

Reputation Management in Higher Education Institutions:

*A Comparative Analysis of Public and Private,
Norwegian and American Higher Education Institutions.*

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IV

Summary

In this thesis, I have worked out from the following research question:

What characterizes reputation management in higher education institutions?

I chose to approach the research question by looking at the differences and similarities that exist between reputation management in the public and private, Norwegian and American HEI sectors in 2006 and 2016.

I have analyzed this research question by looking at nine Norwegian and eleven American higher education institutions. Ten of the institutions were public and the other ten were private. The institutions were studied through a web-census conducted on selected parts of their web-pages.

I have based my analysis in path-dependency and isomorphic theory, which set different expectations for what differences I would find between public and private, Norwegian and American higher education institutions' reputation management.

This thesis is part of an ongoing research project at the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo led by Tom Christensen and Åse Gornitzka. They have previously looked at reputation management through conducting a comparative study of reputation management in Nordic universities and by comparing reputation management in the Norwegian financial sector and Norwegian education sector.

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I also need to thank Erlend Langørgen for giving me advice on how to conduct a reputation management web-census using the web-page: Internet Archive Way Back Machine <http://archive.org/web/>.

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May 10th 2017

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Abbreviations

HEI	Higher Education Institution
NPM	New Public Management
NTNU	Norges Tekniske Naturvitenskapelige Universitet
W-ACT	Westerdals Oslo School of Art Communication and Technology

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1 Introduction

1.1 Brief Overview

In this thesis, I have looked at reputation management in public and private higher education institutions (HEI) in Norway and the USA. An organization's reputation "refers to the general perception of a given organization across stakeholders over time" (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012, p. 189). Reputation management is the management of stakeholders' perceptions of the organization. In other words, reputation management refers to how an organization tries to influence people's opinion about the organization.

How an organization is perceived is important because positive public perception can give an organization a competitive advantage; it can increase demand, identification, performance, public support, and employee recruitment. Increased public support can also help public organizations gain higher levels of delegated autonomy from politicians (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012, p. 187).

Reputation management has been studied in the private sector for a while but is relatively new in the public sector (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012). The goal of my thesis is to contribute valuable information about reputation management differences between public and private institutions. Public organizations often face 'wicked issues' that are difficult to manage well and therefore can lead to a bad reputation. Often public organizations also face the issue that they are automatically assumed to be inefficient and worse than their private counterparts simply because they are public organizations (Pollitt, 2003, p. 8). Therefore, public organizations face different challenges when it comes to reputation management than what the private sector does.

There is an expectation within reputation management that different countries use reputation management differently (Maor, 2016, p. 83). The difference should be most noticeable in countries that have different levels of competitiveness and different sectoral cultures. In this analysis, I have therefore looked into reputation management in both Norway and the USA. Analyzing reputation management in different countries also allowed me to look into how institutional myths are applied differently in different countries.

I have analyzed reputation management in the higher education sector. I find higher education to be a relevant case due to its important role in today's society. In 2016, 32.2 percent of Norwegians over the age of 16 have some form of higher education. This compares to 13 percent in 1985 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2016). In the USA higher education seems to play an equally important part. In 2013, 40 percent of 18-24 year olds in the USA were enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Developments in the higher education area therefore play an important role in how society will develop in Norway and the USA. Public higher education has a high financial cost to a country, but it also contributes to citizens being more affluent and paying higher taxes. Higher education institutions today spend time and resources on deciding how to present themselves to society (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 459). The way reputation management in the higher education sector is managed is important to HEI themselves and for the status of universities and colleges as key social institutions.

Over the past few years there have been conducted more reputation management studies within the public sector. But I have not found any that analyze reputation management on HEI web-pages over a period of time. The influence of time is very interesting because it shows how the relatively new field of reputation management is developing. Studying reputation management on web-pages over a decades time period also gives inside into the development of web-pages. I included the factor of time in this analysis because the reputation management field lacks information about how time is impacting development, and it is therefore something new that this thesis can contribute with.

1.2 Research Question

I have worked out from the following research question:

What characterizes reputation management in higher education institutions?

I have analyzed reputation management in the Norwegian and American, public and private higher education sectors. I have compared how Norwegian and American institutions differ and what similarities exist. I have also discussed what these differences mean. Furthermore I looked for differences and similarities between public and private HEI, and gave an

explanation for my findings. I have studied the higher education sector in 2006 and 2016. This allows me to look at how reputation management has developed over this period of time.

1.3 Theory and Method

To answer my research question, I have used path-dependency theory and isomorphic theory. Both of these theories are institutional theories. Briefly summarized, institutional theory studies events through institutions. In institutional theory, institutions are seen as creating consistency in development and influencing future actions and decisions. This is seen as the case because actors are influenced by their surroundings (March & Olsen, 1996). I have used these theories because they helped me answer my research questions. Path-dependency allows me to explain differences I have found and argue that the differences exist because of sectoral and national differences. Meanwhile isomorphism allowed me to explain similarities that exist within a field, despite situational differences.

I have conducted a comparative web-census of 20 university web-pages. A web-census is a systematic text analysis of website contents. Using web-pages to study institutions is still a relatively new approach in reputation management, but the approach is becoming more popular as web-pages are becoming more important (Bleiklie, 2014; Chapleo, Carrillo Durán, & Castillo Díaz, 2011; Kosmutzky, 2012). I have analyzed the following sections of each HEI web-page from 2006 and 2016: 1) history; 2) strategies, goals, vision, values, and mission statement; 3) research, 4) teaching/education; 5) front page. Under the headings in categories 1) through 4), I followed one layer of links to get a more complete look at the university web-pages. For category 5) front page, I did not follow any links because the links on the front page overlapped with sections 1) through 4). Originally I intended to also look at 'other internal features' and 'environmental features' section of HEI web-pages. I ended up not using these sections in this analysis because they were not available on the majority of the 2006 web-pages I was looking at.

1.4 Background Information

To better understand my research question, I have explained the background of the dimensions I am looking into. I have accounted for some previous reputation management studies and explained how they relate to my thesis. I have looked at differences between the

public and private sector and particularly at how differences between the public and private sector can play out in HEI. I have also looked at differences between Norwegian and American HEI, which is relevant for explaining national differences in reputation management.

1.4.1 Previous Reputation Management Articles

Reputation management is a new field of study within the public sector, but over the last few years several reputation management analysis have been conducted. This includes Wæraas and Byrkjeflot's *Public Sector Organizations and Reputation Management: Five Problems*. Wæraas and Byrkjeflot identify five challenges that the public sector faces when it comes to reputation management that the private sector does not encounter. The five problems they identify are: "the politics problem, the consistency problem, the charisma problem, the uniqueness problem, and the excellence problem" (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012, p. 188).

Wæraas and Byrkjeflot find that public institutions face more difficult circumstances when developing their reputation, because public institutions face the above stated five challenges that private sector institutions do not face. The article concludes that public institutions can still improve their reputation, and even achieve an excellent reputation, but that public institutions have to be aware of the challenges they face in order to overcome them (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012, p. 200).

In this analysis, I have also looked at the difference between public and private institutions' reputation management. Wæraas and Byrkjeflot's findings are therefore relevant to this thesis because they discuss the problems that the public sector faces that the private sector does not. They have therefore guided how I compare public and private reputation management. I will come back to how my results compare to Wæraas and Byrkjeflot's findings in the conclusion.

Morphew and Hartley's analysis in *Mission Statements: A Thematic Analysis of Rhetoric Across Institutional Type* is another interesting reputation management analysis from the last few years. In this analysis Morphew and Hartley look at whether universities are using mission statements to promote an image of the university or if mission statements are simply created because a mission statement has become an expected feature of a university.

The analysis finds that regardless of the intention behind a mission statement, the amount of time and resources universities are spending in creating mission statements means that a mission statement should be seen as an important statement (Morpheus & Hartley, 2006, p. 459). The analysis also finds that universities are intentionally using mission statements to project the institution's values out to the world. The universities are using the mission statement platform to project a reputation of how willing they are to serve their community and to show political standpoints (Morpheus & Hartley, 2006, p. 469).

Morpheus and Hartley's article is relevant for this thesis because they show that universities put thought into what kind of reputation they are developing. Universities are using their online platforms to communicate their reputation to the world. This information legitimizes this and other similar analysis that want to understand how university web-pages are part of the university brand.

Another interesting reputation management article is Christensen and Lægheid's article *Reputation Management in Times of Crisis: How the Police Handled the Norwegian Terrorist Attack in 2011*. This article looks at a crisis situation where the Norwegian police were facing harsh criticism for the way they had responded during the terrorist attack on July 22, 2011. The article shows that despite the criticism, trust in the police remained high. The article argues that trust is so deeply rooted in Norwegian society, even a crisis situation was not enough to decrease this trust (Christensen & Lægheid, 2014).

Christensen and Lægheid's article illustrates how important national context can be to reputation management. The article demonstrates not only that national differences exist, but that national differences impact how institutions are perceived. This information is relevant for this paper because national differences between Norway and the United States are being analyzed from a path-dependency perspective.

Christensen and Gornitzka conducted a reputation management analysis in April 2015 where they compared reputation management in Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish universities through a web-census. They also divided institutions up by age and specialization. Christensen and Gornitzka find that moral reputation is the most emphasized form of reputation management among Nordic universities (Christensen & Gornitzka, 2017, p.134). They also find that Nordic universities use performative reputation the least, something they

argue is due to the egalitarian culture in the Nordic countries (Christensen & Gornitzka, 2017, p. 135).

Christensen and Gornitzka's findings are relevant to my analysis because there are many similarities between their analysis and my own. They also look into how reputation management is used in the university sector in Norway. This gives me the opportunity to compare my findings to their findings, something I due in *6.2 Main Findings*.

1.4.2 The Public Versus Private Sector

There are fundamental differences between the public and private sectors. Therefore, it is interesting to see how these differences have played out when it comes to reputation management in the public and private sectors.

Exactly what the differences between the public and private sectors are can be hard to define. Many believe that the public sector is less efficient, unnecessarily bureaucratic, interferes in people's lives, and is old-fashioned and non-competitive (Pollitt, 2003, p. 8). The negative views on the public sector are stronger in the USA than in Norway. It was therefore interesting to see how different national opinions about the public sector influenced the way individual institutions manage their reputations.

It can be difficult to pinpoint differences between the public and private sectors. Most of the time, the public and private sectors handle different tasks; typically, the public sector takes care of the tasks that the private sector does not find to be profitable and therefore they are tasked the private sector does not take on. Even when an area exists like education where public and private sectors are both involved, it does not mean that they are on an even playing field. For instance, private schools have the privilege of selecting their students, and they often have higher per capita resources (Pollitt, 2003, p. 8). This means that a comparison that looks at public and private schools' student accomplishments would not be a fair comparison because the starting point and the resource of the schools would not be even.

It is difficult to determine the differences between the public and private sectors. Research has found that there is more 'red tape' in the public sector. Public managers put higher value on serving the public, and because there is less promotion based on individual effort, one might see weaker commitment to employers (Boyne, 2002). Boyne also points out

that there seems to be fundamental differences between the public and private sectors when it comes to ethical issues, decision-making, and human resource management (2002).

Another difference between the public and private sectors is that the public sector “is constrained by decisions that have already been made by someone else” (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 459). The public sector does not have full control over how they present themselves to the world because the government has an overriding control. This does not only lead to differences between the public and private sectors, but it also leads to national differences due to different governments managing the public sector in different ways.

1.4.3 Public Versus Private Higher Education Sector

When it comes to public versus private higher education institutions, the differences between the public and private sectors could be seen in a variety of ways. For instance, a public HEI can only change its image and identity within the constraints that the government decides. Of course, there are also constraints that both the public and private sectors face, such as history, tradition, and culture (Waeraas & Solbakk, 2009, p. 452). This means that a HEI that is historically seen as focusing on natural science can have some problems with changing its reputation to becoming a well-rounded HEI. Unlike private institutions, public institutions need to stay within the role set for the institution by the government.

Public HEI can likewise risk being publicly criticized by politicians trying to present themselves and their political party in a more favorable light by “stating that a public agency is corrupt, inefficient, too large, or not sufficiently customer-oriented, and then promising to clean up“ (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012, p. 194). This type of action can be devastating to the reputation of a public agency and is something that private competitors are unlikely to encounter.

It is possible that public and private HEI might desire different reputations. Public universities are more concerned with the role they have in society and might therefore put more emphasis on civic duty. Private universities on the other hand might try to appeal more to individuals and might therefore promise more personal development (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 464). Public HEI are also more likely to have diverse goals that will influence what an institution deems to be a successful reputation (Fay & Zavattaro, 2016, p. 810). This can lead to different isomorphic forces between the public and private HEI. It is also possible that

public HEI will try to emulate private HEI to achieve a reputation of providing high quality education on par with private competitors (Fay & Zavattaro, 2016, p. 807).

It is also likely that private HEI started their focus on branding and reputation management earlier than public HEI because reputation management is a private sector tool (Fay & Zavattaro, 2016, p. 807). We can therefore assume that the data from this study will find that public HEI in 2006 were not as developed in their reputation management as their private counterparts, but that the levels of reputation management in 2016 will be more even.

Through the New Public Management (NPM) wave, differences between the public and private sectors also have gotten smaller. “Most OECD countries have called for action to modernize the public sector by relying on entrepreneurial and business-like models” (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012, p. 187). NPM has brought the logic of the private sector to the public sector, and therefore one can assume that the public sector has become more like the private sector. It is therefore interesting to see if the differences between public and private reputation management have become smaller.

1.4.4 Higher Education in Norway and the USA

In 2014 a higher education reform started in Norway with the goal of merging HEI (Meld. St., 18. (2014-2015), 2015). In this thesis I am studying the Norwegian HEI sector the way it is described in ‘Tilstandsrapport for høyere utdanning 2016’ published February 5th 2016 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016a). This report describes Norwegian HEI the way they were when I started my research in August of 2016. While I have been writing this thesis, there has been a few more merges. Høyskolen i Lillehammer and Høyskolen i Hedmark were merged, creating Høyskolen i Innlandet on January 1st 2017 (Regjeringen.no, 2016). And Høyskolen i Sogn og Fjordane was merged with Høyskolen i Bergen and Høyskolen i Stord/Haugesund and became Høyskolen på Vestlandet on January 1st 2017 (Regjeringen.no, 2016, 06, 17) Both Høyskolen i Lillehammer and Høyskolen i Sogn og Fjordane are selected for study in my analysis. It was not possible to replace these institutions because there were no other institutions that fit into the category that had an available date from 2006. All of the data I am using from Høyskolen i Lillehammer and Høyskolen i Sogn og Fjordane are from before the merge processes was started. Therefore the merges should not influence my findings.

There are eight public universities in Norway and zero private Norwegian universities. There are also 17 public Norwegian 'høyskoler' and 17 private Norwegian 'høyskoler' (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016a). In other words, the Norwegian HEI sector is, on an international scale, a small sector. In Norway, the words 'university' and 'høyskole' are protected titles, that one can only use if the National organization for quality in education (NOKUT) has permitted the institution to use the title (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005, 04, 01). The majority of Norwegian HEI, like most European HEI, are publicly funded. There are private Norwegian 'Høyskoler', but these also receive some government funding. The marked elements and competition that existed between different public HEI existed through a quasi-market (Kosmutzky, 2012, p. 58). Still we see that European HEI are becoming more service-oriented and are adapting to satisfy their students as if they were customers (Huisman, Norgård, Rasmussen, & Stensaker, 2002, p. 315).

In the USA, there is more diversity in the higher education field than in Norway. According to the American government web-page on higher education, "post high school education can include a local community college, state or private university, military college, art or culinary school, or trade or technical training school." (USA.gov, 2017, 01, 03). In this thesis, I have only looked at accredited state and private universities. It is difficult to find an exact number of higher education institutions in the USA because different states have different systems of accreditation and not all states provide lists of the existing HEI. It is however safe to say that there are thousands of HEI in the USA and that the American HEI sector is considerably larger than the Norwegian HEI sector.

There is another important difference between the Norwegian and American HEI systems. The USA is a federal state while Norway is a unitary state. This difference in national government style leads to a big difference in national diversity within HEI. In Norway, there is only the national government that impacts how HEI are run, regulated, and financed. How the Norwegian national government runs HEI is of course influenced by the EU through the Bologna-process, but all Norwegian HEI face the same influence from the EU. The Bologna-process is a European cooperation that uses education to meet future societal challenges, and that works to create more similar education systems within Europe, so that cooperation within Europe can increase (Meld. St. 18. (2014-2015), 2015, s. 13). Meanwhile in the USA each state has its own state government that gets to influence the HEI system

within that state, on top of the federal regulations and financial guidelines. Therefore, there is much more diversity among American universities compared to Norwegian universities.

