbatical leave policies in the Faculty of Humanities.

The remainder of the literature is predominately based on sabbatical leave as it exists in the U.S. U.S. based literature is both necessary and relevant for this study because it fills gaps left by the Norwegian based literature and it provides important concepts and information needed for the analysis. The American literature consists of scientific, peer-reviewed publications whereas the Norwegian literature does not, and it covers more themes than the Norwegian literature does. The literature comprises of both qualitative and quantitative studies. The qualitative based studies primarily used surveys, policy documents, sabbatical leave applications, and post-sabbatical reports, with few studies taking advantage of interviews as a method of data collection. The biggest problem with the U.S. literature is that the bulk of it is at least 20 years old, with few studies that present sabbatical leave in the present decade.

1.3.1 Policies and practices

The main contributors to the discussion on sabbatical leave policies and practices are Zahorski (1994) and Miller, Kang, and Newman (2012). Further, a discussion on policy changes in the Norwegian landscape is presented, based on news articles obtained for this review.

One of the most commonly referenced pieces of literature on sabbatical leave is Kenneth Zahorski’s (1994) book “The Sabbatical Mentor: A Practical Guide to Successful Sabbaticals.” Zahorski’s book is a guidebook for both academics and institutions for planning and supporting sabbaticals at all stages of the leave. Beyond being a how-to-book, Zahorski also presented and discussed various sabbatical leave policies and practices of

\(^1\) See: ‘Lengre ventetid for forskningstermin [Longer waiting time for research leave]’ (UiO 2008)
HEIs in the U.S. from the late 1950’s to the early 1990’s. Based on past literature and analysis of policy documents from over 100 HEI’s in the U.S., Zahorski (1994) found six common policy elements: a purpose, eligibility, application and selection policies and procedures, compensation, individual obligations, and institutional obligations. From his analysis on policies and practices, he concluded that there were considerable differences amongst institutions regarding their policies and practices.

In 2011, Miller et al. (2012) set out to critically exam sabbatical leave policies at 75 HEIs in the U.S. The purpose of the study was to create a baseline understanding of sabbatical policies and processes so that institutional leaders could then conduct studies on the efficiency and cost effectiveness of granting sabbaticals (Miller et al., 2012). Similar to Zahorski, Miller et al. analyzed policy documents and found five common policy elements: a purpose, methods of funding, application approval procedures, application requirements, and post-sabbatical reporting and obligations. Miller et al. did not mention anything about institutional obligations in their findings, as Zahorski had. They did conclude, like Zahorski, that there were considerable variations in policies amongst institutions, which made it difficult for discussions on maximizing the benefits of sabbatical leaves (Miller et al., 2012).

The most common discussion regarding sabbatical leave in Norway is about policy changes—both actual changes made and recommended changes by institutional leaders. Some of these changes were to make sabbatical policies stricter—for example the University of Tromsø (UiT) changed their guidelines in 2008 to a results-based ‘reward’ thus making competition much harder for applicants (Knudsen, 2008); while the university director at the University of Bergen (UiB) suggested in 2012 to change the service period prior to taking a leave from six years to five years, thereby making the policy more liberal2 (Bergstrøm, 2012). What is evident from the literature is that not only are there policy variations amongst institutions, but also amongst the faculties within the institutions. There are indications, from the reviewed articles, that there are different qualifying factors for applying for and taking a sabbatical leave. According to the articles reviewed, one differing factor amongst faculties is length of service before one is eligible to apply for a sabbatical and another qualifying requirement is documented proof of research progress (Lindstad, 2013; Monsen, 2012).

Although very little is written about sabbatical leave at UiO, what has been highlighted in the news is the change that the Faculty of Humanities made to their guidelines in the fall of

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2 As of April 2016, it appears as though this suggestion was not adopted, as evidenced by the UiB guidelines.
2011, thus establishing a merit-based system that requires that applicants within the faculty have a certain number of publication points before applying (Monsen, 2012; UiO, 2015c). This sort of information indicates that there are disciplinary differences regarding policies and practices that are worth investigating and mapping out in order to get a fuller picture of sabbatical leave at UiO.

1.3.2 How is sabbatical leave viewed and treated?

A search for literature on sabbatical leave and the question of how sabbatical leave is regarded (e.g. as a right, privilege, or something else) did not reveal any studies that focused solely on this question or any that went into great discussion about it. There are however, plenty of empirical examples to illustrate differing views as to how sabbatical leave is regarded and how different actors think it should be treated.

According to Zahorski (1994), sabbatical leave was once regarded as a right by the professorate in the U.S. However, this view began to shift after WWII according to Zahorski, from being viewed as an entitlement to being viewed as a privilege or “an award made on the basis of comparative merit” (Zahorski, 1994, p. 8). Zahorski claims that the reasons for this shift in views is due to “financial constraints, staffing problems, and concern about maintaining the integrity of academic programs” (Zahorski, 1994, p. 9).

A concrete example of the shift in views as Zahorski discussed, comes from the U.S. state of Colorado, where in 1993, sabbatical leave programs across the state came under fire due to the questionable use of public monies for ‘unwarranted’ leaves (Sinisi, 1993). The spark that led to this fire was actually an administrative leave, by a vice-chancellor at a public university. The vice-chancellor in question was about to take an 8-month administrative leave at full salary, when the steering board of the flagship university—the University of Colorado, took notice and requested a full review of leave policies, including sabbatical leaves (Sinisi, 1993). As a result, a statewide review of sabbatical leave policies and practices was conducted (Sinisi, 1993), which eventually led to the passing of a bill that regulates sabbatical leaves at all public HEI’s in the state. Within the text of Colorado Revised Statute (1994, §23-5-123), lawmakers made it quite clear that “a faculty sabbatical is a privilege”, rather than a right. Although it was a questionable administrative leave and not a sabbatical leave that led to this controversy over leave policies at HEI’s in Colorado, this example

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3 See ‘Difference between a right and privilege’ in Section 2.1.
illustrates the shift from the public view of sabbaticals as a sort of taken-for-granted right of the professorate (Sima, 2000) to a privilege, as expressed in the text of the revised statute.

However, a review of the literature reveals that the debate on whether sabbatical leave is a right, a privilege or something else, is still on going and it is not clear that there is a distinct shift from one end of the spectrum to the other as Zahorski has suggested. Considering the mixed use of terms to characterize sabbatical leave, it is clear that there are varying views as to what a sabbatical is and where on the spectrum it falls; whether it is a right of the professorate or if it is something else. Throughout the U.S. based literature, one can find several different concepts used to characterize sabbatical leave. In one article alone, sabbatical leave was referred to in at least four different ways: ‘a traditional benefit’, ‘a necessity’, ‘a right’, as well as an ‘unassailable time-honored academic tradition’ (p. 2) (American Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), 2007). Sima (2000) even referred to it as “a cherished part of academic life” (p. 67). Although this is only a sample list of different concepts used to describe how sabbatical leave is viewed, it is quite clear from the reviewed literature that the debate is still on as to whether sabbatical leave is still considered a right or if it has indeed shifted to the other side of the spectrum as Zahorski claims.

While the debate discussed so far concerns the views of sabbatical leave as they exist in the U.S., there are indications from the Norwegian literature that there is also a big question mark surrounding the views on sabbatical leave in Norway as well. As previously mentioned, the bulk of the literature found on sabbatical leave in Norway concerns changes in policy, usually in the direction of making the policies stricter in the way of adding more prerequisites that must be fulfilled before a sabbatical is granted. From this literature, there is a sense of a shift taking place from sabbatical leave as a taken-for-granted right to something more along the lines of a privilege or a conditional right just as Zahorski described. One example that illustrates a shift in the view of sabbatical leave in Norway comes from UiT in 2008.

In “Dropping the right to a research leave” (translated by author) (Knudsen, 2008), the journalist discusses changes adopted by the University steering board in 2008 and the views of the director on sabbatical leave. The changes made to the sabbatical leave guidelines at the time included: making the application process more competitive, abolishing appeal rights, and adding a prerequisite that requires proof of previous results-based progress. The main message, as the journalist claims, is that ‘research leave is not an automatic good, but [rather] a reward for documented research results’ (Knudsen, 2008, para. 1). University Director
Lasse Lønnum has also added to this sentiment by stating: ‘research leave is not to be understood as a right’ (as quoted in Knudsen, 2008, para. 2). Although, the director declined the journalist’s request for comment on why the changes needed to be carried out, it does beg the question as to whether sabbatical leave had been taken-for-granted at UiT or if the changes were made for other reasons.

On the opposite side, there is evidence that sabbatical leave is still regarded as a right within Norway. In 2012, the director of the University of Bergen (UiB) made a recommendation to the University steering board to reduce the pre-service time for a sabbatical from six years to five (Bergstrøm, 2012). Upon quick inspection of the UiB guidelines on sabbatical leave, it does not appear that the suggested change was adopted, however it is clear that sabbatical leave is still considered a right at the University—“All full-time staff in academic positions are entitled to a one-year research leave after six years of service…The granting of this right” (UiB, 1992, sec. 1).

There are indications that the perception of sabbatical leave UiO may be changing as well. In 2011 the HF faculty steering board adopted a change in the guidelines that require all applicants to prove a minimum level of prior research production before they are allowed to apply for a sabbatical. This change hints at the idea that there may be a shift in views on sabbatical leave, at least by the faculty leadership and this idea is supported by the guidelines: ‘Research leave is an offer…not a right’(UiO, 2011, sec. 2).

Given this minimal information on the perceptions of sabbatical leave at UiO, it raises the question as to how sabbatical leave is regarded at UiO—whether it is regarded as a taken-for-granted right by the professorate or if the perceptions are otherwise. Further, because the University gives each faculty the autonomy to grant sabbatical leave and change policies as they see fit (see (University of Oslo, 2008), it seems worthwhile to investigate possibility of disciplinary differences.

1.3.3 Purposes and reasons for a sabbatical

The following three studies by Zahorski (1994), Sima and Denton (1995), and ASCCC (2007) highlight the main purposes and reasons for granting a sabbatical leave at American HEI’s, each employing a different data collection method and each focusing on a different group of actors within the institutions—either the individual academics, the leadership, or both.
Zahorski (1994) conducted an informal study of over 100 colleges, using policy statements as his frame of reference. From these policy statements, he concluded that the four main purposes of a sabbatical were: scholarly enrichment, to improve teaching, to promote course and curriculum development and to enhance artistic performance and creative growth. In other words, Zahorski says that the overall purpose of a sabbatical is to stimulate professional, personal, and intellectual growth.

Sima and Denton (1995) conducted a pilot-study in the early 90’s, using sabbatical leave applications and post-sabbatical reports at a single research university in the U.S. From their study of 193 sabbatical applications and 125 post-sabbatical reports, they identified seven purposes: to conduct research, writing, studying, developing research, learning a new technique, conducting reviews or creating artwork, and developing courses and curriculum.

In 2006, ASCCC (2007) took a different approach and investigated both the institutional and academic perspectives in one study. In this study, 102 community colleges in California were surveyed in a quest to determine the benefits of sabbatical leaves. Asked about the reasons for granting a sabbatical, the highest responses from the 102 institutions were: to generate a new product, such as a written document, study, or work of art; professional enrichment—for example travel or an internship; coursework; and completion of a degree. Interestingly, the faculty responded differently, when asked their views on what a sabbatical was for. Their responses included: to further education, training or work in one’s field; professional development; and to develop new programs and curriculum.

Combined, these three studies illustrate that there are many different purposes of a sabbatical and the views for what the purpose is and what it should be used for. These differences vary between institutions (Zahorski, 1994), between individual academics (ASCCC, 2007), as well as between academics and leaders. Notably, there were three main purposes that were shared across all three studies, which include: scholarly enrichment including research, writing, and studying; course and curriculum development; and enhancing and creating artwork (ASCCC, 2007; Sima & Denton, 1995; Zahorski, 1994).

The literature illustrates the variations in the purpose and reasons for taking a sabbatical leave. While some of these purposes have existed over the centuries, others have changed over time (Zahorski, 1994). For example, Zahorski pointed out that sabbaticals were once used for completing graduate work, such as a Ph.D. (Daugherty, 1979; Ingraham, 1965, as cited in Zahorski, 1994, p. 8), which would have been more essential during the period of massification when more highly trained teachers were needed to meet the needs of the mass
influx of students at the time, and may still be applicable today at HEI’s that grant degrees lower than the bachelor level—such as the two-year community colleges in the U.S.

The Norwegian literature, on the other hand, reveals very little about the perceived purposes of sabbatical leave except for a few examples of how it has been used by a few academics from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). Based on personal experiences, three academics from NTNU describe how they used their sabbatical leaves in the fall of 2012, in Linstad’s (2013) article “A Blank Year”. From these interviews, at least five purposes or uses are apparent: collaboration with local industry, faculty development, writing grant applications, writing applications and reading (Lindstad, 2013).

1.3.4 Benefits of sabbatical leave

There are a number of benefits derived from sabbaticals that directly or indirectly benefit the individual academic as well as the granting institution. The majority of the studies focused on benefits for the academic, with few studies focusing on the institutional benefits (Sima, 2000; Sima & Denton, 1995). While Zahorski (1994) described benefits for both the individual academic and the institution, Sima and Denton (1995) focused only on measurable outcomes of a sabbatical for individual academics. However, in a later paper, Sima (2000) concludes that there are indeed institutional benefits from sabbatical leaves.

In contrast to Sima and Denton’s study, Zahorski’s study can be described as abstract and difficult to measure based on its qualitative nature, thus making it difficult to truly assess the benefits of a sabbatical (Zahorski, 1994). Boening and Miller (1997) also contributed to the discussion of benefits of a sabbatical with a literature review, but were short in their conclusions.

1.3.4.1 Benefits for the individual academic

In search of benefits for the academic, Zahorski (1994) conducted interviews with individual academics, asking them each what benefits were derived from their sabbaticals. From their responses, he found six main benefits: Sabbaticals as an agent of rejuvenation and renewal that helped them in the classroom; time for reflection on the balance between their personal and professional lives; gaining a fresh perspective on their work, field, skills and abilities; expanding professional network; keeping current in ones field, especially in fast changing fields and fields that require more face-to-face meetings—such as the natural sciences; and enhancing teaching.
In the early 90’s, Sima and Denton (1995) examined post-sabbatical leave reports from a single research university in the U.S. in search of scholarly benefits of a sabbatical. From 125 reports, Sima and Denton counted a number of benefits based on the reported outcomes of the sabbaticals. Those outcomes included: written products or publications such as books, monographs, articles or other papers; grant proposals and received grants; dissemination of knowledge through talks, presentations and lectures; new or revised courses; production of music compositions; attended conferences; and completed reports.

Boeing and Miller’s (1997) literature review covering the late 1950’s to mid 90’s, Boeing and Miller broadly concluded that sabbaticals helped to improve teaching and research, thus proving to be an important tool for career development.

1.3.4.2 Benefits for the institution

Many of the studies so far have focused on the benefits of a sabbatical for the individual academic, with little focus on benefits for the institution (Sima, 2000; Sima & Denton, 1995). However, many of the benefits of a sabbatical for the academic can also be translated into an institutional benefit, according to Zahorski (1994) and Sima (2000).

Zahorski (1994) identified eight main institutional benefits related to the granting of a sabbatical (pp. 119-122):

- Increased faculty efficiency, versatility, and productivity, including improving teaching, adding new courses, contributing new research ideas or retraining faculty to assume other roles in the system;
- Strengthened institutional programs either by adding value to existing programs or being the drivers for new programs;
- Enhancing the learning environment with up-to-date knowledge;
- Improved morale;
- Enhanced loyalty to the institution, especially paired with financial compensation from the institution;
- Enhanced faculty recruitment and retention—that is, if an institution has a sabbatical program, it makes it easier to attract and retain faculty;
- Enhanced intellectual climate—that is, the more up-to-date a faculty member is in their field or discipline, the livelier the intellectual climate;
- Enhanced academic reputation of the institution due to increase in publications.
Sima (2000) argues that benefits should be of benefit to the institution as well as the individual academic. Through literature reviews—which include Zahorski’s (1994) book—and conclusions drawn from her previous study with Denton in 1995, she concluded that institutions benefit in the following ways: increased productivity, improved programs, strengthened intellectual climate, and enhanced academic reputation (Sima, 2000, p. 74).

Boening and Miller (1997) add that sabbaticals are a way to help internationalization efforts, which Sima (2000) concludes that more studies need to be done on sabbaticals and travel. However, beyond these empirical examples, there are few if any other studies that focus on the benefits for institutions. Since at least the mid-nineties, Sima and Denton (1995) and Boening and Miller (1997) have argued that more work needs to be done on benefits of sabbaticals for the institution.

1.3.5 Literature review summary and conclusions

From the literature review, a number of gaps are apparent. Overall, the literature is quite old, with only a handful of studies conducted in the last 20 years or so. Furthermore, no studies were found on sabbatical leave at UiO. This provides a unique opportunity to present a current picture of sabbatical leave at UiO. Moreover, few qualitative studies employ qualitative interviews as the method of data collection, thus providing an opportunity to fill this gap by conducting in-depth interviews with individual academics and institutional leaders.

Policies and procedures: In 2011, the Faculty of Humanities at UiO made the news with their recent adoption of policy changes, establishing a merit-based eligibility system for taking a sabbatical. Given that the University of Oslo allows each faculty the autonomy to grant sabbaticals and make policy changes as they see fit (see UiO, 2008), it is worth mapping out policies and procedures of different faculties and comparing them to determine if there are disciplinary differences.

How sabbatical leave is regarded: The literature revealed that there is a mix of views on how sabbatical leave is regarded and should be treated. Whether it is still regarded as a right or if it has shifted to the other side of the spectrum, is still up for debate. Little is known on how sabbatical is regarded at UiO and this provides an opportunity to investigate whether sabbatical leave is indeed a taken for granted institution or if there are other views.

Purposes: Beyond a few personal narratives from individual academics at NTNU, little is known about the uses and perceived purposes of a sabbatical in the Norwegian context.
This presents an opportunity to shed light on the subject, providing a glimpse into how sabbaticals are used by individual academics and how institutional leaders at UiO perceive the purpose of sabbaticals to be.

Benefits: To date, there have been no reports made on the benefits of sabbatical leave for either the individual academic or the institution in Norway. As an exploratory study, this study will give some insight into what those benefits are—at least as perceived by academics.

1.4 Project Rationale

The underlying rationale for this project is to bring sabbatical leave into focus in Norway, as a central object of study. Sabbatical leave within Norwegian higher education institutions (HEI) is scientifically under-investigated. As of the date of this study, it appears as though sabbatical leave in Norway has only been an object of focus in mainstream media, popular science journals, and in research reports. Beyond this, no peer-reviewed studies can be found that focus primarily on sabbatical leave within the Norwegian context—at least according to searches on Google Scholar and the Norwegian publications database—CRIStin.

As illustrated in the literature review, the only peer-reviewed articles that focus primarily on sabbatical leave come from outside of Norway, mainly from the U.S., which are concerned with sabbatical leave in the U.S. context. While the U.S. literature provides a solid base to start from, the bulk of the literature is more than 20 years old, with little insight into sabbatical leave in the present day situation. In addition, as the literature review showed, there are a number of gaps and unanswered questions that can serve as a framework of questions that can be used for the investigation of this project. Given this picture of sabbatical leave, this presents a unique opportunity to set the research ball in motion, to study sabbatical leave in the Norwegian context, with hopes of filling some of the knowledge gaps and inspiring future studies on the subject.

1.5 Research Questions

In line with the rationale, this thesis investigates sabbatical leave at UiO. Specifically, as an introductory study within the Norwegian context, the point of this study is to gain a conceptual understanding of sabbatical leave and why it is necessary. Formally, the guiding question for this study is:

How is sabbatical leave conceptualized and why is it necessary at UiO?
To provide greater insight into this question, three research questions are posed that together will help to guide the analysis for answering this question.

