

Fish, Fisheries and Freedom

A qualitative study on academic freedom in research collaboration and industry partnerships within Norwegian marine research.

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Foreword

This thesis is submitted as the final product of the masters program in Political Science and Management at the University of Agder. I finished my first courses in the masters program during the summer of 2019 and getting to this final point of the journey has been a long and enlightening experience.

I must extend my deepest gratitude to all my friends and family who have helped and supported me on this path. Though many have supported me in the writing of this thesis, there are some who deserve to be mentioned by name.

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Finally, and most of all, I must thank my family through whom all my life has been made possible. No words can adequately repay the love, support and encouragement offered by my parents, my brother and my sister-in-law.

However this thesis may be judged in its execution, I hope that its true heart and intention is not lost on the reader. Though the work of the researcher inevitably bends his neck downwards, the giants upon whose shoulders we stand knew that the search for truth also necessitated lifting our gaze upwards. We should always remember that the university was first birthed by those who built cathedrals, not castles or companies.

I dedicate this thesis to all who have suffered for truth, and can think of no better way to end the foreword than that of the great composer Johan Sebastian Bach:

Soli Deo Gloria

Abstract

Academic freedom has been a salient topic in both academic study and public policy in Norway in recent years, with several high profile reports and public reviews released since 2020. While the recent studies have given important insights to certain aspects of academic freedom in Norway, a review of the international literature shows that there are many potential challenges that remain unexplored.

Notably, the influence of marketization in the university sector and increased collaboration with the private sector is only superficially addressed. The Norwegian university sector is often assumed to be relatively well protected against pressure from the private sector, yet, the Norwegian export economy is highly reliant on a few research intensive off-shore industries. With these important research areas left almost entirely unaddressed in the recent literature it is possible that there are fundamental developments that remain poorly understood.

Through interviews with researchers in marine research fields, this masters thesis investigates whether scientists in these fields report similar challenges as those found in the international theory, and which factors of research collaboration, strengthen or challenge their autonomy and quality of research.

The findings shed further light on academic freedom in the contemporary research sector, and provides clear examples of the benefits and challenges of research collaboration from an academic freedom perspective. These findings are valuable as they provide insight into a topic that has been largely unaddressed in the contemporary academic freedom literature in Norway and provides a basis for better understanding the nature of research collaboration and industry partnerships.

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1.0 Introduction

In recent years, academic freedom and freedom of speech has been a salient topic in Norwegian political and public life. Several high-profile controversies in academia, including cancellation attempts and increased political polarization in many western countries has caused these topics to seize the attention of academic researchers. Since 2020 we have seen several reports, reviews and research projects concerning these issues, analyzed in the local Norwegian context. This has served to inform and enlighten the public debate on issues such as cancel culture, self-censorship in academia, and political polarization.

However, when reviewing the recent academic research on academic freedom in Norway, it is clear that these reports are products of their time, focusing predominantly on issues and debates in academia that dominated the public consciousness at the time of publishing, and that they engage only to a limited extent with the international literature on academic freedom. The reports are also almost entirely focused on the social sciences, from which the loudest controversies had emerged at the time. Yet, little attention is afforded to the many challenges and potential threats to academic freedom that exist in the natural sciences.

Furthermore, the recent developments and reforms of the university and research sector is only partially dealt with. Thus, when the contemporary, Norwegian academic freedom literature and research is consulted one may be left with a lacking perspective on academic freedom, and the current state of the academic sector. With the contemporary literature seemingly shaped more by the topics of high salience in the current debate as the academic research that could explain them, we are left with both theoretical and empirical holes.

The theory section of this thesis consists of a comprehensive review of the international literature on academic freedom with a historical perspective. Lines are drawn from the medieval university, through the Humboldtian reforms that created the modern university, and onwards to the present developments of increased marketization and expanding managerialism. The overarching argument is that the basic questions and principles undergirding the concept of academic freedom has not changed remarkably since the very birth of the medieval university, even though the institutional context and governing of the systems that the researcher works within has changed. The thesis then presents a closer look on the academic literature describing the contemporary developments of academia, and discusses the relationship between the different, and potentially conflicting institutional logics that the researchers find themselves in, from the “logic of science”, associated with the

traditional university ideals, to the “logic of market”, which may challenge central academic ideals and principles. Literature is presented which show that it is yet undetermined whether these developments as a whole are beneficial or detrimental to academic freedom and quality of science. This provides us with a reason to investigate how these contemporary changes to the academic sector impact the freedom and ability of the researchers to produce quality research within their fields.

At this point we return to the Norwegian literature that introduced this thesis, and show that these studies have little to say on these very fundamental developments in a Norwegian context, as well as the potential challenges and benefits of a changing research sector. One of the main developments of the modern university is the strong increase in the prevalence of research partnerships, particularly in fields where research may be expensive and resource intensive. Thus, it is both important and interesting to understand how increasingly common practices of research collaboration and industry partnerships affect the day-to-day life of the researcher, as well as their academic freedom and their quality of research.

Norwegian marine researchers, particularly within fields associated with fishing, fish health and fish farming are identified as professionals standing in the midst of several potential sources of pressure against their freedom and independence, thus they serve as interesting subjects for research on academic freedom. Yet, these are fields of which the recent Norwegian research on academic freedom is almost entirely silent. Thus, a clear research gap is identified, where the academic freedom of researchers in fields related to fishing, fisheries and fish health have not been investigated in depth by any recent Norwegian studies.

Furthermore, how their freedom and work conditions are impacted by engaging in research collaborations remains unaddressed.

Thus, this study has identified a clear research gap; how does researchers in fish- and fishing related research fields interact with research partnerships in a research sector increasingly defined by non-academic ideals, and how does these types of partnership impact their academic freedom and independence in a positive or negative way?

From the desire to better understand academic freedom, marine fish-related research and how the researchers in this field are impacted by research collaboration, this thesis answers three research questions:

- 1 - How do Norwegian researchers in fish related fields understand their own autonomy and academic freedom when engaged in research partnerships?

2 - What aspects of research partnerships are beneficial for academic freedom and quality of science?

3 - What issues towards academic freedom and quality of science may arise from embarking on research partnerships?

In order to answer these research questions, I have undertaken 5 semi-structured interviews with researchers in relevant fields who engage in research collaboration, either with industry or with wider research groups. This semi structured approach has allowed the interviews to stay rooted in the theory, whilst also creating a large space for the personal experiences and interpretations of the research subjects. The interviews have been analyzed through qualitative content analysis, compared with the literature and the central findings are presented and discussed.

This research project shows that academic researchers find research collaboration and industry participation as a predominantly positive aspect of their research, often being a necessity in order to perform the kind of research that they are interested in. The analysis shows that there are clear positive aspects of research collaboration that serves to strengthen the academic freedom of the researchers involved. The benefits include the potential for greater flexibility and providing the researchers with necessary funding, network and resources which allow them to engage in valuable research that would be impossible without their collaborative partnerships. However, researchers also identify challenges to academic freedom and quality science emerging from such arrangements. Amongst these are adversarial treatment by industry actors whose profitability or legitimacy may be threatened by uncomfortable findings. However, the analysis shows that this is a problem that has declined noticeably in severity in recent years, and that increasingly beneficial researcher/industry-relations are emerging in many fields of marine science. It is also shown that other aspects of the modern research system are of equal, if not more concern to the participants. Amongst these, poor publishing practices and the results of New Public Management principles stand out as the most common concerns, undermining both the work of the researchers themselves and the general quality of research in their field.

This study is a relevant and valuable contribution to the contemporary literature on academic freedom as it identifies weaknesses in the current Norwegian literature. Furthermore, the study contributes with new data to an area of interest on which academic freedom research in a Norwegian context is highly lacking, despite both its societal importance and its clear

vulnerabilities regarding academic freedom. The findings provide us with factors which the researchers themselves have deemed important and relevant for their own research and academic freedom. The factors identified may be used as variables in future research seeking to establish causal relationships between the various phenomena, or as the starting point of descriptive studies that provides deeper knowledge of singular topics on a level of detail that this study is not able to accomplish.

Lastly, this thesis is both relevant and important as it encourages a different approach to academic freedom scholarship than that which has been exhibited in the recent Norwegian literature. The study highlights the consistent nature of academic freedom challenges, de-emphasizing their apparent novelty and reemphasizes the need to continually negotiate the space and privileges that the researcher is afforded in society according to each new development of academia.

2.0 Theory

The theory chapter will be divided into three parts, outlining three broad steps through the literature. The first step consists of an historical overview where the origin and development of the principles of academic freedom is explained and connections are drawn back to the very birth of academia in the medieval theological institutions, through to the Humboldtian reforms that created the modern conception of the university. The second step, moves on to discuss the developments and changes that are currently transforming the contemporary university and research sector; namely managerial changes and increased marketization and “third mission” thinking. The third and last step gives an overview over the contemporary Norwegian academic freedom literature and research context. From this three-step movement through the literature the main concepts of academic freedom may be understood in their broadest and most fundamental sense, whilst their contemporary expressions can be used to understand the highly specific local context that holds the answers to the research questions.

2.1 A historical overview of academic freedom and its challenges

In order to fully understand the concept of academic freedom, the deeper roots of academia and the struggles to carve out an autonomous space for itself must be understood. A historical overview of the development of academia and its associated rights will demonstrate two important points. Firstly, that the foundational issues and tensions that surround the principles of academic freedom are consistent and coherent throughout the entire history of academia. Secondly, we will see that the challenges of academic freedom are tightly linked to the institutional context of academia, and has a deep relationship to the way research, teaching and funding is organized. This will become relevant later, as our discussion and research on academic freedom will be seen in the context of changing institutional factors and organizational designs.

2.1.1 The first universities

Academic freedom as a concept has deep roots. The modern concept of academia goes at least as far back as the high medieval period in Europe, with the theological, and later natural scientific universities under the Roman Catholic Church (Karran 2009) (Altbach 2001) (MacLaughlin 1955). These are the institutions that would later develop the framework and become the foundation of western science and academia (Altbach 2001), and already at this early stage we find that questions of academic freedom and autonomy were defining aspects of scholarly life, work and identity.

The first academic institutions grew up within the Roman Catholic schools, as predominately theological institutions who later grew and expanded to encompass study of classical philosophy and natural philosophy, which would later develop into the modern scientific project (Ridder-Symoens 1992). The earliest formal protection of scholars we find in Europe is the *Authentica Habita*, an edict issued by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in the year 1158 (Karran 2009). The edict was issued as European scholars frequently traveled to Bologna to study cannon and civil law. As foreigners they had little legal protection and the edict served to provide scholars with freedoms and rights that would protect their work and studies. Amongst these rights were similar freedoms and rights as those extended to clergymen, as well as freedom of movement for the purposes of study, and the right to be tried by their own masters and bishops rather than local courts (Ridder-Symoens 1992).

This edict is notable for several reasons. Providing scholars with similar rights as clergy, including freedom of movement and protections against local courts, was perhaps the first

formal step in providing a legal and normative space for academic pursuits as separated from other, secular forms of work. The transnational aspect of this edict, with the legal concerns of academics superseding local courts and systems of governance is also notable, as it is perhaps the first expression of the ideals of academic freedom being transnational, universal values. This approach to academic freedom as a collection of universal ideals is still an important aspect of contemporary literature on the topic, (Altbach 2001, Karran 2009, Silvernail, Graso et al. 2021). Finally, it is notable that this first protection emanated from the office of the state. The relationship between academia and the state has been central to the principle of academic freedom through history, and is a relationship that has remained to this day. Traditionally, academic freedom has emanated from a social contract of sorts between the state and the academy (Davies 2015). The contemporary challenging of this relationship is central to much of the recent scholarly discussion of academic freedom, and is an important driver of the changing nature of academia in our own time (Neave 2002, Davies 2015).

As universities gradually develop throughout the high middle ages, two models of organization developed. In Bologna, a system emerged where organization and autonomy emanated from the student body, and where professors, rectors and administrators were hired and elected by the students themselves. In Paris however, it was the professors who was the organizing core of the university, and made decisions on what courses to offer, who to hire, etc. (Ridder-Symoens 1992, Karran 2009). These different approaches to academic organization also privileged two different aspects of academic autonomy, which we find running as consistent threads through the later history of academic freedom. In the university of Bologna, with its student-led approach to organization and academic life in general, an institutional logic that privileged the ability to learn freely without considerable impositions was created. The students and academics were the organizers of their own courses, determined what would be studied and in what fashion (Ridder-Symoens 1992, Altbach 2001). This ensured academic freedom for the students to a greater extent than to the teachers. At the University of Paris however, a different institutional system emerged where it was the administrative and professorial collegiate that organized, determined and executed the education of the enrolled students. This system provided much more influence and freedom for the lecturers, teachers and professors, emphasizing the established academic community's influence and autonomy (Ridder-Symoens 1992, Altbach 2001).

In both systems, academic life was determined predominantly from within the academic

sphere itself, and only to a lesser, and generally more indirect extent determined by interference from church and state authority (Ridder-Symoens 1992). This ensured a certain autonomy of the university, even across differing organizational principles. However, this autonomy was not unchallenged by political and clerical forces, nor did the freedoms extend to all areas and fields that we associate them with today (MacLaughlin 1955, Ridder-Symoens 1992). Before we move on to discuss the modern university, where the freedoms to learn and teach are developed further we will take a closer look at some of the controversies surrounding the U of Paris. Doing so will show us that many of the concerns associated with the modern university were present, even in the very beginnings of academic life, often for the same reasons as today.

2.1.2 High Medieval Europe

There are a variety of debates at this early stage of the development of the academic norms, and institutional forms. Particularly noteworthy is the Aristotelian-ecclesiological tensions at the University of Paris in the 13th and 14th century. Often understood, and perhaps misunderstood, as a conflict of “church vs. science”, it is a reality conflict between two increasingly distinct logics, both emanating from, and “living their lives” within the Roman Catholic Church itself (MacLaughlin 1955). As the medieval church scholastics increasingly gained access to classical Greek texts, Aristotelian views on natural laws, human nature and the world at large became increasingly accepted. In addition to the pure political influence of the catholic church at the time, there was also an important emphasis on understanding the natural world, believing that studying God’s creation would also lead to greater understanding and reverence of God himself, as well as allowing to better govern and act on his world (Harrison 2010) thus there were both political and theological incentives and implications surrounding the philosophical and natural studies of the medieval universities.

By the high medieval age, around the 13th century, many classical writings were rediscovered or became more widely redistributed (Dod 1982). In particular, the writings of Aristotle was often treated as a departure point for study of the natural world (MacLaughlin 1955, Ridder-Symoens 1992), and over time it became clear that the most convincing forms of natural philosophy did not always cohere with established church doctrine. Increasingly, with the prominence of Aristotelian thinking in the universities, this discrepancy became

uncomfortable to parts of the clergy, and would, particularly at the University of Paris, lead to opposition, various condemnations and for a while, a ban on studying the works of Aristotle (MacLaughlin 1955).

However, this was not a general and uniform reaction of the church clergy at large, towards science and philosophy as a whole but rather a particular and local phenomena closely tied to questions of interpretations, personal convictions and the societal role of the university as an institution that reached its highest tension at the University of Paris, where the dispute played out over decades, involving book bans and expulsions as well as honest and cordial theological debate, depending on the actors and personal convictions involved at any particular moment of time (MacLaughlin 1955). This was only one of many possible and actual reactions to the perceived discrepancy between doctrine and scrutinizing scientific study. Other universities also under the wings of the church resolved this tension differently. For instance, the condemnation and banning of the works of Aristotle in 1210 was limited to the faculty of arts at the University of Paris, but were readily available for study elsewhere. The University of Toulouse, founded 19 years later, even marketed itself with pamphlets advertising the ability to study the forbidden works of Aristotle (Ridder-Symoens 1992).

Though Aristotle had been banned, without particular success, the principal underlying questions had been left unresolved: Are academics free to think, argue and believe their findings? What happens when honest study conflicts with the interests and stated doctrinal beliefs of the institution that makes the research possible? Is discussion of philosophy and research inherently and immediately a statement of personal opinion in the theological or political sphere, or is there a space for uncommitted, principled and honest deliberation, disputation and debate.

With these questions unresolved, the tensions ebbed and flowed throughout the 13th century at the University of Paris. Over the course of this period, several important medieval scholars would gain prominence and defend ideas aimed at preserving both the sanctity of doctrine and the validity of independent philosophy and natural study. Many of these ideas are recognizable today as early expressions of the modern principles of academic freedom.