Financing of Norwegian and American HEI also works differently. Unlike the Norwegian higher education system, where public HEI do not collect tuition, in the USA public and private institutions depend on tuition for their finances. American HEI receive less financial assistance from the federal or state government. Therefore, American HEI are seen as existing within a more competitive environment (Krücken & Meier, 2006, p. 245). There is a greater need for American HEI to stand out to potential consumers (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009, p 453). American HEI have a longer history of non-governmental financing and therefore also competition between HEI for resources (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013, p. 700). American HEI have also developed alternative practices for achieving financial funding, such as ‘gift seeking’, where HEI encourage donors and former students to contribute to the institution financially (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013, p. 705).

American Universities are run more like businesses with a top down approach. “The American university leader possesses and autocratic power which would not for a moment be tolerated in an European institution” (Krücken & Meier, 2006, p. 245). European institutions generally allocate more power to professors, and therefore have less of a top-down approach to university management.

The admission process to a HEI is handled differently in Norway and the USA. One big difference is that, in the USA, a potential student generally applies to attend a HEI. Meanwhile in Norway a potential student applies to a specific degree program at the HEI. Another difference is that, in Norway, public HEI admission processes are handled by the Ministry of Education and Research through an online platform called ‘samordna opptak’. In this admission process, the Ministry checks that a student qualifies to apply to a program, and then it is the students with the highest-grade point average (GPA) that gets accepted. To make the process fairer, 50 percent of the total number of available spots in a degree program are reserved for students that graduated high school that year (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016b, 04, 07). Private Norwegian HEI can handle their own admission processes, but usually also only look at students’ GPA. In the USA admission is based on more factors than just a student’s GPA. A student’s academic records, volunteer work, written application, and test scores on tests like the SAT are all evaluated.

1.5 Thesis Disposition

In *Chapter 2* I have looked at the theoretical framework for this analysis, namely path-dependency and isomorphism from institutional theory. In *Chapter 2* I have also explain the theoretical assumptions I have for the empirical findings. In *Chapter 3* I have explained my choice of methodology. I have discussed the use of comparative analysis and ‘web-census,’ and I have explained my operationalization and choice of study objects. I have also looked at methodological strengths and weaknesses in this thesis, such as validity and reliability. In *Chapter 4* I have presented the findings of my analysis and provided insight into how the operationalized concepts were used during the analyzing of web-pages. In *Chapter 5* I have analyzed the findings presented in *Chapter 4* and discussed how the findings aligned with my theoretical expectations. In *Chapter 6* I have summarized the thesis and presented the most important findings in this thesis and given my concluding remarks.

2 Institutional Theory

2.1 Introduction

Institutional theory claims that institutions should be a focus of political analysis, because institutional theory argues that institutions create consistency and predictability. This is because institutional theory argues that past choices constrain further choices, and because actors, decisions, and actions are influenced by their surroundings (Krasner, 1988; March & Olsen, 1996, p. 141). Institutional theory is suitable for analyzing reputation management in HEI, because institutional theory is suitable for analyzing the conscious and unconscious actions that institutions make, which is reflected in HEI reputation management.

I have used two institutional frameworks in my thesis: path-dependency and isomorphism. Path-dependency theory and isomorphic theory each have different expectations as to how reputation management will be used by different types of institutions. I chose to use institutional theory because of its ability to explain contextual differences in reputation due to differences between various national and sectoral practices. Through isomorphism and path-dependency, I have also analyze how reputation management in HEI has developed between 2006 and 2016. Therefore, I felt that institutional theory through path-dependency and isomorph is a good fit for answering the research questions posed in this thesis.

On top of accounting for isomorphic theory and path-dependency theory in this chapter, I also accounted for ways in which an HEI can be seen as an organization. Then, I look at reputation management as the dependent variable before finally describing my theoretically based expectations for the independent variables.

2.2 Universities as Organizations

Universities used to be described as organized anarchies, ruled by a garbage-can decision making model, and influenced by the national arena (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000; Krücken, Kosmützky, & Torke, 2007, p.63; Seeber et al., 2015, p. 1450) “However, from the early 1980s onwards, the uniqueness of the university was not taken for granted anymore.” (Seeber et al., 2015, p. 1450). Trends have been introduced to the university sector to make

universities more like other organizations. Universities have been developed to be more entrepreneurial, more corporate, and more accountable (Krücken, et al, 2007, p.63) “Observed or predicted transformations suggest that the time of the self-governing Republic of Science has passed” (Olsen, 2007a, p. 25).

Today, it is still questioned whether or not university are full organizations. To be a full organization, one must have a hierarchy, identity and rationality (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000, p.730). Therefore, I will briefly look at to what extent universities have these characteristics.

To be an organization, hierarchical steering must be in place. It is uncertain to what extend policy makers are able to control reforms of universities, particularly when reforms go against existing culture (Seeber et al., 2015, p. 1450). Krücken et al. conclude that universities are a specific type of organization, that their statuses as university can only be impacted in a limited amount by reform processes. They also argue that universities unique characteristics should be used as strengths, when reforming, instead of being seen as obstacles (Krücken, et al., 2007, p.79). Seeber et al., finds that university activities are still bottom-heavy in its steering, because key decisions need to be taken by academics that are conducting the research instead of by top-managers (Seeber et al., 2015, p. 1452).

Organizations must also have an identity that makes the organization special. “A complete organization is expected to reflect on its specificity, its peculiar mission and approaches, and on what makes the organization different from other organizations in the field” (Seeber et al., 2015, p. 1451). It can be its purpose, features, competence, resources, ideas, history of culture that create the unique identity (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000, p.726). Universities have been found to have unique identities that they marked to people outside of the University, through their logos, names and profiles (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000, p.726).

One then come to the organizational feature of rationality, which refers to whether or not an organization is a ‘means-end-structure’. Are formal structures in place to obtain rational means? Are goals being projected and followed up? Are there incentive systems in place that managers can use to influence employs? (Seeber et al., 2015, p. 1451). In Universities, one finds that there has been an increase in the use of goal defining. This is most clearly visible through the fact that most universities today are using mission statements. At

the same time, analysis have found that universities seem to be using missions statements not necessarily to reflect the rational goals for the institutions, but instead because using mission statements has become an organizational trend (Krücken and Meier 2006, p.249). Therefore, the use of mission statements by universities cannot be seen as conclusive proof of the use of rationality as an organizational feature of universities.

Different analysis found different results in regards to the extent universities can be categorized as organizations. Seeber et al. state “that universities display the characteristics of complete organizations to very different extents” (2015, p. 1468). They find that some universities are full organizations while others are not. Krücken and Meier conclude that universities have become more like other organizations, and have gained advantages through adapting organizational features. But they also stress that university systems still vary with nationality (2006, p. 253).

One might expect that reputation management conducted by a hierarchical, rational organization with a clear identity would look different for the reputation management conducted by a university that only possesses some organizational features. The extent to which the selected universities in the analysis are full organizations cannot be analyzed in this study design. Because of this, to what level a HEI is an organization might have an underlying influence on this analysis that cannot be accounted for. It is likely that there will be a correlation between national differences and influences from level of organization. Since this analysis accounts for national differences, I therefore still see the results of this analysis as relevant.

2.3 Dependent Variable: Reputation Management

In this thesis, I have studied reputation management through the textual reputation management framework created by Carpenter and Krause, and the visual reputation management framework created by Delmestri, Oberg and Drori.

Carpenter and Krause present four types of reputation: moral reputation, performative reputation, procedural reputation and technical reputation. Moral reputation looks at how ethical, transparent, compassionate, and considerate an institution is. It also looks at how the institution treats clients, constituents and members (Carpenter & Krause, 2012, p. 27; Carpenter 2010, p. 46). I have, in this thesis, interpreted moral reputation as a category where

one looks at statements of interaction between the agency and the faculty, students or society, that have a virtuous or noble nature to them.

Performative Reputation looks at the quality, effectivity, competences and capacity that the institution has. Is the institutions decisions respected by its audience, even when it was a unpopular decision (Carpenter & Krause, 2012, p. 27; Carpenter 2010, p. 46)? Performative reputation has, in this thesis, been seen as a more output and result oriented type of reputation, were HEI accomplishments are in focus.

Procedural reputation is about the extent the institution follows the norms it is expected to follow for “deliberation, procedures or decision making” (Carpenter 2010, p. 47). This can be described as a reputation type that looks at how ‘politically correct’ an HEI reputation is. Is the HEI pointing out action it has taken that could be described as inclusive and diverse? Additionally, is the HEI deliberately avoiding language or images that could be seen as offensive?

There is also a fourth type of reputation call technical reputation. Technical reputation can be described with the following question: “Does the agency have the capacity and skill required for dealing in complex environments, independent of and separate from its actual performance?” (Carpenter & Krause, 2012, p. 27). This reputation type looks at the individuals in an institution, and analysis to what extent they can be called ‘experts’ in their field, and also how qualified they are to do the work they are doing (Carpenter 2010, p. 46). I am not using technical reputation as I do not have expectations that fit with Carpenter and Krause’s definition of a technical reputation. I am not looking at and HEI capacity independent of performance. Therefore, any statements about capacity and skill that I was interested in would also discuss performance, and therefore be categorized as performative reputation. Christensen and Gornitzka used technical and professional reputation in their reputation management study (2017). I find that their interpretation and use of a professional reputation is most like Carpenters 2010 version of this reputation type. To do this, they look at what employees of institutions are qualified to be performing their designated work. I again find that I do not have any expectations that overlap with Christensen and Gornitzka’s interpretation of a professional reputation.

I have also used Delmestri, Oberg, and Drori’s visual self-representation framework for analyzing visual reputation management. Delmestri et al. developed their visual self-

representation framework by analyzing “the icons (emblems and logos) used in the Internet self-representation of 821 universities and higher education institutions in 20 countries in 5 continents” (2015, p. 121). Out of their findings, they developed five subtypes of categories: classic, science, local, abstract and just-text.

I used their framework because it allowed me to categorize HEI according to what type of logo they used, and it allowed me to observe changes over time. Under visual self-representation I looked at if the logo fell within the category of classic, religious local, abstract, or just text (Delmestri et al., 2015, p. 121). Demetri et al., also used a science category, but none of the logos used in this analysis fell within the science category, therefore this category has not been used further in this thesis. To see how I interpret visual self-representation, see *3.5.2 Operationalization of Reputation Management Sub-categories*.

2.4 Path-dependency Theory

Historical institutionalism postulates that institutions develop over time, and that this development is shaped by an institutions culture, values and norms (Brunsson & Olsen, 1993, p. 70). This means that an institution is most likely to develop in a stable and continuous direction that coincides with the culture of the institution. In other words, institutional development is seen as path-dependent (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 212).

The fundamental idea with path-dependency is that institutions are shaped by their history (Pierson, 2000, p. 253). The importance of institutional past, can be seen in how the order of events impacts development. This means that previous actions taken by an institution impacts future actions (Krasner, 1988, p. 67). If a new reform contradicts with the existing path of the institution, the new reform might not get enacted as intended. A public institution is likely to be shaped by different norms and values than a private institution. Differences between different institutions will be shown through different institutional cultures and values, and will also lead to different institutional paths.

Within path-dependency, the order of events matters. A small early action can shape an institution because it becomes part of the institutions fundamental ideas. If the same action happens when an institution is well established than the action might not matter very much. This means that small, seemingly insignificant early events can have large consequences (Krasner, 1988, p. 83).

Another fundamental idea within path-dependency is that it can be nearly impossible to change an institution's path once started. This is due to self-reinforcing positive event sequences (Krasner, 1988, p. 83). If a positive self-reinforcing event sequence exists, it can take a crises situation to reverse long-standing ideas (Pierson, 2000, p. 251). But if event sequences are not self-reinforcing, then the actions of the initial path can lead to a historical conjuncture and a new path will be started (Thelen, 2000, p. 101).

Path-dependency can yield a predictability in actions. If an institution is locked into a path, then its long-term actions should follow the direction of the path (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 220). Short term actions may look like they stray from the path, but an institution is likely to come back to the long-term path.

2.4.1 Theoretical Expectations Based on Path-dependency

- There was an expectation that there exist path-dependent differences between the public and private sector.
- There was an expectation that there are different national path-dependencies in Norway and the USA. There are cultural and institutional differences that were expected to be reflected in the use of 'excellency' and 'fair admission' reputation.
- There was an expectation that institutions with a religious background would use a religious reputation more.
- There was an expectation that young American HEI would use 'accreditation' reputation more than other types of institutions.

2.5 Isomorphic Theory

The process of isomorphism is "a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1997, p. 149). In other words, one institutional form becomes the default model of all institutions in an area. When institutions resemble other institutions in their environment it creates legitimacy for the institution, regardless of the actual benefits or problems the resemblances brings with it (Scott, 2001, p. 184). The reason legitimacy is created is because it is assumed that the most popular institutional form is the one that is best adapted to the

environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2001, p. 185). Isomorphism not only leads to increased legitimacy, but isomorphic institutions are also more successful and likely to survive (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 361).

The environment has expectations of institutions according to what type of institution it is. One would, for instance, choose to be treated in a hospital that has a reputation for being both efficient and of great quality, instead of a hospital that has a reputation for great food and bad quality medical care. Structural similarity also develops because an institution benefits from being structurally recognizable (Scott, 2001, p. 185).

Isomorphism can be coercive, mimetic or normative in the way it spreads (DiMaggio & Powell, 1997; Pollitt, 2001, p. 937). Coercive isomorphism happens when an institution faces pressure from its surroundings to adapt specific myths (Brunsson & Olsen, 1993, p. 73). Mimetic isomorphism is found when institutional surroundings are uncertain and institutions respond to the uncertainty by imitating other similar institutions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1997, p. 152; Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 345). Normative isomorphism is when institutions become more similar due to the process of professionalization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1997, p. 153). This analysis is, through its design, not able to distinguish what form of isomorphic it is analyzing. Therefore, coercive, mimetic or normative isomorphic will not be focused on in this thesis, and only mentioned again in the conclusion.

It is important to remember that institutional forms are not static, and that popularity of myths changes with time. “When fashion swings, organizations must change their forms if they are to be considered normal and up to date.” (Brunsson & Olsen, 1993, p. 74). This means that processes of modeling and isomorphism will change with time, and that institutional traits that are desirable and legitimate at one point might eventually become undesirable and illegitimate (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007, p. 1062). In other words, institutions are always developing.

Isomorphism does have some limitations. Because different sectors and countries start from different positions, we see that isomorphic pressures impact institutions in the global market differently. Pressures that are strong in one country, might because of national cultural differences not be as influential in another country (Pollitt, 2001, p. 936). In other words, unique institutions can still exist, and can be better suited for the environment they are in. Standing out from the crowd can also give an institution a competitive advantage.

2.5.1 Theoretical Expectations Based on Isomorphism

- There was an expectation that there was an ongoing isomorphic process on the development of reputation management between the public and private sector, where the public sector was expected to be attempting to catch up with the private sector. There was also an expectation that the public sector will try to distance itself from the negative public image by imitate the private sector.
- There was an expectation that HEI will adopt reputation management styles that are being used by the American elite universities.
- There was an expectation that there will be more convergence in the American HEI sector, than in the Norwegian HEI sector, because the American HEI sector is more competitive.
- There was an expectation that isomorphic pressures have led young HEI to become more like old HEI, or old HEI to become more like young HEI.

2.6 Independent Variables

In the following section, I have explained how my theory-based assumptions fit together with the four independent variables I have examined in this thesis.

2.6.1 Expectations Based on Private Versus Public Differences

Reputation management was developed by the private sector and was practiced by the private sector before it became common in the public sector (Wæraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012). The public sector has imitated the private sector and started an isomorphic process. Therefore, I expected to see that reputation management in 2006 was more advanced in the private sector than in the public sector. I expected that the text volume relevant to my study of reputation management on the university websites in 2006 would be larger for the private sector. Based on isomorphic theory, I also expected that this difference will have decreased by 2016.