1. How is sabbatical leave organized and regulated at UiO?
2. How is sabbatical leave perceived and understood by academics?
   a. How is sabbatical leave regarded?
   b. What are the perceived purposes of sabbatical leave?
      i. How do they align with the stated purposes in the guidelines?
3. What are the perceived benefits of a sabbatical for the individual academic and the institution?
   a. Who is sabbatical leave perceived to benefit?
   b. What are the perceived benefits for the individual academic?
   c. What are the perceived benefits for the individual departments?

The first research question (Q1) helps to paint a picture of how sabbatical leave became formally institutionalized at UiO in the early 1990’s and how the institution of sabbatical leave exists today at UiO—both in theory and in practice. This forms the base from which questions two and three can be understood.

Next, Study Question 2 (Q2) helps to answer the first part of the research question—‘How is sabbatical leave conceptualized’. This question is broken down into two sub-questions that seek to understand how sabbatical leave is regarded—whether it is regarded as a taken-for-granted institution as history suggests, as something that must be earned, or if it can be conceived of in another way. The second sub-question asks what the perceived purposes are—which will be triangulated with the stated purposes in the guidelines.

Finally, the third question (Q3) attempts to answer the second part of the research question—‘why is [sabbatical leave] necessary at UiO.’ This question is broken down into three sub-questions. The first sub-question helps to understand who is perceived to benefit from sabbatical leave, while the second and third sub-questions help to understand what the perceived benefits are for the individual academic and departments.

The findings from these three research questions will be analyzed using a dual-perspective framework—the first to determine the institutional nature of sabbatical leave and how actors understand and perceive it, based on Scott’s (2014) Three pillars of institutions, while the second perspective is used to discern disciplinary differences between the hard sciences (natural sciences) and the soft sciences (social sciences), using a combined typology
that includes Biglan’s (1973) hard and soft disciplinary groupings and Becher’s (1994) cultural-cognitive framework of disciplines.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The remainder of this thesis is organized into five chapters. In the next chapter, the two-part analytical framework is presented, including definition of key terms. In Chapter 3 the research methodology is presented—including the research design, methods and methodological approach, and delimitations. The core findings are presented and discussed in Chapter 4, as they relate to the research questions and theoretical perspectives presented in the second chapter. Finally, the conclusion is presented, along with suggestions for future studies, in Chapter 5.
2 Analytical Framework

The framework for this project is made up of two perspectives—an institutional perspective based on Scott’s (2014) Three pillars of institutions and a disciplinary perspective based on the combined typologies of Biglan’s (1973) hard and soft disciplinary groupings and Becher’s (1994) cultural-cognitive framework of disciplines. Together this dual-perspective framework guides the analysis in support of answering the question of how sabbatical leave is conceptualized and why it is necessary, by looking at the institutional drivers behind how actors understand and perceive sabbatical leave.

The first step in defining a working framework is defining key terms, which is essential in order to have a common understanding of their meaning when referring to them in the study. There are four key terms for this project that need to be clarified: a right, a privilege, institution, and discipline. The first two terms will be defined in the next section preceding the presentation of the framework, while the latter two terms are referenced directly proceeding the corresponding analytical contributions of the framework in Sections 2.2.1 and 2.3.1.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into three sections: in the following section the difference between a right and a privilege is highlighted, followed by the main parts of the dual framework. Within each section of the two-part framework, the corresponding terms are defined and the theoretical and analytical attributes are presented, followed by an overview of key expectations.

2.1 The Difference Between a Right and a Privilege

The second research question seeks to understand how sabbatical leave is regarded, given evidence that sabbatical leave has historically been regarded as both a right and a privilege. These two concepts are often confused and used interchangeably because they are so closely related. To distinguish the two terms, I have borrowed from Waner’s (2015) definition in the “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy”.

A right is an entitlement…

“(not) to perform certain actions, or (not) to be in certain states; or entitlements that others (not) perform certain actions or (not) be in certain states” (Wenar, 2015, para. 1).

In other words, a right is an entitlement to decide for one self or to make a free choice.
A **privilege** is a conditional right.

“A has a privilege to Φ if and only if A has no duty not to Φ” (Wenar, 2015, sec. 2.1.1).

That is, one is free to make their own choice to do something or not do it, so long as they are not required to do it or that it is not taken away. This means that a privilege is an entitlement that can be revoked. As a reminder, Zahorski (1994) distinguished a privilege from a right as “an award made on the basis of comparative merit ” versus “an entitlement granted automatically” (p. 8).

### 2.2 Analytical Contributions, Part I: Institutional Theory

This section describes the analytical contributions of the institutional framework, beginning with a definition of what an institution is and how sabbatical leave qualifies as one, followed by a presentation of two different institutional approaches that were considered—“The Logic of Appropriateness” by March and Olsen (2008b) and the “Three pillars of institutions” by Scott (2014), followed at the end by a summary of expected findings as they relate to the research questions.

#### 2.2.1 What is an institution and how does sabbatical leave qualify as one?

There are sundry understandings of what an institution is, each individually tailored to different ontological and theoretical perspectives of institutions. The point of this section is to attempt to understand what an institution is and how sabbatical leave can be conceptualized as one. For this purpose, institutional perspectives from Selznick, March and Olsen, and Scott will be presented—each adding breadth to the interpretation of how sabbatical leave qualifies as an institution.

From an ontological perspective, Selznick (1984/1957) describes an institution as “a natural product [created out] of social needs and pressures—[as] a responsive, adaptive organism” (p. 5). Furthermore, he posits that to talk about an institution, is to take into consideration the institutions evolutionary history as it is influenced by its social environment (Selznick, 1984/1957). From this point of view, sabbatical leave can be viewed as an institution because it was initially created out of a need to establish a more structured system of academic leaves, and has since evolved to fulfill the need for continuous time to focus on singular academic activities, during a time in university history that is increasingly putting pressure on academics to increase their academic output.
March and Olsen’s (1984) view on institutions is similar to Selznick’s, in that historical events and the current environment both play a role in shaping the institution. March and Olsen (1984, 2008a) return to a historical viewpoint of institutions—one that views institutions as autonomous and independent from their environment, and posits that not only are institutions able to empower and constrain the behavior of individuals, but that the relationship between actors and institutions is one of interdependence—that is, they influence each other.

From this ontological perspective, March and Olsen (2008a) define an institution as an “enduring collection of rules and organized practices” (p. 3). They claim that these organizations are constructed of resources and meaning making structures that together create order and predictability. Overall, institutions defined by March and Olsen, can be described as autonomous, constant, and resilient—yet still capable of change (March & Olsen, 1984, 2008a). March and Olsen’s definition of institutions is tied closely to the concept they coined “Logic of Appropriateness” that says that individual behavior and choices are driven by what is deemed as appropriate in a given situation (March & Olsen, 2008a, 2008b).

From March and Olsen’s definition, sabbatical leave can be defined as an institution in two additional ways, first because it has evolved into an organized practice in higher education, with a collection of guidelines, rules, and regulations that are intended to create order and predictability, and second it is supported by both financial (e.g. salary and stipends) and human resources (e.g. teaching substitutes).

Scott (2014) presents institutions in a broader manner, for the purpose of “encompass[ing] a variety of arguments” (p. 56). In comparison to March and Olsen who present a narrower definition that considers a normative approach to institutions, Scott argues that members of a particular institution may behave according to other drivers, not just to social expectations. In addition to normative drivers, there are also regulative and cognitive-cultural drivers (Scott, 2014). Scott defines institutions as social structures that “comprise [of] regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life” (Scott, 2014, p. 56), that can be characterized as multi-faceted and durable, yet able to withstand change (Scott, 2014). Scott’s definition encompasses points from Selznick, as well as March and Olsen, that further supports the idea of sabbatical leave as an institution—namely that sabbatical leave carries with it a set of rules, is supported by resources and is everlasting; yet able to endure change. However, Scott’s definition differs from the previous authors, in that it also includes cultural-

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cognitive elements that consider the taken-for-granted nature of individuals. Scott’s (2014) Three pillars of institutions lays and describes in detail the three elements of the social framework of institutions—that includes regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements.

Considering the three perspectives of institutions presented here, sabbatical leave resembles an institution in four ways:

- It was created out of a need for academics to focus on specific academic related tasks;
- It has proven to be durable and sustainable over a long period of time, yet able to evolve with changing needs;
- It has a set of rules that are intended to create order and predictability; and is
- Supported by resources, such as financial and human resources.

In the following section, Scott’s Three pillars of institutions is presented with respect to March and Olsen’s ‘Logic of appropriateness’.

2.2.2 Institutional framework

For this project, I have chosen to use the framework of Scott (2014) and his Three pillars of institutions. I have chosen Scott’s institutional framework because he provides a much broader theoretical approach than other institutional theorists. Scott’s approach takes into consideration three different schools of thought on how institutions and actors behave, which is more flexible than singular approaches, such as March and Olsen’s (2008b) “Logic of appropriateness”. March and Olsen’s approach is limited in scope and only takes into account a normative basis of ‘what is the appropriate way to behave in a given situation’, which overlaps in a number of ways with Scott’s normative pillar, as will be presented later in this section. Further, Scott’s institutional approach is preferable because it takes into account that actors may behave according to other logics other than normative ones, such as legally bound rules and laws or even in taken-for-granted ways according to a given cultural framework.

For this project, it is important to take these other logics into consideration in consideration of possible disciplinary differences, which will be discussed later in Section 2.3. For easy reference, I have included Scott (2014) and March and Olsen’s (2008a, 2008b) definitions of institutions in Table 1.
Table 1: Institutions defined, March & Olsen vs. Scott

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>March and Olsen (2008a, 2008b)</th>
<th>Scott (2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline</strong></td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational</strong></td>
<td>Political structures</td>
<td>Social structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>structures of concern</strong></td>
<td>A collection of rules and organized practices (i.e. prescribed behaviors for specific situations) embedded in structures of meaning and resources.</td>
<td>Social structure comprised of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What an institution is</strong></td>
<td>• Meaning making structures (e.g. identities, roles, belongings, common purposes, casual and normative beliefs) • Resources (e.g. financial, staffing, organizational)</td>
<td>• Symbolic elements (e.g. rules, norms, taken-for-grantedness) • Material resources • Social activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Embedded structures</strong></td>
<td>• Create order and predictability • Give direction and meaning to behavior</td>
<td>• Provide stability, order and meaning • Guide (control and constrain) individual behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose of institution</strong></td>
<td>They empower and constrain behavior</td>
<td>• Restricts and empowers activities • Affects emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How institutions affect actors</strong></td>
<td>According to (Logic of Appropriateness): • Social expectations (Normative)</td>
<td>According to (Three pillars of institutions): • Rules and regulations (Regulative) • Social obligations (Normative) • Shared conceptions/ Taken-for-grantedness (Cultural-cognitive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How individuals behave and make decisions</strong></td>
<td>Constant and resilient against change; yet are capable of change</td>
<td>Multi-faceted and durable—i.e. institutions are resistant to change; yet can endure change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Constant and resilient against change; yet are capable of change</td>
<td>Multi-faceted and durable—i.e. institutions are resistant to change; yet can endure change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ontological perspective*

Scott’s institutional approach follows in the footsteps of March and Olsen, whose brand of institutional logic takes off on the heels of the behavioral and rational choice movement—which considers individuals as autonomous actors both in behavior and decision making and posits that institutions are not as dependent on society as prior theorists once argued (March & Olsen, 1984). Behavioral and rational choice theorists had an exogenous ontological view of institutions that means that institutions are dependent on the aggregate of individual choices (March & Olsen, 1984). March and Olsen view institutions as autonomous organizations that can affect individuals, just as individuals can effect change in institutions;
thereby changing the ontological view to one that sees a reciprocal relationship between institutions and actors (March & Olsen, 1984).

2.2.2.1 Three pillars of institutions

Scott’s (2014) Three pillars of institutions builds upon Dimaggio and Powell’s (1983) “Three mechanisms of institutional isomorphic change”, including 1) a coercive mechanism, which involves internal and external pressures by other organizations, including the state, along with legal regulation; 2) a normative mechanism, which stems from professionalization; and 3) a mimetic mechanism, which stems from habitualization, taken-for-grantedness and mimicry in times of uncertainty. Scott incorporates some of Dimaggio and Powell’s central ideas into his three-pillar approach.

Scott’s three-pillar approach consists of three analytical elements, which represent different types of institutional models—regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. These elements, along with their respective social activities and resources make up the foundation of distinct types of institutions, as shown in Table 2 (Scott, 2014). Within this table, Scott lays out the three elements along with a set of assumptions that define the basis and behavior of the institution and actors, along with their respective basis of legitimacy—which according to Scott (2014), is just as important for an institution’s survival as its social activities and material resources.

Each of the three pillars describe distinctive institutional structures, but many institutions exhibit a combination of these elements that contribute to the structure in “interdependent and mutually reinforcing ways” (Scott, 2014, p. 59). During the lifetime of the institution, one or more elements may dominate the way the institution functions; however, given the nature of institutions to change in response to internal and external pressures, the order and dominance of these elements may shift over time (Scott, 2014).

The aim of the institutional framework is to discover which institutional elements are at play with respect to sabbatical leave, rather than arguing that sabbatical leave aligns with a specific pillar. This approach is more in the spirit of an exploratory study, which requires an open and flexible approach. In the following, a description of each of the three pillars is presented, along with a set of expectations that I would expect to find if sabbatical leave displayed elements from that particular pillar.
Table 2: Three Pillars of Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regulative</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Cultural-Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis of compliance</strong></td>
<td>Expedience</td>
<td>Social obligation</td>
<td>Taken-for-grantedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shared understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis of order</strong></td>
<td>Regulative rules</td>
<td>Binding expectations</td>
<td>Constitutive schema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Mimetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Instrumentality</td>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Common beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Shared logics of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Isomorphism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affect</strong></td>
<td>Fear Guilt/ Innocence</td>
<td>Shame/ Honor</td>
<td>Certainty/ Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of legitimacy</td>
<td>Legally sanctioned</td>
<td>Morally governed</td>
<td>Comprehensible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognizable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Culturally supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Scott, 2014, p. 59)

The regulative pillar

The regulative pillar consists of formal rule-setting and sanctioning processes. This pillar could also be conceived of as the rational choice pillar, whereby individuals employ an instrumental logic in crafting laws and rules with self-interests in mind. In this model, the intention is to ‘follow the rules’. Those that follow the rules are rewarded with incentives and a sense of empowerment, while those that do not are punished by negative sanctions and left with a feeling of shame and guilt (Scott, 2014). These types of institutions are seen as credible because they are “legally established” (Scott, 2014, p. 74), with governing bodies that carry out oversight and judgment activities. In this model, institutions are more removed from the environment and tend to be more restrictive and formal in nature, compared to the other two pillars.

If the institution of sabbatical leave were a regulative type institution, then I would expect to find:

Research Question 1:

• A set of rules that include specific expectations, requirements, and consequences of rule-breaking.
• Oversight from application period to the end of sabbatical.
• Leaders that adhere to the guidelines regarding the granting of sabbaticals.
• Prioritizing applicants with sabbatical plans that align with departmental goals.
• Financial support is available to the applicant, but it is tied to specific purposes.
Research Question 2:

• Sabbatical leave is used as an instrument to benefit the department/institution.
• Sabbatical leave used as an incentive to increase research productivity.
• Sabbatical leave is required as part of the job.
• Suggested purposes by academics align exactly with rules.

Research Question 3:

• Outcomes benefit the department/institution more than the individual.
• Outcomes that align with stated purpose and expectation, as stated in the rules.

The normative pillar

The normative pillar illustrates a slide away from the very strict regulative system with a formal set of rules, to a more informal setting with societal rules or obligations. According to Scott (2014), norms and values prescribe desired ways of achieving particular goals and objectives, depending on an individual’s role or social position in a given situation. This is similar to March and Olsen’s (2008b) normative approach, which posits that an individual’s behavior is “driven by rules of appropriate or exemplary behavior” (p. 3), and varies according to their role or identity in a particulate situation. The logic that plays out in both Scott’s (2014) and March and Olsen’s (2008b) approach is ‘what is expected of me’ or ‘what is appropriate behavior in this situation’. According to March and Olsen (2008b), individuals make the choice to follow these rules because they are seen as “natural, rightful, expected, and legitimate” (p. 3). On the other hand, Scott argues that emotions are a strong driving force behind his model (Scott, 2014). While regulative systems enforce rules with the support of sanctioning activities, the basis of legitimacy for normative institutions is a moral basis (Scott, 2014). In this normative model, it is more likely that the community members of an institution would pass moral judgment on what is concerned right and wrong, instead of a legally-bound governing body. Similar to regulative institutions, normative institutions guide behavior by the ‘fame or shame’ game.

Given this model, I would expect to find the following:

Research Question 1:

• A set of guidelines for sabbatical leaves with stated purpose and possible expectations, instead of a set of strict rules and consequences.
• Guidelines emanate from and shaped by different academic groups within the University (e.g. faculties) and trade unions.
• Leaders grant leaves irrespective of how sabbatical plans align with departmental goals.
• Societal or community norms and values are respected.
• Some financial support is available, but it is not tied specifically to sabbatical leave.

Research Question 2:
• Sabbatical leave viewed more as a privilege—i.e. a conditional right.
• Sabbatical leave viewed as necessary for professional development and career.
• Commonly suggested purposes of sabbatical leave that align somewhat with the guidelines.

Research Question 3:
• Outcomes that benefit the individual more than the departments/institution.
• Outcomes that benefit the individual career.
• Some indirect benefits to the department/institution.

The cultural-cognitive pillar

The cultural-cognitive model is based on symbolic processes, a common cultural framework, taken for-grantedness, and mimicry (Scott, 2014). On the opposite end of the spectrum from the regulative model, cultural-cognitive institutions are more embedded in their environment. Individuals in this model behave and make decisions more autonomously than the previous two models. Within this type of institution, individuals make decisions based on individual interpretations of symbols (e.g. words, signs, and gestures) found in the environment, which are shaped by common cultural beliefs and become habitualized over time (Scott, 2014). The logic behind following the same path as in the past is placed in the idea that other ways of behaving are seen as inconceivable (Scott, 2014). This leads to a taken for granted—‘this is the way it has always been done’—attitude. Rather than being governed by law or by morals, behavior is self-regulated, and driven by an individual’s own emotions (Scott, 2014). Individuals who align their behavior with cultural beliefs are rewarded by a sense of competency and connectedness, whereas those that fail at this attempt are left with confusion (Scott, 2014). In the face of confusion, individuals tend to mimic others in their behavior. Legitimacy in this model “comes from conforming to a common definition of the situation, frame of reference or a recognizable role (for individuals) or structural template (for organizations)” (Scott, 2014, p. 74).
Given this institutional model, I would expect to find the following:

Research Question 1:
- Guidelines are vague—with few to no expectations, or lacking all together.
- Little or no oversight or follow-up.
- Individual faculty and departmental cultures taken into consideration.
- Applicants have explicate rights.
- Relaxed attitude about granting leaves.
- No financial support is available for sabbatical—i.e. applicant must seek outside funding.

Research Question 2:
- View of sabbatical leave as a taken-for-granted, unconditional right.
- Sabbaticals not deemed to be important for career or required part of job.
- Variations in conceptions and interpretations of sabbatical leave.
- Mimicking or habitual practices.

Research Question 3:
- Outcomes of sabbatical only benefit the individual.
- Outcomes that barely (if at all) align with purpose(s) of sabbatical leave as stated in the guidelines.

2.2.2.2 Overview of expectations and codes for analysis

The primary theoretical basis for this study is based on theoretical contributions from Scott’s Three pillars of institutions. As an exploratory study, I am employing Scott’s three-pillar model to determine which institutional elements are most prominent at play in the understanding and perception of sabbatical leave at UiO.

