



Defending the university?

Academics' reactions to managerialism in
Norwegian higher education

Jo Ese

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Working Life Science

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TAKK!

“Pappa, er du snart ferdig med å grave den der doktorgraven din?” Eit par veker før eg gjorde ferdig det som til slutt vart denne avhandlinga kom dette spørsmålet frå den yngste dottera mi Iselin (4 år). Kva dette spørsmålet eigentleg fortel orkar eg ikkje ein gong å starte å tenkje på, eg nøyer meg med å slå fast at dei fyrste eg vil takke er familien min, som i tillegg til Iselin er Emma, Lily, Alva og kona mi Britt. Takk for at de har fått meg til å hugse at det finnast ting i livet som er mykje viktigare enn ein doktorgrad! Takk også til foreldra mine, bror min, svigerforeldre og ikkje minst bestemor, for gode samtalar undervegs.

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Vegleiarane mine Ann Bergman og Helge Ramsdal skal ha ei stor, stor takk for kyndig rettleiing, gode samtalar og solid vegvising inn i den akademiske verda.

Halden 20. mars 2019

Jo Ese

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the quiet weeks before Christmas 2016, the time of year when the Universities of the world usually go silent due to students leaving their campuses to see their families and friends, and the academics travel to global resort hotel hubs enjoying conference season, a note of warning disrupted the peace. One of the world's leading scientific journals, *Nature*, published an editorial on Scandinavian higher education. Scandinavia, the editorial claimed, used to be a sanctuary in a harsh and corporate academic world, a haven where "a combination of social market economy with lavish government expenditure, has guaranteed social peace, affordable higher education and — key for scientists — freedom to do research" ("A creeping corporate culture ", 2016, p. 315). But, according to *Nature*, this image is cracking up. An alien force has breached the defences of the Scandinavian haven, and has colonized it by employing corporate concepts like accountability, metrics and excessive evaluation, eagerly implemented by overzealous business types. The concepts are used to micromanage what used to be autonomous and freethinking intellectuals, threatening the "very pursuit of science" ("A creeping corporate culture ", 2016, p. 315).

Nature is concerned. The developments are in danger of ruining Scandinavian universities, and recent examples like the Macchiarini affair at Karolinska and the Thybo case at the University of Copenhagen are used to illustrate what the journal sees as a corporate takeover. *Nature* is by no means alone in voicing cautionary comments on the developments in higher education in recent years. On the contrary, critical comments are commonplace in a wide spectrum of publications, from local university newspapers to international higher education publications like *Times Higher Education* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, or the Norwegian newspaper *Khrono*. Some critique even transcends into major media outlets, spawning op-eds in major newspapers and debates aired by the largest broadcasting companies (for example Fermariello, Hessen & Lekve, 2017; Taylor, Docherty & Antonucci, 2016).

If we shift our perspective from polemic commentaries and media debates and examine the research that has been done on the developments, we find support for the view that something is changing

albeit the sensationalist headlines have been modified somewhat. In a major part of the scholarly texts on the organisational trends and working life of the higher education (HE) sector there is a predominant presumption stating that throughout the last decades academia has gone through radical changes (for instance Anderson, 2008; Cheek, Garnham, & Quan, 2006; Collini, 2012; Ginsberg, 2011; Head, 2014; Kjelstadli, 2010; Tight, 2012; Whitchurch, 2008; Winter, 2009). The changes described are many-faceted, and although different authors look at different aspects of the development and emphasize different explanations of how and why the development has occurred, they agree that one part of the shift includes a strengthening of the positions of managers and managerial systems at almost every level and every area of HE institutions. They also agree that the strengthened managerial power, to a lesser or greater degree and in various ways, has led to what could be called a reduction of the academic autonomy in the sector, both on institutional levels and for the individual academic worker.

A major theme in the research literature on recent developments of the HE sector is therefore *autonomy*. The preoccupation with autonomy is not surprising, given the traditions of HE organisations and academic work. Closely associated with the concept of *academic freedom*, academic autonomy is seen as a characterizing feature of academia and academic work, one of the differentiating dimensions that distinguishes the sector from other segments of society. Thus, it follows that when this peculiar form of autonomy is altered, challenged or even threatened, it generates an interest from scholars studying academic work.

If we look at the developments from a policy or organisational viewpoint, yet again we find support for the notion that something is changing in contemporary universities. Scholars in the fields of the political and organisational sciences see the developments in academia as part of a larger trend where generic ideas of how to run organisations spread and grow. A varied terminology is used to conceptualise these developments, although *new public management* or *managerialism* are terms that many adhere to. Managerialism is the belief that the *acts and systems of management* are helpful and even necessary for creating more efficient, qualitatively better, more transparent and

more ethical organisations (Painter, 2011). Managerialism also implies that control of the organisations, including control of how people work, and how organisations should prioritise and strategize should be in the hands of managers (Klikauer, 2015). Research on the influence of managerialism in academia has been a prioritized area in political science and organisational research, in work that I will explore later in this thesis.

Less research has been done on what happens to the academics at universities under the influence of managerialism, although, as I will elaborate on later in the thesis, the body of literature on this subject is rapidly growing. The theme is interesting to explore given that professors, PhD-students, researchers and lecturers have inhabited these institutions in centuries before managerialism entered. The people who do research, who publish, who critically assess each other, who mentor and who supervise have done these activities without relating to managers with a strong belief in and resilient desire to utilize managerial techniques to help universities become more efficient, transparent and better.

The main purpose of this thesis is to identify and explain academic *reactions* to the growing influence of managerialism in the contemporary higher education sector. To do this I will answer the following questions:

- a) How can managerialism in higher education be understood and explained?
- b) How do academics in contemporary higher education react to managerialism?

To properly address the two research themes, I have divided the thesis in two parts. I will perform an analysis and develop theories in both. In part one, I look at managerialism in higher education, in light of history, in light of contemporary developments and compared to academic traditions and norms. The empirical data in this part is comprised of historical accounts, policy documents and quantitative developments in the HE sector.

In part two, I present my main contribution to the research on managerialism in academia. Based on twenty-five in-depth qualitative

interviews with academics from two Norwegian HE institutions, I identify and explain academic reactions to managerialism.

Part One – Background and developments in the HE sector

To build a framework for the main analysis, *part one* will discuss different factors that constitute the condition higher education is in today. Since the thesis narrows down its scope to how academics experience their place in higher education, a special emphasis is put on different aspects of academic work.

- Chapter 2 offers a historical backdrop where the origins of the academic norms that guide academic work are developed. The chapter does not attempt to provide a full history of universities and higher education, but it does provide examples of how the nature of academic work has developed throughout history in the face of certain challenges, alterations and even threats.
- Chapter 3 explores managerialism, the organisational trend that affects contemporary academic work. This chapter is a continuum from Chapter 2, and I debate whether managerialism should be seen as a challenge to academic work in the same manner as the different challenges examined in Chapter 2. The chapter includes examples of how managerialism materialises itself in academia, and describes the main features of what managerialism in higher education is.
- Chapter 4 is a comparison of the academic norms and managerialism. In this chapter, I discuss similarities and differences between the two, and lean heavily on other research on how academic work and practices have been affected by the influence of managerialism.

Part two – Qualitative study and theoretical contribution

- Chapter 5 discusses the methods used and debates the methodological choices made in the research process. It discusses qualitative methodology in general and in relation to my research questions, the sampling choices, techniques for analysis (the use of Nvivo), ethical issues, and discusses special challenges that arise when interviewing academics who themselves are familiar with the research process.

- Chapter 6 develops the categories open and covert, based on the fact that the interviewees replied to my questions in an open or covert manner, depending on whether the content was in line with or in opposition to the requests of management.
- Chapter 7 develops the concept *academic resistance*. Through using the concept of *expansion of output*, it introduces academic resistance as a special form of resistance where, contrary to traditional forms of resistance, management and the workers have the same ultimate goals, but disagree on who should decide how to reach them.
- Chapter 8 develops the concept *academic gaming*, a different form of academic reaction to managerialism where the academics abandon the academic norms and relate to the managerial systems as a game they can play. I also discuss the concepts of *perverse incentives* and *functional stupidity* to shed light on different aspects of academic gaming.
- Chapter 9 develops the concept of academic mediation, a position between academic resistance and academic gaming. When engaging in academic mediation, academics try to combine adhering to the academic norms while also attempting to comply to the demands made by the managerial systems.
- Chapter 10 develops a synthesis of Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9, and thus summarises the main contribution of this thesis; the academic reactions to managerialism.
- Chapter 11 suggests some implications of this study. It suggests ways forward for managers and for academics themselves. Issues like transparency, quality, and political control of academic work are addressed and contrasted with views on what higher education, research and teaching have been, are, and should be.

PART ONE

Academic norms and managerialism

Preface to part one

In the introductory chapter, I claimed that the research literature agrees that the influence of management in higher education has grown in the last decades. Furthermore, I argued that contemporary popular debate on academia is dominated by a growing concern over a changing academic working life. The overarching question I will address in part one is therefore: *how can managerialism in higher education be understood and explained?* I will address this by looking at the following questions:

Why is the growing influence of management in academia such a prominent development?

Moreover, why are academic reactions to the growing influence of management important to study?

In the research literature and the debates on academia alike, one aspect stands out: There seems to be some kind of discrepancy between the traditions of academia and elements associated with the growing managerial influence. The discrepancy is described on a diverse set of levels and themes, like leadership issues (Winter, 2009), commodification and academic capitalism (Hasselberg, 2012; Kjelstadli, 2010; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Ylijoki, 2003), industrial science (Ziman, 2000), academic gaming (Alvesson & Spicer, 2017; Butler & Spoelstra, 2017; Kalfa, Wilkinson, & Gollan, 2018) and an audit culture (Tourish, Amernic, & Craig, 2017) to name some of them. Although the texts look into different facets of the development of academia, they all seem to presuppose the existence of a set of academic traditions. In addition, more or less explicitly, they suggest that the academic traditions are incompatible with the different facets of managerialism.

The main purpose of this thesis is to identify and explain academic *reactions* to the growing influence of managerialism. The empirical study in part 2 of the thesis is fully devoted to this issue. Since the body of existing literature on academic work suggests the existence of a discrepancy between academic traditions and managerial influence, and given the overarching purpose of my thesis, I argue that I need to

develop an analysis of *academic traditions* and *managerialism* before I present the empirical study. This is the reason why I have divided the thesis in two parts. Therefore, in part 1, I will discuss the academic traditions, and based on this discussion, I will establish a set of *academic norms* in Chapter 2. I will discuss managerial influence in more depth in Chapter 3. I will then end the background discussions in Chapter 4 by comparing and discussing the academic norms in light of managerialism and inform the empirical study, and help to shed light on the academic reactions to the managerial influence in academia.

According to the Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology “norms are informal rules that guide social interaction” (Dandaneau, 2007, p. 3229). They are “specifying appropriate and inappropriate behavior, and individuals are rewarded or punished as they conform to or deviate from the rules” (Broom & Selznic, 1963). An example from Jörnsten (2008) illustrates how the norms as demands associated with a particular role can be *ambivalent* and even contradicting: A professorship has on the one hand a norm stating an expectation to achieve research funding, and on the other, a norm stating an expectation to uphold the standards of the professor’s academic discipline. To fulfil the first of these norms, the professor must adapt her research to fit the demands of actors outside the university. To uphold the second norm and adhere to the standards within a discipline, it is often necessary to contradict the first norm by protecting it from the same forces outside the university.

In the following chapters, I will illustrate how the norms found in modern day academia are ambivalent, and how managerialism challenges the academic norms.

Chapter 2: Academic Norms

Historical Examples

I will start out the discussion of the academic norms with a selection of historical examples of how universities have developed since their origin in the 12th century, and how the academic norms have been influenced by these developments. The account will consist of examples of historical occurrences, but is by no means an attempt to provide a complete history of universities. The reasons for my refraining from delivering a full historical account are manifold. Firstly, it is a practical issue. A complete overview allowing the depth needed to make sense of the events would add several volumes to this thesis. The historical account serves as a backdrop to the empirical part of this study, and a balanced size of each element adds to the readability. Secondly, it has been claimed that a complete history of universities, of science and academic work, does not exist in the literature (Ziman, 2000). The history varies “from country to country and from subject to subject” (Ziman, 2000, loc 482). Furthermore, emphasis on development of social practices like “the systematic publication of research findings, criteria for membership of scientific communities, the public accreditation of experimental results, academic employment (...) and so on” (Ziman, 2000, loc 489) has been neglected and is still actively developed. Thirdly, and most importantly, the reason why I choose to examine the history of universities and academic norms is to *exemplify* how the norms have developed and changed at certain points in history. By showing how the norms have been altered by historical events, I can shed light on the developments and changes that we observe today.

Why history?

In sociological studies of work and organisation there is a strong tradition of utilising a historical perspective to illuminate organisational, managerial, or labour process related issues to uncover the structures and mechanisms of working lives. As an example of the historical approach, a key element in Marxian thought is an analysis of different modes of production as they dialectically develop through time. Marx could not have developed his historical materialism without

a thorough awareness of different epochs and the way work was organised in them. Moving on both historically and ideologically, another example of historical accounts being used to analyse work and organisation is provided by the father of scientific management, F. W. Taylor. To argue for the introduction of his influential principles of scientific management, Taylor (1911) uses historical examples of how work has been organised and performed by rule-of-thumb methods, and compares them to how they can be improved through rigorous analysis of work processes and training of workers. In reaction to Taylor's influence, authors like Trist and Bamforth (1951) and Blauner (1964) give their own detailed and quite technical historical accounts to display the effects on workers from altered managerial systems, and use "before and after"-stories to analyse the changes that have occurred. The labour process theory-movement in the 1970s and 80s developed a utilisation of historical backdrops for the analysis of contemporary working life further. Several of the studies in this tradition use a comparative historical analysis to develop insight into how the changing labour process has effects on working life, as illustrated by the critique on scientific management given in *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (Braverman, 1974) or Cynthia Cockburn's work on technological development, gender and the unions in the Fleet Street printing trade (Cockburn, 1983). Sociological analysis of work in the 1990s and 2000s has continued to appreciate the insights gained from framing their analysis in a historical context. As an example, Simon Head utilizes a historical perspective in his analysis of computer business systems in his critique of digital Taylorism in the HR world (Head, 2014).

At the same time, some adjustments to the paragraphs above are in place. It has been argued that the academic literature on misbehaviour and resistance has been dominated by research performed during a particular time period, under particular conditions and in a specific category of workplace, namely studies "related to work in relatively large organizations where bureaucracy was quite highly developed, [that became] prevalent in Westernized economies during the long boom following the World War II" (Ackroyd, 2012, pp. 12-13). This thesis may thus contribute with an expansion of scope both historically and categorically within studies on misbehaviour and resistance, as it

includes excerpts from a broader historical perspective and moves its gaze from factories to academia.

Historical examples are relevant to the main subject of this thesis for two reasons. The first is the before mentioned attempt to illuminate the background of what has today become the ideas, values and ethos that guide academic work, namely *the academic norms*. History can provide insights into how the academic norms of today have developed, and in particular, why autonomy is especially important in analysing academic work. The second is to emphasise that academic work and academic ideals have both been developed and challenged regularly throughout the millennium, triggering various forms of defensive actions, and resulting in upholding status quo, adapting to the new situation or in radical changes in academic ideas and altered academic work. Thus, it follows that when we today see new ideas affecting the way academia is organised, and these new ideas trigger reactions from within academia, this is not a historically unique event. On the contrary, variants of this scenario have occurred throughout history. An attempt to understand the underlying structures and mechanisms of the current situation should therefore be informed by what has happened historically.

A need for historical awareness in contemporary debates

Embarking on the editorial in *Nature* in Chapter 1, we learned that there is a growing concern in our time among commentators about the effects managerialism has on academic work. In addition, we have learned that there is agreement among researchers that the higher education sector has changed significantly in the last decades. Although different aspects of the changes are emphasised, an increased influence of managers, growth in managerial concepts and professionalization of administrative roles and tasks are traits recognized by most authors.

Some authors go beyond stating that a significant change is occurring. Several authors are claiming that the changes have the characteristics of an attack; corrosive and threatening to the essence of the universities (for instance Bailey & Freedman, 2011; Collini, 2012; Holmwood, 2011;

Kjelstadli, 2010). The situation is regarded as severe, and as a result, society is described as being:

in the midst of a crisis of massive proportions and grave global significance. No, I do not mean the global economic crisis that began in 2008. (...) No, I mean a crisis that goes largely unnoticed, like a cancer; a crisis that is likely to be, in the long run, far more damaging to the future of democratic self-government: a world-wide crisis in education (Nussbaum, 2012, pp. 1-2).

In many of the before mentioned texts, where the managerial influences in contemporary academia are studied, the historical foundations for academic work are not given much attention. It is therefore remarkable to observe the body of texts generated the last decade, using stark formulations like an ongoing attack on universities, and an assumption that the increasing power of managers over academic work represents what Nussbaum in the quote describes as a largely unnoticed worldwide crisis in education. Although one may establish that the sector has endured considerable change, one must also respond to the question *What has it changed from?* Thus, I argue that the notion that this extraordinary challenge to academic norms is something unique to our time is somewhat poorly substantiated in the literature. Without doubt, empirical evidence establishes that academic norms are challenged. However, evidence that such a challenge is *exclusive* to our time is seldom given. Instead, the uniqueness is often dressed in the form of an axiom, stated as a “given” in the introductory paragraphs of a journal article or book.

One category of scholars that treat the question “What has it changed from?” with grave seriousness are of course the historians. In his foreword to the four volume series *A History of the University in Europe* editor Walter Rüegg starts out by joining the consensus as he argues that modern day universities, at an increasing rate since the Second World War, are facing expectations and demands from society outside academia on a wide range of areas. He points out that such external claims often are mutually contradictory in their terms, and that they tend to conflict with how the universities themselves see their missions. However, there is a great deal of uncertainty connected to what this mission really is, and to safely navigate the dire straits of disparate external demands and internal split personality disorder, Rüegg recommends that universities look into their past to try to identify what they really are (Rüegg, 2003, pp. xx-xxii). This is the

point where Rüegg the historian separates himself from writers that do not dwell upon the historical origins of academic autonomy and academic freedom. To know oneself one has to know ones history, seems to be his recommendation to academia. A fitting advice, perhaps, when dealing with an institutional tradition with a lengthier history than Protestantism, the renaissance and the discovery of America. Similar points on the relationship between contemporary research into higher education policy and history have been made by other historians, like for example Ash (2006).

I have no reason to doubt the severity of the situation in which academia finds itself in in the 21st century; on the contrary, the empirical data from my own study add to the consensus of the uniqueness of the contemporary circumstances. Nevertheless, with the arguments presented in mind, I suggest that a collection of historical examples of how academia and universities have evolved through history, with a special emphasis on the development of the academic norms, will add valuable aspects to the analysis. In the next sections, I will therefore explore a few, but important instances of how academia has developed through history, with special emphasis on the development of the academic norms. As before mentioned, the examples given are by no means a complete history of academia or the academic norms, more a sample of significant events in the history of the universities serving the purpose of shedding light on the main analysis of the thesis.

Medieval universities and the origins of academic freedom

Some historians claim that the idea of the university is intertwined with European history (Hofstadter, 1964; Verger, 1992a). There have been resembling types of educational institutions in other civilizations; in Greece, in the Roman Empire, in China and in Islamic cultures, but the model of organising research and teaching that we today understand as a university, did not exist before it first emerged in medieval Europe (Verger, 1992a p 35)¹. Of course, the universities of the 21st century have developed considerably since the first centuries of their existence, in

¹ The degree of originality attached to the first European Universities is, however, disputed. A proposal has been made, for instance, that the idea of the university was developed in Muslim cultures, and only put into practice in Europe (Isanović, 2013).

some areas to the extent that they are completely incomparable with the medieval versions of themselves. At the same time, there are features that were developed in the first hundreds of years that even today differentiate universities from other forms of institutions, features so essential they make scholars use biblical allusions to describe how the universities of today are connected to them: They are “the lineal descendant[s] of medieval Paris and Bologna. They are the rock whence we were hewn; the hole of the pit whence we were digged” (Haskins, 1923, p. 3 paraphrasing Isaiah 51:1). It is therefore fitting to present to the reader what historians see as the distinguishing features that separate the historical European university from other institutions, and which have imprinted on the university even today. An important concept of the first universities became the *studium generale*, and I will start the account of historical examples by exploring this phenomenon.

Studium generale – the beginnings of university autonomy

The term *studium generale* is interlinked with the early development of the European university, and the way universities became distinguished from other institutions of teaching. *Studium generale*, in its day in many ways synonymous with the term *university*, summarises several of the features of the medieval universities. The features of this special way of organising teaching were developed during the 13th century and can be described as follows:

First of all, it enabled universities to offer their teaching to the public independent of their geographical origins, as opposed to a admissions system that only offered teaching to a local population. Already in the 13th century teachers at Bologna established prominent reputations, and attracted students from near and far (Rüegg, 1992, p. 12), so this liberal admission policy became well utilized. Furthermore, universities had no strict prerequisites for the abilities of their students, meaning they were independent of qualifying school systems (Schwingens, 1992, pp. 174-176). These liberal admission policies, both in terms of the geographical origin of the applicant and of his² qualifications, left the early universities fairly autonomous concerning

² Although I use the generic form “she” when making generalizations, the applicants to the universities of the 13th century were men.

their student bodies, and therefore themselves in control of who were allowed to join their world, and who were found not eligible.

A second implication of the *studium generale* was that the knowledge taught and developed at universities was considered a general knowledge, universal throughout the whole of Christendom. This allowed for generating and accumulating a body of knowledge that the whole university system recognized as valid, thus adding an additional element to the autonomy of universities. The ability and the duty to independently and without bias establish what to teach and what to hold true is crucial even today to the concept of academic freedom. The universal validity and transferral of knowledge throughout Europe was illustrated by the fact that a teacher at one university could teach at other universities without thorough examination of the competences he possessed (Verger, 1992b). The degrees given, like *doctor*, safeguarded that the person holding them mastered the area he was set to teach. The titles were of a universal nature, holding the same value wherever the holder of the title went.

Scholarly privileges – the first academic freedoms

As the university model gained popularity, the gatherings of teachers and students started to infuse conflict with local populations. Travelling scholars were seen as elements of disruption and were unpopular locally. At the same time, they enjoyed few legal rights and were disfavoured by local courts if legal conflict arose. As medieval cities were organised, foreigners could not claim protection from local city government, and their situation was frequently taken advantage of by locals (Kibre, 1961). Centralised power saw how useful the universities had become and wanted to encourage their development and protect them from threats. In 1158, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederic Barbarossa issued the *authentica habita*, giving special privileges to travelling scholars as a reaction to the conditions the students and teachers experienced. The privileges gave them immunity from local jurisdiction, and they were allowed to pass judgement on themselves instead. Barbarossa saw value in the principles of the *studium generale* and wanted to show proof of his “dutiful love to all

scholars who are travelling for the sake of their studies” (Wei, 2012, p. 49).³

The introduction of the *authentica habita* turned the tables completely in the relationship between universities and their host cities. From being a segment of the population without citizenship and no effective rights, scholars now rose above the locals in many ways. The increase in university autonomy that came through the establishment of a system where they passed judgement on themselves was monumental in building autonomy, strengthening the image of the university as a world of its own, controlled by itself and answering to few outside. Consequently, *authentica habita* became a major part in the development of academic freedom.

Another conflict became even more important to the origins of academic freedom. As the reader might well imagine, the development of a form of institution that was gaining more and more autonomy did not go unnoticed by the Roman Catholic Church. Groups of students and teachers that in their own fashion spoke about truth, developed knowledge, and encouraged intense scholastic debates and practices of dialectic disputations were perceived as a serious threat among local elements of the Church. At the same time, support from other elements of the Church became imperative to the solution of the same conflict, with the universities ending up as stronger after they had been attacked than before. This was due to the fact that the Church in medieval times was not a single power, but rather, a fragmented one with a strong centralised power represented by the pope and local powerhouses spread all over Europe. As a result, the pope saw the universities as a way of keeping the power of the bishops under control, and hence explicitly allowed the universities to teach, to develop knowledge, to award degrees and supported the model of *studium generale* that had been developed. The ideal of academic freedom was thus effectively constituted.

The universities could now continue their teaching, their debates and their development of knowledge in a completely new manner, enjoying

³ Although the emperor expressed his respect for people who boasted such love for learning, historians also point out that the universities were especially useful to the emperor in terms of their teaching of classical Roman law that effectively channeled power away from the church and to the emperor (Kibre, 1961).

the protection of both the emperor *and* the pope, who, in their own manner, supported the principles of *studium generale*. The universities became almost untouchable by local authorities and local clergy, and the origins of the almost thousand-year-old tradition of academic freedom were established.

The medieval contribution: academic autonomy

Summing up the accounts from the medieval universities, what might be the most fundamental aspect of the academic norms has been a part of the universities since their very formation, namely *academic freedom* and *academic autonomy*. Universities and academic workers were granted these privileges both as a result of initiatives from within the universities and as a result of developments outside the universities. An important point is that as early as the Middle Ages academic autonomy was many-faceted. It included control over admission, teaching and the rewarding of degrees, as well as special privileges and explicit protection from attempts to control and censor what happened inside the university.

As the previous paragraphs revealed, the idea that universities should hold such privileges and enjoy freedoms that separate them from the rest of society was controversial the moment it was established. As the universities have moved through history, the disputes around academic autonomy have continued. What has ignited controversy has varied throughout the last millennium, depending on how universities have been perceived by society at a given time. Different time periods have seen different takes both on how universities can be utilised, and on how they can be seen as a threat. For instance, in some historical periods, universities have been regarded as useful to support certain theological views, in others, they have been a resource for developing new technologies. On the other hand, some have seen their search for truths as a threat to their foundations of power or as an insult to their beliefs or ideologies. These different perspectives have resulted in different forms of demands or attacks on academic autonomy, targeting various facets of it. As a result, universities have responded to and resisted these attacks at different levels and in different ways, and with different outcomes. Sometimes academic freedom has been defended, sometimes it has been altered and sometimes defeated. An

example of this is the already mentioned conflicts with the earliest university towns, where universities responded to local demands for compliance by securing support from both emperor and pope.

The Scientific Revolution

Moving on hundreds of years from the medieval universities, a historical event that has had a major impact on the way academic work is performed is what has become known as the period of *The Scientific Revolution*. Although Thomas Kuhn famously argues that scientific revolutions occur in the plural (Kuhn, 1962), historians tend to agree that “the period in European history when, arguably, the conceptual, methodological and institutional foundations of modern science were first established” (Henry, 2008, p. 1) is of such significance that it has been coined *The Scientific Revolution*. The period is usually held to go on throughout most of the 17th century (Henry, 2008; Porter, 1996), although there are important causes for the revolution in the preceding centuries, including the Renaissance, and substantial after effects in the 18th century and onwards. Historians of science argue that this period distinguishes itself is due to several factors. The mere advancements in knowledge of the natural world in a broad range of disciplines are given emphasis in the historical accounts of the period (Henry, 2008; Shapin, 1996, chapter 1). On a more fundamental level, the idea that theoretical knowledge could be used to understand observable phenomena started to gain traction. Mathematics is the prime example of this new way of conducting science. In the Middle Ages, mathematics was seen as an abstract discipline with no relevance to the study of the natural world (Henry, 2008); *The Scientific Revolution* fundamentally altered how mathematics was used as a tool for gaining insight into observable phenomena.

As a result of *The Scientific Revolution*, several norms that became guiding to scientific activity were established, all of them strongly affiliated with the methodologies that were developed at the time. Kaiser (2015) sums them up in the following manner: Scientific discovery was to be made *publicly available*. Every single piece of scientific knowledge was to contribute to the common collection of knowledge. Furthermore, every scientific discovery (and every other established “fact” for that matter) should make itself available for and

encourage *critique* and scrutiny from the scientific community. Scientists should not only concentrate on making their own discoveries, but should also help the community at large by looking for flaws in other discoveries, thus helping improve science further.

It is important to mention that there is a substantial debate among historians on whether the term *Revolution* is suitable to describe the period and development in question. Henry (2008), for instance, points out that the word *revolution* implies a radical break with the past; a description too far-reaching to describe the historical events. Although the advances in the 17th century without doubt bring new elements to the scientific methodology and scientific knowledge, it is undisputed that the developments build on medieval discoveries and methodological practices. Furthermore, Henry argues that historians will always be in danger of overemphasizing elements of the past that have proved themselves important to what happened at later stages. As a result, texts and practices of the 17th century that mostly resemble what we today know as science are highlighted. Moreover, the very word *science* was not used until the 19th century, a fact that further raises critique of the concept of a *scientific* revolution. Nonetheless, despite the debate on the relevance of the term, the period undoubtedly saw advances in science that eventually led to development of universities and the nature of academic work. It is therefore included in this chapter as one of the historical examples of how societal developments have affected universities and the development of academic norms.

The Scientific Revolution and the universities

The Scientific Revolution included criticisms of and confrontations with what were the dominant ideas of the age. The new norm of encouraging critique included applauding falsifications and improvements of previous knowledge about the order of the natural world, as famously put forward by Galileo and Kepler in the field of astronomy, and arguments for new methodologies in science exemplified by the methodological texts of Sir Francis Bacon. Before the new knowledge and methodologies took hold, universities were dominated by the teachings and doctrines of the ancient Greeks, Aristotle in particular.

Seen in light of our before mentioned contemporary debates, it is interesting to note that the universities of the time themselves by no means were a stimulant force behind the introduction of the new scientific methods and knowledge (Hammerstein, 1996; Porter, 1996). The proponents of the new ideas were harsh in their criticisms of the scholastic and dogmatic ways of the universities at the time. The Danish astronomer Tycho Brae argued that to make progress in astronomy, one had to conquer “the oppressive authority of Aristotle in the Schools” (Porter, 1996, p. 531). In a much-cited passage from Sir Francis Bacon work *Novum Organum* dated 1620 he pinpoints the issues universities had concerning a lack of critical reflection on what was considered the canonized knowledge of the day:

Again, in the habits and regulations of schools, universities, and the like assemblies, destined for the abode of learned men and the improvement of learning, everything is found to be opposed to the progress of the sciences; for the lectures and exercises are so ordered, that anything out of the common track can scarcely enter the thoughts and contemplations of the mind. If, however, one or two have perhaps dared to use their liberty, they can only impose the labor on themselves, without deriving any advantage from the association of others; and if they put up with this, they will find their industry and spirit of no slight disadvantage to them in making their fortune; for the pursuits of men in such situations are, as it were, chained down to the writings of particular authors, and if any one dare to dissent from them he is immediately attacked as a turbulent and revolutionary spirit (Bacon, 1902, p. 34).

Despite the before mentioned controversy on whether The Scientific Revolution actually was a revolution, most historians have traditionally agreed that the part played by universities in the developments in the 16th century was small (Gascoigne, 1985). As illustrated by statements like the “Aristotelian rigidity” (Porter, 1996, p. 532) of Oxford and the “intellectual wasteland” (Porter, 1996, p. 532) of Cambridge, historians have been unforgiving in their analysis of how universities failed to recognize the importance of the developments in science accomplished by their contemporaries.

However, Porter (1996) argues that a nuanced account emerges if historians allow themselves to use alternative sources of inquiry. Personal accounts, like notebooks, letters, bibliographies and lecture notes tell of different types of activities than more formalized sources bear witness of. Scientific knowledge and methods did occur at universities, in extra-curricular lectures, private tuitions and in seminars. Most of the people recognized as major contributors to The

Scientific Revolution had attended university. Many of them held chairs and taught. Seminars played an important part, as the New Scientists needed forums to develop their ideas. Universities were frequently used as such arenas (Porter, 1996).

In time, The Scientific Revolution made a huge impact on universities. It led to an abandonment of scholasticism and an acceptance of the scientific method as fundamental for development of knowledge. The occurrences in this period are therefore examples of an outside development that altered universities, despite resistance from the universities themselves. One might therefore conclude that The Scientific Revolution is an example of external forces overcoming university resistance and changing the way universities are organized, and the manner in which academic work is performed. At the same time, the nature of the forces of resistance and the nature of the forces of change are worth a closer look. As the examples in the previous paragraph illustrates, the product of The Scientific Revolution - *New Science* – first established itself in universities through informal channels, often through the people performing the academic work of the time.

The Humboldtian University

In the beginning of this chapter, I criticised the claim that the influence of managerialism in the last decades has generated change of unprecedented magnitude in the history of universities. I argued that the contemporary analysis of academia in our time would benefit from an emphasis on the history of universities, either to underpin the bold statement of the unprecedentedness of the contemporary situation, or in some manner to moderate it. Unfortunately, such examinations of the past seem to be lacking in many texts. However, there is one particular historical event that several of the analysts of contemporary managerial influence in academia do tend to include: the development of the Humboldtian model of higher education (see for instance Krull, 2005). The weight that contemporary writers are giving to Humboldtian ideals can be explained by the fact that Humboldt (or at least, the myth of Humboldt) emphasised elements that today lends themselves effectively as opposite of the ideals of managerialism, like the importance of academic autonomy and freedom (Ash, 2006). In the

next paragraphs, I too will give a short account of the Humboldtian model of higher education. My point here is not to introduce the Humboldtian model as the antithesis to managerialism, referring to his “rules of thumb for academic life” (Josephson, Karlsohn, & Östling, 2013, p. 3) as it sometimes is framed in contemporary texts. On the contrary, the Humboldtian model serves as one of many historical examples of the development of universities.

Wilhelm Von Humboldt was a statesman and education official in Prussia, widely credited for developing and facilitating the German or Humboldtian model of higher education (Gerbod, 2004; Rüegg, 2004). The model is often contrasted to another model of its day, the Napoleonic or French model, as Humboldt developed the German model explicitly formulated as an alternative to the French (Charle, 2004). The next paragraphs therefore give a brief account of the Napoleonic University that will serve as a short comparison to the Humboldtian model. The aim is to show a historical example of how different university policies can lead to radically different outcomes for university autonomy and academic freedom. I will start in post-revolutionary France.

The Napoleonic university model rose to prominence in France in the first half of the nineteenth century. The French revolution had devastated the established universities; thus, the rebuilding of the French higher educational system had left universities open to be moulded by the post-revolutionary state. Due to their diminished status, universities found themselves unable to muster any effective resistance to the changes set forth by the state. Charle (2004) describes the Napoleonic universities as having three primary goals: a) to educate the officials necessary to stabilize and sustain the post-revolutionary state, b), to ensure that education adhered to the newly established social order and c), to prevent the academics of France from venturing into intellectual domains that could prove dangerous to the state.

In the Napoleonic model, the ideal of the university as a tool for the state is unequivocal. Consequently, this ideal leads to a diminishing of academic freedom and autonomy on a wide array of levels. In France, the state opted to control what types of teaching and education universities were to perform. Furthermore, the state took full control

over the contents of the courses. Lastly and perhaps most weighty, the state wished to be in control of what types of ideas were to be addressed by academics, what research they were to perform and as a result, and perhaps most significant: what research they were to forgo.

The reason why historians often contrast the Napoleonic model to the Humboldtian is not only due to the fact that they developed in the same age, but also because they represent opposite ideals on several issues on university governance. In France, the state instructed universities on a whole array of aspects, while “according to Humboldt, the state only had two tasks to fulfil with regard to the universities: to protect their freedom and to appoint professors” (Rüegg, 2004, p. 5). The French state saw the teaching mission of universities as one of demonstrating to their students the skills they needed to function as servants of the state. Humboldt had a different understanding altogether. In his view, the teaching of directly usable knowledge was a mere side effect, a task better suited for schools and colleges. According to the Humboldtian ideal, the main task of the university was to “demonstrate how this knowledge is discovered” (Rüegg, 2004, p. 5). Universities were to inspire their students to utilise fundamental theoretical knowledge and employ the scientific method to all aspects of life, and by themselves observe and discern the world around them. Thus, one of the main pillars of the Humboldtian ideal was Humboldt’s version of *academic freedom*. Students and scholars alike should be free to pursue any path or interest they found worthy of following, insofar as they adhered to the methodology and regulations of science.

Due to the prominence of the Humboldtian ideals and their presence in the ongoing discussions on the state of academia, the academic literature on Humboldt is voluminous, and as a consequence, varied and diverse (Ash, 2006; Josephson et al., 2013). However, there are aspects of the ideals that are included in most of the literature. Krull (2005) organises these ideals in four pillars:

The first of the pillars is an integration of teaching and research. Humboldt saw the two as inseparable at universities, and as part of his ideal of *Bildung*. Humboldt’s ideas differed from his contemporaries in that he abandoned the idea of knowledge as permanent. Instead, he saw knowledge as always in development, thus research and teaching

become interwoven. Moreover, this prompts the ambition that students primarily should be taught the scientific method, and not a static set of knowledge of the world.

The second pillar is granting professors the freedom to decide for themselves what to teach, and likewise granting students the freedom to decide for themselves what to study (*Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*). Closely associated with the first pillar, this freedom also comes with responsibilities. Ideally, students should be as responsible for the progress of science as the professors.

The third pillar, according to Krull, is based on the idea that academics must operate in a condition of “isolation and freedom” (*Einsamkeit* and *Freiheit*). A university should set up a buffer for its professors, its students and itself from its surroundings, be it commerce, the military, or the state itself. The real potential of the modern university is only possible through such separation, as the university “precisely because of its distance from the surrounding world, would be able to make a significant contribution” (Josephson et al., 2013, p. 2).

The fourth Humboldtian pillar is the importance of establishing the seminar as the arena for teaching and learning. Closely connected to the third pillar, the seminar of professors and students provides an internal arena for the exchange of ideas and developments, followed by critical examinations. Although the seminar took place in the sheltered university, separated from the rest of society, the seminar gave professors and students a common ground that prevented individual isolation and generated a sense of academic community.

The Humboldtian model of higher education has had a profound effect on the developments of universities, and has been highly influential (Josephson et al., 2013). At the end of the nineteenth century, the model had spread to a number of European countries, as well as the United States and Japan (Rüegg, 2004). In our time, the Humboldtian ideals holds a special status as historical university ideals go, and insofar as it has become a much used “reference point, not only in academic speeches and addresses, but also in the wider debate concerning higher education” (Josephson et al., 2013, p. 1).

The impact of Humboldt is of such magnitude that authors have seen the need to include critical and corrective remarks to the popular

depictions of his legacy. Ash (2006) points out that the *Humboldt Myth* has detached itself from the historical facts about Humboldt, about the founding of the University of Berlin and about the international spread of the German university model. According to Ash, several other thinkers were imperative to the development of the Humboldtian ideals, perhaps more important than Humboldt himself was. Secondly, it is questionable whether a consistent implementation of the structures and practices of the modern research university happened at the same time historically, some of them might not have been de facto implemented at all.

Humboldt and the academic norms

As we have seen, the Humboldtian and the Napoleonic models provided examples of opposite developments in universities, but they also shared an important common trait. This trait holds particular relevance for one of the main points I am making in this chapter insofar as both of the models were initiated by forces outside the university. The revolutionary state was the force driving the French model, while Humboldt, the bureaucrat and state official, initiated the German. Although the differences between the models carry prominence in most historical accounts of the era, the fact that both are developments driven by external forces is an important aspect.