Godfrey of Fontaines held that the bishop of Paris, with his authority limited in time (the duration of his office) and space (the region surrounding Paris) was not in a position to declare propositions heretical when diversity of opinion among reasoned and educated men existed. He believed that statements of heresy, if true, implied heresy for all parts of the church, and must thus be assented to by the body of the Catholic Church at large, as opposed

to the personal whims of the local bishopry (MacLaughlin 1955). In practice, his argument was that the validity of universal matters are not to be determined by the considerations of any one political actor, but should be judged true or false by the agreement of the learned community as a whole. Showcasing an early formulation of faith in the collegial process of reasoned academic debate to establish truth, as opposed to truth established by decree from powerful actors.

Siger of Brabant was a central actor in the debates of the 1270s. He was chosen as a rector by a minority of the fraternities at the University of Paris, and as such failed to be elected for the office, but was an ardent opponent of those restricting the teaching of Aristotelianism. He was himself subject of charges of heresy and fled to Italy where he soon perished for unknown reasons. Siger defended the idea that reasoned natural philosophy could be treated as a separate realm of academic debate, researched and understood through differing logics and methods. As such, separate fields and research logics were imagined where truths found in one sphere were not necessarily taken for granted in the other sphere without first being debated, searched and regarded in light of that sphere's logic, form and tradition (MacLaughlin 1955)

The concept that arguing and defending an idea not being the same as believing it was important to preserve the ability to teach freely at the University of Paris and allowed discussions on topics that were not allowed to be taught as truth, for example by use in exercises or rhetorical debate (MacLaughlin 1955). Showcasing the importance of the concept of disinterested study and debate in preserving academic freedom in a context of institutional oversight. Furthermore, the potentiality of Siger as a rector at the University of Paris showcased that the conflict well could have taken an entirely different approach and that the restrictions on Aristotelianism was not destined to emerge from the clergy and church, but was the result of a political and ideological power-balance, largely reliant on central persons and actors locally. It is quite conceivable that the election of Siger as rector would have led the University of Paris on a path closer to that of other universities of the time. This serves to demonstrate the importance of institutional and personal factors in this conflict between academic freedom and intellectual authority, and the possibility of alternate ways to navigate the relationships between influential actors that may lead to different outcomes regarding the state of academic freedom.

Peter Olivi, though not taking part in this particular debate, was alive, active and a controversial theologian at the university around and after the latest debates. He held, both

during his life and on his deathbed, that he could trust no human opinion, neither his own or that of anyone else, if it was not demonstrated to him by reason (MacLaughlin 1955). In this way he consistently upheld and voiced ideals of personal conscience and primacy of reason and trust in dispassionate academic research over doctrine and confession.

Lastly it is worth mentioning two final characters, who perhaps more than anyone else unified and harmonized the principles of academic and scientific research with catholic doctrine, and laid the ideological groundwork for the later emergence of modern science; Albert Magus, and his student Thomas Aquinas. Having spent three years as a bishop, Magus was active at the University of Paris, and embroiled in the Aristotle-conflict. Working predominantly within a Christianized Aristotelian framework he engaged in a wide variety of fields in both physical sciences, philosophy and theology. He pioneered several fields of science and expanded what was considered to be within the domains of philosophy and natural study (Cortés, Río et al. 2015).

Where Magus devoted most of his work to natural philosophy and natural study, Aquinas worked extensively with harmonizing Aristotelian thought and Roman Catholic theology (Cortés, Río et al. 2015). His work became perhaps the clearest example of the possibility of unifying catholic teaching with the process of natural study and resulted in large works that have been foundational for much of later Catholic theology, philosophy and metaphysics. Many proponents of his approach exist to this day, particularly within the roman catholic church and educational institutions (Doyle 2007) and the fact that his principles of unifying doctrinal belief with ever-developing natural sciences has survived the birth of the scientific method, the enlightenment era, modernity and the marketizing developments of the contemporary university is a testimony to the depth and thoroughness that these questions were addressed with already at the very beginnings of the European university.

2.1.3 The modern relevance of the medieval university

Providing an overview of the early conflicts and conceptions of academic freedom within the catholic religious and educational institutions may at first glance feel like an unnecessary detour. Archaic medieval debates between outdated scientific models and theological arguments probably seem to have little to do with modern science for most modern readers. Yet, we see that the foundational issues grappled with are the same essential issues that are discussed in contemporary debates on academic freedom: What freedoms do researchers have

to research and teach freely, and where do their limits lie? To what extent is the university institution and its participants autonomous from outside pressure and how does the institution respond to political and ideological pressure? What is the relationship between academics and their institutions and how is that relationship ordered? What are the conditions of basic scientific principles like freedom of conscience, disinterested observation, reasoned debate and free dissemination of knowledge?

From the disagreements and tensions arising between doctrine and ecclesial authority we get a window into the early conceptualizations and defenses of the very same principle that we will go on to study in this thesis. Furthermore, the conceptions of what belonged to philosophy and natural science expanded during this time and voiced the principles and arguments which would allow a further distancing from ecclesial authority over science over time. In the centuries to come, the church itself would still place Galileo Galilei in house arrest for his personal feud against the pope (Zanatta, Zampieri et al. 2017), burn Bruno at the stake for heresy (Rowland 2010), as well as persecuting reformers such as John Wycliffe (Levy 2006) and Jan Hus (Schwanda 2016). Furthermore, the academic nature of Martin Luther's criticism of the papacy would not save him from excommunication. Thus, these early debates did not result in the carving out of a perfect space for academic freedom, but they do show us that the freedoms of the academy and of scientific research did not arise by happenstance. Rather, these freedoms came about through deeply reflected and dearly fought battles by many brave men and women since the very beginning of the European university as an institution. An important part of these battles were the formulation of principles that would provide a protected space of reasoned and dispassionate study of the world, even at the expense of ulterior interests, be they monetary, political or ideological. As we move on to discuss the Humboltian reforms of the modern universities taking place in the 19th century, and even the developments in contemporary academia, it should be clear that these reforms responded to, addressed or were shaped by many of the same concerns and pressures that fueled the medieval struggle for academic freedom and independence.

2.3.4 Divergent paths

Through the centuries, important changes happened to academic life. The Great Dispersion of 1229, directly related to the debates surrounding Aristotle and church doctrine caused students and staff in Paris to migrate to other centers of learning in Angers, Orleans and Oxford (Karran 2009). This involved a movement of academic weight to other regions, accelerating

the spread and internationalization of academia. The growth of academia in England and the Iberian peninsula also allowed for the export of higher education to North and South America once the colonial projects began. In these regions of the “New World”, somewhat divergent paths, norms and traditions developed (Altbach 2001). In Latin America, the university system became increasingly associated with societal benefit, public goods and both Christian and Marxist struggles for emancipation, whilst in Northern America, the universities and colleges at times became important factors for economical and technological frontier development, and has in recent decades been important centers for research and technological innovation which has allowed the US to be on the cutting edge of international business, technology and finance (Altbach 2001, Berman 2012).

These regional developments and adaptations has ensured that principles of academic freedom has taken locally diverging paths across the world (Altbach 2001), yet the overview presented in this thesis is representative when discussing the European developments of these ideals. Furthermore, though there have been some divergences in the developments of the north American universities, the systems are similar enough and the institutional logics have over time converged to such an extent that the contemporary developments of the North American and European universities can be discussed together, as I will do going forward.

2.3.5 Humboltian reforms

By the time we reach early modernity, the catholic church had ceased being a central operative system of political and academic life. The growth of the state as central power structure in the space now opened by the weakening of the catholic church and the holy roman empire involved an emergence of rational beurocracy (Bireley 2009). The emergence of the rational beurocracy demanded an educated workforce to fill it. Furthermore; increased rationality in governance increased the need and demand for accurate knowledge to base decisions on. Both forces increased the importance of an efficient and reliable academic system, that could both educate and gather information on ever new areas of society, nature and human life. Enlightenment ideals of liberation and societal development through knowledge and scientific research also increased the perceived public value of science, research and academia (Östling 2018).

The increased importance of the academic sector to state governance demanded a restructuring of academic life. In what would become modern day Germany, particularly in

Prussia, the importance and weight of bureaucracy was perhaps stronger than anywhere else in the world, and it is here that we find the first reforms of academia into what may be perceived as a modern academic system we recognize today (Altbach 2001, Karran 2009, Östling 2018). A series of reforms were instituted at the university of Berlin in 1810, headed by Wilhelm von Humboldt, based not only on enlightenment ideals, but also motivated by deeper principles of German Universalism and the needs of the state (Östling 2018). The success of these changes can be witnessed in their broad adoption into the rest of Europe during the following century, and their dispersion to North American universities (Altbach 2001). In the end the principles of the Humboldt reforms became the norm of western academia that has prevailed at least until the 1950s, and to a large degree still shapes academia today.

The three main principles of these reforms was “*lerhfreiheit*”, “*lehrnfreiheit*” and “*freiheit der wissenschaft*”, which can be translated as “freedom to teach”, “freedom to learn”, and “freedom of science” respectively (Altbach 2001, Karran 2009, Östling 2018). Though the naming of these principles may be novel at the time of Humboldt’s reforms, their underlying ideals are far from new. As we have seen, the ideals such principles were built upon were recognizable even at the earliest stages of western European academia. The principle of *lerhfreiheit* corresponds well to the model seen at the University of Paris, which extended privileges to the professorate and professional academic community to freely educate, teach and organize their dispersion of knowledge as a collegial body. The origins of the principle of *lehrnfreiheit* is seen demonstrated at the University of Bologna, where the students themselves would organize their own academic life; freely organizing their academic life, enrolling in classes as they saw fit and embarking on the fields of study relevant to them. Lastly, *freiheit der wissenschaft* referred to the separation of the academy from most parts of government interference. Creating this separation was seen as necessary in order to protect the two previous ideals, and ensured the creation of institutional powers at the universities themselves, ensuring their status as independent and capable institutions able to govern themselves and pursue academic and scientific knowledge independently of political or ecclesiological pressures (Karran 2009).

The Humboldtian reforms were instituted at the University of Berlin, and its principles expanded from the Prussian state, gaining dominance in the European academies over the following centuries and created the basic university system and institutional logics that the changes and adaptations experienced in our contemporary universities have been developing within (Karran 2009).

2.3.6 Lessons of history

This historical view has painted a broad picture of the developing academic system through western history, spanning nearly a thousand years. This overview is valuable as understanding the greater picture of the development of academia proves an important point; that the issues grappled with even at the very birth of modern academic science have emerged and reemerged in new forms through all major changes and developments of academia. In many ways, the core issues addressed by Albert Magus and Alexander von Humbolt are the same core issues that are grappled with today. As we move on to understand the more recent reforms of academia, including the emerging “Third Mission” and the concept of the “market university”, it will become clear that academic freedom is a continuous issue consistently circling a few core concepts and struggles, and that the centrality of these struggles lies at the heart of academic life, identity and legitimacy.

This is itself a legitimization of the thesis question. Organizational systems, like the university, and the contexts in which they find themselves in change over time, yet these fundamental issues of academic freedom has proven to stay the same. With academia in its modern iteration we must, like academics in ages past, not ask whether or not academic freedom is a concern but rather how the age-old questions and internal tensions of academic freedom, identifiable in the principles of institutional autonomy, freedom to teach and freedom to learn, express themselves in our contemporary context, and how the challenges in our time and place may be addressed. The consistency of these challenges, and their continuous nature implies that the presence of such tensions and challenges today must be assumed. Thus it is our job to understand and adapt to the tensions and challenges that arises from the modern changes to an academic system in continual development.

2.2 Emergence of the contemporary university; academic engagement, marketization and the third mission.

2.2.1 The Shifting Landscape of Academia

The past few decades have witnessed a significant transformation in the perception and role of academia within society. Traditionally, the university has broadly been seen as its own,

sequestered sphere of society where life and work on campus was largely detached from external influences and the social matters of the day. Government affairs or the interests of financial actors were generally at an arm's length (Readings, 1996). However, a paradigm shift originated in the United States during the latter half of the 20th century, where universities became increasingly perceived as active participants in the market economy, engaging and collaborating with industry and commercial interests (Henkel, 2000). This transition has positioned universities as “axial structures” expected to drive industrial and regional development and actively contribute to knowledge production for the benefit of a broad range of societal stakeholders (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1995, Berman 2012).

While the overarching idea of the university existing for societal gain is not new, the orientation towards the market in modern times implies a social contract between the university and its support structures that is increasingly distant from the Humboldtian model (Davies 2015). The changing role of the university in modern society, from an institution protected, funded and utilized primarily by the state, into an increasingly independent actor participating in and driving the regional and national economy present certain challenges. Not only must academics and institutions now navigate new norms and practices, but this reconceptualization of the university also necessitates a certain re-bargaining of central academic concepts and ideals. What was once a relatively settled arrangement between the various academic institutions and the state is now in a degree of flux where the exact changes, power-balances and implications for research and teaching is yet to be determined (Davies 2015). It is in this changing space that the age-old questions which we have seen go back nearly a thousand years are again opened up for re-examination, deliberation and transformation. Thus, it is imperative that we understand what changes and pressures the contemporary scientist is subjected to in order to ensure the continued freedom and independence of science and research.

2.2.2. The Rise of the Third Mission: Commercialization and Academic Engagement

Since the 1960s, universities have experienced a growing trend towards commercialization (Slaughter and Leslie 2001). Elizabeth P. Berman argues that this shift is not solely driven by internal academic or market forces but rather stems from a specifically political, policy-led change in conceptualization and expectation of what place the university should hold in society (Berman 2012). She describes the classical conception of the university and scientific research as being dominated by a “logic of science”. This logic is closely aligned to the

Humboldtian ideals, as well as the Mertonian norms of academia; communality, universalism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism (Merton 1942). However, this “logic of science” that ruled the universities of past centuries she argues has been increasingly challenged by a “logic of the market”. This new logic she argues is characterized by the gradual adoption of market-oriented practices throughout the latter half of the 20th century as financial, regulatory, and cultural barriers to such a change were dismantled (Berman 2012).

Berman identifies the regulatory shift in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the pivotal structural change. The west experienced economic stagnation at this time. There were also fears of the emerging and innovative Japanese economy outpacing that of the United States (Berman 2012). It was political policy-makers, not the academic institutions themselves that conceived of presenting the university as a potential driver of innovation, economic growth and technological development (Berman 2012). Thus, Berman argues, it was not the universities themselves that asked for this change, rather they were coaxed into attempting and later more fully adopting a role as economic market actors.

During this period, policies encouraging experimentation with market practices were implemented. A few early commercialization attempts in the pharmaceutical and biotech industry had shown huge economic gains, and leading universities with ample resources and networks, such as Harvard, Stanford, and MIT found space to experiment with commercialization, particularly within the biosciences that had shown clear potential for economic gains (Etzkowitz 2008). The prominent societal position of these universities, and the experiences, norms, practices, and industry ties established in these early stages facilitated the diffusion of commercialization practices throughout academia, extending into other fields. In time, this created institutional norms, practices and frameworks that allowed for a broader commercialization in other fields and for universities at large. In short; strong early successes of commercialization and market activities in the biosciences departments at the leading US universities became the point of origin for the increased marketization of the university sector as a whole (Berman 2012).

If Berman is correct in her analysis of the contemporary university, this development is an utterly remarkable shift of historical proportions. Whereas the Humboldtian reforms redefined the organizational forms and societal influence of the European universities to some extent (Karran 2009), they do not seem to break with the basic academic norms and principles that were in place before the reforms gained influence. Rather, the Humboldtian reforms seem to be a development of the basic logic of the academic norms already created, though now

fashioned to better serve a growing rational state. Though the organizational form changed, the underlying ethos stayed the same. Berman however, presents the logic of the market as a new logic entirely, at least within the academy. It is worth highlighting the importance and implications of a new academic ethos emerging and being accepted in the western university. There has certainly been previous attempts at introducing new scientific ethos and “*raison d’être*” for the university, for instance that of various Marxists thinkers focusing on emancipation and education as a form of resistance or social change (Freire 1970). These ideas however does not seem to have succeeded in fundamentally reforming academia as a whole, and has generally been restricted to specific movements that spawned their own subfields and methodic approaches. Berman describes a fundamental change that have deeply impacted western academia, which involves a conceptual shift in how the relationship between society and the university is conceived (Berman 2012), a view reflected by the general literature (Compagnucci and Spigarelli 2020). The changes are understood by many as being so deep and fundamental that they necessitate a new look on what lies at heart of the scientific project, and how the terms and conditions that the scientific project operates under may need to be renegotiated (Neave 2002, Henkel 2007).