As an exploratory study, Scott’s broad approach is the better choice over other singular models like that of March and Olsen, because it considers more than one type of institutional model and can more easily be used in conjunction with the next part of the framework, which considers differences that may play out amongst the different disciplinary groupings of this study. The expected findings for the institutional framework, as presented in the previous section, are summarized in Table 3, as they relate to each of the research questions. The table also includes coding terms in parenthesis that will be used later in the analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1: How is sabbatical leave (SL) organized and regulated at UiO?</th>
<th>Regulative elements</th>
<th>Normative elements</th>
<th>Cultural-cognitive elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Set of expectations/rules with consequences (Rules &amp; consequences)</td>
<td>• General guidelines with defined purpose, and few general expectations (Purpose &amp; general expectations)</td>
<td>• Vague or no guidelines—poorly organized (Lack of guidelines)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Oversight defined (Oversight)</td>
<td>• Guidelines shaped by academics and supported by trade unions (Actors)</td>
<td>• No stated expectations or oversight (No expectations/ oversight)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strict granting practices (Oversight)</td>
<td>• Granting practices that respect individual research plans, regardless of departmental goals (Non-instrumental)</td>
<td>• Granting authority given to faculties or departments—in consideration of cultural differences (Cultural considerations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plans that align with departmental goals are prioritized (Instrumental)</td>
<td>• Respect for norms and values (Norms &amp; values)</td>
<td>• Relaxed attitude about granting leaves (Attitude &amp; behavior)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial support available—tied to specific purposes (Purposeful funding)</td>
<td>• Financial support available, but not tied specifically to sabbatical leave (Funding)</td>
<td>• No financial support available—applicants must seek outside support (No funding)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: How is sabbatical leave perceived and understood by academics?</td>
<td>• SL used as an instrument or incentive (Instrumental)</td>
<td>• SL viewed as a privilege (Views)</td>
<td>• SL as an automatic/unconditiona l right (Views)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. How is SL regarded?</td>
<td>• SL is required as part of job (Requirement)</td>
<td>• Necessary for academic profession and professional development (Academic career)</td>
<td>• SL not important for career development or required for job (Self interests)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What are the perceived purposes of SL and how do they align with the guidelines?</td>
<td>• Perceived purposes align exactly with guidelines, no variation (Strict alignment)</td>
<td>• Perceived purposes align with guidelines, some variation (aligned purposes)</td>
<td>• Variations in conceptualizations of SL (Various concepts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. What are the perceived purposes of SL and how do they align with the guidelines?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mimicking others (Behavior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3: What are the perceived benefits of a sabbatical for the individual academic and the institution?</td>
<td>• SL as a privilege (Views)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Who do they benefit?</td>
<td>• Perceived purposes align with guidelines, some variation (aligned purposes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Benefits to the academic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Benefits to the department?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More institutional benefits than individual benefits (Instrumental)</td>
<td>• More direct benefits to individual academic (Academic career)</td>
<td>• Outcomes perceived to benefit the individual only (Taken-for-grantedness)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Outcomes that align with stated expectations and institutional goals (Instrumental)</td>
<td>• Outcomes with respect to individual career goals (Academic career)</td>
<td>• Outcomes that barely align with purpose(s) of SL in guidelines (non-aligned purpose)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some, indirect benefits to institution (dept. benefits)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2.3 Analytical Contributions, Part II: Disciplinary Differences

The second part of the analytical framework draws attention to the discipline level and is useful for teasing out potential differences that may exist amongst the disciplines or between disciplinary groupings. Applied with the institutional framework, this part of the framework will be used to compare the findings of the different disciplines in this study within the hard / soft science divide; thus resulting in more credible results. In the next few sections, the term ‘discipline’ will be defined, followed by a presentation of the disciplinary typologies of Biglan and Becher, and finally, the expected findings.

2.3.1 What is a discipline?

Disciplines form the base-organizing unit of knowledge within universities; yet transcend across large territories—within systems and even across national boundaries (Becher, 1994; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Clark, 1983). Each discipline is unique both in how it functions and how its members behave. The point of this section is to define the term ‘discipline’ and how it can be conceptualized for the second part of the framework, which highlights the importance of focusing in on the disciplinary level and explores the potential differences that may play out amongst the different disciplines investigated in this study.

Clark (1983) calls disciplines the ‘basic building blocks’ in the organization of the university. He defines a discipline as a “specialized form of organization…[that] specializes by subject, that is by knowledge domain” (p. 29). Clark frames disciplines as ‘cultural houses’ in which there are common knowledge traditions, codes of conduct and “share[d] beliefs about theory, methodology, techniques, and problems” (p. 76).

From an anthropological point of view, Bailey (2009/1977) considers universities as communities of cultures that are divided into ‘tribes’, “each with its own name and territory… with a distinct language… and a variety of symbolic ways of demonstrating its apartness from others” (p. 212).

Becher and Trowler follow this conceptualization, calling communities of academics ‘academic tribes’ and expand on this notion by setting disciplines within a cultural framework (Becher, 1994; Becher & Trowler, 2001). Together they define disciplines as communities of academics or ‘academic tribes’ organized around ideas, which “lend themselves to sustained exploration, and which form the subject matter of the disciplines in question” (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 23); each with a “set of taken-for-granted values, attitudes, and ways of behaving, which are articulated through and reinforced by recurrent
practices among a group of people in a given context” (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 23). It is noteworthy to mention that in Trowler (2014) later departed from the strong essentialist view of disciplines, in favor of a more moderate position that acknowledges that not all essential and core characteristics of disciplines are present at all times.

In addition to disciplines, there are also organized groups of people that are organized around professions or fields that borrow knowledge from a variety of different disciplines, such as the medical profession, or the field of higher education.

Regardless of the point of view one takes, under the label of a ‘discipline’ these tribes, communities, or organizational structures share a common culture, which includes a number of common traits that make them distinguishable from one another. Together, their traditions, language, practices, and knowledge are what separate them from other disciplines; yet unite them in global communities that extend far beyond the walls of a single institution.

2.3.2 Biglan and Becher’s disciplinary typologies

The importance of the individual discipline in higher education research and policy management has arguably been overlooked by higher education researchers (Becher, 1994; Biglan, 1973; Clark, 1983). For one reason or another, higher education research tends to make generalizations across disciplines as though they are homogenous and can be lumped together in one large group. Disciplinary scholars have demonstrated that indeed this is not the case—that disciplines are more heterogeneous than homogenous (Becher, 1994; Biglan, 1973; Kolb, 1981; Trowler, 2014). Becher (1994) argued that overlooking individual disciplines and disregarding potential differences can lead to potential fallacies or wider conclusions than what evidence can prove. Dismissing disciplinary differences can impact higher education management and policy making with respect to teaching, learning, curriculum development, and research, including resource allocation.

The intent of the remainder of this section is to present the work of two disciplinary scholars—Biglan and Becher, draw attention to the general research practices that are typically associated with the selected disciplines of this study—biology, mathematics, informatics, political sciences, psychology, and economics—as they relate to Biglan’s (1973) disciplinary groupings and Becher’s (1994) cultural-cognitive framework, and to present my expected findings and hypotheses.

Biglan’s (1973) typology of disciplinary differences comes as a result of a multi-dimensional analysis on content and methods of subject matter. Biglan came up with a 3-
dimensional model of disciplines, which he claims characterizes the disciplines in most institutions. His 3-D model grouped disciplines based on the existence of a paradigm—i.e. whether disciplines were more paradigmatic or idiosyncratic (hard vs. soft sciences), concern with application (pure science vs. practice application), and concern with life systems. This type of framework, as Biglan suggests, may be useful in studying the cognitive styles of academics from different disciplines and fields. The disciplinary groupings, according to the existence of a paradigm and concern with application are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Disciplinary Groupings Based on Paradigm and Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplinary area</th>
<th>Disciplinary grouping (by paradigm and application)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences</td>
<td>Hard-Pure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science-based professions</td>
<td>Hard-Applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities &amp; Social sciences</td>
<td>Soft-Pure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social professions</td>
<td>Soft-Applied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Biglan (1973)

Table 5: Nature of Disciplinary Knowledge and Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplinary grouping</th>
<th>Nature of knowledge</th>
<th>Nature of disciplinary culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pure sciences (e.g. physics):  
  ‘Hard-pure’              | Cumulative; atomistic (crystalline/tree-like); concerned with universals, quantities; simplification; resulting in discovery/explanation. | Competitive, gregarious; politically well organized; high publication rate; task-oriented. |
| Humanities (e.g. history) 
  and pure social sciences
  (e.g. anthropology):  
  ‘Soft-pure’              | Reiterative; holistic (organic/river-like); concerned with particulars, qualities, complication; resulting in understanding/interpretation. | Individualistic, plurastic; loosely structured; low publication rate; person-oriented. |
| Technologicals (e.g. mechanical engineering):  
  ‘Hard-applied’           | Purposive; pragmatic (know-how via hard knowledge); concerned with mastery of physical environment; resulting in products/techniques. | Entrepreneurial, cosmopolitan; dominated by professional values; patents substitutable for publications; role oriented. |
| Applied social sciences (e.g. education):  
  ‘Soft-applied’           | Functional; utilitarian (know-how via soft knowledge); concerned with enhancement of [semi]-professional practice; resulting in protocols/procedures. | Outward-looking; uncertain in status; dominated by intellectual fashions; publication rates reduced by consultancies; power-oriented. |

Source: Becher (1994, p. 154)

Becher (1994) built on Biglan’s work, by applying a cultural-cognitive framework to Biglan’s (1973) broad groupings, based on Biglan’s first two dimensions—hard-pure, soft-
pure, hard-applied, and soft-applied (see Table 4). Using Biglan’s groupings, Becher made predicted linkages between the nature of the knowledge and the nature of the culture. Combining the findings from his previous empirical studies on research norms and values and graduate education, Becher elaborated on the general characteristics one might find within a discipline of a particular grouping. Table 5 illustrates the general characteristics of the disciplinary groupings, based on the linkages between knowledge and culture.

Disciplinary scholars, such as Becher and Biglan, have made strong arguments in support of research at the disciplinary level. I have chosen to focus on Biglan’s first dimension, which categorizes disciplines according to the existence of a paradigm and divides disciplines into the hard sciences and the soft sciences. Originally, I set out to investigate disciplinary differences according to Biglan’s first two dimensions—hard/soft, pure/applied—however, I have chosen to only use the first dimension of Biglan’s disciplinary typology because of the small scale of this project and small sample size.

Based on Biglan’s first dimension of disciplinary grouping—hard sciences and soft sciences, I have classified the six disciplines as follows:

- **Hard sciences**: Biology (MN), Mathematics (MN), Informatics (MN)
- **Soft sciences**: Political science (SV), Economics (SV), Psychology (SV)

Given these two disciplinary groupings, this framework works in conjunction with the institutional framework by bringing the focus to the discipline level to discern whether there are differences in the institutional nature of sabbatical leave and how actors understand and perceive it in the hard and soft sciences. Adding a disciplinary perspective to the overall framework helps to create a more refined and credible study.

### 2.4 Framework Application and Hypotheses

Together the dual perspective framework will help to guide the analysis of the findings to explain the institutional nature of sabbatical leave at UiO and to highlight disciplinary differences that may exist between the hard and soft sciences. The dual framework will be applied to the findings of each question in a two-step process as follows:

1. The first step is to apply Scott’s three-pillar institutional model to determine which type of institutional elements are at play at the University as a whole, based on the expectations I outlined in Section 2.2.2.1 (see also Table 3).
2. The second step divides the findings by their respective hard/soft disciplinary grouping to in order to discern whether there are disciplinary differences in the institutional nature of sabbatical leave within the two disciplinary groupings.

_Hypotheses_

With this dual-perspective framework, I expect that sabbatical leave will display a more regulative nature in the hard sciences and a more cultural-cognitive nature in the soft sciences, with few normative elements in both. Specifically, I expect that actors in the hard sciences will understand and perceive sabbatical leave more from a regulative standpoint—i.e. that sabbatical leave must be earned according to a set of rules and expectations; while actors in the soft sciences treat sabbatical leave in a more taken-for-granted fashion. I also expect that actors in both the hard and soft sciences will perceive of sabbatical leave as necessary for their career and professional development. I expect these findings based on their distinct disciplinary characteristics that align with distinct institutional characteristics of each of the three institutional types.

_Basis for hypotheses_

In Table 6, I have outlined the hypothesized findings, according to which institutional elements (see Table 2) the disciplinary characteristics align with. The disciplinary characteristics are taken from Becher’s (1994) cultural-cognitive framework (see ‘Nature of disciplinary culture’ in Table 5), except for the two characteristics for psychology, which come from Stark’s (1998) “Typology of Professional Education Programs”.

For the hard sciences—including math and biology, I predict that sabbatical leave will take on a more regulative nature because these two disciplines are politically well-organized and task-oriented (Becher, 1994), which aligns with institutional behavior that is concerned with setting and following rules, and employs a rational, instrumental type of thinking (Scott, 2014). The normative elements come from the informatics, which display a slightly different set of disciplinary characteristics, but are still considered part of the hard sciences group. Informatics can be described as role-oriented (Becher, 1994), which aligns with the normative elements of social expectations, as well as norms and values (Scott, 2014).

For the soft sciences—including political science and economics, I predict that sabbatical leave will take on a more cultural-cognitive nature because these two disciplines are individualistic and loosely-structured (Becher, 1994), which aligns with institutional behavior that is based on individual interpretation of symbols and taken-for-grantedness (Scott, 2014).
The normative elements come from psychology—which displays different characteristics than the other two soft sciences, such as being a profession-based discipline that can be characterized as having strong public control and a strong ethical emphasis (Stark, 1998). These disciplinary characteristics align with the normative institutional elements of social expectations, as well as norms and values.

Table 6: Hypothesized Findings by Disciplinary Grouping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplinary groupings</th>
<th>Disciplinary characteristics (Becher, 1994)</th>
<th>Nature of institutional type (Scott, 2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard Sciences (Math and Biology)</td>
<td>• Politically well-organized • Task-oriented</td>
<td>Regulative pillar:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal set of rules • Rule-following • Instrumental thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Sciences (Informatics)</td>
<td>• Role-oriented</td>
<td>Normative pillar:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Norms and values • Social expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Sciences (Psychology)</td>
<td>• Person-oriented • Strong public control (Stark, 1998) • High-ethical emphasis (Stark, 1998)</td>
<td>Cultural-cognitive pillar:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loosely structured • Individualistic</td>
<td>• Taken for grantedness • Individual interpretations of symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Sciences (Political Science and Economics)</td>
<td>• Loosely structured • Individualistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Research Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology and methods will be presented, including research design and case selection, methods and data sources, and delimitations.

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study employs a qualitative, exploratory case-study design. More specifically, this is an embedded case-study that focuses on six disciplines within the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and Faculty of Social Sciences at UiO. This type of research design is ideal for becoming familiar with objects or phenomena where there is a lack of prior research or empirical scrutiny (Adler & Clark, 2015; Patton, 2002; Stebbins, 2001)—such as sabbatical leave within Norway, and for bringing structure and focus to an otherwise broad-ranging and messy approach. Following is an in-depth description of the exploratory approach and case design and how they fit within this project.

Exploratory

The overarching objective for this research project is to bring sabbatical leave to center stage as an object of study in Norway, with the intent of discovering new information that will eventually inspire future studies. The best way to introduce an under-investigated topic is to use an exploratory approach. To understand the nature of exploratory work and its role in social science research, I consulted a number of sources, including Stebbins’ (2001) “Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences” and have summarized the main points as they relate to this study.

By simple definition, exploratory research is a formal form of discovery or scientific endeavor that has a purpose and is methodically pre-organized (Stebbins, 2001). An exploratory design is suitable for new areas of research or for phenomena in which a lack of prior research exists (Adler & Clark, 2015; Patton, 2002; Stebbins, 2001). The intent of exploratory research is to identify or discover new information about a particular phenomenon—such as ‘patterns, ideas, or hypotheses’ (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). This type of research is broad-ranging (Stebbins, 2001) and inductive in nature (Adler & Clark, 2015; Stebbins, 2001; Vogt & Johnson, 2011), thus resulting in the maximization of discovery and generalizations about the objective of study (Adler & Clark, 2015; Stebbins, 2001).
exploratory research forms the basis for future research—known as ‘concatenation’ in which studies on a particular phenomenon become more refined (Stebbins, 2001; Yin, 2014).

An exploratory approach is a good starting point for investigating sabbatical leave, but exploratory work is, as Stebbins admits—is “messy, without direction, [and] time-consuming” (Stebbins, 2001, p. vii). To give structure and focus to this ‘messiness’ I have paired the exploratory approach with a case-study design.

**Case study**

In contrast to the boundless nature of exploratory research, the case study design pulls the focus in by creating boundaries and giving structure to the study. In addition to the exploratory aspect, this study employs an embedded-case design, with focus on six disciplines—‘sub-cases’—three each from the MN and SV faculties. A case study design is ideal for this study because it can deal with a phenomenon that cannot easily be removed from its environment (Yin, 2014), it pairs well with an exploratory approach, and fits within a relativist ontological orientation. For insight on case study research and how it fits with this study, I draw primarily from Yin’s (2014) “Case Study Research: Design and Methods”.

Yin (2014) defines the case study design as:

> “An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon [the ‘case] in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16).

Applied to sabbatical leave, this definition basically implies that a case design is ideal because sabbatical leave cannot easily be isolated from other academic activities, unlike other phenomena and objects that can be isolated in controlled experiments (Yin, 2014). Case study designs deal with this problem by creating boundaries around the context, thus making the study more feasible by limiting the amount of variables to work with.

Although case studies tend to limit the variables, it does so in a flexible way that will not take away from the quality of the project. Case studies can be organized into different levels of analysis, ranging from a holistic approach (e.g. a single university) to a case study that involves more than one embedded unit or ‘case’ (Yin, 2014). This study employs an embedded case study design that involves three levels of analysis, including the university as a whole, the faculty level (i.e. disciplinary grouping), and the department level. This particular case design is ideal because it fits with the analytical framework, which requires the findings to be divided into hard and soft disciplinary groupings.
Beyond the advantage that a case study design allows for an intense, yet flexible investigation into sabbatical leave, another advantage of a case study design is that it pairs well with an exploratory approach. Although the two contrast each other in their breadth and depth of focus, they pair well because of the methods they employ. Both exploratory and case designs are flexible with the types of methods that can be used. For this study, qualitative and inductive methods are employed. Together, these methods bring new information to light and support a relativist ontological position (Yin, 2014)—allowing for multiple perceptions of sabbatical leave to be captured.

### 3.1.1 Case selections

For this study, I have chosen to focus on three levels at the University of Oslo, with primary focus on the department and faculty levels. I have chosen two faculties—the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MN) and Faculty of Social Sciences (SV), which represent the hard and soft sciences respectively. Within each faculty I have selected three departments, for a total of six departments. Together, this represents two levels of embeddedness:

- **MN-Faculty (Hard Sciences)**
  - Departments of: Biosciences, Mathematics, Informatics
- **SV-Faculty (Soft Sciences)**
  - Departments of: Political Science, Economics, Psychology

I have chosen UiO as the main case, for two reasons. The first is for practical reasons and the other is as an instrument case to get to know more about sabbatical leave, with the idea of gaining new knowledge and inspiring future studies.

Practical considerations played a major role in my choice of cases. First of all, I can speak and understand the local language so I knew that this would not be a barrier, in the event that I needed to conduct an interview in Norwegian or read documents that are only available in Norwegian. In addition, as a student at UiO, UiO was an obvious choice for this thesis project because it meant that access to potential informants would be much easier. Considering that I had limited time and financial resources, it would have been impractical possible to carry out research at any of the other universities in Norway.

Second, my interest in this case is an instrumental one. In this study, the interest is primarily on the phenomenon (i.e. sabbatical leave), while the actual case (i.e. UiO) itself is of second interest (Stake, 1994). The role of UiO is to provide ‘a supportive role’ in order to
understand sabbatical leave better within the Norwegian context. This case is what Yin (2014) and Bryman (2012) refer to as a common case. That is to say that because this is an exploratory case study, that beyond practical considerations, UiO was chosen as a general example within the Norwegian higher education system from which sabbatical leave can be studied. The purpose of a common case study is to provide a ‘suitable context for research’ (Bryman, 2012), from which “to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation…because of the lessons it might provide about the social processes related to some theoretical interest” (Yin, 2014, p. 52), with the hopes that it will provide knowledge for more refined studies on sabbatical leave in the future.