The public sector also faces challenges that the private sector does not. Due to image and historical roots, the public and private sector have different reputational challenges. Many believe that the public sector is less efficient, unnecessarily bureaucratic, interferes in

peoples' lives, and is old fashion and non-competitive (Pollitt, 2003, p. 8). I therefore expected to see a difference in public and private reputation management, because the public institutions have to compensate for the existing poor image. From an isomorphic perspective, I expected to see that public institutions will try to distance themselves from the existing poor public image by emphasizing their performative reputation, with a focus on building a reputation for being efficient, competent and modern.

Institutional theory also implies that I would find differences between the public and private sector due to them desiring different reputations (Fay & Zavattaro, 2016; Morphew & Hartley, 2006). There are, in other words different cultures present in the public and private sector that are part of their different path-dependencies. It is to be expected that private institutions would emphasize personal gains of education in a higher degree more than a public institution. This is because personal gain is seen to have a higher acceptance within the private sector, something that should be reflected in the moral reputation. Within moral reputation, it is to be expected that public institution would emphasize societal benefits more. I also expected public institutions to focus more on rule following and fair treatment within its procedural reputation.

2.6.2 Expectations Based on National Contexts

I expected that different nationalities will influence desired reputation. According to Maor information is context dependent. Through socialization, we have acquired “culture, behavior and other assumptions” (2016, p. 83). Our cultural differences lead to different ways of perceiving reality. In other words, there are different logics of appropriateness in different countries shown through norms and values. This infers that there are different path-dependencies in different countries.

I expected that the difference in national norms on declaring oneself the best would be noticeable. In Norway, there is a long standing social norm that stops individuals and institutions from bragging about oneself. In the USA, on the other hand, it is deemed socially acceptable to call oneself the best and one is expected to strive towards this goal. I therefore expect that HEI in the USA would be likely to declare themselves the best. In other words, I expected to find a difference in performative reputation, when it comes to presentation of one's own performance.

I also expected that the different financial systems of higher education in Norway and the USA will impact how institutions present themselves. The American HEI exist in a more competitive framework than the Norwegian HEI (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013, p. 700; Waeraas & Solbakk, 2009, p. 453). Theoretically, there are two opposing views on the influence high competition can have on institutions reputation management. On one hand, it makes sense that one will emphasize ones' unique aspect to stand out from the crowd. From this theoretical perspective, American HEI have higher incentives to stand out from the crowd. In a competitive market, standing out from the crowd can be a valuable resource, which can help an institution gain resources and students. If this were true, I expected to find that American universities procedural reputation would show that they resemble other HEI in the same category less than what Norwegian HEI do. I also expected that between 2006 and 2016 the American HEI would emphasize their uniqueness to a higher degree.

From an isomorphic perspective, one the other hand, I expect to find a convergence process, were institutions are becoming more and more similar, regardless of if they exist in a competitive market. Form a convergence perspective, one can expect that HEI are trying to become more like the elite universities I have included in my analysis. I therefore expect to find that the HEI between 2006 and 2016 have become more similar, across national and sector lines. One can expected that HEI will adopt elite practices so that they themselves can be seen as part of the elite. I expected that the HEI will imitate language and the style of the elite institutions. In other words, I expected to find that moral reputation, performative reputation, procedural reputation and use of logos between 2006 and 2016 would develop among non-elite-HEI in the direction of elite universities.

I also expected to find differences between Norway and the USA due to path-dependency. The HEI system in Norway and the USA have developed under different conditions, and there are different systems in place. For instance, there are differences in admission processes and grading scales. Therefore, I expected that different paths are being followed and that this difference will be visible in the analysis. I expected to find this in procedural reputation differences, because different procedures are in place, and there is a difference in what is seen as fair treatment.

2.6.3 Expectations Based on the Role of Religion

According to path-dependency an institution is most likely to develop in a stable and continuous direction that coincides with the culture of the institution (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 212). Path-dependency therefore implies that an institution with a religious origin would develop in accordance with religious teachings. In other words, the religious origin will influence the path that the institution will follow. I expected to find that religious path-dependency will show up under procedural reputation, when it comes to what is viewed as fair treatment and rule following. I expected that moral reputation at religious institutions will reflect religious norms.

Due to path-dependency, I also expected to find that there will be a difference between religious and non-religious HEI when it comes to visual self-representation. I expected that religious HEI would use religious symbols in their logos to visually underline their religious identity. I did not expect to find religious symbols used in logos of institutions that have a secular background because this would make an institution look more religious.

2.6.4 Expectations Based on Age of the Institution

The university sector has old roots and longstanding traditions stretching back to the middle ages. But during the 1960's, there was a movement to change the university sector. There was a desire to create institutions that focus more on teaching and student learning, with a more democratic governance system and more contact with society outside of the HEI (Huisman, Norgård, Rasmussen, & Stensaker, 2002, p. 316; Stensaker & Benner, 2013, p. 403). HEI created around this time frame can therefore be expected to have a different path-dependency than old universities. I expected to see this through how faculty and students are discussed in the moral reputation. I also expected to see differences between young and old university's discussions of student and faculty achievements in the performative reputation. I also expected young universities to have logos that were not religious or classic.

It was also theoretically possible that the differences in how young HEI were created would lose its importance after a while. The idea is that isomorphism will have led to pressure on young HEI to become more like old HEI (Huisman et al., 2002, p. 318). It is also possible that there has been an isomorphic process where old institutions have been pressured into adopting successful practices from the young HEI, such as a higher focus on teaching,

democratic governance and connecting with the society around the HEI (Stensaker & Benner, 2013, p. 405). In the case of isomorphism, I expected that I would not find differences in the discussion of students and faculty under moral reputation or performative reputation. Additionally, I expected that there would not be a difference in the type of logos the institutions had.

Young universities could also have a need for a different reputation because they were less established. There can be a path-dependency due to the age of the institution that leads to a need for asserting that the university is legitimate. In the Norwegian university system, the public sector is more dominant than the private sector, and private institutions have a financial relationship with the state. Because of this, there is not the same need for HEI to claim legitimacy. In the USA, on the other hand, the HEI system is much larger and more diverse. Therefore, there is a need to be able to communicate to one's surroundings that one is a legitimate institution. This can be done through accreditation. I therefore expect that young American HEI will, to a higher degree than other categories, point out as part of their performance reputation that they are accredited.

3 Method and Research Design

3.1 Reputation Management Analysis

In this chapter I have described and clarified how my analysis was conducted. I have discussed text analysis, comparative analysis, validity and reliability, operationalization, selection of HEIs, and have reflected on using web-pages as a source. In the first section of this chapter I will be discussing the task of measuring an abstract concept, such as reputation management.

Because reputation is an abstract concept that can mean different things to different people, it can be difficult to measure. In order to address this problem, I have looked to previous reputation management studies to help me operationalize the concept of reputation management into more concrete categories that I could measure through a web-census. As you can see in section 3.5 *operationalizing*, I used Carpenter and Krause's *Reputation and Public Administration* for operationalizing written reputation, and Demetri, Oberg and Dori's *The Unbearable Lightness of University Branding: Cross-National Patterns* for operationalizing visual reputation.

In my analysis, I have measured reputation management through a web-census. The use of a web-census is an academic tradition, even if it is a young academic tradition. I have therefore given a brief account of how others, before me, have met the challenge of studying reputation management through a web-census.

In 2011, Chapleo, Duran, and Diaz wrote an article titled: *Do UK universities communicate their brands effectively through their websites?* In this article, they point out that today, web-pages are an intrinsic part of a brand's image, and that web-pages therefore need to be studied more, so we can understand how the online platform is being used (Chapleo et al., 2011, p. 26).

The article looked at how extensively and effectively UK universities used their online platform, and at what type of online brand the institution was presenting. University web-pages were studied looking for three types of brand promises: 'functional values', 'emotional values' and 'social values' (Chapleo et al., 2011, p. 29). The web-census, in their analysis, consisted of a content analysis of the following parts of the universities' web-pages:

“teaching’, ‘research’, ‘management international projection’, ‘social responsibility’, ‘universities environment’ and ‘innovation’” (Chapleo et al., 2011, p. 31). The analysis found that functional values were the most present on the web-pages, followed by emotional values (Chapleo et al., 2011, p. 33).

There are many similarities between my own analysis and the analysis of Chapleo et al.. We look at similar parts of university web-pages. There are also similarities between their ‘functional values’ and my performative reputation, and between their ‘emotional values’ and ‘social values’ and my moral reputation. There are also similarities in the findings of our research, which I have elaborated on under *6.2 Main Findings*.

Another article that conducted a reputation management web-census is Kosmutzky’s 2012 *Between Mission and Market Position: Empirical findings on mission statements of German Higher Education Institutions*. In that article, university web-pages were used to find and study the use of mission statements by German universities in 2000, 2004 and 2008. The researcher was interested in how many public and private universities used mission statements on their web-pages at given points in time. Afterwards, a content analysis of mission statements was conducted (Kosmutzky, 2012, p. 63).

The content analysis found that “instead of articulating strategic profiles for the development of the organization, mission statements use their existing profiles for constructing advanced organizational images on this basis.” (Kosmutzky, 2012, p. 69). The analysis showed that universities over the past fifteen years have built corporate identities that they are using in an increasingly competitive industry (Kosmutzky, 2012, p. 70).

Kosmutzky’s article, in other words, found that different institutions follow different paths. The article illustrates that there are different images for different intuitions, something that should align well with the enclosed study.

3.2 Method

In this thesis, I have conducted a comparative text analysis. Comparative analysis was used because it allows the researcher to pick a variety of cases that fit into central dimensions that have theoretic grounding. A comparative analysis is therefore the best option for this thesis. In the comparative approach, comparisons allow one to show differences and similarities

between different cases. This can lead to the discovery of new information about a field. The two types of comparative analysis are Most Similar System Design (MSSD) and Most Different System Design (MDSD). The main difference is in how they isolate relationships between variables. In this analysis, I have chosen not to focus on picking a sample that is either MSSD or MDSD, but instead on a sample that is as representative as possible. Variation in the independent variables has determined the choice of case.

It was not possible to conduct a random selection for this analysis because of the differences between the Norwegian and American higher education systems. Instead, I strategically picked institutions that I determined were representative for their category, with the intention of creating a sample that would be generalizable. The criteria I developed for each category and the availability of sources from 2006 lead to there being few institutions to pick from in the private categories in Norway. The categories in some cases therefore had to be altered so that comparable institutions were being used in each country.

Within the academic community there are different ideas about what types of studies one has to conduct to be able to generalize out from the study. While some believe that one can only generalize from statistical analysis with a large number of study objects, others, like Gerring, argue one can also generalize from other types of analysis (2007). When conducting a comparative analysis one might not be able to generalize to the whole population, but one should be able to generalize to similar cases. I therefore intended that the findings of this sample have the ability to be generalized to similar cases.

As with most studies, this analysis had both deductive and inductive elements to it, but I would classify this analysis as primarily deductive. The bases for the analysis are theoretical assumptions based on isomorphic theory and path-dependency theory. In these theories, there is an underlying assumption that different types of HEI will be inclined to prefer different types of reputations. Therefore, I have set theoretically based expectations for what type of patterns I would detect in the analysis. The goal for the analysis was to be able to generalize the findings about different types of reputation management in the HEI sector onto different types of sectors.

The thesis for this analysis has both descriptive and causal aspects to it. The descriptive side explored, described and classified reputation management within HEI at two

separate time points. Meanwhile, the causal side explored the relationship between the variables, with the goal of understanding why things were the way they were.

My analysis had both qualitative and quantitative aspects to it. It was a qualitative study because I used interpretation in my classifications. I worked systematically with a goal of reducing the research material down to key pieces of information that could be presented in a table. The number of universities I am studying also places this analyses somewhere in between a quantitative and qualitative study. In this study, there were 20 HEI studied at two moments in time on a variety of dimensions. Given the complexity of the analysis, numeration and quantification are necessary for achieving an overview of the cases.

3.3 Text Analysis

Text analysis is different from everyday reading of text. In a text analysis one examines text systematically, with the intention of being able to draw conclusions about the surrounding situations (Bratberg, 2014, p. 9). In other words, a text analysis goes further than ‘regular’ comprehension of text; it is a systematic and thorough form of conducting an analysis. The material one is reading becomes the source material that the study builds on. A text is usually studied with the intention of drawing conclusions from the text about the focal topics. A text is a reflection of the surroundings that created it. A text will reflect ideas, discourse, language, and subjects in the way that the context does (Mathisen, 1997, p. 2). In other words, a text contains information about the creators of the text because the way a text is written and worded will reflect the writer’s values.

There are several different types of text analysis. Content analysis is a quantitative form of text analysis where one reduces a large text volume to statistics. This is done by coding words and phrases into numbers (Bratberg, 2014, p. 85). Clear instructions are used to show how a study is conducted, what make up an encoding unit, and how a word, phrase, or sentence should be coded. Within a content analysis one can find, count, and compare actor’s abilities and attitudes (Bratberg, 2014, p. 96).

Discourse analysis is a qualitative form of text analysis. Discourse refers to the framework of what is reasonable to believe and have as an opinion within a given community (Bratberg, 2014, p. 9). In this form of text analysis, interpretation of the text is used to achieve a deeper understanding of the material (APSA, 2004, p. 20). Discourse analysis looks at what

type of understanding of reality is reflected in a text and how this relates to the surrounding society.

The web-census I have conducted as part of this thesis will be a text analysis that combines aspects of both content analysis and discourse analysis. I have used a ‘code form’ while conducting the analysis. I will also be clarifying how I have interpreted each category. I did not look for specific words or phrases, but instead used interpretation to get to the deeper meaning and contents of the text. The analysis I am doing is therefore most comparable to an ‘ideanalyse’¹.

My web-census, like a discourse analysis, has through its interpretive aspect, the ability to go deeper into a text than what a purely quantitative study could do. It does not just look at the obvious, but goes into the deeper underlying meaning of a text. To be able to use interpretation in the coding process, the coding process has to be conducted manually. Manual coding allows a deeper understanding of the text, but it also has the disadvantage of its time constraint greatly reducing the amount of material that can be part of the study.

Norwegian HEI that were part of the analysis were analyzed in Norwegian, and USA HEI were analyzed in English. This was done because institutions are presumed to present themselves differently in different languages because they want to optimize how their message is received by the target group. I wanted to measure how Norwegian HEI present themselves to a Norwegian audience, not an international audience. Some of the studied American HEI also had other language options available that were not part of the analysis. To get the most accurate measure of differences in national contexts, the analyzed language had to be adapted to a national context.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity looks at if a concept really measures what it is intended to measure (Bryman, 2012). In other words, validity within a study is good if random or systematic errors do not occur. There are many types of validity. In this thesis, I will focus on measurement validity,

¹ Ideanalyse is a style of text analysis that focuses on central ideas in a society as the most important explanatory factor for understanding that society. This form of analysis is most popular within Scandinavia, therefore the Norwegian word is used.

construct validity, internal validity and external validity. I selected these types of validity because they are the most relevant to my research design.

Measurement validity looks at if “the observations meaningfully capture the ideas contained in the concept” (Adcock & Collier, 2001, p. 529). To improve my measurement validity, I have accounted for my conceptualization of the background concepts and the operationalization of the systematized concepts under *3.5.1 Conceptualization of Background Concepts* and *3.5.2 Operationalization of Reputation Management Sub-categories*. I have carefully thought through the meanings of the concepts and decided how the concepts can be measured in my research. In *4.4 Reputation management sub-category findings*, I also give examples of how I have used and understood each of the operationalized reputation management sub-categories.

Construct validity focuses on “assessing whether a given indicator is empirically associated with other indicators in a way that conforms to theoretical expectations about their interrelationship” (Adcock & Collier, 2001, p. 537). To improve my construct validity, the indicators used in this thesis are based on theoretical information. I have used established frameworks for reputation management created by Carpenter and Krause, and Delmestri, et al.’s as a basis for my own operationalization. I have explained how I understand their frameworks in sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 when I explain my operationalization. I have also looked at how Christensen and Gornitzka have used some of these concepts in their analysis titled *Reputation management in complex environments – a comparative study of university organizations*. The construct validity and measurement validity are strong in this analysis, because of the bases in previous studies.

Internal validity looks at the causal relationships in the analysis. This type of validity is highest in controlled experiments where control groups allow the researcher to prove connections with more certainty (Bryman, 2012, p. 32). This analysis is a comparative study, therefore this analysis cannot determine causal relationships with the same accuracy as a controlled experiment. But one can still find relationships between indicators and propose reasons why these relationships exist. In other words, the internal validity of this study is not as high as it would be in a statistical analysis, but it is higher than in a case study and still has relevance. The internal validity of this analysis is strengthened by the use of theoretically based assumptions that formulate the basis for explaining the causal relationships.

