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Doctoral thesis

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Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Thesis for the Degree of
Philosophiae Doctor
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# Summary

This thesis is about the internationalisation of Norwegian academia, which has long been an important policy concept in Norway, although we still have very little knowledge about what it actually means (Flobakk-Sitter & Hybertsen, 2021). The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) is used as the empirical site of the study. The thesis explores the dynamics of internationalisation between national policies, organisational priorities at NTNU and everyday life experiences of university staff. This exploration is based on a feminist approach towards internationalisation, where I have been particularly interested in studying the dynamics between internationalisation, gender equality and international diversity. The theoretical framework is based on Joan Acker's feminist approaches to organisations, focusing on eliciting gendered, racialised and classed power dynamics in the workplace.

The methodology has been a situational analysis, which means that internationalisation itself is studied as the key unit of analysis. I base the analysis on data material from documents, as well as qualitative research interviews. To perform the situational analysis, I have also drawn upon sensitising concepts from Dorothy Smith's *Institutional Ethnography*, primarily her tools for analysing textual discourses, power, and work-knowledges within institutions, as well as Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis.

The thesis includes four research articles: one critical discourse analysis of NTNU's internationalisation policies, one based on qualitative research interviews with university administrators who are performing work connected to internationalisation, one that unpacks some of the ways in which these administrators frame key issues regarding international diversity, and one article that is co-authored with my supervisor Siri Øyslebø Sørensen, which explores tensions between the use of English and Norwegian. All research articles focus on NTNU as the empirical site.

One key finding from the thesis is that, since the late 1990s, there has been a strong political will from actors both inside and outside of academia to work towards internationalisation. During this time, 'internationalisation' has been discursively tied to a market-based logic of investments, strategic cooperation, how to adapt to global competition and take advantage of resources in the global knowledge market, and a quantitative focus on diversity and researcher excellence. In the introductory essay, I analyse some of the ways in which this strategic conceptualisation shapes academic work-cultures; including researcher ideals, work-conditions for university administrators, international diversity resulting in differences in work-cultures, and the increased use of English, which manifests in rising tensions concerning the Norwegian language. These issues are analysed through a framework of feminist theories of power.

The goal of the thesis has not been to answer the questions of whether internationalisation is good or bad, or whether it has gone too far or not far enough for Norwegian academia, but rather to explore how internationalisation is both conceptualised through policies and in discourses, and how people in a Norwegian university setting experience it. I have aimed to dispel some of the dichotomies that are drawn up when these topics are discussed, and to empirically explore some of the gender and diversity dynamics. One conclusion drawn is that internationalisation as a concept is not inherently problematic- but I am critical to the way that it has been discursively tied a language of market-based logics.

In the conclusion, I launch an alternative approach: sustainable internationalisation. A potential turning away from internationalisation should not necessarily be replaced by a turn towards a sense of nationalism; rather, sustainable internationalisation would mean anchoring internationalisation strategies in local contexts, as there are large differences between research environments and units, including local challenges, inequalities and power dynamics. We should also ask what Norway, NTNU and other universities want to gain from internationalisation and what some of the consequences are for people working, giving space for both positive and negative experiences. The focus could also shift from quantitatively counting the numbers of female academics and international researchers as the measures for 'gender and diversity' and rather focus on how to foster good work-environments in the meeting with global competition and the pressures of a work-life that expects people to work smarter and more efficiently in changing conditions. By doing this, universities might aim towards balancing the demands of Norwegian society, the global knowledge market and their responsibilities towards equality and inclusion.

# Samandrag

Temaet for denne avhandlinga er internasjonalisering av norsk akademia. Dette har lenge vært eit viktig omgrep i norsk politikk, men vi har lite kunnskap om kva dette omgrepet faktisk inneber (Flobakk-Sitter & Hybertsen, 2021). Norges teknisk-naturvitskapelege universitet (NTNU) er brukt som empirisk felt for studiet. Avhandlinga utforskar dynamikkane av internasjonalisering mellom nasjonal policy, organisatoriske prioriteringar på NTNU og levde kvardagserfaringar blant universitetets tilsette. Denne utforskinga er basert på ei feministisk tilnærming til internasjonalisering, og eg har vært spesielt interessert i å studere dynamikkar mellom internasjonalisering, kjønnslikestilling og internasjonalt mangfald. Det teoretiske rammeverket er basert på Joan Acker sine feministiske tilnærmingar til organisasjonar, med eit fokus på å få fram maktdynamikkar knytt til kjønn, rase og klasse på arbeidsplassen.