The embedded cases were chosen with the analytical framework in mind and in consideration of time limitations. I chose the MN-Faculty as an example of the hard sciences and the SV-Faculty as an example of the soft sciences. Just as with the choice of UiO, these embedded cases are considered common cases and are not necessarily representatives of all faculties or disciplines at UiO. Since the faculty guidelines of each of the selected faculties give granting power to individual departments, I have included three departments from each faculty in this study. The disciplines were selected randomly by emailing all of the department heads within the two faculties and asking who would be willing to participate in the study. As it turned out, exactly three from each faculty responded positively and that is how the departments of Biology, Mathematics, Informatics, Political Science, Economics, and Psychology were selected. Given time limitations for this project, it would not have been feasible to include more faculties and disciplines.

3.2 Methods

Qualitative methods are employed in this research project. Qualitative methods pair well with the chosen research design because it is allows for an open, flexible, and inductive investigation into sabbatical leave at UiO. To answer the research question, document analysis and in-depth semi-structured interviews with select leaders and academics were conducted, with the end purpose being to interpret meaning from the documents and informants responses. Triangulation is used to cross-check the theoretical practice of sabbatical leave as indicated in documents with the actual practice—as determined through interviews. Following is a description of the data sources and units of analysis. An overview of the methods, data sources, and unit of analysis can be found in Table 8, at the end of this section.
3.2.1 Data sources and units of analysis

In consideration of the research problem, I consulted historical documents from the University archives that detail the process of formally institutionalizing sabbatical leave at UiO; the current sabbatical leave guidelines from the University, the two faculties, and departments—including the corresponding application forms; and conducted interviews with the Vice-Rector of the University, along with the six department heads, and five individual academics. Following is a list of data sources used, how they were found, and which questions they answer.

3.2.1.1 Documents

Historical documents

Documents detailing the process of formally introducing a uniform, University-wide sabbatical leave practice at UiO were obtained from a contact in the University administration. The collection of documents contain 36 printed documents in Norwegian, including letters, memos, reports, and meeting notes dating from June 1990 to December 2006, from the University Directorate, University Board meetings, faculties, trade unions, and other actors. These documents help to answer the first research question, ‘How is sabbatical leave organized and regulated at UiO?’

Current guidelines and application forms

UiO guidelines: The “Guidelines for allocating research period at UiO” (see UiO, 2008) are available on the University websites, in both Norwegian and English versions. The first draft of the guidelines were adopted by the University Board in June 1990 and were amended twice since then, the first time in December 1993 after a two-year trial period, and the second time in March 2008. A copy of the guidelines is included in Appendix A, for convenience.

SV guidelines: The guidelines for “Research leave at the Faculty of Social Science” (see UiO, 2012) and application form are available on the University websites, in Norwegian only. According to the historical documents from the University archives, the SV-Faculty supplemental guidelines were first drafted and adopted by the Faculty Board in May 1991. They were subsequently revised in March 2001 and last updated in March 2012, according to the guidelines on the website. The three departments do not have their own set of guidelines, but do have websites that provide basic information about the purpose of sabbatical leave and who may apply for a sabbatical. Otherwise, these website refer to the UiO and SV-Faculty
guidelines. These pages are also in Norwegian, with only the ØI department providing information in English.

**MN guidelines:** The MN-Faculty and departments do not have their own supplementary guidelines; instead they refer to the UiO guidelines. They do however have a funding scheme in place that provides funding for sabbaticals that are taken abroad. Information about the funding scheme is available online in Norwegian (see UiO, 2016), along with the rules for allocation of funds (see UiO, 2015), and application form.

Together, the guidelines help to answer the first and second research questions, to determine how sabbatical leave is organized and regulated, and how sabbatical leave is perceived and understood by academics. Specifically, the guidelines will be used to answer Questions 1, 2A—‘How is sabbatical leave regarded?’ and 2B—’What are the perceived purposes of sabbatical leave?’ and ‘how do they align with the stated purposes in guidelines?’ by comparing what is stated in the guidelines with responses given in the interviews.

### 3.2.1.2 Interviews

To determine how sabbatical leave is practiced in reality, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the Vice-Rector, department heads, and select individual academics within the six departments. The interviews were conducted in the spring of 2014, in person, at the offices of the informants—either at the Blindern campus or elsewhere within Oslo. Before the interviews took place, an informed consent form (see Appendix F) and a short list of the main questions that would be asked during the interview were emailed to the interviewees. Each interview was conducted in English and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each. Each interview was recorded and then later transcribed word-for-word. Three different interview guides were used, for the different groups of people interviewed. The interview guides are included as appendices B, C, and D.

**Informants**

In total, interviews were conducted with 12 informants, including:

**Vice-Rector:** The Vice-Rector is the Head of the Research Committee at UiO and was selected to provide information about the organization and regulation of sabbatical leave at UiO. As a former researcher and Dean in the MN-Faculty, questions were also posed to him about the purposes and benefits of sabbatical leave; however, these responses could only be used in the aggregate of responses from the MN informants.
Department heads: Interviews were conducted with six department heads from the departments of Biosciences, Math, Informatics, Political Science, Economics, and Psychology. The responses from the department heads were used in two ways. First as responses from a person in a leader role that has knowledge and understanding of how sabbatical leave is organized and regulated in their departments and how sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit the department. In addition, since department leaders are themselves academics who may also have personal experience with sabbatical leave, their responses are also used to answer questions on how sabbatical leave is perceived and understood by academics, as well as who sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit and how sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit the academic.

Individual academics: Interviews were conducted with five individual academics—two from the SV-Faculty and three from the MN-Faculty. In addition to the five individual academics, I also considered the department heads as academics for certain questions, which means that in reality I have responses from 11 academics (2 females + 9 males)—five from the SV-Faculty and six from the MN-Faculty. The point of adding the responses of the department heads to the responses of the individual academics was to increase the sample size. The particular informants that I have chosen have previously taken a sabbatical, and their personal experiences help to answer the Study Question 2A—how sabbatical leave is regarded, Question 2B—what the perceived purposes are and Question 3B—how sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit academics.

Originally I had planned to contact and interview up to two academics from each department (one male, one female); however there were two main problems with this. The first problem is that, in addition to the seven interviews I carried out with institutional leaders, carrying out 12 additional interviews with academics would have been time consuming. In consideration of this, I then decided to contact and interview eight individual academics, two each (one male, one female) from two departments in each faculty. The second problem arose when I was unable to find enough informants to participate in my study—including female informants. At this point, I decided to treat the responses from the department heads as academic responses to aggregate the response data, so that it would be easier to make inferences and to detect disciplinary differences.

I found the five individual academics in two ways. I first asked the department heads for a list of academics that had taken sabbatical leave in the last few years. I wanted to interview informants who had a sabbatical leave more recently, because they would more easily be able
to recall their sabbatical experiences. Some department heads were willing to release that information, while others were not. For those that I had a confirmed list (with 5-8 names), I randomly chose one female and one male candidate. This method proved to be the easiest way to find willing informants. For the other departments, I searched department websites, looking for candidates who had been at the University long enough to be eligible for a sabbatical. This method however proved to be more difficult and time consuming. In the end, those that I contacted either had not taken a sabbatical or they were not interested in participating. In total, I attempted to contact ten informants in the SV-Faculty and eleven informants in the MN-Faculty.

3.2.1.3 Anonymity

For this study, it is not necessary to identify each of the informants, even though it may be possible to recognize statements made by the Vice-Rector and possibly the department leaders, since I do code the data to identify which faculty the department head belongs to. It is important to at least identify the faculty because the study looks at disciplinary differences between the hard and soft sciences. It should be noted that for Questions 2A, 2B, and 3B—where the responses of the department heads are considered the same as the responses given by individual academics, the identity codes are left the same, to prevent confusion and possible misidentification with a new set of numbers. The transcripts and quotes are coded according to the codes given in Table 7. More information about how personal information is treated is included in the ‘Informed Consent Form’ in Appendix F.

Table 7: Interview coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Code Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>Vice-Rector</td>
<td>VR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN-Faculty</td>
<td>Department heads/leaders</td>
<td>MNL01-MNL03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN-Faculty</td>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>MNA01-MNA03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV-Faculty</td>
<td>Department heads/leaders</td>
<td>SVL01-SVL03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV-Faculty</td>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>SVA01-SVA02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.1.1 Triangulation

Data triangulation is employed in this study using multiple sources of data. Triangulation is recommended according to (Denzin, 2009/1970) to solve “the problem of rival factors” (p. 26) which can include differences in observation. Triangulation will be used for Questions
how sabbatical leave is organized and regulated, 2A—how sabbatical leave is regarded, and 2B—what the perceived purposes of sabbatical leave are. For these questions, the responses from the interviews will be compared to the written guidelines, to compare how the theoretical practice of sabbatical leave compares to the actual practice. Triangulation will help to strengthen the internal validity of the research project (Bryman, 2012). The data analysis for each question is outlined in greater detail in Appendix E.

Table 8: Overview of Methods, Data, and Units of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions</th>
<th>Methodological approach</th>
<th>Data Material</th>
<th>Units of Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How is sabbatical leave organized and regulated at UiO?</td>
<td>Qualitative: • Document analysis • Semi-structured interviews Triangulation: • Interviews vs. guidelines</td>
<td>• Historical documents from UiO archives • Current guidelines • Interviews with leaders</td>
<td>2 Levels: • University • Faculty (MN &amp; SV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How is sabbatical leave perceived and understood by academics?</td>
<td>Qualitative: • Document analysis • Semi-structured interviews Triangulation: • Interviews vs. guidelines</td>
<td>• Interviews with leaders • Interviews with individual academics • Current guidelines</td>
<td>2 Levels: • University • Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the perceived benefits of a sabbatical for the individual academic and the institution?</td>
<td>Qualitative: • Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>• Interviews with leaders • Interviews with individual academics</td>
<td>2 Levels: • Faculty • Academics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1.4 Units of analysis and observation

Overall, there are three levels of analysis and four levels of observation, which vary by question. For the first research question, I am interested in how sabbatical leave is organized and operated at the university level and faculty level. Likewise, the units of observation for the first question are the university, faculty, and department. For the second question, I am interested in understanding how sabbatical leave is perceived and understood at the university and faculty levels. There are four units of observation for this question, including the
university, faculty, department, and individual. The units of analysis for Question 3 are the faculty level and individual academics—as a group, while the units of observation are the department and individual. The overview of methods, data, and units of analysis are presented in Table 8.

### 3.3 Limitations

Considering time limitations for this project, I decided ahead of time to delimit the project to include only two faculties, six disciplines, and a small sample of individual academics. To include more faculties, departments, and individual interviews would have been overly time consuming and is perhaps better fit for a more robust study. In addition, I decided not to interview faculty leaders because sabbatical leave is allocated by the departments within the MN and SV faculties.

Upon reviewing the historical documents it became evident that an important piece of information was missing and still remains a mystery—what prompted the University Board to formalize sabbatical leave with a set of guidelines in the first place. I made an attempt to try to seek out the answer by searching online—including on the webpages of the Ministry of Education and Research, following up on suggested leads, contacting the university administration, the Norwegian Association of Researchers, and even asking my informants. The best information I have for this, are speculations from the Vice-Rector and one department head in the MN-Faculty, which I was not able to verify.

### 3.4 Project Changes

It should be noted that the research project has evolved since the interviews were conducted in the spring of 2014. Originally, the research problem was—“The roles and benefits of sabbatical leave in career and institutional development at the University of Oslo.” A major problem with this project was that it was not feasible a written and it was too complex. For example, I had intended to incorporate a gender aspect into the project—which is why I purposely included both males and females in the sample, but was unable to find enough females to participate in the study. I also decided against doing a comparison between the department heads and the individual academics, because it would have been difficult with so few informants. As the study progressed I realized that I would have to reexamine the research problem and simplify it, which included taking out the gender aspect and delimiting the study.
4 Findings and Discussion

The question that this study set out to answer is ‘how sabbatical leave is conceptualized and why it is necessary at UiO’. I started out investigating sabbatical leave as an institution based on Scott’s (2014) Three pillars of institutions, while comparing the disciplines based on the hard / soft disciplinary framework described in Chapter 2. In this chapter, the findings are presented, organized by the three research questions and related sub-questions. A discussion of findings follows at the end of the findings for each respective research question.

4.1 Q 1: How is Sabbatical Leave Organized and Regulated at UiO?

The first research question helps to paint a picture of sabbatical leave at UiO—both in theory and in practice, from its formal inception at the University in the early 1990’s, up to current day. The findings for this question are organized as follows: the first part includes the theoretical aspect of sabbatical—i.e. the historical background and current guidelines, followed by the findings from the interviews with the six department heads, which represents the granting of sabbatical leave in reality. In the second section, the findings are discussed, following the analytical framework outlined in Chapter 2.

4.1.1 Q1: Findings and analysis

4.1.1.1 Historical context

Formal sabbatical leave guidelines were first established at the University in June 1990. Prior to this, sabbatical leave had existed as an informal practice, going back a number of decades and possibly longer. Sabbatical leave in Norway is not regulated by the state, but rather by the individual institutions of higher education—at least from the early 1990’s. Prior to 1990, it is speculated that sabbatical leave was negotiated with the trade unions—though this was not directly confirmable with the trade unions at the time of this study; though it is apparent from the website of the Norwegian Association of Researchers (i.e. Forskerforbundet) that they fully support time for research and development, as a ‘meaningful and necessary opportunity to immerse in self-selected research problems’ (Norwegian Association of Researchers, n.d.).

From the documents that I was able to secure from the university archives, sabbatical leave was formally introduced as a university-wide practice in December 1993, following a two-year trial period. The purpose of this was to create a more uniform practice across the
University, thereby giving all permanently employed academics an equal opportunity to a sabbatical leave.

The process that led up to the formal adoption of sabbatical leave guidelines, began in the late spring of 1990, when the University Directorate drafted a formal set of ‘Criteria for allocating sabbatical leave at the University of Oslo’, which was passed on to the University Board (formally known as ‘Kollegiet’, in Norwegian) for vetting and final approval. Within the initial guidelines, five criteria were outlined: 1) Right to sabbatical leave—i.e. who had the right and how often; 2) Allocating of sabbatical leave—that is, which unit could grant leaves and how applicants should be prioritized (i.e. faculty or individual department); 3) Timeline for earning a sabbatical; 4) The rights and duties of the applicant during the leave; and 5) The application and report—That is, the requirements related to the application and final report on how the sabbatical leave was used. In short, the guidelines stated that all permanently employed academics had ‘the right to a sabbatical leave’ for a full year once every seventh year, or a half-year sabbatical after three years of service to the University, with full salary. Given these base criteria, the faculties (or individual departments) were given leeway to adopt the guidelines according to their own needs, with the possibility to make adjustments to points 4 (rights and duties during the sabbatical) and 5 (final reporting), as well as prioritization of applicants—as they deemed necessary.

At the conclusion of the trial period, feedback was again solicited from the faculties, trade unions, and relevant actors. Notable points from the feedback included:

- The contradiction in criterion 1: ‘Right to a sabbatical leave’ and criterion 2: ‘Allocation’, which describes prioritizing of applicants and instances when an applicant can be denied; if sabbatical leave was indeed a right, then there would be no need to prioritize applicants and there would be no other criteria for applicants to fulfill. This resulted in a change in terms from ‘a right to have’ to ‘a right to apply for a sabbatical leave’;
- The request to change the term ‘Criteria’ to ‘Guidelines’;
- The need for individual faculties to make necessary adjusts to the guidelines as benefiting their individual academic cultures;
- Concern for adequate funding to cover substitute teachers for all applicants;
- Sabbatical leave as a necessary tool for internationalization and increasing publications, as well as a way to combat diminishing academic vitality;
• Importance of considering the applicants prior publications and research efforts—as noted by the SV-Faculty;
• Concern for insufficient funding and a need to postpone sabbaticals in periods with an overwhelming number of applicants—as noted by the SV-Faculty.

Following the feedback from the actors, the University Board formally made necessary adjustments and officially approved the new Guidelines, making sure to emphasize that the goal of a university set of guidelines was to ensure a more uniform and consistent practice of granting sabbatical leaves.

**Disciplinary differences**

In addition to playing an active role in the drafting of sabbatical guidelines, the SV-Faculty drafted their own variation of the guidelines, as befitted their faculty. In contrast, the MN-Faculty did not make major recommendations during the drafting stages, nor did they choose to write their own guidelines; instead they chose to follow the University guidelines. The decision for the SV-Faculty to draft their own supplementary guidelines along with their suggestion to require the applicant to prove their prior research efforts, suggests initially that the SV-Faculty is more regulative in nature than the MN-Faculty.

4.1.1.2 *Current guidelines (theoretical practice)*

Between 1993 and today, very little has changed with the guidelines. Notable changes that have been made between then and now are how institutional leaders in elected or appointed positions earn sabbatical and exceptions that cannot be counted against earning seniority. Elected or appointed leaders now have the ‘right’ to a full year sabbatical after their period of services ends, thanks to the passing of a special agreement for elected and employed leaders at UiO in 2006. The previous terms gave leaders sabbaticals based on an earning of three months per service year, versus two months per year for regular academics. An exception to earning seniority is granted to those who take parental leave—this means that their time on parental leave cannot be deducted when calculating seniority.

The current sabbatical leave guidelines at UiO (see copy in Appendix A) are intended for permanent academic employees, who are given the “right to apply for a research period” (UiO, 2008, para. 1) according to the guidelines. The ‘*Guidelines for allocating a research period at UiO*’ (UiO, 2008) outlines seven criteria, including: the objective or purpose, application requirements, allocation process, how research leave is earned (i.e. seniority), rights and obligations of the applicant, and the autonomy of the faculties to add provisions.
Following is the analysis of the UiO guidelines, highlighting note-worthy findings from each of the seven criteria, as they align with the three pillar institutional framework.

*Analysis of UiO guidelines*

The first thing to note is that the guidelines are shaped and are supported by multiple actors—i.e. University Board, University Directorate, faculty leaders, and trade unions—which is typical of normative type institutions, according to Scott’s Three pillars of institutions.

**Objective:** Within the first criterion of the guidelines there is a clearly defined purpose, which also supports the idea that normative elements are at play in the guidelines.

**Application:** This criterion call for the applicant to submit an application with stated reasons for the sabbatical, including their plan and work schedule during the sabbatical. It is in this point that regulative elements start to show up.

**Allocation:** Within this criterion, there is evidence of all three institutional elements—regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. The regulative elements include oversight—i.e. who is in charge of handling applications and ensuring that requirements are fulfilled; expectations or rules that the applicant must fulfill, including that they have fulfilled the criteria in points 2 and 4—i.e. that they have submitted and application and have earned enough seniority, they must provide proof of a satisfactory research history, and they must arrange for their teaching duties to be covered during the leave; and there is a clearly stated consequence of not fulfilling the requirements—i.e. that their request can be denied. Within this same criterion, there are suggestions of how to prioritize applications and within these suggestions, it is suggested that woman qualifying for top positions be given priority over men when all other criteria are equal, ensuring gender equality in the academic profession. This suggestion is in line with social norms in Norway and the Norwegian law that strives to improve the position of women\(^4\), which suggests that there are also normative elements at play. Finally, granting of sabbaticals in the two faculties in this study is left up to the individual departments, which suggests that cultural differences are important, thereby indicating that cultural-cognitive elements also exist.