In fact, it seems that we must go all the way back to the university of the high and late medieval ages to again find a comparable reconceptualization of the scientific project. It is possible that marketization and “third mission” thinking is the largest and most rapid ideological shift in the conception of the western university since the early discussions around natural science and religious dogma. There are however counterarguments to the idea that commercialization and the logic of the market represents a fundamental break from earlier academic tradition. Lam, studying how scientists themselves adapt to and relate to “third mission” activities find that even the most commercially active academics rely on and draw their legitimacy from the logic of science (Lam 2010). Furthermore, several important researchers highlight the importance of actively renegotiating the terms of the researchers rights and privileges in light of the new realities they find themselves in (Henkel 2007, Davies 2015). Mary Henkel (2007) places a special emphasis on the agency and responsibility of the researchers themselves to take a leading charge in this negotiation.

This presentation of third mission thinking, and the changes to academia brought about by marketization has shown that these developments are considered extremely fundamental, leading to one of the most influential processes in academia for centuries. We can conclude from this that any further investigations of academic freedom and its place in the life of the

researcher must keep these changes in mind, and treat them as part of his or her analysis. Understanding the tension between the logic of science and the logic of the market, as well as the university researchers position as an actor the midst of this tension provides an interesting and important theoretical point of departure when trying to understand the day-to-day life of the modern researcher.

2.2.3 Distinguishing and understanding Academic Engagement and Commercialization

When discussing the various ways that the modern university engages with the “Third mission” and increased marketization of academic life, it is important to underline that these kinds of marketized interactions takes place in ways that are qualitatively different from one another. Indeed, in order to have a thorough discussion on how the university operates in a marketized society we must understand the different forms of market interaction and academic engagement.

There exists an important distinction in literature between the concept of *academic engagement* on one hand, and *commercialization* on the other. Academic engagement encompasses the various and diverse forms of contact, collaboration and partnerships with actors from outside the university sector, predominantly to advance the academic interests of the university actors involved. Commercialization on the other hand, encompasses activities where actors in the academic sector engage in commercial projects specifically and primarily for financial gain (Perkmann, Tartari et al. 2012). In practical life the distinction is not always clear, academic engagement may release increased funding and access to resources, whilst commercialization and profit can increase visibility and dissemination of research, attract new partners and investors, as well as providing valuable finances for future projects (Perkmann, Tartari et al. 2012).

Alice Lam, in an extensive interview and survey-based study, finds that even the most commercially oriented academics does not envision themselves as breaking from traditional academic ideals into becoming some sort of businessmen. Rather, they see the active nurturing of their academic identity as a necessity to preserve their credibility and the prestige of their work, even if they at times are met with skepticism from colleagues who align themselves closer to traditional Mertonian values (Lam 2010). Lam, interviewing a number of scientists creates a typology of their entrepreneurial identity, categorizing them by how they chose to describe and react to the increasing focus on engagement commercial activity in the

academy. She finds a commonly expressed belief amongst her respondents that the “logic of market” is taking over the “logic of science” in contemporary academia (Lam 2010). However, building on the findings in her study, she makes the argument that the academics’ own self-description and identification does not reflect this supposed take-over even amongst the most commercial-friendly academics. She claims that the “logic of science” is still the predominant orienting principle both regarding career-advancement, scientific reputation and in funding schemes. Despite the widespread notion of the commercial university and logic of market taking over the academic sphere she argues that the “logic of market” has emerged as a parallel logic in academia that plays by somewhat different rules, but is yet entirely dependent on the “logic of science” for its legitimacy, credibility and resource access (Lam 2010). This view seems defensible in light of Perkman et al. which found that scientific production and high impact on behalf of the individual researcher, as well as organizational quality in the parent institution were good predictors of commercialization activities (Perkman, Tartari et al. 2012), in short; that those who excelled by the academic standards were more likely to embark on commercial activity than those who did not.

Summarizing this review of academic engagement and commercialization, it can be said that they are two distinct forms of practice within academia that has, if not emerged then certainly increased in prominence over the last half-century (Berman 2012, Perkman, Tartari et al. 2012). They are distinct phenomena but conceptually related and can be seen as part of the university’s navigation around the concept of the “Third mission” of societal relevance and benefit (Berman 2012, Compagnucci and Spigarelli 2020). While academic engagement may increase resource access and result in commercial benefits, the primary aim is in directly advancing the research interests of the academic collaborator. It is in a sense “academic business as usual”, but in some way involving partners external to academic life. Meanwhile commercialization aims at creating financial gain from research. While it is certainly possible that such ventures may advance research interests in the long term, such benefits are of secondary concern (Berman 2012). It can be said that academic engagement and commercialization each pursue a primary goal; academic or monetary gain, where the remaining benefit is a potential secondary effect of the primary pursuit (Perkman, Tartari et al. 2012). However, they are distinct forms of practices, each with their own impact on academic life, and such practices have become an increasingly important part of contemporary academic life (Henkel 2007). In addition to the increased prevalence of academic engagement and commercialization, we have also seen that the market university

has created fundamental changes to the norms and practices of research and collaboration. As we proceed to investigate the experiences of Norwegian academics and how their academic freedom and freedom of research is impacted by these changes, it is valuable and necessary to review the literature on university-industry relations and researcher collaboration to see what challenges are found in the theory. This can then inform our methodological approach and ensure that the empirical study is rooted in theory.

2.2.4 Challenges to academic work and freedom in the contemporary academic system

First, it is worth making a point that comes into play when discussing academic freedom in the modern university. As we have mentioned, the new structures and ideals of academic life necessitates new negotiations of the rights and freedoms of the researcher (Henkel 2007, Davies 2015), but there is within this changing system no one singular party to negotiate with that can in actuality ensure these rights. In the past, the balance of power surrounding the university has predominately been negotiated with the church, and particularly in modern times, with the state. These structures have in common that they are centralized institutions, governed by a principally unified body with a clear head and command structure. Thus they have been able to represent themselves as a singular stakeholder with which to negotiate, and historically also with the power to enforce the terms of their agreement, even when the terms are only implicitly stated. The market however, by its very nature, does not provide any such unified negotiating partner and is not in the position, either legally or practically to give broad guarantees of rights and privileges as we are used to expect from the church and state (Davies 2015).

Thus, discussing academic freedom challenges within a marketized academic sector becomes a complex and faceted exercise, where the effects of research partnerships, academic engagement and market activities, even on a general level is heavily dependent on local factors, and plays out differently in various fields, organizational structures and legal polities. It is hard to make broad statements about what challenges are experienced by which academics, due to the highly localized nature of relationships and practices. That said, the international academic freedom literature provides us with a birds-eye view of issues commonly associated with the increasingly marketized university sector. A natural question to ask is then, once these potential issues are understood, if, and to what extent they exist in the context of Norwegian marine-oriented researchers. Furthermore, if they are found to exist in

the local context, we should ask how they are expressed and what consequences this has for the researcher in particular, and the scientific project as a whole. As we look into and understand these on a general level we will also be able to investigate which of these challenges are recognized in the local context of Norwegian marine studies.

Focus of research

One concern that is often lifted is that the changing benefactor of academia towards the market may influence the priorities of what is researched (Campbell and Slaughter 1999, Mendoza 2012). The overarching concern is that research projects, strategies and goals may be diverged away from the academic interests of the researcher, commonly associated with a Mertonian, idealistic search for truth and knowledge, towards short term, marketizable results and interests of the financiers. It is thus feared by some that academia as an honest search for truth being coopted for market and industry interests (Mendoza 2012). Related to this is the more general concern that marketization and academic engagement may shift the focus from fundamental, explorative science, towards applied science (Caulfield 1998, Healy 2002). Both concerns are similar in nature, being derived from the observation that the market operates under different principles than traditional academia, and sees the academic “purity” of research under potential threat (Mendoza 2012).

While this is a commonly stated concern in the literature, the actual science on whether this is happening on a large scale is unclear, and Mendoza, in his 2012 case study on research collaboration with industry at a prestigious biomedical department in the UK does not find in his research that the academics themselves are concerned about this postulated split between basic and applied science, stating that the distinction is hardly relevant for their field, and that the applied scientific results often ends up being an important basis of knowledge for more basic research later on (Mendoza 2012). Neither do they experience the potential pressures of industry profitability as particularly concerning in their day-to-day life (Mendoza 2012). Rather, many of his respondents states that their partners understand well that thorough, quality science and the independence of research is necessary for the industry’s long term profitability, and though they are sometimes met with initial unrealistic expectations of the timescales involved in the research, the timescales and practices involved are generally understood upon further communication with the industry partners (Mendoza 2012).

Furthermore, the increased access to private funds, with the then increased ability for scientists to prioritize their most desired research projects is seen in a positive light, and perhaps the main benefit of embarking on industry partnerships. Far from restricting academics to follow their personal research interests, or advance fundamental knowledge, the scientists interviewed by Mendoza find that such projects free up their finances and provides access and opportunities to research of scientific and social value that would otherwise not be possible (Mendoza 2012). Furthermore, several respondents states that these collaborations create important contacts with industry that often facilitates future funding, exciting projects for phd students, networks and job opportunities in other research positions within the industry in the future (Mendoza 2012), this can be seen as empowering for the researchers involved, providing them with increased resource access and mobility, ensuring ever new opportunities to advance research, scientific knowledge and their own personal academic interests. Indeed, many forms of research, in particular within many fields in natural science, the cost of doing new research has increased massively, necessitating more expensive equipment and larger research groups (Reale and Seeber 2010), meanwhile many universities find themselves with increasingly restrictive public funding, widening the gap between potential scientific advancements and the funding available to capture important research opportunities (Mendoza 2012).

Thus we see two related concerns regarding outside funding and partnership involvement; first is the concern that the individual researchers or institutions could be beholden to their financiers and paymasters, damaging the independence and validity of science. We also see the concern that industry involvement, marketization and commercialization of science moves the scientific project away from basic science, towards applied science, creating a flatter and less comprehensive research sector that produce less new, groundbreaking and challenging science. However, we also see examples in empirical research where researchers themselves do not identify with these concerns, and rather claim that industry partnership provides increased freedom and opportunities for interesting research. We also see that some scientists does not consider the distinction between basic and applied science relevant, and that the research they do in practice serves to advance both.

Thus it is an open question whether Norwegian researchers feel the same. Without a deeper understanding of how research partnerships and research collaboration function in the local Norwegian context it is hard to say whether the researchers involved experience these

increasingly common practices as beneficial or detrimental to health and freedom of their research and the research in their fields.

Influence on research

Delving deeper in the financial aspects of research partnerships we find deeper concerns of an unequal relationship between the partners involved. Questions are raised whether such developments create explicit or implicit boundaries on the researchers that cause them to self-censor their work, restrict their research projects or in other ways shape their work so as to appease their partners or private donors (Mendoza 2012), or even that the funding of research projects and departments can be used as leverage and a “foot in the door” to influence the research that is being undertaken (Bonnell 2021). This can range wildly in severity, from smaller strategic positioning, where research is shifted towards areas that the researchers believe will be best received by partners and benefactors but still remain within the interests of the researcher and what him or her finds valuable, or presented in such a way as to be best received, towards far stronger control of research where the research partners themselves may threaten disassociation or cuts to funding if certain approaches are not taken, or certain studies not designed to the wishes of the partners (Healy 2002, Bonnell 2021). The literature at times finds grave and concerning examples of pressure and interference in research (Healy 2002, Cicolella, Harrison et al. 2007) but these examples are not universal experiences. They seem to be predominately found in specific fields where the economic potential for commercialization is great, and where the consequences of results may be costly and delegitimizing to the partner or funding institution. The biochemistry industry may serve as an example of such a field where the risk for disadvantageous influence on research may be high, and lawsuits, increased regulation and loss of profits may be the results of undesired research data (Healy 2002, Bonnell 2021).

Often, research can be expensive, necessitating large inputs or large scale collaborations that local research departments are unable to facilitate themselves (Mendoza 2012). At times, universities or research departments undertake multilateral agreements between an array of institutions and stakeholders; public, private and academic, craft complex networks of partners and may even involve local, regional or national governments (NTNU 2024) and even at times regional development strategies (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2022). thus it is conceivable that not only private industry, but also public investment sources and planning

offices may exert considerable influence over research and departments. Norwegian marine studies, like biochemistry research, often research topics and deal with findings related to strong economic interests, both for private actors and the state as a whole. Marine and off-shore industries, like fishing, aquaculture, and energy production make up more than 80% of Norway's export economy (OEC 2024). Furthermore, these industries are largely dependent on research for current and future production and growth, and may have direct legal and political consequences. As such, it is reasonable to assume that pressures and political interests makes themselves felt on researchers in these fields and that unhealthy influence exists to some extent. When studying these fields and the academic freedom experienced by its researchers, the potential for economic, political or institutional influence should be considered.

Specific forms of weak science

There are examples of research partnerships with industry and other private actors resulting in poor or unethical research and dissemination practices. This can take a wide variety of forms, but regardless of their form they serve to undermine good science and lower the quality of research, as well as trust in science in general (Cicolella, Harrison et al. 2007). Some industries, for instance the pharmaceutical industry, has a particularly bad track record in this respect, where Henry et al claims that up to 21% of those in active research partnerships with industry in the field of pharmaceuticals in Australia may be involved in “possibly serious research misconduct” (Hill, Doran et al. 2005). Examples of misconduct can be fabrication of research data, such as inventing false study participants to bolsters statistics, erroneous coding of detrimental drug effects in order to hide their prevalence, selective reporting or dishonest analysis of negative events during clinical trials, ghost written articles formed entirely in-house, to be signed of by external researchers upon completion in order to borrow legitimacy from reputable scientists, etc. (Healy 2002, Bonnell 2021). There are many cases of such shoddy and poorly executed research being published even in the most reputable journals in the medical field (Healy 2002).

Often, clinical trial data from the pharmaceutical companies themselves are not made available for public scrutiny, as they are considered proprietary data belonging to the company. It has been stated that such studies should not be considered to be science as they are not open to investigation (Healy 2002). It has also been found that industry ties in

biochemical research is associated with both withholding of data, and delays in publications (Bekelman 2003). Delays in publishing may be a response to disadvantageous findings that result in a new, re-engineered study providing more “acceptable” findings. It may also be the result of disagreements and legal conflicts over publishing data that the industry partners would desire to remain undisclosed (Bekelman 2003). Perhaps the most important reason for publishing delays however, is the filing of patent applications before publishing in order to secure intellectual property and commercialization opportunities (Caulfield 1998). While this is perhaps a more benign reason than other causes of publishing delays, it still serves to slow down scientific progress and keeping valuable results unpublished, sometimes for extended periods of time. Lastly, it has been found that industry sponsored medical and pharmaceutical research finds favorable outcomes far more often than non-industry affiliated research (Bonnell 2021). Marcia Angell (2005) finds that industry-sponsored research is as much as 4 times more likely to result in favourable outcomes than those studies conducted by the National Institute of Health.

The issues mentioned here are all found in the context of pharmaceutical and other biochemical research fields and should not be assumed to be present in marine research without investigation, but knowing that these practices take place in some fields makes it relevant to investigate if similar practices may exist in marine fields of research that may hold some of the similar incentives and partnership arrangements as in the pharmaceutical industry. When studying the state and health of academic freedom in the marine industries, various forms of research manipulation and poor data and publishing practices such as those mentioned here should be investigated to see if similar trends are present there.

2.3.1 Norwegian contemporary research

Having gone through both the history of academic freedom, as well as summarizing the broad structural changes academia has gone through over the centuries, we are able to zoom in on the contemporary Norwegian academic freedom literature.

2.3.2 Nordic context

In recent years there has been voiced increasing concern in many western countries about a possible politicization of academia (Education 2022, Eriksen 2022). There has also been published popular science books arguing that the humanities and social science departments have drifted increasingly towards the left politically (Haidt 2018). This may be seen as a part of increased political polarization and has become a successful political topic for the political right in many countries (Eriksen 2022).

In the case of Sweden, already in 2013, the political scientist Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson used the Swedish term “åsiktskorridor” (translated: View-point corridor) to address what he saw a narrow Overton-window, the width of accepted speech and belief in public life (Eriksen 2022). Whilst all Northern European countries have fostered high-trust societies with rather strong social norms and expectations of social cohesion, the dominance of left wing liberal views have been particularly strong in Sweden in recent decades (Eriksen 2022) and it is conceivable that this may have led to an earlier, and stronger politicization of the debate in Sweden than in the surrounding countries.

