Fragile and rapidly crumbling? Academic identity and autonomy in the aftermath of structural reform

A case study of academics working in Norway

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Faculty of Educational Sciences

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IV
Abstract

The purpose of this case study is to contribute new insight into academic identity and autonomy as phenomena, in a Norwegian higher education sector that is rapidly changing. The main problem statement for this thesis is: *In light of educational policy and structural reform, how can we understand academic identity and autonomy?* To answer this, I have employed a qualitative approach, and conducted semi-structured interviews with four academics in “soft sciences”. Theoretical perspectives on professional ‘academic’ identity, highlighting values, beliefs and social/dialogic aspects, have been important. In addition, I have applied theories of academic autonomy, autonomy-control, educational policies and organizational structure.

The empirical findings show that intrinsic values were by far the most important influence to the career motivation of academics. Interest in a subject matter, enjoyment of teaching and/or researching and receiving individual autonomy were all important factors in choosing an academic career. While there were traces of altruistic values, these were not very prominent, and extrinsic values such as salary and status were not influential. Hence, post-materialist and self-development values were evident, implying a tendency of self-actualization.

Belonging to a discipline and participating in various communities was perceived as essential to academics. However, being a part of academic cultures was not without its challenges, as these cultures were sometimes competitive, excluding and hostile. The participants of this study responded to this in different ways, but a threat of ‘unbecoming’ was evident in one academic, who felt ambivalence towards his career choice. This was due to poor work environments, a loss of interest in research, and a sense of “meaninglessness”.

Academics spoke of being part of a larger “a system”. However, they positioned themselves very differently towards recent educational policies and structural changes. A critical position was more prominent than a positive one, but the full spectrum was represented. While critical voices were concerned for empty, meaningless research, the positive voice felt that the current system was fair, rewarding productivity.

While academic autonomy was perceived to be high in both teaching and research, the participants spoke of several accountability mechanisms in the domain of research, e.g. a
need to show to previous results. In terms of institutional decisions, academics were completely excluded \((informed \text{ but not } included)\). Hence, this was not a domain in which autonomy-control was realized at all.

To educational leadership, the findings imply that higher education institutions, traditionally understood as ‘professional bureaucracies’ (Mintzberg, 1980) are adopting traits of the ‘machine bureaucracy’. While exercising steering becomes easier, the authority of academia is decreasing. In turn, higher education institutions could face difficulties with recruitment, as the work conditions of academics have changed. Moreover, accountability mechanisms and the need to earn “trust” through publication points could result in a favoring of short-term studies and academics valuing quantity over quality.

The findings also imply that competitive environments with increasing demands of performativity can be difficult to work in, especially for novice academics. There are a lot of implicit obligations, with academics being unsure of what is expected of them. Some find that there is a lack of support from their nearest leaders, while others appreciate the hands-off approach. Work experience could be influential in how academics perceive this, but there seems to be a feeling of abandonment (from their leaders) among some academics.
Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of an impulse decision in October 2014. I applied for a new master’s degree programme just before finishing my thesis in literature. A lot has happened since then, and I am currently working on my Ph.D., but this project has followed me along the way. I have appreciated the hours spent at lectures on campus, “belonging” to a new faculty. Working with this thesis has been rewarding, but also challenging, and I am glad to finish.

First and foremost, I have to thank my supervisor associate professor Dijana Tiplic. Dijana, thank you for all your guidance, constructive feedback and support. I have had some academic awakenings during this project. The thought of not receiving your comments on my future texts makes me sad.

I am also very thankful to the participants of this study, who took the time to talk to me despite their busy schedules. They trusted me with their experiences, perceptions and thoughts. I hope that I have done them justice.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background
White paper 18 (2014-2015) Konsentrasjon for kvalitet - Strukturreform i universitets- og høyskolesektoren describes a world in constant change, where higher education has become a global commodity. This results in both opportunities and competition, and requires a restructuring in universities and university colleges, according to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2015). Through structural reform, resources have been centralized in fewer but empowered institutions that are able to compete on an international scale. Especially increasing the quality is important, and small, fragmented research environments are described as obstacles to achieve this goal. To face this challenge and others in Norwegian higher education, good management and leadership are highlighted as essential.

Emphasizing leadership and management is not unnatural in this context. Deem (1998) writes that the notion of managing in higher education has up until recently been regarded as heretical. Traditionally, academia has been characterized by a high degree of job satisfaction, status and social position (Schmidt & Langberg, 2007). Employees in higher education are often described as teachers, but also researchers, and they have «…autonomies not to be imagined in elementary schooling or modern secondary education. They are freer of the family … and for the most part, of public officials and local lay control.» (Clark, 1983, p. 3) However, the United Kingdom experienced a shift during the 90s, where universities suddenly had to justify and demonstrate their “value for money”, resulting in higher education operating under quasi-market conditions (Le Grand & Bartlett, 1993). This shift is also evident in other European countries, including Norway. Explicit and overt management of academic staff and their work has become more common, and replaced more laissez-fare ways of organizing teaching and research (Broucker, De Wit & Leisyte, 2015). At the same time, faculty representation and local influence has been reduced.

Similar to other OECD countries, Norway has implemented several reforms in public sector, including higher education (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000). These reforms aim to increase effectiveness and performance, and have largely been classified under the concept of ‘New Public Management’ (NPM). A variation of ideas and styles are encompassed in this term (Broucker et al., 2015), but the general idea is that private sector techniques are superior and

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1 Approximately 10 % of Reports to the Storting are translated to English, but not this one.
can improve public sector performance (Hood, 1995). While Broucker et al. (2015) describe competition for students, funding and performance monitoring as evidence of NPM, Quigley (2011) characterizes these as evidence of ‘new managerialism’. NPM and new managerialism are often mixed up, he states, and claims that the former is merely «…means to obtain efficiency without an underpinning ideology» (p. 25), whereas new managerialism is more political. Regardless of terminology, a major trend has been that institutional autonomy has increased, with many universities now self-managing, and individual academic autonomy or freedom\(^2\) has decreased due to stronger management of processes and control of outputs (Schmidt & Langberg, 2007; Askling, 2001).

Large-scale changes in higher education are made possible by new educational policies in Europe. Schmidt & Langberg (2007) describe an ideology of global market and competitiveness that form governmental policies, which in turn provide incentives for higher education institutions. In doing so, they transform them from a discipline-inspired to a market driven orientation of research and education. These system changes imply new political, structural and economic frames of reference (Askling, 2001).

While the 20\(^{th}\) century afforded stable and legitimizing identities to academics (Castells 1997), this might not be the case in today’s new policy environment. Archer (2008) writes that these “new times” are disrupting notions of professionalism, what constitutes academic work and what it means (or should mean) to be an academic. As dynamics have shifted, academics must rely less on assumed rights and more on management (Henkel, 2005). Hence, the transformation of higher education has changed the nature of academic identity (Clegg, 2008). In a country that traditionally has held a resistance towards trends within NPM (Møller 2006), I find it interesting to study professional ‘academic’ identity and academic autonomy as phenomena.

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\(^2\) Academic autonomy in this context is understood individually, in contrast to institutionally. Moreover, I am not concerned with academic autonomy of students, but solely focus on academic staff. In research literature, both ‘academic autonomy’ and ‘academic freedom’ are widely used. Some consider them synonyms, while other distinguish between the two. For practical matters, I have chosen to use ‘academic autonomy’ in this thesis. It seems to be the dominating term among the theoretical perspectives I have applied.
1.2 Purpose, main problem and research questions
The purpose of this master project is to contribute new insight into academic identity and autonomy as phenomena, in a higher education sector that is rapidly changing. Developing a professional identity is a core aspect of becoming a professional (Nesje, 2018). It has a central, symbolic and instrumental significance in the lives of individual academics (Kogan et al., 2000 in O’Byrne, 2015). Through this process, academics attach meaning to themselves, and in turn this influences their professional attitudes, emotions and behaviors. Academic autonomy plays a large part in this (Henkel, 2005). However, academic autonomy is considered important beyond individual needs, as it is a necessity for institutions to fulfill their mandate (NOU 2006:19).

The main problem statement for this master thesis is:

*In light of educational policy and structural reform, how can we understand academic identity and autonomy?*

Choosing a profession is an identity-based decision, as people tend to choose options they value (Nesje, 2018). Because values and preferences are important to our career motivation and professional identity, I am interested in exploring how intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic values influence the career choices of academics. Ranging from an interest in the common good (altruistic), a personal interest or merely enjoyment of academic work (intrinsic), to an ambition of a high status position (extrinsic), the motives of academics could potentially be very different. My first research question is therefore: *What values are important to the career motivation of academics, and what aspects of the job do they particularly enjoy?*

Furthermore, developing an identity is a reflexive and social project (Giddens, 1991; Bradbury & Gunter, 2006). We gain insight into ourselves, our values and beliefs, through interactions with others. As identity is dialogic in nature, the communities people participate in play an important part in the construction of a professional identity (Quigley, 2011). When it comes to academic identities, Henkel (2005) states that the discipline is especially important, as it represents a source of meaning and self-esteem. Therefore, I am interested in how academics perceive their disciplines and how they experience participating in various formal and informal communities. My second research question is: *How does the discipline and participation in communities influence the professional identities of academics?*
Multiple sources describe a shift in academia towards increased steering and managerialism. As this implies new frames of reference, and a possible disruption of professionalism (Archer, 2008), I am interested in the beliefs and self-images (self-beliefs) of academics. Beliefs in this context, I conceptualize as what academics deem important in higher education today. Furthermore, how they position themselves to the status quo, in combination with how they describe themselves, is tied to their self-images or self-beliefs. My third research question is: What beliefs and self-images do academics attach to their professional identities?

Finally, I am interested in the interplay between academics’ own agency to control what they do, and the structures that determine what can be done (Bradbury & Gunter, 2006). As the concept of autonomy-control presupposes domains (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2007), I will explore their perceived autonomy and influence in three domains or spheres: teaching, research and institutional decisions. My fourth research question is: How do academics experience academic autonomy and control in higher education?

1.3 Previous research
There is extensive research on autonomy, freedom, identity and structural changes in academia. The purpose of this chapter is to position my master thesis in relation to previous studies. Initially I searched DUO for master projects about higher education, and I found two from my own program, both focused on leadership. None had written about academic identity, but there were a few projects about professional identity in relation to leadership and education. I found several theses on ‘accountability’, but no one had written a master using ‘autonomy’ or ‘freedom’ in the title. Interestingly, I found a master thesis on academic freedom from another program, master of law, discussing juridical aspects of this phenomenon.

Furthermore, I searched ORIA, ERIC, BIBSYS, Idunn and Google scholar for relevant articles, reviews and books. I used key words like ‘higher education’, ‘professional autonomy’, ‘professional identity’, ‘academic identity’, ‘academic autonomy’, ‘academic freedom’, ‘policy’, ‘management’, ‘structural reform’ ‘government’ and ‘organizational structure’. I also searched using the Norwegian terms for these key words.
In order to select the most interesting literature for my research questions, I valued recent studies set in a Norwegian, Scandinavian or North-European frame. Studies of academic autonomy and identity in countries where legal persecution of academics is normal are not included. This is because their context differs greatly from the Norwegian one. However, I have included several perspectives set in a British frame, and one could argue that there are vast differences between higher education in the UK and Norway. Nevertheless, I have included these, as many of the articles covering academic identity, autonomy and shifting educational policies originate from the UK.

1.3.1 Academic identity
There are numerous studies that deal with identity and professional identity in general. When it comes to studies concerned specifically with academic identity, the options are quite limited. I have therefore included some of the more general perspectives as well, in addition to studies outside the North-European frame.

The Norwegian study «Developing academic identity in an action-oriented community» (2017) by Furu and Stjernstrøm explores how novice academic staff develop their professional identity when belonging to a Nordic and international network. It is a self study with an action research approach, and the empirical data consists of articles and books produced by the group members. The study concludes that the work of the group is a source of professional development and a contribution to their individual academic identities. A limitation to this study, in my opinion, is that it solely explores positive aspects of belonging to networks.

The Australian-Vietnamese study «ELT lecturers’ experiences of a new research policy: Exploring emotion and academic identity» (2017) by Tran, Burns & Ollerhead is set in a very different context than my project (Vietnamese ELT lecturers), but has great thematic similarities. The study considers motivation, values and self-images as vital parts of academic identity, which is also true for my thesis, and it offers a typology of academics that I will use as a theoretical-analytical concept in my discussion. By performing in-depth interviews with academics and administrative leaders, the inductive study concludes with four types of

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My own translation of the Norwegian title «Utvikling av akademisk identitet i et aksjonsorientert praksisfellesskap»
academic identities: the ‘enthusiastic accommodators’, the ‘pressured supporters’, a ‘losing heart follower’ and the ‘discontented performers’.

I would also like to emphasize Henkel’s article from 2005 «Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment», Archer’s «Younger academics’ constructions of ‘authenticity’, ‘success’ and professional identity» (2008) and Quigley’s article «Academic identity: a modern perspective» (2011). A common ground for these articles is that they study academic identity as a phenomenon in the context of policy changes. These are not as recent, and written in a British context, but still considered relevant to my thesis. In the following, I will briefly describe their aims, empirical data and conclusions.

In order to understand how policy affects academic autonomy, and in turn academic identity, Henkel (2005) draws upon interviews and documentary analysis. She concludes that academic autonomy has changed, while still maintaining much of its normative power. Similarly, Archer (2008) also builds her study on interview data, as she seeks to understand the nature and formation of professional identities among ‘younger’ UK academics. She concludes that younger academics have to negotiate attempts at ‘becoming’ daily, also facing a threat of ‘unbecoming’ while they desire the identity of an ‘authentic’ and ‘successful’ academic. This identity is refused for many younger academics, she states, as it is constrained by structures like race, ethnicity, social class, gender and age. Lastly, the article of Quigley (2011) provides a theoretical discussion of the two before-mentioned articles, using trait and functionalist models. His conclusion and contribution is a reflective framework (Fig. 1) and example discussion questions directed to each individual academic.

| External world: policy change (new managerialism), external agencies (QAA, HEA), communities, cultures |
| Structures: HEI, Faculty, School, Department / Subject area |
| Professionalism (and what it means for the individual) |
| Purpose / Function |
| Description / Traits |
| Values |

Fig. 1 Reflective Framework (source: Quigley, 2011, p. 28)

4 Some of Henkel’s empirical data is gathered from Norway and Sweden (p. 156)
1.3.2 Academic autonomy
Among the studies I found, most researchers describe academic autonomy or freedom as in a complex interplay with control or accountability. Many emphasize a shift towards increased control and management, but they do not agree on whether this is healthy or not. In example, Keller (1983, p. X) states that higher education cannot continue to «… claim to be akin to a tiny monastic order deserving special dispensation from the rigors of planning, priorities, and management.» While others, like Schmidt & Langberg (2007) view academic autonomy as the core of higher education, a central value that is currently under pressure. Hence, many of these studies are quite normative.

The recent article «Academic Autonomy and Freedom under Pressure: Severely Limited, or Alive and Kicking?» (2018) by Aberbach and Christensen explores how changes in HE sector affect academic autonomy and freedom. To exemplify, the authors employ two case studies, one centered towards the University of California and the other focused on the University of Oslo. In the case study of University of Oslo, the authors draw upon previous research and Norwegian legal documents to prove their points, in addition to use a controversial case from 2010 with a fired professor as data. In the case study of University of California, similar methods are employed. The article concludes that US university systems have less institutional autonomy than often perceived, while the Norwegian system has a limited formal autonomy but a high actual autonomy. However, the controversial case with the fired professor shows that the Norwegian system is vulnerable, according to Aberbach and Christensen5 (2018).

In the slightly more normative range, I would like to emphasize Schmidt & Langberg’s review article «Academic Autonomy in a Rapidly Changing Higher Education Framework. Academia on the Procrustean Bed?» (2007). It is written in a Scandinavian context, and the authors study academic autonomy in light of increased governance and management of universities and a shifting educational policy. The article describes the situation in several European countries, including Norway, and highlights differences between countries largely sharing socioeconomic conditions and cultural values. With a main focus on Denmark, it concludes that maintaining a balance between professional autonomy and freedom on one

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5 Lawyers representing the leadership in University of Oslo did not agree that this case was about academic autonomy or freedom of speech. They argued that the professor was fired because he failed to meet his obligation, i.e. attend meetings, and that he was harassing his colleagues.
side, and accountability and competition on the other, will be difficult in the rapidly changing framework of academia.

While many articles on academic autonomy are quite descriptive, Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) provide an analytical tool to discuss the issues connected to autonomy and control in education. The British article «Unpacking Autonomy and Control in Education: some Conceptual and Normative Groundwork for a Comparative Analysis» distinguishes between loci, modes and domains. I employ these concepts in order to analyze and understand how academics experience autonomy and control in different aspects of their work.

To summarize, articles on academic autonomy and freedom are mostly reviews or studies that employ steering documents to illustrate tendencies, without performing a full-on document analysis. In the Norwegian-American article by Aberb ach and Christensen (2018), the authors also draw upon their own experiences and actual legal cases to prove their points. Articles on academic identity, on the other hand, typically employ individual interviews, with the exception of Furu and Stjernstrøm (2017), which is a self-study.

1.4 Outline of thesis
So far, I have established a background for my master thesis and presented its purpose, aims, main problem statement and research questions, in addition to providing a review of previous research. In chapter 2, I will elaborate on the context of this study, presenting a more detailed description of organizational structure, structural reform and educational policies in Norwegian higher education sector. Chapter 3 is an overview of the theoretical framework. Furthermore, in chapter 4, I describe the methodological approach, including questions of ontology and epistemology, as well as research design, data collection and ethical reflections. In chapter 5, I present the data and analyze the transcriptions of the interviews. Chapter 6 is a discussion of the most important findings, where I also answer to my four research questions. Finally, in chapter 7, I summarize the most important aspects of this thesis, by providing an answer to the main problem statement. In addition, I describe implications for educational leadership as well as some directions for further research.
2. Higher education in Norway

To understand academic identity and autonomy as phenomena, implies awareness of social and organizational structures, as both phenomena depend upon context. In this chapter, I will therefore discuss how we can understand organizational structure in Norwegian higher education institutions, and what the recent structural reform entails. This discussion relates directly to the context of my problem statement, which refers to the existing educational policy and structural reform in Norway. Furthermore, I will elaborate on how shifting educational policies change structures within academia. To describe the organizational structure in higher education and its development, I use Mintzberg’s (1980) concepts of ‘professional bureaucracy’ and ‘machine bureaucracy’ and Strand’s perspectives on ‘expert organizations’ (correlating to a professional bureaucracy). When presenting structural changes and shifting educational policies, I lean on several studies, mostly located within a North-European frame. Finally, I present some legal aspects, and a brief summary of recent public debate and discussion in Norway.