When discussing the development of the academic norms, the similarities between the two models end. Humboldt has made several significant contributions to the development of the academic norms. Some of these are refinements of elements that I have associated with earlier periods, like importance of academic freedom and the methodologies of the scientific method. Others, like the explicit insistence on the unification of research and teaching and the importance of the isolated university (*Einsamkeit*) are of a newer character (Kaiser, 2015).

The universities themselves reacted very positively to the Humboldtian ideals. Rüegg (2004) points out that the model eventually spread to large parts of Europe, as well as Japan and USA. It is therefore fair to claim that universities were compliant to the initiatives made by the *bureaucrat and statesman* Humboldt.

Totalitarian ideologies

One of the most notable historical events in the 20th century was of course the Second World War. Events in the period before and during the war also affected universities, academic work and the academic norms. In particular, the emergence of totalitarian ideologies like Fascism and Stalinism made academics reflect on what academic work and science were. The most notable example of how a totalitarian ideology affected science is by most accounts held to be that of Germany, where The Weimar Republic transformed into the Third Reich. For decades, Weimar had been a stronghold of both the natural and the social sciences. The republic brought forward scientists like Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, Max Planck, Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen and Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit just to mention a few (Bockstaele, 2004). Between 1901 and 1931 Germany dominated lists of Nobel Prize laureates, with 38 prize winners, predominantly in physics and chemistry (Bruner, 2011). In the humanities and social sciences authors like Berthold Brecht and Thomas Mann, the social theorists at the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, the influential group commonly referred to as the Frankfurt School, made a huge impact on western philosophy and social science.

Infamously, the shift of power towards the Nazi regime made groups of notable scientist and thinkers leave Germany, perhaps most notably in the field of theoretical physics (Isaacson, 2008), although writers have also pointed out that the majority of German scientists chose to stay (Hammerstein, 2004). Regardless of the number of scientists that emigrated from the Third Reich, historians agree on what pushed the ones who left. The Nazi ideology explicitly expressed mistrust of what they called “liberalistic scholars” (Hammerstein, 2004, p. 660), ivory tower types of academics insisting on academic freedoms and seeing themselves as partly detached from society. However, the Nazis did not see all science as unimportant or irrelevant. On the contrary, a new National Socialist Science based on healthy and strong values and in congruence with Nazi ideology, was believed to be imperative to the triumph of the Third Reich and in particular the German war effort. Hammerstein (2004) goes as far as saying that the Nazis explicitly rejected “concrete scientific evidence and theory” when it was in disagreement with ideology, and that this fact bear witness of a lack of

understanding of the nature of science would of course prove to be destructive for Germany.

In retrospect, several writers have pointed out the fact that the “Jewish Science” rejected by Nazi Germany included seminal works in the development of theories of quantum mechanics and relativity; theories that at a later stage became imperative to the Manhattan Project and the development of the atomic bomb (Isaacson, 2008). As an example German scientists were, neither in their writing nor their teaching, allowed to use the names Einstein or Bohr, and in general there was a great amount of scepticism towards Jewish contributions to theories of physics (Hammerstein, 2004). The way this severely restrained Germany in the race towards developing the bomb serves as a prime example of how inhibiting a focus on the messenger rather than the message is for scientific progress.

The academic norms and democracy

In the midst of the Second World War, American sociologist Robert Merton wrote a short albeit influential paper called “The Normative Structure of Science” (Merton, 1973). Naturally, the global proliferation of totalitarian ideologies worried Merton and his contemporaries as they saw it as an ideological threat to the essence of what science is. Therefore, they wanted to identify and pinpoint aspects of totalitarian ideologies that were incompatible with and corrosive to science. Throughout his paper, Merton contrasts the norms of science to certain aspects of Stalinism or Fascism, or the race ideologies of Nazism. The attacks against the integrity of science from these ideologies, he argues, have “led scientists to recognize their dependence on particular types of social structure” (Merton, 1973, p. 267).

Merton identifies several elements in the totalitarian ideologies that thrived in his time that he saw as opposite to the norms of science. One of these is the Nazi idea of a superior race; and more specifically – the idea that Aryan scientists, and Aryan physicists in particular, had superior qualifications compared to other races when it came to conducting scientific efforts. In generalised terms, Merton saw this as a shift in the scientific discourse towards an evaluation of the qualities of the messenger, instead of the contents of the message the messenger put forth (Merton, 1973, pp. 271-273). The only issue that is relevant,

Merton claimed, is what you put forth to the rest of the scientific community. Religious background, class, ethnicity or “race” should not affect how the content of what is claimed is perceived. With the introduction of Aryan science, this is exactly what happened in Germany. Characteristics of the messenger became more important than the message itself.

Another aspect of science Merton claimed was incompatible with totalitarianism is the scientific creed to question everything. A scientist should not allow her- or himself to be limited or restrained by any interest except science. Ideology, politics or religious views held by the scientist should be separate from scientific endeavours. Furthermore, he or she should never be afraid of any consequences of publishing findings, analyses or theories, except scientific critique from her or his colleagues. Still, in the 1930s and 40s Merton observed an increasing amount of censorship and anti-rationalism that limited “the scope provided for scientific discovery” (Merton, 1973, p. 278).

A third norm of science that Merton found to be incompatible with the totalitarianism of the 20th century is the traditions for scientists working together as a community, and a widespread sharing of scientific findings. Through such collective efforts, science thrives. Nazi Germany based their research strategies on the assumption “that brilliant discoveries and inventions could be thought up by individual brilliant researchers” (Hammerstein, 2004, p. 664), a more individualistic approach than the one Merton recommended. Furthermore, a demand for absolute confidentiality kept their research programmes secret, as opposed to for instance the American scientific community in the same period where scientific discoveries to a greater extent were shared, criticized and developed collectively (Hammerstein, 2004).

A recurring theme in Merton’s critique of totalitarian ideologies is how a sound and well developed democratic society is necessary for science to thrive, although he acknowledges that “this is not to say that the pursuit of science is confined to democracies” (Merton, 1973, p. 269). All of the above mentioned elements that Merton criticised are related to democratic values. Firstly, a democratic principle of universal rights resonates well with the principle that scientists should be evaluated on

the message they bring forward, and not characteristics of their person. Secondly, the sharing of knowledge with both academic colleagues and general society in an open and non-secretive manner represents a democratization of the products of academic work. Thirdly, for academics to be able to communicate the results of scientific inquiry true to empirical findings and theoretical analysis freely, without fear of imprisonment, unemployment or being banished from privileges, is interconnected with democratic values, and freedom of speech in particular. To sum up: In my short overview of historical challenges to academic values, the result of the challenge from totalitarian ideology in the 1930s and 40s were a heightened awareness of the interconnection between democracy and science.

Although Merton's paper was instigated by the global situation in which science was situated in the 30s and 40s, he attempts to formulate an analysis of the normative structure of science that is not restricted to what opposes it to totalitarian ideologies. He outlines four *generic* norms that guide scientific endeavour, independent of what challenges surround it. These norms have later been popularized under the acronym *CUDOS*. These norms are the reason why the paper has received a canonical status in the sociology of science since the norms have been hugely influential in debates on the ethics and norms of science (Hasselberg, 2012). I will return to *CUDOS* in the last part of this chapter, as I, informed by the historical backdrop, will try to sum up what these academic norms are.

***Summing up: "Crisis invites self-appraisal"*⁴**

In the introductory words of his seminal wartime paper where he outlines the scientific norms, Merton raises the issue of how times of adversity tend to make people and groups sharpen their awareness of norms. Aspects that are taken for granted in everyday life suddenly becomes uncertain, and people become more conscious of them, and their importance in upholding the status quo. "An institution under attack must re-examine its foundations, restate its objectives, seek out its rationale" (1973, p. 267), Merton claims. What led Merton to develop his norms was a need to consider the social structures that

⁴ The heading "Crisis Invites Self-Appraisal" is a quote from Robert Merton's paper The Normative Structure of Science (Merton 1942, p 267).

science depends on, to be able to defend it against corrosive societal developments. To be able to say what aspects of totalitarianism that are incompatible with science, one needs first to identify what science is.

Merton's point is relevant to the historical overview of the development of academia we have seen in this chapter, as we have examined examples of different forms of forces outside academia pressuring to change what academia is. This has pushed academia to become aware of different aspects of itself. We have also seen that the nature of the aspects that academia has developed, has depended on the nature of the outside force. Furthermore, in some of the examples, the process has resulted in changes in what academia is, while in others academia has not been as affected by outside pressure.

In Merton's theories, he uses the term "attack". Attacks on academia can come in many forms. As long as they are defined as a wish to transform essential aspects of academia, they might do what Merton claims, namely incite an examination and eventually a greater clarity on what academia really is. Thus, an attack on academia can be harsh and direct, like religious censorship and violent punishment of heretic ideas put forward by science. On the other hand, an attack can be mild and subtle, like a political wish to create revenue from science, through developing innovative clusters around universities and making science available for commercial utilization.

The first historical example in this chapter was the medieval university and the norm of *academic freedom*, developed as universities gained independence from the towns where they were situated and the liberty to govern their own content and titles. The second historical example was The Scientific Revolution. The academic norms stating that knowledge should be made publicly available and that science progresses through systematic critique were established in this era. The third example was the Humboldtian University in which the unification of research and teaching and the need for academic isolation were established. The fourth historical example was the totalitarian ideologies of the Second World War era, where the interdependence between science and democracy was established.

The norms introduced in the different periods clearly build on each other. Critique, for instance, is an important virtue in the Humboldtian

model and in the Mertonian norms, but was introduced earlier, as part of The Scientific Revolution. Likewise, academic freedom is an important feature in all four models, and a prerequisite for all the other norms, but the origins of academic freedom is associated with the scholarly privileges granted the medieval universities.

In light of contemporary debates it is intriguing to observe that in the examples I have shown, pressures from outside academia are not always met with resistance. On the contrary, the first (Medieval) and the third (Humboldt) of the examples show that the changes were met with compliance by the existing universities, while the second (Scientific Revolution) and the fourth (Totalitarian ideologies) were met with resistance. A pattern seems to emerge, in the examples at least, showing that historical events that lead to increased autonomy are met with compliance; events that lead to decreasing autonomy are met with resistance. It is perhaps not so surprising when revisiting the examples that special privileges granted in the Middle Ages were appreciated at universities. Although the idea of academic freedom and academic autonomy was not new when Humboldt established his university model, there is broad consensus that a major increase in academic freedom was a result of the statutes he introduced.

The idea that decreasing autonomy generates acts of resistance is thoroughly investigated and commonly accepted in the literature on the relationships between management and workers (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Karlsson, 2011; Lysgaard, 1967), and it is an issue I will return to in detail later in the thesis. For now, I will only note that the pattern in the examples is in congruence with social theories on resistance in organisations.

Contemporary academic norms

Thus far, I have looked at four examples of how the academic norms have developed historically. I have shown that the developments have been a result of an interaction between general society and academia. In the remaining parts of this chapter, I will discuss the academic norms of our time.

CUDOS

Although the Mertonian norms of CUDOS were discussed in previous parts of this chapter, the status they generally hold in the sociology of science is not primarily as a historical example. When social scientists discuss the principles that science, academia and scholarly work are guided by, the Mertonian norms of CUDOS hold something close to a canonical status (Hasselberg, 2012, pp. 26-27)⁵. In this part of the chapter, I will therefore look more closely at the Mertonian norms as guiding norms for academia today, detached from their historical context. CUDOS will thus serve as a vantage point for my discussion on contemporary academic norms.

In his 1942 paper, Merton tries to capture the “affectively toned complex of values and norms which is held to be binding to the man of science” (Merton, 1973, pp. 268-269). He specifies that the norms are no attempt to describe the methods used by science, nor the knowledge that science has produced. His norms are thus situated within the field of sociology, not methodology. Merton himself does not use the abbreviation CUDOS in the original text, nevertheless, the norms *Communism*, *Universalism*, *Disinterestedness* and *Organized Scepticism* (in some later developments *Originality* and *Scepticism*) have been popularised using the acronym.

The norm *communism* (in later writing including this thesis renamed *communalism*), refers to the communal aspects of science, and entails a rejection of ideas of private ownership of scientific discovery. It is rooted in Merton’s understanding of scientific discovery as a collective effort. The endeavours of science are, for the most part, results of scientists leaning on the work of others; in the words attributed to Newton: “If I had seen farther it is by standing on the shoulders of giants”⁶. Since most scientific discovery is the result of a collective

⁵ Although it might be claimed to be questionable if Merton himself would subscribe to such a vulgar measure of the imprint of a scholarly text, *The Sociology of Science* has exceeded 7 600 citations on Google Scholar by the start of 2019, and the 1942 paper *The Normative Structure of Science* where what later has been popularized as the CUDOS framework is outlined has exceeded 2000 citations.

⁶ In addition to having momentous status as credo for the scientific method, Newton’s line “on the shoulders of giants” has also traditionally been seen as proof of a sympathetic humility expressed by one of the greatest scientists of all time. However, debate has occurred on what Newton actually meant. He wrote the famous quote in a letter to his adversary Robert Hooke, as part of an argument contesting who was to be credited for a specific

effort, findings and ideas are thus owned by the scientific community, and are not held in private ownership by the person that published them first.

The norm *universalism* implies that scientific knowledge is to be evaluated detached from an inquiry into the person(s) stating it. Personal or social attributes such as “race, nationality, religion, class, and personal qualities” (Merton, 1973, p. 270) are irrelevant to the validity of the claim. Theories, discoveries and ideas should be assessed on what their contents are, and according to accepted principles of the scientific method.

The norm *disinterestedness* refers to a scientist’s obligation to report on his or her findings and works regardless of how these findings will make his or her career look, or of what effect these findings will have on society. Considerations of how the publication of findings will be perceived should not be taken into account, as long as the findings come as a result of the use of accepted scientific methods. Therefore, the individual scientist should keep personal considerations, like ones own personal advancement, commercial interests, ones ideology or religion, or even fear of causing controversies, at bay when acting as a scientist. The scientist thus shows a personal *disinterestedness* in his or her scientific findings.

The norm *organised scepticism* describes the way science insists on questioning all aspects of the world, be it the natural world or society. It is a necessary consequence of the scientific method, but has implications greater than simply the methodological. According to Merton, organised scepticism is the main driver behind controversies between the scientific community and other institutions of society. Science disregards “crystallized and often ritualized” (Merton, 1973, p. 277) attitudes towards data, and may thus find itself in conflict with religious, political or economic interests, the latter two might be more prevalent in our time than the first one.

In later versions of the CUDOS norms, *Originality* have been included, and *Organised Scepticism* has been replaced by just *Scepticism*, but for

discovery. Hooke, who was a short man, might be the giant Newton ironically is referring to, not due to his humility, but rather as “the mother of all passive-aggressive swipes” (Wilkins 2012, p. 1) directed at Robert Hooke.

the most part Merton's content is kept (Hasselberg, 2012; Kaiser, 2015).

I will also argue that *academic freedom* is a fundamental prerequisite for the Mertonian norms. Academic freedom is not a norm per se, but rather an enabler for the norms. The norm *communalism* is dependent on academics being allowed to develop communities for the sharing of knowledge. These communities must be developed on the academic communities' own terms, and must be the arenas where academic activities are performed in line with the other norms. The norm *universalism* entails that scientific claims must be allowed to be suggested to the world without being hindered by bureaucratic or corporate hierarchies that often control who are allowed to talk and with what weight in other organisations. The norm *disinterestedness* is in its nature closely related to academic freedom, insofar as it explicitly emphasises the importance of the independence of science from other parts of society, be it religious, political or economic interests. The norm *organised scepticism* is linked to academic freedom due to the fact that the practice of scepticism has shown a historical tendency to be controversial and potentially in conflict with other institutions of society. Merton himself mentions organised religion, and in modern times economic and political groups, that may react when "scepticism (sic.) threatens the current distribution of power" (Merton, 1973, p. 278). Thus, to be able to uphold the degree of scepticism necessary to adhere to the norm, academics need established academic freedoms to protect them from the pressures from other institutions of society.

Kaiser (2015) argues that the origins of the norms communalism, universalism and scepticism can be traced all the way back to The Scientific Revolution. Furthermore, it can be argued that disinterestedness resembles the Humboldtian virtue of isolation (*Einsamkeit*). The fact that the Mertonian norms are closely associated with the history of science and universities is yet another reason why a thorough historical backdrop benefits an analysis of contemporary academic work.

CUDOS as institutionalised norms

This notion of the norms not being innate to the single scientist but embedded in science itself is connected to Merton's notion of the norms

being “legitimized in terms of *institutionalised* values (Merton, 1973, p. 269, my italics). Merton argues that the norms should not be seen as individual traits of every single scientist, but rather as embedded in the way scientific work is organised. It is therefore noteworthy that the features highlighted in the Mertonian norms have traditionally been seen as a form of altruism. Scientists that reject private ownership of their own intellectual work, are able to separate the content of what is being said from the personal attributes of the speaker, and manage to keep up a necessary degree of disinterestedness and lack of self-preservation related to their findings.

However, Merton rejects this idea of the altruistic scientist, a character with an unusually high degree of moral responsibility, who in an act of selfishness is making his great mind available for the greater good of humanity. On the contrary, due to the nature of scientific work and the scientific norms, academic workers are constantly the subject of organised criticism and “rigorous policing, to a degree perhaps unparalleled in any other field of activity” (Merton, 1973, p. 276).

The CUDOS norms thus become a set of four “institutional imperatives” (Merton, 1973, p. 270). Moreover, Jörnsten (2008) argues that the norms should be considered as *ideal types*, idealised concepts that do not necessarily find their true representations in reality. Jörnsten’s argument is only strengthened by the fact that Merton’s own concept of *middle range theories* has a lot in common with Weber’s ideal types, the second being “an earlier formulation of the same idea in a different intellectual context” (Portes, 2010, p. 41). Firstly, they were both developed as attempts to be more useful than grand theories or universal laws within the social sciences that Weber and Merton alike saw as difficult to falsify but also difficult to utilize. Secondly, they are both constructed inductively through empirical observations and adjusted or validated through being empirically compared to similar empirical phenomena.

CUDOS today

Although 75 years have passed since Merton wrote his seminal paper that established the CUDOS norms, they are still considered important as guidelines for academic work. Several contemporary ethical guidelines for academics, like the Norwegian (Kaiser, 2015) and

Swedish (CODEX, 2017) ethical guidelines for researchers, give great emphasis to CUDOS. In a recent study of scientific work in Sweden, Hasselberg (2012) found that CUDOS is still relevant as guiding principles for people performing academic work, although she questions to what extent CUDOS influences the actual work performed. Nielsen (2012) claims that in our time CUDOS has gained recognition as *the* norms of science.

At the same time, the norms of CUDOS have their limitations as analytical tools to shed light on the social structures that affect the actions of academics. Ziman (2000) reminds us that CUDOS are ideals, and an ideal “describes what ought to be, not what usually is” (Ziman, 2000, loc 846). Furthermore, he argues that CUDOS probably represented the way scientists worked in the century that led up to the Second World War, but that it is questionable whether they hold the same relevance today. Other authors argue that the development away from CUDOS further accelerated in the early 1980s and onward, when CUDOS was challenged by NPM ideologies, neo-liberal theories, corporate governance structures, and “an abundant rhetoric on efficiency, effectiveness, quality, excellence, internationalisation and competition” (Santiago, Carvalho, & Relva, 2008, p. 496). The fact that Merton himself highlighted that the norms should be regarded as institutionalised, and not as individual traits of every single scientist, contributes to this discussion.

Merton’s theories have also been criticized by authors taking constructivist approaches to the study of scientific knowledge, a critique that led to less attention being given to the CUDOS norms (Panofsky, 2010). However, several authors argue that this is part of a larger trend where Merton’s contributions have been misunderstood and simplified, written off as part of the debunked paradigm of functionalist theory. This “categorisation both misleads generally and obscures many specific contributions not dependent on functionalism or any other paradigm” (Calhoun, 2010, loc 56). Recent contributions to the debate have opened up for a new relevance of Merton’s insights in contemporary studies of developments in academia (Kalleberg, 2010; Panofsky, 2010).

Regardless of the actual influence CUDOS holds today, managerialism in higher education is generally recognised as a challenge to CUDOS (Hasselberg, 2012; Radder, 2010; Ziman, 2000). In the next chapter, I will discuss the growth of managerialism in academia, establish what I will define as the managerial norms, and finish the chapter with a comparison between the academic and the managerial norms.

Chapter 3: Managerialism in academia

Chapter overview

In Chapter 2, I presented a collection of brief historical examples of how universities have developed through the ages, with a special emphasis on the development of academic autonomy and norms guiding academic work. I exemplified how different times have posed different challenges to universities, altering them and making them adapt to the needs and demands of a changing society. However, I also showed how some traits have proven constant, withstanding outside pressures and partly or entirely refusing to incorporate general societal developments. All in all, the chapter leaves us with an imprint of the universities as affected and altered by the world around them; yet at the same time sustaining themselves as entities of their own, thus preserving the traditions and ways of the academics working within them. In our time, the status of academic traditions have been summarised in the scientific norms of CUDOS, developed by the American sociologist Robert Merton.

In this chapter, I return to the universities of our own age. As described in Chapter 1 of this thesis, a prominent view in the contemporary debate on the developments of academia watches the increasing influence of managerialism with caution, sometimes even with alarm. As the reader will remember, *Nature* described alien models introduced at universities, interfering with the core of what research is supposed to be. Others see the development as a necessary adaptation of universities to the modern age.

I start with an empirical examination of quantitative developments in academia. Managerialism is much discussed, but the question I want to explore is if it is possible to quantify the increasing influence of managerialism? After I have examined the quantitative developments, I will discuss what managerialism is, and how it relates to other organisational phenomena like new public management. I will give examples of developments in higher education, and discuss how they are associated with or related to managerialism. The chapter therefore sets the scene for part two of the thesis in that as it describes a) the introduction and b) the nature of the structures that lies behind the

influence of managerialism in the higher education sector over the last decades.

Historically, the chapter starts where Chapter 2 ended. In the history of universities, the decades after the Second World War and the age of totalitarian influences in Europe are described as the period of mass universities, in particular the 1960s and 70s (Meyer, Ramirez, Rubinson, & Boli-Bennett, 1977). The rapid increase in student enrolment throughout those decades and all the side effects of this development still have effects on the higher education sector today. Although the main developments described in this chapter date from the 90s and onwards, the democratization of higher education in the 60s and 70s has been described as one of the underlying causes behind the development of managerialism in academia (Stensaker & Prøitz, 2015).

The case of Norway

In addition to a narrowing of the historical scope by closing in on our own time, this chapter will also introduce a gradual narrowing down of the geographical scope of the thesis. The interviews used in part two of this thesis were performed in a single national higher education system, that is, in Norway, and therefore the development in Norwegian higher education policies, management and organization will be given more emphasis in this chapter and onwards. Even though higher education always has been and continue to be a highly internationalised venture⁷, a brief introduction to the Norwegian higher education landscape is necessary and will be provided through different examples throughout this chapter. In this chapter and onwards, the reader will also notice that the higher (tertiary) education sector as a whole, not only universities, will be included. The Norwegian institution type “*University College*” (*høgskole*) for instance is therefore part of the analysis.⁸

⁷ Examples of the international aspects of Norwegian higher education could be that Norway is part of both a general global development and more specifically, a European development through the Bologna treaty and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Bologna and EHEA are also examples of processes giving leverage to aspects of managerial influence in academia.

⁸ An interesting point to notice in this regard is of course that the mentioned “expansion” of the scope of my thesis, by including the whole higher education sector and not strictly concentrating on institutions that by law can name themselves universities, could be claimed

The developments in Norwegian HE are interesting to study because as before 2003 Norway was considered a “slow” (Bleiklie, 2009, p. 127) and “reluctant” (Bleiklie, Enders, Lepori, & Musselin, 2011, p. 167) reformer, both in general within public policy and specifically within higher education. Academic autonomy has been respected, and the reluctance has led to institutions having “considerable freedoms to interpret and implement reforms as they see fit”, and only “insignificant moves towards competition” (Bleiklie et al., 2011, p. 167, both quotes) have been made.

The developments in Norwegian HE since 2003 stands out in this setting. The 2003 Quality Reform initiated a development where Norway eagerly and thoroughly followed up on the European Bologna initiatives. Simultaneously, three major restructuring elements were introduced: a comprehensive restructuring of the academic degree structure, a new system for funding of the higher education institutions and the introduction of obligatory quality assurance systems (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2002; Michelsen & Aamodt, 2007). I will explore all of these elements thoroughly in the following chapter, as they are part of the strengthening of managerialism in Norwegian HE.

The Quality Reform thus transformed Norwegian HE policy from being characterized by reluctant and slow reform to be willing to execute “drastic changes combined with a stronger determination to implement them forcefully” (Bleiklie et al., 2011, p. 167). Therefore, it can be argued that Norway is a fitting case in which to study academic reactions to managerialism, as Norwegian academics in the last 15 years have gone through an intensified degree of change towards managerialism.

A quantitative overview on managerialism in academia

Thus far, I have established that there is a general agreement among researchers that the last decades have comprised a shift both in political and administrative control of the HE sector. Some of the research focusses on *discourse*, emphasising the language in which the

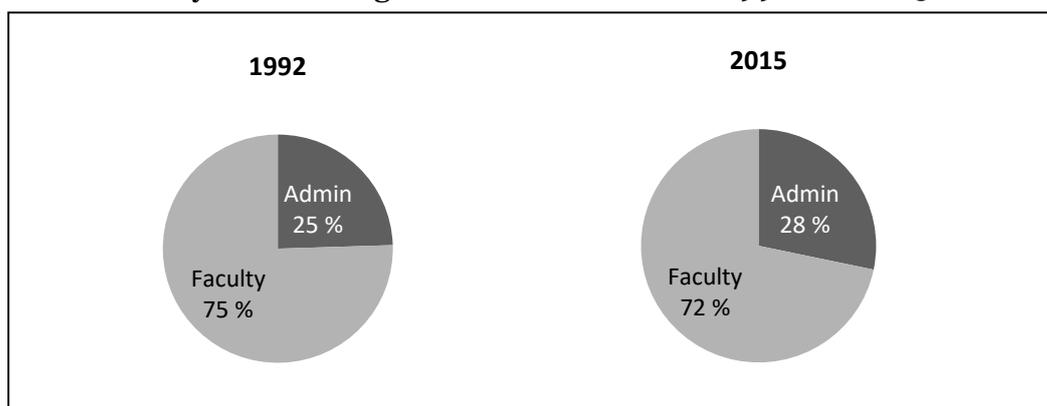
to be a necessary result of the very theme of this chapter. Among many things the advent of managerialism in academia has resulted in is the standardization and categorization of different matters on different levels, including a categorization and naming rights for different types of institution.

management and development of HE is discussed (Persson, 2015; Winter, 2009). Other types of research describe how power formally has shifted through reform or through legislation (Moren, 2011). I would argue that a discussion on managerialism in academia also would benefit from the inclusion of some quantitative measures, to achieve some bearings on the magnitude of the phenomenon. Is managerialism mainly a shift in rhetoric, ideology, and organisational systems? Or, do we see actual consequences of the shift in the distribution of manpower and resources between faculty and administration? Such a perspective seems to be somewhat lacking in the existing literature, although there are some notable exceptions (see for instance Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004). I will therefore start the discussion on managerialism in academia by a quantitative display of the development in Norway the last 25 years.

The Norwegian HE sector keeps detailed records of a variety of performance measures on both institutional levels and national levels, and it is thus possible to do an accurate analysis of whatever numerical changes that occur over time⁹. I will present an analysis of the developments looking at the size of the administrative work force, the level of qualification they hold, and finally compare the salaries of top members of faculty and managerial staff.

Administrative positions in Norwegian HE 1992-2015

In Norway, the number of employees in the HE sector has grown substantially the during last decades. From 1992 to 2015 staff at



⁹ The detailed datasets are of course enabled by the very development of the sector that is described in this chapter – i.e., the advent of managerialism. The appeal of measurements is high in the managerial ideologies, resulting in easy access to datasets enabling analyses like the one I have developed in this chapter.

Norwegian HE institutions grew from 10 360 to 34 103. If we split the numbers into faculty or faculty related positions¹⁰, they tripled in the period, from 7 821 to 24 461. Administrative positions¹¹ increased at an even higher rate, from 2 539 to 9 643 (Database for Statistics on Higher Database for Statistics on Higher Education, 2018). Figure 3.1 shows the total distribution of manpower in the sector between the two categories. Although the increases in administrative positions have been growing at a slightly higher rate, the figure does not speak loudly of a massive change in the balance between admin and faculty as the total percentage switches from 25 to 28 % admin staff.

Figure 3.1. Relationship between administrative and faculty staff in Norwegian HE sector 1992-2015. All numbers from DBH (2016).

However, if we look the distribution of administrative positions between low qualification and high qualification positions, a more nuanced picture emerges. In the Norwegian state bureaucracy the positions *adviser* and *senior adviser* are regarded the highest positions an employee can hold without having responsibilities as a leader (Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet, 2014). An *adviser* or *senior adviser* is expected to be able to work independently, and to perform high-level tasks like complex analysis work, strategical development and leadership support. Adviser positions in Norway normally require master degrees, and it is not unusual that senior advisers hold PhDs (Nyland, 2013).

On the other hand, the positions of *secretary* and *first secretary* are seen as more traditional administrative functions, performing routine assignments and standardised tasks like filing and archive work, budget work, postal duties, coordinating meetings and making transcripts. The secretary positions do not normally require any form of higher education, although some hold bachelor's degrees (Norsk tjenestemannslag (NTL), 2011). In terms of salaries, an adviser makes approximately the same as an assistant professor, a senior adviser

¹⁰ In addition to academic positions like professors and lecturers, the category *faculty related positions* includes research assistants, engineers working on research programs, and also research and teaching support staff, like teaching assistants and librarians.

¹¹ The term "administrative position" covers a wide range in from secretary work, leadership support, legal work, analysis and strategy development, economics, HR and PR to name some examples.

approximately the same as an associate professor (Forskerforbundet, 2018), while secretaries hold significantly lower wages.

Figure 3.2 displays the development from 1992 to 2017 in the administrative position types of adviser (adviser and special adviser) and secretary (secretary and first secretary).

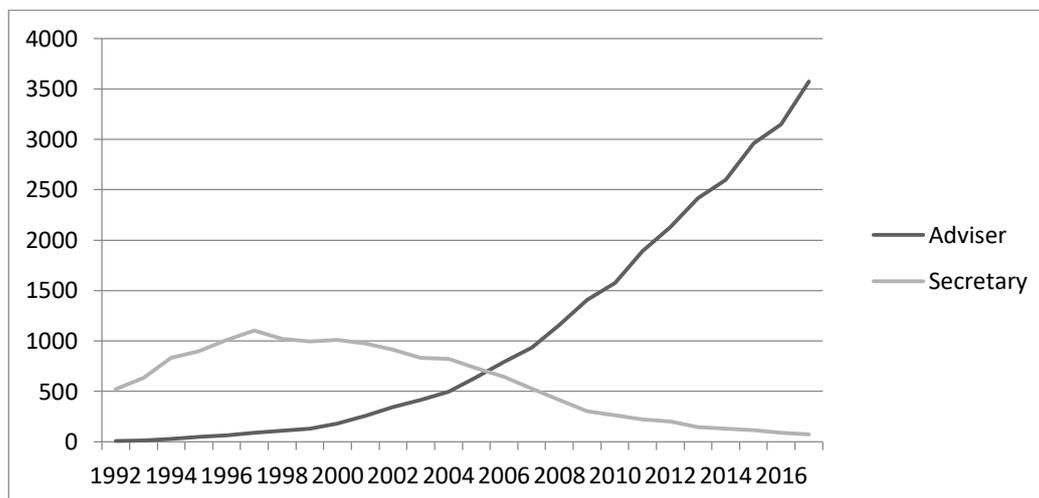


Figure 3.2: Secretary and Adviser positions in Norwegian HE sector 1992-2017. (Database for Statistics on Higher Education, 2018)

The increase in the adviser positions goes from fewer than ten people holding such positions in the whole of the Norwegian HE sector in 1992 to 3 573 positions in 2017. In the early 90s only the biggest institutions had one or two advisers in their staff, in 2017 they are widely distributed at HE institutions. The low-level positions show quite the opposite development in the period; with an increase until around 2000 and a steady decrease in the last 15 years, ending up with 74 positions in the whole of Norway in 2017. The pattern of a growing number of high-level administrative staff and a decline in clerical staff was reported by Gornitzka and Larsen (2004) as evident from 1987 to 1999, and figure 3.2 shows that the development since the millennial shift has been accelerating.

By distinguishing between secretary and adviser positions Figure 3.2 tells a more nuanced and different story than Figure 3.1 does. In terms of levels of competence, tasks and salaries, the numbers show that there *has* been a significant shift between faculty and administration in the Norwegian HE sector. The impact of managerialism on the work force should perhaps therefore not be seen as a mere taking inventory

of people in administrative and faculty positions, but more so a shift in competence levels, payment, responsibilities, power and even status.

The development of an administrative and managerial staff that in many ways are the equals of many faculty members in terms of formal education and salary levels has been described by Whitchurch (2008) as a new form of administrative professionals occupying a *third professional space*, and by Schneijderberg and Merkator (2013) as *higher education professionals*. They are described as situated in-between traditional administrative secretary functions and the faculty tasks of teaching and research. Staff development programmes, the facilitation of innovative teaching methods, development of research programmes or media profiling of teaching and research are all assignments that require competence in areas that used to be reserved for faculty, and allow administrative staff to make decisions in areas that before were reserved for faculty.

Professors vs managers

The professor¹² holds what in most universities is considered the highest academic rank obtainable. To achieve the title of professor is an honour, for many a confirmation that one's efforts and hard work are approved of and valued by one's peers. Professors are at the forefront of the development of their disciplines, take responsibilities in the progress of their departments and have also historically played an important role in the leadership of their institutions, and this last fact has been essential in the development and identity of universities (Scott, 2004). As we saw in Chapter 2, the idea of a self-governing body of professors goes back to the very beginning of the universities; its origins being closely tied to the privileges given by the Holy Roman Emperor in the 12th century. The rest of Chapter 2 gave examples of how the idea of the self-governing body of scholars has been challenged throughout the whole of the last millennium, but also how the universities have upheld and even strengthened their traditions in terms of professorial leadership.

¹² The title professor is here synonymous with what is called *full professor* in some educational systems.

The status the professor enjoys inside her institution is in our time mirrored in the status she enjoys in society at large. For instance, in Bourdieu's framework Professors commonly score very high on cultural capital and high on economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, for instance p. 122 and p. 455). More recent research shows that the Professors still hold their ground as the highest ranking in class and status schemes, in Sweden ranking at the very top in perceived status (Svensson & Ulfsson Eriksson, 2009, p. 31), and in the recent *Great British Class Survey* examples are given of professors being categorized in the highest ranking category, namely belonging to the "elite" (Savage, 2015, p. 318).

The status the professors hold is accompanied by payment higher than the average salary. In the US, professors earn approximately double the average salary; triple if we only consider professors at elite institutions (SoFoKleS, 2007; US Census Bureau, 2006). In Germany, the average is approximately 50 % higher than average, in France around 25 % higher, and in the UK just below 50 %, albeit over 100% higher if we look at elite institutions (OECD, 2016; SoFoKleS, 2007). In Norway this has also been the case both historically and in recent years, with professors in 2014 making an average of NOK 745 000 (Forskerforbundet, 2018), which is just short of 50 % above the average salary, in 2014 at NOK 504 000 (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2016).

To sum up, I have shown that professors historically have held a high status, been respected among peers, enjoyed high salaries and that they have had a lot of influence and responsibility in the leadership of their institutions. Furthermore, professors in our time still seem to have this position in terms of status and payment. However, the last aspect of the professorship, the position as academic leaders, has been challenged during the last decades. And yet again, we are revisited by one of the dominant theories on the development of academia to find the causes of the change: the advancement of managerialism in academia.

According to Winter (2009), managerialism has succeeded in altering the collegial governance model of universities. Academics can still hold some influence in their institutions, but only through becoming *academic managers* and thus "align[ing] themselves with the corporate enterprise and (...) strongly [identifying] with corporate

managerialism” (Winter, 2009, p. 126). Another example of academic managers is reported by Oili-Helena Ylivoiki, as she found that “senior researchers even speak of themselves as managers who hire young researchers for their own projects” (Ylivoiki, 2003, pp. 328-329). On the other hand, if academics do *not* adhere to managerial principles, they become *managed academics*, disconnected from their organisation and in discord with its value system. A changing pattern of how academic leadership roles are appointed and distributed has also emerged, where the tradition of organising leadership as temporary and turn-taking positions has been replaced by permanent line-managers in a hierarchical structure (Lafferty & Fleming, 2000), thus undermining an important principle in the collegial governance model.

In Norwegian HE, a hint of the shift from professorial leadership to professional management can be observed in how the institutions measure their value in the form of salaries. Figure 3.3 shows the development of average pay levels of full professors compared to a category of senior manager called “avdelingsdirektør”. These are managers on a level just below the managing director or CEO, typically in positions like HR director, director of financial services or director of administrative research affairs. Full professors used to make approximately as much as senior management, but since 2008, there is a gap emerging where senior managers at an increasing rate make more than the professors, thus generating a new balance between management and faculty, in 2017 earning an annual average of 90 000 NOK (11,5 %) more than a full professor.

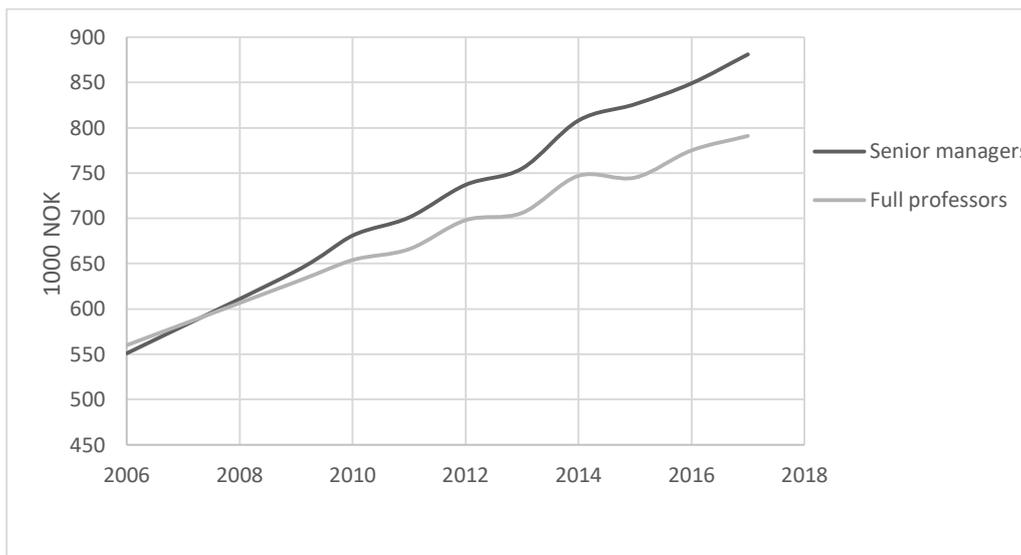


Figure 3.3 Salaries Senior Managers (avdelingsdirektør) and Full Professors Norwegian HE sector 2006-2017 (Forskerforbundet, 2018).