**Earning seniority:** Here, there are only two institutional elements at play—regulative and cultural-cognitive elements. For this criterion, the applicant must be in a permanent

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\(^4\) See Likestillingsloven [Act on gender equality] (2013, §1).
academic position, and they must continuously fulfill all of their university duties as expected of their position—which is evidence of regulative institutional elements. In addition, there are signs of cultural-cognitive elements—for example that sabbatical leave at UiO follows or mimics the biblical sabbatical that calls for rest in the seventh year, grants elected or appointed leaders the right to take a one-year sabbatical after the end of their term, and gives faculties discretion to deviate from this rule as it best suites the particular culture—for example, they may grant shorter sabbaticals than the standard half year or full year, if needed.

**Rights and duties during the period:** Within criterion 5, there appears to be only normative and cultural-cognitive institutional elements present. This includes respecting the norms of sabbatical leave—that sabbatical leave is for research related purposes only and that those on sabbatical leave should be exempt from teaching and other university duties during the whole period, that the recipient has the right to receive their full salary during the sabbatical, and that they have the right to choose where they will carry out the sabbatical.

**Reports:** In this criterion, only one regulative requirement is stated—i.e. that the recipient must submit a report at the end of their sabbatical, describing how the sabbatical was used.

**Supplementary provisions:** In the final criterion, there is evidence that cultural differences are once again taken into consideration as this criterion gives faculties the flexibility to add provisions to the UiO guidelines as they see fit.

*Faculty and departmental guidelines*

Following criterion 7 in the University guidelines, each faculty may add their own supplements to the guidelines, making them more suitable to their individual cultures. The SV-Faculty, along with the three corresponding departments each have their own provisions that supplement the UiO guidelines; while the MN-Faculty and three corresponding departments do not have their own set of guidelines. The MN-Faculty does however have a funding scheme in place for supporting sabbaticals spent abroad. Following are the findings from each faculty compared to the UiO guidelines and analyzed in the same manor as the UiO guidelines.

**Notable findings: SV-Faculty guidelines**

The SV-Faculty has had its own set of supplementary guidelines and application form, since the formal introduction of sabbatical leave guidelines at UiO in the early 1990’s. For the most part, the faculty guidelines reiterate important points from the UiO guidelines, and
make certain changes to better fit their departments—such as a how to prioritize applicants. In addition, many of the departments emphasize what they feel are important points of the guidelines. Following is an analysis of the guidelines, noting the differences between the SV guidelines and the UiO guidelines.

**Objective-Background:** In the first criterion, the SV-Faculty largely follows the objective set out by the UiO guidelines that sabbatical leave is for research related purposes. The SV guidelines only differ in that they make it clear that applicants have ‘the right to apply for a sabbatical’, but they do not have the right to have a sabbatical. Emphasizing this point further strengthens the idea that normative elements are at play, rather than cultural-cognitive elements because the SV-Faculty appears to view sabbatical leave as more of a privilege than a taken-for-granted right.

**Application:** Following the UiO guidelines, the SV-Faculty also requires an application with a satisfactory sabbatical plan, indicating that regulative elements are also at play at the faculty and departmental levels.

**Allocation—criteria for prioritizing:** Here, the SV guidelines follow the UiO guidelines in that they have the same requirements—i.e. that they require a satisfactory sabbatical plan and a satisfactory publication and research record and they remind the applicant that they can be denied for not fulfilling the requirements. They also follow the UiO guidelines in how they prioritize female applicants, which shows that they respect social norms. And finally, they give granting authority to the individual departments, which re-emphasizes that cultural differences are taken into consideration and that they are important for the SV-Faculty, thereby showing that cultural-cognitive elements are at play in the SV-Faculty guidelines as well. They only differ in the order that they prioritize applicants—for example the SV-Faculty prioritizes first on the plan and then on seniority, whereas this is opposite in the UiO guidelines.

**Earning seniority:** The SV guidelines point out what does not count towards seniority for the sabbatical—for example, if one has had periods with extra research time, then that time can be deducted from the seniority. In addition, the SV guidelines put a cap on the maximum amount of accumulated time that can be earned without taking a sabbatical—something that the UiO guidelines do not do. These two regulations are evidence of regulative institutional elements, indicating that the SV guidelines place more emphasis on the regulatory expectations than do the UiO guidelines.
Rights and duties during sabbatical leave: Contrary to the UiO guidelines, the SV guidelines state the department establishes the agreement on which university duties the recipient must carry out during the sabbatical, whereas the UiO guidelines states that the recipient shall not take on other university duties without conferring with their department—which suggests that in the UiO guidelines, the recipient can decide if they want to continue certain duties—such as advising students, during their sabbatical. In the SV guidelines, it appears as though the department makes the decision and not the applicant. This sort of regulation would then fall under the regulative institutional pillar, which suggests that the SV guidelines are slightly more regulative in nature than the UiO guidelines.

Notable findings: SV departmental guidelines

Beyond the SV-Faculty guidelines, some of the SV departments address and summarize what they see as the important points of sabbatical leave. Otherwise, they all refer to the faculty and university guidelines.

Department of Economics (ØI): The ØI department reminds the applicant of the application requirements. Otherwise they refer to the SV and UiO guidelines. This would suggest that the same institutional elements are present in the ØI department as they are at the faculty level.

Department of Political Science (ISV): The ISV department reminds the applicant of the application requirements and reiterates the states purpose from the SV guidelines—“to strengthen the possibility for research”, and explains how seniority is earned. Otherwise they refer the applicant to the SV and UiO guidelines. This would suggest that the same institutional elements are present in this department as well.

Department of Psychology (PSI): The PSI department reminds the applicant of the application requirements—i.e. that the applicant should submit a plan that also includes a plan for how teaching duties will be covered, as the SV and UiO require; highlights how seniority is earned—including how deputy heads earn sabbatical and reminds the applicant that they need to provide proof of prior research record, and mentions; and lastly emphasizes that Deputy Heads have the right to a full year sabbatical at the end of their term. Just like the other two departments, the same three institutional elements are present in the Department of Psychology as well.

SV-Faculty sabbatical leave application: The application requires information following the guidelines, including: a plan for the sabbatical, Employment start date, date of last
sabbatical leave, outside project funding, and other considerations that can affect seniority and prioritizing. I would classify the application as regulative because it asks for information in line with the expectations of the guidelines.

The findings from the SV guidelines contain a mix of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutional elements. Compared to the UiO guidelines, the SV guidelines have slightly more regulative elements and slightly less cultural-cognitive elements.

**Notable findings: MN-Faculty**

The MN-Faculty does not have its own set of guidelines for granting sabbaticals; nor do any of the three departments (Math, IBV, IFI) included in this study. They choose to follow the main guidelines, as set by the University. They do however have a funding scheme in place for applicants who choose to spend their sabbaticals abroad, as well as their own application form. Here the notable findings from the faculty application form and funding scheme are presented.

**Granting authority:** Following the suggestion in the UiO guidelines, granting authority in the MN-Faculty is given to the individual departments, which emphasizes the importance of cultural differences.

**MN-Faculty application form:** The application requests information following the UiO guidelines, including a plan for the sabbatical, employment start date and date of last sabbatical in order to calculate seniority, details about how teaching duties will be covered, submittal of the applicant’s publication list, and inclusion of invitations from institutions abroad. In addition, the application also asks the applicant to state how the sabbatical will benefit the department. Together these requirements are all in line with a regulative type institution.

**Funding scheme for going abroad:** Although going abroad is not mandatory, it does seem to be encouraged, and part of the proof of that is the faculty has a funding scheme in place to support applicants that take sabbaticals abroad. I would classify this requirement as normative because it is not required, but it does seem as though it is encouraged or seen as the appropriate by the faculty, especially because of the nature of work that is carried out in the hard sciences, which centers around physical, real world problems that cannot always be dealt with in cyberspace.

In order to be considered for a stipend to go abroad, the applicant must submit an application and also an invitation from the host institution. The stipends are awarded based
on a priority list submitted by the departments and funds are distributed according to defined conditions outlined by the Research Council of Norway. Towards the end of the sabbatical, the recipient must then submit an expense report. These requirements are all indicative of a regulative type institution.

Overall, the findings from the MN-Faculty documents suggest that all three institutional elements are present. However, it appears as though formally there are more regulative and normative elements than cultural-cognitive elements, when the requirements of the application form and funding scheme are also considered.

Disciplinary differences

When considering disciplinary disciplines, I compared the SV guidelines against the UiO guidelines—because the MN-Faculty and departments refer to these guidelines. The two sets of guidelines were similar in the stated objective, in the application requirements, and how sabbatical leave should be allocated, but they differ slightly in criteria 4—‘Earning seniority’ and 5—‘Rights and duties during the period’. As discussed previously, the SV guidelines appear to be more regulative in the two criteria than the UiO guidelines. Since the MN-Faculty refers to the UiO guidelines, then it can be suggested that the SV-Faculty—i.e. soft sciences—are more regulative than the hard sciences.

In addition, both faculties had their own sabbatical leave applications. Comparatively, the major difference was that within the MN application, the applicant must submit additional documentation—such as invitations from foreign institutions and they must also state how the sabbatical will benefit the department, which suggests that sabbatical leave may be used as an instrument in this sense. Overall, these findings suggest that the MN application contains slightly more regulative tones than the SV application.

4.1.1.3 Interviews (actual practice)

To cross-check the practice of granting sabbaticals, I interviewed the six department heads to see whether the actual practice of regulating and allocating sabbatical leaves mirrors the expected practice as outlined in the current guidelines. The two main topics that were discussed that related to this question were guidelines and granting practices, as well funding schemes available to the applicants.
Guidelines and granting practices

The first topic of discussion related to the guidelines and granting practices, from which three main points were discussed by the informants, including who has granting authority, requirements or expectations, and prioritizing applications.

Granting authority

Following the guidelines, the department heads all reiterated that the responsibility for approving and granting sabbaticals lies with the heads of the departments. As emphasized in the historical documents and echoed in the guidelines, this suggests that cultural considerations are an important component in the practice of sabbatical leave in both faculties.

Requirements and expectations

In each of the interviews, the department heads were asked what their formal concerns were about the practice of sabbatical leave. From the interviews, three common points came up: formal application concerns, how teaching duties would be covered, and whether the applicant had a proven publication record.

Applications: The first concern had to do with formal application requirements. While nearly all departments were aware of the formal requirements as outlined in the guidelines, only two department heads in the MN-Faculty expressed direct concern about the details of the applicants’ specified plans, as exemplified by one MN department head:

“Anybody who wants to take a sabbatical of course has to write an application...submit support letters...say why they want it” (MNL03).

This statement aligns with the requirements as outlined in the MN-Faculty application, supporting the idea that sabbatical leave is regulated in the MN-Faculty in the same way that is outlined in the guidelines. This suggests that following the guidelines and having a plan are important in consideration of granting sabbaticals, at least within the MN-Faculty. The SV department heads, on the other hand, did not discuss the applications in as much detail as the MN department heads and seemed to be less critical about the actual plans of the applicant. As one SV department head explained:

"I don't care [about the plan]. And the reason is—everyone is very active, they work as much as they can, they fulfill their teaching duties and other commitments, and so there really is no reason why I should check on this. I don't expect anyone to go home and lie
on the sofa or travel the world with their family or things like that. I try to leave that up to
the individual researcher as to what they want to do” (SVL02).

Overall, the MN department heads seem to be more critical of the applicants’ sabbatical
plans and making sure that the applicant has fulfilled the application requirements, than the
SV department heads—who take a more relaxed approach to reviewing the applications. This
suggests that more regulative elements are at play in the hard sciences than in the soft
sciences, which display more of a taken-for-granted, cultural-cognitive nature. This also
shows that the MN-Faculty practices sabbatical leave is more in line with the formal
guidelines, than is the SV-Faculty practice.

**Teaching duties:** The next concern that was brought up in the interviews was the
concern that teaching duties would be taken care of during the sabbatical period. This is a
requirement as stated in the main guidelines, as well as the SV-Faculty guidelines and the
MN-Faculty application. This appeared to be the biggest concern, as it was echoed by all six
of the department heads. As one leader expressed:

“The main concern is really if it interferes with teaching or other duties. People are
usually very conscientious about that...that's my main concern—that a course as its
scheduled can still be given even though the teacher is away...if that can be done, then I
will always say yes” (SVL02).

Within all of the departments, the leaders indicated that they had the formal
responsibility for ensuring that teaching duties were taken care of during the sabbaticals.
However, the actual practice is that the person applying for a sabbatical will arrange for their
courses to be covered, usually by asking another colleague in the department, by hiring
someone from outside the department to cover the course (with a stipend or department
funding), or even by postponing the course if allowed by the department head. The general
impression overall, is that the department heads did not see this obligation as a problem.

Overall, there were no significant differences between the hard and soft sciences, with
regards to how teaching duties would be covered during the sabbatical. Moreover, practices
from both faculties align with the expectations of the guidelines.

**Publications:** Regarding the applicants’ prior research record or efforts, the findings
suggest that the MN departments appear to be more concerned with the applicants’ prior
research record than are the SV departments. Although the MN departments showed concern
for the applicants’ research record, they did not require that the applicants to have a specific number of publication points.

The SV department heads on the other hand, had a more relaxed and trusting attitude with regards to the applicants’ prior research record. All three of the department heads echoed the same sentiment that all of the academics worked hard and that there was no need to look at publication points as part of the granting process. As one department head explained:

"Our faculty has been discussing it across the different departments and the social sciences more or less has the same view that we cannot use those kinds of punishments like they have at other faculties—that you have to have published a certain number of publications in order to apply” (SVL01).

Statements such as this, suggests that the SV department heads have a different attitude towards the applicants’ prior research efforts than the MN department heads do. Interestingly, the actual practice of sabbatical leave in the SV-Faculty appears to counter the guidelines and historical findings—which emphasize the importance of the research record and efforts. This suggests that there are more cultural-cognitive elements at play in the SV-Faculty than the guidelines suggest, because there is a much more relaxed attitude in the actual practice of sabbatical leave.

Comparatively, the findings again support the idea that the hard sciences practice sabbatical leave in a more regulative nature than the soft sciences—which tend to show a more taken-for-granted attitude.

Prioritizing: Asked whether the department heads prioritize and how they prioritize applicants, the responses were divided between the two faculties. In the MN-Faculty, the department heads reiterated that sabbatical leave is so under-utilized that it is not necessary to prioritize and therefore everyone more or less gets a sabbatical that meets the requirements. As one department head explained:

“The problem is that too few people apply, so it hasn’t been to hard to get a sabbatical—as long as they have met the minimum requirements” (MNL01).

Prioritizing in the MN-Faculty is however necessary for applicants that are applying for funding to go abroad from the faculty. In the case where it becomes necessary to prioritize applicants, the MN department heads discussed prioritizing in consideration of the sabbatical
plan, publication record, and when they last had a sabbatical. Otherwise, the MN department heads admit that applicants are not denied because one application is better than another.

On the other hand, the SV department heads seemed to take a more relaxed approach, claiming that they did not prioritize applicants, as exemplified by one department head:

“We don't prioritize— we don't say yes to some and no to others. Everybody— once they've done their three years or six years— they are more or less automatically given sabbatical if they want one” (SVL02).

While the department heads did not explicitly state that this was due to under utilization, I would suspect that it is, because they commented about this in other parts of the interview. This suggests that there are slightly more cultural-cognitive institutional elements at play in the SV-Faculty with respect to prioritizing, than the guidelines would indicate.

With concern to prioritizing, the general impression is that the MN department heads are slightly more concerned with the written rules than the SV department heads. This supports the idea that the hard sciences are more regulative in their practice of sabbatical leave, while the soft sciences demonstrate a more cultural-cognitive practice. The next logical topic to discuss was about oversight and whether any of the department heads ever had to deny applicants a sabbatical.

**Oversight:** To get a better understanding of the oversight practices in each of the two faculties, I asked the department heads how much attention they paid the applications and if they had ever denied anyone a sabbatical. Overall, the responses were mixed, divided by faculty.

The findings suggest that the MN department heads are concerned with making sure that the applicants fulfill the criteria set out in the guidelines and that they have a satisfactory plan. Department heads admitted to taking actions from asking applicants to post-pone their sabbaticals if teaching duties could not satisfactorily be covered, to discussing the applicant’s plans with the applicant when they felt that the plan was not sound, as exemplified by this department head:

"If I don't totally like the plan, if I think there's some weaknesses, I will talk to the person say 'you should improve this point of your research plan'. As long as they fulfill the requirements, pretty much everybody gets a sabbatical” (MNL03).

When the SV department heads were asked the same question, the responses were a bit different. None of the department heads admitted to turning down an applicant. In fact, the
sentiment amongst the three departments was that everyone will get a sabbatical, as long as they have enough seniority and have managed to get their teaching duties covered. Otherwise, the department heads did not appear to be overly concerned about the specific sabbatical plans, as explained earlier. The impression from the interviews with the SV department heads was that there is a level of trust between the department heads and individual academics and a belief that everyone works hard and therefore deserves a sabbatical.

The findings on oversight suggest that there is oversight in both faculties, but that there is a difference in their leniency towards granting of sabbatical leave. Comparatively, the MN departments appear to follow the guidelines more closely and seemed more concerned about the plans of the applicants, while the SV departments tend to be more lenient in their practice. Overall, the findings suggest that there are more cultural-cognitive elements at play in the soft sciences and more regulative elements in the hard sciences.

**Funding**

Funding is not mentioned in the UiO guidelines, but it did come up in the interviews quite often, as a challenge to taking a sabbatical—especially when the sabbatical will be spent abroad. According to the informants, taking a sabbatical abroad is a costly endeavor, especially if the applicant’s family will be joining. While the MN-Faculty has an in-house funding scheme specifically for sabbaticals that will be carried out abroad, the SV-Faculty does not. Instead, the SV-Faculty has a number of smaller funding schemes such as Småforsk and travel grants that provide limited funding that can be used in conjunction with a sabbatical. Otherwise, applicants in the SV-Faculty who wish to spend their sabbaticals abroad or need additional funding for other sabbatical projects can seek outside funding, from the Research Council of Norway or European Research Council, for example.

Compared to the expectations I laid out in Chapter 2, the MN-Faculty displays more regulative tones because the funding scheme is specific to taking a sabbatical abroad, while the SV-Faculty displays more normative elements in this respect, because it does offer some financial support that is not tied specifically to sabbatical leave.
4.1.2 Discussion for Question 1

Question 1 asks how sabbatical leave is organized and regulated at UiO. The findings for this question are discussed here with respect to the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2.

4.1.2.1 Institutional framework

From the 1990’s to today

The findings suggest that sabbatical leave may have once been regarded as a taken-for-granted institution with inconsistent practices prior to the formal introduction of sabbatical leave guidelines in 1990. Just as occurred at Harvard University over 100 years earlier, the formal institutionalization of sabbatical leave at UiO in the beginning of the 1990’s sought to bring order and uniformity to the practice. Even still, during the very early stages of the institutionalization of sabbatical leave at UiO, the first draft of the ‘Criteria’ (as it was referred to then) lacked a clear objective for sabbatical leave and referred to sabbatical leave as a ‘right’ for all permanently employed academics. However, during the process of formally vetting the provisional guidelines, several changes were suggested that give the impression that sabbatical leave is not as taken for granted as it once appeared. By the end of the trial period, when feedback from all faculties, trade unions, and other relevant actors had been collected, the ‘Criteria’ began to take on different institutional elements. The new ‘Guidelines’ (as the name was changed to) began to take on more normative and regulative features. Even today, the content of the current guidelines resembles the formally adopted guidelines of 1993—the final draft, adopted after the two-year trial period.

Guidelines

The current guidelines display a mix of all three institutional models—normative, regulative, and cultural-cognitive. The guidelines have a clear purpose, take into account societal or community norms such as gender equality, were shaped by multiple actors, and are supported by trade unions—as is characteristic of a normative type of institution; yet they contain regulative expectations, oversight, and consequences for not fulfilling the criteria as is expected of a regulative type institution; and at the same time are flexible—considering cultural differences, and give a certain number of rights as is expected of a cultural-cognitive type institution.
The SV-Faculty decided to draft their own set of guidelines, which supplement the UiO guidelines. For the most part, there are no major differences between the two sets of guidelines, but there are minor differences. For example, the SV-Faculty guidelines are more regulative in how seniority is earned and who decides what university duties need to be continued during the sabbatical. This suggests that formally, the SV-Faculty continues to display more regulative elements than cultural-cognitive elements, just as they have since the early 1990’s. Compared to the UiO guidelines, the SV supplemental guidelines appear to be slightly more regulative and slightly less cultural-cognitive.