External validity looks at how generalizable the findings are. In other words, are the findings valid for other times, places, people, organizations, nations and so on (Bryman, 2012, p. 33)? External validity is highest in statistical analysis, but there is also some level of external validity in this analysis, as there is the potential for generalizing to similar cases and situations.

I see measurement validity and construct validity as the most important forms of validity for this form of text-based comparative analysis, and I have shown that both measurement validity and construct validity are high in this analysis. Internal validity and external validity would be higher in other forms of analyses but still have some contributing effects to this analysis.

When it comes to validity in this analysis, one could also argue that it is problematic that the analysis is only measuring reputation management from an institution's perspective. On the other hand, though this study cannot measure perceived reputation in an institution's environment, the study of how institutions try to influence their reputations is also important. Validity on the measurement of self-representation of HEI is well-measured through this web-census.

For research to be able to show causality and be verifiable it has to have good reliability as well as good validity. "In research, the term reliability means 'repeatability' or 'consistency'. A measure is considered reliable if it would give us the same result over and over again (assuming that what we are measuring isn't changing!)" (Trochim William, 2006). In other words, an analysis has good reliability if there are no random errors. This means that if a measure is not reliable it is not valid, but it can be valid without being reliable, because it might be impossible to replicate the experiment or analysis.

The research materials used for conducting this analysis are available to anyone online. I have provided information about what materials I have used and how I have used them. Therefore, my analysis can be replicated which contributes to good external reliability.

When it comes to the consistency aspect of reliability, human error is always a possibility, particularly when interpretation is used. To avoid human error, I have worked systematically and with predefined definitions of concepts. Before starting the analysis of the material, I thought through and documented how each sub-category of reputation

management would be interpreted. This can be seen in *3.5.2 Operationalization of reputation management sub-categories*. Before starting the analysis, I had also determined what sections of the web-pages I would be covering, so while conducting the analysis I was able to work systematically through each web-page's material. While I was creating, the tables found in Chapter 4, and in Attachment 1, I also had a chance to look through my classifications and confirm that I was making consistent decisions.

This study is a reputation management study that measures reputation management in the materials presented by the institution. That means that I am only measuring the reputation that the institution is creating on its web-page. There can be other factors, such as word of mouth or media coverage that impact people's perception of an institution, and that are not measured in this analysis. This does not impact reliability, as web-pages do not change when they are analyzed, and the study therefore is repeatable. Both repeatability and consistency are relevant to conducting this study, and both of them are expected to be high.

3.5 Operationalization

3.5.1 Conceptualization of Background Concepts

1. Moral reputation: "is the agency compassionate, flexible and honest? Does it protect the interest of its client's constituencies, and members?" (Carpenter & Krause, 2012, p. 27).
2. Performative Reputation: "Can the agency do the job? Can it execute charges on its responsibility in a manner that is interpreted as competent and perhaps efficient?" (Carpenter & Krause, 2012, p. 27).
3. Procedural reputation: "Does the agency follow normally accepted rules and norms, however good or bad its decisions?" (Carpenter & Krause, 2012, p. 27).
4. Visual self-representation: Within what category does the logo of the HEI fall: classic, religious local, abstract, just text? (Delmestri et al., 2015, p. 121).

3.5.2 Operationalization of Reputation Management Sub-categories

1. Moral Reputation

- Student development: Does the HEI express a desire to develop the character, skills and academic abilities of its students?
- Positive discussion of students: Does the HEI express pride in student accomplishments or character?
- Positive discussion of faculty: Does the HEI express pride in faculty accomplishments or character?
- Religion: Does the HEI give a religious explanation or background for an action or statement?
- Serving society: Does the HEI express the HEI, the faculty's or the students' desire to contribute to their local, regional or national community?

2. Performative Reputation

- Numbers: How many students attend the HEI and what programs do the students attend? How many students graduate each year?
- Excellency: How does the HEI present its own performances? Does it brag about its accomplishments? Does the HEI brag about students' and faculty's academic accomplishments?
- Accreditation: Does the HEI point out that it is an accredited HEI?

3. Procedural Reputation

- Equal opportunity: Does the HEI express that it is an equal opportunity institution? Does the HEI point out that it has a diverse student or faculty population?
- Fair admission: Does the HEI express that its admission process is fair and gives all students an equal chance?

4. Visual Self-representation

- A classic logo: a logo that appeals to a historic past for the institution. It may be or give the impression of being an old emblem.
- A religious logo: a logo that uses religious symbols to show a HEI religious affiliation.
- A local landmark logo: a logo that depicts a local landmark like a building or a mountain that the arena is known for.
- An abstract logo: a logo that depicts an abstract figure.
- A just text logo: a logo that only consists of writing.

For examples of how the operationalized expressions were used in the analysis, see *4.4 Reputation Management Sub-Category Findings*

3.6 Selected Higher Education Institutions

There are 25 public and 17 private accredited HEI in Norway (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016a, p. 11). For the USA, it is harder to find exact numbers, but there are at least a few thousand accredited HEI in the USA. In my study, I have looked at 20 higher education institutions. I intended to study 16 institutions in 8 categories, but because of how the private Norwegian institutions fit into the original categories and because of a lack of available data from 2006 I had to expand the study into 10 categories. I added an American elite university category and expanded the private young American HEI category into 2 categories: one section that can be compared with Norway's private young HEI and one section that can be compared with America's young public HEI. Because all the added categories are within the private sector in the USA, I added an additional institution to each of the public Norwegian categories.

For the old private Norwegian category, there were only religious institutions that had available data from 2006 and 2016. Therefore, both the old private Norwegian and old private American institutions were chosen to have religious backgrounds. When referring to religious HEI in this thesis, I am therefore referring to the 'old private Norwegian', and 'old private America' HEI.

Type of higher education institution		
	Age of institution	
Country and sector	Old	Young
Norwegian Public	1) - Universitetet i Oslo (UiO) - Norges handelshøyskole (NHH) - Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (NTNU)	3) - Høyskolen i Lillehammer (HiL) - Høyskolen i Sogn og Fjordane(HiSF) -Høyskolen i Østfold (HiØ)
Norwegian Private	2) - Lovisenberg diakonale høyskole (LDH) - Det teologiske menighetsfakultet (MF)	4) - Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology (W-ACT)
American Public	5) - University of California at Berkley (UC Berkley) - University of Washington (UW)	7) - University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) - University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)
American Private	6) - Gonzaga University (GU) - Milligan College	8A) - Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts
		8B) - Martin University - Antioch University-Santa Barbara
American Elite Universities	9) - Harvard - Yale	

Table 3.1 Classification of used Higher Education Institutions

1. Old Public Norwegian Higher Education Institutions

These HEI were selected because in a Norwegian setting they are old institutions. Unlike many Norwegian HEI, The University of Oslo and the Norwegian School of Economics have not gone through many institutional changes or merges. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology(NTNU) was selected because it is the oldest Norwegian HEI. It has gone through several organizational changes, but is in Norway seen as an old institution. The specific institutions were also selected because they are institutions that are seen as likely to be at the forefront of development within academia in Norway. The institutions also represent different educational directions inside of Norway because there are two universities and one 'høyskole'. This is done to better represent the Norwegian higher education landscape.

2. Old Private Norwegian Higher Education Institutions

The HEI in this category are both religious ‘høyskoler’. These institutions were not selected because they are seen as representative of the category, but because they are the only institutions that fulfill the criteria for the category. There are not many private HEI in Norway and, out of the ones that exist, the majority are not old enough to fit in this category. The two HEI used here are the only institutions that fit the category and have available data from 2006. The Norwegian selection has been considered when selecting HEI for the corresponding USA category.

3. Young Public Norwegian Higher Education Institutions

The selected institutions in this category are all HEI that became ‘høyskoler’ in the 90’s but can trace their history back to the institution’s establishment in the 70’s and 50’s. This makes these institutions young in a Norwegian setting. The reason no universities are selected for this category is because all Norwegian universities can trace their history further back than the 70’s. Most ‘høyskoler’ in Norway became ‘høyskoler’ in 1994 and 1995, but the institutions largely trace their history back to the 1800’s. These specific ‘høyskoler’ have been selected because of their young age and because the institutions fit well into the category.

4. Young Private Norwegian Higher Education Institutions

The young private Norwegian higher education institutions are in a similar situation as the old private Norwegian HEI. There was only one institution that fits in this category. There are other young private Norwegian HEI, but Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology (W-ACT) was the only one with data available from 2006. W-ACT was on the older side of a young institution, having been established in 1965, but since it was the only HEI that qualified it was included in the analysis. W-ACT was an interesting case to study because it has gone through some controversy in the last few years, and the impact of this on the data could be interesting.

5. Old Public American Higher Education Institutions

These American universities were selected because they fit well into the category and also because they have similarities with the Norwegian institutions in the category. They are

public institutions that can be expected to be at the forefront of university development. They are also of similar ages to the Norwegian institutions.

6. Old Private American Higher Education Institutions

To better complement the equivalent Norwegian category, I have chosen universities that have a religious background for this category. Gonzaga University has a Catholic background and Milligan College has a Protestant Christian background. Both the web-pages of the American and Norwegian old private HEI categories will therefore be shaped by religious practices. The American universities in this category are more well-rounded and larger institutions than their Norwegian equivalent, but the similarity in religious background and age make them comparable.

7. Young Public American Higher Education Institutions

The HEI in this category should compare well to the HEI in the equivalent Norwegian category. The American institutions are maybe on the older side of what I would have wanted, but most accredited universities are at least this old. The institutions are also of similar ages as their Norwegian counterparts and are well-rounded young institutions.

8 A. Young Private American Higher Education Institutions

The HEI in this category has been chosen not because it is representative of young private American HEI, but because the institution corresponds well with the Norwegian HEI in the corresponding category. I have selected an American art college that should be comparable to the Norwegian art college that was the only HEI with available data that fit in the corresponding. This category is not comparable to the young public American universities. Therefore, the following two HEI will also be studied so that the public and private sector can be better compared.

8 B. Young Private American Higher Education Institutions

The HEI in this category are accomplished, young private research universities that are comparable to the young public American HEI.

9. American Elite Universities

Because the old private American HEI category had to be changed to better fit with the corresponding Norwegian category. I decide to create a ninth category consisting of American elite universities. This has been done because there is a theoretical basis to assume that elite universities set a standard for the HEI sector that other institutions try to live up to. It is therefore likely that both Norwegian and American HEI will be trying to imitate the elite universities to make themselves look more elitist.

3.7 Reflection on Sources

The use of university web-pages comes with both advantages and disadvantages. An advantage is the availability of the material, anyone can access the material online. A disadvantage was the limited availability of materials on the 'internet archive way back machine'. This has put strains on which HEI could be used in this analysis. This could also influence the representativeness of the research results.

It is also worth noting that sometimes material is removed from the 'internet archive way back machine'. When I originally checked the availability of material in September 2016 I found an available date from both 2006 and 2016 for the Norwegian HEI that educates teachers for Waldorf schools, 'Rudolf Steinerhøyskolen'. Since this was one of only two HEI with available data for a young private Norwegian HEI, I was going to use it in the analysis and also use an American Waldorf teacher HEI in the corresponding category. But when I conducted the analysis in February 2017 the information about the 'Rudolf Steinerhøyskolen' was no longer available in the 'internet archive way back machine'.

On the other hand, web-pages are an underused resource that have great potential for giving us insight into the functioning of today's institutions. Web-pages are an outlet that institutions control themselves. Unlike traditional media, institutions can present themselves in whatever way they would like on their web-pages. They are free from the traditional constraints and limitations of what could be printed in a pamphlet or how journalists would present them. This means that institutions today have a greater ability to try to influence their own reputations.

Unlike traditional media, university web-pages also have the ability to change easily and respond quickly to current events. This means that parts of the web-pages could be influenced by the point in time that the information is gathered from. To lessen the extent of this I am consciously trying to use web-pages from as similar a time as possible so that current events have the same chance of influencing different HEI. But unfortunately, data is not available from the exact same time point for all the HEI and therefore current events could influence the analysis to some extent.

4 Presentation of Empirical Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I have presented the findings of my analysis. The overall findings for the analysis for 2006 can be found in *Table 4.1 Main Findings 2006* and the overall findings for 2016 are in *Table 4.2 Main Findings 2016*. These two tables show the findings for moral reputation, performative reputation, procedural reputation and visual self-representation. Table 1-9, found in the attachments, shows the results of each sub-category of moral reputation, performative reputation and procedural reputation. In section *4.4 Reputation management sub-category findings*, I have discussed the main findings for the sub-categories and exemplify what type of statements went into each category. In *Table 4.3 Types of Logos*, I have also shown what types of logos went into each category.

4.2 Main Findings

2006	Type of higher education institution				
Type of reputation	1) Old Public Norwegian	2) Old Private Norwegian	3) Young Public Norwegian	4) Young Private Norwegian	5) Old Public American
Moral	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Performative	Very high	Low	Medium	Low	Very high
Procedural	Low	Not present	Low	Not present	Low
Visual self-representation	Classic, Abstract and Classic	Religious and Not available	Local land mark, Abstract and Abstract	Just text	Just text and Classic
Overall Score	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Type of reputation	6) Old Private American	7) Young Public American	8A) Young Private American	8B) Young Private American	9) American Elite Universities
Moral	Very high	Low	Low	Very high	Low
Performative	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High
Procedural	Not present	Low	Low	Low	Low
Visual self-representation	Just text and Religious	Classic and Just text	Just text	Just text and Classic	Just text and Classic
Overall Score	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Table 4.1 Main Findings 2006

Moral, Performative, professional reputation will be scored as: very high, high, medium, low and not present. Visual self-representation will be scored as classic, local land mark, religious, abstract or just text.

Table 4.1 shows the presence of moral reputation, performative reputation, procedural reputation and visual self-representation, in each of the 10 different types of HEI, on their web-pages in 2006. The moral reputation score for the ‘old public Norwegian’ HEI, consists of all the scores in the moral sub-categories (student development, positive discussion of students, positive discussion of faculty, religion and serving society) for all the HEI that belong in the “old public Norwegian” category. All the sub-category moral reputation scores for all three “old public Norwegian” institutions were added up, and then divided by the number of HEI that are part of this type of institution. Scores that were 10 or over are categorized as ‘very high’, Scores that were between 6.66 - 9.99 were categorized as ‘high’. Scores between 3.33 – 6.65 were categorized as ‘medium’, scores between 0.01 - 3.32 were categorized as ‘low’. And if a type of reputation did not occur at all, this was marked as ‘not present’. For visual self-representation, the category that each of the HEI logos fell into is listed.

2016	Type of higher education institution				
Type of reputation	1) Old Public Norwegian	2) Old Private Norwegian	3) Young Public Norwegian	4) Young Private Norwegian	5) Old Public American
Moral	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
Performative	Very high	High	High	Medium	Very high
Procedural	Low	Not present	Low	Not present	Low
Visual self-representation	Classic, Abstract and Just text	Religious and Just text	Local land mark, Abstract and Abstract	Abstract	Just text and Classic
Overall Score	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
Type of reputation	6) Old Private American	7) Young Public American	8A) Young Private American	8B) Young Private American	9) American Elite Universities
Moral	Very high	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Performative	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high
Procedural	Not present	Low	Not present	Low	High
Visual self-representation	Just text and Just text	Classic and Just text	Just text	Just text and Classic	Just text and Classic
Overall Score	High	Medium	Medium	High	High

Table 4.2 Main Findings 2016

Moral, Performative, professional reputation will be scored as: very high, high, medium, low and not present. Visual self-representation will be scored as classic, local land marl, religious, abstract or just text.

Table 4.2 shows if there were ‘very high’, ‘high’, ‘medium’, ‘low’, or ‘not present’ amounts of moral reputation, performative reputation and procedural reputation, on each of

the 10 different types of HEI web-pages in 2016. The 2016 scores have the same values as the 2006 scores. For visual self-representation, each of the logo types are listed on the web-page.