The increasing differences in salaries could be seen as a part of the restructuring of management in HE institutions, and a power shift from collegial governance to professionalised management. It can also be seen as an effect of a devaluation of the professors' roles in institutions, becoming managed academics engaged with a more instrumental take on teaching and research, with reduced leadership responsibilities and chances to affect the direction of the institutions they belong to.

Thus far, I have concentrated on numerical developments in the administrative and managerial staff in the Norwegian HE sector. We have learned that the non-faculty parts of the institutions have heightened their competence levels, their salaries and their status. In the next sections, I will look at the underlying causes behind this development, and discuss how they are closely connected to the rise of managerialism in the contemporary public sector and how it relates to the ideologies of new public management.

What is managerialism?

Before my discussion on managerialism in academia, I will present a short general discussion on what managerialism is. Klikauer (2015) provides the following definition: “[Managerialism is] a belief that organizations have more similarities than differences and thus the

performance of all organizations can be optimized by the application of generic management skills and theory” (Klikauer, 2015, p. 1104). Painter (2011) goes a bit further and claims that “[M]anagerialism is a belief system that highlights the role of management and managers in providing solutions to social and economic problems” (Painter, 2011, p. 237).

Boston (2011) suggests four ideas as central to managerialism. To start with, managerialism presupposes that there exists an activity called “management”. This activity includes the utilization of a set of principles that are assumed to be generic in their nature. Due to their generic qualities, management skills are relevant and applicable across all organisations. Secondly, managerialism entails the notion that managers should be given a substantial amount of authority and responsibility. Thirdly, a firm belief in incentives as means of improving performance is central to managerialism. Individuals and organisations alike are presumed to respond significantly to structured systems of benefits and sanctions based on performance. Lastly, Boston highlights the importance of defining and measuring work processes and tasks. If this is done correctly, it will benefit efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Managerialism and new public management (NPM)

Theories on managerialism are closely linked to theories on New Public Management (NPM), but the terms are not synonymous. Whereas managerialism is a belief or a belief system, NPM is a set of principles and methods, or tools, for the management of the public sector. However, the belief system and the principles are compatible and in our time have become interdependent; one could perhaps suggest that managerialism is the ideology behind NPM.

There is, then, a general agreement that the managerialism belief system has had considerable influence on the development and immense popularity of NPM (Boston, 2011; Klikauer, 2015; Painter, 2011). “NPM is a shorthand term used to describe the rise of managerialism in the context of attempts to reform public services through the 1990s and beyond,” Newman (2011, p. 349) claims. The linkage between managerialism and NPM will therefore be important in this chapter and in this thesis. In the following parts of this chapter,

I will describe the advancements of NPM-inspired reform and the spread of NPM principles in academia, as part of the descriptions of the influence of managerialism. When I conclude the chapter with outlining the managerial norms, NPM methods and practices are important to the analysis as examples of how managerial norms form practice. In the second part of this thesis, where I present and analyse my empirical findings on academic reactions to managerialism in academia, NPM methods and ideas also play an important role as examples of practices informed by managerial norms, practices triggering the academic reactions I wish to study.

Managerialism in academia

The influence of managerialism in academia has led to the introduction of a myriad of different NPM tools in the sector. In this subchapter, I will go through some of them. NPM has been described as a “shopping basket” of different elements or tools available for organisations with a wish to “modernize the public sector” (Pollitt, 1995, p. 133). It has been utilized with local variations in different nation states (Halligan, 2011; Hansen, 2013; Kickert, 2007) and with adaptive nuances in different public sectors (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2011b). As a result, HE has its own distinctive version of NPM (Bleiklie et al., 2011), and furthermore, the Norwegian HE system has got its own local adaptations of the European HE system (Bleiklie & Frølich, 2015).

This diversity observed in the proliferation of different forms of NPM tools across both regional and sectorial borders resonates well with theories on how management ideas spread like fashions (Abrahamson, 1996) and viruses (Røvik, 2011). The fashion and virus theories display how some management tools manage to get traction in organisations while others do not. External actors like consultants and “management gurus” play an important role in the propagating of management ideas (Jung & Kieser, 2012), and internal demands like the need to be perceived as “modern” or “rational” generate an internal drive towards adapting to the managerial trends (Madsen & Slåtten, 2015). At the same time, talking about and deciding on the implementation of concepts do not necessarily lead to organisations acting accordingly (Brunsson, 1989). *Quality management* is an example of a concept that has become particularly fashionable in the HE sector, perhaps more so

than in other sectors that have been touched by NPM (Stensaker, 2007), and will thus be given a lot of emphasis further on in this thesis.

As shown in the above paragraphs, many authors have emphasised NPM as an eclectic term (Pollitt, 1995). Nevertheless, the literature still seems to agree that NPM consists of some shared core elements: It is a common set of administrative reforms that has had significant impact globally in the last 25 years, with mutual goals of effectiveness, strengthening customer relations, cutting down on public spending and heightening transparency and accountability (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2011a). One description many authors emphasise is the idea that the public sector should learn from the private sector (Boston, 2011). Another aspect highlighted by many authors is the before-mentioned connection to the ideology of managerialism, stating that management “is a generic, purely instrumental activity, embodying a set of principles that can be applied to the public business, as well as in private business” (Painter, 1988, p. 1).

This notion of what NPM has been in HE; a set of generic principles, concepts, methods or skills inserted in institutions that have their own pre-existing traditions, will be fundamental in the following presentation of managerialism in academia, as well as in part two of this thesis where how academics have reacted to the development is analysed. I will continue this chapter by showcasing a selection from the “shopping basket” (Pollitt, 1995, p. 133) of managerial tools and methods introduced in HE during the last decades, and discuss their relation to the managerial norms and their compatibility with the academic norms. The selection is not by any means a full list of tools and methods established in HE during the NPM era, but it *does* contain some of the more influential ones.

The different ideas and methods in the NPM “shopping basket” come under many names and in many forms. The “shopping basket” metaphor is suitable to describe the diversity and availability of managerial tools, although it projects the notion of a set of tools that are easy to define and separate from each other. After all, a shopping basket often contains goods that have clear boundaries, precise packaging, and even “best before”-dates. However, when the NPM philosophies and methods hit the ground in an organisation, we often

find that they are overlapping and intertwined with each other. This makes it difficult to assign a given development in an organisation to a distinguished philosophy or method. This insight will be important in structuring my discussion on the influence of managerialism and NPM in academia.

However, the tools and methods of *quality management* hold a special status in global HE, being extremely influential and in many ways setting the premises for several of the other NPM concepts that have influenced HE. Thus, I will use quality management as a vantage point for the discussion of other NPM tools and methods taking hold in academia. There are of course other ways of structuring a discussion on managerialism and NPM influences in academia.

Before I start my presentation of the concrete tools I will introduce three theoretical concepts that I will use to shed light on the discussion. These are *absolute quality*, *relative quality* and *quality cliché*.

Absolute quality, relative quality and quality cliché

Grelland (2011) introduces the terms *absolute quality*, *relative quality* and *quality cliché*. These three different ways of conceptualizing quality can be used to develop a more thorough understanding of the close relationship between quality on the one side and NPM and managerialism on the other, and more specifically how the relationship contributes to the devaluation of professional skill and as a gate opener for managerialism. Developing the first term, *absolute quality*, Grelland starts out with the notion that workers are experts at what they do, whether they are plumbers or professors, roofers or researchers, locksmiths or lecturers. An experienced worker, tradesman or professional innately knows the quality of the work she is doing without having to rely on a set of standards defining what is considered good quality in her particular field. What she recognizes is the *absolute quality* of the product she produces, the service she provides or the lecture she gives.

Relative quality is the quality of a product according to a certain standard. This standard can be defined by for instance a manager, a government agency, or a consultant. Grelland calls the standard a *quality cliché*. It can be a quantitative measure of size, solidness or

design, or an amount of points on a customer satisfaction scale. It can be a maximum number of days a citizen is allowed to be kept waiting for a reply for an inquiry to a public office, or an expected rate of treatments performed at a hospital ward. It can be a percentage of students passing an exam, a sum of grant money rewarded, a number of papers published in peer reviewed journals or a citation index score. In contemporary organisational and working life, there is of course a need for standardisation of products, processes and services. As pointed out by Brunsson and Jacobsson (1998), standardisation has been imperative in the development of advanced society, specialization and division of labour. Hence, quality clichés attributes notions of control, accountability and a shift of responsibility towards the organisation rather than depending on the individual performances of employees.

There is, however, another side to the expanding use of quality clichés in modern organisations. Through defining what is considered quality, the cliché explicitly formulates what used to be implicitly grounded in the knowledge of those holding a trade or a profession. According to Grelland (2011), this is a simplification of the complex understanding of absolute quality that years or even decades of training and practice have embedded in a worker. It is impossible to sufficiently formulate this intricate knowledge using language or numerical systems. Thus, quality clichés can only aspire to become vulgar and coarse reductions of absolute quality. By relativizing quality by introducing quality clichés the worker no longer has to be responsible for knowing what the quality of the product she produces is; the cliché takes over the assessment that used to be part of her work. This removal of tasks will eventually lead to a loss of the ability to perform such assessments, resulting in a loss of skill in the worker. This process is similar to the mechanism of deskilling described by labour process theorist like Braverman (1974). Moreover, in addition to theories on deskilling, this perspective adds an emphasis on the before mentioned loss or even change of content that the transition from absolute to relative quality causes. When the innate knowledge of the worker is passed on to a quality cliché, vital elements of absolute quality gets lost in translation.

Quality management

Quality in teaching and in research are central themes in the contemporary global discourse in the HE sector. At first glance, using a common-sense usage of the word *quality*, this emphasis might seem quite compatible with the academic norms. By applying the stringent demands of the scientific method, academics throughout history have adhered to the ideal of striving for the best and most correct knowledge obtainable. Thus, an emphasis on *quality* in work and services could resonate quite well. Nevertheless, the global quest for quality in HE has caused disputes and been accused of introducing alien and incompatible concepts into academia.

Quality assurance, total quality management (TQM) and quality control¹³ are all parts of a cluster of methods of continuous improvement of quality originating in Japan that gained leverage in American industrial management in the early 1980s (Aune, 2000). Impressions from the Japanese national efforts in rebuilding its industrious capacities after the Second World War had great impact on the American corporate domain, at the time subjugated by a recessing car industry. As a part of the new public management trends (Tolofari, 2005) quality management made its way into the public sphere some ten years later, and gained a potent foothold in HE during the 90s (Newton, 2000) and the 2000s (Harvey & Williams, 2010).

In the following paragraphs, I will explore the rationale for the emphasis on quality in the HE sector and discuss how the emphasis on quality has become a facilitator for the growth of managerialism and challenged faculty's abilities to assess and define the quality of their own work. But first, to establish an understanding of the origins of quality management, I will look at the origins of quality management itself, and elaborate on how it has become a central part of many NPM reforms.

¹³ There are differences between quality assurance, TQM, and quality control, and there are also several other "quality" related management methods. Authors can disagree on what the different labels entail, and the differences between them can sometimes be blurry. I will not go into a discussion on the differences between them, and in the following I include them all under the umbrella term *quality management*.

Quality, managerialism and NPM

Quality management is no foreign concept in the NPM literature. Newman (2011) makes the argument that one of the driving forces behind NPM is to challenge the dominance of professional power bases on behalf of the customer, i.e. the public, and she demonstrates how quality improvement measures, as managerial tools, lend themselves to the ambition of putting the customer first. Following this argument, the concept of quality management becomes a central catalyst in devaluating the power of professionals in the public sector. This aim of elevating control over the labour process from the people performing the work to the managers can be compared to one of the main objectives of Taylorism and Scientific Management. Dating back to the start of the 20th century, one of the aims of Scientific Management was to battle the “rules of thumb” of manual workers by applying time and motion studies, thus achieving a more effective production process (F. W. Taylor, 1911). Similarly, under NPM regimes, by using the objective measurements of quality indicators and the utilisation of systematic improvement procedures, the unproductive “rules of thumb” upheld by the traditions and interests of the professions can be improved upon. A close association between public service orientation and quality management is also observed by Ferlie (1996) and Gruening (2001), who identify the relationship between the promotion of excellence and quality seen in many of the influential management texts of the 80s and early 90s, like *In Search of Excellence* (Peters, Waterman, & Jones, 1982), *The Machine That Changed the World* (Womack, Jones, & Roos, 1990) and *Reinventing Government* (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Being hugely influential, scientific management has also received a fair amount of critical assessment during the century since its publication. A substantial part of the critique comes from theoretical traditions like labour process theory (Braverman, 1974) and critical management studies (Knights, 2009). But scientific management has also generated a group of critics adhering to schools of thought that usually take a more management-friendly stance (McAfee, 2009; Skorstad, 2002). Examples of such texts are the three classical management books mentioned in the last paragraph. The take home message from Womack et al. (1990), for instance, is that American industrial production should discard the teachings of Taylor and Henry Ford, and

start learning from the Japanese car industry. Knowing this, while simultaneously taking into account the close ties between scientific management and quality management claimed by the authors in the previous paragraph, it is perhaps surprising that the latter has become such an influential part of new managerialism and the NPM reforms in recent decades. The answer to this paradox depends on who stands in the replying end.

Several of the early authors on quality management, and in particular, the methods of Total Quality Management (TQM), make a point of distancing their ideas from the principles of scientific management. For instance, several of *the seven deadly diseases*¹⁴, formulated by quality guru W. Edwards Deming, actively oppose Taylor's ideas. Disease number 3 stands out in particular, stating that one should avoid "evaluation by performance, merit rating or annual review of performance" (Walton, 1988, p. 36). Performance evaluation through piece work is one of the major pillars Taylor builds his principles on, but according to Deming, the effects of such schemes are "devastating – teamwork is destroyed, rivalry is nurtured" (Walton, 1988, p. 36). In contrast, TQM introduces a holistic perspective, where the responsibility of management is not only supervising the labour process in itself, but also to consider the workers' perspective and their ability to find work meaningful, the customers and their perspectives, the resources used in production and every aspect the production process affects (Aune, 2000). Taking these self-stated differences into account, it is easier to appreciate the influence TQM has had both on private and public sectors during the last several decades.

Kaizen and identity control

To understand the philosophies behind quality management, it is necessary to explore the influence of the Japanese term *kaizen* (Sallis, 2002). Literally translated as "continuous improvement", *kaizen* as a philosophy for organizing work facilitates a constant drive for better results. *Kaizen* should thus be seen as the major influence behind one

¹⁴ Deming's famous seven deadly diseases are not actually seven, but a shifting number that changes as his writing progresses. "May I not learn?" (Walton, 1988, p. 34) Deming asked, when confronted with the changes. Of course, the biblical connotations associated with the number seven makes it understandable why the title of the diseases never changed its numerical value, regardless of the actual number. Seven is an easy number to sell.

of the most famous contributions from the quality movement, the *Deming circle*, an influential model for designing process improvement. Consisting of four phases relating to each other in circular progression, the Deming circle stresses the importance of identifying and acting on potential for betterment.

The ever-present possibility of improvement is a powerful management scheme. No matter how well an individual performs her work, or how effectively an organization as a whole has performed, the philosophy of *kaizen* will always be a reminder that there are possibilities of getting even better. This chronic pursuit of progress lends itself as a philosophical rationale for what Marx would call the innate demand for increased surplus value in capitalist society, elaborated upon by Lysgaard (1967) as the insatiable technical-economic system of the company (Karlsson, Skorstad, & Axelsson, 2015). As pointed out by Morley and Rassool (2000), the idea that there is always room for improvement also implies that the individual and the organization will forever be full of flaws. Similar to the concept of the original sin in Christianity, this philosophy thus “forces a docility and compliance (...) towards technologies and operational factors” (Morley & Rassool, 2000, p. 177) and shifts attention away from questions of who benefits from the added surplus value, or who optimizes their control over the labour process by introducing quality control schemes.

The kind of compliance described in the above paragraph adds a new level of control in modern organisations. Critical management theorists inspired by Foucauldian ideas of the panoptical surveillance and disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) observe how the very identities of the workers conform to the goals of management (Thomas, 2009). Under Taylorism, the managers controlled their labour process; under quality management, the managers control their *notion of self*. Making the system even more omnipotent, the internalisation of a work identity shaped to fit the interest of management makes the workers effective participants in their own subjugation (Sewell & Wilkinson, 1992).

The notion of a passive subject in a panoptical organisation, left lacking in agency and without the possibility of resistance, has been criticized

for ignoring the behaviour that actually occurs in organisations (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995). For some employees, the search for excellence can be motivational and enhance performance, but this may be limited to situations where the construction of identities is done in mediation between the individual and the organisation, and where the identity of the individual is compatible with the identity of the organisation (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). For others, experiences of strong inner conflict and perceptions of management identities as inauthentic may be the case, and identity regulation thus becomes a catalyst for resistance (Ezzamel, Willmott, & Worthington, 2001). As we shall see in Part 2 of the thesis, an understanding of such identity regulations may be important for explaining how modern day academics react to managerialism in academia.

Regardless of how theorists see the employees in relation to identity management; as submissive receptors of the corporate identity, or rather as partaking in a process of mitigation, or even as resistant agents actively opposing attempts to impose an identity, the notion of a growing popularity of identity regulation as a means of achieving organisational control is prevalent in the literature (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kunda, 1992; Thomas, 2009). Initially, the concept gained traction in the new E-economy and in the Silicon Valleys of the world (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016a), but later it diversified to all strands of contemporary organisations, thus invading a field that used to be considered private and unregulated, carrying out “a creeping annexation of the workers’ selves” (Kunda, 1992, p. 12). And the philosophy of *kaizen*, as well as total quality management and related managerial methods like JIT and Lean (Skorstad, 2002), have been closely associated with the origins and spread of identity management (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Sewell & Wilkinson, 1992; Thomas, 2009).

Quality management in higher education

Quality assurance has become a fashion in HE (Campbell, 2013; Stensaker, 2007). It is regarded a prestigious management concept which by policy documents are seen as a panacea that will solve most challenges that the sector has to face (Newton, 2000). Quality

management in HE has become an industry of its own, with several scientific journals exclusively exploring the subject (Emerald: *Quality Assurance in Education*, Routledge: *Quality in Higher Education*), most European countries having their own national agency dealing with quality assurance and control in HE institutions (Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004) , and most institutions having their own, specifically assigned quality assurance officers or even offices (Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, 2016).

Quality management and policy

The quality discourse is dominant in HE policy documents. One of the three pillars from the 1999 Bologna declaration is a strengthening and a standardisation of quality assurance across Europe (The European Commission, 2016), and this emphasis on quality has been a vital part of European HE strategies in the following years and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

In the Norwegian policy landscape, quality has been dominant in every major HE reform since the millennial shift, with *Kvalitetsreformen* [Trans: The Quality Reform] in 2003 still being the most radical in the number of actual changes it introduced in the sector (Bleiklie et al., 2011). At the same time, *Kvalitetsreformen* has been used as an illustration of governmental reforms that excel in the use of generic terms and abstract language, “making it difficult to argue against them, suitable for inducing hope in organisations and denoting states that you never quite know if you have reached” (Moren, 2011, p. 115, my translation). According to Moren, the use of the term *quality* is a prime example of diffuse managerial language by HE officials.

Later examples of reforms and policy documents that adhere to the quality discourse in Norwegian HE are *Sett under ett* [an idiom, literally translated to “Seen under one”, but meaning All Things Considered] from 2008, *Konsentrasjon for kvalitet* [Trans: Concentration for Quality] from 2015 and *Kultur for kvalitet i høyere utdanning* [Trans: Culture for Quality in Higher Education]. Compared to the 2003 *Kvalitetsreformen* the latter introduced elements associated with post-NPM like mergers (Hansen, 2013) and other whole-of-government approaches to facilitate for better coordination and larger, more robust units in teaching and research,

which in its turn will ensure quality. The institutions were quick to follow up on the signals from the policy documents, and many merger processes and mergers have been effectuated in the Norwegian HE landscape during the last five years. At the same time, the size = quality credo has also been contested and actively opposed, as shown by for instance Persson (2015).

Management by objectives (MBO) and the annual report

Measuring performance as part of managing organisations is an integral part of NPM (Put & Bouckaert, 2011). As a result, *Management By Objectives (MBO)* “has been widely adopted within the public sector” (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011, p. 38). MBO is a common denominator for management methods where the focus is on the *outputs* of an organisational activity. Influenced by theories on the Balanced Score Card (BSC) (Madsen & Slåtten, 2015) and by utilising management techniques like *results-based management* and *results-oriented budgeting*, MBO allows for new ways of control through defining the targets which an organisation is supposed to reach. MBO thus allows for heightened levels of self-governance insofar as the organisation itself can decide the best way to reach the objectives. MBO has been a major part of NPM reform in many parts of public service, especially in the Scandinavian countries (Hansen, 2013). This also holds for the Norwegian HE sector. The Quality Reform of 2003 introduced several changes that led the sector towards a result-based managing style (Bleiklie, Ringkjøp, & Østergren, 2006; Michelsen & Aamodt, 2007), and a funding system “clearly consistent with NPM policies” (Bleiklie et al., 2011, p. 168).

MBO in Norwegian HE

As a result of the influence of MBO, there has been a significant increase in the amount of information on the output Norwegian HE institutions are expected to provide for the agencies that manage them. As the nature of MBO is to follow the output of organisations closely, such an increase follows naturally. Every year in March, the boards of the institutions provide an annual report¹⁵. The reports follow a

¹⁵ This annual report was called “Rapport og planer” until 2014, when it changed its name to “Årsrapport”. All reports from all Norwegian HE institutions from 2008 to 2016 are available

standardized structure where the institutions report on a varied setup of quantitative measures regarding teaching, research, “third mission”, staff and finances (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2015). The national datasets comprise different variations of the annual aggregated behaviour of some 250 000 students and some 35 000 employees¹⁶, and generate millions of data entries. To be able to provide correct information on all of the quantitative measures both the institutions and the agencies that control them have to assign staff with knowledge of complex quantitative methods and statistics, a thorough knowledge on many sides of the institution and how they connect with each other, and the ability to use ITC tools to systematise the diverse data into understandable numbers.

During the last ten years there has also been a shift in the non-quantitative contents of the annual reports (Database for Statistics on Higher Education, 2016a). The depth and complexity of the analysis has increased, with a shift in emphasis towards how the institutions understand and explain the quantitative numbers they produce. There is also a greater emphasis on planning and strategies, and the reports are required to present plans on how the institutions will accomplish the goals set for them by the governing agencies.

The advanced levels of quantitative, qualitative and even mixed methods data collection and analysis in these reports heighten the demands for competence in the administrative workforce of the Norwegian HE sector. Many of the tasks performed when producing the annual reports fit the job description of the *adviser* and *senior adviser* positions that have seen such an increase in the last twenty years (see figure 3.2). The need for high levels of competence in the development of the annual reports is also emphasised by the governing agencies; they explicitly advise that “[the institutions] should develop and sustain administrative services that provide good steering information for all user groups, and [these services] must comply with

online (Database for Statistics on Higher Education, 2016a), in March 2016 adding up to a little more than 500 documents, all of them with its own underlying datasets on different aspects of student, employee, third mission, employee and financial data.

¹⁶ Numbers are from 2015 (Database for Statistics on Higher Education, 2016d, 2018) and will vary a bit from year to year.

the specifications in the law” (Database for Statistics on Higher Education, 2016c, my translation).

MBO and faculty

The influence of MBO in HE also affects faculty. In *The Changing Academic Profession*-survey (N=25 282) university professors in the western countries reported that they spend 30 % of their time on other assignments than teaching and research (Teichler, Arimato, & Cummings, 2013), although this work say nothing on longitudinal developments of time allocation. However, Bleiklie et al. (2011) find that academics “spend more time reporting on their activities as part of internal reporting” (Bleiklie et al., 2011, p. 173). In the Norwegian system an example of such an internal reporting scheme is Cristin (Current Research Information System in Norway), where every faculty member is expected to register all their research and third mission activities. Data from Cristin is a vital part of the annual report, and the aggregated institutional performance in Cristin has direct effects on funding.

The MBO model affects the power balance between faculty and management in HE. By shifting the “emphasis from process accountability to accountability for results” (Boston, 2011, p. 20), and by adding emphasis on metrics (Cheek et al., 2006) that fit into the quantitative logic of the annual report, the complex character of academic work runs the hazard of being reduced to what can be measured as “empirically identifiable indicators, measures, competencies and outputs” (Morley, 2003, p. 48). The quote from Morley fits Grelland’s theories on absolute quality and quality clichés quite well, insofar as it illustrates the shift of responsibility for assessing quality from faculty to the organisation. According to Grelland, the quantification and specific description of the objectives the organisation is expected to meet will also involve a simplification of the complex understanding of quality that has become embedded in members of faculty through years, even decades of experience and formal education in the ways of academic work.

Quality management and identity management by law

In the Norwegian HE system, one can observe the footprints of quality management directly on legislation. In regulations from 2011 on teaching quality in HE, it is possible to read an adaptation of the Deming circle written almost directly into juridical language (NOKUT, 2011). The process of plan-do-check-adjust is translated into five points requiring that institutions a) plan and set targets, b) collect data on quality in teaching c) analyse the data and d) use the analysis to improve teaching. In the words of Grelland (2011), the embedding of quality management into Norwegian legislation can be seen as formulating a quality cliché through legislation.

A fifth point that calls for a *quality culture* in HE institutions steps out of the Deming circle and into the realms of identity management and control, insisting that HE staff do work “characterised by openness, engagement and a will to improve” (NOKUT, 2011, p. 7). Hence, quality and identity management are no longer mere managerial methods the institutions in the sector may choose to adapt, they have effectively been converted to demands put on them by governing agencies. It could be argued that if institutions in the Norwegian system fail to implement the philosophy of *Kaizen* and the Deming circle sufficiently, they become discredited as HE institutions and put under the administration of external agencies.

The transgression of managerial philosophies from the realm of ideology into the realm of legislation is not uncommon in NPM. One of the drivers behind the manifestation of managerial ideas in legislation is an important aspect of NPM, namely accountability (Power, 1997). As partaker in the Bologna Process and member of the European Higher Education Area, Norway is obliged to perform audits to certify that every HE institution meets the requirements for quality assurance and quality culture. To enable sanctioning of deviations legislation is needed, and therefore compatibility between quality management and the law is necessary.

This form of institutionalisation of NPM methods adds to the demand for a professionalised administrative workforce, in line with the increase in senior positions we saw in figure 3.2; as knowledge of the principles and philosophies behind the method is required. In addition

to accentuating a need for knowledge and skills, Marcussen (2013) argues that the development is also a driver to make the workforce more uniform:

“When a certain philosophy has become institutionalised to the extent that it gives superior legitimacy to decisions that are essentially political, it becomes necessary not only to standardize problems and solutions but also to harmonize the kind of people who are employed. To be a professional requires that a certain scientific curriculum forms the basis for one’s role and role perception” (Marcussen, 2013, p. 326).

Quality management and work in HE institutions

Quality management systems in HE are complex and elaborate, and the demands on institutions running them are high. Different aspects of implementing a quality assurance system include elaborate systems for student evaluations of programmes, measuring of student achievements (Stensaker, 2007), and setting them up for external audits and partaking in accreditation processes (Harvey & Williams, 2010). The demands on the administrative staff for establishing and maintaining these systems are high, both in terms of competence levels and in terms of workload. Thus, the emphasis on quality necessitates a strengthening of the administrative and the managerial workforce in HE institutions (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013; Whitchurch, 2008), and is part of the developments illustrated in figure 3.2 earlier in this chapter.

According to Bleiklie et al. (2011), the aim of NPM reform in the HE sector has been to make HE more effective by reducing academic self-regulation. In addition to funding and evaluation practices, quality management is identified by Bleiklie et al. as being the most helpful element of NPM towards accomplishing this ambition. Bringing in the before mentioned concept of the quality cliché (Grelland, 2011), I will elaborate on Bleiklie’s analysis and suggest a list of several examples of quality clichés substituting self-regulated tasks in academia:

- One example is self-regulated teaching agendas and reading lists being replaced by standardised learning outcomes (Caspersen & Frølich, 2014). To ensure that national or international

standards are reached, and that all students that follow a specific teaching programme reaches the same targets, the lecturer must accept a reduction in her freedom to make decisions on what (and how) to teach. In Grelland's terminology, standardised learning outcomes are quality clichés, making sure the instruction students receive adheres to a standard, and does not have to rely on judgements on absolute quality by their lecturers.

- Another example is when a lecturer's own evaluation of her teaching is replaced by standardised evaluation forms like the international *Course Experience Questionnaire* (Ramsden, 1991) or the Norwegian national evaluation *Studiebarometeret* [Trans: The Study Barometer] (Lid, Bakken, & Kantardjiev, 2014). By leaving the evaluation of teaching to the lecturers, the systems trust the lecturers' ability to recognise the absolute quality in their teaching. By defining a set of standard questions, analysis and remedies, some of the responsibility for evaluating teaching is transferred from the individual to the system.
- A third development concerns research. Several quality clichés have been formulated on what comprises good research; on methods and methodologies (Greenhalgh et al., 2016) or on how research should be written in a particular form like the IMRAD format (Sollaci & Pereira, 2004) or instrumental standards of approval on research ethics (Bryman, 2012).

The shift from the self-regulated academic's innate understanding of the absolute quality of teaching and research to the externally regulated quality clichés can be elaborated on in the words of Sally Findlow. She states that "(...) managerialism approaches knowledge as a finished product, packaged, positive, objective, externally verifiable and therefore located outside the knower" (Findlow, 2008, p. 46).

The literature on academic work comes up with different answers to what the effects of quality assurance on the academic profession are. Some claim that we see a transfer of knowledge of teaching and research to the managerial systems resulting in deskilling (similar to the concept described by Braverman, 1974) or quality clichés (Grelland, 2011) that relieve the academic staff of the responsibilities of knowing the absolute quality of the work they do. Others, like Bleiklie et al.

(2011) question whether quality measures can be more than mere symbolic elements in HE, absorbed by the strong traditions in the sector, a view supported by Harvey and Stensaker (2008) in their work on quality culture in HE and Anderson (2008) in her work on academic resistance. Stensaker and Prøitz (2015 pp 26-27) change the perspective and link the discussion on autonomy to the definition of quality, pointing out that when academics themselves are allowed to define what quality in their work is, this should be seen as an elitist understanding of quality. In their paper on quality management as a tool for democratisation, they argue that setting quality standards in fact reduces elitism in HE, making quality assessment more transparent and available for all, regardless of their background.

Chapter 4: Academic norms and managerialism

Thus far, I have discussed the academic norms (Chapter 2) and managerial influence in academia (Chapter 3) separately. In this chapter, I will compare the two. I will see managerial influence in light of the academic norms, and discuss how compatible the development is to different aspects of the academic norms. I will therefore revisit the academic norms and discuss them in light of the influence of managerialism.

In the first part of this chapter, I will look to the literature on academic work and academic institutions as grounds for a discussion on these different options. In the second part, I will look at the academic norms in light of managerialism, and based on the comparison, establish a set of managerial norms that contrast the academic norms.

Post-Academic science

In his work on the developments of the academic ethos, *Real Science*, John Ziman suggests that *academic science* in our time has been replaced by a *post-academic science* (Ziman, 2000). He states that the “transformation in the way that science is organised, managed and performed [is] radical, irreversible and world-wide” (Ziman, 2000, loc 987). Therefore, science has moved so far from the academic norms, as they are summarised by Merton in the CUDOS framework, that a new term is necessary to distinguish academia of today from what it was half a century ago. Hence the term post-academic science. A somewhat similar description of the development of science can be found in the distinction between mode 1 and mode 2 science as put forward by authors on scientific production (Gibbons et al., 1994). To elaborate on what post-academic science is Ziman develops an acronym to represent the academic norms under post-academic science, *PLACE*, as opposed to CUDOS. I will return to the *PLACE* norms in my discussion at the end of this chapter.

The influence of management and the managerial norms are imperative elements in the development of a post-academic science. However, Ziman argues that it is important to distinguish between managerial influence as a driver of the development, and managerial

influence as a result. A close reading of his analysis suggests that there is probably a bit of both.

Managerialism necessitated by scientific progress

Ziman argues that post-academic science is not merely a result of external forces inciting change in a passive and resistant academic sector. In his analysis, he uses several examples where he argues that the shift is coming from within, at least in part. As a result of its own advances, science has become so complicated and so intricate that it is not possible to perform without a professionalised management.

As an example, let us look at the field of particle physics. To be able to make breakthroughs in contemporary cutting edge physics one has to build infrastructure on the magnitude of the CERN Large Hadron Collider or the LIGO gravitational wave detectors. Handling the logistics and financing behind building the physical structures of such projects is not possible for scientists alone. Or, if it were, they would have to spend large amounts of their time doing administrative work, not running experiments. Furthermore, the research performed in projects of this scale involves scientists from a wide variety of disciplines, institutional affiliations and nationalities. To make them all work together, a professionalised HR department is needed, as well as managers specialising in research leadership, information work, lobbying, etc. Ziman's point is that this development is necessitated by science itself. It has become so expensive, so demanding, to further climb the shoulders of the giants of the past that managerial support and therefore managerial influence is inevitable.

The result, however, is a shift in the norms guiding academics. The principle of collective ownership of all things produced by science as entailed by the CUDOS norm of *communalism* is challenged when research becomes impossible without expensive infrastructure and commercial interests therefore become important. As a result of this, adhering to the norm of displaying a certain degree of *disinterestedness* towards the results can be hard when success is necessary to create the media buzz needed to get the attention of politicians, funding agencies and philanthropists. This is by no means to say that scientists of our time are more prone to being sloppy with transparency or even tampering with their data to make them look

more spectacular. On the contrary, managerial influence may include quality assurance measures ensuring methodologically correct treatment of empirical evidence, at least at an instrumental level. However, this is not the point I am trying to make. The weakening of the disinterestedness of the researcher also means a change in her attitudes towards her work; a change in the norms that are intertwined with and guiding her actions as a scientist. Although the managerial influence builds a bulwark to guard against unethical behaviour, this bulwark used to be internalised in the scientist through the norms that were guiding her. The terms absolute quality and quality cliché described in Chapter 3 are relevant to describe this shift – as the responsibility for ethics is extracted from the strength of the character of the individual scientist and inserted into ethical guidelines or checklists that are part of a managerial system – from absolute quality to quality cliché.

Academic resistance

An approach to the relationship between academic and managerial norms that differs from Ziman is provided by researchers that describe a phenomenon called *academic resistance*. The term *academic resistance* is fairly new and still emerging in literature although there is a growing body of research on the topic (Kalfa et al., 2018, pp. 276-277). A review of the literature at hand provides readers with differing accounts of the nature of academic resistance. Some of the work provides evidence that even though they are discontent with managerialism, academics seldom engage in acts of resistance (Alvesson & Spicer, 2017 loc 2858; Clarke, Knights, & Jarvis, 2012, p. 13). I will return to these perspectives in the next subchapter. Others find that acts of academic resistance are more common and these will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

One of the first examples of academic resistance in the literature was provided by Gina Anderson in her 2008 paper “Mapping academic resistance in the managerial university” (Anderson, 2008). Based on a qualitative study using interviews with 30 academics in Australian HE workplaces, Anderson’s analysis never explicitly defines neither academic or managerial norms in her text. However, her analysis implies two sets of norms, one that an academic would uphold when

refusing to conform to managerial demands (Anderson, 2008, p. 263) and an opposite set, as part of a new and dominant managerial culture (Anderson, 2008, p. 267). The academics interviewed by Anderson refused to “take up subject positions within [the managerial] discourse” (Anderson, 2008, p. 256), meaning that they denounced their own roles as parts of a managerial system. The study provides examples of straight out refusal or avoidance of behaviour in manners that adhered to managerial norms. Furthermore, when refusal or avoidance was too costly or impossible, the academics complied reluctantly. In the interviews, they stated that this did not mean that they had internalised the managerial norms. On the contrary, a strategy of “complying with the letter, but not the spirit, of particular requirements” (Anderson, 2008, p. 265) proved to subvert the managerial agenda, and express contempt for the managerial norms.

The findings of Hasselberg (2012) in her study where she conducted 45 interviews with Swedish academics are somewhat similar to Anderson’s findings. Although the elements of resistance are not as outspoken and visible in her material, the academic norms are explicitly separated from the managerial norms in the eyes of the academics she interviewed. Furthermore, Hasselberg explicitly notes that the CUDOS norms still have support in modern day academia. In a study where she interviewed 13 academics at a university in England, Clegg (2008) found similar aspects, where academics performed acts of passive resistance to be able to perform their academic work with integrity.

Defeatist opportunism

Alvesson and Spicer (2017) take a position somewhere in between Ziman’s post-academic science and Anderson’s resisting academics. Alvesson and Spicer find that the reluctant compliance that Anderson saw as a novelty, rather should be considered the norm in contemporary academia. They argue that although academics still are critical towards elements of managerialism, a defeatist attitude in which one feels that the neo-liberal ideologies have won every battle is prevalent among academics. In this situation, standing up for the academic values is pointless. The result is academics trying to make the best of the situation, by being opportunistic through adapting to the

new victorious regime. Being loyal to the institution management policies and branding strategies, and playing the games of publication rankings and study programme assessments are all part of this defeatist opportunism.

Furthermore, there are parts of the neo-liberal ideologies “which have been most positively and wholeheartedly embraced” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2017, loc 2858). Elitism, in the form of promises of excellence and peak performances, as well as some forms of accountability measures are compatible with elements of the classical academic norms. Becoming part of an international academic celebrity through rapid careers and impressive titles is tempting for the individual academics.

Conflicting scripts

At first glance, the notion of reluctant compliance among academics seems contradictory to findings in the before mentioned CAP study (data collected in 2007) and the Carnegie survey (data collected in 1992) where academics’ attitudes towards their work and academia were among the issues addressed. Alvesson and Spicer’s descriptions of academics going along with institutional strategies and managerial requirements seemingly contradict the developments from 1992 to 2007 on responses to a question like: “Please indicate the degree to which each of the following affiliations is important for you: My academic discipline/field, My department (at this institution), My institution” (Teichler et al., 2013, p. 187). In 2007, 90 % of the academics replied that their discipline is important, 72 % that their department is important and 64 % that their institution is important. Compared to the 1992 study, the importance of the discipline is fairly stable. However, the importance of the department drops 11 %, and the importance of the institution “has dropped enormously within 15 years” (Teichler et al., 2013, p. 189), from 80 to 63 %. In the UK (which is the country where Alvesson and Spicer find most of their examples) the drop in the importance of the institution is from 84 % to 38 %. On the face of it, these numbers tell a story where institutional loyalty and going along with institution management policies and branding strategies become less important, not more.