Det metodiske rammeverket har vært situasjonsanalyse, som betyr at internasjonalisering i seg sjølv blir studert som analyseobjektet. Eg baserer analysen av datamaterialet frå dokument og kvalitative forskingsintervju. For å gjennomføre situasjonsanalysen har eg også nytta bevisstgjerande omgrep frå Dorothy Smith sin *Institusjonelle Etnografi,* hovudsakeleg hennar verktøy for å analysere tekstlege diskursar, makt og 'work-knowledges' innanfor institusjonar, i tillegg til Norman Fairclough sin kritiske diskursanalyse.

Avhandlinga inkluderer fire forskingsartiklar: Ei kritisk diskursanalyse av NTNU sin politikk for internasjonalisering, ein basert på kvalitative forskingsintervju med administrativt tilsette ved universitetet som jobbar med internasjonalisering, ein som utforskar nokon av måtane desse tilsette presenterer nøkkelutfordringar ved internasjonalt mangfald, og ein artikkel som er skrive saman med min rettleiar Siri Øyslebø Sørensen, som utforskar spenningar mellom bruk av norsk og engelsk. Alle forskingsartiklane fokuserer på NTNU som det empiriske feltet.

Eit nøkkelfunn i avhandlinga er at sidan 1990-talet har det vært ei sterk politisk vilje frå aktørar både innanfor og utanfor akademia for å jobbe mot internasjonalisering. I løpet av denne tida har 'internasjonalisering' blitt diskursivt bunde til ein marknadsbasert logikk av investeringar, strategisk samarbeid, korleis tilpasse seg global konkurranse og utnytte ressursane i det globale kunnskapsmarknaden, og eit kvantitativt fokus på mangfald og forskingseksellense. I essayet som opnar avhandlinga, analyserer eg nokon av måtane denne strategiske konseptualiseringa formar akademiske arbeidskulturar, inkludert forskarideal, arbeidsforhold for universitetsadministrasjonen, internasjonalt mangfald og resulterande forskjellar i arbeidskulturar, og auka bruk av engelsk, noko som manifesterer seg som auka spenning rundt det norske språket. Desse pågåande diskusjonane blir analysert gjennom eit rammeverk av feministiske teoriar rundt makt.

Målet for denne avhandlinga har ikkje vært å svare på spørsmål om internasjonalisering er eit gode eller noko negativt, om det har gått for langt eller ikkje langt nok for norsk akademia. Målet har heller vært å utforske korleis internasjonalisering blir konseptualisert gjennom politikk og i diskursar, og korleis det blir opplevd av personar innanfor eit norsk universitet.

Eg har satt som mål å bygge ned nokon av dikotomiane som blir teikna opp når desse tema blir tatt opp og å empirisk utforske nokon av dynamikkane knytt til kjøn og mangfald. Ein konklusjon er at internasjonalisering som konsept ikkje nødvendigvis er ibuande problematisk- men eg er kritisk til måten det diskursivt har blitt knytt til ein marknadsbasert logikk.

I konklusjonen lanserer eg ei alternativ tilnærming: berekraftig internasjonalisering. Ei potensiell vending bort frå internasjonalisering bør ikkje nødvendigvis bli erstatta av ei auke i nasjonalisme; berekraftig internasjonalisering vil heller bety å ankre internasjonaliseringsstrategiar i lokal kontekst, ettersom det er store forskjellar mellom fagmiljø og einingar, inkludert lokale utfordringar, ulikskapar og maktdynamikkar. Vi bør også sette spørsmålsteikn ved kva Norge, NTNU og andre universitet vil oppnå med internasjonalisering og kva som er konsekvensane for arbeidarar, og gi rom for båe positive og negative opplevingar. Fokuset kan også skifte frå kvantitativ teljing av kor mange kvinnelege akademikarar og internasjonalisering forskarar som finnast som målet for 'likestilling og mangfald', og heller fokusere på korleis fostre gode arbeidsmiljø i møte med global konkurranse og forventingar om at folk skal arbeide smartare og meir effektivt i skiftande arbeidsforhold. Ved å gjere dette kan universitet jobbe mot å balansere krav frå norsk samfunnsliv, den globale kunnskapsmarknaden og deira ansvar for likestilling og inkludering.