In Sweden, the debate and narrative around the “åsiktskorridor” has been tense and highly politically charged for decades making effective political discussion, critical academic work and pragmatic policy-making difficult (Eriksen 2022). Criticism of social liberal policies, particularly surrounding immigration, gender and climate change has run the risk of being vehemently opposed or effectively silenced, seemingly from fears that discussing such topics would legitimize, strengthen or lend credibility to what is considered far-right politics (Eriksen 2022).

As a result, the political climate in Sweden has become unwieldy. Far from removing social tensions and hindering the emergence of the far right on the national scene, Swedish politics have become increasingly polarized and it has been harder to build balanced public discussions on national decision-making around increasingly difficult topics like gang violence and migration policy (Eriksen 2022). Furthermore, far from being restrained, these attempts at curtailing claimed far-right discourse in the public sphere seems only to have emboldened and legitimized the far right parties, who now consistently draws 20% support in national polls.

2.3.3 Recent Norwegian research

While it may seem like a detour to discuss the state of public debate in Sweden in a thesis on academic freedom in Norway, it is nevertheless an important piece of background information for understanding the context and motivation for the published work on academic freedom in Norway in recent years.

Since 2020 there has been published a series of Norwegian studies on academic freedom that has influenced the public and political debate. Most of the recently published studies on academic freedom in Norway are in some form or another tied to a parliamentary decision in the summer of 2021, which set down a public committee tasked with gathering knowledge and provide a solid basis of research and information in order to inform public policy-making around academic freedom in coming years (Education 2022). This project was, directly or indirectly associated with research projects on academic freedom and freedom of speech carried out at that time (Education 2022).

The effect of a NOU, explicitly, is to provide both the parliament and various government departments and the broader public with an accessible and understandable foundation of knowledge which makes further political debate and policymaking simpler (Education 2022). The commissioning of an NOU, particularly if the findings and conclusions are unanimously assented to by the committee, is the creation of a broad, de-politicized, low-conflict reference point for political action. In short; NOUs are often undertaken to address political topics with a potential for polarization and disagreement, in order to de-politicize and de-polarize the debates and narratives on the topic.

This means that Norwegian studies undertaken in the last years, in particular the NOU itself, could be seen as being influenced by specific political action aimed at avoiding the polarizing language, narratives and debates that has been seen in the American debates on cancel culture, or in the Swedish criticism of the left-wing dominated “Åsiktskorridor”. These studies have been undertaken in a time of high political salience on the topic, with certain powerful narratives in the surrounding public debate. Thus we should keep the political and social context in mind when we try to understand these recent studies.

2.3.4 Presentation and summary of the Norwegian studies

In total, I have reviewed five Norwegian studies, published between 2020 and 2022. Here follows a short overview of their methodological approach, their theoretical framework and main findings.

NOU 2022:2 Academic Freedom of Expression, 2022

In the discussion of academic freedom in the Norwegian research context the NOU 2022:2 – Academic Freedom of Expression, stands out as a significant document. It is a governmental report that synthesizes existing knowledge and reports on academic freedom in Norway. Its stated goal is to summarize various issues and problems that Norwegian academia is expected to face in the coming years related to academic freedom and the role of academia in public discourse (Education 2022). Many of its main points refer to issues that are relevant to international academia as a whole, though it has a heightened focus on consensus culture and self-censorship, which appear to be highly prevalent in certain disciplines. This report consolidates knowledge from, and is partly based on findings from a number of other Norwegian studies and publications on academic freedom and the climate of expression among researchers. All the following reports are cited as being part of the academic basis of the report (Education 2022).

Though the report touches upon many aspects of academic freedom, it has only a brief presentation of the concept of academic freedom, summarized in a single paragraph on page 20 (Education 2022). The predominant focus is that of internal culture in research departments and the academic community and how academics react to and participate in the public debate. Some attention is given to the managerial aspects of the university sector and the effect of increased pressure on publication and NPM-esque target indicators of steering. It's most prominent conclusion is perhaps that the combined pressures of publication, competitiveness in the field, unfruitful debate and less time than desired for actual research leads many academics to avoid participating in the public debate, as well as avoiding controversial research topics (Education 2022).

An Expression Climate Under Pressure? Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression in a Time of Transition, a sub-report by OsloMet, 2021

This review is based on a systematic literature review of Norwegian and international academic sources on academic freedom. It summarizes its main findings as pressures originating from various angles.

The first is the internal pressure factor brought on by self-censorship. The report finds that many Norwegian academics and researchers avoid, restrain themselves or withdraws partially or in whole, from publicly disseminating and discussing their research. This is due to what they perceive as a climate of public debate as well as a tabloidism and general scientific illiteracy in the mainstream media which in many researchers experience makes the public debate around their research lacking in value (Eriksen 2022).

There is also a pressure from the grass root level, amongst the public. The report finds beliefs amongst the non-academic public that academia is impacted to some extent by a culture of consensus and elite networks that cause a homogenizing, conformist or in other forms, restrictive scientific community. This serves to challenge the faith and public trust in science and research (Eriksen 2022).

Systemic pressures from above are also identified. The report finds no one system, structure, board or institution that in a notable way limits or restrict science and research to any notable degree, but is concerned about the cumulative effect of management levels, funding committees, leadership groups and government steering, all with their own managerial focus, guidelines and requirements for funding, measurement targets and value production. The report worries that the total effect of all levels of management, targets and steering in practice creates an increasingly conforming and restricted academic sector (Eriksen 2022).

Sideways pressures from other researchers and scientists within their own field is notable in many cases, but is most predominant in the social sciences, particularly those often associated with controversy or politicization outside of academia, such as gender studies and immigration studies. This results in scientists strategically restricting their research publications and dissemination of findings even within their own scientific communities in order to avoid pushback, criticism or potentially alienating important researchers and institutions in their field (Eriksen 2022).

The study also finds that the Norwegian institutions of higher education and research has reliably resisted attempts at cancelling, “thought policing” and restricting research along leftist ideological lines, a development which has been given great attention in the public

debates in the years surrounding this study, and may be seen as one of the main reasons for several of the recent Norwegian reports on academic freedom.

Researchers in the public square - On Freedom of Speech in Academia, 2021

This report is based on a quantitative research project of structured surveys, with a total of 1512 respondents selected from the members of the Norwegian Association of Researchers and other selected unions and professional organizations for researchers and academics (Mangset, Midtbøen et al. 2021).

The survey questions surrounded topics such as freedom of expression, research dissemination, self-imposed restrictions on dissemination, and critical/threatening responses experienced by researchers.

The study found that approximately 50% of researchers had disseminated their work to the broader public in the past year. It also found that researchers largely avoid disseminating controversial findings outside academia, with the most prominent reason being the complexity of the research and sensationalism of the media and subsequent public debate which they feel makes public debate around their research unfruitful.

The study also found that researchers in certain fields fear reactions to their research far more than in others. Like in the previous study, social studies, particularly in fields often considered controversial in some form stood out. The study also found that the criticism and resistance that was feared most, was not that from the public or non-academic actors, but that of their peers and prominent researchers in their fields.

Freedom of expression in a new public sphere: The limits of debate and the space for knowledge, 2022.

Published in 2022, this book was developed concurrently with the previously described studies from OsloMet and Mangset et al (2021). Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of this book are the relevant chapters for our thesis. In addition to the material from the previously mentioned studies it also builds on qualitative interview data with researchers working in three fields commonly associated with controversial issues; immigration, gender- and equality studies, and finally climate science. These chapters present and summarize the findings in the earlier

studies in an easily accessible format. The chapters also examine the relationship between academic freedom of expression, and public access to information and knowledge, emphasizing academia's role in informing public and political debate. The need for accessible knowledge, diversity of expressions, and counter-expertise is highlighted as crucial for an enlightened public conversation (Mangset 2022).

The authors also investigate whether the institutional frameworks for knowledge production and dissemination enable researchers to fulfill such roles. They question whether consensus-oriented academic communities, in combination with public policy and government priorities in the research and university sector may challenge the level of knowledge and quality of public debate.

It is also argued that certain approaches internally in the academic fields, such as particular schools of thoughts privileging certain interpretations, can limit the diversity of perspectives in knowledge production and dissemination through increasing the personal costs of doing so, or by de-prioritizing such research in funding and grants (Mangset 2022).

Freedom of Expression in Academia by Vidar Strømme, 2020

The report gives a thorough overview of the legal and judicial aspects of academic freedom of expression, highlighting several trends, concerns, and potential weaknesses in the current regulatory framework and academic culture. Generally, it demonstrates that freedom of expression remains strong in Norwegian academia, both de jure and de facto. The report does cite concerns that emphasis on economics and workplace politics may come in the way of investigating whistleblowing and claims of harassment, which may come at the expense of academic freedom and objectivity in research, but does not provide clear examples or further discussion on the topic. It also expresses an uncertainty about how well Norwegian academia engages with research on politically and socially controversial topics like identity politics and minorities (Strømme, 2020).

2.3.5 Summary of recent Norwegian literature

In summary, we see that the Norwegian literature has emerged at a certain point in time where issues of cancel culture and ideological conformity was high in the public consciousness, and

similar developments were criticized in neighboring countries such as Sweden, Denmark or the UK. While the insights here are valuable there is little interaction with the international literature on academic freedom, and most of the studies seem to draw heavily on just three projects of empirical research in total; a literature review (Eriksen 2022), a quantitative study (Mangset, Midtbøen et al. 2021) and a qualitative interview study (Mangset 2022).

While these reports build on well-crafted research and present important data for addressing specific issues of self-censorship and public trust in scientific research, they do not build heavily on the theoretical base of the international literature, but stay within a mutual framework, draw on each other for their arguments and predominately stay focused on only a small part of the very broad picture that we have come to understand as academic freedom. The main topics covered of the international literature on academic freedom focus on entirely different topics than those covered in these reports (Altbach 2001, Karran 2009, Davies 2015).

Thus it is possible that important perspectives and issues concerning academic freedom in Norway have received far less attention than they perhaps should. If we restrain or research to the recent Norwegian literature we may be left with a picture of academic freedom in Norway that is dominated by issues currently salient and high up in the public debate, like political polarization, cancellation attempts, media controversies and the like. Meanwhile, other very important and fundamental trends may have been overlooked. We also see that the academic self-censorship and freedom of expression debate in the Norwegian studies has mainly focused on fields within the humanities and social sciences (Education 2022, Mangset 2022) as it is here that social pressure has been most strongly felt. However, such a focus may have failed to capture important developments fields not belonging to social science, but who may have equally, or even more detrimental developments within them, potentially threatening academic freedom and the quality of scientific research.

Notably, the recent Norwegian research has paid relatively little attention to, and refers to few sources on the increasing commercialization and privatization of the university and research sector. On the one hand, this can be somewhat expected since higher education in Norway is financed to a very large extent through public allocation (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2022). However, much of the Norwegian core industry and export economy is built around high-tech and research intensive sectors, who are dependent on knowledge and data from the research sector (OEC 2024). The development of such industries is also part of Norwegian economic and political strategies from the public sector, and is associated with political interests and at

times even central to aspects of foreign policy (Eriksen 2022) and thus introduces a range of potential challenges into their respective scientific fields. Despite of this, the academic freedom implications for research in the natural sciences seems to have received very little less attention in recent Norwegian literature. One issue that perhaps could have been investigated deeper are tendencies towards lobbying or reputational pressure against academia from non-academic actors in the business sector (Eriksen 2022). This can be particularly relevant when the research touches on industries with strong economic interests and where research may lead to political consequences that challenge the profits or political legitimacy of these industries. Fish farming, reindeer grazing, seabed mining, or wind power are all industries from which such pressures could be conceived.

Another possibility is that institutions, researchers or research departments that depend on good relations with the business sector indirectly adapt to signals from partners and the sector at large, allowing private actors' interests to become part of what NOU 2022:2 describes as a "collective governance pressure", creating an increasingly restrictive and self-censoring research sector where scientists themselves limit what is researched (NOU 2022:2). NOU 2022:2 provides advice for awareness and culture building within academic communities, but it is possible that pressure from organized forces from outside, with large sums of money behind them, plays out in ways and through channels that are impossible to address by the researchers themselves.

As a final example of the kind of academic freedom challenges that are left almost entirely unaddressed by the recent Norwegian research; on December 15, 2023, the then rector of NTNU, Anne Borg, resigned her position. The resignation was the result of a longer series of events surrounding a report commissioned by NHO and Norwegian Industry to assess the profitability of offshore wind power versus nuclear power (NTB 2023). Assistant Professor at NTNU, Jonas Kristian Nøland criticized the report for what he considered to be an inaccurate representation of data and declared it as akin to a commissioned work deliberately misrepresenting research data to portray wind power as a more cost-effective energy source than nuclear power (Ånestad and Holter 2023). In the aftermath, it emerged that Rector Anne Borg had engaged in communication with NHO and Norwegian Industry that can hardly be interpreted as anything other than transgressions against good HR practices and ethical frameworks for research collaboration. The case as a whole can perhaps best be described as a PR farce for most parties involved, and had the potential of seriously undermining many important aspects of academic freedom; from public trust in the institutional autonomy of the

university, to the trust and faith of the researchers that their right to engage in reasoned and principled academic debate is protected by their own employers, to challenging norms of how university-industry collaboration should take place.

However this case is interpreted, it is clear that industry affiliation, and various forms of research collaboration has the potential of presenting new challenges to the autonomy and independence of academic research, and cast doubt in the public mind over the value and trustworthiness of academic research.

2.3.6 Norwegian fish research and the third mission

This theoretical review, from the earliest universities to the latest theory and events, has presented academic freedom as a concept deeply tied to the institutional forms and logics of the research institutions involved. Furthermore, we have seen that Norwegian studies on academic freedom in recent years have given little attention to how these changes have impacted academia. The natural sciences, where challenges to academic freedom and institutional autonomy should be expected to emerge in an increasingly marketized university has been almost entirely ignored by the research presented so far. This opens up a research gap, where the academic freedom and quality of science in fields relevant to research intensive industries have not been investigated.

Furthermore, outside of the repeatedly cited importance of improving the public debate, other conceptions of the “third mission” of the university, or even academic freedom as an idea, have been given surprisingly little attention, and research partnerships with industry and other private or public actors are hardly mentioned..

This thesis begun with a desire to better understand academic freedom. A comprehensive literature review has shown that the recent Norwegian studies address only some aspects of academic freedom, and hardly touches on several topics that are presented in international theory as absolutely essential for discussing the concept in the contemporary research sector. I find it striking that I could find no recent studies on academic freedom in natural science fields relevant to off shore research and industry, despite the great importance for Norwegian society, economy and politics of these sectors. Furthermore, little attention has been given to understand how fundamental changes to academic freedom impact Norwegian research and

academic life. Thus there exists a clear research gap that should be filled; the lack of knowledge on the state of academic freedom in industry-adjacent fields of science, where research and study may challenge both profitability and public legitimacy.

Of these fields, I find the maritime research fields especially relevant for a Norwegian context. Norway has an exceedingly long history of economic attachment to its sea resources (Thrane 2001), and the economic relevance of their maritime industry remains to this day. As of 2023, fish exports made up over 5% of Norway's export value (OEC 2024), with fish-farming in particular has seen an incredible growth in recent years, and is still projected for further growth and expansion internationally (EY 2002).

With their importance for Norwegian economy, as well as their relevance and importance for regional development and employment opportunities, the industries surrounding fish and fisheries make for interesting research topics. They are well embedded in research partnerships collaboration and "third mission activities", and are of both regional and national political interest as well (Eriksen 2022). This puts marine research, particularly on fishing, fisheries and fish health, at an interesting junction between both political and private interests, as well as academic interests, and provides for many potential challenges to academic freedom that should be investigated. Despite the clear relevance of studying academic freedom issues within this research sector, I have not been able to find any studies with such a focus in Norwegian literature. Thus, this thesis will aim at attempting to close a bit of this research gap and better understand how Norwegian researchers embarking on research partnerships with industry or other scientific actors experience their own academic freedom.

3.0 Method

3.1 Introduction

Based on the theory review, as well as contemporary Norwegian scholarship, we have established the relevance of both organizational forms, contemporary changes in western

academia, and institutional logics in understanding and analyzing academic freedom and quality of research.

Since the Norwegian studies do not provide us with in-depth information on the state of academic freedom and research quality in the Norwegian maritime sector, despite its political and economic importance on a national level, it is appropriate to investigate closer how exactly these recent developments in academic models and principles impact the freedom of the researchers and the quality of their output.

Thus I have formulated the three following research questions:

1 - How do Norwegian researchers in fish related fields understand their own autonomy and academic freedom when engaged in research partnerships?

2 - What aspects of research partnerships are beneficial for academic freedom and quality of science?