The MN-Faculty did not choose to write their own supplementary guidelines; instead they follow the UiO guidelines. This suggests that the MN-Faculty has similar views of sabbatical leave as the original actors who drafted the UiO guidelines in the early 1990’s. The findings suggest that spending the sabbatical abroad is the norm in the MN-Faculty and proof of that is the funding scheme that is in place to support sabbaticals that are taken abroad. This suggests that the MN-Faculty appears that slightly more normative elements are at play in the MN-Faculty than in the UiO guidelines.

**Practice versus theory**

With regards to the actual practice of sabbatical leave, the findings suggest that there are both similarities and differences between the actual practice of sabbatical leave and the written guidelines. In the interviews, the department heads discussed who had granting authority, requirements and expectations that they were concerned with, and the different funding options available to the applicants.

The actual practice of sabbatical leave mirrors the guidelines on two points: granting practices and concern that teaching duties are covered during the sabbatical. This suggests that both regulative and cultural-cognitive elements and are present in the practice, as they are in the formal guidelines.

The practice differs from the guidelines in how important the applicant’s prior research record is in approving sabbatical requests, how applications are prioritized, and in oversight practices. In the guidelines, these three points are all representative of regulative institutional elements. In reality, the findings suggest that there is a mix of regulative and cultural-cognitive elements in the actual practice, which gives the impression that sabbatical leave is more taken-for-granted than the guidelines would seem to indicate.
With respect to the applications and plans of the applicants, the findings were different between the two faculties. The MN departments appear to pay close attention to the applications and are concerned about the applicants’ plans, in line with the expectations of the guidelines. The SV departments appear to take a more relaxed approach, displaying more cultural-cognitive elements. These disciplinary differences will be discussed in the next section, in the discussion of disciplinary differences.

The topic of funding was also brought up in the interviews. Although it is not mentioned in the guidelines, it was a major concern in the early stages of the formal introduction of sabbatical leave at UiO in the early 1990’s, just as it has been since at least since the early 20th century, in the U.S. Since funding is not mentioned in the guidelines, it is difficult to draw inferences concerning the institutional nature here. It will however, be discussed further in the next section, in the discussion on disciplinary differences.

Overall, the practice of sabbatical leave appears to be similar to the guidelines, with slightly more cultural-cognitive elements at play in the real practice of sabbatical leave, when the findings from the two faculties are combined. However, when investigated more closely, differences between the two faculties do appear.

### 4.1.2.2 Disciplinary differences

Following the analytical framework, the next step is to compare the hard and soft sciences—that is the MN-Faculty and the SV-Faculty—side by side, to see how they compare and to see how they fit with the expectations that were laid out in Chapter 2.4.

**History and guidelines (theoretical practice)**

In the beginning stages of sabbatical leave being formally institutionalized at UiO, the SV-Faculty started out with a stronger regulative nature than did the MN-Faculty. The SV-Faculty insisted that the guidelines include a requirement for past research results, while the MN faculty was content with the guidelines that were suggested. Within the current UiO guidelines, faculties are given the option to follow the guidelines as written or to supplement the UiO guidelines with their own provisions. The SV-Faculty took this opportunity and decided to write their own provisions to supplement the UiO guidelines, while the MN-faculty decided to follow the UiO guidelines as they were written. Because the MN-Faculty does not have their own supplementary guidelines, I compared the UiO guidelines as a representative set of MN guidelines with the SV supplementary guidelines.
Compared to the two sets of guidelines, a mix of all three institutional elements is present. Based on the guidelines alone, the SV guidelines appear to be slightly more regulative than the UiO guidelines—which suggests that the SV-Faculty is slightly more regulative than the MN-Faculty. However, when the individual faculty applications are compared, the MN application appears to be slightly more regulative than the SV application because of the extra requirements that are required of the applicant in the MN application.

The findings up to this point show that the soft sciences display slightly more regulative elements, while the hard sciences display slightly more cultural-cognitive and normative elements overall. Initially, this finding is counter to the expectations that I laid out in Chapter 2, in which I predicted to find more regulative elements in the hard sciences and more cultural-cognitive elements in the soft sciences. However, the story changes when institutional leaders are interviewed.

**Interviews (actual practice)**

The point where the soft sciences start to take on more cultural cognitive elements than the hard sciences is in the actual practice of sabbatical leave. While the two faculties mirrored each other in assigning granting authority and in their overall concerns about how teaching duties were covered, there were a number of differences in other points, including the formal application concerns, how important the prior research record was, how and if it was necessary to prioritize applicants, the oversight practices and funding schemes available to the applicants. In all of the above points, the MN-Faculty followed the guidelines closely, suggesting that the MN-Faculty grants sabbatical leaves in a regulative fashion. The SV-Faculty on the other hand, takes a more relaxed approach to granting sabbaticals, suggesting that sabbatical leave is taken-for-granted more than the history and written guidelines indicate. The only exception is that the SV-Faculty does display some normative elements in the few funding options that are available to the applicants. Otherwise, the hard sciences display more regulative elements in the real practice of granting sabbaticals than the soft sciences—which display in a more cultural-cognitive fashion.

In Section 2.4, I predicted to find more regulative to normative institutional elements at play in the hard sciences (i.e. MN-Faculty), versus more normative to cultural-cognitive institutional elements in the soft sciences (i.e. SV-Faculty). The findings up to this point suggest that both faculties display a mix of all three institutional types that were described by Scott, with slightly more of a regulative leaning in the hard sciences and a slightly more cultural-cognitive leaning in the SV-Faculty, as predicted.
4.2 Q 2: How is sabbatical leave perceived and understood by academics?

The second question helps to answer the first part of the research question—‘How is sabbatical leave conceptualized’. To guide the analysis, this section is organized according to the two sub-questions, which examine—how sabbatical leave is regarded, what the perceived purposes of sabbatical leave are, and how they align with the stated purposes in the guidelines. The discussion of findings follows at the end.

4.2.1 Q 2A: How is sabbatical leave regarded?

The purpose of this question is to find out if sabbatical leave is regarded as a taken-for-granted institution, a privilege, or as an instrument to achieve specific goals. The findings are presented as follows: first, the findings from the guidelines are presented, followed by the findings from the interviews with leaders and individual academics are presented. The findings from the interviews are then compared to the guidelines to see how the views between theory and practice align.

Guidelines

Within the guidelines, there are indicators as to how sabbatical leave is viewed or regarded by the authors and actors who were a part of the early stages of drafting sabbatical leave guidelines. Notable findings from the guidelines are presented, highlighting the important points as they relate to the three institutional types described by Scott (2014).

The first instance in the current guidelines that gives an indication of how sabbatical leave is viewed is in the first criterion—the ‘Objective’. Here the applicant is given the “right to seek” a sabbatical—as opposed to a ‘right to have’ a sabbatical. This suggests that sabbatical leave is regarded as a privilege—or conditional right, as opposed to an absolute right\(^5\). According to the expectations that I laid out in Chapter 2, this view is in line with a normative type institution.

Within the SV-Faculty and departmental guidelines, the findings suggest that sabbatical leave is also viewed in a normative way. Within the faculty guidelines, it explicitly states that eligible applicants have the ‘right to apply for’ a sabbatical, but ‘not a right to have’ a sabbatical. Within the ØI department, the guideline supplements refer to sabbatical leave as a right, but then reminds the applicant of criteria for getting a sabbatical, including fulfilling

\(^5\) See ‘Difference between a right and privilege in Section 2.1.'
normal job duties and having ‘sufficient publications’—thereby treating sabbatical leave more of a privilege than a right.

In the MN-Faculty, the only faculty related document that indicates how sabbatical leave is possibly regarded in the MN-Faculty, is within the faculty application form for sabbatical leave. In the application, it asks the applicant to state how the home department will benefit from the sabbatical. This suggests that sabbatical leave is viewed as an instrument.

**How sabbatical leave is treated in reality**

When leaders and academics were asked how they or academics in their departments characterized sabbatical leave, the responses varied ranging from ‘It’s certainly a right’ to ‘It’s not a right, but a privilege’.

**It’s a right…**

The findings show that sabbatical leave is a well-ingrained institution at UiO, as quite a few of the informants viewed sabbatical leave as a right—or as an entitlement that allows one to make a free choice. This includes most of the informants from the SV-Faculty, who believed that sabbatical leave was “certainly a right” (SVL02) and that “It's more or less taken for granted” (SVL01). Very few from the MN-Faculty viewed it this way or believed that others viewed it this way.

Moreover, the findings suggest that not only do people view sabbatical leave as a right, but also as a protected right. The Vice-Rector suggested that sabbatical leave is a protected right that would even withstand an economic crisis, stating—

“I think it should be safe because it’s a right. The unions will not let anyone take this away without a big fight” (VR).

And yet another leader added:

"If we were to tighten the rules by very much, there would be an uproar here, because people do see it as some sort of right” (SVL02).

To some, sabbatical leave is viewed as part of the academic job—therefore it is something they have the right to take and it is well protected by actors both inside and outside the University. Many leaders agreed that as long as they had enough seniority, that they would get it when they wanted.
It’s not a right, it’s a privilege…

Yet others appeared confident that sabbatical leave was not an absolute right, but rather a privilege, just as this informant expressed—

"It's not a right because you cannot just say to the department leadership—'now it's my turn, I have the right and I will be away.' You have to give a plan for the sabbatical—which they think is a good plan. So it's a privilege” (MNA01).

Notably, most of those that viewed sabbatical leave as a privilege came from the MN-Faculty, with only a few from the SV-Faculty viewing sabbatical leave as a privilege.

"It's not a right...not formally, because you must submit an application of course, where you outline your plans for the year...[but] I don't think anyone would really be denied having one” (SVA02).

These types of statements align with the very meaning of a privilege—that a person has the free choice or ‘right to apply’ for a sabbatical leave, but not to get a sabbatical unless certain conditions or prerequisites are met.

These views align more closely with the UiO guidelines, which emphasize that eligible applicants have a ‘right to seek’ a sabbatical leave, but do not have the ‘right to have’ a sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical leave as an instrument

Besides being viewed as a right or a privilege, there is yet another way to look at sabbatical leave—as an instrument to meet particular goals. In the guidelines, the only place that it appears as though it may be used as an instrument is in the MN-Faculty funding application—which asks the applicant to explain how the expected outcomes of the sabbatical will benefit the department. Department heads have even supported this, by repeating what is in the application—that the applicant must state how the department will gain from the sabbatical. However, they did emphasize that sabbatical leave is first and foremost important for the individual academic, which is counter to the notion of using sabbatical leave as an instrument for the benefit of the department.

“I would say the main purpose...is for the individual faculty member to renew themselves. So if they make a plan that is good for them—that’s more important for them than sort of being good for the department on a larger scale” (MNL03).
In addition to potentially benefiting the department, sabbatical could also be used to help the individual academic to research particular goals—either by using it as an incentive or reward, or as a motivator to re-stimulate their research activities.

- **Sabbatical leave as an incentive?**

  The idea behind an incentive would be to give sabbatical leave as an award after a certain level of productivity is reached. Only a few members of the MN departments suggested that it could be used in this way. However, there was nothing to indicate that any of the leaders actually used it in this way and in fact, many of the leaders in the SV-faculty seemed to be against the idea of using sabbatical leave is this way, making statements such as—

  "*What we're entering into at the university is a kind of system where you need to be very good in order to get the goods. Which I think is very wrong*" (SVL03).

  The findings show that the SV leaders were clearly not in favor of the idea of using sabbatical leave as a ‘carrot on a stick’ to get academics to work harder. There seemed to be a certain level of trust that the researchers in the SV departments are hard-working and therefore there is no need to use it as an incentive. Rather than as an incentive, some of the leaders suggested that sabbatical leave could be used as a motivator.

- **Sabbatical leave as a motivator?**

  If the department leaders were actively interested in using sabbatical leave as an instrument to stimulate research activity, then the findings suggest that they would prefer to use it to stimulate an academic’s research output during periods of low research productivity, then to use it as an award for work completed.

  “*Probably those that are not producing a lot of publications are the ones that should have a sabbatical, not the ones who produce a lot of publications—they will produce a lot of publications anyways*” (SVL03).

  When asked whether the department heads actually used sabbatical leave in this way and how effective they thought it was, only one department head from each of the faculties actually admitted to trying to use it in that way. The one SV department leader thought that it had been effective, citing one example of an academic who applied for professorship after a sabbatical, while the one MN department head wasn’t sure if it actually resulted in anyone taking a sabbatical, but mentioned that they had at least talked to some academics about it.
Overall, the findings suggest that sabbatical leave is not used in an instrumental way to benefit the department. If sabbatical leave should be used as an instrument at all, then the findings suggest that department heads in the MN and SV faculties would most likely use it as a motivator rather than an incentive.

4.2.2 Q 2B: What are the perceived purposes of sabbatical leave?

The purpose of this question is to find out what academics perceive the purpose of sabbatical leave is based on their belief and by their sabbatical activities, and then to see how these perceived purposes align with the stated purposes of the guidelines in order to determine which institutional elements are at play.

Stated purpose in UiO guidelines

There are four stated purposes of sabbatical leave in the UiO guidelines: uninterrupted time off for concentrating on research, developing international research contacts, and professional renewal in general (UiO, 2008). The only other indication that it is intended for any other purpose is that the MN-Faculty has a funding scheme that is intended to fund sabbaticals that are taken abroad.

The purpose of sabbatical leave according to academics

According to individual academics and department heads, there are several different purposes for sabbatical leave. From the interviews, several purposes were mentioned, including continuous time off for research, going abroad to carry out international research activities, and for general professional development.

Continuous, uninterrupted time off to focus on research

The most commonly mentioned purpose of sabbatical leave was continuous, uninterrupted time off to focus on research. Individual academics from both faculties emphasized that the difficulty of carrying out research in their day-to-day jobs at the University was largely due to having to split their time on other job duties such as teaching and administrative activities and also interruptions from colleagues and students. Sabbatical leave gives them a much-needed reprieve from other responsibilities in order to focus on research activities only. The type of research activities carried out during the leave included basic research activities such as reading, writing, getting articles published, writing grant proposals, collecting data, working in the lab, and running computer simulations.
Compared to the guidelines, continuous time off for research aligns directly with the written guidelines. Furthermore, there were no major differences between the hard and soft sciences except for the last two activities mentioned—working in the lab and running simulations, which are activities associated with the hard sciences.

**Going abroad, to carry out international activities**

For nearly all of the informants, sabbatical leave was associated with going abroad. As the Vice-Rector expressed—

”If you only take a year and sit at home and ponder a problem, then I think it's not necessarily in the spirit of the institution of sabbatical as such” (VR).

Based on the interviews, sabbatical leave was most highly associated with going abroad in the MN-Faculty. In fact, all of the informants in the MN-Faculty had spent their sabbaticals abroad and the topic of going abroad dominated much of the interviews.

On the other hand, it did not appear to be as strongly associated with going abroad in the SV departments—as the topic did not come up as often; although some informants had spent their sabbatical abroad and even encouraged colleagues to go abroad. One SV informant, who had spent their sabbatical in their office at the university, did admit that they were considering going abroad for their next sabbatical.

Asked why it was important to spend sabbatical leave abroad, there were several reasons given by the informants. Between the two faculties, there were three common purposes that were expressed by the informants in both faculties, including:

- **International collaboration and network building:** For most informants, sabbatical leave gave them an opportunity to visit top research institutions outside of Norway, for longer periods of time.

  “We need—as a small country...to have more cooperation with other countries. So...we encourage...to go abroad for a period” (SVL01).

Through these extended visits they were able to collaborate with the top specialists of their field or discipline in a more beneficial way.

Another reason for going abroad, according to some of the MN informants, is for network building. However, while some of the SV informants agreed that sabbaticals could be used for network building, not all of them believed that this was the main purpose for going abroad during the sabbatical.
“I think there are other ways to do networking building that are more effective than sabbatical, but the sabbatical is of course one aspect of it” (SVL03).

Overall, informants from both faculties agreed that the purpose of sabbatical leave was to have an extended period abroad for international collaboration, but they did not agree that the main purpose was for network building.

- **Learn new things:** Many of the informants talked about learning new things that are not possible to learn at the home institution. For the informants of the MN-Faculty this included: learning new ways to organize research, new international research standards, picking up new trends, collecting new material, making new observations or experiments, learning new analytical methods, getting exposure to new technologies, and learning new techniques—especially if the technology is located abroad.

  Those who mentioned going abroad in the SV-Faculty suggested that going abroad during the sabbatical was important for becoming a better international scientist and being free from interruption, as this academic expressed—

  “When you go abroad, you will have peace and quiet to do your research instead of having to deal daily with colleagues and students who are asking about many different things that are not so relevant for your research” (SVA01).

In addition, going abroad was also suggested for the purpose of learning about other teaching and academic cultures, getting a new perspective on the student-teacher relationship, learning new examination techniques, as well as learning how to relate to people from other cultures.

Informants from both faculties agreed that having the opportunity to go abroad for an extended period of time was good for gaining new knowledge. They only differed in the types of things they learned.

- **To get new perspectives:** For some, they responded that going abroad and visiting other institutions during the sabbatical was for the purpose of getting new or different perspectives and ideas in their field or discipline. This was viewed as especially important because Norway is a small country and the traditions and thinking tend to be similar. Just as with network building, getting new perspectives was considered a purpose of sabbatical leave, but not the main purpose.
**Professional development**

Informants from both faculties commonly expressed that sabbatical leave was for keeping up-to-date in the research frontier, learning new things, re-invigoration, and other minor purposes.

- **Keeping up-to-date:** Informants from both faculties expressed that sabbatical leave is good for keeping up in one’s discipline or field, brushing up on old skills and “[to] catch up with the research frontier” (SVL03). Informants expressed that this was an important aspect of the sabbatical, so that they did not fall behind due to other obligations of the job—such as teaching, advising, and administrative duties. For the MN-Faculty this would also include brushing up on forgotten laboratory skills that may be needed for future experiments.

- **Learning new things:** Another common purpose that was mentioned by the informants was learning new and different things for professional development in general. For the MN informants, this purposes was discussed in relation to going abroad, as previously mentioned. Whereas the SV informants did not specifically link learning new things with going abroad; for them, the purpose was to learn new things regardless if they went abroad or stayed home during the sabbatical

- **Re-invigoration:** For a few informants from both the MN and SV faculties, the purpose was also to re-vitalize, to be re-stimulated, and to get new energy for the years following the sabbatical. For some of the SV informants, this also included re-invigoration for teaching, just as this SV leader suggested—

  “To keep the motivation for being a good teacher “ and “[as] an absence to recuperate, to get energy and power to stay active for another period of three years” (SVL01).

Beyond these three main professional development activities, other minor activities were mentioned.

- **Other professional activities:** For even fewer, the purpose of sabbatical leave included time off to re-fresh lecture materials and course curriculum, because the academics are “so tired of doing the same talk…so they have a time out and re-think what they should be teaching” (SVL01). While another suggested that the purpose of sabbatical leave was also for having time to reflect on one’s position and career.
4.2.3 Discussion for Question 2

In the second question, I set out to investigate how sabbatical leave is perceived and understood by academics. This question is divided into two sub-questions, to understand how it is treated, how academics perceive the purpose of sabbatical leave and how the perceived purposes align with the written guidelines. The findings for Study Question 2 are discussion here with respect to the analytical framework.