When comparing Table 4.1 and Table 4.2., one can see that the overall levels of reputation management between 2006 and 2016 had gone up. In 2006, the ‘not present’ category is used three times. In 2016, the ‘not present’ category is used four times. The ‘low’ category is used fourteen times in 2006. Meanwhile in 2016 there were only eight instances where the ‘low’ category is used. The ‘medium’ category appears seven times in 2006 and six times in 2016. The ‘high’ category is used one time in 2006 and four times in 2016. The ‘very high’ category appears four times in 2006 and eight times in 2016.

Moral reputation levels between 2006 and 2016 stayed at a somewhat stable level. Five of the categories stayed at the same level in 2006 and 2016 and the other five categories either move up or down one level. Under performative reputation one sees that there is a bigger increase in the levels present on the web-pages between 2006 and 2016. None of the performative reputation levels between 2006 and 2016 go down. Only two of the types of HEI stay at the same level in 2006 and 2016. Three HEI types increased their level or performative reputation by one, four increased by two and one type of HEI increased by three.

Procedural reputation in both 2006 and 2016 was at a stable ‘low’ level. In 2006, the ‘low’ category appears seven times, and in 2016 the ‘low’ category appears five times. The ‘not present’ category appears three times in 2006 and four times in 2016. The ‘American elite universities’ in 2016 is the only higher instance of procedural reputation, with a ‘high’ score.

4.3 Visual Self-presentation

Under visual self-representation one can see from Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. That the ‘just texts’ logo type was the most popular in both 2006 and 2016. Followed by the ‘classic’ and then ‘abstract’ types of logos. ‘Religious’ and ‘local land mark’ logos were less used. It is worth noting that ‘classic’ and ‘religious’ logos were in decline between 2006 and 2016, meanwhile the number of ‘abstract’ and ‘just text’ logos were increasing slightly. There seems to also be national differences in logo usage, where the ‘just text’ category is especially dominant among the American HEI while there is more diversity in logo usage between the Norwegian HEI.











Visual Self-representation				
Classic	 Norges Handelshøyskole	 Harvard	 Martine university	 University of Maryland Baltimore
Religious	 Lovisenberg diakonale høyskole(2006)	 Lovisenberg diakonale høyskole(2016)	 Milligan College	
Local land mark	 Høyskolen i Lillehammer			
Abstract	 NTNU	 Høyskolen i Østfold	 Høyskolen i Sogn og Fjordane	 Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology
Just text	 University of Washington	 Det teologiske menighetsfakultet	 University of Texas and San Antonio	 Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts

Table 4.3 Types of Logos

Under visual self-representation, the logo on the front-page of each HEI web-pages from 2006 and 2016 was evaluated into one of the following categories: classic, local, abstract, or just text. In Table 4.3, you can see examples of logos put in each of the five remaining logo categories.

Four logos are included as examples of each category, except in the ‘religious’ and ‘local land mark’ categories, due to there being less than four examples of each of this logo categories in this analysis. In Table 4.1 and Table 4.2, one can see how often and for what type of HEI each of the types of logos were found. In the case of ‘Det teologiske menighetsfakultet’ an ‘old private Norwegian’ HEI, the logo from 2006 was not available. This is due to pictures not having been saved from the web-page from 2006.

4.4 Reputation Management Sub-category Findings

Moral reputation, performative reputation and procedural reputation were each measured through the use of sub-categories. Table 1-9 as seen in attachment 1, shows how each type of HEI scored on each of the sub-categories in 2006 and 2016. The overall moral reputation, performative reputation and procedural reputation scores are the same as in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. The scores in the sub-categories were scored on the same scale as in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. This means that scores that were 10 or over are categories as ‘very high’, while scores that were between 6.66 - 9.99 were categorized as ‘high’. Scores between 3.33 – 6.65 were categorized as ‘medium’; scores between 0.01 - 3.32 were categorized as ‘low’. If a type of reputation did not occur at all, this is marked as ‘not present’.

4.4.1 Moral Reputation

Under the moral reputation, it is worth noting that only the HEI that were religious ‘old private Norwegian’ and ‘old private American’ showed religious reputation on their web-pages. The ‘old private American’ HEI showed much higher levels of religious reputation than the ‘old private Norwegian’ HEI.

Religious reputation is used as a sub-category for moral reputation. In this sub-category sentences and paragraphs that appeal to religion have been classified. The sentences and paragraphs that contain appeals to God, Jesus, the Bible, church societies, and church leaders, were categorized as religious. Christianity was the only religion used in the analysis.

Examples of religious reputation are found in both Norwegian and American HEI. On the 2006 web-page of Lovisenberg diakonale høyskole, the following quotation was found: “Høgskolen har en økumenisk profil og bygger sin virksomhet på Bibelen og den felles kristne trosbekjennelse” (Lovisenberg diakonale høyskole, 2006).

Gonzaga, as a Jesuit university, contains many appeals to Christianity. In 2016, the following example was on their web-page: “The Governing Boards recognize that the President of the University serves not only as the institution's chief executive, but also as the director of an apostolic work of the Society of Jesus” (Gonzaga University, 2016).

The ‘serving society’ sub-category of moral reputation was the most common type of moral reputation overall. Most HEI web-pages contained some use of the ‘serving society’

reputation. Appeals to the betterment or contribution to local, state and national society, are categorized under the sub-category of ‘serving society’. This contained a diverse set of statements. The majority of the sentences and paragraphs in this category looked like the following statement from the 2006 Berkeley web-page:

Through our academic programs, UC helps create an educated workforce that keeps the California economy competitive. And, through University Extension, with a half-million enrollments annually, UC provides continuing education for Californians to improve their job skills and enhance the quality of their lives (Berkeley, 2006).

Statements that indirectly show an HEI contribution to society also fell into the ‘serving society’ sub-category. This included sentences such as when the 2016 web-page of the University of Oslo stated: “Observatoriet vert eit viktig symbol på nasjonsbygging og utviklinga av norsk realfagleg vitskap” (Universitetet i Oslo, 2016b).

The ‘student development’ sub-category of reputation management was found in ‘low’ levels on the majority of HEI web-pages. There were no web-pages with ‘medium’, ‘high’ or ‘very high’ cases of ‘student development’. Sentences and paragraphs that encourage students to grow as individuals, academics, professionals or researchers have been categorized as ‘student development’.

An example of a university encouraging their students to develop their craftsmanship and professional skills is found on Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology, web-page in 2006:

Intensjonen bak dette tilleggsåret er å gi talentfulle designstudenter reell profesjonell erfaring og vekst under veiledning. Derfor består alt arbeid av oppdrag for eksterne kunder. Oppdragene konsentrerer seg om grafisk design innen alle aktuelle medier som for eksempel bøker, magasiner, websider, emballasje, logoer og fullstendige visuelle profiler (Westerdals School of Communication, 2006a).

The remaining two sub-categories of moral reputation were less present on the HEI web-pages. Most web-pages scored ‘not present’. There were a few that had ‘low’ levels of both ‘positive discussion of students’ and ‘positive discussion of faculty’. Only the ‘old public American HEI’ Scored a ‘medium’ on ‘positive discussion of students’. This is largely due to

Berkeley having a comprehensive history present on their 2016 web-page that contained much information about both the Universities but also student and faculty accomplishments.

Statements that showed a university's pride in their students were placed into the sub-category of 'positive discussion of students'. This excludes statements that bragged about research accomplishments, since such statements were put in the 'excellency' sub-category of performative reputation. An example of 'positive discussion of students' reputation is from the 2006 web-page of Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology: "Og vi som skole sørger litt over tapet av flinke og flotte studenter, men gleder oss desto mer over at de har nådd så langt i utdanningen at de kan gå ut i verden og praktisere som profesjonelle kommunikatører" (Westerdals School of Communication, 2006b).

In the sub-category for 'positive discussion of faculty', one can find sentences and paragraphs that show pride in faculty members' non-research accomplishments. Statements that were bragging about faculty members' research accomplishments were not included in this category as these also went in the 'excellency' sub-category of performative reputation. The 'positive discussion of faculty' sub-category was most present on Berkeley's web-page in 2016 where there were several examples of faculty standing up for moral ideals, including the following quotation:

Collectively, Berkeley professors came together in the early 1920s to instigate a "faculty revolt," which ultimately secured for the Academic Senate an unprecedented role in shared governance of the Berkeley campus. That tradition has kept the Berkeley faculty independent, outspoken and powerful in the formation of academic policy (Berkeley, 2016b).

4.4.2 Performative Reputation

The performative reputation category was the most dominant type of reputation found on the HEI web-pages. Both the 'numbers' and 'excellency' sub-categories were dominant, but the 'excellency' category occurs most often. The difference in the 'numbers' and 'excellency' categories is smaller between the Norwegian HEI.

Under the sub-category 'numbers', the number of students attending the university, numbers of students in graduating classes and lists of courses or degrees offered were

categories. This includes the 2016 statement for NTNU's web-page about the number of attending students at each campuses: "33 000 studenter i Trondheim, 3 500 studenter i Gjøvik og 2500 studenter i Ålesund" (NTNU, 2016).

Statements such as the following from Yale's web-page in 2016 were also counted towards 'numbers': "More than 200 graduates of Yale Law School participated in commencement ceremonies on Monday afternoon" (Yale, 2016).

The performative reputation sub-category, 'excellency', is the overall most used sub-category on the HEI web-pages. Only 'old private Norwegian HEI' in 2006 fall within 'not present' levels. Under the sub-category 'excellency', statements that bragged about students' and faculties research accomplishments were included. As well as statements about groundbreaking and prize-winning research. Statements that presented the HEI as superior to other HEI were also included. These statements were both of an academic and non-academic nature.

On the web-page from 2016 by the University of Oslo, the following quotation bragging about a faculty members' accomplishments is an example of a statement in the 'excellency' category: "Professor Rune Blomhoff er blant verdens én prosent mest siterte forskere i sitt fagfelt. Vi tok en prat med ernæringsprofessoren som nå vil finne ut hvilket kosthold som er best for kreftpasienter" (Universitetet i Oslo, 2016a).

An example of an included sentence about an HEI prize-winnings comes from the 2006 web-page of the University of Washington:

The UW is honored to have some of the greatest researchers in the world on faculty. Six UW faculty members have received Nobel Awards since 1989. Five have won Nobel Prizes in medicine since 1990, more than any other institution during that time period (University of Washington, 2006).

An example of a non-research related paragraph that was classified into this category is from Berkley's 2016 web-page. The paragraph is a presentation of their university athletes' accomplishments during the 2012 summer Olympics:

The Golden Bears earn 17 medals -- 11 gold, one silver and five bronze. If UC Berkeley were its own country, it would be sixth in the world for the number of gold

medals earned, tying with France and Germany. The school's overall count of 17 medals ranks it third among U.S. universities, behind the University of Southern California and the University of Florida (Berkeley, 2016b).

The third sub-category of performative reputation is 'accreditation'. As expected 'accreditation' is 'not present' in many of the HEI types. In the 'accreditation', are sub-category statements that discussed a HEI accreditation. This includes the following statement for the 2006 web-page by Det Teologiske menighetsfakultet: "Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet (MF) er en privat vitenskapelig høyskole, akkreditert i henhold av Lov om universiteter og høyskoler av 28.02.2005" (Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet, 2006).

The Antioch University- Santa Barbara's web-page of 2016 included a logo for the achieved accreditation the HEI had earned. This logo was included in the analysis together with sentences and paragraphs:



(Antioch university- Santa Barbara, 2016).

4.4.3 Procedural reputation

Overall procedural reputation was less used on the HEI web-pages than moral reputation and performative reputation. The 'equal opportunity' sub-category of procedural reputation was the most common type of procedural reputation. The most common level of 'equal opportunity' statements was 'low' level. There were also many HEI web-pages where 'equal opportunity' statements were 'not present'. 'Old public American HEI' stand out in 2016 for having 'very high' levels of 'equal opportunity' statements on their web-pages. 'America elite universities' in 2016 also stand out for having 'medium' levels.

In this the 'equal opportunity' sub-category, statements that showed the HEI acting as an 'equal opportunity' agent were included as well as statements that outlined how the HEI would perform as an 'equal opportunity' actor.

This means that the 2006 web-page from Høgskolen i Lillehammer's statement about equality and antidiscrimination was counted because it shows that the HEI wants to be an 'equal opportunity' actor: "Høgskolen skal være en lærende organisasjon og arbeide for likestilling og antidiskriminering" (Høgskolen i Lillehammer, 2006).

The 2006 web-page by the Høgskolen i Sogn og Fjordane's statement about the gender composition at their social worker program was also counted, because it shows the HEI acting as an 'equal opportunity' actor: "Nær 40% av dei nye studentane i dei nye kulla ved bachelorstudia i vernepleie og i sosialt arbeid er menn" (Høgskolen i Sogn og Fjordane, 2006).

The other sub-category of procedural reputation 'fair admission' was only found on a few web-pages. 'American elite universities' in 2016, 'old public American' HEI in 2006 and 2016 and (8B) 'young private American' HEI in 2006 and 2016 had 'low' levels of 'fair admission' on their web-pages. All other HEI had scored at 'not present' levels.

Contained in the 'fair admission' sub-category were statements that showed that the university was presenting their admission process as fair. This included the following statement from the 2016 web-page of Martin University, that discusses non-traditional students: "Martin University's Mission is to provide excellence in educating and developing traditional and non-traditional students in an inclusive, supportive and healthy collegiate environment" (Martin University, 2016).

4.5 More Than One Type of Reputation

Some sentences and paragraphs contained more than one type of reputation management. In these cases, a sentence or paragraph was categorized into all of the qualifying reputation management type sub-categories. The following example from the University of Washington's web-page from 2016 contains two different sub-categories of moral reputation. Both 'positive discussion about students' and 'positive discussion about faculty':

So, what defines our students, faculty and community members? Above all, it's our belief in possibility and our unshakable optimism. It's a connection to others near and far. It's a hunger that pushes us to tackle challenges and pursue progress. It's the

conviction that together we can create a world of good. Join us on the journey (University of Washington, 2016).

Another example of sentences and paragraphs containing more than one type of reputation can be found on the Berkley web-page from 2016. The quotation was categorized into both the moral reputation sub-category of 'student development' and the performative reputation sub-category of 'excellency'. In other words, the sentence was categorized into two different types of reputation. The sentence is as follows: "Shape Your Future Compare programs, find detailed degree requirements, discover faculty research specialties, and learn more about the unparalleled academic opportunities available to you at UC Berkeley" (Berkeley, 2016a).

4.6 The Differences Between Web-pages in 2006 and 2016

It is also worth noting that there was a difference in the contents and development of the university web-pages between 2006 and 2016. In 2006, the university web-pages were generally less developed than in 2016 and there was less information available. In 2006 one of the web-pages even stated that it was used as a tool to promote students to potential employers, instead of as a tool to promote the HEI:

Dette nettstedet er i stor grad tilrettelagt for dere som har interesse av å komme i kontakt med avgangsstudentene våre, enten dere er framtidige arbeidsgivere, samarbeidspartnere, framtidige studenter eller rett og slett opptatte av hva skolen utdanner til (Westerdals School of Communication, 2006b).

In 2006, there were also web-pages that would, instead of listing information on the web-page, ask you to provide your address so they could mail you a brochure, or ask you to download pdf files. Pdf's and brochures were not read as part of this analysis, due to the desire to limit the analysis to only web-based information. This was done to get a more realistic impression of how university web-pages have developed their reputation management between 2006 and 2016 and to get a realistic impression of how much more information is available online in 2016.

There were also instances where a visitor to the site was explicitly told that this information was not available online and were offered no other platform to gain the desired information from. This was even the case at Harvard's 2006 web-page: "Please note that not all academic units at Harvard maintain web sites" (Harvard, 2006).

4.7 Path-dependent Institutions

In 2016, Norges Handelshøyskole has significantly lower levels of reputation management on its web-page, compared to the two other 'old public Norwegian' HEI, NTNU and the University of Oslo. I only found performative reputation present at Norges Handelshøyskolen in 2016, meanwhile both the other 'old public Norwegian' HEI also use moral reputation and procedural reputation in 2016. This could be due to Norges Handelshøyskolen being smaller than the other two institutions. It could also be connected to the fact that Norges Handelshøyskole is a 'høyskole', meanwhile the other two institutions are Universities.

Høyskolen i Lillehammer is the only institution that uses a local land mark logo in this analysis. Therefore, it is possible that Høyskolen i Lillehammer has a special path-dependency with its geographic region. The logo of Høyskolen i Lillehammer can be seen in Table 4.3. The logo consists of a mountain that is local to Lillehammer.