2.1 Organizational structure in higher education

There is extensive research on organizational structure in public administration, but the higher education sector has received relatively little attention. It has «… rarely been studied as a public policy or management topic and so has not been one of the traditional areas covered by generic political scientists or public management scholars.» (Ferlie, Musselin & Andresani, 2008, p. 325) Organizational structure in public administration is complex (Christensen, Lægreid, Roness & Røvik, 2009), and higher education is not an exception. The higher education sector is often seen as a “stand alone sector”, not directly or easily comparable with other types of organizations (Ferlie et al., 2008). Not everything is unique to academic organizations, but academic work is intellectual in character and differs from industrial organizations and governmental bureaus (Clark, 1983). As a result, higher education has peculiar problems connected to performance and power.

Higher education institutions are prime examples of what Mintzberg (1980) characterizes as ‘professional bureaucracies’. Within the professional bureaucracy, standardization of skills is a key coordinating mechanism, and the organization hires highly trained specialists, professionals, in its operating core. This configuration is characterized by considerable autonomy among members of the operating core, which seeks to minimize the influence of
administrators, managers and analysts. Much of the formal and informal power rests in its key part, the operating core. Professionals work relatively freely, maintaining an individual control of their own work and a collective control of the administrative apparatus of the organization.

In order to have power in a professional bureaucracy, managers must be professionals themselves and maintain the support of professional operators, according to Mintzberg (1980). As the work of professionals is complex and can not be easily formalized, technostructure is minimal in these organizations. Therefore, there is a highly elaborated support staff who carries out the simpler, more routine work to back-up professionals. These normally work in a ‘machine bureaucracy’, in a pocket off to one side of the professional bureaucracy, achieving no democracy, according to Mintzberg (1980).

These divided co-existing bureaucracies are also described by Aberbach and Christensen (2018), who states that there is one ‘academic’ hierarchy and one ‘administrative/economic/technical’ hierarchy. While the original purpose of the latter was to serve the academic one, the administrative hierarchy has recently received more influence. Aberbach & Christensen (2018, p. 17) discuss possible consequences of this: «In a critical version, this can be seen as administration ‘interfering more in academic matters’, though a more positive angle would be that this is a necessarily close collaboration...» Hence, the previous clear distinction between the two, in regards of status, work-conditions and influence may be blurring because administrative and academic tasks have become more intertwined.

According to Mintzberg (1980), a professional bureaucracy avoids a regulating, sophisticated and automated technical system because it would destroy individual operator autonomy and drive the organization to a different configuration. The would-be professional bureaucracies become machine bureaucracies, «… to the regret of operator and client alike.» (p. 339). Even
though exercising leadership is easier in a machine bureaucracy, Mintzberg (1980) argues these organizations, like hospitals and academic institutions, would lose something fundamental if they were to develop into organizations with a more complex technostructure.

When applying Mintzberg’s (1980) perspectives, it seems that higher education institutions in Norway could still be understood as examples of professional bureaucracies. However, parts of the characterization are no longer that accurate. This is especially true for the traditionally strong division between academic and administrative work, which is now more blurred. In addition, the leadership of these institutions seems to differ from the characterization of the professional bureaucracy. Aberbach and Christensen (2018) state that academic leadership positions in Norway, and in other European countries, are increasingly professionalized. Rather than being elected based on the principle of “best among equals”, leaders are now appointed, and the trend of strong professors dominating in Lehrstuhl-like systems is long gone. Mintzberg’s description of leaders having to be professionals themselves is therefore up for discussion. Academics may still be holding a lot of leadership positions (perhaps most?), but there also seems to be a lot of economics appointed⁶, which strengthens the impression of academia increasingly becoming a business.

In a Norwegian context, Strand’s (2007) concept of ‘expert organizations’ is comparable to Mintzberg’s (1980) professional bureaucracies. Strand (2007) describes universities and university colleges as examples of expert organizations, with a high degree of professional and individual autonomy. Employees in these organizations have a high status and competence, and they work relatively independent, which makes formal leadership unnecessary and administrative procedures difficult and unwanted among the staff. Knowledge of “what is right” is situated with the individual employee, who also receives response from students. Guidance and evaluation is primarily carried out with co-workers, neutralizing many leadership tasks in these organizations. At the same time, public expert organizations are often entailed in what Strand (2007) refers to as ‘bureaucracies’ that calls for certain rules and systems. Similar to Mintzberg (1980), Strand’s (2007) descriptions of leadership (as unnecessary) and academic work not containing administrative tasks, may not be as accurate anymore.

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⁶ By this I refer to economics taking leadership positions in institutions or faculties where they have little knowledge of the subjects researched and taught, i.e. economics leading an institute of arts and humanities.
2.2 Structural changes in HE and shifting educational policies
Similar to many other countries, higher education sector in Norway has shifted from a state control model to a state supervisory model (Broucker et al., 2015). This is described by Meyer, Ramirez & Schofer (2007) as “a global reform script”, hence a worldwide trend. In Norway, the state is still the paymaster, but the institutions themselves have gained a more independent role as employers than previously, being responsible for internal organization, economy, staffing and physical premises (Askling, 2001). The institutional autonomy of universities has therefore been significantly strengthened, but at the same time moderated by accountability. Askling (2001, p. 174) writes:

The devolution of state authority and the radical reduction of state regulations in combination with a stronger dependence on external markets for additional funding create the need for measures to strengthen the institutional leadership and the executive capacity at the top offices.

It is important to emphasize that increased institutional autonomy does not equal a strengthened academic autonomy. Individual academic autonomy has been restricted because of increased institutional autonomy and new steering mechanisms (Nokkola & Bladh, 2013). This is true for all five Nordic countries, and it particularly affects autonomy of research. It is also evident in a reduced democracy, a trend described by Aberbach and Christensen (2018, p. 15) as increasing representativeness and hybridization combined with re-hierarchization: «The number of decision-making bodies is decreasing and a smaller number of people are represented in each body. This indicates a stricter hierarchy in decisions, with fewer actors having influence, which may collide with the principle of broadening representation.» As a result, academic leaders (appointed, not elected) have increased their autonomy and power.

During the last decades, higher education institutions in Norway have undergone several large-scale changes. In 1994, 98 university colleges merged to 26 in order to improve efficiency. The Quality Reform in 2001 aimed to strengthen quality of research and education, intensifying different study options and increase internationalization (Norwegian Ministry of Church Affairs, Education and Research, 2001). To achieve this goal, a controlling authority for higher education institutions in Norway was established, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NAQAE/NOKUT)³. The most recent structural reform of 2015, as described in White paper 18 (2014-2015), sought to reduce the number of public HE institutions further, to «far less» than 33 (Norwegian Ministry of Education and

³ I will not discuss these reforms further. I have mentioned them in order to establish the trend towards merging.
Research, 2015, p. 23). Hence, many universities and university colleges as of today have merged or are currently in a process of merging.

As before-mentioned, large-scale changes are made possible by shifting educational policies in Europe. Schmidt & Langberg (2007) state that the Bologna paradigms in North and West European countries have shifted from political to economic, from cooperative to competitive. This change is legitimized and supported through steering documents. In a Norwegian context, White paper 18, is an example of a policy text, where its author (the government) can be considered as a “regime of truth” (Ball, 1993). It describes a problem of quality in higher education sector, and uses what Ball (1993) refers to as new “sciences” in education, like ‘standards’, ‘quality of teaching’ and ‘efficient use of resources’ that a set of specific intellectuals can inhabit and disseminate. Language (semiosis) then becomes a mean to economical, organizational and political actions (Fairclough, 1989).

This is not to say that there is a linear relationship between policy, structural changes and outcomes. Bleiklie & Michelsen (2013) writes that the potential role of actors cannot be overlooked. However, educational policies are an important part of the context to both the structural reform and the perceptions of academics. As policies frame our perceptions, the utterances of academics in this study must be seen in light of policies. Ball (1993, p. 14) writes: «… we are spoken by policies, we take up the positions constructed for us within policies.» Policy can be conceptualized as a ‘discourse’ that determine what can be said and thought, but also who can speak, when, where and with what authority.

2.3 Legal aspects and debate

*Act relating to universities and university colleges*\(^8\) (2005, p. 5-6) states in section § 1-5 that: «Universities or university colleges may not be instructed regarding the academic content of their teaching and the content of research or artistic or scientific development work…», and added in 2007: «Universities shall further and protect academic freedom.» This happened after the Official Norwegian Report No. 19 *Academic Freedom. Individual rights and institutional management needs* found that academic autonomy was challenged from many sides. In the report, the authors describe three main threats:

\(^8\) Translation of the Norwegian title: Universitets- og høyskoleloven (Lov om universiteter og høyskoler).
One has to do with the wider policy context… The emphasis on the utility value of knowledge… Another set of challenges has to do with changes in the management of universities and university colleges… Finally the Commission discusses challenges related to changes in the internal organization, administration and management of each institution. One of the main objectives of these reforms has been to improve and strengthen universities and university colleges as organizations. (NOU 2006:19, p. 9-10)

Hence, the shifting educational policy and increasing management of universities and within universities represent significant changes in framework conditions for higher education. However, the commission points out that “… the consequences for individual academic freedom are not clear-cut… the knowledge about the effect of these developments is still insufficient.” (NOU 2006:19, p. 11)

More recently, during the 20-year anniversary of UNESCO’s Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel in 2017, SAIH⁹ held a seminar titled «Academic Freedom For All? Commercialization & populism as rising threats to free research», pointing to the rise of populist political discourse. The same year, University of Bergen had academic autonomy and freedom as main themes at the European University Association (EUA) conference. The European University Association, who have studied and analyzed the autonomy of universities and university colleges in Europe, published their results for the first time in 2016. All countries were evaluated by studying four different dimensions: (1) organizational autonomy, (2) financial autonomy, (3) staffing autonomy and (4) academic autonomy (University-autonomy.eu). Currently, Norway has a relatively high score in academic autonomy, ranking at a 9th place (of 28), and a low score in financial autonomy, ranking at 27th. The universities in Norway are therefore considered to have very little financial independence.

2.3 Summary
To summarize, the changes in Norwegian higher education can be understood in light of a greater international context. While institutions have strengthened their autonomy, many are concerned with the status of individual academic autonomy. This is evident through official reports, but also in the recent debate. A shifting educational policy, sometimes described as economic and commercialized, with an increased steering and management, is highlighted by many. To my project, this is interesting as it frames and perhaps re-conceptualizes how we

⁹ Norwegian Students’ and Academics’ International Assistance Fund
understand academic autonomy, but also because it will provide a different context in which academics construct their professional identities.
3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I present and discuss the theoretical and analytical framing of this study. I explore different perspectives on academic identity and academic autonomy. These are two separate phenomena, but I consider them integrally connected, both to each other and to a larger context. This approach is not uncommon, as they are often discussed in light of each other (Henkel, 2005; Archer, 2008). Still, there are some distinctive theoretical perspectives tied to each of my four research questions as well.

In order to present some general and historical perspectives on career motivation, professional identity, people’s values and motives, I lean on Nesje (2018), Inglehart (2008) and to some extent Quigley (2011). To distinguish between values, I use Kasser’s (2002) understanding of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* values, but include a notion of *altruistic* values as well. I also draw upon Fizmaurice’s (2013) description of moral and values, who writes about the academic context specifically.

There is somewhat of an overlap between the theoretical perspectives tied to the second and third research questions, as they both deal with dialogic and social aspects of identity. To discuss positive aspects of belonging to a discipline and participating in communities, I lean on Henkel (2005) and Furu & Stjernstrøm (2017), while Quigley (2011), Archer (2008) and Colley, James & Diment (2007) portray challenges and difficulties within academic cultures. Archer (2008) and Colley et al. (2007) are primarily tied to the second research question, but also relevant to the third research question, which has to do with beliefs and self-images. Still, it is the typology of Tran et al. (2017) that represents the most important theoretical aspect in approaching research question three.

When discussing academic autonomy and different conceptualizations of this phenomenon, I use several perspectives, including Aberbach & Christensen (2018) and Schmidt & Langberg (2007). In order to describe and understand the interplay between academic autonomy and control, I lean on the analytical concepts of Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) and their distinctions of loci, modes and domains.
3.1 Academic identity
3.1.1. Professional identity, motivation and values
Social theorists have challenged the basic assumptions of the nature of identity since the end of the 20th century (Henkel, 2005). Late modernity sees identity as fragmented and changing, as opposed to a stable unit. Today, the assumption that individuals have multiple identities is widely accepted (Nesje, 2018). Our professional identity is one of these, and it is flexible, multi-layered and susceptible to change over time. It is a process we go through in order to define who we are, but not necessarily by adapting an initially desired identity; it can also be characterized by exploration and discovery. In an academic context, many consider identity an ongoing process of construction and deconstruction, in which emotional and intellectual work is highly involved (Fizmaurice, 2013).

There is a strong link between professional identity and career motivation, in which values and beliefs are important components (Nesje, 2018). Fives & Gill (2015) describe beliefs as a social construct that is situated and grounded in specific contexts and practices. Beliefs are assumptions we hold to be true, and acts as filters or guides. While values and beliefs both influence our attitudes and motivation, values are more universal than beliefs and transcend contexts. Values conceptualizes what is important to us; what we need to feel a sense of well-being. As identity is forced within a moral framework, it is integrally bound to our values (Fizmaurice, 2013).

According to Inglehart (2008), economic prosperity has changed people’s motives in relation to work, from materialistic to post-materialistic, with qualitative rewards being more appreciated than high status and material assets. This has to do with historical development. He writes (p. 17): «In regard to both post-materialist values and self-expression values, a key factor is the extent to which a given generation grows up under conditions that permits it to take survival for granted.» As survival is taken for granted, individual autonomy has become more important, and people develop their self expression values and pursue self-realization. Similarly, Quigley (2011) describe a tendency of self-actualization emerging in the 1950s. Self-actualization, a term coined by Maslow (1954/1987), refers to «… a developmental process that involves the actualization or full use of one’s own potential.» (in Beumont, 2009, p. 99)

10 There are different ways of conceptualizing values and beliefs. I distinguish between the two in this master project.
Hence, *intrinsic values* have become more dominant in career motivation than *extrinsic values*. Kasser (2002, p. 128) writes:

Example of intrinsic values include those for self-acceptance, affiliation, and community feeling. Self-acceptance values are those that concern growth, autonomy and self-regard; affiliation values involve having good relationships with friends and family; and community feeling values focus on improving the world through activism or generativity.

According to Kasser (2002), extrinsic values (or attainment values) represent a contrast to this. They do not provide satisfaction in and of themselves, but can be connected to presumed admiration and power, e.g. salary and success. However, one could also argue that extrinsic values can be understood in light of security. In societies where survival is not taken for granted, extrinsic values might be more prominent. Extrinsic values are then not exclusively connected to admiration and success, but also to security and survival.

Inglehart’s description of post-materialistic motives could also be understood in light of *altruistic* values. Altruistic values represent an interest in the common good, and are evident in statements like “a chance to give back to society” (Nesje, 2018). Some question the distinction of intrinsic and altruistic, claiming that altruistic motivation is a part of intrinsic motivation, located within the individual. The before-mentioned definition by Kasser (2002) sees “community feeling” and a desire to improve the world as part of intrinsic values, rather than altruistic. In this master project, I will separate between the two, regarding the desire to improve the world as altruistic rather than intrinsic. By following the perspectives of Inglehart (2008), it is likely that self-expression values, and what I interpret as intrinsic values, will be an important influence to the motivation of academics. Furthermore, the self-actualization tendency, described by Quigley (2011) and Beumont (2009), could also be evident.

### 3.1.2 Social and disciplinary perspectives

Beliefs and values cannot be isolated from context. Henkel (2005) writes that we gain insight into our values over time, through interactions with others. Our values become a key to us being oriented in moral space, differing what has meaning and importance from what is trivial and secondary. The context and other people are therefore key elements to understanding both professional identity and identity as a concept in general. Identity is
always social, and can be understood as a reflexive project (Giddens, 1991). Bradbury & Gunter (2006, p. 498) writes:

…‘our understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us)’…. the practice and study of identity is dialogic in nature.

According to Henkel (2005), the two most important things in identity construction for academics is the discipline and academic autonomy. In her study, these were the primary sources of meaning and self-esteem, and also what was most valued by academics. Hence, the discipline and the higher education institutions are key communities in which academics build their identity (Henkel, 2005). It is, however, important to note that while universities have common traits «... the way individuals interact with each other, as a reflection of the institutions’ methods of achieving those missions, may produce very different cultures (cultural identities).» (Quigley, p. 24) Therefore, there can be vast differences between one institution to another, but also within the same institution and between disciplines.

Today, it is not uncommon for academics to have previous work experiences from other professions. Nesje (2018) writes of a historical development where work, previously determined to a large extent by tradition and class, has become more flexible. Furu and Stjernstrøm (2017) describe how they entered academia with a strong teacher identity, after many years in the profession. Their academic identity, however, was underdeveloped. Through participating in various Nordic and international networks and research groups, their interest in teacher education, action-research and self-studies became a source of meaning and belonging. These networks became ‘communities of practice’ (as is described by Wenger), and they state: «...our community have contributed to each individual academic’s qualification and career development11.» (Furu & Stjernstrøm, 2017, p. 4) Hence, they highlight the positives of being part of professional communities, emphasizing how they can help academics construct a professional identity12.