However, there is an important point that Alvesson and Spicer make here that can explain the apparent conflict of results: the reluctant compliance is only one side of a more complex situation. The loyalty to institutional policy is part of a *game* played by the academics. They are still very critical towards neo-liberal ideologies, but the critical attitudes do not materialise themselves in acts of resistance as described by Anderson, they contain themselves in innocent activities like expressing one's dismay as an "important part of ongoing informal social interaction in (...) universities" (Alvesson & Spicer, 2017, loc 2845). Alvesson and Spicer describe this as playing out different scripts, of compliance and of resistance. When in a survey asked about the importance of the affiliation to their institution vs their discipline, the resistance script is activated and the loathing of the institution is dominant. But when present in settings like "a department meeting (...) looking at performance metrics" (Alvesson & Spicer, 2017, loc 2953), academics are more eager to be part of the neo-liberal games, fixated on the instant gratification of seeing their name rising on lists like an H-index scoreboard.

Comparing CUDOS and managerialism

John Ziman's idea of an ongoing *industrialization* of academia is central to a discussion on the CUDOS norms and managerialism. Ziman distinguishes industrial science from academic science; industrial science occurring in industries like pharmaceutical firms, military enterprises etc. and academic science occurring in academic institutions. For the layman, the two forms of science may seem indistinguishable, but in terms of the norms guiding them, industrial science should be seen as "the antithesis of academic science" (Ziman, 2000, loc 1121). Ziman argues that industrial science contravenes every single one of the CUDOS norms. Industrial science and academic science each has a role to play in knowledge production, but recent developments have led to an industrialization of academic science, implying "the establishment within academic science of a number of practices that are essentially foreign to its culture" (Ziman, 2000, loc 1150).

Central to the opposition between academic science and industrial science is Ziman's development of a set of alternative norms, as

opposites to the CUDOS, more fitting to describe the industrial science. He calls these norms by their acronym PLACE (Proprietary, Local, Authoritarian, Commissioned and Expert). In addition to Ziman, there are other examples of authors who contrast the CUDOS norms to recent developments in academia like Hasselberg (2012) who suggests the COIUC norms (Competition, Ownership, Interest, Utility and Consensus). Furthermore, Jörnsten (2008) suggests that the PLACE norms give insights into contemporary Swedish higher education but also argues that a translation is necessary. In the following, I will look at each of the individual CUDOS norms and analyse them in light of the managerial influence in academia as described in Chapter 3, the previous discussions in this chapter, and the alternative norms of PLACE¹⁷ and COIUC. I start out with the CUDOS norm of communalism.

Communalism vs managerialism

As we remember from Chapter 2, the academic norm communalism entails that no scientist, institution or other private or public body owns the thoughts, ideas, findings and knowledge produced by science. Scientific findings and knowledge belong to the scientific *community*, and should benefit all. Several writers have commented that in contemporary academia the norm communalism is challenged, on many levels and in many forms.

Some of these texts can be grouped in the way that they suggest the umbrella term *commodification* is suiting to describe a set of developments in academia. According to Radder (2010), commodification is associated with commercialization, but the term includes more than just selling academic services to a market. In this wider sense, “academic commodification means that all kinds of scientific activities and their results are predominantly interpreted and assessed on the basis of economic criteria” (Radder, 2010, p. 4). An important point in relation to my analysis is that Radder explicitly

¹⁷ In Ziman’s text there is no clear statement indicating that the PLACE norms are direct counterparts to the CUDOS norms, i.e. C ≠ P, U ≠ L, D ≠ A, etc. Hasselberg however, makes such direct comparisons and explicitly formulates the COIUC norms as directly opposing the CUDOS norms, meaning that C ≠ C, U ≠ O, D ≠ I, O ≠ U and S ≠ C.

argues that commodification should be seen as conflicting with the CUDOS norms (Radder, 2010, pp. 17-18).

A well-known and illustrative example of a process that would work against communalism and towards commodification is the recent developments in academic publishing. In the 21st century, the most important channel for communicating new scientific and research findings is without comparison journal articles. There has been an ongoing debate on the availability of journal articles to the public. Technology has made it easy to make all publications available to any member of humankind with an Internet connection. However, publishing houses demand payment for access to journals, putting new scientific discoveries behind paywalls. As critics point out, the academic community has to pay publishers for a journal article manifold. First, the academic community does the research and the writing. Secondly, inspired by the CUDOS norms of universalism and organized skepticism, the academic community takes responsibility for the quality of the result through peer review, editorial committees and boards. Finally, the academic community has to pay to get access to the text. In several documented cases university libraries have stated that they cannot afford the publishers pricing schemes, and although this issue is most grave at institutions with limited resources it has even become a problem at elite institutions like Harvard (Sample, 2012).

The paywalls of contemporary publishing divide the academic world in an insider and an outsider group: the ones employed at institutions that can afford access and the ones that are left without access. The ideal that scientific findings should be the common ownership of the academic world is not upheld. Funding agencies and governing institutions have made many attempts to make research available for all through a mix of carrots and sticks; the Norwegian open access legislation initiative of August 2017 is an example of this (CRISTin, 2017), the international Plan S initiative another (Science Europe, 2019). A perhaps even more interesting development in the availability of research is the pirate-site Sci-Hub, a site that illegally bypasses the paywalls of the academic publishing companies and as of October 2017 offers illegal downloads of 64 million scientific papers according to the site's own numbers (Sci-Hub, 2017). The people behind the site have

their own mission statement; under the heading “knowledge for all” the following is proclaimed:

“We fight inequality in knowledge access across the world. The scientific knowledge should be available for every person regardless of their income, social status, geographical location and etc. Our mission is to remove any barrier which impeding [sic] the widest possible distribution of knowledge in human society!” (Sci-Hub, 2017).

Given its emphasis on availability regardless of affiliation, the Sci-Hub mission statement could be perceived as an attempt to regain traction in the academic landscape for the Mertonian norm of communalism, and fighting commodification of academic work.

In addition to commodification of research, the commodification of academia is also visible in teaching. Students are seen as customers shopping for qualifications and universities as providers in a HE marketplace. An alternative take on the commodification of teaching is the universities as production facilities where employable personnel for the knowledge economy is produced (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002). Del Fa, Sergi, and Cordelier (2017) illustrate how recent developments have taken the commodification of teaching even one step further, to a state when students becomes both the customers and the commodity that the university offers. In a case study of an ongoing branding campaign at a university from 2014 to 2016, the authors describe how students are “living the brand of the university in which they (...) study” (Del Fa et al., 2017 loc 4189). Furthermore, they describe how the emerging concept of *prosumer capitalism* (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010) has spread into universities, blurring the lines between production and consumption. Students thus simultaneously fill the roles of producers and consumers at the university. A comment I would like to make in light of the academic norms of CUDOS is that the authors refer to a statement made by a dean at the university as a reaction to the marketing campaigns: “Students are depicted as naïve and idealist and research as a problem solving practice reduced to intervention and practice. We are in a good position to know that we cannot reduce academic research to these basic principles” (Del Fa et al., 2017 loc 4062). Although this statement is not explicitly described as an example of the conflict between academic and managerial norms, the

statement suggests an annoyance with the intrusion of new identities and norms that come with the new branding regime of the university.

In Ziman's alternative set of norms, PLACE, communalism is replaced by *proprietary*. In Hasselberg's alternative set of norms, COIUC, communalism is replaced by *competition*. The norms Ziman and Hasselberg suggest are not necessarily opposites of each other, but both of them are certainly opposites of Merton's communalism. One way of uniting Ziman and Hasselberg is to suggest that *proprietary* entails that scientific findings do not belong to the scientific community, but to the individual(s), the company or the industrial complex that has discovered it. Proprietary structures support a culture of *competition*, while the cooperative and sharing ideal of communalism supports cooperation.

Universalism vs managerialism

As we remember from Chapter 2, in Merton's original text, an important aspect of universalism is that in science, emphasis should be on the message and not the messenger, insofar as "the acceptance or rejection of claims entering the lists of science is not to depend on the personal or social attributes of the protagonist" (Merton, 1973, p. 270). As Merton exemplifies it, according to the norms of science one cannot oppose Newton's theories on gravity just because one is an Anglophobe.

Recent developments in academia challenge this message-not-the-messenger aspect of the norm universalism. There is a growing trend advising academics to build their social media presence (for examples of texts giving such advice to academics, see Chan et al., 2017; Freitag, Arnold, Gardner, & Arnold, 2017). Some aspects of this new trend align with the expectations of the norm universalism, other aspects conflict with them. The aligning aspects are that academics using social media are making research available to the public through suitable and commonly available channels, as social media platforms are where people are. Furthermore, the interest-based infrastructures of social media make sure that the research reaches an audience with an interest for the research.

Nevertheless, the importance of branding the individual researcher is also framed as imperative to success as an academic in the online world. Social media activity has been proven to interplay heavily with other elements associated with individual academic success, like publication metrics. As far back in the history of social media as in 2011, a study found that texts with high visibility on Twitter are 11 times more likely to be cited than texts without the same visibility (Eysenbach, 2011). ICT capacities and big data have made complex measuring, quantification and metrics of an individual researcher's performance possible, furthering the push towards branding and individualization of academic efforts (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016b). Hall (2014) points out that this development has led to a situation where an individual academic's social media activity can reach a critical mass where it becomes an enhancer to her brand in itself, unrelated to the academic publishing or research she has done. A bit like an academic Kardashian, the person thus becomes "famous for being famous" (Hall, 2014, p. 424)¹⁸.

The connection between the individualization of academic work through social media branding and managerialism might not be self-explanatory. One could argue that this development is facilitated by social media, and has nothing to do with a growing influence of managerialism in academia. However, as shown by Cheek and Øby (2018), the branding of the individual researcher is enabled and necessitated by the growing availability of different kinds of publication metrics. Several of these metrics have their origins as managerial tools, meant to provide managers and governing agencies with information on research output, for instance of a department, a university or a national higher education sector as a whole. These systems have proven themselves potent catalysts for branding of individual academics and the individualization of research.

A Norwegian example of such a system is CRISTin (Current Research System in Norway), a database and reporting system keeping track of research publications by employees of Norwegian HE and research institutions. The system is not meant to be used to compare and assess

¹⁸ Hall's paper itself has done quite well in terms of altmetrics. According to the K-index of December 2017 it has reached a top 5 % altmetric score of 2194, with 2328 tweets.

individual researchers (Norsk publiseingsindikator, 2016), albeit having been utilized for exactly this purpose. In the fall of 2017 a group of IT students systematized the publicly available CRISTin data, and thus made individualized comparisons between researchers possible through a search engine interface (Lie, Tønnesen, & Eriksen, 2017). As a result, a list of the top 100 Norwegian researchers quickly surfaced, highlighting the research output of individuals. This again prompted the Norwegian higher education online newspaper Khrono to publish short (individualized) bios on the top 3 on the list (Lie & Tønnesen, 2017), further strengthening the emphasis on individual researchers. Similar to the Norwegian CRISTin database, commercial bibliometric index providers like Web of Science base their business model on providing academic managers with knowledge on the output value of the academic staff they manage, answering questions like “what research strategies are correlated to producing better research? How do you decide how to best allocate your funding?” (Clarivate Analytics, 2017).

This development is strengthened through several of the managerial structures that have been introduced in academia during the last decades. An example is the way in which departments and institutions depend on big name professors to gain positions in university rankings, to be able to gain funding, and even to continue existing. If institutions cannot show that they have a certain number of full professors and have performed publishing on a certain level, they are in danger of losing accreditation, a structure that has led institutions and academics alike to engage in questionable behaviors in search for publication points (Butler & Spoelstra, 2017, loc 2365).

In Ziman's PLACE norms, universalism is replaced by the word *local*, in Hasselberg's COIUC by *ownership*. By using the term *local* to describe what knowledge is under the regime of industrial science, Ziman argues that instead of providing universal understanding, industrial science “is focused on local technical problems” (Ziman, 2000, loc 1141). Hasselberg's *ownership* on the other hand is related to an understanding of Merton's universalism as a norm that safeguards universal utilization of the findings of science; ownership thus limits the universal usage to the *owners* of the findings.

Disinterestedness vs managerialism

The norm *disinterestedness* states that academics should distance themselves from the object of their research and their teaching. A finding should be reported on no matter what effects the findings may have on the career or reputation of the academic, or perhaps more importantly seen in light of managerial influence, the reputation of the institution where the academic works. In many ways, disinterestedness is even more fundamentally challenged by commodification than what universalism is, at least if we revisit the definition of academic commodification as “scientific activities and their results are predominantly interpreted and assessed on the basis of economic criteria” (Radder, 2010, p. 4). An assessment of a scientific finding based on economic criteria is fundamentally different from an assessment based on scientific criteria. Economic interests in scientific practice, be it from the researchers themselves or from the institution, distance the practice from the principle of disinterestedness.

Disinterestedness is challenged by *authority* in Ziman’s model and by *interest* in Hasselberg’s model. Both of the authors make valuable additions to the understanding of how managerialism challenges the CUDOS norm of disinterestedness. Ziman clearly states that “[i]ndustrial researchers act under managerial *authority* rather than as individuals” (Ziman, 2000, loc 1139, italics in original). Contrary to the disinterestedness of academic science, industrial science exists within a hierarchy, be it within government or within a corporation, where members of the hierarchy must be loyal to democratic decisions made by politicians (within government), ethical guidelines (within professions) or the strategies set by a board (of a corporation). Within academic science, there is no room to adhere to loyalty claims or authority, the only master science answers to is science itself.

By plainly pointing out that the opposite of disinterestedness is *interest*, Hasselberg makes the forthright yet vital argument that under managerialism, science and research are to a great extent dominated by interests. She illustrates this by referring to a demand for political relevancy and demands for commercial utilization of research, demands that many an academic will recognize from research fund calls and HE institution policies and strategies. The growing demand

for an element of “usefulness” of research is also an important topic that Jörnsten (2008) addresses.

(Originality vs managerialism)

In later developments of the CUDOS norms, *originality* has been added to the original four norms that Merton suggested. Since originality (or lack thereof) plays no major role in my analysis of CUDOS vs managerialism, I have not given the versions of CUDOS where originality is included much space, but used Merton’s original text as my vantage point. I find some support for this view in Hasselberg, insofar as she states that she, due to several options “hesitates on how to classify” (Hasselberg, 2012, pp. 59, my translation) a norm that fits as the opposite of originality.

I will therefore limit myself to stating that the PLACE opposite to originality is *commissioned* and the COIUC opposite is *utility* (although Hasselberg also suggests the alternatives *appropriateness* and *demand*).

Organised scepticism vs managerialism

As discussed in Chapter 2, organised scepticism describes the way science insists on questioning all aspects of the world, be it the natural world or society. In Ziman’s PLACE, scepticism is opposite of *expert*. Closely tied to the norm of commissioning, the expert’s research is performed “to achieve practical goals, rather than undertaken in the pursuit for knowledge. They are employed as *expert* problem solvers rather than for their personal creativity” (Ziman, 2000, loc 1148, italics in original).

As an attempt to link the expert to the other parts of this chapter, the commissioned expert can perhaps be seen not as a norm in itself, but as a *role* that elicits several of the managerial counterparts to CUDOS described earlier in this chapter. For instance, the commissioned expert thrives when faced with commodification of research and is thus in conflict with *communalism*. Being an actor in a marketplace, the research sold by the expert can be considered a commodity. Furthermore, on a different level, so can the expert herself. This last point leads us to the previous discussions on the *branding* of individual

researchers, and how this conflicts with *universalism*. The commissioned expert lends herself to *interests*, political or commercial, and is thus in conflict with *disinterestedness*.

Hasselberg argues that rather than Ziman's *expert, consensus* seems a more fitting counterpart to organised scepticism, thus completing the acronym COIUC. Organised criticism necessitates conflict rather than consensus, making science "anti-social" (Hasselberg, 2012, p. 35), in the sense that it does not emphasise the search for common ground but makes claims, contending and critically disputing them.

Ideal types

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Merton saw the CUDOS norms as institutionalized norms (Merton, 1973). This entails that the norms are not so much internalized in individual scientist, but rather are part of the particular type of social structure that guides science. Jörnsten (2008) suggests that it is useful to see the CUDOS norms and the PLACE norms as ideal types, as "poles where reality exists between the two and never at their ends" (Jörnsten, 2008, p. 44, my translation). This view of the Mertonian norms as ideal types is supported in Portes (2010), who also argues that the norms are fitting examples of what Merton himself called middle range theories.

Building on Jörnsten, it can be useful to see the discussion on CUDOS and managerialism in this chapter as describing two positions relating to each other as ideal types. What is described can thus be considered poles, and reality will find itself mediating between the two.

Summing up and pointing forward

The comparison of CUDOS and managerialism marks the ending and conclusion of part one of this thesis. Before I embark on part two, I would like to sum up a few key points that will be imperative to the analysis of the empirical data that will be presented.

The first lesson to be learned from part one is that universities and the academic norms have developed and gone through changes throughout history. I have also established a set of academic norms relevant in our time. Secondly, I have explained the concept of managerialism and explored how managerialism has influenced contemporary higher

education. Finally, I have discussed managerialism in light of the academic norms.

In part two I will present an empirical study of academic reactions to managerialism in higher education.

PART TWO

Empirical investigation and theoretical contribution

Chapter 5: Methods and methodology

Part two of this thesis presents the results and analysis from a study based on 25 qualitative interviews, half of which were conducted in the spring of 2014, the other half in the fall of 2014. In the methods chapter I will briefly discuss some methodological considerations of qualitative interviewing, present the sampling process, discuss how I developed the interview guide and discuss issues of interviewing researchers. I end the methods chapter with a discussion on the use of a reflexive approach when conducting and analysing qualitative interviews.

A qualitative approach

As part of my discussion on managerialism in academia in chapters three and four, I presented previous research that addresses the question of how academics react to the introduction of managerialism in academia. Parts of this previous work is of a quantitative nature (Teichler et al., 2013), and finds statistically observable changes in the attitudes of faculty at universities. Presented in this research is a notion that qualitative approaches are necessary to provide a thicker description of what lies behind the changes observed in the statistical material.

In my study, the ambition has been to contribute to the knowledge on academic work in the 21st century by utilising a qualitative approach. A common view is that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to “gain access to people’s social and cultural constructions of their ‘reality’” (Gray, 2014, p. 160), using the “perspectives and accounts of research participants as a starting point” (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014, p. 3). My interest therefore has been in the *experiences* and *understandings* of what it is like to work as part of the faculty at the institutions where my interviewees are employed, not only an account of their actions and responses.

Qualitative interviews

To capture the academics own understandings of what it is like to be an academic in the 21st century I decided that talking to them in the form of a qualitative interview was a fitting approach. The interview is “probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research” (Bryman, 2012, p. 469), but it is not without its methodological

challenges. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) use the metaphors of *the miner* and *the traveller* to describe contrasting views of how data from a qualitative interview should be considered, by discussing the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer. The miner-interviewer *mines* for knowledge in the conversation. By asking neutral questions the interviewer finds data that can be compared to nuggets of metal that remain unaffected by the questioning or responses from the interviewer. The miner metaphor implies that knowledge is treated as something that exists independently of the interview situation.

The traveller-interviewer metaphor conveys that both the interviewer and the interviewee contributes to generate knowledge in the interview situation. The conversation is full of negotiations and by asking questions and responding the interviewer and the interviewee are both part of the process of generating knowledge. Therefore, data from the interview does not exist independently from the interview situation but is constructed in the interview.

Silverman (2011) provides three different models for how qualitative interviews can be understood based on different epistemological standpoints. *Positivism*, as the name suggests, sees data from the interview as something that exists independently from the interview situation, and represents objective accounts of the themes that the researcher is interested in exploring, much like the nuggets in the miner metaphor coined by Kvale and Brinkmann. *Emotionalism* sees the necessity for open-ended interviews and letting the interviewee define the conversation. This can be done by establishing trust and *rappport* between the interviewee and the interviewer by emphasising natural interaction. By doing this, the researcher gains access to authentic representations of the interviewees experiences. *Constructionism* recognises that the interview knowledge from an interview is generated in the interview situation. It is therefore important to acknowledge what interview data is and what it is, and that it must be understood as a product of social interactions. The notion that knowledge is generated in and therefore highly connected to the interview situation has raised concerns about the reliability and validity of interview data (Yeo et al., 2014). Furthermore, the increasing tendency that we live in a society where interviews are commonplace and impression management is an important part of people's everyday

lives has made some authors question whether “interview talk may say more about role playing and adapting to social standards (...) including how to appear authentic – than about how people really feel or what social reality is really like” (Alvesson, 2010, loc. 128).

Building on Silverman, and as an attempt to come to grips with the different methodological challenges the qualitative interview imposes on a researcher, Alvesson (2010) suggests that a *reflexive* and *pragmatic* approach can be helpful. This is an approach where the researcher is aware of the “complexity and uncertainty” that inherently lie in interview data, and attempts to acknowledge these complexities and uncertainties when utilising qualitative interviews as a method for generating reliable knowledge. When using qualitative interviews as a source of data in this study, I have attempted to utilise such an approach in all phases, that is, in the preparation for, in the execution of, in the analysis of and in the discussion of, the interviews.

The interview guide and the interviews

It is possible to perform qualitative interviews with a variety of different degrees of openness as regards to structure. The almost *unstructured* interview is an interview where the interviewee is given only a theme to base the conversation on or a single question to which “the interviewee is then allowed to respond freely” (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). At the same time, “even in the most unstructured interviews the researcher will have some sense of the themes they wish to explore” (Yeo et al., 2014, p. 183) and for instance Alvesson argues that these interviews are best described as “loosely structured” (Alvesson, 2010, loc. 227). In a *fully structured* interview the researcher wants answers that can be “coded and processed quickly” (Bryman, 2012, p. 470) following pre-set scripts that control the conversation both chronologically and thematically. In *semi-structured* interviews, the interviewers utilise a pre-written list of themes or questions to assist them in controlling the conversation, but allows for flexibility both in terms of the order of when in the conversation themes are discussed and also in terms of how the interviewee replies to the questions (Bryman, 2012).

The interviews I conducted clearly fall into the category of semi-structured interviews. I used an interview guide (attachment 1), but in

line with recommendations in the literature I did not use the interview guide as a manuscript that questions were read aloud from. The interview guide was more of a “list of issues to be addressed” (Atkinson & Flint, 2004) and was developed so that the conversations would thematically be relevant to my research questions. I allowed for a great deal of flexibility both thematically and chronologically.

As a supplement to the interview guide, I constantly reminded myself to utilise probing techniques and questions during the interviews. Pauses, follow up questions (“why is that?”, “in what way?”, etc.) and also drawing attention to inconsistencies are examples of probing techniques that are described in the literature (Yeo et al., 2014) that I utilised in the interviews. This constant reminder to always consider the option of probing during the interviews helped me to use the interview guide as a list of issues that I wanted to address, but not as a strict script for the conversation. Issues that were relevant to my research question but that I had not thematised directly in the interview guide thus appeared in the interviews. These were issues that I had not thought about before I started gathering data, and in the analysis these issues became valuable. An example of this relationship between the interview guide and the interviews is described in the next paragraphs.

The deskilling hypothesis

When I designed the interview guide, before I did the interviews, I was influenced by theories on managerial systems that change the labour processes of workers and professionals. Several of these theoretical perspectives are described in Chapter 3. In particular, Grelland’s (2011) concepts of absolute and relative quality were important to me. For a quick recapture, these concepts state that if relative quality replaces absolute quality, it may also lead to the transferral of knowledge and knowhow from the individuals performing work to the managerial systems, leading to a deskilling or reskilling in workers. In the interviews, I wanted to explore if managerial systems in higher education, like quality assurance systems and incentive structures, could have such a deskilling or reskilling effect on academics. Therefore, the interview guide included several elements that intended to enable the interviewees to address such issues in the conversation.

These elements in the interview guide were not direct questions like “has anything changed in the way you work as a result of managerial systems being introduced?” or even “have you experienced any form of deskilling?” They were rather formulated as themes like *standardisation*, *measuring* and *quality assurance* to remind me to bring them up in the conversation to see where they led the interviewees. I had an idea that bringing these themes up would lead the interviewees to talk about deskilling, but wanted the “questions” to be more open.

However, experiences of a changed labour process and deskilling/reskilling turned out to be of no major importance in my interviews. On the contrary, the interviewees described various ways of resisting or gaming the managerial systems, not conforming or being passively changed by them. Thus, as the next chapters will reveal, the concepts of deskilling/reskilling ended up without importance in my analysis even though I had an idea that the concepts would be of importance when I designed the interview guide.

Sampling and interviewing

Sampling of context

The interviews were all conducted within one national setting, Norway. In Chapter 3, the choice of doing the study in the Norwegian HE sector is seen in light of its development from being a slow to eager reformer (Bleiklie, 2009), and how this affects the issue of academic reactions to managerialism. The choice of including only one national setting is also a practical issue. Choosing one national setting puts clear limitations on the external validity of the study (Bryman, 2012). Although I, in the analysis section, compare the findings to studies on academic work under managerialism in other national or cross-national settings, my interviews are still limited to Norway.

In the last 25 years, the Norwegian higher education landscape has consisted of *universities* and *university colleges*. At the time of the interviews, half of the interviewees in this thesis were employees at a university, the other half at a university college. I made this choice to ensure diversity in the types of institution to which the interviewees belonged.

A structural reform during the latter parts of the 2010s has generated substantial changes in the Norwegian higher education landscape; a process that has transformed most of the institutions that in 2014 were university colleges into universities, and furthermore blurred the lines that used to separate *universities* and *university colleges*. One might argue that the efforts that I made to secure interviewees that represented both forms of institution no longer holds as much relevance. However, as of 2019, some differences do remain within the new group of institutions labelled universities. Five of the “old” and “elite” universities in Norway have established a group called U5, inspired by the Russel Group in the UK (Lie, 2017). One of the institutions where my interviewees come from is now a U5 university, the other is not.

Sampling of participants

I sampled the interviewees according to several criteria. I made sure that women and men were included in the sample, and ended up with 14 women and 11 men. I also wanted to include academics from different positions in the academic hierarchy. The sample therefore includes nine full professors (Norwegian: Professor), eight associate professors (Norwegian: Førsteamanuensis) and eight PhD students, all of which were employed at a higher education institution and had teaching and/or supervision assignments as part of their workload. The professor/associate professor/PhD student divide also provided a decent distribution in terms of age between the interviewees. Furthermore, the sample is divided into different academic disciplines, approximately evenly divided between natural sciences and engineering, social sciences, the humanities and professional training programmes.

When the criteria for selection of interviewees were in place, I looked at the web pages of both the university and the university college where I had decided to do my interviews. I chose departments where I would expect to find academics within the fields I had chosen. Both institutions provided lists of employees at department level where academic title, name and academic field were provided. Apart from making sure men/women and academic positions were represented, I

randomly chose which interviewees that were to be included from these lists.

Several times interviewees suggested that I should include one of their colleagues in the sample, because the theme of the interviews was one that the colleague in question was very engaged in. Since the interviewees themselves were academics, they used the language of research when suggesting this, making statements like “An interview with him will give you great data, you know!” Although sampling interviewees through other interviewees, or “snowball sampling” (Atkinson & Flint, 2004) in some cases is a recommended sampling method, I decided not to follow up on these suggestions. Snowball sampling can be useful, for instance in situations where interviewees are particularly hard to reach like members of deprived groups or elites. In my case, interviewees were very easy to reach, as they were available with all of my sampling criteria available just by looking at the web sites of their work places. Snowball sampling is also a method with difficulties associated with it, like bias towards inclusion of interviewees with inter-relationships or perceptions of the interviewer being affected by relationships among interviewees. I also considered my obligation to as far as possible providing anonymity of the interviewees, a goal that to a greater extent would be compromised if the interviewees were aware of each other’s participation in the study. If the interviewees in my study had been aware of each other, it would be easier to identify who made the quotes I have presented in later chapters of the thesis.

Making contact

The first point of contact I made was an email to the HR directors of the university and the university college respectively where my soon-to-be interviewees were employed. In the email, I explained my intentions of asking their employees if they would partake in the study, and asked if they had any objections. The HR director of the “old” U5 university replied after a few minutes. He thanked me for giving him a notice of my intentions, but stated that the members of faculty were free to talk to whomever they wanted. He also commented, humorously, that if he were to try to regulate whom the members of faculty interacted with, it would have no effect whatsoever.

The HR director at the university college gave quite a different reply, stating that he would need to get back to me after he had discussed the matter with the rest of the top management at his institution. A couple of days later he replied that they had addressed the issue in their weekly meeting, and come to the conclusion that they would allow me to make contact with the employees at the university college. They had decided that they wanted to contribute to the research into managerial systems and work in HE institutions because they saw this as an important issue. Furthermore, he stated that they had agreed that a study on managerial systems in higher education would be useful.

Of course, I noticed the variance in the way the HR directors had replied to and acted on my inquiry. The different reactions gave a hint towards the conflict between autonomy and control that the interviewees later in the study would heavily elaborate on. In both cases, I included a phrase in the information letter to the interviewees stating that the HR director of their institution had accepted that I did the study, and furthermore, that the interviewees as employees of their institution, talked to me.

I made contact with the interviewees in two steps. After finding a set of candidates that fit my sampling criteria, I sent them an email. In the email, I described the aim of the study, how I planned to do the interviews and how I would secure their anonymity, and information on the project being approved by the Norwegian data protection services. A copy of the form of consent was attached to the email. The email ended with a question asking if they would consider partaking as interviewees in the study, and a notice that I would call them later to provide answers to any questions they might have.

A day (or in some cases two days) after sending the email, I called the candidates on the phone number that was available on their institution's website. Without exception, they were positive to partaking in the study, and all but two, who were on a sabbatical or too busy with other tasks, said yes. Some of them questioned whether they would provide any useful information, or "good data" as one of them stated, for my work, but they still wanted to be interviewed. The fact that they doubted that they could provide good data is an interesting point that I have used in my analysis, in Chapter 6.

Conducting the interviews

Both the university and the university college that I conducted my interviewees at are geographically situated away from where I live, so I had to make logistical arrangements to conduct the interviews. All but one of the interviews were conducted face to face in the offices of the interviewees, and one person, me, did all of the interviews. I used a digital recorder to record all of the interviews. I was also equipped with a small notebook and the interview guide printed on paper. I started every interview by informing the interviewee of how I would use the data from the interview, how I would store the data and that they could withdraw from the interview or from the study at any point. They then signed the form of consent (which I also had sent them on email before the interview).

One of my interviewees had to cancel the appointment I had made the same day as the interview was supposed to take place, and asked if we could do the interview by telephone at a later stage. For practical reasons, the telephone option was a viable solution for me as well since making a new face to face appointment meant expensive airline tickets and hotel booking, but methodologically it was far from perfect. The telephone interview has potential disadvantages since “physical cues of body language or facial expression can be missed, which could be very important pointers for probing for further detail or to indicate different points of views that those being communicated verbally [and] for this reason telephone interviews (...) have at times been criticised in traditional research literature” (Yeo et al., 2014, p. 182). Nevertheless, I ended up with doing the interview by phone, to be able to uphold my original sampling of interviewees.

Interviewing researchers

Since the interviewees all were academics they had a professional understanding of research. The social scientists in particular had high levels of competence both methodologically and theoretically related to what I was trying to do in my project. When they were interviewed, for a while they became the researched rather than the researcher. Several of them commented on this, either before or after the interview, stating that it was interesting to be on the other side of the recorder for once. The fact that my interviewees were researchers resulted in a few

situations during the interviews that made me reflect methodologically on my role and the role of the interviewee. In the following paragraphs I will elaborate on these situations and how I decided to respond to them.

As an interview with a seasoned professor in one of the more peripheral of the social sciences drew to a close, I asked one of my standard wrap-it-up questions that went something along the lines of “Is there anything you feel that we haven’t covered, or perhaps something you would like to add at the end?” It seemed like the professor, although she already had told me that we were out of time and that she had to move along to a physical training session, was very happy that the question was posed. “Yes, actually...”she replied. “There is something. Reading the description of your project, and listening to the themes of your questions, I must admit I thought you would ask me about New Public Management...”

Immediately I felt like someone had spotted a major crack in the middle of my research design, although quite quickly I convinced myself that this was not the case. Research and theories on NPM and its influence on HE have been central in the development of my interview guide. Nevertheless, I decided early on not to use the term myself in the interviews. Firstly, NPM is a term defined in a variation of ways, often complicated and many-faceted (Boston, 2011) and is as such a much debated theoretical concept with no finite, agreed upon definition. Secondly and more importantly, in addition to being a scholarly term, New Public Management has become a political term, in the Norwegian discourse often used by critics to describe a whole array of un-wanted developments in the public sector. A bit exaggerated one could perhaps claim that no one in Norwegian politics wants to be associated with NPM, but many accuse others of being spokespersons for it. Thus, if I used the term in the interviews I would perhaps be perceived as sceptical to the implementation of management systems in HE and even affect the answers of the interviewee.

Let us return to the interview: “Well, that is a good observation” I told the professor. “But the term is left out intentionally,” I continued, a bit more hesitant. After a few seconds of contemplating, I decided I had to

explain myself, and continued more firmly: “You have of course noticed that we’ve been through many of the major concepts traditionally associated with NPM. We’ve talked about performance measures, incentive structures, audits and transparency, not to mention the new status of the students as customers...” “Yes, but these are all administrative, quite boring elements associated with NPM,” she replied. “What I would like to talk about are the ideological aspects of the development. Because I don’t like it at all”.

The pending training session made sure we did not have the time to continue the discussion properly. In addition, the meta-perspective that was introduced was on the verge of leading the conversation into becoming a discussion about my methods and my design. The situation still stands as an example of an issue I thought through before the interviews, but still found myself to be a bit off guard with when I encountered it: Will I as the interviewer have to behave in a special way because my interviewees have methodical, analytical and theoretical training and experience, often on levels much higher than my own?

Another experience around the same time in the project can stand as an additional example:

Approximately in the middle of another interview, as the interviewee, a senior lecturer with 20 years of teaching experience, was reporting on how the increasing standardisation of study plans had affected her own teaching, she suddenly stopped and asked: “But tell me, what kind of theory will you use to analyse this? What kind of perspective do you adhere to, what disciplines do you employ?” This resulted in me getting quite uncertain if I should answer the question or not. After all, this person had agreed to meet me, even though she had told me that she really did not have the time, she had made time since she really liked the topic of my research. In addition, she seemed really interested as she asked the question. The way I saw the situation, she might perceive it as a bit rude if I were to be reluctant in giving her a reply. The trust and talkativeness that I had spent half an hour establishing would perhaps be somewhat damaged if I refused to answer. At the same time, I was worried that lifting the conversation up to the analytical or theoretical realm could ruin the whole interview. Not only did a theoretical discussion at this point in the conversation have the

potential to go on at great length and take up a lot of the time I had available, it would also entail influencing the answers of the interviewee. Since she was a trained social scientist, she would quite easily recognize what schools of thought the theories belonged to and also the general claims they would make concerning connections between managerial systems and her own experiences of her work. On the other hand, if she had suggested to me what theories I could use, the situation would be different.

During the whole project, the competence level in terms of knowledge on methods and theory of my interviewees has been high; in many cases they probably would be well fit to participate in and contribute to the analysis that followed the interviews. And this is the exact thing that some of them directly or indirectly expressed that they wanted the conversations to a greater extent to be about. They wanted to contribute by analysing their own experiences. They wanted to apply a meta-perspective to their own reporting on the condition of their own academic work. In addition to delivering descriptions of how different organisational concepts affected their everyday work situation, they wanted to partake in the analysis of why it was happening. Put simply, they wanted to analyse the data they provided themselves.

What I have ended up doing both in the two mentioned interviews and in other similar situations has been some kind of compromise between a complete rejection of theoretical discussions and a full-scale inclusion of them. It has been an attempt to remain neutral without striking down on the interviewees wish to engage in theoretical discussions of their own experiences. Similar attempts are described by Jörnsten (2008) who also, as a PhD student, interviewed researchers more seasoned than himself, and ended up with concerns of being too respectful towards his seniors in the academic hierarchy.

I never took the initiative to start discussions like the ones exemplified above myself, but when they nonetheless occurred, I replied by saying things like “I have not concluded yet” and “I try to keep an open mind at this point in the study”. At the same time, I have also said that I would be glad to hear about the theories they think would be applicable. Nevertheless, through follow up questions and other techniques I have

tried to direct the conversation back on the main topic of the interviews.

Data analysis

Transcribing and coding

After I had conducted the interviews, I transcribed them using Nvivo. Nvivo is one of the market leaders in what has become known as computer assisted qualitative analysis software, or CAQDAS (Bryman, 2012). There are mainly three ways that CAQDAS can be used to assist qualitative analysis; that is for *data management*, to *assist* (or even automate) *the interpretive process*, and to *facilitate teamwork* (Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor, & Barnard, 2014). Of these three, I only utilized the first.

The first way CAQDAS can assist data management is through enabling researchers to archive and store several forms of data in one *file* or *project*, accessible through the same interface. Instead of having to relate to different software (media player, word processor, spreadsheets and even paper versions), all forms of data are available in one place. In my case, this meant that sound files (recordings of the interviews), texts (transcriptions of the interviews), memos, field notes and policy documents could be stored and accessed within the same computer programme. Furthermore, the software provides a system for annotations and coding within and across the different formats, making instant comparisons, recoding and restructuring of the data possible. It is also possible to instantly compare different media formats of the same data, like being able to play back the audio from a segment of an interview by clicking on the transcribed version of the same interview. I made use of several of the data management options available in Nvivo.

The second way that CAQDAS can be used to assist qualitative analysis is in the interpretive process, but I did not utilize any of these features in my analysis. Nvivo is able to do search for words, phrases or strings in different configurations in the material. Furthermore, Nvivo can visualise the data, including visualisations of relationships between codes.

The third option, facilitation of teamwork, was also not utilised in my project since I was the sole researcher on this project.

CAQDAS has received a fair amount of critique (Spencer et al., 2014). For instance, the software has a tendency to make researchers see passages of transcribed material stripped of its context due to its abilities to instantly retrieve snippets of data. Other techniques of assisting the interpretative process have received similar criticisms due to the fact that these processes have been accused of reducing what perhaps is the most important strength of qualitative research— namely the ability of a researcher to gather thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of a phenomenon. As a reply to these criticisms, a common stand is that CAQDAS should only be used in the same manner as a word processor is used by an author; as a tool for making the writing of the text easier but not as an author of the text (Spencer et al., 2014 citing Flick, 2009). Therefore, an author should always account for and discuss how CAQDAS has been used in qualitative analysis, and not merely state that Nvivo has been used to analyse the data in this project (Spencer et al., 2014).

I had no experience using Nvivo or any other software specifically designed for qualitative analysis prior to my PhD project. Although I did test some of the more advanced analytic tools the software offered, I was unable to utilize the findings in my analysis and I ended up using only the most basic functionality in Nvivo. It is therefore fair to say that the use of CAQDAS has had no major impact on the research project compared to what would have been the case had I used a more traditional approach to qualitative data analysis. However, I did find some of the functionality in Nvivo timesaving and practical. Nvivo syncs transcribed text with audio recordings of the interviews, making comparisons between audio and text easily accessible for referencing throughout the project. Nvivo also provides an interface for annotations and coding that makes cross coding between different kinds of data (text, audio, memos) easy to administer.