4.2.3.1 Q 2A: How is sabbatical leave regarded?

From the literature review in Chapter 1, it was noted that the empirical findings from the U.S. suggested that there appeared to be a shift over time in the way sabbatical leave had been regarded historically in the U.S., to how it is perceived to be regarded today—namely that while once it was regarded as a right, it is now regarded as a privilege—according to Zahorski (2014). However, it was noted that according to the Norwegian literature, there still appeared to be mixed views on sabbatical leave, and as the findings in this study suggest, there are indeed mixed views on sabbatical leave.

Within the UiO and SV guidelines, sabbatical leave appears to be viewed as a privilege and not an absolute right—which is what I would expect of a normative type institution. The only indication that it may be viewed differently is within the MN-Faculty application for sabbatical funding, where it appears as though sabbatical leave may be treated as an instrument. Here the applicant is expected to state the expected outcomes, as they would benefit the department, which suggest that regulative type behavior is theoretically present in the MN-Faculty. However, the findings from the interviews tell a slightly different story.

In reality, the findings suggest that there are mixed views on sabbatical leave. Comparatively, the findings suggest that more informants in the SV-Faculty view sabbatical leave as a taken-for-granted right—which suggests that cultural-cognitive elements dominate in the soft sciences, while more informants in the MN-Faculty view sabbatical leave in line with the guidelines—as a privilege. Although sabbatical leave does not appear to be used primarily as an instrument in either the hard or soft science groupings, the findings suggest that it could be conceived of as an incentive in the hard sciences—which would indicate more regulative leanings in this respect, while it could be considered more for the purpose of motivating than rewarding in the soft sciences, which again suggests supports the notion of the soft sciences behaving in more of a cultural-cognitive way.
Overall, it appears as though sabbatical leave is regarded more of a right or a privilege than an instrument, which means that more normative and cultural-cognitive forces are at play than regulative. These findings are mostly in line with what I would expect to find in the soft sciences—that is mostly cultural-cognitive leanings. For the hard sciences I expected to find more regulative elements, with only some normative findings—compared to these expectations, the hard sciences are less regulative than what I would expect.

4.2.3.2 Q 2B: What are the perceived purposes of sabbatical leave?

The informants suggested that sabbatical leave is for a number of purposes, including continuous time off for research, going abroad to carry out international activities over longer periods of time, and other professional development activities—such as keeping up-to-date in one’s discipline or field, learning new things, re-invigoration, and other minor professional activities. The purposes mentioned by the informants are in-line with the type of activities that are normally carried out in the academic profession, which supports the idea that actors view sabbatical leave from a normative standpoint—that is, that sabbatical leave is meant to be used for activities that support career and professional development.

Compared to the guidelines, the suggested purposes by the informants mostly aligned with the stated purposes in the guidelines, with only one exception—namely that the informants associate sabbatical leave with going abroad, which is not explicitly stated in the guidelines. The guidelines do mention that sabbatical leave should be used to build international contacts, but they do not state that one must go abroad to do this. Nevertheless, the stated purposes by the informants largely align with the guidelines, which further supports the idea that normative elements are at play.

Comparatively, both the hard and soft sciences largely share the same beliefs as to what they believe are the main purposes of sabbatical leave. Beyond basic research and professional development activities, the two faculties differed in the specific activities that they engaged in and the aspects of academic life that they felt were important to focus on during the sabbatical. According to the findings, the hard science academics were more interested in engaging in research related activities during the sabbatical, including: network building, learning new research methods and technology, as well as working in the lab and on computer simulations. Whereas, academics in the soft sciences appeared to be more interested in using the sabbatical for learning about the social aspects of academic life, such as teaching and academic cultures at foreign institutions, as well as being a better
international scientist, and getting away from the interruptions of daily life at the university. These findings align with the disciplinary culture of the hard and soft sciences—namely that the hard sciences tend to organize their work around technology, whereas the soft sciences tend to be person-oriented and individualistic in their work style (Becher, 1994).

Further, the two faculties differed in how much they associated sabbatical leave with going abroad. Informants in the MN-Faculty discussed going abroad on the sabbatical more so than informants in the SV-Faculty. Going abroad seems to be normative for the disciplines in the MN-Faculty, as evidenced by the funding scheme that is intended for sabbaticals that will be taken abroad by academics in that faculty, whereas it seems to be more of an individual choice in the soft sciences.

Overall, from a disciplinary perspective, the findings suggest that academics in the hard sciences have a more normative view on the purpose of sabbatical leave, whereas academics in the soft sciences have a mixed normative and slightly cultural-cognitive view because it appears as though going abroad for the sabbatical is an individual choice rather than a normative expectation. These findings more or less align with what I would expect to find between the hard and soft sciences—i.e. that hard sciences are more regulative or normative in their views and that the soft sciences are more normative to cultural-cognitive in their views.

4.3 Q 3: What are the perceived benefits of a sabbatical for the individual academic and the institution?

The intent of this question is to attempt to understand why sabbatical leave is necessary at UiO—i.e. what the perceived benefits are. This question is split into three sub-questions that together will help to provide answers for this question. The first sub-question attempts to understand who sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit—the academic or the department. The second and third sub-questions attempt to answer the question of what the perceived benefits are for the individual academic and the departments, respectively. A discussion of the findings with respect to the analytical framework follows at the end.

4.3.1 Q 3A: Who is sabbatical leave perceived to benefit?

The findings suggest that most department heads believe that sabbatical leave is first and foremost a benefit of the individual than the department. This belief aligns with the findings from Question 2A that indicates that sabbatical leave plans are left up to the individual
academic and are not for the benefit for the department. However, there were a few that suggested that sabbatical leave did benefit the department, but indirectly or in a collective way, as this department head explains:

“We are all in the same boat, so what benefits the researcher is a benefit to the department, to a larger extent” (SVL02).

Comparing the responses from the two faculties, there did not appear to be any major disciplinary differences. They both had a more or less equal perception that sabbatical leave was first and foremost was meant to benefit the individual and that maybe the department benefited in an indirect way.

4.3.2 Q 3B: What are the perceived benefits for the individual academic?

The purpose of this question is to find out what academics and leaders perceive the benefits to be for the individual academic, based on their perceptions and their experiences from their sabbaticals. The findings are presented according to perceived direct and indirect benefits. To be clear, a direct benefit is considered a positive outcome that was actually experienced by the individual as a result of a sabbatical, while an indirect benefit is a benefit that is perceived to be the result of the sabbatical leave, but one that cannot be directly linked to the sabbatical specifically.

According to individual academics and institutional leaders, there are a number of perceived benefits of a sabbatical leave for the individual academic—both direct and indirect. In the interviews, eight common benefits were discussed, four which were perceived to be direct benefits and four which are perceived to be indirect benefits of sabbatical leave.

Perceived direct benefits

Based on the individual experiences, the informants said that they benefited from sabbatical leave by learning new things, increasing their overall number and diversity of publications, increasing their international network, and they also had better international collaborations, and felt rejuvenated upon returning from their sabbaticals.

• Learned new things

One of the most common benefits mentioned by the informants, was the benefit of learning new things—that is gaining new knowledge, learning new skills, and refreshing old skills. Informants from both faculties talked about getting new research ideas, inputs, and impulses, as well as learning different ways to conduct research. Informants from the MN-
Faculty also talked about new techniques they had learned and old ones that they brushed up on, and how they learned new ways to organize research groups. Informants from the SV-Faculty talked about new theories, new methods of examination, and academic standards that they had learned. Notably, these benefits were discussed mostly in connection with spending their sabbaticals abroad.

- **Increased number and diversity of publications**
  
  Another benefit commonly discussed amongst the informants, is the increased number and diversity of publications. Whether they spent their sabbaticals at home or abroad, a number of the informants from both faculties wrote and published articles. A few from the MN-Faculty even wrote articles on new things they had learned while collaborating abroad, which they believe helped them to diversify their publications.

- **Increased international network and better international collaborations**
  
  Some informants mentioned that because of sabbatical leave, they increased and strengthen their international networks through visits to international institutions. They also remarked how much better their international collaborations were by having the extended time to spend abroad.

  "If you are [at other institutions] for longer periods, you get to know people in a different way, you become part of the system, you can collaborate much more intensely with people there. That's something which is difficult to achieve if you didn't have the sabbatical leave" (SVL02).

However, not everyone agreed that networking was a major benefit of going abroad, stating that they believed that there better ways to network-build than through sabbatical leave.

- **Rejuvenated**
  
  Fewer still remarked how rejuvenated or how re-motivated and inspired they felt upon returning from their sabbaticals, just as this informant remarked:

  “[Going to a new place]—you feel that you get struck by the ambition which is around you, which is at a high level. And I was a little bit frustrated before this sabbatical, but I then became inspired and it's inspiration has lasted for quite long since I returned” (MNA01).

  Considering disciplinary differences, the findings suggest that the two faculties benefited in much the same way, differing only in the typical disciplinary activities that lead to the benefits.
Perceived indirect benefits

There were four other benefits that were mentioned in the interviews, which are perceived to be indirect benefits of sabbatical leave, including a benefit to the individual career, making one a better scientist, improved research quality, and improved chances of getting more grants. These benefits are perceived to come as an indirect result of having had a sabbatical, especially when the sabbatical was taken abroad, but were not mentioned as often as the more direct benefits were.

- **Benefit to the career**
  
  Some believed that sabbatical leave indirectly benefited their career. Informants have suggested that as a result of going abroad, collaborating, and even increasing the number of publications during their sabbaticals has helped them in their career. For one person, they worked “very systematically towards achieving the competence of a professor” (SVA02) in order to get a promotion—which they did achieve.

- **A better scientist and teacher**
  
  A few informants from both faculties suggested that sabbaticals helped them to become more productive and to gain new knowledge abroad that they believe has helped them to become better scientists. In addition, one informant from the SV faculty mentioned that they had learned new examination methods, which they believed made them a better teacher.

- **Improved research quality**
  
  The findings suggest that the opportunity to go abroad and collaborate in turn has resulted in an improved research quality for some.

- **More grants**
  
  Informants from the MN-Faculty also suggested that more international collaborations, leads to more international publications, which is perceived to help secure grants more easily in the future.

Overall, the focus in the interviews centered on the perceived direct benefits of sabbatical leave, than the indirect benefits. Moreover, because most of the informants had had sabbaticals abroad, a lot of the benefits that were realized, were tied to having spent time abroad.
4.3.3 **Q 3C: What are the perceived benefits of sabbatical leave for the department?**

In addition to benefits for the individual academic, informants from both faculties also discussed what they thought the benefits to the department are. As previously mentioned, many believed that the benefits of sabbatical leave were first and foremost for the individual academic. Those that believed that there were benefits to the department, believed either that sabbatical leave benefited the department indirectly or in a collective way—that is, the benefits are more easily seen over time, after a lot of people have gone on sabbatical. Based on the interviews, there appeared to be two main ways that sabbatical leave could benefit the departments—increased visibility and reputation, and helping to meet departmental goals.

**Increased visibility and reputation**

When academics spend their sabbaticals abroad, it is perceived that this benefits the department by increasing the visibility and reputation of the individuals’ home department, “because if the faculty members continually develop and stay on top of things, then the department can stay on top of things” (MNL03).

In turn, it is believed that as a result of sabbatical leave and increased visibility and reputation of the department can lead to additional indirect benefits including attracting academics from abroad, attracting more funding, and even collaborative agreements between departments and outside industry.

**Helps to meet departmental goals**

The second way that sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit the departments is by helping the departments to meet departmental goals. Informants from both faculties talked about two types of goals that sabbatical leave could possibly help their departments to meet: internationalization goals and increasing the quality of research put out by the academics in the department. As one SV department head explains—

"One of the defined goals is to strengthen the international collaboration and to establish formal contracts and [sabbatical leave] is the most effective way to do that” (SVL01).

Sabbaticals taken abroad, international collaborations, and increased publishing in international journals is believed to equate to higher quality research, which in turn is believed to help the departments to reach certain departmental goals.
“High quality research—that’s an important goal for the department, and I think the sabbatical helps us to achieve this vital goal. It contributes to higher quality in our research, definitely” (SVL03).

While sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit the departments and holistically the University—at least indirectly, more studies would need to be conducted in order to draw real conclusions. These findings however, give some ideas as to how sabbatical leave can benefit the University and the departments.

**Disciplinary differences**

Comparing the MN-Faculty to the SV-Faculty, there were no major differences between the two faculties. There were a few singular responses, which could give the impression that there may be disciplinary differences, but without more data to support this, it is difficult to come to such conclusions based on the findings in this study.

### 4.3.4 Discussion for Question 3

In the third question, I set out to investigate the benefits of sabbatical leave for the individual academic and the institution, as perceived and experienced by individual academics and department heads. The discussion that follows is organized by the three sub-questions: 1) who sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit, 2) what the perceived benefits are for individual academics, and 3) what the perceived benefits are for the individual departments.

#### 4.3.4.1 Q 3A: Who is sabbatical leave perceived to benefit?

Sabbatical leave has long since been perceived to be advantageous for both the individual and the institution. The findings from this study suggest that sabbatical leave is believed by informants from both faculties to be first and foremost a benefit to the individual academic, with only few, indirect benefits to the department. Compared to the expectations outlined in the second chapter, this finding suggests that there are normative elements at play in both faculties because there are perceived benefits for both the academic and the department. From a disciplinary perspective, there appeared to be no differences between the hard and soft sciences, which means that both the MN and SV faculties equally display normative features, with respect to who sabbatical leave is perceived to benefit.

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6 See ‘Harvard University: the beginning of the academic sabbatical’ in Section 1.2.2.1.
4.3.4.2 Q 3B: What are the perceived benefits for the individual academic?

Based primarily on experiences, sabbatical leave is perceived to directly benefit individual academics in at least four ways: they reported that they learned new things, they increased the overall number and diversity of their publications, they built and strengthened their international networks and had better international collaborations compared to not having a long stay abroad, and some reported that they felt rejuvenated after they returned. In addition, they also discussed indirect benefits including a benefit to the career, becoming a better scientist and teacher, improved research quality and increased chance of getting more grants—especially when sabbatical leave was taken abroad.

These findings suggest that normative elements are at play because they align with the purposes of sabbatical leave as suggested by academics and leaders in Question 2, and they also overlap with benefits found in previous studies in the U.S., such as gaining a fresh perspective on one’s work or field, expanding one’s network, and being rejuvenated as found in Zahorski’s (1994) studies; completing writing projects and helping to get more grants as found in Sima and Denton’s (1995) study; as well as improving teaching and research and proving to be an important tool for career development as found in the literature review by Boeing and Miller (1997). Furthermore, these suggested benefits align with the expectations of a normative type institution—as I outlined in Chapter 2, because they are conceivably all beneficial to an academic’s career.

Comparing the two disciplinary groups, informants from both groups commonly discussed the four direct benefits more or less equally. Where they differed was in the details of each suggested benefit. For instance, the informants from the hard sciences focused more on learning new things in the physical world like new technologies and brushing up on old skills, for example; whereas the informants in the soft sciences tended to focus on learning things that are more abstract, like new theories, academic standards, and teaching methods. These responses are typical for the type of work that is carried out in the hard and soft sciences, in which academics in the hard sciences are generally task-oriented (Becher, 1994) and are their work is often organized around technology, while the soft sciences are traditionally individualistic and role-oriented (Becher, 1994). This suggests that the six disciplines are following the respective norms that are typical of their respective disciplinary grouping, further supporting the idea that normative elements are at play.
4.3.4.3  Q 3C: What are the perceived benefits for the department?

As described in question 3A, benefits to the department were perceived to be an indirect or collective result of many academics taking a sabbatical over time. This finding aligns with the findings of Zahorski (1994) and Sima (2000) who both propose that the benefits of sabbatical leave for the individual academic translate into institutional benefits.

The findings suggest that there were a few, indirect benefits of sabbatical leave to the department. For example, it is believed that sabbatical leave helps to increase the visibility and reputation of the department, as well as help the department to meet certain departmental goals, such as internationalization goals and increasing the overall quality of research in the department. Compared to prior studies conducted in the U.S., these findings only represent two of the combined nine benefits found by Zahorski (1994) and Boeing and Miller (1997), which suggests that further studies would need to be conducted on the institutional benefits, before any concrete conclusions could be made.

Overall, the findings support the idea that normative elements are at play because sabbatical leave appears to benefit the individual academic more than the department, which matches with the expectations that I laid out in Chapter 2 for normative institutions.

From a disciplinary perspective, the findings do not suggest that there are major differences between the hard and soft sciences with respect to sabbatical leave benefitting the institution.
5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

The over-arching question for this project is ‘How is sabbatical leave conceptualized and why is it necessary at UiO?’ To investigate this question, I laid out three research questions that look into 1) how sabbatical leave is organized and regulated at the University, 2) how sabbatical leave is perceived and understood by academics, and 3) what the perceived benefits of sabbatical leave are for the individual academic and the institution as whole. I set out to investigate these questions from a dual institutional and disciplinary perspective, to determine the institutional nature of sabbatical leave—that is what institutional drivers are behind how actors understand and perceive of sabbatical leave, and to determine how the nature of sabbatical leave differs between the hard and soft sciences.

Q1: How is sabbatical leave organized and regulated at the University?

Over time, sabbatical leave has evolved from a taken-for-granted institution to an organized and regulated practice that takes into account cultural differences between faculties and departments and is supported by multiple actors both inside the university and outside—including trade unions. Overall, sabbatical leave appears to be a well-organized practice in the MN-Faculty, while it appears to me more loosely organized in the SV-Faculty. In both faculties, sabbatical leave is organized and regulated by a set of rules and prerequisites that the applicant must meet before they are granted a sabbatical. However, when it comes to oversight and the granting of sabbaticals, the MN departments are careful to follow the guidelines, while the SV departments take a more relaxed approach to granting leaves. For both faculties, there are funding options available for applicants to cover sabbatical related expenses such as substitute teachers if someone from outside must be brought in, or if the sabbatical will be taken abroad. The MN-Faculty has an in-house funding scheme that specifically supports sabbatical leaves—albeit sabbaticals that are taken abroad. The SV-Faculty does have some funding options available in the form of smaller grants, but these options are not specific to sabbatical leave. In the case that in-house funding is insufficient to cover the costs of the sabbatical, applicants can then seek outside funding. From a disciplinary perspective, these findings are in line with the disciplinary nature of the hard and soft sciences.
Q2: How is sabbatical leave perceived and understood by academics?

Within the guidelines, it is clear that the authors conceptualized sabbatical leave as a privilege—or as a right given after certain conditions are met. In reality, there are mixed views of sabbatical leave amongst academics. Within the MN-Faculty, sabbatical leave is mostly viewed as a privilege, just as the guidelines indicate. However, within the SV-Faculty, sabbatical leave appears to be viewed more as a taken-for-granted right, even though applicants must meet certain pre-requisites—such as earned seniority and securing substitute teachers for their courses. In reality, sabbatical leave is treated and practiced like a privilege at UiO, even if it is viewed as a right by some. While it is clearly indicated as a privilege in the guidelines and is treated like one in reality, it is not exactly known why some informants perceived of sabbatical leave as a right. One possible explanation could be that sabbatical leave is perceived to be under-utilized and that everyone who applies for one is almost guaranteed to get one. These findings do however, align with the disciplinary nature of the hard and soft sciences—that is that the hard sciences are generally well-organized and tend to follow rules, whereas the soft sciences are more individualistic in nature.

Based on personal experiences, academics conceptualize the purpose of sabbatical leave largely in the same way as the guidelines indicate. Informants in both faculties indicated that sabbatical leave is necessary for professional development and for carrying out research activities in an uninterrupted fashion, free from the normal distractions of their job. The major difference between the guidelines and how the informants perceived sabbatical leave is that in reality sabbatical leave is highly associated with the purpose of going abroad to carry out research activities at foreign institutions. This is especially true in the MN-Faculty, where it appears to be a professional expectation. While it was also associated with going abroad in the SV-Faculty, it appears to be an individual choice more so than a professional expectation. This finding illustrates that sabbatical leave and going abroad are highly intertwined concepts that are perceivably difficult to separate. Comparatively, sabbatical leave is largely conceptualized in the same way between the two faculties, differing only in their disciplinary specific activities—such as working with technology in the hard sciences and focusing on more individualistic activities in the soft sciences.
Q3: What are the perceived benefits of sabbatical leave for the individual academic and the institution?