The University of California Berkeley stands out for high levels of moral reputation management, particularly in 2016. In 2016, the University of California Berkeley had a very comprehensive history section for the University's on its web-page. This history section contained many elements of moral reputation, and also high amounts of the performative reputation sub-category 'excellency'. There are several universities that use the 'serving society' sub-category of moral reputation in their reputation management, but Berkeley also uses the sub-categories 'student development', 'positive discussion of students' and 'positive discussion of faculty'. The University of Washington, which is the other 'old public American' HEI, also uses all of the above-listed moral reputation management sub-categories in 2016, but to a much lesser extent. Therefore, Berkeley seems to have a stronger path-dependency to expressing a diverse moral reputation than other 'old public American' HEI.

Harvard is also an institution that seems to have a particular path-dependency. Harvard has a more comprehensive web-page than most other HEI in this analysis, including the other 'American elite university': Yale. Both in 2006 and 2016, Harvard has high levels of

reputation management on its web-page, and uses moral, performative, and procedural reputation. In 2016, Harvard also has very high levels of excellency reputation on its web-page. This was connected to Harvard writing a lot about their research accomplishments. It is not surprising that Harvard would have a reputation that stands out, even in the American elite university category, as it is possibly the most famous University in the World.

4.8 Summary

Between 2006 and 2016, HEI web-pages have developed. In 2016, the web-pages contain more content and are more complex in their formatting. Therefore, there is also more reputation management material available on HEI web-pages in 2016, compared to 2006.

Both in 2006 and 2016, performative reputation was the form of reputation management that was most present on HEI web-pages. In 2006, performative reputation was only slightly more present than moral reputation on HEI web-pages. Between 2006 and 2016 the amount of performative reputation present increased more than the amount of moral reputation presence. In both 2006 and 2016 procedural reputation has the lowest amount of presence on the HEI web-pages.

Within moral reputation, ‘serving society’ was the most present sub-category both in 2006 and 2016. Religion was only found among religious institutions, while ‘student development’, ‘positive discussion of students’, and ‘positive discussion of faculty’, were found in low amounts. Within performative reputation, ‘excellency’ was the most present sub-category. The ‘numbers’ sub-category was also present in high amounts; meanwhile ‘accreditation’, was found in smaller amounts. The ‘equal opportunity’ sub-category was most popular within procedural reputation. ‘Fair admission’ was found in small amounts.

Within visual self-representation there was only a few changes between 2006 and 2016. There was one logo that changed from ‘classic’ to ‘just text’, one from ‘just text’ to ‘abstract’ and one from ‘religious’ to ‘just text’. In both 2006 and 2016 the ‘just text’ category was most popular, followed by the ‘classic’ category. ‘Abstract’ logos were more popular in Norway, but not in the USA. Religious logos were only used by religious institutions, and only one institution in both 2006 and 2016 had a local land mark logo.

5 Path-dependency and Isomorphic within Reputation Management in the Higher Education Sector

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 2. *Institutional theory* I outlined theoretically based expectations about what I would find while conducting the web-census. In this chapter I revisit these expectations to see how they line up with my findings. I also discuss what the findings mean. Next, I have looked at changes that occurred between 2006 and 2016. In the end, I summarize the isomorphic and path-dependent findings.

5.2 Does Private Versus Public Sector Matter?

Reputation management started as a private sector tool. Therefore, in the theoretical chapter the expectation was made that reputation management in 2006 would be more visible in the private sector than in the public sector. I also expected that an isomorphic process would be happening between 2006 and 2016 and that the overall levels of reputation management in 2016 therefore would be more equal between the public and private sectors.

The findings in this analysis showed that the levels of reputation management in 2006 were equal between the public and private sector. In 2016, one saw that the overall levels rose and instead of equaling out there were slightly higher levels of reputation management present on the private HEI web-pages.

In other words, the theoretical expectation that reputation management would be more visible on private institutions web-pages in 2006 was not supported by my findings. Therefore, it was not possible to judge if an isomorphic process for reputation management has happened between the public and private sector. It is possible that if one would have looked at reputation management at an earlier time point than 2006, that there would have been a bigger difference between the private and public HEI sectors. In other words, the theoretical assumption could still be correct, but it would have happened at an earlier point in

time. It is also possible that if one would have studied a different platform than HEI web-pages that the expectation could have been correct.

The overall presence of reputation management on HEI web-pages was rising between 2006 and 2016. This correlates with the overall rising development and use of HEI web-pages in general. In this study, the private institutions are found to be developing their reputation management on their web-pages at a slightly faster pace.

There exists a different image in society at large of the public and private sector. The public sector is by many seen as less efficient and more bureaucratic, and therefore the public sector is, according to isomorphism, expected to distance itself from this negative image by focusing on its output reputation. This would mean that the public sector would focus their reputation management more on performative reputation. In other words, public HEIs can be expected to highlight their efficiency and effectiveness.

Performative reputation is the form of reputation that is in this study found to be most used on the analyzed HEI web-pages. In 2006, the findings support the expectation that performative reputation is more used in the public sector. In 2016, the levels of performative reputation are more equal between the public and private sector. So, for 2016 the expectation is not supported by the findings.

In other words, there is some support for the expectation that performative reputation is more used in the public sector than in the private sector. The public sector had somewhat higher levels of performative reputation in 2006, which supports the assumption that presenting a good performative reputation is important for public institutions, due to the necessity to combat a poor public image. The fact that the performative reputation levels in 2016 are more equal between institution types could be a by-product of overall reputation management levels rising on HEI web-pages, and performative reputation management being the most used form of reputation management on HEI web-pages. It is also possible that there are underlying factors that make performative reputation important to private HEI. Private HEI face a more competitive financial environment. Presenting themselves in a performative output manner could therefore be important to private institutions for attracting financial and academic resources.

It is also possible that different logics of appropriateness rule in the public and private sector. It is possible that different path-dependencies exist in the different sectors that will lead to desires for different reputations. There also exists a possibility that the public sector puts a higher value on procedural reputation, because as a public institution HEI have a responsibility to exercise ‘equal opportunity’, and ‘fair admission’. A public organization might also align itself more with a moral reputation of ‘serving society’. This is because as a publicly funded institution, it is more likely that tax payers and the contributing levels of government want to see that their investment is contributing to the betterment of society. A private institution on the other hand, is not likely to put the same emphasis on ‘serving society’ because the private institution exists more to provide personal benefits to its students.

Procedural reputation is, in this analysis, generally found in low amounts, but the levels of procedural reputation in the public sector are, in both 2006 and 2016, slightly higher than in the private sector. The ‘American elite universities’ are an exception in 2016 as they use procedural reputation to a much higher extent than any other institution. Because the ‘American elite universities’ are different from other institutions, I do not see their higher use of procedural reputation in 2016 as representative for private HEI. This analysis also finds that there are slightly higher levels of ‘serving society’ in the public sector compared to the private sector in both 2006 and 2016.

The results, in my analysis for procedural reputation and ‘serving society’, support the claim that there are essential differences between public and private institutions. Public institutions are shaped by their roots. The results support the expectation that there is a path-dependency for the public sector that makes public HEI act as an extension of public sector values. Though public institutions show higher levels of ‘serving society’, the difference between the use of ‘serving society’ reputation in the public sector and private sector are not that big. This could mean that private institutions within the higher education sector, might feel the need to adopt some public-sector values. It could mean that in a field that consists of both private and public institutions, private institutions at times have to present themselves in a more public sector way, to gain legitimacy. It is easy to understand that a private HEI can benefit from its local society seeing the institution as a contributor to the society.

5.3 Does National Contexts Matter?

Just as different logics of appropriateness between sectors can lead to different path-dependency, and therefore differences in desired reputation, so can different national contexts. Between Norway and the USA, I expected to find a difference in performative reputation, when it comes to the presentation of ‘excellency’. In Norwegian culture, bragging about accomplishments is less acceptable than what it is in American culture. Therefore, it is expected that Norwegian HEI will brag less about themselves.

In both 2006 and 2016 there was no clear pattern of either nation having a higher level of ‘excellency’ reputation on their HEI web-pages. ‘Excellency’ is a form of performative reputation that was seen being used both in Norway and in the USA. The path-dependency expectation that predicted that higher levels of ‘excellency’ reputation would be used in the USA, was therefore not supported by my findings. It is possible that the cultural differences in talking about accomplishment are getting smaller between the USA and Norway. Another possibility is that there could be a difference in how Norwegian culture treats bragging on the internet, compared to other forms of bragging. It is possible that because web-pages are a more indirect form of communication, they can present more of an ‘excellency’ reputation without going against Norwegian cultural norms. There was, on the other hand, a difference in levels of overall procedural reputation between Norway and the USA. The overall procedural reputation levels in this analysis were higher in the USA than in Norway. Therefore, there is a possibility that there were some cultural differences on output reputation seen in this analysis.

Instead of seeing a national cultural difference, the results showed a tendency that more of the prestigious HEIs used ‘excellency’ reputation to a larger extent. The ‘old public Norwegian’ HEI, ‘old public American’ HEI and ‘American elite universities’ have consistently higher excellency reputations than what was found among the other institutions. These three HEI categories consisted of the most prestigious HEIs in this analysis. It is possible that prestigious HEI today face more international competition to attract excellent students and faculty and therefore have a need to brag about accomplishments. It is also possible that more prestigious HEI simply have more accomplishments to present on their web-pages than less prestigious HEI. Especially considering that these accomplishments

consisted of things such as successful research, and winning prizes, which was an important part of the 'excellency' category.

At the time of this study, American HEI also existed within a more competitive environment than what Norwegian HEI did. There was a theoretical basis, that assumes that competitive environments lead to more unique presentations of the institution. Therefore, I would have expected to find that American HEI presented themselves in a more diverse way. I measured this possibility by looking at national difference in the use of logos, to see if there was more diversity within Norwegian or American HEI. There are also many other indicators of diversity between different HEI, but since the other indicators are not measured in this analysis, I only looked at logos.

The analysis found that there was more diversity in logos used among Norwegian HEI than American HEI. This is the opposite result of what the uniqueness theory claims one should find. Instead the findings support an isomorphic claim that higher competition leads to more similarity. Based on isomorphic theory, one would expect to find that American HEI are less diverse, due to a more competitive environment. The isomorphic claim is based on a heightened need for reconcilability and legitimacy in a competitive market. Between 2006 and 2016 there was one American HEI that went from having a 'religious' logo, to a 'just text' logo. This is only one change and therefore was not seen as representative, but this change does support the hypothesis that a convergence process is ongoing among American HEI.

Isomorphic literature would also expect that both Norwegian and American HEI are becoming more similar to 'American elite universities'. This is due to the 'American elite universities' being market leaders. They are seen as the best HEI in the world, and therefore other HEI, according to isomorphic theory, stand to benefit from imitating elite reputation management practices.

The 'American elite universities' mainly stood out in the analysis for the amount of material their web-pages contained. Both in 2006 and 2016 the 'American elite universities' web-pages contained higher amounts of materials that were covered in the analysis, than most other HEI. Some of the 'old public Norwegian and "old public American' HEI contained similar amounts of materials. It makes sense that the 'old public Norwegian' and 'old public American' HEIs turned out to be the most similar to the 'American elite universities' in this

analysis, because the ‘old public’ HEIs are also internationally recognized as leading educational and research institutions. The ‘old private’ HEI in both Norway and the USA are, in this analysis, religious institutions. The final grouping: public, and private, Norwegian, and American young HEI are not as well established. Therefore, it makes sense that the ‘old public HEI’ would resemble the ‘elite universities’ the most.

‘American elite universities’ in 2006 also stood out for having ‘high’ levels of performative reputation. In 2006 the “old public Norwegian” and “old public American” HEI had ‘very high’ levels of performative reputation. All other HEI had lower levels of performative reputation in 2006. In 2016 we saw that performative reputation levels had risen. The ‘American elite university’ levels were then ‘very high’. The overall levels of performative reputation had also risen highly, to the point where all the American HEI categories showed ‘very high’ levels of performative reputation. Norwegian HEI also had high levels of performative reputation in 2016, though they were slightly lower than those shown among the American HEI. These findings would support the expectation that there is an isomorphic process going on where ‘American elite universities’ are being imitated but the findings could also be a byproduct of overall rising levels of reputation management.

Norwegian and American HEI also face different path-dependent contexts. In the established timeframe, there were different procedures in place for things like admission processes in Norway and the USA. In Norway, admission to public HEIs were run by the Ministry of Education and Research instead of being run by the institution itself. Private Norwegian HEI administered their own admission processes. Therefore, it is not surprising to have found a difference in how the sub-category ‘fair admission’ of procedural reputation was represented in each nation and each sector.

Overall in this analysis procedural reputation was used less than performative reputation and moral reputation. In particular, I found that ‘fair admission’ was not a type of reputation that HEI focus on. When looking at ‘fair admission’ one sees that the levels were higher in the USA than in Norway. Both in 2006 and 2016 this analysis found no examples of ‘fair admission’ reputation on any of the Norwegian HEI web-pages. There were a few examples of American HEI using a ‘fair admission’ reputation. Therefore, the expectation that American HEI were more likely to present the sub-category ‘fair admission’ was supported by this analysis.

It is worth noting that there were so few web-pages that presented this type of reputation, that even though the findings supported the theoretical assumption, I found that more research would be necessary before coming to a more decisive conclusion about whether or not American HEI use 'fair admission' reputation more. I do think that more research would find that there is a national difference and that Norwegian HEI are less likely to discuss the subject. It makes sense that American HEI would have a higher interest in being seen to run a 'fair admission' process, as they run their own admission process. It would also be very likely to see that at least public Norwegian HEI, that have admission administered by the State, do not feel the same need to highlight the fairness of the process. The Norwegian process is also more subjective than the American process, as the Norwegian admission process is focused on grade point averages, while American HEIs also look at other more subjective factors like volunteer work, students interests, and written applications.

5.4 Does a Religious Origins in an Institution Matter?

An institution that has a religious founding is likely to have a path-dependency that is shaped by the religion it belongs too. In this study the only institutions that fit into the category 'old private Norwegian' HEI with data available from 2006 and 2016, were two religious institutions. Therefore the "old private American' HEI that were chosen for use were also religious institutions.

According to path-dependency theory, a religiously founded institution will be likely to have a reputation that has been influenced by the religion the institution belongs too. One can assume that a religious background will influence what type of procedural reputation the institution will have, since religion can influence what is seen as 'equal opportunity' and 'fair admission'. Religion is also likely to influence moral reputation, especially in the sub-category 'religion'. HEI web-pages from religious institutions are also expected to use more religious visual-self representation than non-religious institutions.

In both the Norwegian and American religious HEIs, procedural reputation is not used in either 2006 or 2016. Meanwhile, among non-religious institutions in both 2006 and 2016, procedural reputation is found in most institutions in low amounts.

So, instead of finding a higher presence of procedural reputation in religious HEI, I found that non-religious HEI have a higher presence of procedural reputation. This could mean that religious background leads to a different path-dependency than what was expected. Religious background looks to influence procedural reputation, but instead of leading to a higher level of procedural reputation, it leads to a lower level. It is possible that religious teaching, instead of encouraging institutions to act as ‘equal opportunity’ and ‘fair admission’ institutions, might instead lead an HEI to be more selective in who they want attending the HEI. Instead of a tendency that favors inclusion, there is a tendency that religious institutions try to separate themselves. It is also possible that statements on religious HEI web-pages are formed by religion to an extent that they are interpreted as ‘religious’ moral reputation statements, instead of procedural reputation statements.

Earlier results in this analysis, supported the statement that public HEI have a higher focus on procedural reputation. Since all the religious HEI in this analysis were private, it is possible that the determining factor for the presence of procedural reputation among this particular HEI is not the fact that they were religious, but instead the fact that they were private institutions.

When it comes to ‘religious’ reputation as a sub-category of moral reputation on HEI web-pages, I find that ‘religious’ reputation was only used by religious institutions. In both 2006 and 2016 I find that the ‘old private Norwegian’ HEI had a ‘low’ level of ‘religious’ reputation of their web-pages and that the ‘old private American’ HEI had a ‘very high’ level of ‘religious’ reputation on their web-pages. In both 2006 and 2016, all the non-religious schools were found to not use any religious reputation on their web-pages. This means that the theoretical assumption that religious institutions use more ‘religious’ reputation was supported by this analysis.