11 My translation. Original text in Norwegian.
12 I don’t share this perception of identity as something to be accomplished. My perspective is that identity is an ongoing process, always constructed and deconstructed.
3.1.3 Academic identity as contested
There are also risks or negatives that comes with being involved in professional communities. In her study of young academics, Archer (2008) found that they experienced tension and identity conflicts, and some academics attempted to resist the drive for performativity by adopting a critical position to dominant practices. Professional identity can also become a disrupted process, she states, which involves not only attempts of ‘becoming’ but also threats of ‘unbecoming’. This is especially true for younger academics, and explained further in the study of Colley et al. (2007). They describe two young academics who fall into difficulty due to their personal professional beliefs being at odds with the professional practices of their communities. This results in one finding new security and confidence, whereas the other one resigning. Archer (2008, p. 386) leans on Bourdieu to describe academia as a territory that:

…entails constant struggles over the symbols and boundaries of authenticity… [where] claims to legitimacy are bound up with the creation of capital and the formation of hierarchies and power relations within the academy.

In the formation of social relations, questions of authenticity and legitimacy are therefore central, with competing groups and individuals that works to ensure that their interests, characteristics and identities are recognized and valued. While this perhaps could describe most workplaces, to some extent, academia is especially reliant on the «…representation which its agents have of it» (Bourdieu, in Archer, 2008, p. 386), which results in «…rival, sometimes hostile representations, which all claim the status of truth and thereby the right to exist.» Although professional and informal communities can be a source of meaning and belonging, it is also clear that academic environments can pose a threat of ‘unbecoming’ if they are hostile and/or represent different values and beliefs than your own.

Fitzmaurice (2013, p. 614) writes: «It has been suggested that, because of the changing nature of higher education institutions, those who work in them are presented with many opportunities for the expression and recognition of their identities.» In a Norwegian context, the recent structural reform can represent such an opportunity. These large-scale changes can lead to academics expressing their values and beliefs, constructing (and deconstructing) their professional identities. In this, culture obviously plays a large part, but it is important to remember that academics do not solely form their identities in negotiations with these communities; they also bring their “luggage” from other communities to which they have historically belonged (Gardner & Willey, 2018). In a climate of collectivity in research, work
relationships are growing in their complexity and heterogeneity, and takes place in a context marked by power relationships (Henkel, 2005).

3.1.4 Self-images and beliefs
Quigley (2011) states that academic identities are constantly shifting targets, with individual differences for each academic. Still, there are commonalities, and attempts to provide typologies have been made. In the study of Tran et al. (2017), it is suggested that academic identity can be understood as what lecturers considers important in relation to their views of themselves. By analyzing their (a) job motivation, (b) values and (c) self-images (present and future), they categorized their informants in four types: (1) the ‘enthusiastic accommodators’, (2) the ‘pressured supporters’, (3) the ‘losing heart follower’, and (4) the ‘discontented performers’.

The first category of ‘enthusiastic accommodators’ were motivated and energized by the recent changes in institutional research policy, and had self-images of being “research apprentices” (Tran et al., 2017). They were conscious of the policy, with notions of ‘globalization’ and ‘managerialism’ and expressed positive emotional responses: «…they appeared eagerly engaged and even excited and optimistic because the policy facilitated their professional goals.» (p. 70) Hence, they did not feel constrained by the context, au the contrary. They described a professional satisfaction of being able to “grow up” and gain recognition.

The ‘pressured supporters’, who constituted the largest number of interviewees, experienced increasing tension and anxiety due to the new policy, which they interpreted as product-oriented and quantitative in nature (Tran et al., 2017). Lecturers in this category saw themselves primarily as teachers and felt that their research roles were imposed upon them, with statements like: «If I say I only teach and don’t do research, I will be kicked out. So pressured…. I don’t know how. I just feel so unsure.» (p. 70) Still, when describing their future self-images, the pressured supporters were thinking of committing more to research, and some statements reflected an emergent sense of a researcher self.

The ‘losing heart follower’ consisted of only one informant who underwent conflicting emotions, mostly extreme and negative, through the experience of change (Tran et al., 2017). She took pride in her research achievements, but felt that institutional pressure made it
difficult to realize the true meaning of research. She expressed her resistance to the agenda more strongly than the pressured supporters, with statements like: «I can't live my life when I must chase after things I find impractical and meaningless, just because others do it and I have to do it. If research is done like this.... I don't want to be part of that competition.» (p. 71-72) Her frustration was most evident when discussing “meaningless” research projects, and she positioned herself increasingly as a critic and protestor.

The ‘discontented performers’ supported the essence of the new policy, but were dissatisfied with the current research culture and its underdevelopment, in example the lack of transparent, international evaluation criteria (Tran et al., 2017). They were also dissatisfied with the quality and perception of research at their institution, and they felt discontent due to (lack of) financial support. Some also questioned the relevance of the research promoted by the institution towards practical needs of society.

Tran et al. (2017) state that the three factors of job motivation, values and self-images were all intertwined. To me it seems as if the beliefs of academics were central to this study as well, as the way academics positioned themselves towards policy changes (positively, critically....) represented a part of the analysis. Beliefs are, as before mentioned, more contextualized and therefore relevant to understand in light of a shifting policy.

3.2 Academic autonomy

3.2.1 Different conceptualizations
There is no universally accepted understanding of ‘academic autonomy’. Traditionally, institutional autonomy and academic autonomy have been perceived as more or less identical (Schmidt & Langberg, 2007). However, in a rapidly changing environment, the two are becoming more differentiated. Today, academic autonomy or academic freedom can refer to either/both (a) an institutional level, often concerned with its independence from the state or stakeholders, (b) individual professional autonomy, to choose your own research and publication methods. This is also evident in NOU 2006:19 that states academic autonomy is connected to both institutions and individuals. Furthermore, it can be a formal right, but also a «slogan without effective impact». Aberbach and Christensen (2018, p. 8) write:

While the formal right can be an institutional or individual right, or both, real exercise of the right may have something to do with institutional and/or individual resources, ways of steering/control by university administrators, other pressure from the environment, etc.
Hence, there can be a difference between the formal rights of autonomy and the actual rights, what Aberbach & Christensen (2018) refer to as ‘real discretion’ or ‘without discretion’.

In a European context\(^\text{13}\), academic autonomy inheres the right academics have to determine the nature of their work. These perspectives can be found in *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988), a document written in the context of celebrating Bologna Universitites’ 900\(^{\text{th}}\) anniversary, and signed by rectors from many different European countries:

> The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organized because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching. To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.

These perspectives can also be understood in light of the Humboldt-oriented ideal, where academic autonomy is connected to the concept of ‘Lehrfreiheit’: «...meaning that the professor should be able to freely carry out the duties of his position – teaching and research – without asking for permission or being threatened by sanctions from superior governmental authorities.» (Aberbach & Christensen, 2018, p. 11) This perception of academic autonomy differs from the American\(^\text{14}\) one, which is more concerned with academic’s rights to speak and write outside their area of academic expertise.

As before-mentioned, many researchers describe a shift towards increased management/managerialism and accountability mechanisms in academia, but they do not agree on whether this is healthy or not. On one end of the spectrum, Prakash (2011) describes academic autonomy as “something to be earned”, while on the other end, Schmidt & Langberg (2007) are critical towards the recent changes. They state that trust, in the epoch of competitiveness and accountability, has to be earned again and again. As a result, the authority of academia has been weakened, and the traditional elite been undermined. These perspectives can also be understood in light of social embeddedness, as universities have become more socially embedded over time (Aberbach and Christensen, 2018). This is still more evident in the US than in Europe, but the tendency is also clear here: the ivory tower

\(^{13}\) Aberbach and Christensen (2018) describe the tradition as German specifically, while Schmidt and Langberg speak of a European tradition.

\(^{14}\) American in this context refers primarily North America. In Latin America, for example, there is a very broad definition of academic autonomy. This has to do with the university reform movement of 1918 (Altbach, 2001)
metaphor and notion of universities as elite institutions shielded from society, have become less relevant.

While social embeddedness could be said to have both positive and negative consequences, Schmidt & Langberg (2007) worry about the decreased attractiveness of an academic career. This is tied to both work conditions, with many temporary contracts at all levels, and a lack of trust, with restricted academic autonomy as a result. They worry because «…academics have traditionally valued their freedom and academic autonomy very highly, perceiving it as one of the primary values of the profession.» (Schmidt & Langberg, 2007, p. 87). Hence, if this autonomy is further reduced, recruiting people to academia could become difficult.

3.2.2 Intertwined with control and accountability

*European University Association* underlines in its report that academic autonomy is not the absence of regulations: «The state needs to provide an appropriate framework…» and hold autonomy with accountability (Estermann, Nokkala, Steinel, 2011, p. 8). This is lacking in higher education today, according to Prakash (2011, p. 36), who favors increased control in order to develop what he describes as ‘excellent institutions’:

> … the fact remains that there are only a few institutions of higher learning which are know to have achieved excellence in the genuine sense. And these are those institutions that have embraced and institutionalized autonomy in the truest sense

In an increasingly output-oriented society, accountability becomes an important keyword as it «… entails a relationship in which people are required to explain and take responsibility for their actions» (Sinclair, 1995, p. 220-221). To be accountable is therefore to be held responsible (Kjær, 2004). While responsibility involves steering through rules and content, accountability is steering through results and goals (Afsar, Skedsmo & Sivesind, 2006). With these perspectives, favoring increased managerialism and a focus on institutional autonomy in academia, may not be based on a wish to steer through rules and content, like curriculum or teaching methods, but instead through results and goals. In a higher education context, publication points, student evaluations and study points are examples of steering through results. Of course, steering of output could also affect the content – so there are no clear lines here.
3.2.3 Loci, modes and domains of autonomy and control

Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) describe autonomy as in a complex interplay with control, with autonomy-control being ‘always in process’ and ubiquitous: «…the extent and the nature of the autonomy we have and the control we are subjected to are not set in stone and nor are they a result of one-off policy decisions» (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2007, p. 207). It is rather constantly being made and remade, negotiated and renegotiated in daily interactions. In order to understand this complex interplay, they distinguish between loci, modes and domains.

Loci and modes of autonomy has to do with who’s autonomy is in question and how it is being exercised (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2007). The concept of autonomy presupposes agents, and these agents can be individual, collective or institutional. Students and academics are examples of individual agents. However, they can also act in teams, for example through student associations and trade union activity, and then be described as collective agents. Institutions in higher education, like university colleges and universities, along with government agencies and local authorities, are examples of institutional agents. All three of these agent levels are connected because they can foster or inhibit the autonomy of each other. A high amount of individual autonomy will often result in less autonomy on a collective and/or institutional level, and the other way around. Therefore, if one were to try to enforce professor collaboration at a collective level, exercising their autonomy collectively, one might weaken the individual autonomy of these professors. This has been the case with teachers and teacher autonomy (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015). During the introduction, I stated that institutional autonomy in higher education has increased, while individual professor autonomy has decreased (Schmidt & Langberg, 2007). When applying the perspectives of Cribb & Gerwirtz (2007), this shift in autonomy can be understood as a common effect.

After establishing whose autonomy is in question and in which way it is exercised, one must find out the domains or spheres over which autonomy or control is exercised (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2007). Cribb & Gewirtz states that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (of students) are domains where autonomy-control can be exercised. I have conceptualized these in one domain, ‘teaching’, and included two more domains: research and institutional decisions. Some of these domains might be interconnected, so a distinguishing between

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15 I made these adjustments as there are some differences between the teacher profession and the academic profession.
domains of autonomy must consider «… the extent to which they are either insulated from one another or mutually constitutive.» (p. 205)

Finally, the last dimension relates to the following questions: *Who are the agents of control, and how is their agency exercised?* (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2007). Hence, these are loci and modes of control. Control can be exercised in different ways using a variation of influence mechanisms, possibly through a combination of ‘input’ controls, e.g. administering resources, and ‘output’ controls like measuring performance. In a higher education context, research is largely dependent on resources. When academics must apply for funding or resources by delivering in project descriptions, possible/ probable publications and more, this is an example of input control. Using previous publication points as a measure of whether or not to grant funds, is an example of output control. Furthermore, it is interesting to discuss *who* makes these decisions and represent the agents of control.

### 3.3 Summary

In this chapter, I’ve presented theoretical perspectives on academic identity and autonomy. When it comes to perspectives on professional identity in general, and academic identity specifically, some aspects appear more individual, focusing on values, motivation and beliefs. Others are more social and dialogic, concerned with how our interaction with others influence in constructing or deconstructing a professional identity. Still, these somewhat individual and social perspectives can be understood as integrally connected, as we for example gain insight into our values through our experiences with a context. And when it comes to beliefs, we position ourselves in relation to something, in this case a shifting educational policy.

Theoretical perspectives on academic autonomy and freedom are somewhat more descriptive. The European understanding of academic autonomy, focused on institutional independence and individual autonomy to choose your own research, differs from the American one. In these articles, researchers typically position themselves in how they understand academic autonomy, focusing either on rights or obligations, or both. While some resent the idea of an ivory tower, seeing academic autonomy as something to be earned (Prakash, 2011), others are concerned with increased accountability mechanisms in higher education institutions. In order to understand the interplay of autonomy-control, Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) provide an
analytical tool, distinguishing between (1) loci and modes of autonomy, (2) domains of autonomy-control and (3) loci and modes of control.
4. Methodological approach
In this chapter, I outline the ontological and epistemological positioning of my master project. I also describe the research design and methods used in the gathering of empirical data, and the gathering process itself, with case description and participants. Furthermore, I have included information about the transcription process and the analysis and coding of data. Finally, I have included perspectives on the validity and reliability of the research, as well as ethical perspectives.

4.1 Ontology and epistemology
Research is not a simple, technical exercise (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Our assumptions of ontology give rise to assumptions of epistemology, which in turn give rise to methodological considerations (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Hence, the ontological and epistemological position of a researcher shape both the choices of the project itself and how to think and resonate about the findings (Nesje, 2018).

Questions of ontology have to do with the nature of existence and reality, for example whether social reality is an objective, external frame, imposing itself on the consciousness of individuals, or if it is a result of individual cognition (Cohen et al., 2007). These two positions are referred to as objectivism and constructionism (Bryman, 2016). The ontological position of my project is constructionist, which invites the researcher to «…consider the ways in which social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them and that totally constrains them.» (Bryman, 2016, p. 30) In other words, academic identity and autonomy are considered constructed phenomena. They cannot be observed directly, and they cannot be constructed once and for all, i.e. finally “reaching” an academic identity.

Epistemological questions concern the bases of knowledge, its nature and form, how it can be acquired and communicated to other human beings. Epistemologically my project is part phenomenological and part social constructivist. These are often presented as contrasts, but can rather be said to support each other16, according to Gilje (2006). Husserl describe phenomenology as the study of phenomena in this world as it reveals itself to our consciousness, our life world (referenced in Snævarr, 2017; Lindseth & Nordberg, 2004). A

16 There are several examples that can support this claim, for example that Peter L. Berger and Tom Luckmann, who wrote The Social Construction of Reality (1966) came from a phenomenological tradition.
social constructivist epistemology claims that knowledge always is historical, social and cultural, and that it has to be re-/constructed in social communities/contexts. In both phenomenology and social constructivism, subjectivity plays an important part in how to acquire knowledge. To see knowledge as personal and subjective, can be described as an anti-positivist position, and in the nominalist-realistic debate (Cohen et al., 2007), I would describe myself as the former. To Bryman (2016) this epistemological orientation could be described as interpretivism, as opposed to the natural science model (in particular positivism). I see the nature and essence of social phenomena like identity and autonomy as products of individual consciousness, and regard different ways of seeing as new ways of knowing (Simons, 1996).

4.2 Research strategy and design
This master thesis has a qualitative approach. While some question the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research, claiming it to be ‘false’ or no longer useful, most value this way of classifying (Bryman, 2016). In this project, I assume clear distinctions between the two, claiming that they are fundamentally different, especially when it comes to their epistemology. That is not to say that qualitative research is unanimous, or that a combination of traditionally qualitative and quantitative methods is impossible. Both qualitative and quantitative research can employ a variety of research designs and methods. However, in qualitative research, methods like interviews and observations are dominant and coherent with the interpretive paradigm (Golafshani, 2003). In quantitative research, on the other hand, these methods are often supplementary to for example surveys, and the epistemological position is often understood as positivist.

The qualitative approach emphasizes words rather than numbers and quantification in the collection and analysis of data. It has a naturalistic approach, which sees behavior as influenced by the physical, sociocultural and psychological environment (Krefting, 1991). It is defined broadly by Strauss & Corbin (1990, p. 17) as «… any kind of research that produces findings not arrived by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification.» Furthermore, it is often characterized by its inductive view on the relationship between theory and research, «… whereas the former is generated out of the latter.» (Bryman, 2016, p. 375)
A qualitative approach can employ different research designs. This thesis is a case study that strives to portray “what it is like” to be in a particular situation. In this context, the situation is working as an academic in the aftermath of large-scale changes and structural reform. The case study is often mistakenly referred to as a method¹⁷ (Bryman, 2016). Rather it is a preferred design when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context (Yin, 1994; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995), as is the case in the context of my study.

By using a concrete example, with real people in real situations, one is able to understand ideas more clearly than abstract theories or principles. Case studies are set in temporal, geographical, organizational, institutional and other contexts, which make it possible to enable boundaries to draw the case that: «… can be defined by participants’ roles and functions in the case» (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, s. 319). All of these characteristics are true for my project; I possess little control over the events, and the case is set in a temporal (structural reform) and institutional (university) context. Eventually, the participants as a group are defined by their role as academics.

Among the hallmarks are the case study’s concern with rich description relevant to the case, how it blends this description with the analysis of them, its focus on actors and how it seeks to understand their perceptions, and how the researcher herself is integrally involved in the case (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). A case study can observe effects in real contexts, presenting the whole as more than the sum of its parts. Yin (1994, p. 3) also emphasizes this holistic approach:

> …the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena. In brief, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries.

Presenting the whole in my study means seeing academic identity and autonomy as complex social phenomena, bound to a national context of structural reform, but also to an international context of globalization.

¹⁷ A case can be both an object of study and a research design – but not a method (Johannesen, Tufte & Kristoffersen, 2010).
More important than the methods that case studies employ, are the subjects/objects of their inquiry (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). As before-mentioned, case studies have a focus on actors. In the following, I will therefore present the participants of this study.