3 - What issues towards academic freedom and quality of science may arise from embarking on research partnerships?

3.2 Research Design

NOU 2022:2 has shown that many aspects of academic freedom, and various potentially detrimental responses to outside pressures may be affected by or even imposed by the researcher himself. Thus, in order to understand how the academic freedom of researchers are affected it is valuable, perhaps even necessary to operate within a research paradigm that does not separate the research subjects and their internal experiences from the analysis, but allows for personal perspectives and interpretations to be presented, discussed and analyzed. I have thus been working from an interpretivist framework, which allows for such analysis.

When choosing a methodology through which the research questions may be answered it is also important to have a clear and reflected view on what type of knowledge one is trying to acquire. Generally, research projects are aimed at being either descriptive, explaining a phenomena and providing a basis for further knowledge on a topic, or as being causally oriented, identifying cause and effect relationships between factors (Bukve 2021). As this research project is innately tied to personal experiences, and since research collaborations

may take many forms and have a high numbers of factors that may impact the experiences of those participating in them; Perkmann, Tartari et al. (2012) employs a quantitative study with as many as 21 variables, it can be hard to know whether one has identified the appropriate variables for studying their causal relationships. Often, descriptive studies are useful in identifying variables that may then be used to test causal hypotheses (Bukve 2021). Since I do not yet have a clear perspective on what variables that may show causal relationships, it is appropriate to undertake this research with a descriptive research design from basic knowledge can be gained and from which further research can be informed.

In the social sciences, we operate with two main forms of data; quantitative and qualitative. Whilst the former is more oriented towards data that can be measured and analyzed numerically, the latter form of data is more oriented towards comprehension of language, meanings and relationships that are harder to quantify (Bukve 2021). In the case of this study I believed that qualitative analysis provided the best approach in attempting to understand world of maritime research collaboration, the reason being the emphasis shown in both (NOU 2022:2) and (Eriksen 2022) on self-censorship and the extent to which personal experiences may impact the researchers academic activity. These aspects I found is easier addressed through qualitative research approaches that allows for personal expressions from the research subjects which can then be interpreted and held up against theory.

My data sources for this research project has been primary interview data from a series of semi-structured interviews. An interview approach was chosen for its ability to provide open ended data and identify potential factors of which I do not have foreknowledge. Choosing an interview situation, as opposed to for instance a survey also provides a reactive research approach where one is able to press deeper into relevant trails of answers that I would not have been able to expect beforehand. In a descriptive project like this, where the researcher is attempting to understand a context and forms of practice unfamiliar to him or her, such open ended methods can ensure that one does not rely to closely on pre-conceived assumptions about a context of which the respondents themselves have a more intimate knowledge.

3.3 Participants and sampling

The selection of participants was done by scouring through the employee-pages of high profile universities and research institutions in Norway with separate departments for marine

research. The selection criteria were that the researchers to be contacted had to be working in marine research and have a documented experience with research collaboration. Beyond this, there was no hard criterion for inclusion or exclusion, but I consulted my advisor repeatedly for his opinions regarding the fitness of individual candidates. I also prioritized getting a good balance of researchers from universities and from other research institutions respectively, as well as ensuring a representation of both younger and older researchers, scientists at various career levels, and a relatively even gender balance.

In total, 8 potential interviews were contacted, with 5 agreeing to participate in the studies. As studies were undertaken, and partially analyzed one after another, the 5 interviews emerged as an appropriate size to the planned analysis. Of the 5 researchers interviewed, 2 were employed in the university sector and 3 employed in independent or governmental research facilities. However, it is worth noting that several scientists did currently work within and had experience in both sectors.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through interviews, lasting from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the time available for each respondent. Interview guides were provided to participants beforehand and can be found in the appendix. Each interview was recorded and transcribed by the AI-function of the video-call program. Each interview was then manually re-watched alongside the transcription data and any mistakes or inaccuracies in transcription was corrected. This method of data collection and transcription cut down some of the workload associated with transcribing interviews manually from recordings and the use of video gave good contextual information when rewatching which itself provided reason for reflection and consideration of interview methods and phrasings of questions for later interviews.

The interviews were semi structured, with a base list of topic, questions and follow-up questions surrounding the central topics addressed in the latter parts of the theory section. This list went through several iterations, before interviews commenced in order to ensure that they addressed the research questions in the best possible way. Like the interview guide, this list is also to be found in the appendix.

3.5 Data Analysis

Classical forms of content analysis were utilized to process and analyze the data. Initially, the first two interviews were labeled individually and then compared to identify common themes. These themes were categorized and labeled collectively, forming the basis for analyzing the remaining interviews. As necessary, labels were revised, combined, or adjusted. After categorizing all relevant interview data into basic categories, each label was further divided into sub-labels. These statements, now categorized to two levels of detail, were then compared, with their relationships and central thoughts described and interpreted in the results chapter of this thesis.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The research project was applied for and approved by SIKT, the relevant institution on research ethics for this project. Informed consent, as well as permission to record and transcribe the interviews was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were also assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and the data handling policies of SIKT which UiA adheres to. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

3.7 Limitations

On an ethical level the study has a clear beneficial element for the researchers involved as it allows reflection and the ability to anonymously inform of positive or negative personal experiences or the challenges of colleagues. One notable point to consider is that some of the respondents rely heavily on industry partnerships and may see it beneficial to paint such practices in a positive light. However, I consider the expected impact of a masters thesis small enough, and the potential benefits from such presentation to be abstract enough that this has not been a concern when analyzing the data. Even the subjects most heavily involved with industry partnerships for their research did not shy away from sharing negative experiences.

A limitation of the study is the reliance on self-reported data in general, which may affect responses in various ways, for instance by introducing social desirability bias, or even by an unconscious desire to present ones' work or research practices in the best possible light. As a researcher I have to trust the validity of the respondents' statements unless reasonable grounds for skepticism can be found. I have not found any such reason for skepticism in my analysis.

3.8 Justification of Methodological Choices

Through personal deliberation and discussions with my advisor, these methodological approaches were deemed to be those most appropriate in order to analyze and understand how academics themselves experience their autonomy and academic freedom when taking part research collaboration. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were particularly fitting for the research question as they allow for both an in-depth exploration of personal experiences and thoughts, while also keeping the discussion rooted in research questions with foundation in theory. Other methods, such as surveys or quantitative analysis, would not have been able to strike this balance.

While there are limitations to these methods, such as potential biases in self-reported data and the limited sample size, these are outweighed by the ability to gain nuanced insights into the internal life and practices within Norwegian marine research collaboration. The methodological choices made in this study are justified by their ability to address the research questions in a way that unifies the importance of acquiring unknown data whilst staying close to the theory.

4.0 Results

Having presented the problem statement, a thorough literature review detailing the developments of contemporary academia and the evolving conception of academic freedom, as well as explaining the methodology of this study, it is time to present the empirical findings. The presentation will be structured with initial chapters for each major theme found,

where the subthemes within will be discussed separately. Then, a final chapter will summarize and reflect on the findings and their broad implications.

4.1 Challenges to scientific quality

4.1.1 The context of New Public Management in the research sector

On a general level, the participants in the study state that their academic fields are predominantly healthy and characterized by high quality science, yet all interviewees identify tendencies they consider challenging to the research quality of their field in some form or another. An example of such a tendency is that of increased pressure to publish, even at the detriment of quality, which serves to create less depth and discussion over findings and data. This was felt by several of the participants:

“there is a lot of pressure on publication, especially at the universities [...] but the thing about publishing, when it’s on life and death, whether you actually have good results or not, or have not done a proper job, many times it shouldn’t be done at all”.

This issue is linked by several interviewees to other phenomena that challenges the quality of the research output. One of these phenomena identified by the interviewees is NPM and the increased managerialism in their research institutions, which they believe creates a more quantitatively oriented research sector. This feeling is felt by both those employed at universities, as well as those operating in independent research centers.

“With all the management tools... checking boxes becomes what is important rather than the content [of the research] for us. We only deliver the right numbers and all these things, and they [the institutional management] end up just meeting amongst each other so they live their own lives, and deliver this [to government departments]. But I feel that the rest of us have no contact with them. And for us it is the research that is important, what we can use it for, what is new, what can be improved, and all these things. But that ends up taking second row... or perhaps no row [laughs].”

Though some of the interviewees made the point that certain developments in New Public Management thinking was a legitimate response to actual problems in academia, the experiences associated with these principles in research institutions are overwhelmingly negative across the interviewees. We will take a deeper look into the structural changes of the research sector in a later chapter of the analysis, but for now it is enough to note that all of the following complaints in this chapter are in some form or another experienced to be consequence of the structural changes that has been introduced into academia in recent decades.

4.1.2 Poor publishing practices

Several interviewees experience a remarkable growth of low-quality publications in their fields, and associate this with what they call predatory journals and “pay to publish” practices. These are publications that turn a blind eye to fundamental flaws, such as poor methodology or research that seems aimed at reaching predetermined conclusions. A senior university professor expressed his concerns thusly:

“In addition; the number of what we call predatory journals, who live of publishing things that are completely insane. I get perhaps one or two emails every week from some obscure journal or another, who want me to deliver an article in very short time, where I can write nearly anything and get it published in two weeks. If you can’t call it cheating, you can at least call it atrocious science.”

Continuing he explained it as resulting from increased publishing pressure:

“And that [publishing in predatory journals] is exploding at the moment. Exploding in particular among young scientists. You know we have “Publish or perish”. If you want to go somewhere in the academic world you have to publish all the time [...] and the temptation to cut borders is strong”.

The above researcher expressed concern of the rapid growth of disreputable journals, but expressed equal concern for experiences he has had in dealing with even highly respected journals in his field:

“To my surprise it is often the heaviest journals in my field, like “Science” and “Nature”, which in a way is the gold standard. If you have published in Science and Nature you don’t get higher. There have I experienced that our articles have been denied for not being politically correct. And twice I have been part of protesting against a “Science”-article where they used statistics wrong, and where we could prove that it was wrong. We wrote a letter to the editor that this research was not undertaken in an entirely correct manner, but we were declined. It turned out that the journals which all people say are the best in the world, they have their own political angles. There is no doubt of that. Of course, all journals have their own agenda so to speak. They have their own demographic or their own angle of attack, but the big journals like Nature and Science really should be entirely impartial. But they aren’t.”

One of the researchers working at a research institution stated:

“I see all the time, not necessarily just from us..., but things that I would never publish”

The latter researcher later elaborates:

“In the new journals now you pay to publish, and that’s a nice way to make a lot of money [for the publisher]. So you get a lot of research that should not have been published because no one has read the material, the method, or know what has actually been done. But it gets published, and when it gets published it becomes the truth. So there is a lot more of that in recent years. It is a result of all publications being open. It is the researcher who pays, and then there is someone at the other end who profit. They want to publish as much as possible, for they make money of every single publication. [...] Its become a very large industry”.

4.1.3 Increased publishing pressures

NPM principles are seen as having provided heavy incentives for increasing publication numbers and created an increased pressure to produce scientific articles in the university sector, where “impact” and publications are generally important parameters of funding allocation. It is also pointed out that younger and less established academics may feel they need to partake in low-quality publishing in order to bolster their publishing numbers and advance in an increasingly competitive academic environment created by contemporary developments in the university. One of the respondents also describe “pointy elbows” and competitiveness as a major issue for the beneficence of her work, which may be related to the increased publication demands.

“I can’t say that I have had any bad experiences regarding the industry, but it is clear that my experience within an university environment is that there is a lot of pointy elbows internally. A very competitive, very career-oriented environment. And that has not always been easy to deal with. One thing is to have pointy elbows with colleagues, but also that we in some situations where we do not see eye to eye on whether a piece of research has been executed well enough. ...”

This respondent then connects this to publishing:

“... That may come from an impression that some people hurry through things because that means publications and points, and then they may perhaps not execute the project in such a way that we... or I believe it should be done. I don’t know if I would call it a matter of conscience, but I at least think it is important to execute a project in the best possible way, not hurry through things. I think these things are more common behind closed doors at a university than the everyman realize. Increased focus on these issues internally in the university; prioritizing quality over quantity, would help to constrain such things.”

All these issues of poor publications, predatory journals and pointy elbows seems tied to the increased time sensitivity in academia, and increased pressure to publish. Nearly all respondents highlight increased publication pressure as something that challenges the value, depth and ease of producing quality research in their field. One of the researchers speak on how increasing time pressure and hurriedness in her institution creates a lack of depth and critical approach to the research being done:

“We have lost the wider comprehension of things. We don’t go into depths and we don’t discuss amongst the researchers back and forth to find disagreements and self-reflect. There is so little time for that part; to find literature, finding more trials, consider what we really need in order to learn something, what trials to set up to get proper results. There is very little of such things that we have time for. Now we just have to hurry ourselves through.»

4.1.4 Lowered research and publishing quality

Several scientists describe these issues as lowering the quality of the research, and promoting scientific practices that “flattens out” research and produce less interesting, groundbreaking and relevant science. Furthermore, it is clear that declining quality in publishing makes it harder and more time consuming to produce good science as well. When you can no longer trust that the peer review process functions as intended and that the quality of published research is solid, the scientists themselves have to read research more thoroughly, distrust findings, look for mistakes or biases that one traditionally expect the publishing process itself to identify and stamp out. One researcher explains how such developments impact the relevance and usefulness of what is published in her field:

“... research is supposed to be interesting and new. In the past, when you read an article, you would read a lot. Now it is all so fragmented that what would be one article in the past is perhaps five articles today. You know, you don’t get the context of it, you just get the small pieces. The smallest piece that you can publish. And that is very uninteresting to read.»

Another scientist also pointed out that she often finds research of so low quality that she would never herself publish anything like it. She stated that this is often related to research where it seems nearly predetermined how data is supposed to be interpreted, and where even obvious alternative interpretations are not considered.

“I see a lot concerning [fish] welfare. There is a lot of strange research there. In a lot of the conclusions they have decided for themselves what the answer should be, and not to look at other possibilities of what their findings may also indicate. Very much of this around.»

Another researcher with an interest in fish health describes a similar experience:

“...not fisheries, but those who do the research on welfare [of fish]. They very often know

what answers they want before they have done it. And not just in Norway, but it is even worse outside of Norway. There are people who decide that everything they see means this and that, when they are actually looking at reactions that all [fish] will have. You know, you can find bacteria on a fish that creates some form of reaction. That does not mean that the fish is suffering.”

One of the researchers reflect on the potential of lowered quality, predatory publishing and weaker science to undermine the very value of research and the researcher as a societal figure:

“Our entire value, or... the only thing we can be used for is that people have faith in what we say is true. If we lose the public trust that what we do, we do to the best of our abilities, and according to scientific methods, then we are in big trouble. We say that one lie can destroy a thousand truths. It is clear that our credibility is the most important. If you lose that, you lose everything, as a researcher”.

4.1.5 Summary

Having presented these concerns, it is worth taking some time to analyze and summarize what issues the researchers themselves see as threatening the quality of research in their fields. The issues presented by the researchers themselves include publication pressure, time sensitivity, poor research, predatory journals and low quality publishing, as well as research that seems nearly premediated and politically, or at least narratively motivated. Though the issues are diverse there are some overarching trends that seem to bind them together.

As has been touched on already, most of these issues seem related to increased managerialism, New Public Management thinking and related measuring indicators. It is possible that all of these issues are made worse, and some perhaps even directly caused, by New Public Management reforms in the research sector that increases the pressure to perform on predetermined indicators. Furthermore, it is not at all obvious whether these indicators actually serves to improve the output that is being produced. This perspective is voiced by interviewees themselves. It must however be reiterated that all researchers found the general quality of the research in their fields as good, and that the issues discussed at length here only represent a minority of the research they interact with. Thus the concerns should not be

overestimated or used to paint a picture of corrupted fields of study plagued by dishonest practices.

In conclusion, all scientists interviewed presented coherent and correlated perspectives on the challenges to quality research that they found in their own fields, whether they were engaged in research on fish farming, marine conservation or other areas. Though the individual researchers gave their own, individual emphasis to the various challenges, they were never contradictory. Furthermore, it seems that in some way or another, all issues can be related in some form or another to the changing management principles and funding structures of research and academia.

We have already discussed the probability of these issues being derived from new forms of managerialism and NPM principles. In order to understand how and why these issues arise it is clear that we should better understand the institutional context that these researchers find themselves in. Understanding the governance structures, management principles and the day to day working lives of the researchers will help to understand how and why these issues arise, and if there are ways to address these challenges in such a way that the quality of research in their fields can be improved.