In addition to analysing and coding transcribed material, I also used field notes and memos actively during the whole process. Some of the field notes are cited in the analysis, for instance in Chapter 6 where a response from a soon-to-be interviewee has provided valuable data to

my analysis. The response was not recorded because it was given before the interview started, but nevertheless written down in the form of a field note.

Sampling, analysis and results

I have earlier mentioned the criteria according to which my interviewees were sampled. In the following chapters, it will become clear that neither the institutional type, gender, position in the academic hierarchy or discipline are given much attention in my presentation of academic reactions to managerialism. In my analysis of the interviews, I attempted to subscribe the interviewees to certain categories depending on their sampled backgrounds, but I always ended up with contradictions where the data did not fully support the claims. Therefore, the sampling criteria have ended up without having any influence on the results that are presented. Nevertheless, the knowledge that the interviewees were sampled according to the mentioned criteria might reassure the readers that the interviews were analysed with the criteria in mind, although the analysis produced no results that I found worth reporting on.

Developing categories

As discussed earlier in this chapter, I had some notions of what I would find in my interview and these notions formed some elements of the interview guide. I ended up finding that the situation described by my interviewees differed somewhat from the notions I had. It is thus safe to state that the categories in my analysis are data driven. At the same time, the five central categories of my thesis (open, covert, hiding, gaming and mediation) are informed by previous research within the fields of working life studies, critical management studies and organizational studies.

In line with the ambition of performing reflexive and pragmatic (Alvesson, 2010) interpretations of the data from my interviews, methodological themes will be included in the following chapters (analysis) and are therefore not merely addressed in the methods chapter (this chapter). This is especially apparent in the next chapter (Open and covert reactions) where a methodological discussion on a

shift that happened in some of the interviews plays a vital part in the analysis and development of two analytical categories.

The ambition of performing reflexive and pragmatic interpretations also entails that the development of the categories will be described in the next chapters. Therefore, I will not go into detail on how the categories were developed here in the methods chapter, only describe the principle of reflexive interpretations.

Translation

The interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and the interview guide was written in Norwegian. I have translated the interview guide into English and translated all quotes used in the thesis into English. The transcribed interviews have remained in their original language throughout the process. The quotes from the interviews are translated in a form where they resemble the original as closely as possible. This has led to some sentences seeming odd. Where a direct word for word translation inhibits meaning, I have restructured the sentence.

Ethical considerations

The Norwegian data protection services

The project is approved by the Norwegian data protection services (NSD), and I have utilised guidelines developed by this agency to secure gathering and storing of data during the whole project. The approval was in place before any contact with the research participants was initiated. All the participants have signed a form of consent to partake in the study, and the option to at any time withdraw from the study has been highlighted in writing and several times orally (before and after the interview).

Informed consent

An important principle that most authors on the ethics of social research seem to agree on is the idea of *informed consent*. Informed consent means that the participants in a study should be aware that they are studied, and participate voluntarily. The issue of the participants being aware that they are being studied also implies that the study “takes place on the basis of the fullest possible information

about the goals and methods of the particular piece of research” (Flick, 2015, p. 33). However, this aspiration may conflict with other important issues concerning the research design, an example could be “if comprehensive pre-information would distort the results of the research in an unjustifiable way” (Flick, 2015, p. 33).

In my study, I have had to make decisions on whether I should elaborately disclose all the information I possibly could to the interviewees, or to hold back some information for the sake of risks of distortion. This is of course a practical issue, insofar as providing elaborate information on the theoretical basis of the interview guide would require a couple of full 45 academic lectures delivered to the interviewee to be done sufficiently. More importantly, this is also a question of leading the interviewees towards providing certain sets of answers. An example from my study that has been discussed earlier in this chapter can provide some insights into this issue:

Under the heading “The deskilling hypothesis” I described how I expected to find accounts of deskilling or reskilling of academic work in the interviews, and how this had led to the inclusion of certain elements in my interview guide, but also that I had tried to keep the questions open and not leading. I also described how these themes ended up being of no importance in my interviews, while other issues that I had not thought of became important. Had I stated in the information provided to the interviewees that I wanted to address issues of deskilling and reskilling in my interviews, perhaps this would affect the interviewees in such a manner that they would lean towards these issues?

Another issue relevant to the concept of informed consent is something that I will return to in the next chapter on open and covert reactions. In some of my interviews, I saw a shift in how the interviewees talked about management, managerial systems and their own academic work. The interviewees shifted from what could be labelled as an “official version” of the managerial systems, to elaborate on “dysfunctional” aspects of the systems and how they were incompatible with academic work. I will elaborate broadly on this issue in the next chapter including a discussion of what the reasons for the shift might be. In this chapter,

I will limit myself to the issue of what such a shift in the middle of an interview says about the concept of informed consent.

I will therefore only mention that in the next chapter, I will provide three different explanations for the shift from the “official version” to the “dysfunctional version” that I saw in the interviews. One of the explanations I provide suggests that the interviewees in the middle of the interview changed their understanding of what the interview was about; this is elaborated upon further under the heading “This is not an audit”. If this explanation holds any truth, it will imply that the interviewees in question first thought that the interview was about providing one perspective on managerialism and academic work, but later in the interview thought it was about providing another perspective on management and academic work. The question thus becomes: What did the interviewees in question say yes to when they gave their consent? And is it fair to argue that the consent they gave was informed?

Furthermore, as Gray (2014) suggests, the researcher holds great responsibility in protecting participants from harm, and that this is just as or even more important than providing full and complete knowledge of all sides and themes of a research project.

As for my own project, I ended each interview with repeating the option all the interviewees had to withdraw from the project at any time. I also explicitly stated that if the interview had turned out to be something that they had not anticipated, it was fully understandable if they wished to reconsider. I do subscribe to the notion that a principle of full disclosure of all sides of a research project sometimes can lead to a flawed research design insofar as research participants might be inclined to provide different data due to the information they receive. This might hold particular relevance in qualitative research designs that utilize open-ended approaches, as these open ends risk being considerably narrowed down by providing the research participants with elaborate information on theories and expectations of findings a researcher might have before the project. The notion that providing all information is both practically unviable and may compromise a research design is recognised by several authors on the subject, like

Flick (2015, pp. 32-34), Gray (2014, pp. 75-77) and (Webster, Lewis, & Brown, 2014).

It is also important to recognise that the issue of informed consent in general is much broader than the discussion on how informed the participants are on the themes of the research they partake in. Bryman (2012, pp. 138-146) debates issues like whether or not participants should be informed at all (covert research) and researchers that knowingly deceive participants like in the infamous Milgram experiment. Such designs are arguably on another level regarding violations of the principle of informed consent than my discussion of whether or not the participants fully have understood the themes of the study.

Insider research

The issue of insider research is a recurring theme in research on higher education. To say it bluntly: It is not unusual that researchers that do research on HE institutions are employed by HE institutions, since HE institutions usually employ many researchers. Therefore, issues of studying something that oneself is a part of becomes relevant.

As I have not conducted interviews at an institution where I have had any form of employment, my study does not fill all of the criteria set by some authors for what insider research is. Insider research can for instance be defined as “research by complete members of organizational systems in and on their own organizations” (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 59), or *insider action research*, “in which managers or other professionals are engaged in action research projects in their own organisations or context” (Gray, 2014, p. 329).

Nevertheless, interviewees and I share academia as our field of work. Our positions within the organisation where we work are the same, the language we use is the same, the tasks we perform are similar and we might even share professional values. I have found elements in Alvesson’s (2003) concept of self-ethnography valuable when considering this issue in my own research. Alvesson suggests this approach for researchers who wish to study universities, and describes a self-ethnography in the following manner:

A self-ethnography is a study and a text in which the researcher-author describes a cultural setting to which s/he has a “natural access,” is an active participant, more

or less on equal terms with other participants. The researcher then works and/or lives in the setting and then uses the experiences, knowledge and access to empirical material for research purposes (Alvesson, 2010, p. 174).

In opposition to traditional ethnography where participation in a field is a means to facilitate observation, participation is the primary position in self-ethnography. The field of study is also the researcher's home base. The role of observer of the home base is a secondary position occasionally taken to be able to do research.

Alvesson discusses that what constitutes this home base could vary, and his examples span from studying one's department, or even a fraction of the department, to studying the faculty or the university where one belongs, to studying a (national) system of higher education (Alvesson, 2003, p. 177). In my research, the only home bases I share with the interviewees is the national system of higher education, and with some of them, belonging to the social sciences.

One important issue when doing research in a sector where the researcher is a native is to be aware of and reflect on one's own preconceptions. Researchers will always have some degree of preunderstanding, but the "knowledge, insights, and experience of the insider researchers apply not only to theoretical understanding of organizational dynamics but also to the lived experience of the researchers' own organization." (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, pp. 68-69). Alvesson argues that having different work-related social identities and experiences from different positions within the organisation is an advantage when dealing with the dangers of "staying native" (Alvesson, 2003, p. 187) within the boundaries of one's own lived experiences. Thus, my varying experiences from the sector, as a quality assurance advisor, head of studies and PhD student may contribute to strengthening my ability to be aware of and reflect on the preunderstandings I have due to my lived experiences in academia.

I have not utilized all of the suggestions that Alvesson recommends in his concept of self-ethnography when studying higher education, but been inspired by elements in his paper on self-ethnographies in higher education when considering how to cope with studying a sector where I am employed. To sum up, I have attempted to deal with the fact that I am studying a sector where I am a native mainly by adhering to the following three aspects:

- By utilising a pragmatic and reflexive approach (Alvesson, 2010) to the interviews and to the analysis.
- By stressing the fact that I have had three different positions and identities within the higher education landscape (Alvesson, 2003, p. 187): PhD-student (aspiring faculty), Head of Studies (management) and Quality Assurance Advisor (administration).
- By removing myself from the institutional setting of the place where I am employed and doing my interviews at two institutions where I have no affiliations, thus sharing only the national system of higher education as “home base” with my interviewees (Alvesson, 2003, p. 177).

Further methodological discussions

As part of my attempt to utilize a reflexive interpretation of the interviews (Alvesson, 2010), the methodological discussions will to some extent continue throughout this thesis. This is particularly true for the next chapter on open and covert relations. I have tried to utilize a stand in which methodological issues and analytical issues affect each other, and one way of emphasising this relationship is to include methodological reflections in the interpretations and analysis of the interviews. Therefore, in this thesis, methodological discussions are not contained within the “methods/methodologies”-chapter, but I will also return to them when they are relevant for the analysis.

Chapter 6: Open and covert reactions

In the first part of the presentation of academic reactions to managerialism I will critically consider the data provided in the interviews by looking at how the interviewees engaged in different processes of sense-making and actively situating or “framing” (Alvesson, 2010, loc 1563) the interviews. Therefore, I will not merely analyse the statements made in the interviews in their crude form, but attempt to analyse elements like the *when* and the *how* connected to the statements made. First, I will look at some examples of how accounts of some of the reactions to managerialism emerged only after some time had passed in the interview, and discuss several possible explanations for why this occurred. Secondly, I will analyse a response some of the interviewees gave before the interview even started.

“I probably shouldn’t be talking about this, but...”

In one subgroup of my interviews, critical perceptions of managerial systems surfaced as soon as the words *evaluation*, *quality control system* or *research metrics* were mentioned. Accounts of reactions to and criticisms of these systems followed immediately. In another group, accounts of critical perceptions of managerial systems emerged only after the interview had gone through some developments. This happened repeatedly in different interviews, and being the interviewer, it was intriguing for me to encounter this, time after time.

In the beginning of these interviews, the critical perceptions of managerial systems lingered more in the background, never explicitly voiced. However, as the interview developed the critical perceptions became more outspoken. The fact that this happened in a seemingly systematic manner in one subgroup of interviews is worth a deeper analysis, and I will therefore spend the next pages providing some alternative explanations to why I observed this shift in the interviews. The analysis in the rest of this chapter will therefore concentrate only on this one sub-group of interviews.

Typically, all of my interviews started out with themes linked to how the interviewees were doing their teaching and their research, and how the managerial systems in HE were providing support or not in doing these tasks. The interviews belonging to the subgroup that I will discuss

in this section followed a script where the interviewees started out stating opinions in accordance with what might be called “the official version”; the version that is described in managerial routines and strategy documents, using the language of managers, quality assurance officers and auditors. Hence, they described the situation in agreement with the way management meant it was supposed to be; how they were expected to perform and how they delivered on those demands. In these descriptions managerial systems are rational, they work in a linear fashion where you start out with a centralised plan or a strategy (designed by management) that is performed by the employees, and at the end of the process the results are summed up by management. Furthermore, at this stage of the interviews, my interviewees emphasised educational and research policy buzzwords from the time of the interviews¹⁹, like the throughput of students or the robustness of a research team.

But, as some time had passed, and I started asking questions that drilled specifically on how the interviewees themselves negotiated between on the one hand their own identities as lecturers and researchers, and on the other side, the managerial systems, I ended up with quotes like this one, from an associate professor:

I probably shouldn't be talking about this, but... Well, when we want to do really good work we seldom follow the procedures actually. I can tell you a lot about how we spend a lot of time trying to figure out ways to do what is best for the teaching of our disciplines, you know, it's our job to try to develop stuff, to say *this would be really good, let's do this!* And it is the administration's job and management's job to say *No!*

After this quote was uttered, the conversation altered quite dramatically. The theme was still managerial systems and management in the HE sector, but the interviewee talked about them differently than what had been the case earlier in the interview. The managerial buzzwords were used in a changed way, more aloof and with a higher

¹⁹ As several authors have shown (for example Birnbaum 2001, Moren 2011) academia is no stranger to managerial *trends* and *fashions*. As I argue in chapters 2 and 3 the higher education sector is not a closed system, but is influenced and pressured from different strands of society. At the time of my interviews, the Norwegian public sector at large was infused by a demand for *robustness*, a trend almost unanimously emphasised from all sides of the political spectrum and in all types of public organisations. Such fads are not empty rhetoric without real consequences; the robustness fad has been identified as one of the driving factors behind the merger fever that dominated the organisational landscape in Norwegian higher education during the 2010-2015 five year period (Persson 2015).

degree of sarcasm. Managerial systems were described from a critical perspective and critique and descriptions of malfunctions were voiced. Moreover, as will be important later in the analysis: The interviewee started to provide accounts of different forms of reactions to management, performed by herself and others, as well as accounts of how she had found ways to game the managerial system.

In the subgroup of interviewees that I am discussing here, this shift was often marked by a development in the interview similar to the one I just described. A statement like the one quoted above, could mark the shift. These shifts emerged after a point somewhere between ten and twenty minutes into the conversation. There might be several explanations to why these shifts happened. In line with Alvesson's idea of the interview as a complex act (Alvesson, 2010), I would argue that these shifts have to be seen as more than mere methodical observations on the instrumental development of a qualitative interview, but also as parts of the analysis; some of which have implications that suggest they should be linked to the analysis of academic reactions to managerialism. This is the reason why the following paragraphs, where I will present different possible explanations for this shift, are situated in a separate chapter and not included in the "methods"-chapter.

Trust

To see what happened as an issue of *trust* is perhaps the most straightforward explanation, and one that would find support in textbooks on qualitative interviews (for instance Bryman, 2012, p. 475). Imaginably, the interviewees needed some time to trust me as an interviewer and as a researcher before opening up on their scepticism towards management. The "I probably shouldn't be talking about this, but..."-part of the quote supports this explanation. It indicates that the information that follows is dangerous, immoral or disloyal to reveal. The interviewee might have held back her critical perceptions during the first parts of the interview, since critical perception, and more so, active resistance, is by its nature controversial in organisations. Telling people about ones critical perceptions might be counterproductive to the career of an individual, and to many academics in the 21st century "playing the game of managerialism" (Hyde, Clarke, & Drennan, 2013, p. 49), as well as performing a symbolic adaptation to managerial

systems, where the individual researchers find ways to incorporate their own goals into the managerial lingo, has been found to be a strategy that they adhere to (Smeenk, Teelken, Eisinga, & Doorewaard, 2009). A fear of not speaking the correct language, or of not adhering to the “corporate” ideals, can thus offer some explanation of the shift I observed.

According to such an explanation, when the interviewees eventually told me their critical thoughts and elaborated on their distaste for certain elements of managerialism in the HE sector, this could be because they trusted the promises of anonymity and my integrity as a researcher, the institution that I represented and even the systems put in place by the Data Protection Services, (NSD) where my project has been approved. Thus, they trusted that the scepticism they had uttered would not be revealed, or that even though they had told me about the kinds of resistance or gaming they were involved in, their careers, reputations, or relationships at work therefore would not be at risk. The explanation is thus that the interviewees in the middle of the interviews decided to trust my promises of confidentiality, and opened up to a more honest and non-strategic account of their attitudes and behaviours towards management.

The trust hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that some of the most interesting accounts of critical reactions to managerialism came after the interview had been ended. This phenomenon, where an interviewee goes “well, if you really want to know what I think...” (Parker, 2000, p. 236) the moment the recorder has been turned off is well known to most people seasoned in the craft of doing qualitative interviews, and also extensively described in the literature (Bryman, 2012, p. 487). Interviewees fear the recorder, and speak more openly when nothing of what they are saying is documented. Therefore, when the interviewees display even greater audacity in expressing critique when nothing is recorded, it is a sign that these opinions are dangerous to voice.

However, the trust hypothesis is not the only possible explanation for what played out in my interviews. It can be argued that it represents a view that is a bit too simplified or naïve, and that it does not take into account important developments in the HE sector and the findings of

previous research. In the next paragraphs I will therefore discuss alternative reasons for the shift that occurred in my interviews.

This is not an audit

As in most strands of organisational life in our time (Power, 1997), members of faculty have gotten used to the fact that their work is getting audited (Amaral & Rosa, 2010); by managerial systems, by quality assurance agencies, and by managers, mentioning just a few. Knowing this, it might be that several of my interviewees consciously or unconsciously saw my conversation with them as just another audit. The theme of the conversation, naturally, would probably at first remind them of an audit interview by a representative from management. Questions on their use and utilization of quality control systems, on the helpfulness of admin routines and how they related to student evaluations could perhaps remind them of questions heard when faced with an auditor. A critical perspective on the social interactions that happen in an audit would claim that an audit interview might be seen as the wrong time and place to voice critical comments about managerial systems, comments that might even question the purpose of the very audit itself. Following the critical argument, audits have become interactions where you can “stage a routine of complying” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016a, Loc 2047). Talking about active resistance or gaming in such a setting would of course be unfavourable to the interviewee.

If this explanation is valid; that interviewees started out the interview by seeing it as an audit-like dialogue, it is no surprise at all that they highlighted how they achieved their goals as measured by different performance indicators, or even more importantly, how they at first emphasised the instrumental usefulness of the managerial and quality assurance systems of their own institution. The shift marked by the sentence “I probably shouldn’t be talking about this, but...” thus becomes a marker of a role shift, where the interviewee goes from being controlled by an audit to partaking in a qualitative interview. The interviewee realises that I (the researcher in front of her) am not an auditor controlling if she has been doing her chores according to procedure, but wants to know how she is experiencing the situation without having to adhere to some procedural standard. She thus comes

to terms with the phenomenological approach of the study, and realises that my interest is in *her experiences* of the relationships between academic standards and the managerial systems, not the formal demands.

We now have two roles established that might have been played out in the interview – the role of being controlled by an audit and the role of partaking in a qualitative interview. Although these two roles share some descriptive traits, there are some fundamental differences between them as well. The similarities might be the open ended questions, common in both audits and in qualitative interviews. Furthermore, the importance of letting the interviewee speak freely and not directing the interviewee towards any opinions or type of answers is also, at least in principle, fundamental in both audits and qualitative interviews.

The differences between an audit interview and a qualitative research interview lie in how the data from the interview is used. An audit interview is used to control or approve, the qualitative research interview is used for exploration. The information given in an audit interview might be used to heighten the standing or status of the organisation the interviewee is working in, or on the opposite end, to lower the status or even employ sanctions towards the organisation. All of these effects may have direct consequences for the interviewee. The data gathered from the qualitative research interview has no such direct negative consequences for the interviewee. On the contrary, at least as an ideal, opinions uttered in a qualitative research project can be ways of channelling a person's opinions anonymously and still make them heard. A quote from the interview might end up being part of a conference presentation, an academic article, a doctoral thesis or even have some political influence if the findings come to politicians' or policymakers' attention.

Parker (2000) describes a situation where he did qualitative research in an organisation, where the interviewees experienced role confusion similar to the one accounted for above. In an account of a series of qualitative interviews with managers, he was perceived as being a representative of central management whose task it was to spy on the interviewees (Parker, 2000). The fact that researchers performing

qualitative interviews are experiencing different roles in different interviews, or even role shifts during an interview is nothing new in the literature. As discussed more thoroughly in the methods chapter, Alvesson (2010) argues that the different perceptions different interviewees have of a researcher vary radically, and that reflexivity regarding what role one is given is an important part of the analysis.

Different discourses

In addition to the two explanations where a) the interviewee opened up due to trust and b) the interviewee understood that my role was not that of an auditor, a third explanation might be valid, namely that the shift that I observed in the interview might be seen as a *discursive change* in the conversation. Although a lot has been written on discourse as a theoretical concept and on discourse analysis as a tool in the social sciences, the term is not a major theoretical or analytical cornerstone in this thesis. Therefore I will not go into an extensive discussion on the different forms of discourse analysis, their different implications or debates between different schools of discourse theory, which are manifold, diverse and sometimes contradictory (Cheek, 2004; Fairclough, 1992; Gill, 2000). I will, however, to shed some light on the peculiar change I observed, briefly discuss how the concept of discourse, and more specifically how the possibility of multiple discourses being present in the course of a conversation, may explain the changes in the interviews.

Originating from the linguistic turn in the social sciences, discourse analysis puts emphasis on how meaning is constructed through the use of language (Talja, 1999). It “rejects the realist notion that language is simply a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world” (Gill, 2000, p. 10). A discourse therefore becomes “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1), that influences what is being said, how it is said, and how it is perceived. It gives the person making a statement a specific framework that the statement is made within, and will therefore greatly affect what is being said. One point to be made on discourses that is central to the discursive analysis of the shift observed in my interview is that multiple discourses can operate simultaneously, on individual, organisational and societal levels, and these discourses

compete to gain hegemonic positions (Persson, 2015, p. 62). In my case, multiple discourses thus compete over control of the conversation, and over influence on the statements made by the interviewees.

Regarding the shift I observed in the interviews, discourse analysis enables me to display how what is being said by my interviewees is said within the context of a specific discourse. It also enables me to identify different discourses that appear during the course of an interview. These discourses function as a framework that the conversation operate within, and therefore affect what is being said at a specific time during the interview, and how it is being interpreted.

Furthermore, discourse analysis could help explain why different statements made at different times during the interview seem contradictory, if we see them as uttered within the framework of opposing discourses. This suggests that the interviewees have the potential to express contradicting statements on management and managerial systems in HE. This resonates quite well with the before mentioned idea of academics “playing the game of managerialism” (Hyde et al., 2013, p. 49) as was described earlier in this chapter under the heading “Trust”. However, a discursive analysis of what goes on in the interview implies more in terms of contradictions than academics consciously playing a game. A discursive perspective would see the statements in the interviews not as “straightforward matters of external or internal reference, but also depend[ing] on the local and broader discursive system in which the utterance is embedded” (Talja, 1999, p. 3). What is being said in a conversation at a specific moment depends on what discourse is dominant in the conversation at that specific moment. From this, it follows that it is fully possible that different discourses within HE, and therefore, different opinions on the developments of HE, are uttered during one interview. I will now follow up on this very brief discussion on discourse analysis and return to the interviews, while at the same time reminding the reader that theories on discourse are not the dominant theoretical strand in this thesis and that this is not meant as an elaborate discourse analysis of the full interviews. It is only meant as a broadening of possible explanations of what actually happened when I observed the peculiar shift in the course of a subgroup of interviews, with some implications for the analysis.

To narrow the emphasis down to the moment when the peculiar “I probably...”-shift occurred in the interviews, I will limit my analysis to suggest two discourses that were present in the dialogue between the interviewees and me, one of them being dominant before the shift, the other being dominant after the shift. The two discourses are related to the two competing views on the developments in academia that occur throughout this thesis. Chapter 2 presented the development of some core elements in what could be coined the academic norms. Chapter 3 presented the influence of managerialism in HE, and explained how managerial philosophies challenge the academic norms. Using the terminology of discourse theory, and the rationales in Chapters 2 and 3, we can identify two competing discourses within HE, the *academic norms discourse* and the *managerialism discourse*. What the two different discourses signify can be illustrated by the shift I observed in the interviews. The interviewees started following the scripts and structures of the managerialism discourse, telling me how they utilized managerial systems and tools to develop their teaching and research, and how the influence from management was incorporated in their daily work. But as the conversation shifted with the “I probably shouldn’t be talking about this, but...”-statement, seen through the lenses of discourse theory, what happened was a *discursive shift*. The statements made by the interviewee were now made within a new discourse; they were therefore produced and interpreted under the influence of a new framework. Expressing oneself within a specific discourse allows the discourse in question to affect what is being said, expressing oneself in another discourse affects what is being said in a different manner than the first one. As a consequence, the shift I observed in this sub-group of interviews would not necessarily be perceived as contradictory to the interviewees themselves. Although they started the interviews with giving credit to some aspects of the influence of managerialism in HE, and in the latter parts of the interview being highly critical to it, this might not be seen as making contradictory statements by the interviewee.

When speaking within the managerialism discourse, the interviewee accepts the idea of a rational managerial system that will improve the quality of teaching and research, make HE more fair, transparent and robust. Since these ideas are a prerequisite for the managerialism

discourse, they are part of the framework the statements are made within, and dominate the statements. On the other hand, when speaking within the academic norms discourse, the managerial philosophies no longer have dominance. The ideals of the academic norms, like academic freedom, autonomy and a firm belief in the impact of scholarly knowledge have become dominant. This means that the ideas of rational managerial systems can be challenged, insofar as they are perceived as naïve and damaging to HE within the framework of the academic norms discourse. There is a constant struggle for hegemony between discourses, and, if more thoroughly developed, the academic norms discourse and the managerialism discourse could be used as tools for further analysis of contemporary developments in the HE sector. In the following, however, this will not be my main concern, as I will concentrate on developing the different forms of academic reactions to managerialism.

“I am probably of no interest to you...”

I started this chapter by leaning on Alvesson (2010), arguing that interviewees engage in sense-making of the interview situation and thus actively frame the interviews. Building on Alvesson, I went on to argue that reflexivity and discussion of this process is an important part of what researchers should do when analysing qualitative interviews. Furthermore, I followed this advice in my own analysis when I discussed an example of this type of sense-making in the last paragraphs; I addressed a shift that occurred in some of my interviews, and discussed different explanations for what motivated the shift. I will now turn to another issue that is fruitful as an example to discuss the sense-making the interviewees engaged in even before the interviews started: The reactions some of the interviewees had at my first point of contact with them – when they were asked to partake in the study.

I will provide poor Data

As described in Chapter 5, the initial contact with the interviewees in this study was made as a combination of an e-mail, where a description of my project was provided, and a phone call where the participants asked questions about the study and gave their first oral acceptance to partake. An interesting event occurred several times in this initial stage

of contact. Some of the respondents, although they showed great interest and said that they would be happy to talk to me, stated they did not think they would be of any interest to me or my study. If I wanted to talk to them, surely, they would love to partake, but out of concern for my project, they still hesitated. They were thinking about the quality of my data, so to speak, and concluded that if they were to partake they would only waste my time. The reasons given were similar in every case: They had little knowledge of the managerial systems in HE, they knew little or cared little for institutional policy or strategies and as one of them said in the initial phone call: “I try to spend my working hours on academic issues like teaching and research”.

In retrospect, knowing the rich accounts of both resistance to and gaming of managerial systems some of these individuals ended up giving during the interviews, there is an interesting point to be made. To use the words of qualitative analysis: The interviewees thought that audio files and transcriptions generated from interviews with them would add no value to the analysis; it would not contribute to exploring the themes discussed in this thesis. However, the opposite turned out to be the case.

There are several comments worth making on these statements. First of all, such an issue might be particularly relevant when interviewing researchers. Having a generic knowledge of how the scientific method works, how research questions are formulated, how interviews are conducted, and perhaps most important, how interviews are analysed and informed by theory, they might have made an instant analysis themselves of what they might be able to say in the interview, how this would add to my data, and how it would contribute to my analysis. If this is the case, the soon-to-be interviewees performed an instant self-reflecting analysis of what they thought would be their own contribution to my study, including mini-versions of many important steps in a qualitative research design, and it was conducted in a few seconds. One interviewee even used methodological terms as he claimed “I think I probably would generate pretty poor data for your data material”.

The analysis of these statements could stop at this stage, settling on an understanding of these statements as a mere reflection of concern for

the quality of the data of my project. However, there might be an underlying implication made when a certain type of data is regarded as important and another one is not. Given that the same interviewees that discarded their own experiences as irrelevant ended up with highly reflective accounts of the relationship between the nature of academic work and contemporary management of universities, saturated with accounts of criticism and resistance, the initial statements could imply that the interviewee rated one type of data as more important than another. That is, for a research project on the management of universities they saw knowledge of the formal and technical sides of the managerial systems as more important, with more value and perhaps even truer than their own knowledge, based on experience and insights gained from years of teaching, mentoring and doing research at a university.

Such an attitude towards one's own knowledge of an organisation is nothing new in the studies of workplaces. As an example, in his seminal work on the workers' collective Lysgaard (1967, p. 5) saw that the shop floor workers were surprised by the fact that the researchers were interested in their views on management and work. They had expected that the only perspective relevant for researchers was the managerial perspective. It is perhaps a bit surprising if we were to find similar attitudes towards one's own knowledge among academic workers as the attitudes observed among Norwegian blue collar workers in the 1960s. However, given the main question I ask in this thesis, the observation is nevertheless notable. Power structures like managerial systems have many ways of controlling its subjects, including the establishment of knowledge hierarchies. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power (1984) might be applicable to the "I will provide poor data"-reaction the interviewees displayed. Symbolic power is a form of influence an agent has over another as part of a power structure that is recognised as just and right both by the dominating part, in this case *management* and the dominated, in this case, *the academics* (Bourdieu, 1984). For symbolic power to establish itself, it needs to be accepted, often unconsciously, as an embedded part of the social structure that both the dominant and dominated adhere to. In the case of managerial influence in academia, this would mean that managerial knowledge, managerial principles and managerial language have

established themselves as the superior form of understanding and discussing universities. Furthermore, it would mean that academics, managers and administrators all share this form of understanding.

This should not be important

A second and quite different explanation of the “I am probably of no interest to you...” statement is that, it in itself, is a statement of resistance. Like the “I will provide poor data”-explanation, such an interpretation of the statement would also be in concord with the fact that the interviewees eventually provided rich data, but with an almost completely opposite motivation behind it. In such a case, the interviewees would regard their own knowledge and principles of how a university should be governed as the opposite of unimportant and subordinate. On the contrary, the academics are the ones who know how to and therefore should run the university. However, the request to spend an hour and a half discussing such issues with a researcher would be a waste of time. Managerial issues should not be something a professor spends time on, because it is subordinate to the work that actually matters for a professor at a university, that is, research and teaching.

There is one quote in particular that gives support to this explanation; the before mentioned “I try to spend my working hours on academic issues like teaching and research”. It could therefore be that the interviewee in fact knew much about these systems, perhaps in particular how to trick or avoid them, but to come across as someone who does not know anything about these systems is a part of hanging on to the academic identity. The meaning of the statement would then be something along the line of “I do not care about this, because it should not be important.”

A continuum between covert and open

Based on the analysis this chapter has provided on how and when the interviewees talked about their reactions to managerialism, I have developed the first two categories of academic reactions to managerialism – *covert* and *open* reactions. The categories *covert* and *open* are organised as a continuum where the different forms of reactions to managerialism are situated. The two categories will be

used throughout the rest of the thesis will be and built upon do develop the different academic reactions to managerialism.

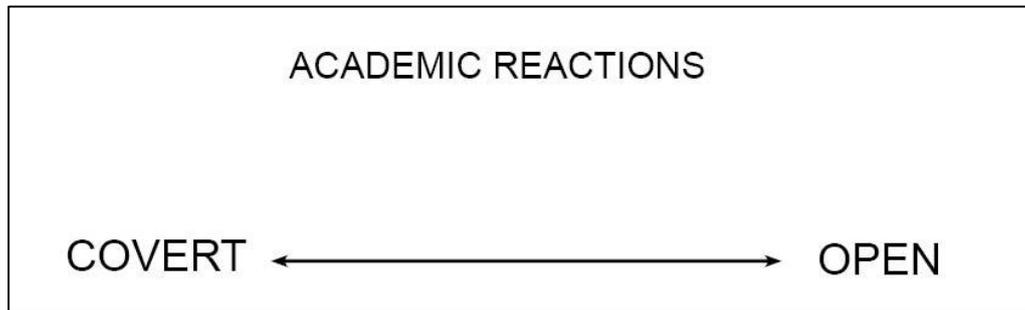


Figure 6.1. Framework for covert and open academic reactions to managerialism

In figure 6.1 I illustrate how this continuum can be displayed graphically, and how examples of academic reactions can be situated on this continuum. The figure is here presented in a very simple form but will be developed and built out in the following chapters.

Chapter 7: Academic Resistance

In this chapter, I will develop the first form of reaction that the academics talked about in the interviews: *academic resistance*. As I accounted for in my review of the literature on the subject in Chapter 4, the term *academic resistance* is still under development in the literature (Kalfa et al., 2018, pp. 276-277). In this chapter, I will contribute to the body of research on academic resistance through an analysis of the data on the theme provided in my interviews.

I will present and analyse examples of different types of academic resistance that my interviewees described. I will also discuss how academic resistance relates to more generic theories on resistance in the workplace, making a few points of why there is a need to develop a distinct form of academic resistance. Given that the content of what was discussed in the interviews in some respects differs from the established literature on resistance, I will also provide a more thorough discussion on whether or not the term “resistance” is actually suitable to describe the phenomenon I have observed.

Examples of academic resistance

I have identified several forms of academic resistance in the analysis of my interviews. In the following section they will be presented.

Hiding

One of the forms of resistance described in my material is *hiding*. I have coined the term using a quote from one of my interviewees, a professor. We discussed the nature of academic work, and she told me how she, as a new researcher, had been socialized into the informal ways of academic work:

Professor: “One of the first things I was told was that if you are to get something done, for God’s sake do not show up at your office! You should sit at home and hide. Hide yourself! And I’ve realized that this is so true. Then you can, like, you can do your research, then you can maintain focus, you can read the articles and those things, right. But if you show up at work, if you make yourself available, you will be caught up in a meeting or have to answer a phone call or someone is at your door. Suddenly the whole day has passed and you haven’t done a thing of what you’re supposed to!”

Hiding is an act of resistance where the academic worker makes herself unavailable to students, colleagues or management, and to the formal structures of her organisation. The purpose of hiding is to allow for the

time and concentration needed to perform what is perceived by the academic herself as essential for doing academic work: immersion into a specific task or a specific theme. Hiding directly defies demands stating that academics should make themselves available and be physically present, demands that my interviewees claimed are being asserted by management in increasing magnitude.

The act of hiding is linked, but not identical, to the phenomenon described in the literature on resistance as *absenteeism* (see for instance Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999 pp 41-44). Absenteeism is when an employee is absent from work without having a reason accepted by management as valid. Due to the nature of academic work, professors have enjoyed a great degree of individual freedom regarding whether or not they should be absent or present. Ackroyd and Thompson argue that university teachers have been seen as having little absenteeism, but points out that this might be attributed to the fact that “there is no close monitoring of what managers and professors are doing with their time, no records of when they are not present, and thus no possibility for any calculation of their absenteeism” (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999, p. 76). Due to the nature of their work professors have been treated differently than, say, assembly line workers, and the issue of absenteeism has been almost irrelevant.

According to statements made by my interviewees, the situation as it is described by Ackroyd & Thompson might be changing. In the words of another of the interviewees, an associate professor: “Sometimes they say in a meeting or send an email or something saying that we need to come to our offices more often because this is where we work”. The interviews provided accounts of management seeing hiding as similar to absenteeism, insofar as the employees are physically away from their main place of work, which is often their office, and have gone to great lengths in making themselves unavailable for contact from management, colleagues or students. This has led to a situation where activities that used to be privileges and even necessary for the job to be performed, have become unwanted by management. When the academics nevertheless make themselves unavailable by being absent, they understand that this is now considered unwanted behaviour. What used to be part of academic work has now become a form of resistance.

The special kind of absenteeism that I call *hiding* is not caused by a desire to increase leisure time by limiting time doing work; quite the contrary. As the first quote illustrates, hiding is an attempt to get away from the tasks defined by management as the ones the employees are supposed to do, like attending meetings, following up on quality assurance routines, catering for students immediate needs or being available as a social and cultural building contributor part of a workplace milieu. Through hiding, and not being available at the physical workplace, lecturers and researchers can concentrate on what they define as their job; preparing and developing teaching and doing research. According to my interviews, acts of hiding are generally accepted as necessary among academic staff, it could therefore be claimed that hiding is a collective act of resistance.

Being a bit thick

In my interviews, regulations and standards for development of study programmes and research were a recurring theme. An associate professor expressed some frustration about how these regulations hindered what she thought was a sound development of the programme where she taught. As the following conversation illustrates, she and her colleagues had ways to get around what they saw as managerial obstacles; they pretended to be a bit dumb.

Associate professor: "There was this course that we were supposed to run one time only, as a pilot project. But we really believed in it, it was cutting edge pedagogically and we really wanted to do it, but we knew that if we asked management they would never allow it. So what we did was that we just ran it anyway, and after a while we were asked "Where the hell do these changes come from!?" So we pretended to be a bit dumb and said "ummm, well, we ran it last year, so...". And then they said "Yes, but who said you could run it now?" And then we were just like "Ummm... I think it was [name of admin employee]... or something... maybe?"

Me: "So what happened?"

Associate professor: "Yeah, the students had already been enrolled before they noticed what had happened so the course was run, even though they got angry, or not angry, more resigned. And that is just one example of how we do it."

Being a bit thick is faking unawareness of strategies, instructions, guidelines and even the law as a means to bypass the same strategies, instructions, guidelines and laws. Combined with tactics of impression management where they attempt to come across as naïve nerds hopelessly stuck in their own fields of expertise, academics are sometimes able to make organisations move in the direction they

prefer, even if it violates formal decision structures. There were several examples in my interviews of narratives on successful acts of being a bit thick, and as another of my interviewees, a professor, stated: “You can get away with a lot if you only pretend you haven’t heard about the rules”.

Acts of being a bit thick as they were described in my interviews were collective acts. The associate professor that pretended she did not know the guidelines on whether or not a study programme could run, continued her narrative describing how most of the faculty teaching on the programme were in on the hoax. According to her, they all agreed on the academic value of the new programme, and furthermore, they agreed that the outcome (the programme was now running every year) was vital to the quality of the teaching they offered. As a result of this, they felt a certain degree of *entitlement* to perform the deceiving acts of *being a bit thick*. When they pretended to be dumb, they did so to make an impact on decisions they felt should have been theirs to make in the first place, due to the knowledge they held as active researchers and teachers. *Entitlement* is thus an important element of motivation for performing academic resistance, the entitlement academics feel they should have to have influence over teaching and research that they feel they have lost as a result of managerialism.