## Acknowledgements

To paraphrase John Donne: No woman is an island. I would never have finished this thesis without the help and support of my network of co-workers, friends and family.

This thesis would not have been possible without my supervisors, Guro Korsnes Kristensen and Siri Øyslebø Sørensen. You have been my best supporters and mentors all through this process, and deserve recognition for your patience, support, generosity, constructive feedback and advice throughout the research process. I would especially like to thank Siri, my main supervisor, without whose support during my master's I would never have pursued this PhD degree. Siri deserves much credit for not only supervising my master's thesis, but also for encouraging me to continue a career in academia through first a position as a research assistant and for support in applying for this PhD-position. Siri's optimism, pragmatism and good will has made this process manageable.

Rebecca Lund read an earlier version of this text and gave valuable feedback and perspectives which have greatly improved the insights of this thesis.

I have been so lucky to have been part of a wonderful research environment at KULT and would especially like to thank all my co-workers at the Centre for Gender Research for creating a place where all PhD-students are welcome, where support and feedback is always provided and where people take an active interest in you and your research. Examples of the advice given by the researchers at the centre includes: "A feminist toolbox should include spray-paint", and "Good coffee should be a human right", both of equal value.

To my fellow PhD students at KULT, especially the PhD group Agraphia: Thank you for all the payday beers, quizzes, singing and sharing of pictures of people's pets. I would especially like to thank Birgitte, Maja, Martine, Amber, Outi, Sonia, Bård and Thomas for the friendship, humour, and coffee breaks that have made this process not only possible but also enjoyable. Thank you also to Åse Marit and Cecilie in the administration for assistance, support, and most importantly: the occasional piece of chocolate.

My family and close friends have been an invaluable part of the road towards finishing this PhD. My partner, Håkon, has been endlessly kind, patient and supportive, and has had the unenviable task of cooking dinner as I have ranted about feminism and the patriarchal oppression. My parents are the ones who introduced me to books, feminism, and politics, who read my first ventures into writing and always said that I would one day publish something, sparking an early interest in academia. My siblings, for their part, have always made me laugh no matter how stressed I have been, and have kept my feet on the ground when my mind has been spinning yarns of theories and analyses.

I have also been as fortunate as to be a part of the community at Feministhuset in Trondheim, an arena which gives me and many other women opportunity to meet, discuss, march and organise over endless engagement and cups of coffee- letting theory become practice. As a quote from Vibeke Vasbo is written on the wall inside Feministhuset: De kjenner ikke vår styrke!

# Preface

Dear reader,

This thesis has been written in an interesting time and place. When I first conceptualised the idea to examine internationalisation in 2019, I perceived that this phenomenon had for many years almost uniformly been presented at as something positive. When I am writing this preface in the spring of 2024, there are stronger concerns being expressed in politics and among leaders and managers, such as how to balance academic mobility with sustainability goals in travel policies, the status of Norwegian as a disciplinary language with the increased use of English, and economic insecurities for NTNU and other universities, which puts the internationalisation ambitions more towards the background. In such times of change, it is interesting to explore the internationalisation project for academia as it happened from the early 2000s until the 2020s.

I started this project formally on 1 March 2020. Twelve days later, Norway went into lockdown due to the corona-pandemic. I hope this provides perspective to others who feel like their timing has met with bad luck. On the one hand, this disrupted many parts of my intended research strategy, such as planned observational studies. On the other, the general consensus in the KULT research environment is that no research project ever goes smoothly according to plan. If you are at the start of your own dissertation work as you are reading this, this might be some comfort: no matter how much time you spend planning, pragmatism will usually win out in the end.

God lesing.