‘Religious’ reputation was, in this analysis, found to be a form of reputation management that was only used by institutions that wanted to be seen as religious. Non-religious institutions did not benefit from having a religious reputation, therefore it is a form of reputation that was not included in how they present themselves. HEIs that value religion, and wanted to attract religious students and faculty, on the other hand, did benefit from showing a ‘religious’ reputation. American society is overall more religious than Norwegian society. This could be an explaining factor in why the religious American HEI showed higher levels of religious’ reputation than the religious Norwegian HEI.

Under visual self-representation, I find it to be true that institutions with religious backgrounds were more likely to have religious logos. Not all the religious institutions used 'religious' logos, but among non-religious HEI religious logos were not being used at all. In 2006 two religious HEI had 'religious' logos. One fell in the category 'just text', and one was not available. In 2016, there was only one 'religious' logo in use. The other three logos used by religious HEI contained 'just text'. None of the non-religious institution used 'religious' logos.

Just like only the religious institutions benefit from 'religious' moral reputation on their web-pages, so do the religious institutions solely benefit from the use of 'religious' logos. A religious logo makes it immediately clear to anyone looking at the HEI web-page, that the institution they are looking at has a religious affiliation. A HEI that does not claim a religious affiliation therefore would instead of benefiting, risk ostracizing potential students that don't have a religious affiliation, or have a different religious affiliation.

5.5 Does Age of the Institution Matter?

Young HEI that were created in the 1960's can be expected to have a different path-dependency than other institutions, because they were created as part of a counter revolution to the existing system. These young HEI were created to have more of a student and teaching focus, and on wanted to improve students and faculty and have the HEI be run through a democratic governance model. In my analysis, I expected to find that there would be higher levels of the moral reputation's sub-categories of 'positive discussion of students' and 'positive discussion of faculty'. I also expected young HEI to not use 'religious' or 'classic' logos.

On the other hand, there also exists the opposite theoretical expectation. From an isomorphic perspective, I expected to find that there had been a convergence process between young and old institutions. There could either be a pressure on young institutions to become more like the old institutions, or there could be a pressure on old institutions to become more like the young. Either way, I expected not to find a difference between young and old HEI when it comes to levels of the moral reputations sub-categories of 'positive discussion of students' and 'positive discussion of faculty'. From an isomorphic perspective, I also expected to find no difference in types of logos.

When it comes to ‘positive discussion of students’ and ‘positive discussion of faculty’, there seems to have been a convergence process between young and old HEI. In both 2006 and 2016, the old and young HEI showed very similar levels of ‘positive discussion of students’ and ‘positive discussion of faculty’ as sub-categories of moral reputation.

In other words, I found support for the expected convergence process in my analysis. There seems to have been a convergence process between young and old institutions that has led to isomorphism within HEI. The results in this analysis show that young and old HEI have equal levels of positive discussion of students’ and ‘positive discussion of faculty’. The results in this analysis cannot show whether old institutions have adopted the practices of young HEI, or the other way around.

When looking at what logos are used by old and young HEI, one can see that older HEI in both 2006 and 2016 use traditional logos to a larger extent. But we do also see that there was one less old HEI in 2016 that used a traditional logo. Therefore, it is possible that there is a convergence process moving logos in a more modern direction. But for now, this analysis still found a difference in what type of logos young and old HEI use.

Young institutions are less established and therefore have a higher need to create credibility. This points to a path-dependent need for young institutions to point out their credibility by showing of their accreditations. This need was expected to be higher among American institutions, because there is more diversity in the American HEI market, and therefore there is a higher need to show to potential students, faculty, employees and donors, that this is a legitimate institution. This was measured through performative reputation in the sub-category, accreditation, and I expected that young American HEI will have the highest levels of presence of this type of reputation on their web-pages.

In 2006 and 2016, the ‘accreditation’ reputation levels for American HEI were higher than for Norwegian HEI, but age of institution did not influence ‘accreditation’ reputation levels. Overall ‘accreditation’ levels were higher than expected, since they were only expected to be consistently present among young American HEI. This could be influenced by the fact that this analysis was based on a web-census, and that there is a need among HEI to prove that they are legitimate institutions on the internet.

5.6 Significance of Time

The biggest change in reputation management between 2006 and 2016 on HEI web-pages found in this study, was the overall rising levels in material available. In 2016, ‘overall score’ for reputation management present on web-pages increased by one level for seven out of ten categories. In the remaining three categories, the “overall scores’ stayed the same. I would argue that this change was due to increased use of web-pages as a marketing and communication tool with potential students, donators and employers. I also think that HEIs have become more deliberate in their choice of contents that they publish on their web-pages, and that in 2016, web-pages were designed more deliberately to communicate desired forms of reputation.

The increased amounts of material found on university web-pages between 2006 and 2016, could also be due to a layering effect. This would mean that it is easier for institutions to add new material to their web-pages, and substitute existing materials with new information, than it is to remove materials. This would lead to a layering effect of information where one ends up adding material on top of existing material, without removing information. It is possible that this happened to university web-pages because it could be harder to get a consensus for removing information. This analysis could not test if a layering process was ongoing, but the findings in this analysis would support such a claim.

Between 2006 and 2016, it was performative reputation that was increasing its presence the fastest. The performative reputation levels increased between one and three levels in eight out of ten HEI between 2006 and 2016. The remaining two HEI, did not increase due to the fact that in 2006 they had ‘very high’ levels, and this was the max score achievable in the analysis.

Moral reputation increased in four HEI types, stayed the same in five HEI types, and decreased by one level in one HEI type. Overall the moral reputation levels increased, but at a much slower pace than performative reputation. Procedural reputation stayed the same in eight HEI types, and decreased in two. In other words, the overall levels of procedural reputation, between 2006 and 2016, decreased slightly.

There were only two logos that changed between 2006 and 2016. There was a ‘classic’ logo, that changed to ‘just text’ and there was a ‘religious’ logo that changed to ‘just text’.

This shows that logos were mostly stable over time, but that some HEI with more traditional looking logos are changing their look and getting more modern logos. It is also worth noting that many of the HEI made small changes to their logos between 2006 and 2016, without changing their logo from one category to another. The smaller changes were most often a change in colors, but many logos were also simplified to create a more modern version of the original logo. An example of this can be found by looking at Table 4.3 *Types of Logos*. There it is shown that the logos for ‘Lovisenberg diakonale høyskole’ from 2006 and 2016, both show a cross, and therefore both are religious logos. Further, it is important that the 2016 version is simpler and more modern looking.

The stability in logos usage between 2006 and 2016 is likely due to path-dependency. Institutions have a history represented in their logos, and they have a connection to the image. This makes it difficult and often undesirable to make drastic changes. Path-dependency also explains the consistency found in institutions proportional use of each of the reputation management categories. A tendency was shown for institutions that focus more on moral reputation in 2006 to also focus more on moral reputation in 2016.

5.7 Summary

5.7.1 Path-dependency

The analysis found support for there being path-dependent differences between the public and private sector. The public sector has a responsibility to the society that it is meant to serve, this is a responsibility that private institutions do not have to face. This leads to the public sector holding different values than the private sector. The public sector was, in this analysis, found to focus more on procedural reputation, and the moral reputation sub-category of ‘serving society’. These types of reputation represent values that one would expect are particularly important to public institutions. Interestingly, the private institutions also showed these forms of reputation, though at a lower amount. The analysis show that traditionally public values also play a role in the private HEI sector. It was even the ‘American elite universities’ that showed the highest levels of procedural reputation.

There were also expectations that there would be different national path-dependencies in Norway and the USA. Surprisingly, the results of the analysis showed that Norwegian HEI

use the performative reputation sub-category of ‘excellency’ as much as American HEI do. The analysis also showed a pattern of prestigious HEI using ‘excellency’ more than other HEI. Prestigious HEI using ‘excellency’ more could both be a result of them being more prestigious and therefore having more accomplishments to brag about, or it could in itself be a contributing factor to why this type of HEIs are seen as prestigious. It is possible that reputation management focused on presenting ‘excellency’ leads to a more prestigious reputation.

There was also a path-dependent expectation that American HEI would focus more on the procedural reputation sub-category of ‘fair admission’. This expectation was based on national differences in the admission process between American and Norwegian HEI. American HEI that use a more subjective process were expected to have a greater need to justify their process. The findings in the analysis supported this expectation. It is worth noting that ‘fair admission’ was a form of reputation that was found sparingly, and therefore more evidence is needed to come to a more certain conclusion.

Performative reputation was consistently being used more than procedural reputation and moral reputation. It is possible that this is due to the path-dependency of the HEI sector. Higher education institutions have a history that goes back to enlightenment times, of valuing factual and objective information. This can be a reason that the more output oriented performative reputation is emphasized heavily. This could also be a reason behind no non-religious institutions using any form of religious reputation; because a religious reputation could go against the enlightenment ideals non-religious HEI strive towards.

In this analysis, the ‘old private American’ and ‘old private Norwegian’ HEI were religious institutions. The analysis found that religion brings with it a religious path-dependency. The religious institutions, used the moral reputation sub-category ‘religion’ consistently, this sub-category was not used by any non-religious institutions. There were also some religious HEI that had logos that were classified as ‘religious’. Again, there were not any non-religious HEI that had logos that were classified as ‘religious’. Religion was also expected to lead to a higher focus on procedural reputation. Instead the analysis showed that the religious HEI stood out for having a lower focus on procedural reputation than non-religious HEI.

There was also an expectation that age and nationality would influence how much an institution mentioned the performative reputation sub-category of ‘accreditation’. The expectation was that young American HEI would use ‘accreditation’ most. The analysis found support that ‘accreditation’ had a national path-dependency that lead to American HEI using this form of reputation more. But there was no evidence found that would support the claim that age of HEI can indicator of how much ‘accreditation’ was used.

This analysis also found support for the claim that HEI are path-dependent over time. This can specifically be seen in the consistency that is found in institutions logo usage.

5.7.2 Isomorphic

From an isomorphic perspective, there was an expectation that the analysis would show that there was an ongoing isomorphic process on the development of reputation management between the public and private sector. The public sector was expected to have started using reputation management at an earlier time point, because reputation management started as a private sector tool. However, the analysis showed that the reputation management levels between the public and private sector in 2006 were already equal. Therefore, there was no development between 2006 and 2016. Instead it is possible that an isomorphic process happened before 2006, but to show this, one would have to conduct a different analysis, for an earlier time point.

I found that there was some evidence to support that there exists isomorphic pressure for public HEI to create more of an output reputation to compensate for an existing poor public image. I found that in 2006 the public sector did indeed have a greater focus on performative reputation. Even though the finding was supported in 2006, in 2016 the public sector did not have higher levels of performative reputation than the private sector.

Isomorphic theory claims that institutions in a sector become more similar over time, because they adopt practices that they see are successful among their competitors. The ‘American elite universities’ are marked leaders in the HEI sector, and from an isomorphic perspective we can expect other HEI to adopt the practices of the elite. In this study, I found that the ‘American elite universities’ had more elaborate web-pages, that contained more information than what is found on the median web-page in the study. Because of the higher levels of material found on the ‘American elite university’ web-pages, the elite universities

also score higher on many of the reputation management scores than other HEI. Overall, I find that other prestigious schools, found in the ‘old public Norwegian’ and ‘old public American’ HEI types, have similarities with the ‘American elite universities’ that would indicate that they are imitating elite practices in order to be more competitive and improve their reputation. This means that I found support for the expectation that there is an isomorphic process going on, I also found that the isomorphic process is strongest among more ambitious HEI.

According to the uniqueness theory, I expected to find that a more competitive environment like the American environment, would have more diversity in reputation management. In the analysis, I instead found that Norwegian HEI had a more diverse logo presentation. It is possible that if I would have looked at other factors that measured differences in presentation, that I would have gotten different results. In this analysis however, I did not find support for the uniqueness theory. Instead my findings could be explained by isomorphic theory. According to isomorphic theory one would expect that heightened competitiveness would lead to convergence.

When it comes to the development of young HEI, created out of the 1960’s university movement, I outlined two possible, opposing theoretical possibilities. It is possible that isomorphic pressures have led young HEI to become more like old HEI, or that isomorphic pressure brought old HEI to adopt practices created by the young HEI. On the other hand, it is also theoretically possible that young and old HEI are on differing paths, and therefore have different path-dependencies.

I found support for a convergence process between young and old HEIs when it came to their ‘positive discussion of students’ and ‘positive discussion of faculty’ as these two sub-categories of moral reputation did not differ significantly between young and old HEI. There was, on the other hand, a difference in logo usage between young and old HEI. I found that young HEI used ‘classic’ and ‘religious’ logos less, which would speak in favor of there being a path-dependency in logos. However, I did also find that old HEI in 2016 used less ‘classic’ and ‘religious’ logos than what old HEI used in 2006. Therefore, it is possible that there is an ongoing convergence process.

I also found support for there being a layering process on HEI web-pages. The increasing amount of materials available in general and also within the different sub-

categories of reputation management, would support there being layering of material on HEI web-pages.

Theoretical Expectation	Empirical Findings
Path-dependency	
Path-dependent differences between the public and private sector	- More use of procedural reputation and 'serving society' in the public sector
Path-dependent differences between Norway and the USA	- Equal use of 'excellency' in Norway and the USA - More use of 'fair admission' in the USA
Religious institutions followed a religious path-dependency	- 'Religious' reputation is only used among religious institutions - 'Religious' logos are only used among religious institutions
Young American HEI have a different path-dependency with use of accreditation reputation than other institutions.	- American HEI used 'accreditation' reputation more than Norwegian. - Age of institution was not found to influence use of 'accreditation' reputation
Isomorphism	
Ongoing isomorphic process between the public and private sectors use of reputation management	- More use of performative reputation in public sector in 2006, but not 2016 - In 2006 reputation management levels were already equal, therefore this analysis cannot illuminate a possible isomorphic process
Isomorphic pressure for HEI to become more like American elite universities	- HEI are becoming more like American elite universities - More prestigious institutions are becoming most like the American elite universities
More convergence in the American HEI sector	- American HEI use more similar logos
Convergence between young and old HEI	- There has been a convergence process on 'positive discussion of students' and 'positive discussion of faculty' - Logo usage between old and young HEI have not gone through a convergence process

Table 5.1 Theoretical Expectations Compared to Empirical Findings.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Thesis

The goal of this thesis was to find out *what characterizes reputation management in higher education institutions*. How is reputation management used in the public and private, Norwegian and American higher education sectors? What differences exist, and how can the differences be explained through isomorphic and path-dependency theory? I also wanted to see how reputation management has developed between 2006 and 2016.

To examine my thesis question, in *Chapter 1* I looked into what differences exist between the Norwegian and American higher education systems. I also highlighted differences between private and public institutions and showed that public institutions face more complex circumstances. I also examined the reputation management field, and looked into other studies about reputation management that could elevate the level of my own thesis.

Chapter 2 was devoted to isomorphic and path-dependency theory. I looked at the expectations that the chosen theories had for my study and how a number of factors were expected to influence results. The factors were age of institution, nationality, private versus public sector, and religious background. Overall, path-dependency theory expected to find that the previously stated factors would influence institutions to act differently from each other, while isomorphic theory expected to find that over time institutions are becoming more similar to other institutions in their surroundings.

In *Chapter 3* I looked into the methodological challenges and advantages of a web-census. I looked at how other reputation management studies have faced the challenges of studying an abstract concept like reputation through a web-census and how this thesis would handle the challenges. I also operationalized reputation into concepts I could look for in the analysis. In *Chapter 3* I also laid out what institutions I would be analyzing and why I had selected these specific institutions.

In *Chapter 4* I went through my findings and exemplified how I interpreted the different forms of reputation management I had used. In *Chapter 5* I discussed my findings and compared them to my theoretical expectations.

6.1.1 Why is Reputation Management within HEI Important?

How an institution is perceived by its surroundings has consequences for the institution. An institution with a positive reputation has a competitive advantage. Meanwhile, an institution that is facing a scandal will face negative financial consequences for its reputation decreasing (Carpenter 2010, p. 47-51). Understanding how reputation management is used is therefore not only interesting but also important for how an organization should be run.

The higher education field is an important field to study: “The University has developed into a key institution that impacts most aspects of democratic societies” (Olsen, 2007a, p. 53). In both Norway and the USA, today’s economies are knowledge economies that depend on higher education institutions to deliver employable graduates. Therefore, both countries depend on HEI to function well. For HEI to function well, they have to have functioning reputations that will attract students.