4.3 Participants
The participants in this master project were four associate professors\(^\text{18}\) working in Norwegian universities and university colleges. Although age and work experience were not explicit criteria in my project, it was important that my informants had a certain amount of experience in the higher education system. Therefore, I approached professors and associate professors\(^\text{19}\), as opposed to assistant professors or Ph.D. candidates. Due to anonymity, the participants have received fictional names, and their age and some of their more specific research interests are not mentioned.

My pilot interview was conducted with “Chloe”, an associate professor in pedagogy. She had a master’s degree in philosophy and a Ph.D. in pedagogy. She taught from bachelor’s level to Ph.D.-level and had been employed at her current workplace for about two years.

My second interview was with “Tom”, an associate professor in religion. He had two master degrees and a Ph.D. in religion, and he had worked at his current university for one year. Tom taught at various levels in teacher education and belonged to a discipline with professors of different backgrounds, from anthropologists to theologists. Their common ground was religion and didactics.

My third interview was with “Sofia”, an associate professor in human rights. Sofia was Latin American, and we therefore conducted the interview in English. She had a master’s degree in international law, finished her research at an American elite university, and her Ph.D. in Argentina\(^\text{20}\). Sofia had worked several years in academia and taught exclusively at a master’s level.

\(^{18}\) I chose four participants as Postholm (2005) recommends a number of three to five for this type of project.

\(^{19}\) I did not intentionally exclude professors, but I was not able to recruit any as participants in this study.

\(^{20}\) This is fictive. “Sofia” was from another country in South America, but she referred to her country a lot, so I gave her a fictive one with clear similarities.
My fourth and final interview was with “Helen”, an associate professor in literature. She had worked approximately ten years in higher education and taught from introductory level to Ph. D. level. Helen was very concerned for her anonymity, and did not want me to go in any detail of her research interests.

The academics in this study belonged to different disciplines and institutions, but had in common that they were all employed at a university or university college directly affected by the structural reform. By this I mean that their workplace recently had been through a process of merging with other smaller or larger universities and/or university colleges, in order to gain status as a level 1 university. NAQAE/NOKUT\(^{21}\) describes three categories of institutional accreditation in Norway: (1) Universities, with the right to establish programmes at all levels, (2) Specialized University Colleges and University Colleges/Universities of Applied Sciences, with the right to establish study programmes at all levels within their majors, and (3) University Colleges with accredited study programmes, with the right to call themselves University Colleges (Accredited Institutions, NOKUT). My informants worked at universities ranking at first and second level.

Another commonality among my informants was that they worked in humanities and social science as opposed to physical science. Some refer to these as “soft science” and “hard science” (Hedges, 1987), although the distinction is also considered controversial by some. While hard science is characterized, among other things, by a higher degree of consensus within the discipline, the opposite is true for soft science. The level of consensus was obviously something that could influence my informants’ perceptions and experiences of working in academia. Despite few (none?) Norwegian studies on differences between working in humanities and social science versus physical science, I excluded hard science in this project because I wanted a slightly more homogenous group, while still representing different disciplines. I did this because I anticipated that working in a hard science, such as medicine, would inhere different work conditions than for example working in the field of literature. To exemplify, salaries in the medicinal faculty at the University of Oslo were in 2017 significantly higher than salaries in humanities\(^{22}\). However, I discovered that salaries in

\(^{21}\) Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education is a controlling authority for higher education institutions in Norway.

\(^{22}\) According to statistics presented at Uniforum: [https://www.uniforum.uio.no/nyheter/2017/08/hf-professorene-tjener-darligst.html](https://www.uniforum.uio.no/nyheter/2017/08/hf-professorene-tjener-darligst.html)
the faculty of social science were higher than in the faculty of mathematic and natural science (which would be considered a hard science). Hence, my focus on soft science was perhaps unnecessary in terms of work conditions. However, the level of consensus, which is considered higher in hard science than in soft science (Hedges, 1987), remains a valid point. It shows to an aspect of the culture in which academics work, and perhaps the nature of their work as well.

4.4 The semi-structured interview
As data collection, I performed semi-structured individual interviews with the before-mentioned academics in this study. An interview is not subjective or objective, but intersubjective and a part of life (Cohen et al., 2007). It seeks to understand the world through the eyes of informants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) and is demanding due to its personal approach (Bryman, 2016). It is described by Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) as a craft, a way to produce knowledge and a social practice, rather than a method. Furthermore, it is defined by historical, cultural and material contexts.

The semi-structured interview uses an interview guide (see Appendix 3) with fairly specific topics to be covered, but the process is still flexible (Bryman, 2016). This can result in less systematic material or substantial differences in the interviews, which could make it more difficult to compare them. On the positive side, semi-structured interviews allow for follow-up questions and provides more flexibility. As my study is concerned with perceptions and experiences of academics, it was important for me to ensure enough room for each individual.

I developed the interview guide by following the recommendations of Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) and through studying interview guides of similar projects. I opened with a few questions of background information: the educational background of my participants, their discipline and career to date. After this, I continued with questions of how and why they entered academia, what they particularly enjoyed, and what challenges they faced in their work. These questions, which were more open-ended than the rest, could tell me of their motivation and values, and somewhat more individual aspects of professional identity. I continued with the social aspects, asking questions of their workplace, discipline and participation in communities. These questions were posed partially through reading literature on academic identity, as many emphasized its dialogic nature (an example question from the
interview guide reads as «How would you describe your workplace and the professional communities here?») Finally, I used the perspectives of Cribb & Gewirtz’s (2007) to pose questions of academic autonomy and control. In this, I understood my participants as agents, experiencing autonomy-control in different domains or spheres, like teaching, research and institutional decisions. At the same time, I was interested in understanding who the agents of control were, and how control was exercised in these domains. These questions were less open-ended than the questions dealing with academic identity (an example question from the interview guide reads as «What incentives or restrictions exist when it comes to what you can research and teach?»)

Parkhe (1993) states that ongoing theory advancement requires continuous interplay between induction and deduction, with a separation between the two perhaps being impossible. The theoretical framework of my project was not complete before conducting the interviews, and it has largely been constructed after analyzing the empirical data. While questions of autonomy-control were posed through the perspectives of Cribb & Gewirtz (2007), and social perspectives of identity were influencing the questions of discipline and communities, questions of values and self-images were far from theory-testing. Hence, my approach could be understood as both inductive and deductive.

As a part of the methodology course, I conducted a pilot interview in September 2017. I later revised and adjusted the interview guide, but have still chosen to include this interview as part of the material. Then, in spring 2018, I conducted two more interviews, and in fall 2018, I performed my last interview. I waited with the final interview because I wanted to analyze the material before deciding if I should adjust the interview guide one last time, which I did not. I allowed for this flexibility as interviews often evolve during the progress of projects (Bryman, 2016), and there are also examples of studies employing semi-structured interviews that have opted for this same amount of flexibility.23

4.5 Transcribing and coding the interviews
The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder, which made it possible to transcribe the audio data afterwards. Transcribing interviews is time consuming, but the process has its clear advantages. Bryman (2016) states that this helps correct the natural

23 See for example (Mazmanian, Orlikowski & Yates, 2013).
limitations of our memory, allows more thorough examination of what people say, and that it opens up the data to public scrutiny by other researchers. As three of my interviews were conducted in Norwegian, with native-Norwegian speakers, these were first transcribed in Norwegian and later translated to English. One interview was conducted in English, with a native-Spanish speaker, Sofia. In contrast to the others, this interview was not conducted in the native language of either researcher or informant.

Coming from a linguistic background myself, and knowing the importance of language, I originally questioned performing one interview in English and the others in Norwegian. However, I found that Sofia’s perspectives would be very valuable for this thesis, as she had experience from the higher education sector in other countries. I reasoned that her perceptions could provide a meta-perspective on the Norwegian higher education context.

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2015), transcriptions are complex because of the differences between oral and written language. While an oral utterance may seem fragmented and repetitive if transcribed directly, it could be well-put in its original form. Similarly, a well-written article can sound boring if read aloud. Bourdieu (1999, referenced in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) states that important tropes are almost guaranteed to be lost during the transcriptions. The issue of transcribing should therefore not be taken lightly (Bryman, 2016). Prior to these interviews, I had some experience with transcribing interviews, but errors can creep in even among more experienced researchers.

As with transcribing, coding the data can be understood as a hermeneutic or interpretive act (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013). Coding is as much about the enacting as it is discovering, so it requires the researcher to be conscious and self-reflexive. When analyzing the data, I did what Sivesind (1996) describes as a theme-oriented coding. I selected different pieces of the data and gave each piece a certain code. Quotes like «I was interested in a topic, and discovered that I could work with that at a university... So that was the beginning, take a hobby, and then study it» were coded as ‘1-Values-Intrinsic’. Utterances about research groups, for example «I think I’ve found a group that I identify with. They can relate to the things I consider important, but it’s actually quite hard to find» were coded as ‘2-Social-Formal communities’. Hedlund-de Witt (2013) would probably describe this as a holistic coding, a broad-brush stroke representation intended to capture the gestalt or essence of an utterance.
Corbin & Strauss (2008) write that themes or concepts abstracted from categories and codes lean towards the development of theory. However, pre-established theoretical suppositions can also drive the initial coding itself (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013). I analyzed the data both inductively and deductively (see Appendix 5 for list of codes). I used deductive codes to analyze research question four (autonomy-control). These codes were generated primarily through the article of Cribb and Gewirtz (2007). Research question one and three (values and beliefs) were analyzed inductively, by first gathering the data and then generating different categories. Analyzing research question three was somewhere in between; I had some initial categories, but these were somewhat adjusted as the project progressed.

4.6 Validity and reliability
Evaluating validity and reliability plays an important part in research today. However, several researchers have questioned the use of validity and reliability as terms in qualitative research. Validity carries connotations of measurements, which can be problematic as qualitative research focuses more on words rather than numbers. Furthermore, the notion of reliability and validity presuppose that «… a single absolute account of social reality is feasible.» (Bryman, 2016, p. 384) This obviously contradicts with the phenomenological and social constructivist position that frames my project.

Maxwell (1992) and Guba & Lincoln (1989) argue that the positivist notions of validity should be replaced with authenticity, while reliability can be dealt with using terms as trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability and consistency. Other suggestions of suitable terms have also been made, and the critique of quantitative terminology in qualitative research is not unanimous. Some suggest renegotiate the meaning of the terms: «… even writers who do take the view that the [quantitative] criteria are relevant have considered the possibility that the meanings of the terms need to be altered» (Bryman, 2007, p. 383). However, these perspectives are still undeveloped and therefore difficult to apply to this master project. Therefore, I have used validity and reliability as evaluation criteria.

There will always be threats to both validity and reliability in research (Cohen et al., 2007). As these threats can never be completely erased, one must pay attention to them throughout the research process. Traditionally, notions of validity have been based on whether a method measures what it purports to measure. In an interview context, valid responses are about
asking the right questions (Kvale, 1987), which is difficult to evaluate, but important to have in mind during a research project.

While traditionally being concerned with measuring, validity has recently taken many forms. It can be content-related, criterion-related, focused on construct, or concerned with the internal, external, concurrent and many more. In qualitative research it is often assessed through «… the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher.» (Cohen et al 2007, p. 133) The honesty, depth and richness of the data in this thesis is difficult to assess. Some of my informants showed a vulnerability during the interviews, for example by sharing personal insecurities and feelings of exclusion (Tom and Sofia). I interpret them being vulnerable as a form of honesty on their part, and this honesty is important in interviews and especially critical when it is first and foremost their perceptions and reflections that I’m interested in. As Cohen et al. (2015) states, discussions of validity must always be located within the research paradigm that is being used.

According to Maxwell (2013), *researcher bias* and *reactivity* are the two most common threats to validity in qualitative research. In terms of bias, the researcher’s values and beliefs may influence the conduct and conclusion of a study. While it is impossible to eliminate our theories, beliefs and perceptual lenses as researchers, it is important to explain our possible biases and avoid selecting data that fits our preconceptions. This researcher bias can be understood in light of the before-mentioned *disinterestedness of the researcher* (Cohen, et al. 2007). Although I strived for objectivity while working with this project, I am not disinterested in the topic I am studying, as both structural reform and academic autonomy concern my work conditions.

A certain degree of bias and influence will always be present, and validity should therefore be seen as a matter of degree instead of an absolute state. In terms of reactivity, a researcher must be aware of how she or he can influence the setting or individuals studied (Maxwell, 2013). The interview setting is more likely to influence participants’ behavior (reflexivity) than observations in natural settings. Especially in a constructivist understanding of knowledge, it is important to acknowledge the part I played in these interviews, and also in the interpretation and analysis of data afterwards.
Maxwell (2013) describes several strategies in order to improve validity. Some of these strategies (e.g. intensive, long-term involvement, using a variety of methods) have not been possible to implement, due to the limitations of this master project. However, I partially used respondent validation, which is one of the strategies that Maxwell (2013) recommend. During the interviews, I stopped and summarized my understanding of what we had talked about, and received response from my participants if we had understood each other correctly or not.

The findings in this study are not generalizable in a classical, statistical way, but they may still have generative power. I can make an analytical generalization, which generalizes back to the phenomena of academic identity and autonomy. Wardekker (2000, p. 271) states that generative power depends on «… the balance between results and investments, the question of whether in other situations the same or at least recognizable constraints apply…» Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007) write that interviews can be validated by comparing the interview measure with another measure that has already been shown to be valid. However, Maxwell (2013) writes that the value of qualitative research is not in its generalizability, but rather in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site. Hence, *particularity* rather than *generalizability* becomes the hallmark of a good qualitative research.

Reliability has to do with consistency and trustworthiness. It is a necessary but not sufficient aim for validity. For example, in quantitative research, it is possible to prove the reliability of an instrument without the instrument being valid (Golafshani, 2003). An invalid piece of research is obviously worthless despite its high reliability. In the context of interviews, one could ask if my informants would provide other researchers with the same replies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). However, if someone were to conduct a similar study in the future, the context could be different, which could perhaps influence the perceptions of the participants.

The reliability of the interviewer and researcher also has to do with the transcription process and analysis of data. I have listened to the recordings several times, both to transcribe them correctly, but also to critically evaluate what the participants are actually saying, due to the before-mentioned differences between oral utterances and written language. In addition, I have implemented what Cresswell (2009) refers to as cross-checking. Cross-checking, or intercoder agreement, can be employed through finding another person to cross-check one’s coding, or through coding parts of the interview in two different time periods. I opted for the...
second approach, i.e. coding a part of one interview with 6 months apart, to ensure I had coded the passages of texts similarly.

4.7 Ethical guidelines and reflections
Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) emphasize the importance of integrating ethical reflections in all parts of research, not just during the interviews. As they describe seven phases of interviews\(^{24}\), I have used these as a guideline. Thematically I was concerned with the small amount of attention academic identity and academic autonomy had received in research, especially in a Norwegian context. It was also something I considered relevant and actual, with ongoing changes and debates. However, I was also concerned that I could be biased as I was directly affected by the structural reform myself. Still, I reasoned that many of these master projects have strong link to one’s own profession, and that studying phenomena related to your workplace or similar workplaces is not uncommon.

In terms of planning, I sent an online application form to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services in Bergen before conducting the interviews. This was approved (Appendix 4). Norwegian guidelines of research ethics emphasizes the importance of free, informed consent from all participants. Initial contact was made by sending formal letters by e-mail to possible informants meeting the criteria (Appendix 1). I contacted fifteen employees, in order to get four informants. The assistant professors who agreed to the interviews, received the interview guide (Appendix 3) and a document called *Forespørsel om deltakelse i masterprosjekt/ Consent to participate in master project* (Appendix 2) by e-mail. It describes the informed consent, confidentiality and rights to refuse and withdraw, and this document was also signed by my informants before the interview.

When interviewing I tried to set aside all personal experiences and opinions. This was sometimes difficult, especially when the informants asked me if I knew the answer to my own questions, for example «[about consequences] What could happen if you don’t meet these demands?» In this instance, I knew that losing hours for research could be a possible consequence, as this has happened to some of my colleagues. At the same time, practice can vary from different institutions, so I avoided bringing my own work experiences into the interview.

\(^{24}\) 7 stages are: Theme, planning, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verification, publishing
In the **transcribing** process, it was important to keep my informants anonymous. It was difficult to assess how many details I could include before jeopardizing their anonymity. It is possible that I could have been less vague in their educational background and research interests, but keeping their anonymity has been very important. Moreover, an important ethical dimension to the transcription process was also listening through the tapes several times, in order to ensure I had included everything.

Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) are especially concerned with how in-depth and critically the interviews can be **analyzed**, and this all depends on the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. They state it is important that interviews are conducted in a neutral room or at the office of the participants. Three interviews in this project was conducted in the office of my informants, and one was performed in a meeting room at my informant’s workplace. An asymmetrical relationship, for example if the informant considers you an expert in the subject matter, can make them less likely to share their thoughts and opinions. However, I don’t think anyone considered me an authority, as all referred to me as a ‘student’ (in example «it’s important to help students with their projects…») with the exception of Tom who called me a ‘colleague’, signaling a more equal relationship. This was also evident after the interview, as he and I spoke of our experiences with publication processes. Chloe, on the other hand, viewed me as more of a research apprentice, and she finished the interview by giving me some advice on how I should phrase my questions. The participants were not included in the process of analyzing the interviews.

In the **verification** of data, it is my responsibility to ensure that the results are truthful. Interpreting others is always a challenge and can be described as a hermeneutic process. In cases where I have been especially uncertain of how to interpret an utterance, I have launched different options or specified «I interpret this as…», underlining that it is not set in stone.

Finally, when **publishing** this, I have assessed the value of the thesis to any possible consequences of participants and their organizations. An important principle is that research (in most cases) should be published (NESH, 2016), as knowledge is a public good. However, it is always important to reflect upon how publishing a study might affect participants. Even though my informants are anonymous, it is possible that they could react negatively to my description of them, if they were to read this thesis.
4.8 Summary

This master project is a qualitative case study, based on a phenomenological and social constructivist epistemology. I strive to portray “what it is like” to be in a particular situation, in this context, working as an academic in the aftermath of structural reform. True to the research design of a case study, I possess little control over the events. Furthermore, the case is set in a temporal and institutional context, and the participants are defined by their role as academics.