# Table of contents

# Introduction

This thesis explores internationalisation in Norwegian academia. Focusing on the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) as the empirical site, it explores how internationalisation shapes academic work-cultures, and unpacks how internationalisation is conceptualised in policy, discourses and everyday sense-making among university staff. The results are presented in four independent research articles that empirically explore internationalisation at NTNU. The first article focuses on NTNU’s policies for internationalisation, the second explores internationalisation from the perspective of university administrators, the third concerns international diversity, and the fourth explores language tensions between Norwegian and the increased use of English at NTNU. The first section of this thesis consists of an introductory essay in two parts. In the first part, I discuss the methodological and theoretical framework of the thesis, present the research articles and give a thematic overview of internationalisation in national policies. In part two, I have conducted an overarching analysis of internationalisation in context, using feminist organisational theories to analyse the empirical results and answer the research questions of the thesis.

Internationalisation is a dominant policy discourse in academia that tends to be presented as something neutral and positive (Morley et al., 2018). Increased internationalisation has been an explicit policy goal in Norwegian academia for several years, and yet we have relatively little knowledge about what internationalisation means as a concept in Norway (Flobakk-Sitter & Hybertsen, 2021). Nor do we have much empirical knowledge about how internationalisation as a concept influences organisational cultures at universities.

In this thesis, internationalisation is not treated as a neutral and inherently positive policy, but as a politically and socially constructed phenomenon that has been discursively created in a situated context, and that affects university cultures and the experiences of people working at universities.

This study was conducted at a time when there has been an apparent turning point in discourses concerning internationalisation in Norwegian academia. After some 20 years of internationalisation being a political goal for the sector, questions were raised in both 2017 and 2021, with debates about whether internationalisation in Norway has gone too fast, too quickly (Helsvig, 2022), and there are concerns about the widespread use of English, which has led to recent political efforts to preserve and strengthen the position of the Norwegian language in academia (Ministry of Education and Research & Ministry of Culture and Equality, 2023). One of the reasons why Norway is interesting for such a study is because it illustrates some of the tensions between opposing societal interests throughout a time-period with policies promoting the internationalisation of academia: in the meeting between political will towards internationalisation, a society with national interests and a marginal national language to protect, internationally diverse workplaces in a historically relatively homogenous society, where considerations for gender equality in the shape of a welfare state and protection of work-rights as a tool for equality, in meeting with global competitiveness. Some of the problems I find in this thesis illustrate the negotiation processes between these different interests and positions.

The timeframe of the study is from the early 2000s, when internationalisation became cemented as an important goal for Norwegian academia, until the early 2020s, when increasing concern has been raised among the Norwegian public about different aspects of internationalisation. This timeframe spans the relative rise of internationalisation and the possible beginnings of scepticism towards some of the implications of internationalisation, and there has also been a major focus on gender quality and gender balance in academia, as well as a large influx of international diversity through active policies prioritising the academic mobility of students and staff. In this context, it is important that complex issues are not viewed in isolation but in the context of other social factors, such as gender, and socioeconomic, national and cultural backgrounds. The thesis explores the different dynamics, tensions, sometimes conflicting sense-making, and experiences within the phenomenon of internationalisation. Research has highlighted a need for discussions about the gendered implications of such developments; despite claims that gender equality has been achieved, women are facing barriers such as wage gaps, caring responsibilities, and traditional patterns of disciplines and work areas. (Slowey et al., 2020). This exploration takes an interest in power dynamics, especially those related to social justice, equality and diversity, and how these dynamics are present within the internationalisation of Norwegian academia.

European higher education and research institutions have undergone important changes since the early 2000s, with a greater focus on external control, market-like competition in how institutions are run, professionalisation of institutional management functions, and, with the global knowledge economy, questions of accountability to society (Maassen & Musselin, 2009). The key challenges for European universities are competition, a focus on 'output' as a way of measuring academic time management, productivity and measurement of performance, and internationalisation (Neave, 2009). Norway has had a strong political interest in internationalisation; as a small country, international recruitment and cooperation have been seen as important to ensure researcher quality and to build strong research environments (Egeland & Vabø, 2022).

Norway makes an interesting context for exploring how internationalisation is construed and experienced. By being stipulated as an important goal for Norway's higher education and research sector, internationalisation means that Norwegian universities are expected to prioritise, among other things, international cooperation and mobility, competition and the focus on researcher excellence (Aarseth & Owesen, 2022). Such a strong pull towards internationalisation is interesting for a country that is situated at the geographical periphery of Europe, without a long tradition of mobility and with a unique national language (Sin et al., 2021).