By mere etymological relationship, *being a bit thick* could be somewhat associated with the concept of *functional stupidity* (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012), since dumbness and stupidity are somewhat synonymous. Functional stupidity is when organisations reward people for not reflecting too much on their tasks or their situation. Functional stupidity can be harmful to organisations and their surroundings, but still thrives in organisations because it has many short-term positive consequences. I will return to the concept of functional stupidity and introduce it in more detail in Chapter 6 of this thesis, but for now, I will highlight a few aspects that *differentiates* being a bit thick from functional stupidity.

- 1) Acts of functional stupidity as they are described by Alvesson and Spicer (2016a), tend to be applauded by management and managerial systems alike. Acts of *being a bit thick* are not

approved by management and are in their very nature intentionally ignorant of managerial guidelines.

- 2) Functionally stupid structures in organisations, as well as acts of functional stupidity, are not covert. Quite the opposite, Alvesson and Spicer (2016a) provide examples that are highlighted and even bragged about by management and employees alike, in strategic plans and in annual reports. Acts of *being a bit thick*, on the other hand, are covert. The actions themselves are open, but the motivation for performing them is hidden. The academics that are *being a bit thick* pretend that they perform the actions because they do not understand instruction and guidelines, when they in fact, understand them perfectly well.
- 3) People performing functionally stupid actions tend to be unaware of the full range of stupidity involved in their actions. On the other hand, people that are *being a bit thick* are fully aware of how dumb they appear, and use this to achieve hidden objectives.

Ignoring

One of the most common forms of resistance in my interviews was *ignoring*. Ignoring is when an academic feels that managerial guidelines are counterproductive with regard to the goal they are trying to achieve, and for that reason decides to pay no attention to the guidelines. The action of ignoring is more straightforward and requires less effort and imagination than the other forms of academic resistance; nevertheless, it shares many of the traits, like being a collective act, performed as a means to control the quality of the work, and being motivated through a notion of entitlement. The following illustrative quote is from a professor, telling me about how the process of writing research grants are organised at his university:

Professor: "We're supposed to run them through a whole heap of quality assurance measures. But to be quite honest I can't see the point of many of them, so we ignore them."

Me: "How do you do that?"

Professor: "By just ignoring them I guess. We do our work without taking them into consideration."

Me: "So, do you in any way try to hide that you do this, or for instance manipulate anything?"

Professor: “No we don’t actually. We just ignore the regulations. I mean, we’ve been told to follow these guidelines, even many times I think, but it takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of effort and it doesn’t really add anything to the project so we don’t do it. If they should come and ask why we haven’t followed procedure I’ll ask them who knows the most about physics. Is it them or is it me?”

The last statement in this conversation, the question “who knows the most about physics?” provides an example of one of the traits that I suggest is important for academic resistance - how academics express a deep-felt entitlement to resist. As with the other forms of resistance, the interviewees described this entitlement as motivated by an obligation to ensure the quality of their own work. By being a professor in physics, the interviewee saw it as his right but also his obligation to assess the quality of his own work, and to act (or refuse to act) when said quality was threatened. A similar notion of entitlement was found by Kalfa et al. (2018) when one of their interviewees claimed that the following response to managerial demands was common in his institution: “(...) I’m a professor, I know what my field is, who are you to tell me what to do in my field?” (Kalfa et al., 2018, p. 283).

Another aspect of ignoring is related to how the interviewees perceived their own work. An illustrative quote from an associate professor: “I did not do a PhD just to fill in forms for the admin department to approve”. The tasks that the managerial systems require the academics to do, like quality assurance of research grants or reporting on different aspects of the running of study programmes were considered by my interviewees as something that was not part of their job. Therefore, they ignored the tasks by not performing them. In this way, the academics refuse to accept the job description they are given by the demands from the managerial systems and *ignoring* the instructions from the managerial systems becomes a tool to maintain control of their own labour process. This last point is in line with the findings of Anderson (2008), who saw widespread avoidance of time-consuming managerial practices.

Overachieving

One of my interviewees was a professor who had been in academia most of her career. When discussing developments in how her university was managed, she told me that she had seen intensification of regulations and control of teaching. Administrative guidelines and

directives were driving this development. The university had introduced standards dictating time use for tutoring, preparations for teaching, all standardized to fit the amount of ECTS points the course gave each student, and to the level of the course (BA/MA/PhD). She argued that this development was problematic and in danger of jeopardizing important aspects of academic work. As an example, she told me of the importance of letting any lecturer and tutor make the adjustments in teaching and tutoring as they saw fit due to the individual needs of the students, and due to the nature of the subject studied. She argued that if she were to comply with the introduced standards, she could not make such adjustments. However, she argued that decisions on what should be the proper amount of tutoring and teaching, and the preparations needed for such activities, are central parts of academic work, and not possible to fit into a managerial standard. To make the correct assessment of how much work should be put into a mentoring or teaching session is highly demanding, and requires great degrees of knowledge of the academic discipline in question, pedagogical skills, experience as well as an awareness of the knowledge levels and learning styles of the specific student or group of students. As a result, the amount of resources in the form of time used for these tasks varies a lot and should not be standardized. Nevertheless, the decision to introduce such regulations on time-use had been established, but as the following quote illustrates she decided to violate them:

Professor: “Actually we’re just supposed to give them (the Master’s students) two hours of tutoring on this specific area. But I mean, this is really important stuff, and management can’t see that! The themes we teach are so central to the students’ whole understanding of this subject, and in addition, it is really difficult, so if you want to understand it, it has to be done properly. So we’ve actually agreed that we give them more like ten hours each instead of two, but it varies a lot depending on their needs. But we never tell management. They wouldn’t understand.”

The quote and narrative from the professor above is an example of a form of academic resistance I have coined *overachieving*. Overachieving occurs when an academic spends more time or achieves better results on a work task than management wishes them to do. Thus, the phenomenon of overachieving is perhaps the clearest example of how *academic* resistance differs from more general forms of resistance and misbehaviour as these are described in the dominant research literature. For instance: limitation of work effort, or

soldiering, “the most frequently noticed and carefully examined” (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999, p. 26) phenomenon in the classical literature on resistance actually seems to hold but a small prominence in academic resistance. In classical texts on resistance the phenomenon known as limitation of work effort, soldiering, effort bargain or “appropriation of work” (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999) is a form of resistance where workers intentionally limit their work effort by doing less work than they are expected to. Ever increasing demands of higher production output is met with different techniques of holding the pace of work down. While Taylor (1911) claimed that the “evil” of soldiering could effectively be removed from workplaces through the use of scientific management, later authors have shown that if anything, attempts to subdue workers’ control of the work pace only leads to new and more severe forms of resistance, because appropriation of work like other forms of resistance is motivated in a desire to retain some degree of autonomy in the workplace (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999), or a certain degree of dignity at work (Karlsson, 2011).

The category that I have coined *overachieving*, on the other hand, is resistance through the opposite of *limiting* the work effort, namely *intensifying* the work effort. All the other forms of academic resistance have this element of intensifying the work effort in one form or another, although we see it in its clearest form in *overachieving*. Academics *hide* to be able to attain the necessary focus to do good work. They *pretend to be dumb* as a means to make their study programmes the best they can be from an academic viewpoint. They *ignore* managerial demands to be able to spend time on research and teaching.

At face value, intensifying the work effort might seem very different from *limiting* the work effort. However, the motivations behind the activities seem very similar, at least in the interviews that I have conducted. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, limiting the work effort is motivated by a desire to retain some degree of autonomy and dignity. Similarly, descriptions of attempts to uphold autonomy and dignity as motivations for intensifying the work effort were prevalent in my interviews. The same interviewee that in the quote above described how she gave the students five times the tutoring she was supposed to give them also talked about how important she felt it was that her faculty retained very high degrees of control and ownership of

their own work. The ending remark from the quote above: “But we never tell management. They wouldn’t understand,” highlights the need to hide this behaviour from management because they do not share her understanding of what academic work is.

Fighting

All the forms of resistance described so far in this chapter have aspects that make them to a lesser or greater degree hidden from management. *Hiding*, obviously, is hidden. *Being a bit thick* is hidden through its deceiving character, *overachieving* is hidden by being unavailable to formal managerial systems and *ignoring* is hidden through estrangement. I will now present a form of resistance that in its form is anything but hidden, where the very point of the act is to be as outspoken and visible as possible. Activities that were described by my interviewees were addressing management directly, speaking up and voicing concerns at meetings, participating in panel debates and writing texts in campus magazines and even op-eds in national newspapers. I will also discuss the relationship between hidden acts of resistance and the more open acts of fighting.

The interviewees gave different answers to questions on whether they engaged in voicing concerns or critique in public. One interviewee said he regularly voiced concerns, while others said that they were wary of doing so. Regardless of whether the interviewee was a person engaging in public critique or refraining from it, there seemed to be an agreement that academics in general are careful about engaging in open opposition to management. A quote from my interview with a professor touches on this theme. The professor had told me about how he had engaged heavily in a debate on a suggested new strategic direction for his university. We discussed whether he or his colleagues had any concerns about opposing management in the way he did:

Professor: “I am not fearful. But I remember in the beginning of that process, then there were only a few of us that dared to speak up.”

Me: “Why don’t the others dare?”

Professor: “I guess they are afraid of sanctions. Even if the Rector says that everyone can speak freely here, it is, especially the new generation, they are afraid of getting fired or getting tenured or, and such matters if they are too critical in public statements”

The fact that many aspects of academic resistance are kept hidden from management is important in the before mentioned work of Anderson (2008). In her research, she builds on Scott's (1990) concept of a *hidden transcript* that subordinate groups use to voice critique of the powerful behind their backs. The interviews she undertook in her study "elicited a wealth of discursive resistance to managerialism" (Anderson, 2008, p. 256), most of which was uttered in settings hidden from management.

However, Anderson also saw examples of the hidden transcript going public, in the meaning that academics no longer kept their thoughts on the managerial systems hidden but voiced their discontent. Except for one example where an academic had success in submitting a text to a periodical on HE, the examples Anderson provides illustrate that voicing academic resistance seems to be difficult. Experiences of dismissal, disempowerment and even embarrassment towards management and other colleagues alike were reported as results of trying to publicly question managerial ideas. Anderson sees this as an expression of a characteristic of academic work and workplaces, where organised, collective efforts are unusual and difficult to establish. As a result, individual academics who raise their voice in protest often end up in solitude, being perceived by management as difficult and individually deviant (Anderson, 2008, p. 259).

Contributions to theories on academic resistance

Academic resistance vs generic workplace resistance

Many of the features characterising the specific form of workplace defiance that is called *academic resistance* share some major similarities with generic workplace resistance. The body of research on generic workplace resistance has provided well developed and thoroughly discussed concepts describing how employees through resistance attempt to maintain autonomy and keep managerial influence at an arm's length in all kinds of organisations. Some of the aspects from theories on generic workplace resistance are also suitable to describe academic resistance. However, some also differ. This prompts the following question: Is the phenomenon of academic resistance, as it is described in the literature and found in my

interviews, compatible with the phenomenon described in the literature as workplace resistance? Alternatively, is it an expression of some other form of oppositional behaviour in organisations? In the next paragraphs I will look at one of the major differences between traditional workplace resistance and academic resistance: Resistance as a means of upholding academic standards.

Resistance as a means of upholding academic standards

In the traditional literature, a main cause of the phenomenon of resistance is a desire to protect the workers from inhuman demands of reaching ever increasing production goals. According to the literature on resistance this is due to a fundamental and inherent difference in objectives. Management is always trying to make the labour process more efficient, thus increasing surplus value that is the primary end of all managerial activity, and end to which the workers cannot comply without ruining themselves. The protection from this unending demand of increased efficiency and production has been described by authors all the way back to Taylor, who described this form of resistance as *soldiering*, arguing that one of the main prerogatives of scientific management is to deal with soldiering, and by Lysgaard (1967) who argued that the main function of the worker collectivity was to provide a buffer for the workers against the demands of the technical-economic system.

Findings in the literature on academic resistance and the statements made in my interviews alike suggest that academic resistance differs from classical resistance insofar as the concept of soldiering, or the intentional limiting of production, needs to be adapted to academia to provide a more fitting description of the rationale of the resisters. I will argue that, to a greater extent than is described in earlier studies of resistance and academic resistance alike, academic workers and academic managers share the same ultimate “production goals”, in that they all want to uphold high standards in teaching and research, and all strive towards excellence and acknowledgement in the academic world.

Nevertheless, when it comes to how one is to reach these shared goals of excellence and high academic standards; a form of resistance similar to soldiering emerges. One of the overarching themes in this thesis is

that there is an underlying and major dissimilarity between the academics' and the managers' understanding of how one best organises academic work, a dissimilarity developed through the opposing academic and managerial norms. A point I will develop later suggests that in many cases this becomes a dichotomy, where the very way in which management rigs the organisation towards excellence becomes the fabric of what academics claim ruins excellence.

An example of important threads in this managerial fabric is quality assurance systems. As I highlighted in Chapter 3, quality assurance has had a major impact on academia over the last 30 years, and is a substantial part of the phenomenon of managerialism in academia. The way my interviewees perceive management, their ways of working towards excellence in teaching are standardised, quantitative, often aggregated evaluation methods, generating data that is to be controlled and processed by management itself. Through strategical decisions based on the total knowledge that is provided through the evaluation methods they will help the teaching staff to do better teaching. This notion of the expert manager, that through the utilization of powerful managerial systems, guides, informs and decides over the academic workers, resonates well with how the relationship between the manager and the worker is described in Scientific Management (F. W. Taylor, 1911) and has been developed throughout the 20th and 21st centuries as different versions of a system where the manager knows best how the job should be done. In opposition to this, the academics themselves claim that the traditions of their disciplines, their general knowledge on teaching and tutoring, and the scientific method itself, are stronger forces in the pursuit for "quality" than the managerial systems will ever provide. Therefore, they perform acts of resistance directed against the quality assurance systems and paradoxically, the objective of the resisting acts is to assure quality. Similar paradoxical findings on the relationship between quality assurance systems and the academic perception of quality have been noted in the literature on academic work in later years (see for instance Anderson, 2008; Lucas, 2014; Teelken, 2012).

The form of academic resistance I have dubbed *hiding* serves as a neat illustration of this special aspect of academic resistance connected to the fact that the employees and management of HE ultimately are

working towards the same ends. In my interviews and in other research alike, academics strongly emphasise their wish to adhere to the standards of the academic community and the traditions of their disciplines. They want to be part of a global society of researchers in their field by contributing in research projects, developing their work in seminars, presenting their results at conferences and publishing it in peer reviewed journals and books. Furthermore, they appreciate the acknowledgement they get from their peers through being cited, being invited to hold keynote lectures and being rewarded honorary titles by the scholarly communities.

All of the above mentioned targets are shared by management, albeit in a different discursive packaging. Participation in research projects generates heaps of points on the NPM scoreboards of ministries and public agencies. All publications in highly regarded journals are counted and trigger incentives associated with quality, robustness and an increase in funding. Having a renowned scholar as part of your organisation attracts other highly productive employees that will deliver consistently and with high quality on the scoreboard. Invitations to holding keynotes at renowned conferences constitute superb content to include in public relations strategies and to use in the annual report. And, if delivered consistently on a macro level, the sum of all of the above bears witness to a robust and well-managed HE institution with thought-through strategies, efficient organisational structures and a culture of quality in teaching and research.

Thus, the conflict between management and employees does not originate in a disagreement on where to end up, but on how to get there. The destination is agreed upon, the map is up for debate, while the choice of path is in dispute. Returning to the act of resistance I have dubbed *hiding*, the destination-map-path-metaphor illustrates the conflict well. Management subscribes to the view that academic excellence is best achieved through teamwork, culture building and that the physical interaction of employees will generate activity. The academics, on the other hand, adhere to values like concentrating undisturbedly on your work for lengthy periods of time, taking time to read up on literature and new research, and, in the words of my interviewee, *maintain focus*. What the conflict is about is thus in essence the organisation of *the academic labour process*. The academic

workers themselves claim that having periods or chunks of time where immersion is possible is a vital part of their labour process that enables them to do their work both efficiently and qualitatively well. Demands from management that interfere with, distort or take away immersion thus directly corrodes academic work.

Expansion of output and responsible subversion

I have now established that a common trait to all forms of academic resistance seems to be that the academics perform these acts as an attempt to improve the output of the academic work performed. Academics *hide* to secure the amount of time and focus needed to do academic work properly. Furthermore, they *pretend to be dumb* so that they can run the courses that in their view are the best; for their students and for the development of their academic area. They *ignore* managerial guidelines to be able to perform their research to the standards they themselves have set. They *overachieve* through spending more of their own time and resources on their students and their research than management allocates to them. Lastly, they *fight* organisational models they feel are counterproductive and the introduction of standards and routines that reduce their own control over their work. I will thus argue that all of the forms of academic resistance are examples of academics resisting by *intensifying* the work effort. This is an important feature of academic resistance, and in the following paragraphs, I will situate this aspect of academic resistance in relation to the existing literature on resistance and misbehaviour.

I have earlier mentioned that descriptions of workers misbehaving by intensifying the work effort are somewhat novel in the literature on resistance and misbehaviour in workplaces. This has led me to believe that this is an area where the concept of academic resistance has to be developed differently than generic workplace resistance. There are, however, a few exceptions in the literature on resistance, and I will lean heavily on these in the following paragraphs. In a study on public sector workers, Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012) conceptualize a phenomenon they coin *expansion of output*, as an antonym to the arguably more common *restriction of output*. The authors define expansion of output as when workers are “doing more than they are expected to do in order to resist management control”, a definition that well suits the

descriptions of intensifying the work effort through the different forms of academic resistance seen in my interviews. In the next paragraphs I will discuss the phenomenon *expansion of output* to find similarities but also differences when comparing it to the phenomenon of academic resistance. For ease of reading, I will also abbreviate expansion of output as EOO.

Kirchhoff and Karlsson argue that EOO as a form of misbehaviour has been largely ignored by the critical studies on resistance in organisations because of the contradictory idea of someone doing more than expected as an act of resistance. Furthermore, they argue that the management-oriented literature, although it has provided heaps of texts and advice on how to make employees put in an extra effort, have not been able to see the phenomenon as acts of *resistance*. Thus, we can argue that management-oriented literature have observed the phenomenon but not sufficiently understood it, while studies on resistance has had the theoretical perspectives needed to understand the phenomenon properly, but never observed it. As a result, there is a gap in the knowledge previous research has provided on behaviour and misbehaviour in organisations; a gap that Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012) are filling with findings from nursing and care workers, and I will add to through my findings on academic resistance.

Kirchhoff and Karlsson relates their observations to the concept *responsible subversion*, developed by Hutchinson (1990) in her study on “nurses that bend the rules for the sake of the patient” (1990, p. 3). Hutchinson’s study is based on participant observation and interviews with nurses, and I will give a few examples of findings to provide comparisons to the forms of academic resistance I have found in my study. As the concepts of responsible subversion and expansion of output are very similar, I will use the latter term (abbreviated as EOO) to refer to them both.

Hutchinson found that nurses experienced conflict between rules and regulations imposed on them by administrators, and their own beliefs or “rules” about how to treat patients. Similar to academic resistance, responsible subversion materialises itself as different forms of behaviour. Some of these forms of behaviour are minor bending of the rules, like permitting family and friends of patients to visit outside of

formal visiting hours; others are more serious like alterations in the prescribed medication a nurse gives to a patient. These different degrees of graveness are comparable to the forms of academic resistance I have found, where hiding and overachieving would certainly be less serious and provocative to management than being a bit thick or ignoring.

As mentioned, Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012) builds on Hutchinson's work, and add a few contributions to it. First of all, they expand Hutchinson's concept by showing that employees assigned to different types of work engage in different forms of EOO. This is an important finding as it illustrates how the underlying tendency to misbehave through expanding the output of the labour process is a phenomenon not only observable with nurses, but also with other professions within health and social care. Furthermore, it shows that the *form* of EOO varies depending on the occupation of the person(s) performing it. My contribution is thus that the underlying tendency to misbehave through EOO also seems relevant to academia. It also seems that, like Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012) suggest, academic resistance materialises itself in different *forms* of EOO, in my case specific to academia, although the underlying mechanism is similar.

So far, I have written on the forms of EOO, and I will now turn to what lies behind the actions themselves. Hutchinson found that three conditions have to be in place if nurses are to engage in EOO. The first of these is *knowledge* on matters relevant to the situation the act of EOO is situated in. Examples are issues like *what is the medical situation of the patient? What is the intention of the rule I am about to break? And what might the consequences be?* Secondly, the nurses needed to be *ideologically inclined* to engage in EOO. A belief in the patients' autonomy and well-being, and their own role as the champions of the patients would be examples of such an ideological inclination. Thirdly, the nurses needed to have a certain degree of *experience*, to assess the consequences of EOO, for the patients and for themselves.

Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012) build on Hutchinson's conditions with findings from their own study. First of all, they nuance Hutchinson's findings somewhat: In expanding their gaze to other professional

backgrounds than nurses, finding that employees without formal skill also engage in EOO, they find that *knowledge* does not seem to be a prerequisite like Hutchinson suggests. EOO is thus a phenomenon that have a broader impact on working life. They do, however, find strong support for the notion that ideology is a prerequisite, insofar as their interviewees “referred to norms in order to justify an expansion of output” (Kirchhoff & Karlsson, 2012, p. 120). They conclude their paper by stating that since EOO has been off the radar in most studies on resistance and misbehaviour in organisations, it is important to include this element in forthcoming studies. Furthermore, they state that since ideology has been confirmed as an important prerequisite for EOO across studies, “ideology or norms that justify resistance should therefore provide a starting point for further studies” (Kirchhoff & Karlsson, 2012, p. 120).

Against this background, it is noteworthy that the interviews conducted in my study also provide strong support for ideology as a prerequisite for engaging in EOO. Just like the health and social service workers in Kirchhoff and Karlsson’s study, the academics interviewed referred to norms in order to justify EOO. The norms referred to by the academics were harmonious with the CUDOS norms accounted for in Chapter 2, and in contradiction to the managerial norms accounted for in Chapter 4. My interviews therefore expands the relevance of Kirchhoff and Karlsson’s findings to a new occupation, namely academic work. They thus provide support for Kirchhoff and Karlsson’s concluding remarks that EOO is an important part of resistance and misbehaviour in organisations, and that ideology and norms as justifying elements of the phenomenon seem central.

Academic resistance on the covert-open axis

Figure 7.1 illustrates how the reactions categorised as academic resistance can be situated on the continuum between open and covert reactions that I developed in Chapter 6.



Figure 7.1 Academic resistance activities on the covert-open axis

The figure is an attempt to illustrate the differences in how covert or open the act of resistance is. When fighting, there is an explicit wish for the activity to be open. The academic who engages in fighting wants to be noticed, by her colleagues, by management and perhaps also by society. Overachieving, hiding, ignoring and being a bit thick are all examples of activities that are performed more or less covertly, but are still situated differently on the axis. The academic engaged in overachieving would rather be left alone by management “because they wouldn’t understand”, but the extra efforts this academic puts in are noticed by colleagues and students, whereas the activity of hiding seemed to be an open secret at the institutions where my interviewees worked. On the other hand, ignoring and especially being a bit thick were activities that the interviewees were very clear that they wanted management to have no knowledge of at all.

All but one of the activities (i.e. *fighting*) I have categorised as academic resistance fit with the descriptions of EOO by Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012). Furthermore, the same categories are more or less covert, but fighting is open. I will therefore suggest a new version of the figure of academic resistance on the covert-open axis, this time with the activities themselves removed and the theoretical categories highlighted.

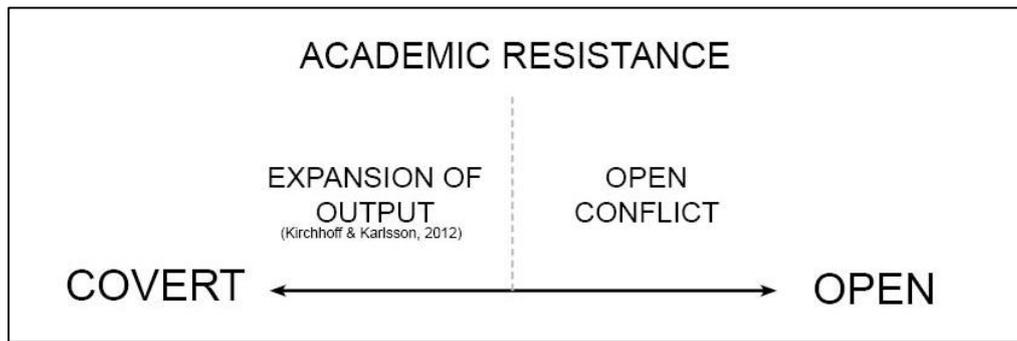


Figure 7.2 The two categories of academic resistance

By removing the actual activities that are described in my interviews and highlighting the theoretical aspects of the academic reactions, the theoretical understanding of the different aspects of *academic resistance* as an academic reaction to managerialism becomes clearer. There are thus two major forms of academic resistance, *open conflict* and *expansion of output*. The line that divides the two categories is dotted to illustrate how there is no clear boundary between the categories. This is due to the varying positions the activities that constitute the categories occupy on the axis.

Academic resistance as reclaiming quality assessment

In the last paragraphs, I discussed how a certain category of academic resistance seems compatible with the phenomenon of EOO. I have emphasised to the fact that *the form* the EOO takes varies from occupation to occupation, and that ideology or norms are important as justifying elements behind EOO. Previous literature on EOO has been based on studies of occupations in health and social care. In the following paragraphs, I will suggest that studies on academic resistance reveal a new element of what motivates EOO. In addition to the motivations already discovered in literature, a new element was of importance in my interviews: *Reclaiming quality assessment*. To understand how academics motivate their actions through a wish to reclaim the quality assessments of their own work, I will start by discussing notions of entitlement and obligation in my interviews.

In my interviews, notions of both *entitlement* and *obligation* were important as motivating factors for acts of resistance. The interviews were rich in descriptions of how the academics saw it as their right and duty to oppose the managerial systems. After all, they belonged to an

occupation with traditions for being granted high degrees of autonomy; autonomy over their time, their tasks, and how their work is to be evaluated. In other words, academics have enjoyed very high degrees of control over their own labour process. However, in my interviews academic resistance is not mere grumbling over the loss of power and privileges. The academics also felt they had an obligation to oppose the managerial systems. The high degree of autonomy the academics enjoy have been granted them for a reason. Through their experience and knowledge the academics have a very strong conviction that they are the best suited to assess the quality of the work they do. With the introduction of managerial systems in academia, they feel that their position as assessors of the quality of their own work is under threat.

To gain insight into why *reclaiming quality assessment* is such an important element in academic resistance and academic EOO, the concepts of *absolute quality*, *relative quality* and *quality cliché* (Grelland, 2011) that I discussed in Chapter 4 are helpful. When managerial systems attempt to plan, measure, evaluate and restructure academic work they intrude upon and colonize the quality assessments of academic work. By doing so, they increase their control over the academic labour process by introducing *quality clichés* that assess the quality relative to standards integrated in the managerial systems. The systems therefore assess a form of *relative quality*. This way of assessing quality is in opposition to what my interviewees thought of as optimal - academics assessing the quality themselves based on their own experience. The latter form of quality assessment would be of an *absolute quality*, a form of quality assessment independent of standards formulated as quality clichés and solely based on the experience and knowledge of the academic herself.

There are many examples of such colonization in my interviews. For instance, the academics who pretended to be a bit thick in order to run a course felt that the decision not to run the course was based on flawed quality indicators. What mattered was that the academics had assessed the absolute quality of the course and concluded that it was “cutting edge pedagogically and [they] really wanted to do it”. Therefore, they pretended to be dumb and in effect, in this particular case it was their own quality assessment that prevailed, not the quality assessment made by the managerial system.

Another example from the interviews are the academics who overachieve by tutoring the students five times more than they are supposed to. Overachieving is a very similar form to EOO and to several of the forms described by Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012), where health and social care workers did more for their patients than management wanted them to do. One of their interviewees, a manager, disapproved of this practice and compared the situation to an automobile repair shop where the customer asks for an oil change and gets a polish or repaint without asking for it. The academics in my interview do the extra mentoring of the students without telling management, since management explicitly told them to spend less time on mentoring than they end up doing. In light of the difference between absolute and relative quality it is important to note how this act of overachieving is justified. The interviewee lists a whole range of reasons, all of them grounded in her and her colleagues assessments of what provides the best quality for the students. This is an assessment of the *absolute quality* of academic work, because it is grounded in the experience and knowledge of the academics performing it, and not on pre-determined standards. These assessments differ from the assessments the managerial system provides that are based on a set of *relative quality* assessments, formulated as a certain standard the quality is to be measured by.

A common trait of all of the forms of resistance I found in my interviews is that the acts are justified by the interviewees as a means of reclaiming the quality assessment of their own work, like exemplified in the above paragraphs. Furthermore, the act of reclaiming the quality assessment means that the quality assessment in itself changes – from being an assessment of relative quality based on an quality cliché and part of the managerial system, to being an assessment of absolute quality, based on the experience and knowledge of the academics, but not explicitly formulated as a standard. Reclaiming the quality assessments of academic work therefore means that academics insist on doing *absolute* quality assessments of their work.

Upholding CUDOS

By performing acts of academic resistance, academics are upholding the CUDOS norms. The norm of *communalism* is perhaps the clearest

example of this. This is closely connected to the point I made in the last paragraph on the academics' insistence on doing *absolute* quality assessments. When academics are *being a bit thick, ignoring, hiding, overachieving* or *fighting* these are all examples of activities done to ensure that the quality assessments are done by the *academic community*, in line with Merton's norm communalism.

The norms *universalism, disinterestedness* and *organized criticism* are also upheld by acts of academic resistance, by the act of *fighting* in particular. The earlier mentioned statement made by my interviewee, "they are afraid of getting fired or getting tenured or, and such matters if they are too critical in public statements" is a sign that all of the three norms are under pressure. When academics have to include strategical considerations about their careers when they consider what to state publicly before making statements, several relevant elements occur. First, this makes the messenger an important part of the message, thus challenging universalism and the notion that what characterises the messenger should be of little importance. Secondly, the academic gains a personal interest in what is being said. The academic might ask herself: Will addressing this issue publicly damage my career? Will making this statement match the media strategies of my university? If management disagrees, perhaps they will see me as a troublemaker? The academic thus becomes *interested*, the very norm that is proposed by Hasselberg (2012) as the opposite of *disinterestedness*. Lastly, the two previous points underline the fact that when academia is organised in a manner where academics have to make thorough consideration of personal and career-wise consequences before making statements, this is the opposite of facilitating *organized scepticism*. Organized scepticism is a fragile structure. If its pillars, universalism and disinterestedness, are strong, it keeps erect, but it crumbles under conditions of fear, distrust or consequence. *Fighting* is thus a brave form of resistance where the resister insists on being disinterested, in the sense that she disregards any consequences the act might have.

A costly form of resistance

I have now singled out some common characteristics of academic resistance. First, the overarching objective of academics and management alike is excellence in research and teaching. However,

they disagree on the road to excellence. This is related to the academics reclaiming the quality assessments from the managerial systems because academic resistance enables academic workers to regain degrees of control over their own labour process. These characteristics makes academic resistance comparable to the form of resistance called EOO.

Academic resistance is, however, a potentially costly enterprise to be engaged in because the resistance happens outside of the formalised managerial system. Therefore, the activities are not registered and included in HR procedures like salaries, workload processes, tenure tracks and professorial promotions. As the formalised managerial systems become more influential in HE, the fact that the systems do not recognize the resistance activities performed by the academics, becomes potentially more serious. Overachieving is perhaps the clearest example from my interviews of how this plays out, when the interviewee told me she had to work five times harder than the managerial system recognizes due to her own understanding of how the work is done best. The other forms of resistance I observed also risk being costly to the academics performing them, albeit more indirectly. When engaging in covert activities and concealing their real intentions from management, academics are also concealing a substantial amount of work from the systems and people in charge of their pay, promotions and careers as a whole.

At the same time, the managerial systems might be able to measure the increase in output that occur as a result of the acts of resistance. If courses are improved, students become happier and research output is increased because academics are expanding the output, this may have effects on throughput of students, student evaluations and citation indexes and size of research grants rewarded. However, if managerial systems and managers alike stay unaware that this is happening, they might interpret high output rates as a result of their own efforts to manage the work of the academics, when in fact the successes are results of the academics reclaiming quality assurance and taking control of their own labour process at the cost of managerial control. In time, such a relationship between academics, managers and managerial systems could only increase the cost of this form of resistance for the academics.

Academic resistance – summing up

In the last part of this chapter I will present a table that sums up characteristics of academic resistance on the dimensions I have developed throughout this chapter. A similar table will also be presented in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, and in Chapter 10, I will merge the three tables to provide an overview of academic reactions to managerialism.

Table 7.1: Summing up academic resistance

Factor	Academic Resistance
Disapproval of management	Yes
Control over academic labour process	Yes
Mode of quality assessment	Absolute
Performed to uphold CUDOS norms	Yes

The first factor, *disapproval of management*, states whether management approves of the behaviour or not. As I have shown, management does not approve of the activities that constitute academic resistance. Management and academics might agree on the ends of the resisting acts, but they disagree on the means.

This is related to a dispute over who are best suited to *control the academic labour process*, the academics themselves or the managerial systems. The resisting academics perform their acts of resistance to deny managerial systems influence on aspects of their work. Furthermore, this is related to the *mode of quality assessment*, in an absolute or relative manner. By not adhering to the quality standards of the managerial systems, and by insisting on basing quality assessments on their own academic knowledge and experience, the academics perform *absolute* quality assessments.

Finally, I argue that there is a close relationship between the CUDOS norms and academic resistance, as the acts of resistance are *performed to uphold the CUDOS norms*.

Chapter 8: Academic gaming

In the previous chapter, I discussed one set of reactions to managerialism where academics found ways to avoid demands from management and the managerial systems. I categorised these reactions as academic resistance, and constructed a model to systematise how the different forms of academic resistance are situated between covertness and openness. In this chapter, I will add to the analysis of academic reactions to managerialism by discussing a different form of reaction that came up in the interviews – a set of reactions I have categorised as *academic gaming*. Academic gaming happens when faculty plays along with the wishes of management or managerial systems, but does so only superficially. Accounts of academic gaming were prevalent in my interviews, and examples include inflation of academic publications, simple or elaborate ways of boosting citation indexes, tricks to make students satisfied to increase student evaluation scores and teach-to-test-tactics to increase student output. A more thorough discussion of this superficiality will follow after I have presented examples of what academic gaming is.

Examples of academic gaming

In the following pages, I will provide examples of gaming from my interviews. Like in the chapter on academic resistance, I will present the examples including some context to provide a more thorough understanding of the direct quotes from the interviewees. I will continue with an analysis of the phenomenon of gaming after the examples, and finish the chapter by expanding the model of academic misbehaviour. The examples are *the economy grade*, *teaching to the test*, *tweaking publication metrics*, *making the students happy*, and *third mission mockeries*.

The economy grade

As in many HE systems, the Norwegian system awards the HE institutions for students passing exams. This incentive model originates from the 2002 whitepaper leading up to the before mentioned Quality Reform (see Chapter 3). The whitepaper states that government should “reward universities and university colleges characterized by quality, and institutions that make students succeed”

(Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2002, p. 71, my translation). The recommendations from the 2002 whitepaper were effectuated in the form of incentives where every student passing ECTS-courses generates additional funding for the institution they belong to. In the Norwegian incentive system, the difference in letting *one* student pass or fail an exam is substantial. If the exam is, say, equivalent to one year of full time studies, the difference in funding for the institution ranges from NOK 37.000 (BA studies in social sciences, humanities etc.) to NOK 149.000 (degrees in medicine, veterinarian school etc) (Database for Statistics on Higher Education, 2016b).

The basics of the incentive system was well known to my interviewees. One of them was an associate professor, a merited researcher, who was also very fond of teaching. When I asked what he preferred, he replied, “I cannot choose between the two, I think they naturally fit together”. During the interview, he described how economic incentives related to teaching in Norwegian HE worked in his department. He and his colleagues were all aware of the intentions of the system, and how it is supposed to reward courses that are taught well. However, imperfections in the system had become apparent to him, as the following dialogue between him and me illustrates:

Associate Professor: “We joke about it sometimes, grading a paper with the grade E and calling it “the economy grade” (laughs). E for “Economy”, but seriously, the difference between an E and an F is a lot of money to our department. And we get some nice throughput statistics as well, management is really on us about throughput.”

Me: “Is it your impression that this is common?”

Associate Professor: “The first time I heard about this was actually through an external examiner from another university that we used to grade the work of the students, and I remember that although the tone in his voice suggested that he was partly joking he actually said he had been nice to us and used the economy grade a couple of times (laughs) and then I asked him what he meant and then he explained the term, you know. So I guess this is pretty common, since they obviously have this expression at other universities as well. And around here it is a joke that comes up every year when the students do their exams.”

Me: “Have you ever graded a paper with an E that you thought should have been an F yourself?”

Associate Professor: “(laughs) well, no, honestly I do not think that I have, at least not very consciously. But I will definitely admit that it has happened that I have thought about the consequences of writing down an F when I have pondered whether I should put an E or an F. And, well, it is not the consequences for the student I am thinking about, it’s the economy of our department. But I haven’t let it influence my decision.”

Thus, applying the “economy grade” can be defined as letting a student pass an exam despite his or her performance suggesting giving an “F” for economic reasons. The phenomenon of letting a student pass for economic reasons was familiar to several of my interviewees, albeit none of them reported that they had actually used the “economy grade” themselves, nor had they any opinion of how widespread the practice was. Furthermore, based on the empirical data from my interviews, nothing can be said about how common setting the economy grade is.

However, Hægeland et al. (2015, p. 50) point out that the use of the weakest passable grade E, has not increased in the period after the before mentioned whitepaper introduced the incentives in 2003, suggesting evidence against a strategic use of the economy grade as a result of the incentives. An important point is also that the incentives were introduced to reward HE institutions that make students succeed. A reduction in the rate of failing students could be a result of HE institutions efforts to help students pass. To note that the narrative of the “Economy grade” is a result of incentives in the Norwegian HE sector, is however a relevant part of an outline of faculty responses to managerialism in academia.

Teaching to the test

In one of my interviews, a professor, told me what he thought of as a paradox in the teaching at his department. When asked to describe the ideal version of teaching and learning at a university, he emphasised that students should be taught how to reflect critically on what they read, to be curious and how to use the methodological tools of science to enable that curiosity. However, he suspected that the way he taught his students sometimes directly countered this ideal.