4.2 Structural concerns

In the previous chapter I proposed that a majority of the self-reported challenges to quality science brought up by the interviewees were related to changes in management principles that has emerged in the research sector recent decades. We have already gone through some of the theory and history of these changes, but we have yet to delve into the scientists own experiences of working within these structures. This chapter will highlight exactly how the interviewees have described their own work within this system, and how they are impacted by NPM principles and changes.

The general trend of increased managerialism, as it was presented by the researchers may be summarized into two main issues; the formalization and checkmarking of research and academic life on one hand, and the increased focus on “safe” research and conformity to imposed standards on the other. They both result in a general overarching move of the scientific production away from quality output, and towards adhering to imposed

measurement standards.

4.2.1 The university, and the research center

These points may be demonstrated by two small cases. As mentioned previously this study has been conducted with both university-affiliated researchers and researchers affiliated with dedicated marine research centers, and interestingly, though the institutional forms and traditions are somewhat different in structure and societal mission, they are both impacted in similar ways by the changing standards and expectations of research.

One of the university-affiliated respondents has had a long career at his university, and discussed the changes he has seen in recent decades with a far greater emphasis on “safe” research and education in the university sector. He relates these directly to the emergence of NPM thinking. He also claims that this is related to a deeper reconceptualization of what the educational role of the university has become; moving from educating independent researchers to becoming a “sheep gate”, with the goal of shuffling as many students through as possible.

“Yes, there is a pressure, and the pressure is greater and greater. I have been in this for decades, back in the days there was no professor who cared about how much time you spent on a masters thesis. That was the responsibility of the student. Two years or ten years was their own matter. Now you only have this timeframe. If you deliver your thesis an hour late you fail. This also lays big pressure on the advisors, as it is their responsibility that the research projects are manageable. [...] There is pressure both on students, and also on the lecturers. Its constant. You almost can't fail a student anymore, or else we lose money.”

When asked whether the recent NPM changes in academia has been generally positive, or generally negative, the interviewee responded negatively:

“In my eyes it has gone too far. I believe there is a golden mean, but in reality we have gone from one ditch of the road to the other. In the past there was old professors producing nothing, laying their feet on their desk and fiddling with their thumbs. That wasn't good either. There was a lot of dead meat so to speak. But then we have gone to far into the other ditch. This New Public Managment; every time I use the copying machine I must pay rent to

myself, a thousand boxes to check. I use to say that I pay rent to my own employer. My phone bill is registered. [...] So what we see in this New Public Management way of thinking has gone too far. Way too far.”

However, it is not only in the university sector that these changes are felt. An equally senior interviewee working in a government-affiliated research institution emphasized and described similar developments:

“... I am concerned that everything is supposed to happen so rapidly today. You get so short time limits for everything. When I took cand. real., we didn't have masters degrees then, we were given 3 to 3,5 years, and was told that we should at least spend 4 years on our degree; we should mature, we should go into the depths, we should read... No one can speak like that today. You're supposed to get through in 2 years and that's it. People don't have the time to go deep, to mature, discuss a lot, I feel. There is way too little discussion. In the past there were discussions and discussions and discussions. And now, no one has time. They are only running; from one meeting to the next, hurrying to do research, hurrying to write, and hurrying and hurrying and hurrying”

These changes are seen by the interviewee as also resulting from technological changes, not just organizational. She also addresses an increased emphasis on applied research related to this shift in priorities and mindset:

“In the old days, from the time you sent out a manuscript it took months to get a reply. You'd send it by mail, sent out for review, all sorts of things. So you had peace of mind and as much time as you needed, but now you get your answer in a couple of days, so there is a lot more pressure today, and I don't think that is good. Things get much more superficial. Everything.”

Ending her statement with:

“When old people talk [laughs].”

The same researcher was asked if the development of increased production demands and focus on quantitative output had an impact on the basic and applied research distinction, and

replied:

“Yes. We see that everything should preferably be able to be used the day after, but you need the base of knowledge that you are going to build onto in the future. That is what it means to go into the depths, which is not possible anymore. Everything is supposed to be applied [...] But all research that we do must be based on what other people has done before us. If no one has the time to do it properly we end up in a situation where you believe that you have the answer, but then you don't actually have it once you try it out in practice. Preferably, we should have answers that can be used one week from now, and politicians only think 4 years at a time. Basic research however, can take 10, 15 and 20 years. And if we look at those who have really done it well in other countries, they might have worked with the same things for 20 or 30 years. Then, they truly discover new things. But if you are only meant to run around for answers all the time, you don't have time to do the foundational work.”

The researcher later states:

“...if you want to have applied research it needs to build on something, and if no one does new basic research you are only using the same knowledge again and again, without introducing anything new. I feel that this very applied focus is just a surface. You don't get any depth. And if you consider; all great inventions in the world came from the basic research, not from the applied research. There are no research groups that do a lot of groundbreaking work. That comes from the small groups working year after year. From these large EU projects, almost nothing actually comes out of them. They are just lots of money and lots of meetings and almost nothing comes out of it. [...] I believe the financing here is completely wrong, and that we should have way more basic research. That is the research that we are going to use later, and if you never do basic research, in a sense, you get less and less to draw from”.

These longer examples, showcasing the experiences and consideration of two senior researchers in the university sector, and in a government research institution respectively, paints the picture of an work life were depth and quality has been exchanged for shallowness and quantity, as a result of new managerial principles. However, these are not the only cases that can be presented, showcasing concerning developments in academia.

4.2.2 Example of management issues; failed centralization

The interviews provided further examples of NPM challenges to the life of the researchers. Two more will be discussed; one which demonstrates the potential for organizational breakdown, and one demonstrating the potential for communicational breakdown, each with very detrimental consequences for the quality of the research output that the institutions are able to produce.

One of the interviewees worked at a university where his institute had come under enormous economic strain due to what he considers to be failed centralization and NPM-oriented reforms.

“My institute has been placed under economic administration, as the economy has run amok. We are tens of millions in debt, have a total stop in hirings at the institute. [...] Everything is being tightened. And everything comes back to the idea of centralization»

This process of centralization, he claims, is not derived from actual demands and desires of the academic community, but from imagined benefits and perks of being a larger institute, able to present itself as leading institution on a national and international stage. In reality however, he states that many of the fields involved have no benefit at all from cooperation and that the centralization has only succeeded in removing administrative support functions away from the researchers and weakening their capabilities. The result is a more isolated researcher with far less accessible support structures.

“We have an enormous width in the fields at the institute, fields that have nothing to do with one another. To gather them all into one institute... it is madness. Our institute is larger than some of the faculties [...] You sit in your institute and three quarters of your colleagues you have no relationship with, as they belong to an entirely different field than you do. They could just as well have lawyers or social scientists. [...] You have nothing in common, other than that you are under the same administration. And that has been moved up to the faculty layer, so we have lost our support functions [...] everything is centralized and you only have a mailbox to turn to. This is one of the reasons we have been driven into the ground. It is one of the reasons that our board lost control, and worked up debts in the multimillions”.

The challenges associated with the heavily restricted funding for the institute also impacts the work environment:

«This has permeated the sentiments on the entire institute. People are done. They get more and more burdened onto them, and they know that the only thing that counts now is to stabilize the ship once more, and we are all going to do our part in this. But the thing is that there was some party at some point in time that we were not part of. So when we were not invited, why should we contribute here?»

In addition to the loss of support structures and work environment, this centralization has also been detrimental to the funding of his own research, which now compete amongst a far larger group of applicants in his department:

“This makes my specific part of the institute so peripheral that we struggle to get funding. When we represent a small field, with few students, we will always stand at the back of the line. [...] We are so small that we just disappear”.

4.2.3 Example of management issues; failed communication

The feeling of being increasingly removed away from leadership, support and beneficial administrative functions is echoed also outside of the university. When a research subject was asked to describe how she experiences the functioning of her research institutions she hesitantly described a similar, perhaps bleaker picture:

“I can say this under anonymity; a lot of our researcher says that the institution functions ok because of the researchers..., and despite the management [laughs]. And that is because very many of us are very interested in what we do and manage to cooperate well, but there is very little understanding upwards in the system. I have been here for a long time, and in the past we sat together and discussed, and everything flowed from the bottom upwards. Now, everything comes from above, and we don't actually have any contact with upper management, or really upward in the system at all. They live in their own world, and hardly have any contact with us. They only see that we write down our work-hours.”

When asked further about how the research is managed in such a situation, she explains:

“We have groups, and we have group leaders, and short seminars every two weeks, and that is pretty much the only thing. We have practically zero contact with program leaders, and most of us zero contact with the directors. [...] The program leaders don't do anything other than sending out budgets. But we have created our own team, so we work together, sit together and have made our own little bubble, and within that we manage to do a lot of fun stuff”.

She continues describing the absence of leadership involvement and communication:

«I think it has developed like this from the new forms of leadership: They no longer have contact with that which they lead. The only things they are interested in are the processes, not results. No one asks what results you have gotten. If you write down your hours and all projects proceed as they should, no one asks what you have actually found out. I don't think anyone up there actually know what we do».

She describes many of these issues as being derived from managerial thinking but she also highlight the relevance of funding restraints in breaking down points of communication. Like the university in the previous case, her institution is also in dire financial problems and have a great need of lowering costs.

«Much of the physical resources is well covered by funding, but the researchers have to be cut down. We have cut down the amount of people. We don't get funding increases that match the price increases, and we have to pay extra taxes for each researcher making over 750.000 kr. which very many researchers do after some years. [...] That means less research and fewer internal projects.”

She states that many of the points of contact that once existed between administration and research has been cut down or removed entirely due to strained funding, further exacerbating the lack of communication and contact between the departments

«Considering the poor economy we need to reduce meetings, so we almost never meet. We have our own teams that tries to keep our contact towards the leadership. We also have group

meetings for 30 minutes every other week, but often then with a seminar that lasts 20 minutes, so we have miniscule time for actual discussion”.

She also explains how the institute used to arrange yearly gathering where research was presented, and everyone got to see what the other parts of the institution was working on. This however, has been cut down to a short ceremonial speech and a subsequent social gathering, with no emphasis on research.

“So I don’t know what a lot of people in the institute are doing, and I don’t know how I can find out either. We are many researchers, and we are spread far and wide, in different cities. When you never meet things develop differently in different places. And I feel like we could have gotten so much more out of it [...] we could combine things that are not usually combined, and from that lots of new things could come”.

Notably the interviewee believes that the lack of communication and understanding greatly restricts the potential of her research institution, which she believes could far outperform itself in its current state if the research and human resources available at the institution was properly understood by the leadership. She believes that the institute has great unrealized potential, which remains unrealized due in part to this lack of understanding.

«I am afraid that we miss out on a lot of interesting and important things [...] They are not on top of what is happening in the research, they don’t have an overview of how far the science has come in certain areas and how we can use it. I feel that they don’t keep up, that all the time the researchers are far ahead of where the management is. When we don’t speak to each other, that’s what happens. I think they could have gotten far more out of this institute. It is amazing [...]. We could have produced an incredibly higher amount of fun and interesting research than what we get today».

4.3.4 Summary:

This chapter has provided us with some examples of how NPM principles interact with the day-to-day life of researchers, both in the university sector and in non-academic research institutions. We see a close similarity in experiences across the institutional forms, where

researchers in both systems experience an administration expanding and removing itself from the researchers. As the administration becomes less accessible, valuable support functions, such as IT assistance, financial accounting departments and contact with the leadership in general becomes increasingly inaccessible for the researchers, and they experience a detachment between the department leaderships and the actual work that is being done.

I consider it remarkable that such similar developments are experienced and described similarly in both university and non-university research facilities. Though a few of the scientists in the study recognize legitimate aspects of NPM-reforms in academia, the overall description of these managerial changes in the interviews have been overwhelmingly negative.

4.4 Research collaborations – Benefits

Hitherto we have gone over topics related to contemporary organizational reforms of the university and studied how it has impacted both the research output and the day-to-day life of the researchers themselves. However, in the contemporary university and research sector there are many other factors that may influence research quality in a positive or negative way. In particular, it is worth giving special attention to research partnerships and how these impact research quality and the independence of the researchers involved.

All interviewees considered research partnerships an essential part of their work, several stating that it would be impossible to do research in their field without embarking on partnership projects with other scientist, institutions or private industry. One researcher, when asked whether research collaboration was necessary for his research, replied:

«It [research collaboration] is absolutely necessary. You cannot do it on your own. It is impossible. You need an organization. The projects that have the highest rate of success are the interdisciplinary projects where you can bring together different disciplines. [...] This has changed since I began, where we treated each discipline as a silo, but now it is far more integrated across disciplines, institutions, and research projects. It has made a huge

difference».

It is possible to make a distinction in types of research partnerships, between projects undergone in partnership with private industry, vs. projects done with other not-for-profit academic or research actors. Many of the benefits arising from research partnerships are found to be common between the two forms. In this presentation, statements quoted can be considered relevant for both forms unless otherwise is expressly noted.

4.4.1 Networks and resources

The most obvious benefit of research partnerships found in the interviews is increased and broadened access to networks and resources. Many fields and research projects demand facilities, funding, contacts or simply a certain size in the research group in order to gather and analyze the necessary data. In such cases research partnerships become a necessity to undertake relevant research projects. Some researchers also work in fields where the nature of the research demand international cooperation and partnerships, for instance when studying migrating species, or doing research in issues of international relevance.

“I give advice on eel in Norway, but considering that this is a fish that exist everywhere in Europe and Northern Africa, I have to collaborate with other researchers. It is the same stock, so what we do in Norway influence what happens in Great Britain for instance. So we are an international group who gather yearly, all eel-experts in Europe and North Africa, around the mediterratian. We gather and write a report. Everyone brings data from their own country and we try to see what the status of the eels are. Then we provide advice on an international level.”

Several of the interviewees are involved with research partnerships with large fisheries and other forms of maritime commercial harvesting. Though there have been issues in some situations, all of the scientists involved in such partnerships report generally good relations and useful partnerships where both the academic and the industry partners involved get something valuable in return.

“It has been a very good collaboration [...] They give information, they built the [research]

system for us, which was very good. They have given quite good funding to do it, so they have given us very good equipment that we have kept, and keep using to test systems. So there has been no pressures, they have not been involved in the rest of the research. They just built a system and told us to test it”.

Two of the respondents involved with industry research report such arrangements as very economically valuable, with industry partnership being necessary and useful for financing other research. Both respondents highlighted the financing of expensive research equipment and facilities that may be used for further research independently in the future as a beneficial result of research partnerships with industry.

4.4.2 Institutional benefits

Benefits from research collaboration are possible not just on the level of the individual researcher or research project, but can also have very beneficial consequences for entire institutions. One of the interviewees from the university sector discussed the beneficial relationship between her university institute and a local research institution, highlighting the important role the research institution has played in building up their own competency and experience at the university:

«I believe the marine research environment that exists at our university would be far poorer without the contact with especially [institution]. There was zealots from that institution which in their time wanted, helped, and in many ways were the primary drivers of building up our programmes. These things I think would have been very challenging to create if there had not been a strong will and impetus in our region [...]. Those initiative came from [institution], back in the day. The idea that these things would have emerged anyways at the university... Well, they probably would have at a later date, but it would most likely look quite different from today.”

Furthermore, the close relationship towards this institution provides a larger pool of knowledge and human resources for the university to draw upon:

“There are not many full-time employees, and not a big labour stock of marine researchers at

our university. But we still enjoy a very good environment despite the size, as you have the wider networks to tie your projects and research to. There are external partners, etc. So it has been very important for the university to have [institution] here. Definitely”.

She describes the relationship between the two institutions as highly beneficial for both parties, with close relationship, openness and mobility in regards to positions between the institutions.

“A good part of those who work at the institution has some form of smaller position at the university, and is being used in lecturing, given responsibility for courses or participating in them, taking in students. I would say that it is a very good collaboration, but it also depends a few key individuals who really see the value of this collaboration, perhaps more than others do. [...] It is no secret that our department and the marine environment at the university has had enormous benefit from the competency at [institution]. [...] My research at [institution] and my university is very beneficial also for my colleagues at my research institution. So there is a strong mutualism, both ways”

4.4.3 Foreign work and international networks

One of the researchers has a background working with government foreign aid and competency building projects in developing countries. He described this as incredibly valuable work, not only for its stated foreign policy goals of building up local research communities and academic institutions, but because the involvement in such international collaboration programs produced tight connections and networks of contacts.