As data collection, I conducted semi-structured interviews with four academics, all associate professors. These represented different “soft sciences”: pedagogy, religion, human rights (“soft law”25) and literature. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using inductive and deductive codes. In terms of validity and reliability, I have given the most attention to researcher bias and reactivity, which is described by Maxwell (2013) as the most common threats in qualitative research. Free, informed consent was received from all participants, and I have reflected upon ethical aspects during different phases of the interviews.

25 This was how the participant herself described her discipline.
5. Presentation of data and analysis
In this chapter, I present and analyze the interview data to explore my problem statement for this thesis: *In light of policy and structural reform, how can we understand academic identity and autonomy?* The data is presented mainly through paraphrasing and directly quoting the participants, and the chapter is structured accordingly to my four research questions. First, I will present my informants’ descriptions of career motivation, values and preferences. Then, their perceptions and experiences of belonging to a discipline and participating in various communities will be presented. Moreover, I will look at their beliefs, self-images and pressures, and finally their experiences of academic autonomy and control.

5.1 Career motivation, values and preferences
To the academics in this study, the desire of working in higher education gradually developed over time. None of the informants originally planned an academic career, but they were interested in something that they wanted to explore further. Three academics made conscious choices to shift their careers. Chloe, originally a kindergarten teacher, was motivated by the possibility of doing research. This was also the case for Helen, who prior to Ph.D. worked as a publicist. After her Ph.D. was finished, she applied for jobs in both sectors and left it up to chance: «But somewhere along the way, I made a conscious choice to continue my education… I sought a creativity and autonomy that I didn’t have in the publicist business… and a chance to pursue my interests and influence them.» Sofia, originally a lawyer, described becoming gradually more interested in critical discourse analysis and what she defined as “soft law”. She stated: «My theoretical background changed. I forgot a little bit about the legal understanding of human rights, and I got into more critical perspectives on those….» After leaving her previous ambitions of becoming a judge, she remembered her positive experiences with teaching in the past.

The possibility of studying a subject matter also motivated Tom, who even described his interest as a hobby: «I was interested in a topic, and discovered that I could work with that at a university… So that was the beginning, take a hobby, and then study it.» He described himself entering academia as a natural development:

*After the master, I was a bit like «Hm, maybe apply for a ph.d?» It seemed natural, since I achieved good results. And then, that was it… Even though I wasn’t sure if it was what I wanted.*
He also expressed a clear ambivalence towards his choice of career, unlike the other informants.

The academics in this study all spoke of an interest in “their” subject matter, which they pursued, and the enjoyment of teaching and/or researching it. Hence, intrinsic values, sometimes referred to as interest-enjoyment values, were by far the most important influence in their career choices. These findings support Inglehart’s (2008) perspectives of an increased focus on the individual and self-development values, and also a shift from materialistic to post-materialistic motives.

The self-actualization tendency, described by Quigley (2011), was perhaps most evident in Chloe, Sofia and Helen, who all had in common that they had changed their careers. These changes were explained by *an interest in doing research* (Chloe), *a chance to pursue and influence interests* (Helen) and *a shift in interest* (Sofia). Therefore, their interests played a large part in the decision to change their career. Their choices to pursue an academic career seemed somewhat more conscious than with Tom, who described it as a natural development and something he was «not sure he wanted».

None of the informants gave altruistic motives as reasons for their careers, but it is possible to discuss whether Sofia’s reasoning could be understood as altruistic. Her subject matter is human rights, and she spoke of herself having a part to play in making Norwegians aware of third world problems. Still, when discussing her career choices and development, she spoke mostly of what she was interested in, and how this changed for her, and was in my interpretation not primarily motivated by giving back to society. To Kasser (2002) her motivation could be understood as both intrinsic and altruistic, as he doesn’t distinguish between the two.

Extrinsic values in terms of salary and status was not mentioned by any of the informants, also supporting the findings of Inglehart (2008). However, one can imagine that stating for example “high status” as a reason to enter academia (and hence a materialistic motive) could be uncomfortable in an interview setting.

As all participants highlighted intrinsic values as central to their career motivation, it was interesting to discover what aspects of their job they particularly valued. Working as an
associate professor includes a variety of tasks, and Tom and Sofia were especially enthusiastic about teaching and used words like ‘fun’ and ‘rewarding’ to describe it. Sofia stated: «I prefer teaching...I meet people from everywhere, students from Kenya, from Nepal, Australia, United States, so you learn a lot with them....We have different ways to see the world and different perspectives.» Similarly, Tom was also highly motivated to teach because of the social aspect. Chloe expressed a high amount of motivation towards research and writing articles, and spoke of how she had an inner drive to expand her knowledge.

In contrast, Tom was ambivalent towards the research-part of his job. After Ph.D., he was not interested in working exclusively with research and turned down a position as postdoc. He stated the reason for this was largely due to the lonelitude and insecurities that came with being a researcher:

> It was a combination of me not being all that content while working on my ph.d., and my ambivalent relationship with research. You often sit quite isolated, striken with uncertainties and self-doubt, and for me it is just not rewarding enough, the whole process of publication, the entire research process really.

Similarly with Tom, Sofia also dwelled on the lonelitude of doing research: «...as a researcher, you’re quite lonely. Usually you have to read a lot and have your own ideas...» Still, she did not express the same amount of resentment towards the research process itself.

Helen stated she was fond of both teaching and research, but was less enthusiastic of administrative tasks. She was the only informant who commented on this aspect of the job in terms of enjoyment and said: «It’s not just teaching and research, you know. People often ask which one you prefer, but it’s so much else. It’s writing applications, evaluating student papers, attending meetings...» Especially when applying for funding she wondered if it was time well spent.

While intrinsic values played a large part in the career motivation of academics, they differed in their preferences towards various aspects of the job. They all showed a preference towards either teaching or research, with the exception of Helen who was very clear in that she valued both. To prefer one aspect of the job (e.g. teaching) is not synonymous with a low motivation for other tasks (e.g. research). Sofia and Tom, who both favored teaching, gave similar reasons for their preference, highlighting the social part and other people’s perspectives. Both
also tied the negative aspects of research to the loneliness/isolation that comes with it, but also as a source of uncertainties and self-doubt (Tom).

Helen was the only one to point out that the job of being an academic includes a variety of tasks, for example organizing, attending meetings and writing applications. This was not discussed by the others. Applying for external funding, which was described by Helen several times as somewhat unfulfilling, can be understood as evidence of increased NPM or new managerialism in higher education, according to Broucker et al. (2015) and Quigley (2011). The merging of administrative and academic tasks is also described by Aberbach and Christensen (2018). However, my interpretation is that Helen spoke less of collaboration with administrative staff and more of the administrative tasks being handed over to academics.

5.1.1 Summary
There were traces of altruistic values, but intrinsic values were by large most noticeable in the career motivation of the academics in this study. The actualization tendency was also prominent, but somewhat more clear among the informants who made conscious shifts to change their careers. As for preferences, most preferred either teaching or research, but one valued both and expressed less enjoyment towards the administrative part of the job.
5.2 Discipline and communities
Belonging to a discipline and participating in professional communities was considered important to the academics in this study. My informants highlighted different reasons for this, for example social and dialogic aspects, with gaining other people’s insights, but also the importance of participating yourself, to contribute and represent your interest matter and institution.

Chloe especially valued formal communities, like research groups, but also emphasized being part of a greater network. This was also evident in the reflections of Sofia, who was a member in several national and international research groups. However, it was evident that establishing a research group could take time, and to Sofia it was important to share a common ground:

...now I think I’ve found a group that I identify with. They can relate to the things I consider important. But it’s quite hard to find researchers that you can work with, and that really gets the unity that you need to work well and have fun doing that.

All informants spoke of both positive and negative aspects of belonging to a discipline and participating in communities. Still, Tom spoke of more negative experiences than the others and described a discomfort of working in academia due to the internal competition and disagreements in the discipline. He stated that new academics were trapped in these. Disagreements among colleagues caused a difficult work atmosphere, and he reflected:

Maybe it has something to do about this profession, you invest a lot of yourself in what you produce, it is after all your name on that article with that argument, and then it is difficult to separate between argument and person.

To his surprise, Tom had several negative experiences with his discipline and coworkers during his ph.d. He referred to himself as naïve for thinking his philosophy professors, lecturing about ethics, wouldn’t talk badly of colleagues during lunchtime.

Helen, on the other hand, spoke of a supporting culture among her literary scholars. However, with their humanist background, they represented a minority in their workplace and had to fight in order to be heard and remembered in different institutional processes. Still, she was not alone in this and considered the communities at her workplace the most important ones. Despite being in the minority, she described the influence between her and
her coworkers as mutual. They worked on a lot of interdisciplinary projects, which influenced her as an academic, she stated: «Working with literature here is different than working with literature at other universities. My focus is affected by the strategies and profile of my workplace. I am a different literary scholar here than if I were to work somewhere else.»

Tom described finding colleagues to work with (at his present job) as a challenge. There was a lack of collaboration at his workplace, and the fact that they were located on different campuses made it even more difficult. He spoke of taking the initiative to meet some of his colleagues over lunch and discuss various topics that concerns their discipline, and he stated that he would like escape the “loneliness”: «I would like to collaborate, not having to work alone like I did during the Ph.D., but rather work with others.» Still, he did not prioritize conferances as he had few hours for research in his current position.

Sofia on the other hand, put great value in conferences: «I think you need the network. And it is important that the institutions and the program on your projects are represented on those conferences as a unit... You have to show them that everybody are active and producing, so that’s important.» Attending conferences, and being a part of a network, includes gaining insights to recent development in your discipline, contributing with your own research and representing your workplace. I interpret Sofia’s description of «showing you’re active and producing» as a form of self-governance. Professions characterized by a high degree of autonomy, like academics, are often perceived by others as professions with a high amount of internal self-governance or accountability (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015). This often leads to less external control and vice versa.

Helen, however, did not prioritize conferences: «It probably should be important to me, but I have not prioritized it. I have worked a lot with research, and it has called for a downprioritization of other things... My own stuff never makes it out to conferences. When I work with others, it’s different.» She described her research groups as very active, with no need of members holding each other accountable. She spoke of this group solely in positive terms: «Everyone is heard, we don’t require unamousity... We support each other.»

While research groups were considered a source of belonging, as is described by Furu and Stjernstrøm (2017), they took time to develop. It was not a “given”, and none of my informants described a situation where they were automatically became a part of a research
group they identified with. However, Helen and Chloe described less challenges in this area than Tom and Sofia.

While all informants considered belonging to a research group as very important, the answers varied when discussing conferences. Among my informants, Sofia was the one who most clearly expressed the importance of attending conferences. All informants recognized it as important, or something that should be important to them. However, both Tom and Helen stated they hadn’t prioritized it yet. In Tom’s case, he was new in his position as an associate professor, while Helen was more experienced. I found it interesting that she described prioritizing conferences if she was a part of a collaborative research project, but not if it was her “own stuff”. Hence, when participating in a group, you are perhaps hold more accountable?

The perspectives of Henkel (2005), who describes the discipline (together with academic autonomy) as a primary source of meaning and identity construction, were perhaps most evident in the utterances of Tom and Sofia. Both expressed a loneliness and a wish to connect with others. One obstacle to achieve this, according to Tom, was the organization of academic staff in different campuses, often with considerable geographical distance between them. This centralized model of higher education can, as before mentioned, be understood in light of the ambition of empowering institutions and enabling them to compete on an international scale (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2014-2015). However, it seems as if geographical distance can make collaboration challenging, not necessarily strengthening the communities.

In addition, a range of other problematic aspects were discussed. Performing academic work can be challenging in itself, not necessarily due to disciplines and communities, but merely because of what constitutes academic work. This was emphasized by Tom as he reflected on the blurring of professional and personal selves, and how it was «always your name on that article that you wrote.» I interpret this as having to do with how your identity, especially your beliefs, can influence your research and articles. Hence, you communicate and share your beliefs in one arena, and this can be “held against you” later. In other professions, beliefs may be something you can completely withhold from your colleagues. While in academia, and especially in “soft science”, positioning yourself is often important. Tom’ reflections also
echoes the perspectives of Clark (1983), who describes «problems with power and performance» in academia, due to its intellectual character.

The more informal social settings, like lunchtime, were also of great importance and emphasized by both Tom and Sofia. However, these informal communities were also a source of conflict, uncomfortable situations and exclusion. Tom stated: «Discussions and conversations are characterized by people testing each other, even lunches could be like that... My experience is that academic environments are poor environments.» To Sofia, language was an obstacle to participate in the informal communities. She reflected that it might be her own fault, as she didn’t speak Norwegian yet. Still, she did not appreciate how her co-workers would exclude her:

If we are all here, having lunch, they will not care to speak in English. They will speak Norwegian. And that’s like, “Ok, we don’t want to hear you”, so that’s a little bit annoying... Sometimes I think it’s more because they are shy.

While having different experiences in this area, Tom and Sofia both had in common that lunch was not a source of informal, relaxing dialogue, connecting with your coworkers. These were also the same informants who seemed to put the greatest value in the social and dialogic aspects of working in academia.

As Quigley (2011) states, institutions and disciplines can have varying cultures, and my informants described their workplace very differently. Through my conversation with Chloe, I understood her environment as a competitive one. She distanced herself clearly from academics who did not fulfil their research responsibilities, and stated that “others” might need a leader to control their work, but not her. She described how colleagues had lost their research hours due to lack of publishing, and underlined the importance of fairness in the system, rewarding publishing researchers like herself.

Tom also spoke of competition, but described an even more hostile environment at his former workplace, which echoes the perspectives of Bourdieu and Archer (2008). He told me of how they were constantly testing each other, even in informal settings like lunch. As Schmidt & Langberg (2007) describe, educational paradigms have shifted from cooperative to competitive. Even though this might refer more to competition among institutions or
countries than individuals, the competitive environment was very evident, especially in the utterances of Chloe and Tom.

Even though Tom had changed his workplace, he spoke mostly of his past experiences and present ambivalence towards working in higher education. As identity is social and reflexive (Giddens, 1991), we understand ourselves partially through feedback from the context. Feedback in the form of criticism and devaluation naturally affects our understanding of ourselves. Tom never stated that he, specifically, was in the receiving end of this, but he expressed not wanting to be “a part of it” and a wish to feel safe. I interpret this as a way of distancing himself and his identity from the “others”, and also acknowledging how we are affected by others.

Sofia spoke of exclusion at her workplace, and she emphasized the differences between the Norwegian and Latino way of life. On one hand, she acknowledged that some was due to cultural differences. However, not being able to participate in informal settings, like lunch time, because of the language barrier was difficult. Still, she didn’t express any self-doubt like Tom did, who seemed much more affected by his environment. Instead she reasoned with it due to her colleagues’ shyness, hence placing “the fault” outside herself. Maybe this has to do with Sofia being more of an experienced academic? If that is the case, communities may have more influence in young academics, who are just starting their career. This is suggested by Colley et al. (2007), who found young academics to be particularly vulnerable to environment. An alternative explanation could be that Sofia belonged to other international communities as well, who were supporting, and hence she was less reliant on her workplace. Of course it could also be due to other individual or situational differences.

Helen described being part of a supportive, but marginalized group at her workplace, with continuous battles in order to further their humanitarian view of research. She was also the only informant who acknowledged that her profile as an academic was influenced by the institution. She was a literary scholar, and described herself as one several times, but stated that she was a different literary scholar at this university than if she were to be employed somewhere else. Therefore, the profile of the university may also influence you as an academic, as Helen spoke of adapting somewhat to her workplace.
5.2.1 Summary
The discipline and participation in communities influence the professional identities of academics in various ways, both positive and negative. While the social and dialogic aspects of academia were valued, with my informants expressing the need for a network, these were also a source of exclusion and marginalization. The academics in this study described very different cultures at their workplace (or previous workplace), and two were clearly negative (Sofia's experience of exclusion and Tom's experience of hostility).
5.3 Beliefs and self-images
The academics in this study were all aware of recent structural changes within higher education, and they spoke of being part of “a system”. However, they described and positioned themselves very differently. Sofia and Tom both distanced themselves from “a system that promotes poor research”. Tom was particularly frustrated by the fact that intellectual antics take up a lot of room in the debate: «They don’t really help us to understand the world any better... there is something about the theorizing, I find it a bit empty...» Sofia was concerned that doing research today was more about replicating one article after another, which she described as ridiculous, but also problematic and dangerous:

*I think that the issue of education becoming a business has serious consequences. Not only in terms of teaching, because when student becomes consumer, the relationship is over....I think that the risk is that you have more and more bad articles, superficial articles, that will not change anything, that will not be used by anyone. And you create that, just so people can stay in their jobs....I think that is jeopardizing the quality of academia everywhere, not only in Norway but everywhere.*

In contrast, Chloe described a “fair system”, rewarding productive academics. She did not share the critique of Sofia and Tom, and she spoke of research solely in positive terms. She did, however, experience pressure in her job. Chloe pointed to the fact that being the leader of a professional community like a research group, took a lot of work. She was not able to distinguish her “personal self” from her “researcher self”, and this – along with the many expectations towards her - lead to her working more than she should. She gave an example of how she recently was with her family on vacation, but still had to answer to calls because of her position.

Unlike the others, Helen did not express her own opinions and beliefs very strongly. She spoke of “others” who didn’t agree in the direction the university was heading and said: «I think there are some tensions here now when it comes to preserving the democracy, and the pace in which we are developing.» She was reluctant to share how she felt about this. Her pressures were primarily tied to being a minority at the university, coming from a humanistic background:

*It’s demanding coming from a humanist background and working here... We always have to take on different battles, like the possibility of a Ph.D being a monography instead of it being articlebased for example... We have different perceptions of what research is, or what it should be.*
Helen’s utterances about application writing and administrative processes could be understood as a critique of the “system” as well: «I like to spend my research time doing research, not writing applications.» As academics must rely less on assumed rights, they rely more on management (Henkel, 2005).