Professor: “We want the students to pass, right? And we are always told how important it is so we help them [the students] with things like a lecture summing up the most important exam-relevant issues right before the exam period and these are very popular lectures, I mean I never see as many faces in the auditorium as I see these summing up lectures. But this worries me because I think that makes them less able to think bigger thoughts and to think for themselves, this is cramming and maybe even forgotten two months after the test. But like I said that’s the most important stuff they should learn here.”

Me: “Do you have any thoughts on why this is happening anyway?”

Professor: “Well, I have briefly thought about cutting them out but I fear it would be very unpopular among the students, and maybe it would ruin the good exam results our department get as well, I don’t know.”

Activities that can be categorised as *teaching to the test*, or “test-specific instruction” (Jennings & Bearak, 2014, p. 381), were discussed in a majority of my interviews. There are several drivers of “teaching to the test”-practices in HE. Incentives for passing students are obvious, but teaching to the test as a method of gaming evaluation scores also came up in my interviews. The summing up lectures were popular among students and one interviewee told me that if you did a summing up lecture the same day as the evaluation questionnaire was handed out, you were sure to get a good result.

Making the students happy

A consequence of the HE reforms of the last decades has been an increase in the students’ influence on teaching, study programmes, their institutions and even the HE sector as a whole. Student representatives have been granted seats at institutional level boards, and student representation is considered important in almost all spheres of the organisation, from learning environment and study programme committees to public relations committees and research committees. Institutions spend time and resources controlling that students are treated well by administrative personnel, by their fellow students and by their lecturers and supervisors. Managerial systems are also rigged to cater to these needs, through online reporting systems and formal procedures making sure the student voice has influence.

In the Norwegian HE sector, this has led to very real results for the working life of academics. Student evaluations are obligatory parts of quality assurance systems and must be performed in order for an institution to be accredited as an HE institution. It is not enough to execute student evaluations, institutions also have to show auditing agencies that they are able to follow up weak evaluation scores with taking appropriate actions. One way to do this is to start with the lecturer, for instance through standardised staff development tools like courses in higher ed. pedagogies, courses in the use of IT based teaching tools, and mentoring by colleagues.

My interviewees were almost unanimous in claiming that there has been an increase in the influence students enjoy. They were eager to state that they agreed that students need to be active and involved in

their own teaching, and this includes having opinions on how the study programmes are organised. At the same time, almost all of them commented that the development in many aspects had consequences that are more sinister, like this quote illustrates:

PhD student: “When I took my BA degree I am sure that I didn’t think it was my job to decide how or what the professor should teach. And why should it be? The reason why I have spent so much time studying is because I believe that when I study I learn stuff and get more competent but the way it is now it seems like the students don’t see it that way”.

One of the ways my interviewees reacted to the increased power of students was to let them have their way, regardless of whether or not the interviewees agreed with what the students wanted. One example that came up in several of the interviews was the printing and handing out of copies of lecture presentation files before the lecture. One of my interviewees told me she knew of research that explicitly recommended lecturers not handing out copies before lectures, and personally she thought it was a bad idea to do it. Every time she held a lecture, she did it anyway. The reason she gave was that she had a lot to gain to make the students happy. Happy students made no trouble for her, her manager left her alone and evaluation scores became high. Put bluntly, happy students were more important to her than students that learned something.

Tweaking publication metrics

One of my interviewees was a second year PhD student. Still in his mid-twenties, he had been encouraged to apply for a scholarship in the write up phase of his master’s thesis, and started his PhD work quickly after he had finished. Being quite unexperienced as an academic, he still pondered some of the tricks of the trade. However, his university had a lot of programs and seminars for new researchers, as well as a close community of fellow PhD students. He told me how he was getting mixed signals on whether to prioritize a high number of publications, or to try to get them into journals with a high impact factor and to get them cited.

PhD student: “At this one seminar, the guy talking to us said straight out that no paper should contain more than one finding. If we had another result to report on, we should save it for the next paper to utilize the material for another paper. And that makes sense, of course, I see these guys in my department, barely ten years older than me and they’re full professors already, and when I look at their publication lists I see that they’ve had a huge output the last ten years. But I’ve also

heard that there is a shift now and they value quality now. Like, it's going to become more important to be in the best journals and get cited a lot."

Me: "So you've seen a shift, could you tell me a bit more about the shift?"

PhD student: "Yes, and it is probably good, but at the same time it is a bit unfair that the generation that did their postdocs in the 2000s could just mass produce publications, but we, the next generation have to get cited a lot. I'll probably spend a lot more time before becoming full professor."

Me: "Could you tell me more about the citations?"

PhD student: "Yes, absolutely, there is a lot of talk about that, there are strategies to tweak citations. Our research group leader once said we should cite each other. And the people we cooperate with, as a sign of good will, and they cite us back."

Me: "Did you pick up any other tricks at these seminars?"

PhD Student: "Well, yeah, they always told us how important it is to adapt your text to the journal you want to submit to. Obvious stuff like how to present your data and writing styles, but also like how important it is to try to find a way to cite the editors and boards of the journals you want to get into, because they will be more inclined to accept your paper if you do. They want to tweak their metrics as well."

Gaming publication metrics is perhaps the form of academic gaming that previously have been most elaborated on in the research literature (see for instance Butler & Spoelstra, 2017), and accounts of different ways of tweaking the metrics were also prevalent in my interviews. The branding of individual researchers that I discussed in Chapter 4 can be seen as a powerful incentive behind the kinds of actions the interviewees describe here.

Third mission mockeries

The traditional two core activities of universities are generally understood to be teaching and research. However, contemporary HE institutions are also expected to engage in what has been known as *third mission* activities. The term is used to describe a whole array of societal engagements in which universities take part. Third mission activities can for instance be collaborations with businesses, different forms of social engagement, partaking in innovative clusters, or popularized communication of scientific knowledge; though activities described as third mission expand the boundaries of these examples. How third mission activities are defined and performed varies a lot, depending on for instance national context (Pinheiro, Langa, & Pausits, 2015), academic discipline (Pinheiro, Normann, & Johnsen, 2012), or

university ranking systems (Montesinos, Carot, Martinez, & Mora, 2008).

The third mission became a theme also in my interviews, as evident in the following excerpt from an interview with a professor. The professor had a background of working both outside and inside of academic institutions, and she talks about third mission activities in the form of communicating her research to practitioners:

Professor: “The research we do is actually quite popular among practitioners. It happens quite often that people ask us to do talks and write popularised texts, often in Norwegian to make it more accessible to politicians and the public. But there is an attitude among my colleagues saying that such activities are a proper waste of time. I’ve seen several examples of people straight out mocking third mission activities. I would actually go as far as to say that it’s frowned upon to do talks for practitioners, or to write texts for practitioner magazines or journals, if they aren’t peer reviewed or recognized as “scientific”.

Me: “Frowned upon, what does that mean?”

Professor: “I mean, if you do it the others will say you’re wasting not only your own time, but valuable contributions to what we can contribute with as a team of researchers. I mean, I’ve been quite fortunate and I am pretty effective when I write scientific papers. If I spend my time catering for practitioners, the scientific output of my team suffers. And I will be made fun of, I guess, by my colleagues.”

Me: “So what do you do then, do you do these kind of activities?”

Professor: “No, heavens no. It’s a waste of time, it doesn’t generate funding at all to our department, and as I said, it is not appreciated among my colleagues. It’s a shame, really, because I think we all see that it would be valuable both for us and for the practitioners, but nothing comes out of it.”

As the quote shows, there is an ambivalence associated with third mission activities. On one hand, they are seen both as meaningful to the core work of academics, and as valuable for society. Nevertheless, they are also regarded as a waste of valuable time that preferably should be used for research and publishing papers instead.

The Norwegian HE system where my interviewees work is a system where the “service provider” (Pinheiro et al., 2015) model of third mission activities is dominant. The service provider third mission activities is characterised by a university’s “established reputation as a regional player, its vast linkages with the local community, industry included, and its financial dependency on the public purse” (Pinheiro et al., 2015, p. 237).

Third mission activities are actively encouraged in HE by policymakers and by university managers alike. The strategic opportunities that lie

in the third mission, both as a catalyst for generating additional income and to strengthen the universities' public standing, are increasingly recognised by universities (Pineiro, 2012). Mission statements made by Norwegian HE institutions generally include substantial proclamations of the importance of being of service to society (for examples of such statements, see for instance Høgskolen i Østfold, 2015; NTNU, 2011). It is therefore intriguing to see how the incentives for gaining funding through research related activities trump third mission activities due to the incentive structure, leading to a mockery of the third mission by academics.

Contributions to theories on academic gaming

In the following paragraphs, I will develop my findings on academic gaming in light of various theories on misbehaviour in organisations.

Gaming: not resistance, but not mere compliance either

Gaming is a paradoxical behaviour, and has elements of both resistance and compliance. The relationship between these two elements in gaming is complex and allusive, and therefore it is not obvious how the actions I have coined gaming should be categorised in relation to resistance. However, there are several reasons why I argue that gaming is not resistance. Firstly, it is difficult to distinguish gaming from compliant behaviour where academics simply do as the incentives require them to do. In this case, gaming is a form of *compliance*, and therefore the opposite of resistance. Secondly, gaming tactics are sometimes partly encouraged by management, at least by middle management. Resistance, as it is described by Karlsson (2011), is acting in a way management think is inappropriate, not in ways encouraged by them. Thirdly, it is not obvious that gaming is a measure to uphold the autonomy of the academics. As I discussed in Chapter 7, acts of academic resistance are attempts to control the academic labour process through reclaiming quality assessment and through this upholding autonomy. Contrary to this, gaming can render the academic workers without control over how they publish, teach and evaluate their own work.

Although difficult to categorise as resistance, *gaming* is not mere compliant behaviour either. There are several reasons for this. Firstly,

my interviewees talked about some elements of gaming with the same level of secrecy as they did when they talked about resistance. Both accounts thus belonged to the “I probably shouldn’t be talking about this...”-section (see Chapter 6) of the conversations, similar to the off-stage “academic hidden transcript” described by Anderson (2008, p. 257). The interviewees also indicated that the accounts of resistance and the accounts of gaming both described behaviours that are not supposed to be performed, albeit for different reasons.

Perverse incentives as catalyst for gaming

Edwards and Roy (2017) argue that an increasing set of *perverse incentives* in academia encourage behaviours that diverge from established scientific standards. They do not explicitly relate their analysis to theories on *managerialism* as a structural prerequisite, nor to theories on resistance in organisations as reactions to such structures. However, some comparisons can be made between Edwards and Roy’s understanding of the nature of perverse incentives and theories of managerialism and theories on resistance, and in particular theories on *organisational misbehaviour (OMB)* as they are described by Ackroyd and Thompson (1999). On the structural side, Edwards and Roy point towards a development in HE where a) quantitative performance metrics, b) competition for research funding and c) “a steady shift toward operating public universities on a private business model” (Edwards & Roy, 2017, p. 52), which are all elements that fit within the managerialism paradigm (see my Chapter 3). The academics react by creating an “increasingly perverse academic culture” (Edwards & Roy, 2017, p. 52) and an escalation in unethical behaviour of scientists, comparable to elements in OMB theories. I will return to the theories on OMB in the next subchapter, after I have presented theories on perverse incentives in more detail.

Edwards and Roy argue that historically, science and academia have been characterised by strong virtues and ethical standards, guiding and regulating the practice of scientists, although they do this without referring to the CUDOS norms. However, by introducing quantitative performance metrics and incentives, these virtues become effectively undermined. And even if the intention behind introducing performance metrics and incentives had been to identify and

strengthen individuals and institutions that excel due to the same academic virtues, such a way of managing academia is inherently flawed, because “when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure²⁰” (Edwards & Roy, 2017, p. 52). Through a process that resembles natural selection, actors that are comfortable and thrive in an environment of perverse incentives will succeed, while the system “selectively weeds out ethical and altruistic actors” (Edwards & Roy, 2017, p. 53). The perverse incentives result in a whole body of unintended consequences. The sum of these is having broad and unhealthy effects like excessive competition between academics and between institutions, academics behaving unethically, and, eventually, a reduced trust in academia in the general public.

Although Edwards and Roy fail to include major parts of the insights of sociological studies on the relationship between managerialism and work provided by for instance labour process and critical management studies, their observations on the relationship between norms and incentives are valuable as tools for analysing the findings on *gaming* in my interviews. Edwards and Roy provide numerous examples of the growing perverse incentives in academia, systematising *the form of incentive*, its *intended effect* and its *actual effect*. All of the examples of academic gaming from my interviews can be analysed using the model of perverse incentives in academia, as illustrated in table 8.1 on the next page.

²⁰ «When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure” is also known as Goodhart’s Law.

Table 8.1. Perverse incentives in academia (model from Edwards & Roy, 2017, p. 52, modified using data from my interviews)

Incentive	Intended effect	Actual effect
Additional funding granted when students pass courses.	Reward and strengthen institutions that are characterized by quality and that make students succeed.	<i>The economy grade:</i> Academics allow students to pass in order to secure funding.
Institutions and departments rewarded for better grades on exams.	Increase quality of teaching and student learning outcomes.	<i>Teaching to the test:</i> Academics focus on short term learning, and neglect critical thinking.
Academics rewarded for evaluation scores.	Increase quality of teaching and student learning outcomes.	<i>Making the students happy:</i> Lowering demands, dumbing down courses.
Academics rewarded for high number of publications.	Increase research productivity and efficiency.	<i>Tweaking publication metrics:</i> Academics “mass producing” publications
Academics rewarded for high number of citations.	Strengthen academics and departments that have impact on other researchers.	<i>Tweaking publication metrics:</i> Strategic citations of colleagues and partners. Inflated reference lists. Self-citation.
Academics rewarded for publishing in distinguished journals.	Strengthen academics and departments that are recognised by the best journals.	<i>Tweaking publication metrics:</i> Strategic citations of editorial board members and probable peer reviewers.
Higher rewards for publications for the scientific community than for publications for practice communities or the public.	Balanced levels of attention towards scientific community and society outside academia.	<i>Third mission mockeries:</i> Disregard and contempt for production of non-scientific texts and presentations.

Table 8.1 illustrates how the actual reactions that I found in my interviews diverge greatly from the intention behind the incentives. So far, my findings are thus compatible with the point made by Edwards and Roy (2017) that academics react to perverse incentives in ways that leaves the incentives not only without effect, but even renders them

counterproductive, insofar as they are working against their intended consequence.

Several authors have written on how *gaming* is a suitable way to categorise phenomena comparable to the *actual effects* of perverse incentives in academia. Tourish et al. (2017) shows how audits and accountability regimes in the HE sector have the “perverse effect of encouraging academics to game the system” (Tourish et al., 2017 loc 1424), reducing the richness of academic work to simple metrics that are auditable. Kalfa et al. (2018) show how the introduction of performance appraisal schemes challenges values of collegiality and erodes collective communities through turning academic work into a game where short term and individual successes that are measurable are rewarded. In a rich series of vignettes, Butler and Spoelstra (2017) shows how academics play the publication game. In several of the vignettes, academics are agreeing to demands from reviewers in ways they are not comfortable with in order to get their work published. In an especially stark example, an interviewee gives the authors information on European universities paying six thousand Euros for a false co-authorship in renowned papers; the reason being that they need their employees to publish or they will lose their accreditation. The authors comment that although such a practice is shocking, it “nonetheless epitomizes the kind of dilemmas that many academics face in a professional sphere that values the mere fact of publication in certain outlets over and above other modes of scholarly engagement” (Butler & Spoelstra, 2017, loc 2381). They also question whether there really is a substantial difference between this practice and other more acceptable albeit ethically questionable practices, like hiring big name professors shortly before accreditation processes or research assessments.

Thus far I have not addressed the ways in which theories on *perverse incentives* and other theories on misbehaviour in academic organisations are contradicting each other. It is, however, not straightforward to combine these theories in the manner that I have done in the last paragraphs. Differences in perspectives can be illustrated by an example from Edwards and Roy (2017), who argue that not all incentives are perverse. On the contrary, some incentives are good in academia as there is a theoretical sweet spot between too

broad a use of incentives and the need to maintain the autonomy of academics. Incentives are necessary to avoid hindered productivity, but too many of them will increase erroneous results. Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) is one example of a different understanding of the nature of incentives. In their theory on organisational misbehaviour, they see the pattern of managerial desires to control the labour process and worker reactions to maintain autonomy as a structural phenomenon that will have a tendency to play out in new forms in organisations where there is management and where there are people that are managed. A sweet spot will not remove the desire of the managed to protect their autonomy and oppose attempts to control them.

The dynamics of managerialism and academic gaming

Ackroyd and Thompson (1999, pp. 90-96) explain how organisational misbehaviour can be understood through *the dynamics of direct control regimes*. According to the authors, misbehaviour can always be understood as a reaction to an attempt to control behaviour. The form the misbehaviour takes depends on the form the managerial control measure takes. Furthermore, as a managerial control measure triggers a new form of misbehaviour by workers, management will eventually be inclined to introduce yet another form of managerial control measure to cope with the new form of misbehaviour. Which, in turn, triggers yet another form of misbehaviour to counter the managerial control measure. Thus, the sequence continues, with managerial actions in the form of managerial control measures and worker reactions as new forms of misbehaviour.

Within this framework of managerial actions and worker reactions “a variety of possible trajectories of development are possible” (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999, p. 94). It is also possible to model these trajectories, using a figure where managerial actions and worker reactions are systematically situated in relation to each other. Ackroyd and Thompson (1999, p. 95) provide an example of such a figure, illustrating how a managerial attempt to control soldiering through *close supervision* in turn triggers misbehaviour in the form of *work limitation* by the workers. *Work limitation* triggers a new managerial attempt to control the workers, this time through *piecework incentives*.

The *piecework incentives* make the workers misbehave through *cutting corners* and *decreasing the quality of their work*, which leads management to attempt to control the workers through *job redesign*. This trajectory of managerial actions and worker reactions continues in what seems to be an everlasting dance in organisations.

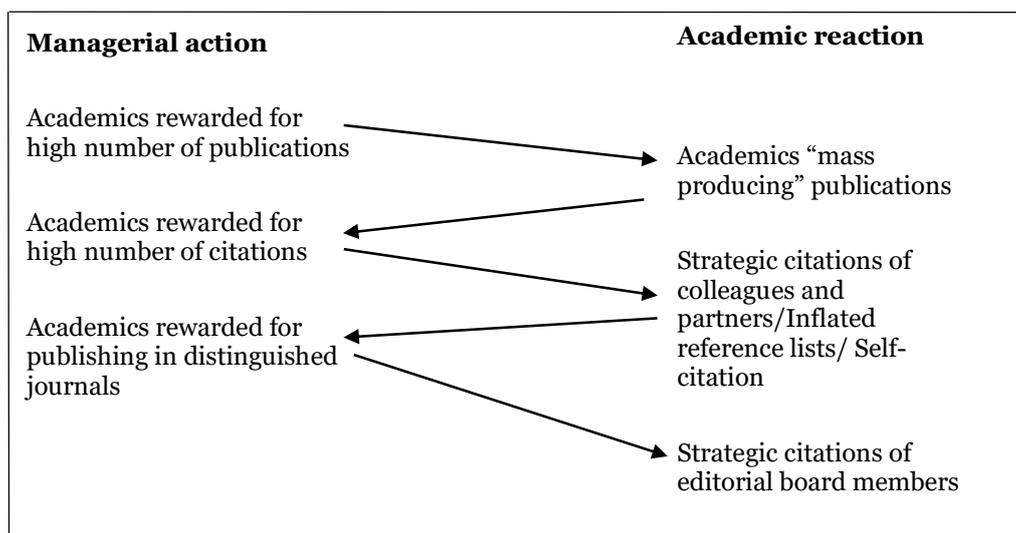


Figure 8.1. Managerial actions to improve research and academic reactions of gaming through tweaking publication metrics (modified from Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999, p. 95)

Figure 8.1 illustrates how academic gaming is a set of managerial actions and (academic) worker reactions. The figure is also suited to discuss the compatibility of the *perverse incentives* suggested by Edwards and Roy (2017) and the managerial attempts to control workers. I have used the incentives for scientific publishing as examples of managerial actions and the examples of tweaking publication metrics as examples of academic reactions.

I have earlier argued that gaming should not be seen as resistance, as gaming is neither motivated by an ambition to avoid managerial control, nor to uphold the autonomy of the academics. Ackroyd and Thompson’s concept of trajectories of managerial actions and worker reactions is describing the worker reactions as compatible with resistance, because the motivation for the reactions is to escape managerial control. However, I suggest that their model is valuable as a tool to describe the relationship between managerial actions and the academic reaction of *gaming* as well, although gaming cannot be categorised as resistance.

Functional stupidity: Gaming in broad daylight

Functional stupidity has been introduced earlier in the thesis, but will now be explained properly. It is a concept developed by Alvesson and Spicer (2012, 2016). It is somewhat related to perverse incentives insofar as it offers an explanation of why people and organisations do seemingly stupid things. The concept of functional stupidity is also useful to add to the understanding of academic gaming.

Functional stupidity is an absence of reflexivity in organisations. Instead, people “focus only on the narrow, technical aspects of the job. [They] do the job correctly, but without reflecting on purpose or the wider context” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016a, loc 191). Functionally stupid activities are *stupid* because they are performed even if the actors often suspect or even know they are harmful. They are *functional* because they lead to short-term or instrumental gains or rewards, for employees, for managers and for organisations. In this way, the concept is compatible with the concept of perverse incentives, as functional stupidity and the perverse incentives alike continue to exist because of their short-term rewards.

According to Alvesson and Spicer (2016a) it is painful for employees, managers and organisations to address uncertainties, contradictions and bad solutions at the workplace. On the other hand, things that run smoothly, without conflict and effort are pleasing. People that make sure things run easily are therefore appreciated, in all strands of an organisation. This is the reason why functional stupidity is allowed to happen in broad daylight, endorsed by all parts of the organisation; employees and managers alike. I suggest that this aspect of functional stupidity is valid for some examples of *academic gaming* as well.

Several of the gaming activities identified in my interviews fit the descriptions of functionally stupid activities. When tweaking publication metrics through strategic citing, academics know they are undermining an important principle in academic publishing and that such activities lead to bad science. Thus, it is stupid to do it. At the same time, it is functional, because by citing strategically the chances of getting a paper accepted increase. Similarly, teaching to the test is stupid because the students do not learn things that they ought to learn in HE, like critical thinking and reflexivity. Teaching to the test is also

functional, because the students increase their chances of passing their exams (the students are happy), the department gets a higher throughput rate (the managers are happy) and the university increases its funding (the organisation is happy). Academics and managers together have an interest in keeping these activities going even if they see them as destructive. Such activities enable them to reach short-term goals, and they are therefore allowed to be performed openly.

In my interviews, I also found forms of gaming that do not fit Alvesson and Spicer's descriptions of functional stupidity as well as the examples above. These are activities that, due to their severe character, are clearly not allowed to happen openly. If they had happened openly, my interviewees thought it probable that managers and academics alike would have to address them and stop engaging in them. When my interviewees told me of these activities, they made it clear that they never could have told their managers they did this (third mission mockeries) or like in the gravest example, none of my interviewees even admitted to having engaged in the activity, although they had heard of others (the economy grade). I therefore suggest that these activities are not categorised as functional stupidity, due to the fact that they are not activities that are allowed to happen because they are functional and secure that everything runs smoothly. Had it been known that these activities had been performed, the smoothness would end.

Although I do not characterise these activities as functional stupidity, I still categorise them as gaming. They are not resistance, because they are not performed to uphold the autonomy of academics and to maintain control over the quality assessments of academic work. On the contrary, like other gaming activities, they are performed to cater to a quality measure in the managerial system.

Academic gaming on the covert-open axis

I will now return to the continuum between covert and open activities and situate the different examples of academic gaming on the axis.

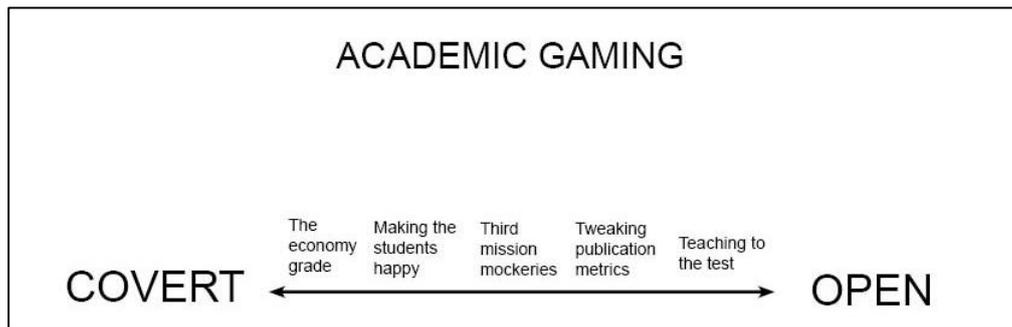


Figure 8.2 Academic gaming activities on the covert-open axis

The figure illustrates how the activities that I categorise as academic gaming fit on a continuum from covert to open, just like the activities categorised as academic resistance. Teaching to the test is a public activity, announced to students and encouraged by management, but like the quote from one of my interviewees shows, questionable in the eyes of faculty. Tweaking publication metrics is also an activity on the “open” end of the axis, insofar as the activity is encouraged by parts of management. At the same time, the activity also has a notion of cheating associated with it, insofar as the techniques described, like quoting ones colleagues, twist the original intention of the metrics somewhat. The third mission mockeries are situated somewhere between *covert* and *open*, since the mockeries are not directly encouraged by management. At the same time, the incentive structures in the sector are so biased against third mission activities and towards research that management and faculty alike condone the behaviour. Making the students happy, and the economy grade in particular, are covert activities. To care more for satisfied students than the quality of teaching, or to allow students to pass for economic reasons, are activities that are hidden from management and from the public.

Since *Teaching to the test* and *Tweaking publication metrics* are activities that are allowed to be performed in the open, even if faculty recognise them as gaming and consider them stupid to the academic endeavour, the right side of the covert-open axis can be categorised as *Functional stupidity*, the name of the category taken from Alvesson and Spicer (2012). *Making the students happy* and *The economy grade* are on the other hand gaming activities that are not allowed to happen in the open and that are not condoned by management. Therefore, I categorise them as *Cheating*.

This splitting of academic gaming into the two categories of functional stupidity and cheating enables me to develop a new figure, illustrated in Figure 8.3.

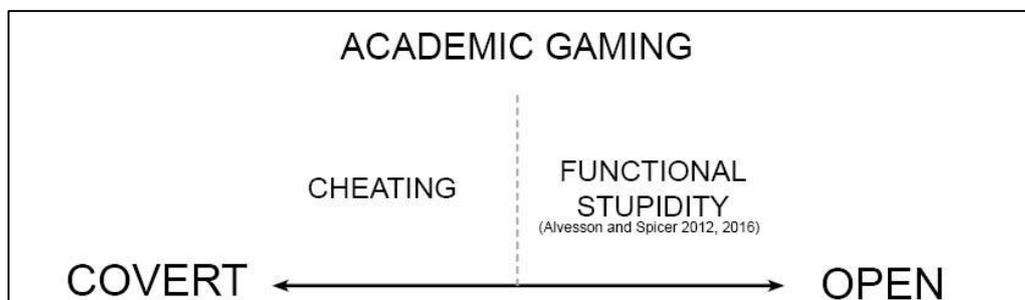


Figure 8.3. The two categories of academic gaming

In this version of the figure, the actual activities that are described in my interviews are removed. Instead, the theoretical aspects of the academic reactions are highlighted. The figure therefore is an attempt to create a theoretical understanding of the different aspects of *academic gaming* as an academic reaction to managerialism.

Surrendering quality assessments

As I have noted earlier, one of the main differences between *academic resistance* and *academic gaming* is the relationship to managerial control. Academics engage in resistance to obstruct managerial influence, to be able to control the quality assessments of their own work and thus uphold their autonomy. When academics engage in gaming, there is no such obstruction of managerial influence. Gaming therefore entails that the academics surrender their autonomy and hand over control over the academic labour process to the managerial systems, a finding that has been documented by several authors (Alvesson & Spicer, 2017; Kalfa et al., 2018; Tourish et al., 2017).

The interviewees in my study were aware of the fact that they were gaming the system, and demonstrated the ability to observe and discuss their own actions from a meta-perspective. There were examples of interviewees talking about this in quite a self-contented manner, stating, “If this is what they want, this is what they’re going to get”. Such statements imply a subversive element in gaming, the motivation behind gaming being to “show management right” by maximising the deficiencies of the managerial system. However,

several authors have identified risks of playing games in organisations, in academia and elsewhere. What used to be academics with very high degrees of autonomy in their work “can get so tightly wound up with playing with power relations, they stop thinking outside the game” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2017, loc 2647). When this happens, the game is no longer a game, but a full internalisation of the managerial regime and power structures that the gamer used to hold in contempt. Butler and Spoelstra (2012) argue that such phenomena seem to occur even if the gamers explicitly state subversive motivation for playing the game, like changing the system from within or buying freedom by playing the game well. Building on Gadamer’s notion of the game mastering the players as opposite to the players mastering the game, they found that scholars within critical management studies that had ambitions of outplaying the game, risked ending up being outplayed by the game. For instance, they found that experiences of playing the game lead academics to alter the way in which they “approach and assess their own academic work [thus] it becomes difficult for game-playing critical academics to extricate themselves from a regime of excellence that they may see as being fundamentally ‘unfair’ (...) and even ‘inhumane’ (...)” (Butler & Spoelstra, 2012, p. 901).

The idea that the player gets outplayed by the game resonates well with an important aspect of Alvesson and Spicers’s (2016a) concept of functional stupidity. Functional stupidity can resemble the game, insofar as a person needs to have a good understanding of the organisation where they work, and thus need to be “relatively intelligent to be functionally stupid” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016a, loc 204). But in the same manner as when the players get mastered by the game, people engaging in functional stupidity eventually “avoid thinking too much about exactly what [they] are doing, why [they] are doing it, and its potential implications” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016a, loc 209). Furthermore, the agonizing process of being critical, to yourself and to others is avoided, and in the end people engaging in functionally stupid activities are usually rewarded for doing so, as are people engaged in gaming.

Although I found no notions in my interviews of academics explicitly recognising that they had been affected by playing the game in ways such as the ones described by Butler and Spoelstra, several of the

statements they made were paradoxical in light of the theories on mastering and being mastered. An example of this is that interviewees saw it as natural to slice findings into several research papers, spreading their research findings thinly as a means to tweak publication metrics. Another example is how interviewees talked about the advantages of citing their colleagues and partners without addressing this as something unscientific. In my interviews, these paradoxes were more prevalent when we discussed research and publishing, than when we discussed teaching. The interviewees were more explicitly stating that what they did when gaming in teaching situations was undermining the ideal of what HE was supposed to be. When discussing some assets of gaming within publishing the distinction between the act of gaming and the ideal was not equally clear. This might reflect the fact that managing by metrics has had greater impact on publishing than it has had on teaching. It may also reflect that in issues like tenure and academic promotions, research and publications for a long time have had a tendency to triumph over teaching (Mørland, 2017).

An important part of this phenomenon lies in the difference between absolute and relative quality assessments (Chapter 3). Academics resist in order to be able to perform quality assessments themselves, based on their own knowledge and experiences and not on a quality standard pre-defined by management. When academics engage in gaming, the opposite is taking place: The academics use the managerial standard as a vantage point, and attempt to maximise their score or assessment as according to the same standard. The quality assessment is then no longer an *absolute* quality assessment, but a *relative* quality assessment based on the *quality cliché* formulated in the managerial standard (Grelland, 2011).

All the forms of gaming I found in my interviews are examples of this phenomenon. If academics use *the economy grade*, they let the managerial push to increase throughput influence their assessment of a student's work in such a manner that it overrides their own academic assessment. When academics engage in *teaching to the test*-activities, they suppress their own idea of what good academic teaching and learning is (reflection, critical thinking, enabling curiosity) and teach in a way that will increase the student's test scores (short term learning,

cramming). Academics who engage in *tweaking publication metrics* allow simple quantitative measures like number of papers, citations or the reputation of a journal to dominate over their more complex scholarly assessments of their texts. And finally, academics who engage in *third mission mockeries* deliberately neglect tasks like communicating with practitioners within their field, popularising their research or talking to journalists. This is done to be able to spend more time on publishing papers in scientific journals, perhaps with the intention of boosting publication metrics even more.

Abandoning CUDOS

In the previous paragraphs, I have argued that when gaming, academics surrender quality assessments over academic work, control over the academic labour process and their autonomy to the managerial systems. I will now argue that by doing this, academics will gradually abandon the CUDOS norms.

The most obvious norm to be challenged through gaming is *disinterestedness*. As I have previously discussed thoroughly in this chapter, the perverse incentives of academia have introduced rewards associated with issues like the number of texts an academic is able to produce, how many times she is quoted by her peers and the standing of the journals in which her texts are published. This is not to say that mechanisms rewarding certain behaviours in academic publishing that undermine *disinterestedness* did not exist before managerialism. The champions of science and research have for centuries been the ones who publish discoveries or new understandings first, creating a very strong personal interest in one's own findings and texts. However, my analysis suggests that what is new under the regime of managerialism is that managerial action has strengthened the mechanisms pushing academics away from adhering to the norm of *disinterestedness*. This push can be found on a personal level in the incentives for the individual academic, like tenure, academic titles and salaries. It can also be found on organisational levels, as departments gaining funding as a result of the collective publishing efforts of its employees, or institutions being measured and accredited by measuring different metrics like research output. The findings in my interviews suggest that managerialism has systematised these incentives in a way that allows

for systematic gaming schemes, strengthening the push away from disinterestedness even further. Like Hasselberg (2012) argues in her COIUC alternative to the CUDOS norms, *disinterestedness* becomes *interest*.

The norms *communalism* and *universalism* are not as directly challenged by acts of gaming as the norm *disinterestedness*. However, many of the incentives in academia are designed to reward individuals and generate competition between academic colleagues, thus activities that game these incentives also lead to extensive rewards for individual academics. Gaming evaluation scores, tweaking publication metrics and third mission mockeries are examples of gaming that rewards individual researchers. If competition between academic colleagues becomes an important part of the game, and academics get outplayed by the game in the manner described by Butler and Spoelstra (2012), communalism's emphasis on science and research as collective endeavours might be under threat. This is also in line with Hasselberg's (2012) alternative COIUC norms, as *competition* is the opposite of Merton's communalism in her framework.

Similarly, the emphasis that universalism entails on the *content* of what is stated, rather than on the *personal attributes* of the academic stating it, also risks being downplayed when metrics associated with individuals are being highlighted. However, it can also be argued that the same incentives are strengthening science as a collective endeavour. One element of Newton's idea of standing on the shoulders of giants has found new support in a disputed part of the publishing regimes of modern science. When citation indexes become such an important measure of the success of an academic, the act of citing others, i.e. building on the work of others, could end up being strengthened.

The last of the mertonian norms, *organised scepticism*, is also challenged when academics game the managerial systems. Statements from my interviews and findings made by other researchers confirm that the incentive structure in the contemporary publishing regime leads academics to include other factors than the search for facts. Adapting the content of publications to fit the profile of a journal (Butler & Spoelstra, 2017) and biases in methodological choices to cater

to the guidelines of journals (Greenhalgh et al., 2016) are examples of such factors. One important aspect of organised scepticism that is especially fragile faced with gaming is critique and falsification of the work of others, especially if said others hold positions that enable them to influence who should be published and who should not. The PhD student that I interviewed who told me of the importance of citing the editors and board members of the journals that a paper is sent to, implicitly meant that the citations should be in a positive light. Butler and Spoelstra (2017) inform the readers of a 2014 paper, where a note the authors had made to themselves was left standing in the final publication, asking “Should we cite the crappy Gabor paper here?”, indicating that the authors contemplated whether they for tactical reasons should include a paper that they did not hold in high regard. This emphasis on pleasing editors and being in line with fashionable texts within ones field is clearly compatible to *consensus*, the norm that Hasselberg (2012) proposes as an alternative to organised scepticism as part of her COIUC framework.

Academic gaming - summing up

As I did in the chapter on academic resistance, I will also end this chapter by presenting a table that sums up characteristics of academic gaming.

Table 8.2: Summing up academic gaming

Factor	Academic gaming
Disapproval by management	No
Control over academic labour process	No
Mode of quality assessment	Relative
Performed to uphold CUDOS norms	No

As I have discussed in this chapter, academic gaming is approved by management. The *open* forms of academic gaming, the ones I categorize as functional stupidity, are condoned and even encouraged

by management. The covert forms, the ones I categorise as *cheating*, are not formally condoned by management, but are indirectly caused by managerial systems through structures of perverse incentives.

By engaging in gaming, the academics surrender control over the academic labour process to the managerial systems. They do this by allowing the managerial systems to make *relative* quality assessments of their own work, assessments that conform to a standard and not to the absolute quality assessments of the academics themselves.

I have also argued that by doing this, the academics gradually abandon the CUDOS norms. The norms therefore have little impact on academics when they engage in gaming.

Chapter 9: Academic mediation

In addition to *resistance* and *gaming*, my interviewees also described a third form of academic reaction to managerialism. This is the third and last form of reaction in my thesis, and it lies in the middle ground between resistance and gaming. Academics who engage in this activity attempt to achieve the same thing that academics that engage in resistance achieve, namely to uphold academics standards, to adhere to the CUDOS norms, to control the quality assessments of their own work and to maintain their autonomy. At the same time, they attempt to do like the academics who engage in gaming, namely to adhere to the demands of the managerial systems. This is done through different forms of *academic mediation*.

Examples of academic mediation

In the following pages, I will provide examples of academic mediation from my interviews. As I did in the chapters on academic resistance and academic gaming, the examples will include context to provide a more thorough understanding of the direct quotes. I will continue with an analysis of the phenomenon of academic mediation after the examples, and finish the chapter by finalising the model of academic reactions to managerialism.

Push to publish

So far, we have seen that managerial attempts to enhance and develop academic publishing through the use of managerial tools and incentive structures have been a main reason for academics engaging in both resistance and gaming. In my interviews, there were also accounts of how the interviewees meant that the academic standards and the managerial initiatives are compatible. The following quote from an interview with a professor illustrates this:

Professor: "It used to be that people just spent their allocated research time doing nothing, well I shouldn't say nothing because they did a lot of things like going cross country skiing during working hours more like it. But then these metrics came and with them clearer demands and a lot of people started to realise that research is also a part of this job. And I think I saw a report or something stating that the publication rate has increased immensely as a result of this development. But I can also sense it in the department and among my colleagues. I used to be one of the few that did research and now we all do it."

Me: "Do the systems change the way you do research in any way?"

Professor: “Of course it does and that has been a big debate. But I don’t think that it is all negative. We needed a good shaking and we have been given that now. As a matter of fact one of my colleagues, a guy who never had published anything not ten years ago now has many papers out. I recall him saying that hadn’t it been for the push to publish he would never have started writing.”

In this quote, the professor argues that the incentives have increased publication by a combination of motivating the academics to communicate their findings to the world, but also by making academic work and the contributions of individuals to the community more transparent. The professor argues that the ideal stating that academics are supposed to do teaching *and* research, and to find a balance between the two, has been strengthened in her academic community by the managerial incentive structures. The Humboldtian ideal of an integration of teaching and research is therefore enforced by managerialism in the view of the professor.