“We [development organisation] invested in about 200 students from developing countries, which took their education in Norway. That means that almost no matter which country I go to in Africa, I meet one of my former students, which are now in leading positions in a ministry, research institution or university. [...] What we really educated was hundreds of small diplomats placed around in Africa, opening doors for us. It has been an incredible advantage. The personal contact is so important when doing research. If I write to a university in South Africa, Ghana, Kenya and so forth, having a person that I have direct contact with opens up doors in an entirely different way than if I am incognito. The fact that

Norway stopped giving education to students from third world countries have been a fiasco in the sense that we have closed doors for ourselves in many situations”.

4.4.4 Personal freedom and independence

Hitherto we have seen the benefits of research partnerships for strengthening institutions, expanding networks and gaining resources. But there are clear benefits for the individual researcher as well. In the interview data, the most prominent benefit that emerges is the independence, autonomy and freedom often gained for the individual researcher who chooses to engage in research partnerships.

One of the researchers explain the freedom she gains by the open doors to her partner organization and how she is able to draw on the benefits of both research institutions. As a university researcher she enjoys a space of discussing, disseminating and taking personal positions around her research that the employees at the research institution is not able to, whilst still accessing the resources and networks there.

“It is determining for my ability to continue the kind of science I do now, that the things that I can utilize daily is accessible at [institution], and I am very grateful that they take care of us. I have been part of raising funds for them and helping to build the things they have, but that is because there is so much resources there. It has been a very good policy at their institution to include the university, so even though I work on contract with the university at the moment, there has never been raised any questions, there are only open doors and “great that you are here”. It is a good cooperation I would say”.

When asked if this cooperation provides her with increased freedoms, she replies:

“Yes, I have. I slither away from most of the advices and demands that comes from the leadership at [institution]. I can sneak away from them for I am not hired there. So that freedom I think is very nice. It should be said that I think my colleagues at [institution] would say that they enjoy large academic freedom, but they do have a bit different set of rules and guidelines. If they want to make public comments on research they have to be more careful. I would claim that I have a bit more freedom than them, as I don't have to ask the leadership at the institution before expressing my views in media for instance. I can ask the leader of my

institute and I believe that it is mostly all right.”

She continues, explaining the difference between the institutions:

«Their institution has a social responsibility to be independent. The same ideal is part of the university culture as well, but here we have a bit more room to be personal. If I want to be an activist, in the sense that I want to participate in demonstrations or chain myself down for the Førde fjord or whatever may come in the future, I can do that without, hopefully; hopefully, retribution from my employer. I expect that the university protect us as their employees in such cases, I expect that they respect that we have personal opinions and are engaged in the social debate. But my colleagues at [institution] which would feel the same impulses would probably be far more reserved, seeing as they have their specific social responsibility.»

She gains access to both research, data, personnel and experience from the research institution, without being obliged to follow many of their formal guidelines. Thus, she is able to combine the privileges and freedoms of a university researcher, with the knowledge, experience, networks, facilities and data accessible at her partner institution. Another researcher affiliated with a governmental research institute describes the benefit of being able to work with industry partners, and acquiring funding for research projects that would not be eligible for funding from her own institution, but is still considered valuable, relevant and interesting.

“There are things that I could never apply for funding to at the institute, where outside actors ask us to participate. [...] There are institutions with questions that need to be solved where you are able to acquire new knowledge as well, and you can get full financing, which is very nice”.

These kinds of arrangement thus allow researchers to address and sometimes circumvent restrictive policies, lacking human resources, funding issues or similar challenges to their own personal freedom of research.

4.4.5 Conclusions

We have seen that there are a variety of benefits arising out of research partnerships, motivating and even necessitating such forms of collaboration in many maritime fields of study. Research partnerships may open doors and provides new research opportunities, as well as enabling access to valuable data or facilities. Often, research collaboration with industry may even result in fully financed, direct sponsorship of research, equipment or facilities. Seeing as many scientific fields are increasingly complex and many forms of research, such as longitudinal studies on fish health, may be very expensive to undertake, these benefits can be vital in order to pursue research in many fields.

We have also seen institutional benefits of research collaborations. Close links between institutions can be vital in building up and improving research institutions, expertise and experience both locally and internationally, creating networks, partnership alliances and opening doors that would otherwise be closed without such ties.

Lastly we have found that research partnerships may provide the individual researcher with increased independence and autonomy, allowing him or her to draw on the strengths and privileges of both institutions, or opening up avenues of research that would otherwise be inaccessible.

4.5 Research partnerships, industry relations and public relations

We have seen many of the benefits of research partnerships and found that many of the interviewees consider such practices an indispensable aspect of their work, yet there are also situations where collaboration may be more challenging, and conflicting interests, priorities and differences between market and scientific logics must be navigated. When asked how they manage such situations, a leading researcher at a prominent research firms puts it thusly:

“On a good day, when we have a good dialogue with a client, we can argue that they have a vested interest in our independence. On a good day we can say that «You need a [institution] that is independent, and which gathers independent knowledge that is being seen by others as independent.” It is a proof of quality when we publish a report. It has an integrity which is valuable for the client. On a bad day, with a different dialogue with a client, you will get the mirror image, where they do not want an institution which challenge them. As for me, and my

researchers, we are idealistic, we believe in the potential of the industry, but there are some actions that must be taken. The work injury statistics are unacceptable for instance, the mortality rates of the fish must come down, risk management must be adjusted. Even if the escape rates have improved, we must work to reduce them. The level of knowledge must be raised. So there are many areas where we present uncomfortable statistics for the industry».

When asked how such uncomfortable research is received, he states:

“My impression is that some are absolutely in agreement with our results, saying “here are things we have to do differently”. [...] But, its not a homogenous industry, and this last period of high mortality rates and increased attention to fish welfare has shown that different actors have different solutions in how they chose to handle their dialogue with society. Some begin by acknowledging a problem and explaining what they will do to solve it, others take more an approach of “but look how much good we do that is also part of this industry”.

4.5.1 The case of the fisheries

It may be that not all fields are “created equal” in this aspect, but that challenges with research collaborations may be more likely when working with industries where huge sums of money may be at stake. Fisheries are an example of such an industry, and seeing as several researchers have worked closely with the fish farming industry it is worth treating this industry in special detail. When asked about how free she feels when collaborating with industry, one researcher responds:

“It has varied both in the past and in the present. The industry doesn’t want to share new knowledge with others if it can bring them advantages you know. So we have to be careful what we say. And many our projects have to be open, though the prospective industry partners are not always so willing to agree with that. But mostly, it is okay.”

From the money involved, one could assume that collaborations with the fishery industry would be more challenging than other forms of research collaboration. The interview data however, is not so clear. All interviewees involved with collaboration and work with fisheries describe their present collaboration as generally fruitful and beneficial:

“We have also worked a lot with fishers in various places, towards the directorate of fishing, the fisheries and fishers and we experience very good cooperation there. We work well together, and that part has been very good»

However, all researchers involved with fishery research shared more concerning aspects of partnerships as well. It was repeatedly mentioned that the terms, benefits and openness of collaboration is highly reliant on personal contacts and relationships. Which persons they get in touch with in the industry, and to what extent their contacts value the general advancement of science itself was described as determining factors in the beneficence of industry partnerships, even down to the level of the individual industry representative.

“... it is also very up and down what experiences you get. It depends a lot on the personal relationships you have, and what the environment is at the various places you get in contact with. [...] It varies very much by what people are there. That may be true for all places.””

Another researcher touches upon the same considerations:

“[...] I wouldn't say that it works badly, but there are variations in what kind of access we have to different installations and whether they want us to share results and whether they provide us with what we need. It varies a lot with who works there, so it is not necessarily the company that is the issue. Its not so that these actors are good and these are terrible, it all depends on who those who work at the installations are, and how interested they are in the research. But sometimes we have limits with what we are allowed to say”.

Though all researchers find their contact with fisheries to be generally positive, beneficial relationships are not to be taken for granted. Rather they are the result of practical arrangements and forms of collaboration that seem to have learnt from past mistakes. It seems a common opinion among the interviewees involved with fisheries that business/researcher relations have improved in recent years. All interviewees however have either had negative experiences with the industry themselves, or know colleagues who have been met with some form of resistance or disassociation from actors within the industry.

This kind of resistance have taken a variety of forms. Several researchers have either experienced being blacklisted by certain industry actors or have close colleagues who have experienced such blacklisting. Such measures not only make it harder to access research opportunities, funding and valuable data. It may also lead to the dampening self-censoring effect highlighted by recent Norwegian studies. One of the researchers who have experienced being blacklisted by industry actors state she restricts the areas she comments and speaks on publicly as a scientist in order to not arouse reactions.

“There have been some areas that I would perhaps not speak on, as I don’t know how it would be received. I have been blacklisted by [fishery corporation] for a while for my research, so you notice that the industry doesn’t like what is not good for them”.

Later the researcher is asked to elaborate on the type of reactions she was met with:

“Well, this was a long time ago, and at that time [fishery corporation] had just begun fish farming and did not manage to do it very well. So they of course didn’t like that we.... Well, I don’t know what, but at least I was blacklisted for a while. But I have come “back in“ later on. I have worked with them since. It changes who works there you know, so I have gotten lots of good friends there afterwards”.

Similar experiences of blacklisting were also shared by another interviewee.

« [...] there was once a trial concerning a lot of fisheries. When some of us were asked to witness, these fisheries did not want us at their facilities at all. These kinds of thing challenge the relationship. When we end up on one side, and are called in to witness [...], and the institution takes a position so that they end up on the other side of the table, then we don’t get access, and they don’t wish to work with us.”

Another respondent points out that relationships and access to facilities and industry partners may ebb and flow with time and tensions and be more restrictive at certain times than other. The big picture however, seems to be that unhealthy practices has been highlighted and problematized publicly and politically in Norway in recent years, and that most industry actors see the importance of keeping their public reputation as clean as possible, while also being in need of quality research in order to improve and develop their own production.

One of the researchers was asked if he had experienced actions or restrictions from industry that challenge the independence of his research institute. He stated:

“I can’t think of any examples..... [...] I also believe people are careful to act in a way that can be interpreted like this. This brings us back to the series in Morgenbladet¹ which I believe shook people a bit, because I don’t believe that people want to be arrested like that again.

4.5.2 Other industry actors

When we move from fisheries to the other marine research fields covered by the interviewed researchers we find that the big picture is quite similar; when research may undermine profits or public legitimacy of an industry, tensions can rise, but as a whole the relationships between researchers and industry is predominantly beneficial. However, there are areas of more skepticism or even antagonism than others.

One of the researchers is affiliated with research on international eel-stocks and points out that the large scale eel-fishing operations, who have a vested interest in maximizing eel fishing, often do not see eye to eye with the scientific community. However, this is presented predominately as an issue with other European industry actors. Whether this is through culture or simply a lack of large scale eeling industry in Norway is hard to say.

“To give a concrete example; eel is a very important fish outside of Norway. Many fishers depend on eel and want to continue fishing it, however, it is critically endangered. The fishers however say that the eel stock is very low due to power plants, who create the most mortality. But the power plants say that it is the fishers, so they both disagree. [...]”

When asked if the disagreements around eel stocks have led to more than just cordial disagreement, she replies:

“Not in Norway, no. Because eel is not so important. But in other countries, internationally [...] for instance, I have a colleague in France who sit in meetings with fishers, and they fight and fight and I know there are big issues there”.

¹ An article series we had discussed previously in the interview, criticizing many aspects of the fish farming industry, which stirred up controversy and criticism of aquaculture practices in Norway at the time.

As a whole however, industry relations are presented in a predominately positive light by those who engage with industry. As we have seen in the previous chapter, several interviewees report their institutions benefiting greatly financially and facility-wise from such collaboration, as well as some individuals stating that such collaboration has been vital for their own career, financing their PHDs or similar.

“When I took my PhD in France, many years ago, my PhD was financed by a power plant in France, to build a system for them. We tested a bypass-system to hinder eels from ending up in their turbines. So they gave funding for me to study, but there was no pressure. They have their own research department, and the people who work there are always trying to find solutions. For instance, you can create a bypass system, and it has been discussed stopping turbines when eels migrate. If we can predict their migration they are willing to stop the turbines. So my experience is that they are always willing to try out solutions, at least coming from us”

Another researcher, working closer with the fishing industry states:

«There is a lot of contact between fishers and researchers, and by and large I experience the contact to be very good, very nice and respecting. Of course there are exceptions, and I would perhaps say that those of my colleagues that work with the larger industries, like aquaculture, experience more pressure. At time even direct harassment. So its not out of the question that it can be like that when there is big money involved. But personally, I have only had good experiences with all fishers and local actors”.

When asked what causes this good relationship, she replies:

“I think I work with very non-dangerous things [...] the same with marine conservation areas. In the past it was very tense, but now it is more accepted that this is a tool in the toolbox to people who live along the coast. So it is no longer so controversial to work with conservation, nor effects of fishing. I think most of the fishers I talk with are very positive to these regulations that are introduced. [...] It is clear that if you manage to prepare the soil, and argue your case well to them, we can manage to have a very good communication with the fishers.”

4.5.3 Reliance, positioning and acquiescence

So far we have seen the impact of industry relations specifically on researcher's work and academic freedom, with special attention given to the fishery industry. We have found that relations are mostly good, with certain challenging aspects still making themselves known. Furthermore, it seems that relations have improved and become more beneficial in recent years, likely due to increased awareness of the importance of high quality research and grace in the public eye for future growth in the industry.

There are however a few aspects of researcher/industry partnerships that we have not yet discussed. It is for instance not obvious that a low-conflict environment is necessarily the healthiest for good research to be done. It may well be that scientists, out of fear of losing access and network opportunities actually restrain themselves and avoid uncomfortable data, or that research likely to produce uncomfortable results for the industry partners is simply not being undertaken.

Regarding this, one of the interviewees responded:

“I think everyone will feel that you have this relationship of dependence with an industry. There are some institutions that are more oriented towards the civil service, but also them, in their research projects are dependent on fish farmers for data [...] I would absolutely say that we too depend on a good relationship, but we also depend on that integrity [...], for there are many consultancy firms out there, and we are very aware that we are not a consultancy firm. We keep the balance of research, with its necessary academic independence, as well as a client focus [...] and then it is a continuous job to protect this academic independence, while also caring about and having insight into how it is used by our partners”.

When asked how his research institution mediate the potentially conflicting interest between themselves and the partner the researcher underlined the importance of ethical awareness in his institution.

“We have an ethical compass, and an ethical framework that we often use both concerning ethics of research or ethics of commerce. I leaf through it quite often when questions arise related to independence, conflicts of interest, etc. [...] I also sit in the leadership group off [institution] and we often have very interesting discussions considering relations with marine

industry and other industries.

When asked what these discussions might entail, he continued:

”It can be what parts of petroleum activity do we believe that we are able to provide offers and project on, and what are the criteria for it to be an acceptable project, might be such an example. We build on the Paris-agreement and upholding the 1,5-degree target, but what does that mean in practice? Which fields can we thus take part in? Is it more acceptable to perform environmental consequence reviews, rather than assisting in design of oil platforms? These kinds of questions.»

Both institutions and the individual scientist must have an active and reflected view on his or her public engagements with networks and relationships in order to balance their research ethics and professional networks. When asked if the researchers at her institution have to be strategic in their research in order not alienate partners, one of the interviewees responded:

“I believe that some people consider things carefully, we are not really meant to do so, but we don’t want to shoot ourselves in the foot either. Our rule is that you can speak openly on what you want, but as a private person. However, I think hardly anyone does that.”

This discussion naturally leads us to further questions of how the disparate logics of science and market economics actually interact with one another, and whether this relationship between logics in some form or another challenges or even perhaps even strengthens one another. These questions will be dealt with in the following and concluding chapter of this section.

4.5.4 Institutional logics and priorities

Some of the interviewees studied are affiliated with publicly funded university departments, whilst others are involved in independent research organizations that are predominately funded through partnerships with industry actors. The answers and quotes provided in these sections come predominately from the latter group, as the university-affiliated researchers had less to say about these relationships. Thus, it should be understood that a different sampling, perhaps of university researchers that engaged more with industry partners, may give other

perspectives. However, due to the low N of the study, ensuring breadth in representation in this aspect was not a priority.

This distinction between degree of industry interaction may be related to the nature of universities and research institutions in general and may be less prominent in the non-university research institutions.

“We are not a university; they are often more theoretical than we are. We always stay on the practical side. We are either meant to learn more about the ecology part or the biology part in order to understand something. We are meant to provide advice, and the advice we give must be based on research. So I think we end up being more practically oriented than a university. So that works a bit better with companies and such, as they want to solve things, and we want answers.”

Despite the correlating goals however, the researchers that do engage with industry notice and acknowledge there are two separate logics at play, and sometimes use language that is reminiscent of being a service provider to the industry.