In terms of self-images and self-beliefs, Tom expressed self-doubt about his new role as an associate professor: «It’s a bit challenging, the insecurities... Now I’m an associate professor, so I should know a few things. But you’re new... are you good enough? Those thoughts just appear...» He seemed a bit uncertain of his own abilities, and the fact that he was not contributing the way his workplace expected him to, was attributed to himself being “new at this”.

In contrast, Chloe expressed a positive self image with a clear confidence in her own abilities, especially in research. She received a lot of autonomy in her work, due to the fact that she was publishing according to expectations and that she “delivered”. She stated that she didn’t need any support or guidance from her nearest leader, and noted that «...but others might do.» However, she described receiving some constructive criticism about her teaching in the past, when transferring from her previous workplace: «I needed to adjust to the students that are here. They were very different from the ones I was used to.»

Like Chloe, Sofia also showed confidence in her abilities. Still, she was clear on the fact that she needed others. When reflecting on being part of interdisciplinary programs, she said: «If I were to do it myself, maybe I would be too legal or to critical I don’t know. But if you get with others, and you see... okay, you’re dealing with that and those refereances, and I’m dealing with that, so maybe I could also bring something.» She was also positive towards the idea of receiving feedback and guidance from her nearest leader. «It is important, evaluating the course, evaluating the teacher...» Sofia valued the perspectives of others, and she underlined this several times during the interview. Increasing the understanding of different cultures was also important to her, and she felt that while Norwegians could understand issues in the third world theoretically, we didn’t always fully comprehend them. To her, it was important to contribute in this area:
...being a Norwegian, sometimes, you don’t realize the problems, I mean you know about them but you’ve never felt them, so it is different. I think I have a social responsibility to try to make this more clear and bring them to this context and make them engage in this new knowledge that they are starting to experience.

As a researcher, Sofia considered it crucial to be aware of how you influence opinions, not only academic opinions, but also public ones. She spoke about the complexity in research and the importance of not being “light”: «I deal with law and international institutions.... You can not be light on how this society works...you may bring generalizations that are not accurate.»

While Sofia was concerned with complexity in research, Chloe felt strongly about productivity and “fairness”. She distanced herself from academics who did not contribute in research, perceiving this as an important societal responsibility. In contrast, Tom distanced himself from the pressure of publishing and performativity. He valued what he perceived as autonomy or freedom in his work, and spoke highly of his individual project with a podcast: «It’s fun and rewarding, and I publish it myself, I am the editor and decide the pace. It is very comfortable. I also think the result is a lot more rewarding than the research articles I’ve published, whether it’s level 1 or 2...» Similarly to Sofia, Tom also seemed to appreciate the perspectives of others, and described a preference towards research that included narrative elements. He also appreciated the “larger” discussions within the discipline: «I think it’s fun when it’s with people you feel safe with... To question... and to receive questions as well.»

Helen was more neutral and did not speak of herself in positive or negative terms. She spoke about her projects, and it was clear that she was an active researcher, but she did not express a dependence on the perspective of others (like Sofia) or the importance of a fair system (like Chloe) or safety (like Tom).

The categorization of Tran et al. (2007) does not fully describe the participants in this study in terms of beliefs and self-images. While Chloe shared many similarities with the ‘enthusiastic accommodators’, being highly motivated by a new research policy, she did not speak of herself as a research apprentice. She spoke of herself as a researcher (present self-image) and did not speak of how she in the future would become one, like the interviewees in the before-mentioned study. It is possible to discuss whether she could better be understood as a ‘discontented supporter’. She was supportive of the policy, but perhaps somewhat
unhappy with the current research culture? Her comments of how other academics might need follow-up could suggest a certain dissatisfaction.

Tom would perhaps fit best in the category of a ‘losing heart follower’, as he spoke of a ‘meaninglessness’ in a lot of research. However, he did not have the same amount of experience as the ‘losing heart follower’ in the study of Tran et al. (2017). It also seemed as if his thoughts of the system were more tied to his discipline and academia in general and somewhat less to a shifting educational policy. In the case of Tom, I find Archer (2008) and Colley et al. (2007) perspectives of ‘unbecoming’ interesting. Similar to the younger academics in Colley et al. (2007), Tom experienced that his personal professional views contrasted from the practices of his discipline. This resulted in him turning down a position as postdoc and changing his workplace. He also emphasized how “new academics” were trapped in competitive environments, and Archer (2008) and Colley et al. (2007) also speak of “younger academics”.

Among the academics in this study, Tom was the one who most clearly expressed a present self-image that contrasted to his previous one. He described a personal development from naïve and possibly idealistic to an ambivalent cynic. As identity is a reflexive process, and has to do with how a person associate himself with something or someone else (Bradbury & Gunter, 2006), I interpret Tom’s statements as a difficulty or unwillingness of relating to this culture. With his description of “ambivalent cynic”, he distanced himself from the others and his previous self.

Similarly to Tom, I found that Sofia shared many traits of the ‘losing heart follower’. She took pride in her research while still being highly critical of the system. However, I did not perceive her as wavering between extreme emotions, as it was characterized in the study of Tran et al. (2007). She never questioned her choice of career or expressed an ambivalence towards it, but merely highlighted aspects where she positioned herself critically.

Helen was, as the other informants, very aware of recent changes. However, she was reluctant to share her beliefs, and it is therefore difficult to understand her self-image in light of the before-mentioned theoretical perspectives. She shared some similarities with the ‘pressured supporters’ as she described different opinions and a struggle to further her (humanist) perspectives in research. However, she was not critical of research standards or
seeking new unifying standards; quite the opposite she was seeking an acceptance of different paradigms and therefore a variety.

5.3.1 Summary
The academics in this study positioned themselves very differently towards new educational policies and structure changes within academia. With the exception of Helen, they were either critical (Tom and Sofia) or positive (Chloe). While Chloe valued the fairness of the new system, increasing productivity, Sofia and Tom found a lot of research to be empty and meaningless. Sofia was the one who most clearly expressed a critique of academia as a system, machine and business. Using the typology of Tran et al. (2017), Chloe could perhaps be understood as an ‘enthusiastic accommodator’ and Helen a ‘pressured supporter’. Tom and Sofia could both be described as ‘losing heart followers’. However, none of the informants were an accurate match for either of the categories. In the case of Tom, Archer’s (2008) perspectives of ‘unbecoming’ was interesting, as Tom was questioning his choice to be an academic and the purpose of research.
5.4 Autonomy and control

Even though I never used the words ‘autonomy’ or ‘freedom’ during the interviews, all participants used them in order to describe their job. Chloe stated: «I have a high degree of freedom.... A lot of autonomy» (her emphasis). Similarly, Tom explained: «There is a lot of autonomy and freedom in that area.» When asked whether their nearest leader influence their teaching and evaluation of students, both Chloe and Sofia laughed and said no. Also Helen spoke of her nearest leader having confidence in her, which to her was evident in: «I don’t experience any micromanagement.»

Receiving trust was also evident when being granted different opportunities. Chloe stated: «I was recently made the leader of an important research group, so I have been given a huge responsibility», and similarly Sofia said that her workplace called her for different projects and always tried including her.

My informants experienced few explicit obligations, and were somewhat unsure what their workplace expected of them. When I asked Sofia how she knew what was expected of her in her job, she replied: «Nobody told me (laughs). I just do what I used to do in Argentina.» However, there were some implicit obligations and expectations: «I think it’s not something that is spoken of, but if you have research hours, you have to publish. But they don’t say how many or where you have to publish...» To publish was therefore an implicit obligation, but my informants were still uncertain of possible consequences if they did not meet these demands. Tom stated: «I don’t think they could do anything, but I’m not sure» and he asked me if I knew the answer to that, while Sofia was convinced she could be fired: «If I was told to do... and didn’t do it? Yeah, sure.»

Chloe was, however, more relaxed: «What can he do?» she asked, but noted that her hours to research would probably be affected. This was also something that Helen discussed, but she reasoned the talk of reducing research hours might be just an empty threat or a rumour:

I’ve heard that we can loose our research hours if we don’t publish, but I don’t know if it has ever happened... I’m not sure what is expected. Is it one article every three years? I don’t know. It seems very dramatic [to lose research hours] I don’t think it has happened to anyone.
Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) describe teaching (‘curriculum’, ‘pedagogy’ and ‘assessment’) as a domain or sphere in which autonomy-control can be conceptualized, and in this domain, the academics in this study experienced a high amount of autonomy. All informants described being given a certain amount of hours to each program, but decided how to administer this themselves with their colleagues. The notion of their nearest leader influencing or evaluating their teaching was unheard of, some even laughed at the very thought of this. In comparison, teachers in primary and secondary schools have traditionally enjoyed this autonomy as well. However, recently, they have been subjected to increased evaluation, with what happens in the classroom as no longer being “off limits” to educational leaders. Hence, it seems as if autonomy-control in teaching is conceptualized very differently in higher education institutions than in primary and secondary schools.

To academics, research is an important domain of autonomy-control. My informants perceived a high amount of autonomy in this area, but some of their comments somewhat contradicted this. Sofia expressed she had a lot of freedom in her research, stating that it was all up to her. However, the institution favored some topics: «Of course they prefer something related to education, because that’s where we are at as a faculty.» Similarly, Tom stated that he had to give up his main research interest when changing jobs, due to the profile of his current workplace.

It seemed as if academics could research the topics that they found interesting, but with certain regulations and incentives, and also a need to show to previous results. Chloe stated that she received a high amount of autonomy in research because of her results, which was fair in her view, echoing the perspectives of Prakash (2011) who describes academic autonomy as something to be earned. Similarly the others spoke of how they had to apply for funds or research hours, in which they had to show to their previous results. Hence, research as a domain of autonomy-control seems heavily influenced by accountability mechanisms. This is also how the report of European University Association conceptualizes academic autonomy, that the state should hold autonomy with accountability (Estermann et al., 2011).

The academics expressed uncertainties towards their influence in organizational decisions. Helen stated: «I don’t really know where the power lies, but some people here are concerned. They may not agree that university status is important...» Even though Sofia described a
democratic environment in her institution, there was a clear distinction between her influence in disciplinary decisions and organizational decisions:

*I think it’s very positive about Norway, that people really like to share the responsibility of changing and everybody has the right so say something. I think in terms of the program, it is very open-minded and democratic. But in terms of the institute, I don’t think that we have... I mean I was on seminars where they would present «We want to do this and that, and internationalization and bop-bop-bop» The decisions have already been made, and they are presented rather than being discussed (her emphasis).*

The experiences and perceptions of my informants corresponded well to Mintzberg’s (1980) and Strand’s (2007) descriptions of a professionals working in ‘professional bureaucracies’ and ‘expert organizations’. They enjoyed a lot of autonomy, especially in their teaching tasks, and this was obviously an area where advice was uncommon or unwelcome. Still, Chloe described a situation where she needed guidance in adjusting to a new “type” of students. She didn’t say how she became aware of this, if it was something she discovered herself or maybe her leader or students approached her.

Despite having great individual autonomy in their work, especially teaching, the influence of academics was somewhat restricted to their own discipline. In organizational decisions, they could state their opinions, but received little influence in the decision itself – and were therefore excluded from these processes. Helen’s description of the “others” at her workplace, who spoke of a reduced democracy echoes the perspectives of Broucker et al. (2015), Schmidt & Langberg (2007) and Aberbach & Christensen (2018).

What Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) describe as agents of control were referred to by my informants as “the system” or “the business” and not specified to people holding certain leading positions. They never mentioned the word ‘policy’, but they were speaking of a change that was happening “all over.” Sofia spoke of a transition where students suddenly became consumers that can be understood in light of an educational policy shifting from political to economic (Schmidt & Langberg, 2007). These changes were perceived to be out of their hands and not something that they could influence. In this system, they also had to perform, which was equivalent of publishing – a lot. Sofia stated: «I think this is like a machine...»
Certain signs of what Mintzberg (1980) characterizes as a ‘machine bureaucracy’ were therefore also present, because the academics experienced clear regulations that limited their autonomy. Resources for research had, for example, to be applied for, and there were certain topics that were more interesting to the institution than others – and therefore more likely granted funds. Administering resources like this is what Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) characterizes as input control. The academics were also subjected to output control and accountability measuring their performance in research and teaching, with publication points and students who evaluated them. However, these student evaluations were not a topic of discussion with their nearest leader.

5.3.1 Summary
The participants in this study perceived having a high degree of academic autonomy in their work. However, their autonomy was somewhat restricted to one domain: teaching. I found it interesting that my informants perceived having a lot of autonomy in their research, while still speaking of regulations, incentives and (implicitly) accountability. Hence, their research is steered, and the idea of choosing your own research and publication methods could be understood as partially fulfilled. In terms of strategy and organizational decisions as a domain, academics were informed rather than included. This points to the trend of important decisions being made “above” academics in the hierarchy, and confirms a reduction in the organizational democracy.
6. Discussion
In this chapter, I will discuss the empirical findings of this project in light of the theoretical perspectives I’ve presented earlier. This chapter is structured using my four research questions. First, I discuss the career motivation, values and preferences of academics, especially by applying the perspectives of Inglehart (2008), Kasser (2002) and Nesje (2018). Then follows a discussion of how the discipline and participation in various communities influence academics professional identities, drawing upon the social and dialogic perspectives of Henkel (2005) and Furu and Stjernstrøm (2017), in addition to the more critically founded Quigley (2011), Archer (2008) and Colley et al. (2007). Furthermore, I discuss the beliefs and self-images (self-beliefs) of academics, by comparing with the typology of Tran et al. (2017), and to some extent through the before-mentioned perspectives of Archer (2008). In the last research questions, Cribb & Gewirtz’s concepts (2007) represent the most important framework, but I also use the perspectives of Aberbach & Christensen (2018), Schmidt & Langberg (2007) and Mintzberg (1980).

6.1 Career motivation, values and preferences
The academics in this study were not initially seeking out a career in higher education, which implies that becoming an academic is not necessarily the result of a long-term plan. This points to a flexibility in work, as mentioned by Nesje (2018) and Furu & Stjernstrøm (2017). The motivation of working in higher education developed gradually among my informants. In this process, having a flexible job and the possibility of researching and teaching something they were interested in were important factors. As the decision to enter academia was primarily motivated by the interest in a subject matter, the subject matter (e.g. pedagogy, literature…) can be interpreted as an important factor in the professional identity of academics.

Furu & Stjernstrøm (2017) discuss difficulties with leaving a past professional identity behind, in their case a teacher identity, in order to achieve an academic one. While three of my informants had previous careers, none of them spoke of such difficulties. In stead, my impression was that their former professions were a part of their academic identities, and not that their academic identities were “new” or in a dichotomous relation to their former ones. One could argue that time is a factor here. Furu & Stjernstrøm (2017, p. 170) describe themselves as spending «many years in the [teaching] profession» before entering academia, and I never asked my informants in detail about their previous jobs. Another possible
explanation, is that there are stronger similarities between the teaching profession of Furu and Stjernstrøm (2017) and working in academia, than to the past careers of my informants.

While traces of altruistic values were present in the career motivation of academics, the empirical data shows that intrinsic values were by far the most influential. I interpret academics working with their subject matter as a form of self-development, representing self-expression values, supporting the perspectives of Inglehart (2008). He claims that materialistic motives - and what Kasser (2002) characterizes as extrinsic values - have become less important due to economic prosperity and societal changes. This is not necessarily a surprising find as people have become less materialistic in general when choosing their career. As Inglehart's perspectives are of such a general character, and not specifically focused on academics, it is only possible to imply that academics do not differ from the general tendency of post-materialistic motives when choosing their careers.

The emphasis of intrinsic values and motives among the participants in this study can also be understood in light of a general self-actualization tendency, as it is described by Quigley (2011) and Beumont (2009). In addition to an interest in “their” subject matter, the academics of this study were motivated to work in higher education because of the individual autonomy and freedom they could receive. This correlates with the perspectives of Schmidt & Langberg (2007) who state that autonomy has traditionally been considered the primary value of the academic profession. As these are examples of intrinsic values as well, what Kasser (2002) describes as a part of self-acceptance, it strengthens the impression of how intrinsic values were very influential.

A surprising find was that altruistic values played such a small part in the career motivation of academics. This was surprising since, in the case of teachers, previous research suggests that altruistic reasons are the most powerful motivators (Nesje, 2018). While the subject matter is an important motivational factor to teachers as well, my findings imply that intrinsic values has a much greater influence among academics. Perhaps there are fundamental differences between these professions, but I would argue that the gap between teachers and academics is reducing through (among others) the weakened authority of academia (as described by Schmidt & Langberg, 2007) and increasing demands for upcoming teachers. A possible explanation for the different emphasis of altruistic values, could be that these two
professions – while sharing some traits – still have their differences. Seeking out an academic career is perhaps more associated with pursuing one’s own interests, while the teaching profession is more centered towards helping others?

While there were traces of altruistic values, there were no signs of extrinsic values among the participants of this study. Extrinsic values, according to Kasser (2002), has to do with salary, power, success and status, what Inglehart (2008) would describe as materialistic motives. Although their absence was not very surprising, I still found it somewhat interesting as academic environments were often described as competitive or hostile, both by my informants and in the literature, with a lot of power negotiations between colleagues. Hence, gaining power and success are probably important to some academics, but maybe localized within their field of study or at an institutional level? It is also possible, as before-mentioned, that stating “high status” as a reason for entering academia during an interview would be uncomfortable, or that the questions I asked could have been posed differently.

While the self-actualization tendency can be thought of as a contrast to extrinsic motivated careers, I would argue that seeking success and power is not necessarily the opposite of self-development. This is evident in the perspectives of Quigley (2011), who writes of self-actualization and what Kasser (2002) would consider as intrinsic motives and values, while still describing academics’ negotiations for power and success. Hence, academics may be driven by a desire for self-development and self-actualization, but I would argue that these are not without certain ties to power and success (extrinsic values). Another way of interpreting this, is that academics are initially motivated by what can be understood as intrinsic values, while their environments and institutions foster different ones. It has already been mentioned how HE institutions have become more competitive (e.g. Schmidt & Langberg, 2007; Quigley, 2011).