I agree with Carpenter and Krause that, in the study of reputation management, it is not only the existence of reputation management that is important. It is important to see the richness in the field, both the consistency and inconsistency in between sectors, with regards to what type of reputation institutions are using and the persistence or lack thereof with which they are using these reputation types (Carpenter & Krause, 2012, p. 31).

6.1.2 Limitations of this Analysis

The biggest limitation of this study is that I am not analyzing HEIs’ actual reputation in the world, but instead what sort of reputation management types are found on their web-pages. There can, as previously mentioned, be other factors that influence what the reputation of the institution actually is, such as media coverage and in-person communication. For instance, one of the studied institutions in this analysis is Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology. W-ACT has faced much criticism in the Norwegian media, particularly in 2016. W-ACT had charged former students too much tuition, and have therefore faced lawsuits from students and the Norwegian government (NRK, 2017). W-ACT’s web-page did not reflect the scandal the institution was facing. Therefore, this analysis does not detect any impact of the scandal. That is a weakness with analyzing the reputation that institutions are creating with their own means.

One might expect that reputation management conducted by a hierarchical, rational organization with a clear identity would look different from the reputation management conducted by a university that only possesses some organizational features. The analysis conducted in this thesis will not be looking at to what extent the studied institutions are full organizations or not, as the study design does not allow for this consideration.

6.1.3 Further Reputation Management Research

Social media reputation is a relevant and understudied type of reputation management. When I started developing this analysis I was interested in including an analysis of reputation management on social media pages and comparing these findings with my findings of reputation management in HEI web-pages. I was interested in finding out if reputation management on web-pages and social media would differ because the target groups differ. I was not able to include a social media analysis in this thesis due to time constraints. I therefore would find this to be an interesting future analysis.

When it comes to procedural reputation I have previously compared this reputation type to political correctness. While conducting the web-census part of this thesis, I noticed that many institutions use images that give the impression of being politically correct. Many institutions use pictures of students that look like they have been chosen because the image shows diversity in it. The pictures look to be chosen because they show diversity in gender, ethnicity, religion, and/or sexual orientation. This analysis has not measured to what extent politically correct images are being used, but I have observed a tendency to use such images. I would therefore be interested in looking to what extent Carpenter and Krause's textual reputations categories could also be applied to visual reputation, and if the visual representation would focus more on procedural reputation, as opposed to performative and moral reputation.

This analysis finds support for the expectation that there is an ongoing isomorphic process in the HEI reputation management field. This analysis cannot measure if the isomorphic process it finds is coercive, mimetic, or normative, but the results of this analysis do support the occurrence of an isomorphic process. Therefore, it would be interesting for further analysis to measure if the isomorphic process is coercive, mimetic, or normative.

6.2 Main Findings

In this thesis, I have found support for the use of isomorphic theory and path-dependency theory to explain how reputation management is used differently in different countries and between the public and private sectors.

When it comes to isomorphic theory I found support for the expectation that ‘American elite universities’ as market leaders are being imitated by other HEI. The results of this analysis show that the convergence process is strongest among more prestigious HEI found in the ‘old public Norwegian’ and ‘old public American’ category. Fay and Zavattaro found similar tendencies. They had expected that it would be less prestigious institutions that would imitate market leaders, but instead found that it was the more prestigious institutions that most imitated each other. They found that “universities with high graduation rates are more likely to mimic the branding initiatives of peer institutions rather than vice versa.” (2016, p. 811).

My analysis also found support for the claim that a more competitive environment, like the one found in the American HEI market, leads to a stronger isomorphic process than what one finds in a Norwegian quasi-market environment. This fits well with isomorphic theory’s expectation that increased competition leads to similarity because the need to be seen as a legitimate institution that is just as good as everyone else increases. Fay and Zavattaro found that there was a tendency towards HEI adopting similar rebranding initiatives at a higher rate when more of their competitors had adopted the same rebranding initiatives (2016, p. 814).

I also expected that isomorphism would lead to the public HEI using performative reputation at a higher rate so that they could be perceived to be more like private HEI. In other words public HEI would try to look like they are private HEI by emphasizing their efficiency and effectiveness. I found that in 2006 public HEI did use performative reputation more frequently. In 2016 the levels of performative reputation in the public and private sector were equal.

I also found support for a convergence process between young and old HEI when it comes to the use of the moral reputation subcategories of ‘positive discussion of students’ and ‘positive discussion of faculty’.

In this analysis, I found that there are differences in visual self-representation among young and old HEI that can be explained by path-dependency. Old HEI were found to be more likely to have old logos that are more traditional looking, while HEI that were created during the 1960's were more likely to use 'abstract' or 'just text' logos. I also found a limited tendency towards old and young HEI modernizing their logos and moving away from classic and religious logos. The modernization of logos could be interpreted as an isomorphic process. My findings on the modernization of logos align well with Delmestri et al.'s earlier analysis that found that 'seals and crests' were being replaced by 'eye-catching, corporate-like logos (2015, p. 122). The modernization of logos was found to vary with nationality, and the United States was found to be one of the countries that used the most abstract logos (Delmestri, et al., 2015, p. 127-128).

My findings and Delmestri et al.'s findings line up well when it comes to the increased use of 'corporate' logos among American HEI. They argued that the fact that American HEI used logos that do not reveal them as HEI is because this allows them to better "compete for status in the knowledge economy" (Delmestri et al., 2015, p. 130). They find that German and French HEI are also using more 'corporate' looking logos for the same reason. It is interesting to find this difference in the use of visual and textual reputation management because even though American HEI are using more corporate logos, their HEI web-pages in no way try to hide the fact that the institution is in the higher education field. This shows that optimally HEI might need different visual and textual reputations.

This analysis also found path-dependent differences between the public and private sectors on moral reputation and procedural reputation. The public sector holds responsibilities that the private sector is free from. Therefore, it is likely that the public sector's reputation management emphasizes different norms and values than what the private sector does.

My results align well with earlier studies on differences between the public and private sectors. Wæraas and Byrkjeflot also find that there should be differences between the public and private sectors' reputation management because the public and private sectors face different circumstances.

Morphew and Hartley also found that public universities are more likely to emphasize to their students that it is important to serve one's geographic region and instill in students a sense of civic duty (2006, p. 464). They argued that institutions' mission statements will

emphasize the “mission that their benefactors value” (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 467). Public institutions that have the government as a main benefactor are therefore more likely to promote values that align with serving one’s society. This aligns well with my findings that the public sector emphasizes the sub-category of moral reputation and serving society more. Although, it is worth noting that my analysis only found a slight difference between the public and private sectors.

Norway and the USA also have some cultural and norm differences between each other (Maor, 2016, p. 83). National differences most likely lead to the difference I found, which is that the USA emphasizes ‘fair admission’ and ‘accreditation’ more in its reputation management. Surprisingly I found no significant difference in the use of performative reputations and ‘excellency’ between Norway and the USA. Value and norm differences most likely lead to a different path-dependency between religious and nonreligious HEI. Religious HEI emphasize their religious dogma in their reputation management use. These findings support the claim that path-dependency does exist in reputation management within HEIs, and is influenced by the expected factors.

Between 2006 and 2016 I found that the overall amount of web-page contents increased. The overall amount of material that contained reputation management also grew. The increased amounts of materials indicate that there is an ongoing layering process on HEI web-pages. Performative reputation saw the biggest increase in overall reputation management levels between 2006 and 2016. Moral reputation also increased at a slower rate, while procedural reputation decreased slightly.

This could mean that performative reputation is the form of reputation that a HEI has the biggest benefit from. Performative reputation consists of a HEI showing concrete numbers, highlighting excellent accomplishments, and showing achieved accreditations. In other words, performative reputation consists of concrete, largely provable achievements. Performative reputation could be the most popular form of reputation because it largely deals in facts that students, faculty, and donors are interested in. It is easier for an institution to promote their reputation with a provable achievement than a claim. For instance, a prize won for a HEI’s contribution to their local society is likely to have a bigger impact on the institution’s reputation than an institution simply claiming to be a contributor to their local society.

A previous reputation management study by Chapleo et al. found that universities communicated 'functional values' at a higher rate than 'emotional values' or 'social values'. They defined functional values as "product attributes, benefits, or attitudes" (Chapleo et al., 2011, p. 29). The more numeral and factual nature of this study's performative reputation category matches best with their functional values definition. Since performative reputation is the form of reputation management I find in highest amounts on HEI web-pages, my results align well with Chapleo et al.'s earlier study.

Performative reputation is consistently being used more than procedural reputation and moral reputation. It is possible that this is due to the path-dependency of the HEI sector. Higher education institutions have a history of valuing factual and objective information that goes back to enlightenment times. This may be a reason that the more output-oriented performative reputation is emphasized heavily. This could also be a reason as to why no non-religious institutions are using any form of religious reputation because a religious reputation could go against the enlightenment ideals HEI strive towards.

Christensen and Gornitzka found different proportions of the reputation management categories. Both my study and Christensen and Gornitzka's analysis looked at moral and performative reputation. Christensen and Gornitzka found that moral reputation was used more than performative reputation among Nordic universities (2017, p. 134-135). They argued this was due to the egalitarian Nordic culture. My analysis finds that among Norwegian HEI performative reputation is used more than moral reputation, even though moral reputation levels are also high. My analysis overlaps chronologically with Christensen and Gornitzka's. They conducted their analysis of web-pages in April 2015 while my analysis looked at web-pages from 2006 and 2016. Therefore the difference cannot be due to the time period of the analysis.

I think the different results could be explained by several factors. We might simply have had slightly different understandings of what statements fit into each reputation management category. The difference might also have been due to there being a difference between Norwegian and other Nordic HEI. Christensen and Gornitzka only looked at universities while I looked at the whole HEI field; the institutional differences could therefore be influencing what form of reputation was used. But I think the most likely explanatory factor is that we studied slightly different parts of HEI web-pages. I included front pages in my analysis, something which Christensen and Gornitzka did not do. But they included the

sections ‘other internal features ‘and ‘environmental features,’ which I ended up not using due to these sections not being available on the majority of the 2006 web-pages I was looking at.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

This analysis contributes to expanding the knowledge of how reputation management is being used in the public sector, an area that has not been studied much in the past. This thesis contributes comparative information about differences between the public and private sectors, and between the USA and Norway. The analysis has also shown that institutions are consistent over time.

In conclusion, I find that the independent variables, nationality, religious background, private versus public sector, and age of institution, are factors that influence how reputation management is used in the higher education field. I find that there are ongoing isomorphic processes between higher education institutions. I also find that there are path-dependent features that differentiate HEI.

This analysis also shows that web-pages became a more important platform for HEIs to communicate with potential students, employees, and donors between 2006 and 2016. Web-pages are also becoming a platform that is gaining importance for institutions’ reputation management, a trend that can only be expected to continue to grow.

The findings in this analysis show path-dependency and isomorphism can be used to understand the reputation management of HEI. But the findings in this analysis could also be used to indicate how reputation management in other countries and other fields would look. The similarities that exist between Norway and the other northern European countries makes it likely that the tendencies that are found in Norwegian reputation management would also be found in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

The higher education field might be a field that stands out for being difficult to manage as an organization. But HEI are not the only institutions with strong professional groups that are used to having independence in the management of their own work. Hospitals are also institutions that are difficult to run as hierarchical organizations due to the independence expected by doctors. Hospitals also exist in both the public and private sectors.

It is therefore possible that the findings in this thesis could also be generalized to the healthcare sector.

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Attachment

1) Old Public Norwegian HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Classic, Classic and abstract	Classic, Just text and Abstract
Moral reputation	Low	Low
Student development	Low	Low
Positive discussion of students	Not present	Not present
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Not present
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	Low	Low
Performative Reputation	Very high	Very high
Numbers:	Medium	Medium
Excellency:	High	Very high
Accredited:	Not present	Not present
Procedural reputation	Low	Low
Equal opportunity:	Low	Low
Fair admission:	Not present	Not present

Table 1. Old Public Norwegian HEI

2) Old Private Norwegian HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Religious and not available	Religious and Just text
Moral reputation	Medium	Medium
Student development	Low	Not present
Positive discussion of students	Low	Not present
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Not present
Religion:	Low	Low
Serving society:	Not present	Low
Performative Reputation	Low	High
Numbers:	Low	Low
Excellency:	Not present	Medium
Accredited:	Low	Low
Procedural reputation	Low	Low
Equal opportunity:	Not present	Not present
Fair admission:	Not present	Not present

Table 2. Old Private Norwegian HEI

3) Young Public Norwegian HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Local land mark, Abstract and abstract	Local land mark, Abstract and Abstract
<i>Moral reputation</i>	Low	Low
Student development	Low	Low
Positive discussion of students	Low	Not present
Positive discussion of faculty:	Low	Not present
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	Low	Low
<i>Performative Reputation</i>	Medium	High
Numbers:	Medium	Medium
Excellency:	Low	Medium
Accredited:	Not present	Not present
<i>Procedural reputation</i>	Low	Low
Equal opportunity:	Low	Low
Fair admission:	Not present	Not present

Table 3. Young Public Norwegian HEI

4) Young Private Norwegian HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Just text	Abstract
<i>Moral reputation</i>	Medium	Low
Student development	Low	Low
Positive discussion of students	Low	Not present
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Not present
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	Not present	Not present
<i>Performative Reputation</i>	Low	Medium
Numbers:	Not present	Low
Excellency:	Low	Medium
Accredited:	Not present	Not present
<i>Procedural reputation</i>	Not present	Not present
Equal opportunity:	Not present	Not present
Fair admission:	Not present	Not present

Table 4. Young Private Norwegian HEI

5) Old Public American HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Just text and classic	Just text and just text
Moral reputation	Medium	Very high
Student development	Not present	Low
Positive discussion of students	Not present	Medium
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Low
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	Medium	Medium
Performative Reputation	Very high	Very high
Numbers:	Low	Medium
Excellency:	Very high	Very high
Accredited:	Not present	Not present
Procedural reputation	Low	Very high
Equal opportunity:	Low	Very high
Fair admission:	Low	Low

Table 5. Young Private Norwegian HEI

6) Old Private American HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Just text and religious	Just text and just text
Moral reputation	Very high	Very high
Student development	Low	Low
Positive discussion of students	Not present	Not present
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Not present
Religion:	Very high	Very high
Serving society:	Not present	Low
Performative Reputation	Medium	Very high
Numbers:	Low	Medium
Excellency:	Low	Medium
Accredited:	Low	Medium
Procedural reputation	Not present	Not present
Equal opportunity:	Not present	Not present
Fair admission:	Not present	Not present

Table 6. Old Private American HEI

7) Young Public American HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Classic and just text	Classic and just text
Moral reputation	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Student development	Not present	Not present
Positive discussion of students	Not present	Low
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Not present
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	Low	Medium
Performative Reputation	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Very high</i>
Numbers:	Medium	Medium
Excellency:	Low	Medium
Accredited:	Low	Not present
Procedural reputation	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>
Equal opportunity:	Low	Low
Fair admission:	Not present	Not present

Table 7. Young Public American HEI

8A) Young Private American HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Just text	Just text
Moral reputation	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>
Student development	Not present	Low
Positive discussion of students	Not present	Not present
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Not present
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	Low	Not present
Performative Reputation	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Very high</i>
Numbers:	Low	Low
Excellency:	Low	High
Accredited:	Not present	Low
Procedural reputation	<i>Low</i>	<i>Not present</i>
Equal opportunity:	Low	Not present
Fair admission:	Not present	Not present

Table 8.A Young Private American HEI

8B) Young Private American HEI	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Just text and classic	Just text and classic
Moral reputation	Very high	High
Student development	Low	Low
Positive discussion of students	Not present	Low
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Low
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	High	Medium
Performative Reputation	Low	Very high
Numbers:	Not present	Medium
Excellency:	Low	Low
Accredited:	Low	Medium
Procedural reputation	Low	Low
Equal opportunity:	Low	Low
Fair admission:	Low	Low

Table 8 B. Young Private American HEI

9) American Elite Universities	2006	2016
Visual self-representation	Just text and Classic	Just text and Classic
Moral reputation	Low	Medium
Student development	Low	Low
Positive discussion of students	Low	Low
Positive discussion of faculty:	Not present	Low
Religion:	Not present	Not present
Serving society:	Low	Low
Performative Reputation	High	Very high
Numbers:	Low	Low
Excellency:	High	Very high
Accredited:	Low	Not present
Procedural reputation	Low	Medium
Equal opportunity:	Low	Medium
Fair admission:	Not present	low

Table 9. American Elite Universities