“In much of the governance apparatus, and for the clients, there is a desire for applied science; as close as possible, as quickly as possible, and as close to the problem statement of the end user. So that is an important axis for us. And as a leader in charge of a large department, we also need the counterbalance. We need research that is as independent as possible, and to invest in science that will be useful in the future, investing long term, building up researcher competency, and at some point along that axis we end up in that pinch between what the clients demand in the short term and is best served by, and the overarching mission of producing knowledge valuable to the entire value chain and all relevant stakeholders”.

The terms presented when asked about conflicting logics of science and market are predominately oriented around speed and demands on time. The idea is also presented that the industry often seek the shortest possible research loop with the quickest possible answers however. This is seen as impacting more than just the practical aspects of the individual research projects, but also as something that touch on the very nature and societal mission of scientific research.

«They [the industry] always want a problem solved. We often wish to proceed with understanding the “why” and go deeper into research. In those cases, you have to seek projects and support other places, because the industry can’t finance those things. But mostly it works fine. But we have met companies in the fisheries who doesn’t understand that we can’t provide the results almost before we have performed the trials- So it varies by what insight they have into how research is done

4.6 Summary of findings and closing discussion

Taken as a whole, the interviews paint a nuanced and highly informative picture of research collaborations within the marine research sector in Norway. All researchers hold up research collaboration as a beneficial aspect of their academic and scientific life but acknowledge some issues. Most issues are either tied to the relationships between the partners or outside interests, or to phenomena that emerge from the recent structural and ideological changes in the research sector, associated with New Public Management principles and increased managerialism.

As it pertains to relational issues, they seem most prominent within fields and around projects with the potential of challenging the economic prospects of industry actors. Yet this is not an inescapable and determined phenomena. Researcher-industry relations can be mediated, improved and strengthened in such a way that it benefits both parties, and this does in fact seem to have happened in recent years in many of the fields touched on in this project. As we see in the theory, several theorists postulate that the logic of science, traditionally associated with the university and research sector, is threatened by an increasing market logic (Berman 2012), yet we also see research that indicates that the two logics are not necessarily at odds, but that they may exist in parallel, and even improve the opportunities and autonomy of the researchers (Lam 2010, Mendoza 2012). The research conducted here lends credence to the latter argument, as all researchers speak positively of their collaboration efforts with industry. Admittedly, the challenges that do arise at times have a genuine and restrictive impact on the researchers involved, such as blacklisting or motivating self-censorship. However, not only have we seen that these issues are mendable in the long run, but that they must also be held up against the clear benefits that research collaboration provides.

Pertaining to the issues emerging from structural factors in academia it is clear from the researchers themselves that the vast majority of these are ascribed to NPM thinking and

practices. The most pervasive issues, such as the existence of predatory journals and poor, even falsified data and analysis are related to increased pressures in publishing and time sensitivity. This has been understood as deriving from an increased competitiveness and demands to reach measured parameters such as publishing numbers and impact. Thus, it is plausible to construct a causal link between NPM changes on a general level and the various specific issues experienced by the researchers themselves; from predatory journals to unreliable or even falsified data. Though such a causal link is plausible, and indeed stated outright by a few of the interviewees, it has not been the goal of the study to establish or prove this relationship. However, investigating the relationship between NPM changes in academia and their possible causal relationship with increases in predatory journals and poor scientific practices would be an interesting concept for further research.

5.0 Conclusion

This study has emerged from a fundamental interest in acquiring the deepest possible understanding of academic freedom. When investigating the developments of these ideals a close relationship is found between academic freedom and the institutional logic of the academic sector at any given time. We have discussed three conceptions of academic systems, each embedded within their own conceptual, social and economical frame. They have each operated with their own social contract with their benefactors; from the church, to the state, and increasingly, though not entirely, towards the market. Despite the highly diverse contexts we find that the overarching issues of academic freedom stays the same across academic systems.

From discussions of Aristotelianism, heliocentricity and theological disputes that may seem esoteric, and largely unrelated to the modern scientific project, to modern research on salmon louse and death rates in fisheries, the underlying problems remain the same: To what extent is the researcher free from outside pressures? To what extent is science motivated by an honest search for better knowledge? To what extent are the institutions of science independent, autonomous and protected from outside influence that may harm the scientific project? What happens when the interests, privileges and rights of the researcher conflict with the interests of the institution facilitating his research?

These were the questions which divided many of the earliest pioneers of science and academic research. Not only were the medieval researchers and theologians divided over these issues, but many were willing to fight dearly for them, suffering expulsions, persecutions, and lifelong struggles to protect their rights to professional and intellectual autonomy.

These questions are also the very same that challenges the independence, autonomy and quality of contemporary research and academic life. The questions posed to the modern researcher have not changed since the age of bishops and natural philosophy, even though the structures, relationships and dependencies of the research institutions have. The modern researcher must face the same questions, though now dressed in new clothing appropriate to the changing institutional context.

In its current iteration the research sector is increasingly surrounded by new ideals of marketization, managerialism and profitability. The impact of these institutional ideals, priorities and the work-life of the academics who interact with them in the Norwegian context have still not been covered exhaustively by researchers. In particular, the Norwegian research has very little to say on research in many of the industries that are central to economic and commercial activity in Norway and whom we could reasonably expect to be at the center of such debates.

Thus, the study identified a clear research gap that has been addressed; how does researchers in fish and fishing related research fields interact with research partnerships in a research sector increasingly defined by non-academic ideals, and how does these types of partnership impact their academic freedom and independence in a positive or negative way?

This overarching question has been addressed through three sub-questions:

- How do researchers understand their own autonomy and academic freedom when engaged in research partnerships?
- What aspects of research partnerships are beneficial for academic freedom and quality of science?
- What issues towards academic freedom and quality of science may arise from embarking on research partnerships?

These three questions have been addressed through a series of qualitative interviews, followed by content analysis of the interview transcripts. The results show that the researchers interviewed saw their own autonomy and academic freedom in a predominantly positive light,

whilst acknowledging the existence of more challenging trends and developments in contemporary academia and research that they too felt the consequences of.

The results further identify increased autonomy, increased resource access and ability to access larger networks and communities of knowledge as the aspects of research partnerships beneficial to their own academic freedom. It was also shown that research partnerships could be the precursor to valuable work opportunities and career opportunities in the future, as well as gaining potentially vital contacts and door-openers for future projects.

Regarding the more detrimental aspects of research partnerships and modern academic life, there were several potential issues that have the potential to arise in various context, with most of them being related either to increased managerialism or NPM-thinking within their own institutions, or to adverse reactions from industry actors. Whilst these latter issues are largely open to amelioration and negotiation, the former set of issues seem to emerge from the very nature of contemporary developments in academia, emerging from its institutional logic and social justification.

The research approach undergone was well crafted and appropriate to answer the research questions, gaining in-depth knowledge of the lived experiences of the researchers themselves, whilst also staying rooted in theory. As such, the results found can be taken back to the theory and used to defend certain perspectives rather than other, concerning for instance the nature and effect of marketization in academia.

One example of this that these findings cohere well with Lam (2010) findings that the logic of science and logic of market are not necessarily at odds, or that the latter are in danger of displacing the former. Rather her analysis is that the logic of the market within research is dependent on the logic of science for its value, and that the overarching framework of norms and identity for even the most market-oriented researchers remains the scientific framework. Industry actors who engage in partnership with researchers are dependent on the faith and trust in scientific integrity to even gain benefit from such collaborations and have a vested interest in protecting the scientific legitimacy of their partners, perhaps motivating the recent improvements in industry-researcher relations within the fishery research.

Throughout this investigation we have received a deeper insight into both academic freedom as a concept, the institutional logics of the contemporary university, as well as in depth knowledge of how researchers experience and work within this reality. A few new questions have presented themselves which may be relevant for further study; on the theoretical level it

is worth questioning the way we usually conceive of academic freedom and to not only see them as static and clearly defined principles, but also as answers to questions that seems to be eternally baked into the nature of scientific research, and which change and must be understood anew with each iteration and development of the academic system. Thus each new academic structure and development should be assumed to carry with it inherent challenges to academic freedoms that should be understood and addressed by researchers.

On the empirical level, having isolated several factors that the scientists themselves identify as causes of most of the adverse aspects of contemporary academic life; dysfunctional managerialism, outside pressure, predatory journals, increasing time-constraints, etc. it could be valuable to attempt to establish causal links that demonstrate more clearly the relationships between these issues. Furthermore, given that one accepts the theoretical claim that academic freedom in practice must be continually renegotiated, and given that one could potentially be able to establish causal links between the issues discusses by the researchers, it would be valuable to investigate what types of changes could be made to address the issues found in the current institutional context.

Further research will bring more light into the relationship between marketization, research collaboration and academic freedom. This thesis may serve as a small, yet relevant contribution to this important mission.

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7.0 Appendix

7.1 Interview guide

The following document was attached to the introductory email sent out to each participant at first contact. The document is based on the appropriate template from Sikt's webpages (Sikt 2024), adapted to give a clear and thorough understanding of the current research project and the rights for the research subjects involved:

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet «Forsknings samarbeid og fri forskning i marine studier»

Formålet med prosjektet

Prosjektets formål er å samle informasjon om hvordan forskningssamarbeid innenfor områder tilknyttet marin industri, fiskeri og fiskeoppdrett påvirker fri og uavhengig forskning; hvilke faktorer som kan assosieres med god kvalitet og uavhengighet i forskningen og hvilke faktorer som kan utfordre kvalitet og uavhengighet.

Dette er en masteroppgave tilknyttet studieløpet «Statsvitenskap og Ledelse» ved Universitetet i Agder. Alle innsamlede data vil bli anonymisert etter retningslinjer fra SIKT, og anvendt utelukkende til dette formål under veiledning av Marco Seeber v. institutt for statsvitenskap og ledelsesfag på UiA.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Forskningsprosjektet baserer seg delvis på semi-strukturerte intervjuer med 6-10 forskere som inngår i forskningssamarbeid på områder relevant for marine næringer. I samråd med veileder har jeg funnet et utvalg forskere som representerer en god variasjon av senioritet, institusjonell tilknytning og faglig interesse.

Utvalget er gjort basert på offentlig tilgjengelig informasjon fra en gjennomgang av hjemmesider og ansatt-profiler på nettsidene til universiteter og andre forskningsinstitusjoner som er involvert i maritim forskning.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitetet i Agder er ansvarlig for personopplysningene som behandles i prosjektet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å be om å få dine opplysninger slettet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Det vil bli avholdt et semi-strukturert intervju med ramme på 45-60 minutter. Tematikken på intervjuet dreier seg omkring dine erfaringer med forskningssamarbeid og hvilken rolle slike samarbeid spiller i din forskning. Særlig interessant er de aspekter av forskningssamarbeid som styrker og bedrer din forskning, samt eventuelle aspekter som kan være utfordrende, begrensende eller krever spesiell tilpasning.

Intervjuene vil foregå digitalt og bli tatt opp. Et automatisk transkripsjonsprogram vil lage en rå-transkripsjon som senere vil bli gjennomgått. Råfilene vil bli tilsendt deg så raskt som mulig etter intervjuet, og renskrevet transkripsjon sendes på forespørsel.

Kort om personvern

Utover den offentlige tilgjengelige informasjonen som har blitt gjennomgått for utvalgsprosessen vil det ikke bli innhentet annen informasjon om deg som respondent enn hva som kommer frem i intervjuet. All informasjon vil bli anonymisert og konfidensielt behandlet i henhold til personvernregelverket og standarder fra SIKT. Du kan lese mer om personvern under.

Med vennlig hilsen

Student :
Martin Ellingsen

Prosjektansvarlig:
Marco Seeber

Utdypende om personvern

Utdypende om personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Innhentede opplysninger som er offentlig tilgjengelige vil kun bli delt mellom meg selv som student, og min veileder, Marco Seeber v. UiA. Opplysninger du selv oppgir i intervjuet vil fullstendig anonymiseres, og retningslinjer for personvern ivaretas før de eventuelt siteres eller fremlegges ved offentlig publisering.

Kontaktopplysninger og navn vil bli erstattet med kode som lagres på egen navneliste, adskilt fra øvrig data, og slettes etter vurdering og godkjenning av oppgaven. Sitasjoner og andre måter å formidle informasjon fra intervjuet i oppgaven vil bli gjort på et slikt vis at deltakeren i intervjuet ikke vil være identifiserbar, og særskilt hensyn vil bli tatt ved diskusjon av potensielt sensitive temaer. Ingen respondenter skal kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonen.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysningene om deg fordi forskningsprosjektet er vurdert å være i allmennhetens interesse.

På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Agder har personverntjenestene ved Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør, vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til å protestere, be om innsyn, og til retting og sletting av opplysninger vi behandler om deg. Du vil da høre fra oss innen en måned. Vi vil gi deg en god begrunnelse hvis vi mener at du ikke kan identifiseres, eller at rettighetene ikke kan utøves. Du har også rett til å klage til Datatilsynet om hvordan vi behandler dine opplysninger.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 3. Juni.

Opplysningene vil da lagres frem til vurdering og sensur av masteroppgaven er publisert, deretter vil kontaktinformasjonen, intervjuopptakene og transkripsjonene slettes.

Spørsmål

Hvis du har spørsmål eller vil utøve dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

-Prosjektansvarlig: Marco Seeber, mail: marco.seeber@uia.no

-Personvernombud v. UiA: personvernombud@uia.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Sikts vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt på epost: personverntjenester@sikt.no, eller på telefon: 73 98 40 40.

7.2 Interview questions

The following document is the list of research questions that was used as outline for the interviews. Due to the semi-structured approach, some changes were made in each individual interview, such as the order the questions were asked, or the amount of follow-up questions that were presented to the interviewees:

Interview questions

-Introduction.

-“in order to better follow you and focus on our conversation, I would like record the interview, so I do not have to focus on taking notes and I can relisten and be more accurate/not miss anything. Do you consent to me recording this interview? All information will be anonymous, and audio-files can be sent to you immediately after the interview for review. You will also be given access to transcriptions when available for any correction ”.”

Opening questions

-Can you please tell me briefly about XXX and the work you perform there?

-Your scientific career and your research interests?

-Tell me about your research partnerships with public or private organizations, what sort of projects are you involved with?

-What are the most important reasons that motivates such research collaboration and what is their impact?

-Would your preferred research be possible without research partnerships?

-Are there aspects of research partnerships that are especially beneficial to your work? (f.i. funding, access to data, etc.)

Main questions

Start with something more general:

- Do you feel to be completely free in your research or do you feel that you need somehow to be careful in any regards?
- If yes: what do you think guarantees your freedom (problematize: after all this is potentially a delicate area, with important economic interests in Norway, what if you find some inconvenient truth?)

Field:

-In your academic work, do you feel secure that you are operating in a scientific context that safeguards your freedom of research, investigation and dissemination?

(Is there anything in particular that causes this?)

-Do you feel that industry partnerships provides necessary accountability and a good climate for scientific scrutiny?

(If so, what routines, norms or institutional aspects like agreements etc. ensure this?)

-Do you feel that there is transparency in research done through industry partnerships, where data and findings is open and verifiable?

(What does this look like in practice?)

Personal experiences:

-Have you ever experienced any bad scientific practices coming out of industry research? F.I. embellishing results to advance economic interests, or selectively exclude certain research data without appropriate cause?

-Have you ever experienced restrictions on information gathering or dissemination, beyond what is reasonable and unduly restricts your research and dissemination capabilities?

-Have you ever experienced any undue hidden or overt interference in your academic work through your research partnerships? Ex. attempts at

-Do you believe that private partnerships at times influence or restrict your ability to research what you will freely?

Institutional context:

- Do you believe that the respective logics of the private and academic sector creates challenges to academic work?
- Do you believe that your research institution is equipped with the necessary routines, practices and protocols for safeguarding academic freedom when engaging in research partnerships?
- Do you believe that there is transparency, openness and ability of scrutiny of the research agreements that your institution engages in?

Influence:

- Do you believe that funding, even philanthropic, non-commercial funding, at times is used in your field to promote certain political or economical interests?
- Do you believe that certain research approaches, or publicly stated perspectives and opinions can be detrimental to receiving private funding and partnership agreements?
- Do you believe that there exists such targeted funding and partnership agreements in your field as a whole?

Other:

- Do you believe industry partnership may shift attention in academia away from other central societal missions, such as education or basic research?
- Do you believe that academic-industry partnerships may undermine the credibility and public trust in the independence of academic research?
- Do you find that you are well supported from the university side to engage in fruitful partnerships with private industry?