Extrinsic values can also be understood in light of job security and survival. Inglehart (2008) writes of how our priorities shift when survival is taken for granted, and these post-materialistic values are perhaps somewhat of a luxury. We can afford to pursue ourselves because we do not have to fear for our survival. If extrinsic values are understood more in terms of job security than power/success, it is not difficult to understand why this was absent in my material. Similar to many other countries, academics in Norway often face a struggle to
Academia is well-known for having a high percentage of employees on temporarily engagements, with job security not being guaranteed. This is also discussed in the article of Schmidt & Langberg (2007), and mentioned as a possible reason for the decreased attractiveness of working in higher education. Hence, choosing to pursue an academic career in order to have a steady job, would make little sense.

While a tendency of intrinsic values, self-expression values and self-actualization represent a commonality among the academics in this study, they differ in terms of preferences towards different aspects of the job. They were all motivated to academic careers due to an interest in a subject matter, but showed a preference towards either teaching or researching this, with the exception of one informant. To some, what drove them to the profession in the first place, e.g. the possibility of doing research, did not end up being their preferred activity. Hence, these preferences could change or continue after entering their careers. I see this echoing the perspectives of Fizmaurice (2013), as he states that academics identities are characterized by exploration and discovery, e.g. the discovery of enjoying teaching, or losing interest in conducting research.

26 There are other countries (i.e. United States) where this is much more difficult than in Norway. I will not go in detail of this, but argue that in a Norwegian context, the academic career is not considered the safest choice.
6.2 The influence of discipline and communities
When pursuing an academic career, the discipline and various communities may influence one’s professional identity. To the academics in this study, being part of a discipline and participating in formal and informal communities was considered a necessity. Similar to the perspectives of Furu and Stjernstrøm (2017) and Henkel (2015), communities were described as a source of support and belonging. Especially research groups were highlighted by my informants as important. They gave different reasons for this, but most of them were tied to social aspects, e.g. working with others and being part of a network.

While all informants spoke of the importance of their discipline and communities, they didn’t necessarily experience a sense of support and belonging. Some found supportive colleagues within their university, while others described difficulties in this area and were sometimes more connected to networks outside their workplaces. When recalling negative episodes, they spoke primarily of formal and informal groups and situations (e.g. lunch) located within their workplaces. As my informants described their workplaces very differently, I have concluded with four possible categories of cultures: (1) competitive, (2) hostile, (3) excluding and (4) supportive, but marginalized.

It is impossible to state exactly how and in what ways experiences of hostility and exclusion influence the professional identity of academics. Among the two informants describing very negative experiences, disillusionment and ambivalence towards career choice was only evident in one of them, the youngest. This may be a coincidence, but it could also point towards Archer’s (2008) and Colley et al. (2007) perspectives of ‘unbecoming’. They state that young academics are more vulnerable, which may result in their professional identity becoming a disrupted process. As before-mentioned, identities are ongoing processes, not happening once and for all, but always constructed and deconstructed (Fizmaurice, 2013). This concept of unbecoming and deconstructing has to do with both the discipline and communities (social aspects) and beliefs and self-images (self-beliefs). Hence, it concerns both my second and third research question.

The empirical data supports Colley et al. (2007) description of how academics who are at odds with the practices of their professional communities, might fall into difficulties, with tensions potentially resulting in identity conflicts. The blurring of a personal and a
professional persona in academia can represent a vulnerability in such situations, as it is difficult to distance yourself from the potential “attacks” of others.

In the intellectual character of academic work, discussions and disagreements represent a natural part. However, these disagreements and potential conflicts always take place in power relationships and dynamics where you are defined and sometimes devaluated by others. While the focus of the discussion or conflict may be towards a specific topic, these discussions can soon become personal, given the blurring of professional and personal in academia discussed earlier. It is therefore not difficult to understand that participating in various communities can pose a serious threat of ‘unbecoming’ as an academic (Archer, 2008; Colley et al. 2007).

While a competitive environment may represent a threat to the professional identity of academics, the empirical data suggests that they respond differently to these cultures. This was also the case in the study of Colley et al (2007), where one aspiring academic resigned and the other gained newfound confidence. Hence, individual aspects, e.g. resilience and self-confidence could be an important factor. However, it could also be the case that the level of disagreement, tension etc. – what can be defined as more of an external influence – represent a larger influence or is just as important as individual aspects.

While Furu & Stjernstrøm (2017) and Henkel (2005) both emphasize the positive aspects of participation in communities as important to construct identities, I have found that these can also be a source of very negative experiences. Hence, these influences can help construct but also possibly deconstruct professional identities. This is perhaps especially true when the academic identity work has just begun, in the initial phase of an academic career.

My empirical data suggests that the social and dialogic aspects of working in academia are very complex, not solely positive or negative. All academics in this study spoke of both rewarding and challenging aspects of belonging to a discipline and participating in various communities. None described it as without challenges, but the negative experiences and perceptions differed a great deal.
6.3 Beliefs and self-images
The empirical findings show that academics differ in their perceptions of what is important in higher education today. While some speak highly of productivity, others are more concerned for a lack of complexity and an “emptiness” or “meaninglessness” in present research. This is not to say that valuing productivity is equivalent to reducing the complexity of research. Productivity in this context is tied to a notion of fairness among colleagues, with one academic believing that a lack of publishing should result in consequences, and that productive researchers should be rewarded. The concerns of meaningless and empty research were, as I interpreted, more tied to a social mandate than work conditions. However, one could also argue that academics failing to publish are not contributing to realize the social mandate of academia.

A commonality among the academics in this study, is that their beliefs are strongly tied to the production of knowledge (research) and less so to the dissemination of knowledge (teaching). While several spoke highly of teaching during the interviews, as something they liked or even preferred, this was not a topic where they expressed strong opinions of how it should be, in contrast to the research-topic. I found this interesting, as teaching was obviously considered an important part of the job. To one academic, the opinions of research were primarily tied to administrative tasks, and the wasteful amount of time spent on different applications and formalities.

In all, a critical position towards recent changes in academia was more prominent than a positive one. However, there was a representation of both ends of the spectrum. The highly critical academic was concerned about higher education becoming a business, where students are consumers and academics only re-producing the work of others, resulting in empty research. Words like ‘dangerous’ and ‘jeopardizing quality’ were used to convey the seriousness of this. On the other side of the spectrum, there was a recognition of a system that finally holds academics accountable. Both sides are echoed in the research covering academic autonomy. The positive voice corresponds well with Keller (1983) and Prakash (2011), while the critical is evident in Schmidt & Langberg (2007). This also points to how educational policy and structural changes, and academics’ beliefs and positioning, has to do with how they perceive academic autonomy and control.
Still, some are more reluctant to position themselves very strongly. Fitzmaurice (2013) writes of how changes in academia represent opportunities for expression and recognition of professional identities. The structural reform represents such an opportunity, as it entails large-scale changes. However, not all academics position themselves very strongly in the aftermath of structural reform and shifting educational policy. A possible reason for this, is the changing nature of higher education institutions, with many other opportunities for expression and recognition as well. To some academics, perhaps there are other changes, in more local arenas, that are of greater concern?

Using the typology of Tran et al. (2017), two academics from this study can be characterized as ‘losing heart followers’, one as an ‘enthusiastic accommodator’ and one as a ‘pressured supporter’. However, none of them are “perfect matches” for either type. The losing heart followers both positioned themselves critically, and used the before-mentioned words like “empty” and “meaninglessness” to characterize today's research. They shared many of the same concerns and were also the two informants who spoke of very negative experiences in their past or present workplaces (hostile, excluding). Still, there were vast differences between them. One was an experienced researcher, expressing a belief in own abilities and consciously making the choice of shifting her career to an academic one. The other was more of a novice, ambivalent towards his career choice and expressing a lot of self-doubt. They shared a common trait of positioning themselves critically, and also preferring teaching over research.

Adopting a critical position is not uncommon when trying to resist the drive for performativity, according to Archer (2008). Partially, it could be understood as a defense mechanism. As before-mentioned, perspectives of ‘unbecoming’ has to do with the influence of the discipline and communities on your professional identity. However, this perspective also characterizes a positioning (critical) that has to do with beliefs and self-images (self-beliefs). Through adopting a critical position (e.g. ‘ambivalent cynic’), one expresses beliefs or dis-beliefs of the system which justifies not participating (actively) in it. However, I found that while representing a critical voice towards research, you can still be an active researcher and participate in “the system” that you are critical of. Hence, adopting a critical position is not necessarily a result of resisting the drive for performativity.
Using the perspectives of Tran et al. (2017), the academic who positioned herself positively to the recent structural changes, can be understood as an ‘enthusiastic accommodator’. She did not consider herself as a research apprentice, as is the case in the before-mentioned study, but she could perhaps be described as one. I found it interesting that among two of my informants who had recently finished their doctoral theses (<2 years), one described himself as “new at this” and the other (the enthusiastic accommodator) expressed strong beliefs in her own abilities as a researcher, e.g. taking on a supervising role during the interview. However, this is not necessarily black and white. Vulnerability, e.g. expressing insecurities, could also be a form of confidence, and how they chose to represent themselves probably also probably depends on how they experienced the interview, and my capabilities as a researcher.

Finally, my categorization of one informant as a ‘pressured supporter’ is perhaps the most imprecise. I found that applying a typology based on academics’ beliefs and self-images is challenging when they are reluctant to express (or perhaps don’t possess), strong opinions about higher education today. In both the critique and appraisal of “the system”, academics’ beliefs were evident. The structural reform can therefore represent an opportunity for academics’ identity construction, as they position themselves and express their beliefs towards it. However, one informant was reluctant to positon herself, which can imply that structural changes may not be of great importance to the professional identity of all academics.
6.4 Autonomy and control

The empirical findings show that academics perceive having a high amount of academic autonomy in their work. However, when applying Cribb & Gewirt’s (2007), this academic autonomy is realized very differently in various domains. While academics experienced a lot of autonomy, and a more or less complete absence of control in teaching, there were strong accountability mechanisms in the domain of research. This supports the findings of Nokkola & Bladh (2013), who claim that while academic autonomy has been reduced in general, it has particularly affected the domain of research. Accountability mechanisms in this domain were evident in the need to show for previous results and goals, which in the context of academia, is mainly publication points. Hence, research as a domain was steered through what Afsar et al. (2006) describe as output rather than input. However, there was some steering on content as well, with academics having to somewhat adapt to the profile of their institutions.

Following the assumption that higher education institutions have two key tasks, producing knowledge (research) and disseminating knowledge (teaching), the former seemed to be subjected to a lot more extensive control than the latter. As before-mentioned, the academics in this study expressed their beliefs more strongly in research than in teaching, and also in the literature covering academic autonomy, there seems to be an emphasis on research part of the job. Perhaps the autonomy in teaching is taken for granted in HE institutions, especially in the Norwegian context, and therefore not discussed?

While that might account for a difference between the two in the literature, and in academics’ beliefs, it is interesting to discuss why higher education institutions enforce controlling mechanisms in only one of them. This possibly has to do with money and prestige, as hours for research is an economical issue. Granting hours for research to unproductive academics is not “money well spent”, especially when perceiving academia as a business.

Furthermore, I found it surprising that there seemed to be so many unspoken or implicit obligations towards academics. As a result of these covert contracts, academics in this study didn’t know for sure what was expected of them, and neither what the potential consequences were if they didn’t meet these implicit demands. While some felt their nearest leaders could do nothing, others thought they possibly would be fired.
The academics in this study enjoyed influence in disciplinary decisions, but were excluded in terms of important institutional decisions. They were *informed* rather than *included*. This is a domain where autonomy-control could potentially be realized. However, if academics are not participants in this sphere (or at least perceive they are not), autonomy-control is probably realized by other actors. Perhaps union representatives are present in these decisions, which would mean that academics act as collective agents in them, but the participants in this study did not speak of this.

Furthermore, the conceptualization of academic autonomy and the expectations of academics varied. No one spoke of academic autonomy as a special right; they were more inclined to perceive it as a balance of obligations and rights or something to be earned, echoing the perspectives of Prakash (2011), who speak of the importance of accountability mechanisms. It is, however, not solely institutional steering and controlling mechanisms that influence the exercise of academic autonomy as a right. As Aberbach & Christensen (2018) highlight, this also has to do with individual resources and pressure from environments, for example. Following this line of reasoning, it would be interesting to explore whether the expectations of colleagues or oneself as an academic, places restrictions in terms of academic autonomy. As before-mentioned, the formal rights of academic autonomy and the actual rights realized can be with or without discretion.

In all, the empirical findings show that higher education institutions had traits of both the ‘professional bureaucracy’ and the ‘machine bureaucracy’ of Mintzberg (1980). Decisions were made at the top level, with implications for the lower levels, in this case academics. However, it did not seem that academics carried out their tasks mechanically, and they still enjoyed a lot of autonomy in the teaching area, and to some extent in the research area. The overt management of academic staff in regards of teaching, as described by Broucker et al. (2015) during the introduction, was not evident. However, the reduction of faculty representation and local influence was.
7. Conclusion and implications

During the introduction of this thesis, I stated the following problem statement: *In light of policy and structural reform, how can we understand academic identity and autonomy?*

Academic identity and autonomy are phenomena that can be understood in light of a Norwegian context and a greater international context. Similar to other OECD countries, higher education institutions in Norway have increased their autonomy, while individual academic autonomy has become more restricted. Increased management and large-scale changes, both in Norway and internationally, are made possible by new educational policies. In turn, this can affect power structures within academia, but also what constitutes academic work, and how academics perceive their work.

A commonality among all academics in this study is the role of *intrinsic values* in career motivation, rather than altruistic and extrinsic values. An interest in teaching and/or researching a subject matter was the primary motivational factor to enter academia, but individual autonomy and autonomy was also important. Self-expression values, focusing on self-development, interest and enjoyment were prominent, as is suggested by Inglehart (2008). This represent a turn from materialistic to post-materialistic motives. Hence, the self-actualization tendency that Quigley (2011) describes was evident in this study.

The discipline and participating in various formal and informal communities was considered important, as it could be a source of support and belonging. This supports the findings of Henkel (2005) and Furu & Stjernstrøm (2017). However, academics in this study spoke of many negative experiences and difficulties working in hostile or competitive environments, where they were sometimes excluded or represented a minority. While the social and dialogic aspects of academia could influence the professional identity of academics positively, they could also be harmful, especially to novice academics. My findings suggest that the threat of ‘unbecoming’ in academia, as it is described by Archer (2008), was real.

In terms of beliefs, the academics in this study expressed their opinions strongly about research and recent changes, with the exception of one. A critical position was more prominent among my informants than a positive one, but the full spectrum was represented. While the critical voices were concerned of empty, meaningless research, and administrative
tasks taking a lot of time, the positive voice felt that the current system was fair, rewarding productivity. The typology of Tran et al. (2017), describing four types of academics, was to some extent applicable. However, it was somewhat imprecise in terms of my participants.

The academics in this study perceived having a high amount of academic autonomy, both in terms of teaching and research. However, they spoke of several accountability mechanisms in research, i.e. a need to show to previous results. Autonomy-control was therefore realized quite differently in these domains. In terms of institutional decisions, they were completely excluded. Hence, this was not a domain in which autonomy-control was realized at all to academics. There are probably other actors who are more relevant here, most likely actors in top level management.

To answer the question I posed in my title, is academic identity and autonomy fragile and rapidly crumbling? My findings suggest that constructing academic identities is a vulnerable process, especially when the identity work has just begun. It is not possible to conclude that the professional identities of academics are subjected to greater challenges today, in the aftermath of structural reform, than it has been in the past. However, the competitive aspects of working in academia have become more evident, furthering individualism and probably creating more difficult environments for academics to construct their identities in.

The academics in this study spoke of many negative experiences with their environments, but responded to them quite differently, as ambivalence towards career choice was only evident among one of them. This makes it difficult to identify the factors that cause academics to (sometimes) experience a meaninglessness in their work, hence deconstructing their academic identities. However, when following social and dialogical aspects of identity, academics’ interactions with different environments is probably an important factor.

In terms of academic autonomy, the empirical data suggests that while academics experience steering in research and a lack of participation in institutional decisions, they perceive having a great academic autonomy. Some speak of a dangerous change in “the system” happening all over, but it seems that this is not something they perceive happening to themselves on an individual level. Hence, answering this questions becomes very challenging, and it probably depends on how you define academic autonomy. Autonomy to fully decide your own research seems to be gone, with institutions at least providing some incentives for research, in
order to steer it towards “relevant” topics. This was considered unproblematic to the participants in this study. What was by some considered problematic and dangerous, however, was the demands for productivity, the speed in which the research needs to happen and be published.

Both the fragility of academic identities and academic autonomy seems tied to demands for productivity and performativity. It defines whether you are authentic and successful, which is described by Archer (2008) as crucial to professional identity. Furthermore, the need for publication points could steer research in a direction of short-term studies, where some methods become more natural than others. As Ball (1993) states, policy is a discourse that changes the possibilities we have for thinking otherwise. Although academics have the autonomy to choose within certain given frames, the room is – as suggested by findings in this study – smaller.

7.1 Implications for educational leadership
The findings of this study suggests implications for educational leadership on different levels. On an international and national scale, I would like to emphasize three main points: (1) paradoxes of competitiveness and collaborations, (2) a transitioning towards ‘machine bureaucracies’ and (3) steered research. On a local or institutional level, I would like to emphasize the (4) follow-up of academics, (5) novice vulnerability and (6) critical positioning.

The empirical findings of this study suggest that environments academics work in are sometimes characterized by competitiveness and hostility. In an academic world becoming increasingly more preoccupied with collaboration, what Henkel (2005) describes as a ‘climate of collectivity’, this is an interesting find. While paradigms have shifted from cooperative to competitive (Schmidt & Langberg, 2007), individuals are expected to collaborate on a larger scale than before. This paradox may carry implications for educational leadership. Establishing a system where you often have to compete with your colleagues, for tenure, research hours etc., may not further collaboration, but rather individualism. Hence, these work relationships become much more complex.

Secondly, as academia adopts traits of what Mintzberg (1980) characterizes as a ‘machine bureaucracy’, it is important to consider what is gained and what is lost in this process. On
one side, these institutions become more “manageable”, easier to steer and control, which probably makes the role of being a leader in these institutions slightly less challenging. A reduction of democratic processes among staff, makes carrying out different strategies a lot easier for senior management. Institutional decisions don’t really have to be discussed with the staff, you can just inform them of the decisions that have already been made.