Sabbatical leave is perceived to be necessary first and foremost for the academic career. If it helps the institution, it does so incidentally—in an indirect way, usually as a collective result after many academics have gone on a sabbatical. The perceived benefits largely align with the intended purposes of sabbatical leave, which shows that sabbatical leave is necessary for having uninterrupted time off to focus on activities that are beneficial for the academic career. Sabbatical leave can potentially benefit the institution by helping the departments to meet their goals, particularly internationalization and research goals. Comparatively, the benefits for academics in the two faculties were largely the same and only differed in disciplinary specific ways—for instance academics in the MN-Faculty benefited more from learning new things in the physical world, whereas informants in the SV-Faculty benefited in more abstract ways.

Overall, sabbatical leave is a well-organized and regulated institution at UiO, that takes into account professional norms, as well as cultural differences. While sabbatical leave is conceptualized as a privilege in the hard sciences and as a right in the soft sciences, in reality it is treated the same—as a privilege. Beyond predictable disciplinary differences, actors in both the hard and soft sciences do understand and perceive of sabbatical leave as a necessary part of the academic career. From a theoretical perspective the findings support the hypotheses that actors in the hard sciences understand and perceive of sabbatical leave from a more regulative and normative standpoint, while actors in the soft sciences understand and perceive of sabbatical leave from a normative and cultural-cognitive standpoint, as is dictated by their respective disciplinary cultures.

5.2 Future Research

A number of informants talked about sabbatical leave being under-utilized. A future study would investigate sabbatical leave usage, looking into for example—how many people are on sabbatical at one time, who uses it (and who doesn’t), why they use is it (and why they don’t), how it is used, and what the outcomes of a sabbatical are.
References


Likestillingsloven. Lov 21 Juni 2013 nr. 59 om likestilling mellom kjønnene [The Gender Equality Act].


University of Oslo. (2008, September 17). Guidelines for allocating research period at UiO. Retrieved from [http://www.uio.no/english/about/regulations/personnel/academic/guidelines-research-period.html](http://www.uio.no/english/about/regulations/personnel/academic/guidelines-research-period.html)


Appendices

APPENDIX A: Guidelines for Allocating Research Period at UiO

Guidelines for allocating research period at UiO
Adopted by the University Board on 12 June, 1990, with the amendments of 14 December, 1993, and 6 March, 2008

Content
1 Objective
2 Application
3 Allocation
4 Earning seniority
5 Rights and duties during the period
6 Reports
7 Supplementary provisions

1 Objective
The purpose of a research period is to provide an opportunity for uninterrupted research activities. The research period shall be used to concentrate on research projects, the development of international research contacts and professional renewal in general. All permanent employees in academic positions have the right to apply for a research period according to the guidelines.

2 Application
An application stating the reasons for the research period shall be sent to the institute on a separate form. A work schedule stating how the period is intended to be used shall be submitted with the application. The application deadline is determined by each individual faculty.

3 Allocation
The research period is allocated by each individual faculty, or possibly by the basic unit if the faculty has so delegated it. The allocation assumes that the basic unit finds the applicant’s work schedule for the research period satisfactory. An applicant who has not been active in research over a longer period of time, without a valid reason (particularly onerous work tasks of another sort, illness etc.) can be refused a research period or can be asked to participate in specific skill development courses or similar. The allocation is normally dependent on the establishment and financing of a satisfactory temporary staffing scheme. Those who work part-time must themselves arrange for leave and salary from their primary employer.

Should a need to prioritize applicants arise, emphasis shall be placed on seniority (cf. item 4), the research schedule submitted, previous research efforts, the need to place the research activities at another place than in own institution, particular efforts in teaching, advising or other university activities that are not covered by the provisions of item 4, heavy care duties and the opportunities for women to qualify for top positions. The evaluation shall also take into consideration the working situation at the individual unit and possibly any previous research periods with other temporary staff financing than the university’s. The individual unit should endeavour to avoid interrupting advisory relationships for masters or doctoral candidates, and should possibly ensure that the advisory tasks can be transferred so that the students/candidates concerned do not
suffer. If two applicants are very similar, after a total evaluation of seniority and professional and working criteria, a female applicant shall be preferred over a male applicant.

Any rejection of an application for a research period may be appealed to a higher authority.

4 Earning seniority

A permanent academic employee earns seniority for two months of a research period for each year of service when the teaching and administrative duties that ordinarily belong to the position are maintained. The time acquired may be used for a research period of six months after three years of service, or 12 months after six years of service. When special considerations dictate (e.g. for employees with combined positions), a faculty may grant shorter periods, with correspondingly shorter periods to accumulate the time. A special agreement for elected and employed executives of UiO, entered into on 5 December 2006, gives the Rector, Pro-Rector, Vice Rector and Dean full exemption from teaching and the right to a research period of one year after the expiration of their period in office. The same is given to heads of institutes who return to their ordinary research positions at UiO. The Pro-Dean may be given an exemption from teaching in a half-time position and the right to a research period of one year after expiration of the period in office. For further information, see the special agreement for other conditions with respect to executive positions that are less than full-time, and about the when research period may be taken.

Absence due to maternity leave shall not be deducted when calculating the research period. This also applies in cases of adoption, while other leave is not granted a corresponding right.

5 Rights and duties during the period

The employee is on leave with full pay during his or her research period. Those who have a research period shall not accept, without conferring with their institute, teaching, examination work or other work that may detract from the research activities. The employee is exempt from all elected university positions during his or her research period unless otherwise agreed. During the period, the employee may locate his or her research activities at a suitable place other than his or her own institution.

6 Reports

Within a month of the research period expiring, the employee shall send a brief report to the allocating authority about how the period has been used.

7 Supplementary provisions

The individual faculty may issue provisions that are supplementary to these guidelines.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warm-up (5 mins)</th>
<th>Study Q2 &amp; Q3 (10-15 mins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How long have you been the head of the Research Committee?</td>
<td>1. What would you say is the purpose of sabbatical leave?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What position did you hold before becoming V.R.?</td>
<td>(Conceptualization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Q1 (7-10 mins)</td>
<td>a. *Why is it important for them to go abroad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you know anything of the history of the introduction of S.L. at UiO? (History)</td>
<td>2. How do you view S.L. (Conceptualization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. From what I can tell, sabbatical leave is left up to individual universities to manage—that is, there is no formal policy from the government on this. Do you know why this is so? (Regulation)</td>
<td>o Some have called it a right—do you agree with this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Can you tell me a little bit about how sabbatical leave is organized and regulated at UiO? (Organization and Regulation)</td>
<td>o How would you characterize it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Who approves SL requests?—the faculties / departments?</td>
<td>a. Do you think it could or should be used as a motivator or as an incentive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you know anything about the usage of SL—how popular it is?</td>
<td>3. Why is S.L. important for academics? (Aca. benefits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Does the university keep records/statistics on this?</td>
<td>o Career development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are there any known problems?</td>
<td>o Network building (other uni’s and research institutes, internationally, others...)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Are there any concerns about the practice of SL at the University?</td>
<td>o Learning new things? (skills, knowledge...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mist/Final Q’s (5-10 mins)</td>
<td>o Research (Quality/Quantity)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you think S. L. guidelines should be changed in any way?</td>
<td>4. Why is sabbatical leave important for UiO? (Inst. benefits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What changes do you think need to be made?</td>
<td>a. Does it help the department to meet its goals? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you have anything else to add, that I haven’t covered?</td>
<td>o Internationalization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is there anyone else you would recommend that I speak to about this topic?</td>
<td>o Network building/ partnerships/ collaborations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. May I contact you again if I have additional Q’s?</td>
<td>o Reputation and recognition (e.g. rankings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Recruitment of top scientists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Interview Guide (Department Heads) (~45 mins)

## Warm-up (5-8 mins)

- **Opt Q**: Look up bio and website. Ask Q about this.

## 1. **Tell me about the department?**

- **a.** How long have you been the head? Are you elected or appointed?
- **b.** How big is the department—how many permanently employed academics are there? How many women/men?
- **c.** How many research groups?
- **d.** What is aim of department/who are you training?

## Study Q2 & Q3 (10-15 mins)

1. **What would you say is the purpose of sabbatical leave?** *(Conceptualization)*
   - *Why is it important for them to go abroad?*

2. **How do you view SL?** *(Conceptualization)*
   - Some have called it a right—do you agree with this?
   - How would you characterize it?
   - Do you think it could or should be used as a motivator or as an incentive?

3. **Why is S.L. important for academics?** *(Academic benefits)*
   - Career development?
   - Network building (other uni’s and research institutes, internationally, with)?
   - Learning new things? (skills, knowledge...)
   - Faculty vitality (motivation, morale, interest in work)?

4. **Are there any benefits to the department? / How does the dept. gain from academics going on sabbatical?** *(Institutional benefits)*
   - Does it help the department to meet its goals? How?
   - Internationalization?
   - Network building
   - Reputation (i.e. highly recognized, leading institute)
   - Recruitment of top scientists

- **Opt Q**: Are their any disadvantages of S.L. for either academics or the department?

## Study Q1 (7-12 mins)

1. **How popular is sabbatical leave within this department?** *(Popularity)*
   - Approximately how many people do you guess (or know) are on sabbatical leave in a given term/this term?
   - Do you ever have to persuade people to take a sabbatical?
   - Do you ever have to deny anyone?

2. **What are the formal concerns regarding sabbatical leave?** *(Guidelines)*
   - Concerning the practice of
   - Requirements
   - Allocation/prioritizing

3. **Does the dept. care/concern itself with the plans of the people who apply?** *(Perceptions/Attitudes)*
   - Do you know where academics tend to take their sabbaticals?
   - Is it popular to go abroad?
   - Do they work with other universities or research institutes in Norway?
   - What about working on projects in the private sector?

4. **What are commonly discussed concerns or problems that academics face when considering, planning or taking their sabbaticals?** *(Challenges/barriers)*
   - Practical or logistical (e.g. planning)
   - Financial (e.g. funding project)
   - Personal or Family issues
   - Teaching obligations and advising of doctoral students (how is this dealt with—find substitute or reschedule?)

## Misc/Final Q’s (5-10 mins)

1. **Do you think S.L. guidelines should be changed in any way?**
   - What changes do you think need to be made?

2. **Do you have anything else to add, that I haven’t covered?**

3. **Is there anyone else you would recommend that I speak to about this topic?**

4. **How can I find out who in this dept has taken a sabbatical?**

5. **May I contact you again if I have additional Q’s?**
# APPENDIX D: Interview Guide for Academics

## Warm-up (5-7 mins)
1. Can you tell me about yourself, how long you have been in academia, how long at UiO and what your area of research is.

## Sabbatical Experiences (10-15 mins)
1. Can you tell me about the sabbaticals you have taken...
   a. How many have you taken?
   b. When?
   c. How long?
   d. Where did you go?
   e. Why did you go/stay there?
   f. Did you consider going to other places?
   g. Did everything go according to your original plan? (If not—what happened?)

2. Why did you decide to take a sabbatical—i.e. what was the purpose of your sabbatical(s)? *(Purpose)*

3. What did you do during your sabbatical(s)? *(Purpose/Benefits)*
   - Research project?
   - Writing/publishing?
   - Conferences?
   - Learn new skills/trends/ideas?
   - Build network?

4. What barriers or obstacles did you face before, during or upon your return from your sabbatical leave? *(Challenges/Barriers)*
   - Practical or logistical?
   - Financial?
   - Teaching/advising duties?
   - Personal or family issues?
   - Delayed leave?
   a. Have you ever been denied leave and if so, for what reason?
      - If so, for what reason?

## S.L. Cont’d
5. If you could reflect for a moment, how would you describe/characterize your overall experience with your sabbatical(s)?
   - What was your overall impression?
   - How did you feel at the conclusion of your sabbatical?
   a. What did you like and dislike about your leave?
   b. Looking back, would you do anything different—why or why not?

## Purposes & Benefits (8-12 mins)
1. In your words, what is the purpose of sabbatical leave? *(Purpose)*
   - Why is it important to go abroad?
   - Why is it important to build networks?

2. How do you view SL? *(Conceptualization)*
   - How would you characterize it?
   - Some have called it a right—do you agree with this?

3. Why is sabbatical leave important? *(Aca. Benefits)*
   - Career development?
   - Network building?
   - Vitality (re-motivation, re-energize, re-invigoration)
   - Increase in research productivity?
   a. In what way has sabbatical leave helped you in your career development?

## Misc/Final Q’s (6-8 mins)
1. What do you think of the current S.L. guidelines?
   - Is there anything you think should be changed?
   - If so—what and why?

2. Do you plan to apply for future sabbaticals? Why or why not? Where might you go?

3. *(OPT. Q)* If you could give advice to other academics that have not taken a sabbatical, what advice would you give?

4. *(OPT Q)* Is there anything you would like to add that hasn’t been covered?
APPENDIX E: Analysis Strategy

The data analysis was done by hand, instead of using computer software. For my first research project, it was important for me to be able to get intimate with the data so that I could better understand it. This meant also trying to understand the different perspectives of the informants as well. As Corbin and Strauss (2015) explain:

“Thinking is the heart and soul of doing qualitative analysis. [It] is the engine that drives the process and brings the researcher into the analytic process” (p. 163).

For the analysis, I had to break the data down into codes or recognizable concepts to make the data easier to work with. Concepts came from other literature, the institutional framework, and the data. Finding concepts in the data was a process that took many steps. This included reading the documents and transcripts several times and going back and forth between the documents and transcripts, the literature, and the framework. Overall, there were about 3-4 levels of categories per document type. For the first round, I used the research questions as a guide to break down the data into three major groups. From there, I broke the data down into smaller units with newly found concepts, and then repeated this process as many times as necessary, until the data was more understandable and easier to work with. This timely process is necessary in order to understand what is being expressed in the raw data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In Table 9, I have described how I coded and categorized the data to answer each of the three research questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Question(s) answered</th>
<th>Analysis Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical documents</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Summarize content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines</td>
<td>Q1, Q2</td>
<td>Using the seven criteria of the guidelines as a guideline: 1. Code each criterion according to which research questions the criterion answers. 2. Code data according to institutional codes established in Section 2.2.2.2 (see codes in Table 3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews/Transcripts</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Create broad categories based on seven criteria from guidelines—in order to easily triangulate back to the guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>1. Divide responses according to sub-questions (i.e. how regarded/viewed and purpose). 2. Code and group data for each sub-question according to different views and purposes. 3. Organize categorized data according to the broad categories from the guidelines—in order to easily triangulate back to the guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>1. Divide data according to who is perceived to benefit (i.e. the individual or the department). 2. Code and categorize the two groups of data according to direct and indirect benefits. 3. Organize categorized data according in the same way as the purposes were organized.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F: Informed Consent Form

As required for social research projects that involve human subjects, I registered my project with NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). As a condition of social science research that involves persons, I created and emailed the informants an Informed Consent Form detailing the project, explaining their participation in the study, and giving them options on how they would like their identity treated in the event that I wanted to quote them directly. As indicated in Section 3.4, the project has since evolved since the form was created.

![Informed Consent Form]

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**Master thesis project:**

**Sabbatical Leave: What is it good for?**

*The roles and benefits of sabbatical leave in career and institutional development at the University of Oslo.*

You are invited to participate in a research study on sabbatical leave. You have been chosen because you have knowledge on sabbatical leave and its policies and practices, or have previously taken a sabbatical leave.

- **Institutional leaders** will be chosen by their expertise on the subject.
- **Academic researchers** will be chosen randomly from a list of researchers who have previously taken a sabbatical leave.

This study will be conducted by [Lori Lincoln](mailto:researcher@uni.edu) as part of a Master’s thesis project, for the Higher Education Master’s (HEM) program in the Faculty of Educational Sciences (UV) at the University of Oslo. The academic/project advisor is [redacted] (advisor), Researcher-Professor at [redacted]. Contact details may be found at the end of the form.

**Background Information**

Research is the life-blood of both the academic’s and the research university’s existence. As long as the academic is able to research, produce new knowledge and publish, then both the academic and institution will thrive. The problem however, comes when the vitality of the academic diminishes. For example, when the academic faces increased stressors—such as increased teaching duties in addition to their research duties, loses motivation or even reaches the point of job burnout. In this situation, not only does the academic’s career development start to suffer, but as a consequence so too does the university’s development. One incentive the university can offer the academic is Sabbatical Leave (SL)—uninterrupted time off for the researcher to carry out independent research projects. The hopes of what SL can help the academic to accomplish are many—including a re-vitalized academic, new knowledge, completed research projects, etc. However, the phenomenon of SL is a rather under-investigated research topic in Norway, beyond a hand-full of popular science articles. To date, no academic studies have been conducted that focus on the exact roles and benefits that SL has on academic career and institutional development. That is precisely what this study will attempt to answer.

**Your participation as interviewee**

If you agree to participate in this study, your role will be to participate in an in-person interview (by Skype if necessary). The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and location sometime in the month of May 2014. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

In the event that a follow-up interview is necessary, then the researcher will contact the participant and arrange another interview.
Interview questions

If you agree to participate in this study, you will receive a list of questions beforehand in order to help you prepare.

- **Interviews for academic researchers** will contain questions regarding sabbatical leave experiences; as well as the roles, benefits and barriers of sabbatical leave.

- **Interviews for department and institutional leaders** will contain questions regarding general sabbatical trends; as well as the roles, benefits, and barriers of sabbatical leave.

Possible risks and discomfort

There are no known risks or discomfort for your participation in the research.

Voluntary Participation & Option to withdraw from the study

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question or choose to stop participating in this study at any time, for any reason, without consequence.

If you decide at a later date that you wish to withdraw any of your responses/answers or wish to completely withdraw from the study, then you may do so by contacting the researcher by email: Lori Lincoln, [redacted]. All data generated as a consequence of your participation will be destroyed.

Confidentiality

All data, notes and audio recordings for this study will be kept confidential. Personal details such as name, email, and other contact information will only be collected for contact purposes and will be kept separate from the interview notes/data. All data will be kept on the researcher’s home computer, which is password protected and is not accessible by others. Only the researcher and possibly the project advisor will have access to the data and audio recordings. If the research is terminated for any reason, all data and recordings will be destroyed.

Data, notes and audio recordings from the interviews will be used for this study only, and will be erased at the completion of the research project in the fall of 2014.

If the researcher publishes any type of report, statements made by you will only be quoted with your permission*. If you allow statements (quotes) made by you to be used in the thesis, then your permission will be sought for each quote used.

*Statements (quotes) made by academic researchers** will not include personally identifiable information in the thesis write-up—i.e. quotes will be anonymous. Academic researchers may elect to be quoted or not, by checking the appropriate box at the end of this form.

*Statements (quotes) made by department and institutional leaders** may contain information that can identify the person who made the statement. In this case, the department or institutional leader may choose whether or not to be quoted in the thesis write-up by checking the appropriate box at the end of this form.
Questions about the Research

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact the researcher or the advisor.

(Researcher) Lori Lincoln
Email: (redacted)

(Advisor) (redacted) (Researcher Professor at (redacted))
Email: (redacted)
Telephone: (redacted)

Statement of Consent

I have read the information about the study and willingly consent to participate in this study.

☐ YES
☐ NO

(if you answered yes above) In addition, I would like statements (quotes) made by me to be treated as such:

☐ Statements made by me may be quoted* in the final thesis write up, along with my personal details identifying my position and department.

☐ Statements made by me may be quoted* anonymously in the final thesis write-up (i.e. no personally identifiable details such as name and position will be used to identify you).

☐ I do not wish to be quoted in the research paper, for this project.

*Any quotes used will first be sent to you, to check for accuracy and consent for use, before they are published in the thesis.

➢ This research project has been reviewed and approved for compliance with research ethics protocols by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

Participant name:______________________________

Participant signature:_________________________ Date:________________