Forced to find the time

One of my interviewees, an associate professor, told me how the introduction of standards for study programmes had resulted in what she thought was a sound development of the programme where she and her colleagues taught. The introduction of the standards was part of the implementation of the cross-European *Qualifications framework*, and resulted in study plans having to be rewritten and altered. At the start of the process, the interviewee thought of the process as just another management fad, but as she worked with it, she changed her thinking:

Associate professor: “When we were forced to use these terms, “learning outcomes” and the others, what are they called again...? We were actually forced to critically reflect on what we were doing in our teaching. It was especially good for seeing the whole of the bachelor programme. I, for one, learned stuff about the bachelor that I never knew before this process. I got to know the things my colleagues do a lot better and we actually had many good talks about the bachelor with assignments and reading lists and we changed it a lot actually and the students contributed a lot. I mean we always plan to have these talks because we see this critical conversations as important to what we do, it’s not like we never thought about it as a result of the learning outcomes but we never found the time but this process forced us to find the time.”

The interviewee argues that a push from the managerial systems is what enabled activities that they for a long time had planned to engage in. The plans were motivated by a desire to uphold academic standards by engaging in collective critical thinking on the bachelor programme. The quote also illustrates how the Humboldtian ideal of including the

student in development of study programmes can be strengthened by a managerial initiative.

It is therefore an example of *academic mediation* because the academics that engage in it are able to take steps towards upholding academic standards while at the same time adhering to managerial demands. It is possible to interpret what the interviewee says in the light of the Mertonian norms of *communalism* and *organised criticism*. The managerial demands made the community of researchers engage in communal activities; activities they otherwise had been unable to prioritize. Furthermore, the demands made by management facilitated new and *critical* ways of thinking, by forcing them to rethink and reorganize the way they had organised their study programme.

Quality assurance on my own terms

As we have seen earlier in this thesis, student evaluations were an important theme in my interviews. Some of the accounts saw student evaluations as a threat to the academic norms, leading to acts of academic resistance as exemplified in the *Ignoring* activity. Other accounts revealed acts where the student evaluations were used to game the system; an example of this was presented in the *Making the students happy* category. There was also a third way of relating to student evaluations present in the interviews, as the following example illustrates.

One of my interviewees, a PhD student, was relieved she had a well developed and diverse system of student evaluations to give her feedback on her teaching. She had never held a lecture before she started her position at her university, and talked about how her teaching became better as a result of the feedback the quality assurance system of her institution provided.

PhD student: "They've got this web page where I can go and pick from a kind of list of different evaluation methods and it's really good and diverse and I have always found a technique that I can use. I sat down with the student representative and we chose one form that we thought would be good to give us feedback on teaching and the literature especially since that had been an issue during the course."

Me: "So, when it comes to the assessment of your own teaching, could you say something on whether the things that management have developed are a resource or a hindrance for you?"

PhD student: “I see it as a resource actually. Because it is good to have a system around these things, it makes it easier to compare to others and we’re supposed to be scientists, aren’t we, I mean, we should be a bit systematic in the way we gather data on our own work as well. But I am not sure all my colleagues see it that way.”

Me: “Could you say a bit more about that?”

PhD student: “There’s a lot of scepticism here towards evaluations and all of that, I don’t think many of my colleagues use these systems at all. In the beginning, I tried asking my colleagues for tips on how to use the evaluation systems but I quickly realised that they don’t know because they see it as a waste of time or something. To be honest, I don’t talk much to my colleagues about the student evaluations at all.”

Me: “Why is that?”

PhD student: “Because I get the impression that we’re supposed to be negative towards it. It’s sort of a betrayal of my colleagues to do the things we’re supposed to. So I do it anyway. As a little secret (laughs).”

There are several interesting points in this quote that help us understand the phenomenon of academic mediation. When describing the different evaluation procedures made available to her by the managerial system, she highlights her own role in actively deciding what parts of the systems she wants to use. She is not passively handing the quality assessment of her own work over to the managerial system, but utilising it to enhance her own quality assessment. She is also using the scientific ethos to argue for the use of the managerial system, thus bridging the divide between the CUDOS norms and the managerial norms. The interviewee does not experience this as a conflict, it is possible to adhere to and to uphold academic standards and cater to the demands of the managerial system at the same time. As a result, she is doing *quality assurance (QA) on her own terms*.

Another important aspect of the quote above is that the activity *QA on my own terms* is hidden from the colleagues of the interviewee. This shows that the different forms of mediation, like resistance and gaming can be placed in the figure illustrating a continuum between open and covert activities, keeping in mind that resistance and gaming are hidden from management, while mediation is hidden from colleagues.

Contribution to theories on academic mediation

In the following paragraphs, I will develop my findings on academic mediation in light of my earlier discussions on academic resistance and academic gaming, and in light of theories on the CUDOS norms.

Elements of academic resistance, elements of academic gaming

Academic mediation must be seen in relation to academic resistance and to academic gaming because it exists due to its connection to both of them. Therefore, it is helpful to repeat the main motivations for academics engaging in these activities. Academics engage in academic resistance because they want to uphold academic standards and the CUDOS norms, reclaim the quality assessments of their own work and the control over the academic labour process, and to maintain their autonomy. As a result, their work is guided by assessments of *absolute quality*. Academics who engage in academic gaming give up control of the quality assessments and the academic labour process, and adhere to the demands from the managerial systems. Their work is thus guided by assessments of relative quality, dictated by the quality clichés embedded in the managerial systems.

Academics engaging in academic mediation experience no such conflict between adhering to the demands of the managerial systems and upholding academic standards. On the contrary, in all of the examples from my interviews cited above, elements of the CUDOS norms are used to justify why the managerial systems are helpful in conducting academic work. When *forced to find the time* academics collectively engage in critical reflection on their own practices, a way of turning their trained researcher gaze on themselves, thus adhering to the norm *organised scepticism*. Similarly, when academics do *QA on their own terms*, they argue that by using managerial systems they take a more systematic and scientific approach to assessing their own work. The inclination to question everything about their own practice is strengthened and enhanced through the use of the predefined and standardised evaluation methods provided by the managerial system. At the same time, reflection is secured through the wide array of methods available in the system.

Academic mediation cannot be categorised as resistance because the activities are not seen as unwanted by management (Karlsson, 2008). Neither can they be categorised as functional stupidity since they do not represent an absence of reflexivity or “focus only on the narrow, technical aspects of the job” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016a, loc 191). On the contrary, they utilise elements of the managerial systems to enhance

reflexivity in concord with the academic norms. Academic mediation is also not gaming, because academics use the managerial systems to uphold the standards, not *giving up* on them.

What academics do give up when engaging in academic mediation is the ability to assess their own work according to its *absolute* quality (Grelland, 2011). By adhering to the demands of the managerial systems, they are accepting quality standards (quality clichés), and thus the assessment of the quality of their work becomes *relative* to the standard, and not *absolute*. An implication of this is that some control over the academic labour process is given up and handed over to the managerial systems.

The overlap model

The divide between resistance and gaming as two distinctive ways of responding to managerialism supports the idea of an incompatibility between the academic norms and managerialism. Other research, however, have pointed to a need to move beyond this dichotomy that see administrative and academic work as separate (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013; Whitchurch, 2008). Although the findings in my interviews on resistance and gaming indicate that the divide is relevant, my findings on mediation suggest that the dichotomy may be overcome. In Chapter 3, I briefly touched on the idea of a new form of professionals in HE, referred to as “third space professionals” (Whitchurch, 2008) “higher education professionals” (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013). These professionals inhabit roles between management roles and academic roles, engaging in issues like student academic curriculum, evaluation of applications, evaluation of teaching and course design, issues that in a traditional university would be considered the responsibility of faculty. The proliferation of this new category of professionals is a result of the growing influence of managerialism in academia, inevitably developing a need for highly skilled employees to cater to the managerial systems. Figure 3.2 in Chapter 3 in this thesis shows clearly the numerical increase this group has had in academia over the last 25 years.

Schneijderberg and Merkator (2013) suggest that there is an overlap between the tasks that academics do and the tasks that the new higher education professionals do. Academic staff and higher education

professional are both engaged in these activities, having fluctuating responsibilities regarding who does what. The development is more prominent within the field of teaching than in the field of research. The authors also suggest that “activities which used to be and are in the job description of academic staff (...) is offered more and more by [higher education professionals] and less and less by academics” (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013, p. 80). The fact that non-academic staff enter domains that used to be reserved for academic staff also means that academic staff have to relate to non-academic staff in areas of their work.

The overlap model provides a framework that situates the phenomenon *academic mediation* in relation to the organisational developments and introduction of new roles and new responsibilities in HE. The developments in the sector do raise the question if the divide between academic and the managerial norms is fruitful, and to some extent, the phenomenon of academic mediation supports this. When engaging in academic mediation, the interviewees in my study were able to adhere to the academic norms by utilizing the managerial system and by cooperating and sharing responsibilities with administrative staff and management. These descriptions are compatible with the ideas of the *third space* and the *higher education professionals*.

Academic mediation on the covert-open axis

I will now return to the continuum between covert and open, and situate the different examples of academic mediation on the axis.

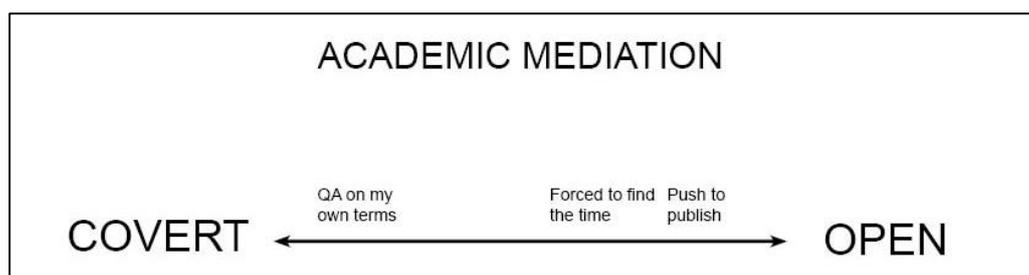


Figure 9.1: Academic mediation activities on the covert-open axis

There is one important difference between academic mediation and the other forms of reactions to managerialism I present in this thesis. This difference is related to the covert-open axis. In academic mediation, the covert activities are hidden from colleagues, whereas in academic

resistance and academic gaming the activities are hidden from management.

This can be elaborated on by taking a closer look at the activity *QA on my own terms*. The academics performing this activity utilise the tools belonging to the managerial systems for quality assurance, but doing so without informing, let alone collaborating with, the academic community they belong to. The academic community is of the impression that the QA measures in the managerial systems are working against the academic norms, while the individuals performing *QA measures on their own terms* see them as enhancing the academic norms.

In the activities *forced to find the time* and *push to publish*, the inverted form of covertness described above is of no issue, since they are open activities known to management and the academic communities alike.

Like in academic resistance and academic gaming, the covert-open axis enables the construction of two categories of academic mediation. These are illustrated in figure 9.2:

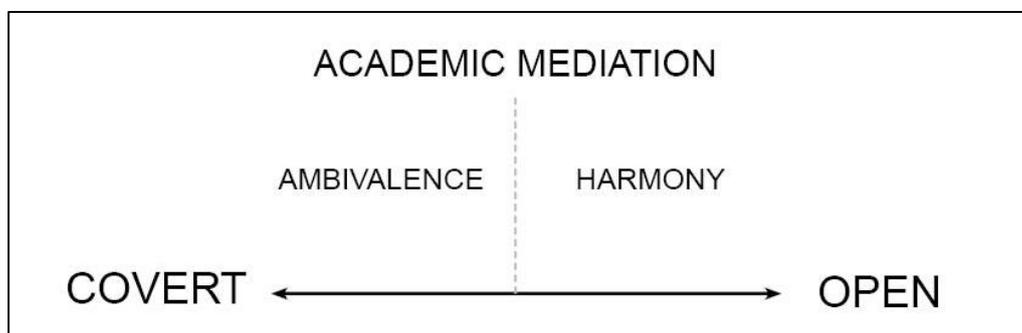


Figure 9.2. The two categories of academic mediation

The figure consists of the categories *ambivalence* and *harmony*. *Ambivalence* is a category where the academic sees the academic norms as compatible with the managerial systems, and performs activities where she utilises the managerial systems to improve on academic work. This is done covertly, hidden from the academic colleagues, who oppose the belief that managerial systems can be used in this manner. The category is called *ambivalence* because the academic is torn between adhering to a managerial system she considers enhancing the work she does, and loyalty to the academic community

to which she belongs. *Harmony* is a category where the managerial systems are used to enhance academic work in congruence with the academic norms, and this is taking place openly. The category is called *harmony* because there is no conflict, neither between the individual academic and the academic community, nor between the academic community and management, or even between the CUDOS norms and managerialism.

Negotiating the CUDOS norms

When performing activities of academic mediation, the academics attempt to unite the CUDOS norms with managerialism. I have argued that within the form of academic mediation I have coined *harmony*, the CUDOS norm of communalism is strengthened because the managerial systems initiate and facilitate cooperation between academics within the academic community. Furthermore, the CUDOS norms of communalism and universalism are strengthened through a managerial demand of increased transparency concerning publications. Both by enabling all members of the academic community to *do* research, and by making academic publishing more frequent, the managerial systems encourage academics to contribute to the global body of research within their fields.

I have also seen in my interviews that in *mediation*, the CUDOS norm *organised scepticism* has been strengthened by managerial initiatives. This is related to the points I make earlier in this thesis on how managerial initiatives have enabled academic communities to work together by initiating processes like study plan developments or research project proposals. By requiring that study plans and research projects must follow certain standards, these managerial structures challenge the academic communities and thus enable critical thinking and reflexivity on their own practices.

On the other hand, when academics are performing *mediation* activities that I categorise as *ambivalence*, the CUDOS norm of *communalism* is seriously challenged. By not adhering to the communal view of the academic community they belong to, and doing this covertly, the academic community suffers. As the norm of *organised scepticism* ensures, the academic community depends on

disagreements being discussed and criticism being publicly proclaimed. It is therefore interesting to note that Hasselberg (2012) suggests *consensus* as an alternative norm to organised criticism. If consensus becomes imperative in the academic community, Hasselberg is correct to suggest this as a challenge to organised criticism. Furthermore, if a demand for consensus makes academics weary of addressing disagreements within their own community, covert reactions like ambivalence may be the result.

Academic mediation – summing up

As I did in the chapters on academic resistance and academic gaming, I will end this chapter by presenting a table that sums up characteristics of academic mediation:

Table 9.1: Summing up academic mediation

Factor	Academic mediation
Disapproval by management	No
Control over academic labour process	No
Mode of quality assessment	Relative
Performed to uphold CUDOS norms	Yes

The table first states that academic mediation includes activities that are approved by management. It also shows that while engaging in academic mediation, the academics attempt to uphold the CUDOS norms. This is a direct result of mediation being attempts to combine the two.

However, the table also shows that to be able to do this, the academics must allow the managerial systems to take control over certain aspects of the academic labour process, like student evaluations or elements of research proposals. This is done by accepting quality assessments defined by others than the academic community, and the mode of quality assessment thus becomes *relative*.

Chapter 10: Academic reactions to managerialism

In this chapter, I will sum up the findings in the previous chapters. By doing this, I am providing a concise answer to the research question I have addresses in part 2 of this thesis: How do academics in contemporary higher education react to managerialism?

The academic reactions compared

In Chapter 6, I developed a model that illustrates how academic reactions to managerialism can be *covert* or *open*.

In Chapter 7, I presented the phenomenon *academic resistance*. Based on my interviews, I described five examples of academic resistance. I found that academics engage in these activities as a means to reclaim the quality assessments of their own work, to uphold the CUDOS norms and to maintain their autonomy. I used the covert-open axis to develop two categories of academic resistance: expansion of output and open conflict.

In Chapter 8, I presented the phenomenon *academic gaming*. Based on my interviews, I described five examples of academic gaming. I found that the academics who engage in these activities comply with demands from the managerial systems, even though they see their activities as destructive to aspects of their work and that they lose control over the quality assessments of their own work. I used the covert-open axis to develop two categories of academic gaming: cheating and functional stupidity.

In Chapter 9, I presented the phenomenon *academic mediation*. Based on my interviews, I described three examples of academic mediation. I found that the academics who engage in these activities are attempting to adhere to the academic norms not by resisting, but by utilising the managerial systems. I used the covert-open axis to develop two categories of academic mediation: ambivalence and harmony.

Categories of academic reactions to managerialism

I will now briefly summarise the six different categories of academic reactions to managerialism and relate them to each other.

Academic resistance

Open conflict

Academic resistance consists of two categories and *open conflict* is one of them. There is only one example of an activity that fits in this category in the interviews: *Fighting*. In this category the academics oppose and resist the managerial systems openly, breaking out of what Anderson (2008) has called the hidden transcript that subordinate groups utilize to level playing fields in uneven power structures. Previous research and my findings state that activities situated in this category tend to be unpopular not only among management but also among academic colleagues of the academics engaging in them. A finding from my interviews is that academics are afraid of the consequences and see no point in being in *open conflict*, while Anderson (2008) found that academics engaging in *open conflict* tend to be perceived as difficult and deviant, lone wolves with no support from colleagues or management.

Expansion of output

The other category of academic resistance is *expansion of output*. In this category, the academics perform acts of resistance hidden from management. I found four activities in my interviews that fit in this category: *Hiding, ignoring, being a bit thick* and *overachieving*. The category is coined from the concept developed by Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012), stressing the fact that the activities that fit in this category are performed to uphold academic standards, but doing so in ways that management disapprove of. The category separates itself from the other form of academic resistance – *open conflict* – in that all of the activities that fit in this category are directly linked to controlling the academic labour process. Academics *hide* to enable focus and uninterrupted stretches of work, they *ignore* to concentrate on the tasks they judge important, they are *being a bit thick* to disable formal structures around their work, and they *overachieve* by prioritizing differently than management. In *open conflict*, the academics indirectly attempt to control the academic labour process, by partaking in debates or voicing their concerns.

Academic gaming

Functional stupidity

Academic gaming consists of two categories and *functional stupidity* is one of them. When performing activities that fit within this category, the activities are open and visible to management. I found three activities in my interviews that fit within this category: *Teaching to the test*, *Tweaking publication metrics* and *Third mission mockeries*. The category is coined from the concept developed by Alvesson and Spicer (2012) and popularised in their book *The Stupidity Paradox* (2016a). By engaging in activities that fit in the *functional stupidity* category, academics adhere to the managerial system but ignore the academic norms of CUDOS.

Cheating

The other category of academic gaming is *cheating*. In this category, the academics perform acts of gaming that are concealed, to management and even to their colleagues. I found two examples of activities in my interviews that fit within this category: *Making the students happy* and *the economy grade*. The category is coined *cheating* because the academics performing the activities are playing the game of managerialism, but use game tactics that, if they were to go public, would make others think they are cheating in the game. Therefore, they are *covert*. At the same time, it is difficult to precisely separate *functional stupidity* from *cheating*. An activity that at one time and in one place is allowed and even encouraged in the managerial game, and therefore allowed to happen openly, might at another time or in another place be considered cheating, and therefore becomes covert. Activities can thus move back and forth from being categorised as *functional stupidity* and *cheating* depending on when and where the activities are performed. This can be exemplified in figure 8.2 (in Chapter 8), that illustrated how managerial actions of introducing publishing incentives leads to academic reactions in the form of unwanted behaviours, which again triggered new managerial actions to correct the unwanted behaviours. According to this model, an activity would first belong in the *functional stupidity* category, then move to the *cheating* category.

Academic mediation

Harmony

Academic mediation consists of two categories and *harmony* is one of them. In this category, the academics perform mediating activities that are open to both management and academic colleagues. I found two examples of activities in my interviews that fit within this category: *Push to publish* and *forced to find the time*. The category is coined due to the fact that the academics that perform activities that fit this category manage to uphold academic standards and the CUDOS norms while simultaneously complying with the demands of management.

Ambivalence

The other category of academic mediation is *ambivalence*. In this category, the academics perform acts of mediation that are hidden from their colleagues but approved by management. I found one example of an activity in my interviews that fit within this category: *QA on my own terms*. The category is coined due to the fact that management approves of it and colleagues disapprove of it, conveying an element of pleasing the boss by going against ones colleagues.

Academic reactions – summing up

A summary of how resistance, mediation and gaming relate to management, the academic labour process, mode of quality assessment and CUDOS is presented in figure 10.1 where I combine figures presented in the previous chapters:

Table 10.1 Summing up resistance, mediation and gaming

	Resistance	Mediation	Gaming
Disapproval by management	Yes	No	No
Control over academic labour process	Yes	No	No
Mode of quality assessment	Absolute	Relative	Relative
Performed to uphold CUDOS norms	Yes	Yes	No

The table provides an overview of the different motivations behind the different forms of academic reactions to managerialism. The only form of reaction that management disapproves of is resistance. This is related to the next element in the figure, and the fact that in mediation and gaming, the academics agree to surrender control over aspects of the academic labour process to management. They do this by leaving aspects of the quality assessments of their own work to the managerial systems. Acceptance from management thus seems to be related to whether or not academics allow the managerial systems to influence their work. In other words, if academics let themselves be managed, management approves.

The status of CUDOS

The figure implies that the CUDOS norms still hold value as norms guiding action in academia, at least when the actions performed are activities that fit within the categories resistance and mediation. However, I have argued that the CUDOS norms and managerialism are difficult to combine. This makes the category *mediation* interesting to study. Chapter 9 illustrates that the activities that fit within the category mediation can be difficult to perform. Mediating academics are torn between acceptance from their colleagues and the academic community and management, and it seems that the mediating academics cannot escape the notion that the two sets of norms are in opposition to each other, like argued by Hasselberg (2012), Jörnsten (2008) and Ziman (2000). At the same time, some of my interviewees provide examples of this happening, like *push to publish* and *forced to find the time*. It is, however, difficult to make general statements on compatibility of the CUDOS norms and managerialism based on these two activities alone. My thesis also provides examples from a wider range of situations in academic work where the CUDOS norms and managerialism are *not* compatible.

It would therefore be interesting to further inquire into the situation of academics attempting (and even succeeding?) to find congruence between the CUDOS norms and managerialism. As academics become more accustomed to managerialism being present in their institutions, such congruence might become common. There are studies on

employees in administrative positions who manage to fuse the two (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013; Whitchurch, 2008).

Static activities and flexible academics

An important aspect of comparing the categories to each other is that they are generated from an analysis of *the activities* that fit within them, not from the academics *performing* them. Academics as actors are more complex and cannot be seen as only partaking in activities representing one or a few of the categories. A single academic may perform activities that fit within all six categories, many times, probably in the course of a day. There might be variations on how many times a specific academic performs the activities, one academic might for instance be prone to do a lot of *expansion of output*, another to *functional stupidity*, but such considerations are beyond the scope of this thesis. An inquiry into such matters as tendencies to partake in the activities of one category more than another would be interesting to pursue in further research, where both qualitative and quantitative explorations are possible ways forward.

The flexibility that the individual scientists can employ when facing the demands of the norms is in line with Merton's view on the academic norms as institutionalised, and not internalized in the individual scientist. This point is also in line with the argument that Jörnsten (2008) makes, that the norms guiding academics of our age are ideal types.

Reflections

In developing the academic reactions to managerialism through Chapters 6-9, I have built on many theories and the contributions of many authors from several theoretical strands, like working life studies, labour process theory, critical management studies, higher education studies as well as more general sociological and social science theory. Combining theories into a framework for understanding an empirical phenomenon like I have done in this thesis runs the risk of making statements about academic work that neither the authors nor other readers would agree with. Authors risk being categorised as in agreement with theories that they disagree with, or

the opposite, in disagreement with theories that they mean to subscribe to.

One example of this is that it is not obvious that *resistance* and *gaming* should be categorised as different headings. It can be argued that both of them are examples of organisational misbehaviour (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999), especially when considering newer developments on issues like cynicism and detachment among white collar and professional employees, as well as managerial misbehaviour (Ackroyd, 2012, p. 18). The reason I still suggest that the two should be divided into different categories is that it enables the model to separate activities that are performed as attempts to a) uphold academic standards, b) uphold academic control over the academic labour process, c) uphold control over the quality assessments (absolute quality).

Another example is that it is not a given that authors on expansion of output agree that these activities are always hidden from management, nor that it is possible to see expansion of output as a continuum towards the *mediation* category. There is, however, some support for this in the literature. For instance, Kirchhoff and Karlsson (2012) found that some forms of expansion of output were “regarded to be a minor violation” (Kirchhoff & Karlsson, 2012, p. 117) while other forms “were regarded to be a more significant violation” (Kirchhoff & Karlsson, 2012, p. 118) that “management strongly disapproved of” (Kirchhoff & Karlsson, 2012, p. 117). I will thus argue that the continuum of the open-covert axis and the blurred boundaries between *open conflict* and *expansion of output*, as well as the continuum towards *mediation*, fit with the findings from previous research.

A third example of such a critique is that I suggest that the activities in the functional stupidity category are always open, and once they become covert they become cheating. I have briefly addressed this issue when discussing *cheating* above, but will repeat here that the boundaries between functional stupidity and cheating are the most fluctuating one in the models, and activities seem to briefly change their position both within and between the two categories.

Other theoretical viewpoints could also be used to shed light on the interviews. One example would be if I utilised a gender-based

perspective. For instance, the quotes I have used to illustrate the activities fighting and overachieving were uttered by a man and a woman respectively, filling gendered stereotypes about how men and women act.

Academic reactions to managerialism

To sum up Chapter 10, a very short answer to the research theme I addressed in the beginning of the study, to “empirically identify academic reactions to managerialism”, can be formulated as follows:

Academic reactions to managerialism can be categorised as *covert* or *open*. Furthermore, they can be categorised into three different forms of reactions: *academic resistance*, *academic gaming* and *academic mediation*. This leaves us with a total of six categories of academic reactions to managerialism, open conflict, expansion of output, functional stupidity, cheating, harmony, and ambivalence.

In the next chapter, I will look at implications of the findings and of the analysis in this study.

Chapter 11: Implications of the study

A changing academic working life

In this thesis, I have attempted to examine academic reactions to the introduction of managerialism in academia. I have found that academics are torn between on the one side adhering to their traditional norms, conceptualised as CUDOS by Robert Merton, and on the other, giving up these norms by playing the games of managerialism. I have also identified a middle ground, mediating between the two. In the interviews, the mediating academics talk of being able to uphold the academic norms, but they do this by handing over some of the control over their own labour process to the managerial systems. As I have argued several times in the thesis, academic autonomy and academic freedom are important foundations that enable the CUDOS norms. The question thus lingers: If academics no longer have high degrees of control of their own labour process, can the CUDOS norms survive as influential in academia?

In a society, institutions like science, universities and higher education are responsible for generating, developing, storing, communicating and teaching academic knowledge. Historically, this model has demanded a certain degree of separation between academia and the rest of society. Interaction between academia and society is important, but so is the need to recognise that if academia is to fulfil this task, it must enjoy degrees of detachment from the world around it. This detachment is something academia must be allowed to have, but also something academia must be forced to have. The Mertonian norm of *disinterestedness* stresses this point, so does the Humboldtian ideals of *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*.

Although the main issue of the thesis has been the *reactions* of academics, I will in this chapter try to broaden the view and say something on the implications these reactions have on a grander scale – how it influences academic working life and thus, on the developments in academia and science itself. These implications stem from a very simple point: If academics abandon the CUDOS norms, an important cornerstone of science is removed. Ziman (2000) stresses this interconnection between CUDOS and science itself, stating that

“the academic ethos is a tightly woven complex of social and epistemic norms, all closely dependent on each other (...). Any substantial changes in the social practices of scientists must affect their intellectual practices, and vice versa” (Ziman, 2000, loc 879). In other words, there is an interconnection between the academic labour process and the social structures of which it is part. If the social structures of science are subject to change, so might science itself be.

Crisis invites self-appraisal

In Chapter 2, I looked at the developments of universities and academia throughout history with one main intention: to illustrate that the academic labour process has gone through many changes due to pressures both from within and from outside academia, for example The Scientific Revolution or nation building ideologies. The changes in the labour process led to substantive alterations as to what academia ended up being after the respective periods. The message to our time from history is that the potential to change academic practices is considerable, and such changes have effects on what science and research are. I ended the chapter by suggesting that the dominant force to change the academic labour process in our time is managerialism, and that the effects managerialism has on the academic labour process still is in dire need of exploration.

In the introductory part of the thesis, I quoted *Nature* and others who are concerned about science being under attack from “a creeping corporate culture”. This culture, the culture of managerialism, may be a force powerful enough to change universities. The question of whether such change is appreciated or undesired can be asked in many ways, including a political one. *Nature* seems to have a clear political opinion on this question; others might disagree. Whatever the stance, all stakeholders would benefit from a clear understanding of what the changes entail, as knowledge makes it possible to make informed choices. To repeat the words of Merton: “An institution under attack must re-examine its foundations, restate its objectives, seek out its rationale” (1973, p. 267). One of the implications of this study is that academia as well as the general society must pay close attention to the developments. Knowledge about what managerialism does to science and teaching is crucial if we want to make some form of control of the

developments of universities under the regime of managerialism. Through developing different categories of academic reactions to managerialism, I have attempted to add a small contribution to this field, but more research is needed.

All of the categories of academic reactions to managerialism have effects on academic working life. Some are mild, like the soft surrender of control of the academic labour process that is a prerequisite for the category *harmony*. Others have starker effects, like relationships of distrust that are created between managers and academics when the latter find themselves forced to engage in *expansion of output*, or the unethical behaviour of academics engaging in *cheating*. However, the category that might end up being the by far most ruining for academic working life, and thus to academia at large, is *functional stupidity*. In the next paragraphs, I will expand on the effects the different categories might have on academia.

The frustrations of academic resistance

When there is widespread academic resistance, academics and managers alike spend large amounts of their organisations' time and resources wrestling over control of the academic labour process. Management develop elaborate managerial systems that require an extensive work force of high-level administrative employees and voluminous resources to operate. However, academics do not respond to these developments by utilising them to improve the quality and effectiveness of their work. On the contrary, they react by establishing intricate forms of resistance that are costly to perform.

They do this because they do not accept handing over control over the academic labour process to management. They have an unequivocal understanding that if managerial systems are to dictate their work, the quality and effectiveness of the work will decline. Academic work becomes poorer if it is micromanaged; it becomes better with high degrees of autonomy.

The paradox in this situation is that management and academics are ultimately working towards the same end. They want outstanding research, inspirational teaching; some of them even agree that a good relationship with the rest of society is a good thing. However,

disagreement on how to reach this end leads both parties to engage in a demanding fight over control over the labour process. Overall, this is a resource draining way of organising academia, in which it is frustrating for all parties to partake.

In this thesis, I have shown that most of the activities that constitute academic resistance are covert. This may imply that management is unaware of the full scope of activities going on. A better knowledge of how common such activities are would allow management to realise the levels of discontent that exist in the organisation they manage. More importantly, a clearer understanding of the motivations behind the resistance would enable managers in academia to find ways to support academic autonomy. Furthermore, they might appreciate the fact that activities that may seem malicious in reality are performed with an intention of benefitting the organisation.

The corrosiveness of functional stupidity

Functional stupidity, with its emphasis on short-term personal gains and distaste for critical thinking is in its nature a parody of all of what the CUDOS norms stand for. A distaste for critical thinking is of course in direct opposition to the CUDOS norm *organised criticism*, similarly, short-term personal gains are in direct opposition to *disinterestedness*. Albeit more indirectly, functional stupidity also undermines *communalism* and *universalism*. The fact that large publishing houses have the property rights to most academic work through the contemporary system of online academic publishing behind paywalls is the opposite of the communalist idea that no one but the collective scientific community owns academic work. The weaknesses of the contemporary publishing system are well known to academics, it has been heavily critiqued in public for more than a decade, and attempts have been made to change it through boycotting campaigns and through politics, but somehow the system is still very viable and fully operational. For even though it is stupid, the system is *functional*, providing short-term gains for both academics and their institutions.

In this thesis, I have shown how powerful incentives are as instigators of functional stupidity in academia. Despite the CUDOS norms of universalism and disinterestedness, academics have a drive towards

academic honour and personal merits. Publication metrics, funding successes, evaluation scores and ratemyprofessors.coms are siren songs to academics, as they are easily transferrable currency in the academic hierarchy.

A better understanding among managers and academics of the full scope of metrics and how they affect academic work is needed. Heightened degrees of reflexivity among academics on how academic gaming affects the content of their work could help counter functional stupidity. However, if the incentive structures continue to dominate the managerial structures of academia, the choices available through such reflexivity might be limited to either resistance or gaming. Therefore, to battle functional stupidity is the responsibility of academics and academic managers alike. Functional stupidity is said to have a corrosive effect on all modern organisations and working life. It might turn out to be especially vicious in academia.

The complications of mediation

Mediation is a complicated and narrow path. As I have discussed both in part 1 and in part 2 in this thesis, the CUDOS norms and managerialism are tough to combine. There are examples of mediating academics who seem to serve both masters well, but there is also an example of academics who must hide their adherence to managerial systems from their resisting colleagues.

This thesis has concentrated on the academics, and therefore only on *academics* who mediate. To broaden the scope, perhaps it is possible to concentrate on mediating *managers*. Like suggested on the previous page, knowledge of the motivations behind academic resistance would perhaps better enable managers to adapt to *academic* organisations. By being sceptical to an excessive use of standardised management tools and realising the importance of academic autonomy, perhaps academic managers could be the ones responsible for mediating academia between the demands of management and government, and upholding the standards that are imperative for academic work.

Implications for academics and management

Implications for academics

Academics who read the thesis might use the categories of academic reactions to managerialism as a tool to heighten the understanding of one's own working life. It may provide insights into the relationship between the norms that academic work is built on and how academic organisations are managed. Being an academic in contemporary academia means relating to a complex set of demands and requirements, from academic traditions, peers, publishing houses, policymakers, students, the public and from management, to name a few. The model of academic reactions to managerialism may make it easier to navigate these complex surroundings. It may also be easier for academics to reflect on how they should react to managerialism. Even if they end up with seeing *functional stupidity* as rational choice, at least it is a rational choice informed by the anti-functional stupidity action of reflexivity.

Implications for management

Managing academic organisations and academic work has become the main job task for a large amount of people. As we have seen earlier in this thesis, several authors argue that academic management is in the process of becoming a profession of its own. Professions need well-developed and comprehensive knowledge bases, especially on the conditions for the object of their work. Therefore, it is perhaps even more important to the people managing academia, than it is to the academics themselves, to reflect on and gain knowledge of academic reactions to managerialism. It is imperative that academic managers understand the academic norms and what they imply for science, for research, and for HE. It is also important that they understand what conflicts that potentially lie between managerialism and the academic norms.

However, the most important issue for managers to understand and reflect on is what effects managerialism has on the academics. After all, managers are the ones who form managerial systems, and managers are the ones that perform managerial actions. The managers therefore have the power to influence, adjust and alter the very elements that

form academic working life in our time: managerialism in academia. If managers gain insights into how academics react to managerial systems and routines, managers may end up becoming better managers, not only to the systems but also to the academics, by *recognising* the academic reactions to managerialism, and by *understanding* and *relating* to the rationale behind the reactions.

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(Some of the references listed are Kindle e-book editions of the works in question. In these cases, the e-book *location* (loc.) of the source is stated instead of the page number).

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Attachment 1: Interview guide

From Chapter 4 (pp. 88-89): “I used an interview guide (attachment 1), but in line with recommendations in the literature I did not use the interview guide as a manuscript that questions were read aloud from. The interview guide was more of a “list of issues to be addressed” (Atkinson & Flint, 2004) and was developed so that the conversations would thematically be relevant to my research questions. I allowed for a great deal of flexibility both thematically and chronologically.”

The interview guide is translated from Norwegian.

Interview guide

Background

- Position, academic title, education
- What are your job tasks and how are the tasks balanced?
Teaching, mentoring, research, third mission, admin?
- How long have you been in academia?
- Have you worked in other forms of organisation?
- Have you worked outside of academia?
 - What kind of work?
 - Did this experience make you feel that academia is different from other jobs (and how)? Is academia different?
- Teaching
 - How many students have you got, what levels?
 - How many do you supervise, bachelor, MA, PhD?
 - Do you have administrative responsibilities? Programme coordinator, other tasks?
 - Do you sit on any programme boards, committees, etc?
 - Are you involved in evaluation of studies?
- Research
 - What research projects do you work on?
 - Are there many participants in the project? From your institution, other institutions, international?
 - Do the projects have their own admin resources?
 - Who takes care of admin, faculty or admin?

- How is the project managed, do you use a managerial system?
 - Is this management concerned with quantifiable results (citation index, high level journals)?
Economical incentives (Norwegian “tellekant”).
- Third mission
 - Do you have an interest in third mission activities (explain the term).
 - How do you disseminate your findings?
 - Does your institution have any guidelines or incentives for dissemination?
- Administration
 - Do you do any administrative tasks? What are they? How much time/resources do you spend doing this?
 - Do you have any administrative employees working for you? How many? What do they do for you?

Academic work / academic ethos

- What do you see as important traits of a person working in academia?
 - Teaching and research compatible?
- What would be the ideal organisational structure to support academic work?
 - Do you identify with your discipline, your section, your institution?
- What values are important to academic work?
- Teaching
 - Do you have a workload plan, how does it work?
 - Is your work measured in any way?
 - Evaluations?
 - Throughput?
- The academic and society
 - Do you actively do any form of third mission activity? What should that be? Is this important to you?
 - Ask the interviewee to talk about status and pay
- What would the ideal academic working life look like to you?
 - How do the managerial systems accommodate for that?

Themes for reflection and discussion:

Students rights

Increasing rights for students through evaluation systems and the law. How do these developments affect academic disciplines? How do they affect pedagogy? How do they affect academic working life?

Audit society

- NOKUT. Focus on control.
- Compatibility with academic values

Standardisation

- Bologna and The Quality Reform
- Strengths and weaknesses for your discipline, your work

Management by objectives

- Sectorial objectives
 - As tools to influence research and teaching
 - As tools to control the size of study programmes and number of students
- Reaching managerial targets
 - Financial incentives based on publications, student throughput.

Faculty and management

- Loyalty – institution or discipline?
- Who decides on who should become new employees – faculty or admin?
- Who controls workload, labour process, budgets, strategies?
- Who makes study planes, who develops study programmes, who are in charge of admissions, who does evaluations?



Defending the university?

What is *managerialism* in higher education? And how do academics react to it? In this thesis, the author tries to answer these questions.

The first question is addressed through an analysis of managerialism in light of the history and norms of academic work. The second question is addressed through an interview-based qualitative study of how academics react to managerialism. Drawing on theoretical concepts like *resistance*, *organizational misbehavior*, *gaming* and *functional stupidity*, the author develops a set of academic reactions to managerialism.

A central argument in the thesis states that academic resistance towards management differs from traditional workplace resistance, as it is performed to protect academic work from what academics see as the corrosive effects of managerial systems.

By addressing these issues, the thesis contributes to the knowledge on academic work in the 21st century, with a special emphasis on how members of faculty react to contemporary developments in the management of universities.

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