Enthusiasts of increased management in higher education institutes (e.g. Prakash, 2011; Keller, 1983) argue that higher education institutions just have to follow along with everyone else. One positive aspect of following along, is possibly that academia becomes less of an ivory tower and more open and available to the public. I believe that the notion of social embeddedness can be understood in light of this, as myths surrounding academia are no longer taken for granted. It has been made possible to question the power of professors, for example, and a transitioning from professional bureaucracies to machine bureaucracies, or somewhere in between, is not necessarily all bad.

On the ‘what is lost-side’, Mintzberg (1980) argues that it is something fundamental. He doesn’t state what this fundamental aspect is, but it has to do with the very core of these institutions. During the introduction, I referenced white paper 18 (2014-2015), which states that education has become a global commodity (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). As a result of this, the value of education risks being reduced, as it becomes something to be bought (or sold). While knowledge has become more publically available, research is increasingly de-valued and questioned – also in harmful ways (i.e. vaccine resistance). A combination of social embeddedness, increased critical reflection and loss of authority, as is described by Schmidt & Langberg (2007), has made people question the myths that academia, research and knowledge are founded on. This carries both positive and negative consequences both for higher education institutions and for their leadership.

Furthermore, increasing administrative tasks and management in academia could make it less attractive to pursue an academic career, and this has also been mentioned by Schmidt & Langberg (2007). The blurring of academic and administrative tasks could be problematic (Aberbach & Christensen, 2018). If the prestige and status surrounding higher education institutions is reduced, it could be difficult to recruit the best candidates. This is not to say that intelligent people are motivated solely by prestige, and my findings certainly don’t suggest that, but the combination of reduced status, more steering and difficult work
conditions (e.g. competitive work environments, struggle to get tenure, uncertainties…) could drive clever minds to other professions. A possible and in my opinion dangerous consequence of this, is obviously a reduction of quality, both in terms of knowledge production and when it comes to knowledge dissemination.

My findings also show that academics are motivated by intrinsic values, e.g. a large amount of autonomy. The overall academic autonomy among my informants is perceived to be high, but is still somewhat restricted, especially in the research area. This is also the domain or sphere (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2007) where they expressed the most frustrations. If reducing autonomy further/enforcing stronger control mechanisms in research, or introducing them to other domains (e.g. teaching), it will be interesting to see who will pursue academics careers. Perhaps academics careers will be associated with more of altruistic values in the future, rather than a focus of a subject interest and self development? Or perhaps academia will attract people who enjoy administrative tasks, as these have become more important?

My final point of educational implications on a national and international level, has to do with the consequences of steering research and research becoming a business. Some of the participants in this study are concerned for the role of research today, claiming it is only reproducing already existing knowledge and providing empty theorizations. Others would argue that research has in fact never been more relevant than it is today, and that the steering of research ensures that we gain knowledge in areas where it is needed. However, increasing accountability factors among researchers makes it interesting to discuss what room there is today, in academia, for great and groundbreaking research. Perhaps short-term studies always will be preferred, as there is a need to document publication points. This could be harmful to research that requires a long-term perspective.

My findings also suggest implications for educational leadership on more of a local level, aimed towards leaders in higher education institutions. The follow-up of academics seems more or less non-existent, which can be considered both a positive trait and a negative one. The lack of follow-up is perhaps contributing to a perception of great academic autonomy. However, academics seem uncertain of what their nearest leader or workplace expects of them, and they don’t know what the consequences are if they don’t perform. This is not considered an issue to all of the academics in this study, but some expressed a feeling of “abandonment” by their leaders. One example of this was having to conduct student
evaluations, but receiving no dialogue about it with their nearest leader afterwards – hence it seemed pointless.

As before-mentioned, working in higher education institutions can pose several challenges, especially for novice academics. New academics are sometimes – not always – vulnerable, being “new at this” while still facing these competitive and sometimes hostile environments. It seems that leaders in higher education institutions are unaware of the possible challenges and difficulties that novice academics face as they are “abandoned” by their leaders.

Finally, in a context that puts great value on productivity, the critical position of academics could be understood as an urge to resist the pressure of performing (Archer, 2008). That is not to say that being both highly productive and highly critical is impossible. However, I think it is important to note that not all employees thrive in competitive environments. In addition to the pressure of producing, it is also possible that academics assume a critical position when they are subjected to changes and informed of strategies, rather than included in these processes.

7.2 Implications to further research

The findings of this study suggest that some academics experience a meaninglessness in aspects of their work. This is especially true for academics who position themselves critically to increased demands of performativity, perceiving academia as a business. As a sense of meaning is highly important to professional identities, it would be interesting to explore what characterizes the experiences of academics who perceive their job as very meaningful. Is the notion of meaninglessness solely linked to academics’ beliefs and positioning (critical-positive), or could it be that work conditions and work environments influence in this as well? It would also be interesting to study how educational policies influence the cultures of academia, who in turn are important to the academics who participate in them.

Furthermore, with an increased focus on collaborations in academic settings (Henkel, 2005), it would be interesting to explore how academics perceive these collaborations and work relationships in both teaching activities and research. Among the participants of this study, two expressed a strong wish to connect with others, escaping the “lonelitude” of being a researcher. At the same time, they spoke of a hostile and excluding work environment.
In comparison, one spoke of being marginalized, but still belonging to a larger group. Hence, she didn’t have to face the difficulties alone. In a climate of competitiveness, perhaps having a sense of belonging to some kind of community or group becomes crucial?

The study of Colley et al. (2007) showed that novice academics could respond very differently when involved in conflicts with their professional communities. Whereas one resigned, the other gained confidence. Hence, they faced the threat of ‘unbecoming’ differently. In further research, it would be interesting to explore the experiences of novice academics and how they perceive the cultures of their disciplines. If new academics experience contrasting views and practices within their disciplines, what causes them to quit – and what causes them to continue? Researching what novice academics draw upon in order to gain confidence when faced with such difficulties, and potential threats to their professional identities, could provide valuable insights.

In my study, I found vast differences in how academics experienced their disciplines. In further research, it would be interesting to study the cultures of different disciplines. Are some disciplines characterized by a more supportive culture than others? If so, it could be of interest to see if these cultures are tied to workplaces and institutions, or if they could be understood nationally or internationally. Furthermore, possible reasons for differences between cultures could be studied. However, it would also be valuable to discuss to what extent subjectivity, e.g. personality traits and previous experiences, influence academics’ perceptions and experiences of cultures.
8. References


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https://doi.org/10.3402/nstep.v1.28520


DOI: 10.5014/ajot.45.3.214


Kjære

Mitt navn er Therese Garshol Syversen, og jeg er for tiden masterstudent ved Universitetet i Oslo på studieprogrammet ‘Utdanningsledelse’. Mitt spørsmål til deg er om du er villig til å stille til et individuelt intervju?

Mitt masterprosjekt utforsker akademisk autonomi og identitet(er) som fenomen, i en tid hvor det er store endringer innenfor høgskole- og universitetssektoren. Jeg håper å få gjort intervjuene i løpet av , og jeg kommer selv til å besøke campus for å gjennomføre dem. Jeg er ganske fleksibel på dato og tidspunkt, men har noe fastsatt undervisning i løpet av måneden.

Ta gjerne kontakt dersom du har spørsmål!

Med håp om positiv tilbakemelding,

Therese G. Syversen
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9.2 Informed consent

**Forespørsel om deltakelse i masterprosjektet**

"Academic autonomy and identity in higher education"

**Bakgrunn og formål**
Formålet med studien er å bidra til økt innsikt i akademisk autonomi og identitet som fenomen, i kjølvannet av strukturreform og store endringer i norsk UH-sektor. Studien er tilknyttet utdanningsvitenskapelig fakultet ved Universitetet i Oslo.

Utvalget av informanter er gjort med utgangspunkt i stillingsbeskrivelse og arbeidssed. Informantene jobber som professor/førsteamanuensis/førstelektor ved en høgskole som nylig har fusjonert og blitt direkte påvirket av strukturreformen i høgskole- og universitetssektoren.

**Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?**

**Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?**
Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidentsielt, og det er kun jeg som har tilgang til personopplysningene. Filer fra båndopptaker lagres på en sikker intern server tilknyttet høgskolen jeg arbeider ved. Denne er passord-beskyttet.

Ingen vil kunne identifieres i publikasjonen.

**Frivillig deltakelse**
Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil jeg slette alle data hvor du er med.

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, kan du ta kontakt. De involverte i prosjektet er:

Therese Garshol Syversen, masterstudent i utdanningsledelse/høgskolelektor i norsk, telefonnummer: +47 62 51 78 94/ 91316334  
Min veileder, Dijana Tiplic, førsteamanuensis ved Universitetet i Oslo, +47-22854318

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.

**Samtykke til deltakelse i studien**
Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

__________________________________________________________
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)
Consent to participate in master project

“Academic autonomy and identity in higher education”

Background and purpose
The purpose of this study is to contribute new insights to academic autonomy and identity as phenomena, in light of structural reform and large-scale changes in Norwegian HE-sector. This study is a part of a master program at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo.

Informants are selected due to their position/job description and work place. The informants are all working as professors/associate professors at a university college directly influenced by the structural reform.

What does participation in this study involve?
Data is collected through individual interviews. No information of the participants will be gathered through other sources. Individual interviews will be conducted by spring 2018, and by the use of a tape recorder.

Confidentiality
This study is anonymous. The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be stored safely, using a password protected server at my work place, a university college. I am the only person with access to personal data.

It will not be possible to identify anyone in the publication.

The project will finish, due to the plan, in November 2018. Tape recordings will be deleted by the end of the project. Transcriptions of interviews will be stored, if needed, in later articles and further research studies.

Rights to refuse or withdraw
The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. If you do this, I will delete all data that involves you.

If you have questions about this study, you can contact me. This project includes:

Therese Garshol Syversen, master student in ‘Utdanningsledelse’/assistant professor in literature, phone number: +47 62 51 78 94/ 91316334
My tutor, Dijana Tiplic, associate professor at the University of Oslo, phone number: +47-22854318

This study is reported to
Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.

Consent
I have received information about this study, and I am willing to participate

(Signed by participant, date)
### 9.3 Interview guide

#### 9.3.1 Norwegian version

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<td>ii. Hvilket fag/disiplin arbeider du innenfor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Hvor lenge har du jobbet her?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profesjonell ‘akademisk’ identitet, motivasjon, verdier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Kan du si noe om hvorfor du ville jobbe innenfor høyere utdanning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvilke deler av jobben din oppler du som spesielt givende (… forskning, undervisning, oppfølging av studenter, veiledning…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Er det deler av jobben din som er spesielt krevende eller utfordrende?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… hva motiverte deg til denne jobben?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… hva tror du er grunnen til at du verdsetter disse arbeidsoppgavene?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… har du noen eksempler?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disiplin, profesjonelle fellesskap, arbeidsmiljø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hvordan vil du beskrive arbeidsplassen din og det profesjonelle fellesskapet her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvilke områder er dere spesielt interesser i?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvilke andre profesjonelle fellesskap er viktige for deg?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvem er involvert i utarbeiding av pensum, semesterplaner og emneplaner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… er det et tydelig fellesskap/samarbeider dere innenfor forskning, formidling og undervisning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… på disiplinnivå, instituttivå…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er dette en del av en overordnet strategi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… ved eller utenfor arbeidsplassen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindre forskningsgrupper eller større nettverk…. Konferanser?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…hvorfor gjøres det slik?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Akademisk autonomi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomi-kontroll, arbeidsoppgaver, oppfatninger (beliefs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opplever du at din nærmeste leder og/eller arbeidsplassen overordnet sett har tillit til deg og den jobben du gjør?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvem er det som er involvert i avgjørelser tilknyttet din undervisning, og hva bestemmer du selv?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvilken støtte er du avhengig av når du planlegger forskning, og hva bestemmer du selv?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvilke føringer/restriksjoner finnes på hva du kan forskе på eller undervise i?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• På hvilke måter inkluderer (es du i viktige avgjørelser som tas på fag-, fakultet- og organisasjonsnivå?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvilken innflytelse oppler du at du har i disse avgjørelsen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I hva slags type avgjørelser oppler du dem som viktig at du uttaler deg?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… hvordan kommer dette til syne?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… kan du gi noen eksempler?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… arbeidsmåter, pensum, evaluering…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… er det noe du er spesielt engasjert i?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ansvar og ansvarliggjøring, evaluering, vurdering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hvem mener du selv at du står til ansvar for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hva er du ansvarlig for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… samf., studenter, kolleger, inst.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… resultater, forskning, undervisning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opplever du at du ansvarliggjøres i jobben? Hvis ja, av hvem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hva synes du er viktig i høyere utdanning i dag?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvordan arbeider du for å utvikle din egen kompetanse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvordan vet du hva som er forventet av deg som førsteamanuensis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hvem er det som vurderer om du oppfyller dine arbeidsoppgaver og forpliktelser eller ikke?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hva kan være mulige konsekvenser hvis du ikke møter de kravene som stilles til deg?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

... finnes det tydelig formulerte forventninger eller implisitte?
### 9.3.2 English version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Background information** | i. Can you describe your educational background and career to date?  
ii. To which discipline do you belong?  
iii. How long have you been working here? |
| **Professional ‘academic’ identity, motivation, values.** | • Can you tell me about why you decided to work in higher education?  
• Which part of your job do you consider especially rewarding? (…research, teaching, counseling students)  
• Are there any parts of your job that you consider particularly challenging or difficult? |
| **Discipline and professional communities, work environment** | • How would you describe your workplace and the professional communities here?  
• Which areas are you, as a community, particularly interested in?  
• What professional communities are most important to you?  
• Who are involved in developing the curriculum and schedule? |
| **Academic autonomy** | • Is it your experience that your nearest leader, and the workplace in general, have confidence in you and the work you do here?  
• Who are involved in decisions regarding your teaching, and what is up to you to decide?  
• What kind of support do you depend upon, when planning your research, and what is up for you to decide?  
• What incentives or restrictions exist when it comes to what you can research and teach?  
• In what ways are you included in important decisions on discipline, institute, and organizational level?  
• What influence do you have in these decisions, by your experience?  
• In what kind of decisions do you perceive it’s important that you contribute with your perspectives? |

... what motivated you for this job?  
... why do you cherish these tasks, do you think?  
... can you give me any examples?  
... do you collaborate on research or teaching?  
... on a discipline level, institute level… are these a part of an overall strategy?  
... at the workplace or outside the workplace? Smaller research groups or larger networks? Conferences…?  
... why do you solve the task in this manner?  
... how can you tell? Can you give any examples?  
... pedagogy, curriculum, evaluation…?  
... do you have more or less influence as a part of a group?  
... is there anything you are particularly interested and devoted to?
| Accountability, evaluation/assessment | • Who do you consider yourself accountable to?  
• What are you accountable for?  
• Are you held accountable in this job? If yes, by whom?  
• What do you consider important in higher education today?  
• How do you work to develop your competence?  
• How do you know what is expected of you as an associate professor?  
• Who evaluates whether you fulfill your tasks and duties or not?  
• What can be possible consequences if you do not meet the demands? | … society, students, colleagues, institute?  
… results, research, teaching?  
… are there any explicit or implicit expectations? |
9.4 Recept. The Data Protection Official for Research Norwegian Centre for Research Data/ NSD
når prosjektet skal avsluttes og når personopplysningene skal anonymiseres/slettes

På nettsidene våre finner du mer informasjon og en veiledende mal for informasjonskriv.

Forskningsetiske retningslinjer
Sett deg inn i forskningsetiske retningslinjer.

Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet
Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke endringer du må melde, samt endringsrekkefølge.

Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet
Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i Meldingsarkivet.

Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt
Ved prosjektslutt 30.11.2018 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Gjelder dette ditt prosjekt?
Dersom du skal bruke databehandler
Dersom du skal bruke databehandler (ekstern transkriberingsassistent/sperreskjemaoverlækar) må du innlede en databehandlertakst med vedkommende. For råd om hva databehandlertakst om innelde, se Datatilsynets veiled.

Hvis utvalget har taushetsplikt
Vi minner om at noen grupper (f.eks. opplærings- og helsepersonell/forvaltningsansatte) har taushetsplikt. De kan derfor ikke gi deg identifiserende opplysninger om andre, med mindre de får samtykke fra dem de gjelder.

Dersom du forsker på egen arbeidsplass
Vi minner om at når du forsker på egen arbeidsplass må du være bevisst om de orsakene som både forsker og ansatt. Ved rekrutering er det spesielt viktig at forespørsel rettes på en slik måte at frivilligheten ved deltakelse ivaretas.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt med oss dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Vennlig hilser

Marianne Hegetveit Myhren

Hanne Johansen-Pekovic
### 9.5 Example of coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) What values are important to the motivation of academics?</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>“I was interested in a topic, and discovered that I could work with that at a university... So that was the beginning, take a hobby, and then study it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Altruistic</td>
<td>“I think I have a social responsibility to make this [third world problems] more clear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2) How does the discipline and participation in communities influence the professional identities of academics? | Social   | Discipline (tradition, characteristics) | “Working with literature here is different than working with literature at other universities” |
|                                                                 |          | Formal communities (research groups, conferences) | “I think I’ve found a group that I identify with. They can relate to the things I consider important, but it’s actually quite hard to find” |
|                                                                 |          | Informal communities (e.g. lunch) | “If we are all here, having lunch, they will not care to speak in English” |

| 3) What beliefs and self-images do academics attach to their professional identities, and what pressures do they experience in their work? | Beliefs   | A. Beliefs – policy/system | “I think this is like a machine...” |
|                                                                 |          | B. Beliefs – self | “It's a bit challenging, the insecurities... Now, I'm an associate professor, so I should know a few things. But you're new... are you good enough?” |

| 4) How do academics experience autonomy and control in higher education? | Autonomy-Control | A. Domain: teaching (curriculum, assessment of students) | “I don't experience any micromanagement” |
|                                                                        |                  | B. Domain: research | “I think it's not something that is spoken of, but if you have research hours, you have to publish” |
|                                                                        |                  | C. Domain: institutional decisions | “I don't really know where the power lies, but some people here are concerned. They may not agree that university status is important” |