Internationalisation touches upon the difficult balancing act by which academia straddles being local and societal institutions, as well as its inherent connections to the global research and knowledge market. NTNU, as are other Norwegian universities, is expected to work strategically towards internationalisation through activities such as international recruitment, facilitating the international mobility of researchers and students, participating in the European Union's (EU) programmes and cooperating with international research environments. At the same time, as Norwegian institutions, they are also expected to maintain what is regarded as a good work-culture within a welfare state, work strategically towards gender equality, educate Norwegian students prior to entry into the Norwegian labour market and maintain a Norwegian disciplinary language.

### Gender dynamics, diversity and work-culture

Similarly to Sweden and Denmark, Norway organises its society according to what has been called the Nordic model, which means a strong central state, a public welfare state with universal benefits funded by taxes, many public services, and strong organisations within work-life to ensure the rights of employees through common negotiations for salary. Questions have been raised as to whether the forces of internationalisation challenge this way of organising work-life (Bungum et al., 2015). The Nordic model has been described as 'woman-friendly', and Norway has been one of the countries with a high focus on gender equality policies (Dørum, 2020). This means that gender dynamics and questions about working culture are interesting facets within the context of internationalisation.

The past ten years have also seen an expansion in these policies where there is an increasing focus on equality to also include other categories, such as gender identity, ethnicity and nationality, as well as discursively tying the topic of 'diversity' to 'equality' (Suboticki & Sørensen, 2022). It is therefore interesting to not explore internationalisation in isolation. Through feminist theories of power, inequality and social justice, it also explores dynamics of power, gender and diversity in Norwegian academia, and how these are linked to questions of class.

The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on feminist organisational studies with a focus on power dynamics connected to social categories, especially those that are gendered, racialised and connected to questions of class (Acker, 2006, 2012). The project has had an abductive approach towards the topics of gender, race and class, based on an explorative strategy with an openness to how these social categories appear in the empirical field. On the basis of the key finding from Acker's work that gender is embedded in organisations in ways that are often invisible in everyday work-life, I have used gender as a deductive lens in the empirical analysis. In the emerging field that connects gender dynamics to internationalisation, I found it relevant to explore whether internationalisation might affect men and women differently. Another relevant dynamic within internationalisation is international mobility. The mobility prompted by internationalisation has resulted in increased national, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity at Norwegian higher education and research institutions. This leads to new questions concerning the status of the Norwegian language, the inclusion of international researchers and tensions with gender equality ambitions. International diversity has therefore been an empirical interest for this thesis. In the context of European higher education and research, mobility has often been discursively presented as something positive for both the individual researcher and for quality and excellence in teaching and research, as well as an important policy. Simultaneously, 'migration' can be controversial and trigger anxiety and fear (Zgaga, 2020). In this context, it is interesting to explore and seek to understand how both gender and diversity dynamics are relevant within the context of internationalisation.

Academia departs from other parts of Norwegian society in keyways, and the topics of gender and diversity illustrate these. Norway has strict immigration policies, yet there is a political desire for universities to focus on international recruitment and mobility. In a society with high focus on gender balance in the workplace, including in academia, universities were for a long time dominated by men, especially in top academic positions (Miland, 2020; Rasmussen, 2019). Norwegian society is concerned with protecting the Norwegian language, although

English is widely used as the academic language. Norway has a history of being a rather frugal mid-income social democracy (Tranøy, 2010) with a tradition of protectionist policies in areas such as agriculture (Espeli, 2008), and although scepticism towards large global influences has kept the country outside the European Union, policies for the academic sector show a great willingness to tie itself to European programmes for education and research. Such tensions and seeming oppositions make it interesting to view academic organisations as workplaces that are both part of global knowledge markets and Norwegian institutions with certain employment and societal responsibilities.

### Changing understandings of internationalisation

Today's understanding of internationalisation has grown over time: from primarily concerning activities abroad and physical mobility to also including internationalisation 'at home' and more complex topics such as multiculturalism (Yemini & Sagie, 2016). The internationalisation of higher education has also been given much research attention around the world (see, for example, Raghuram et al., 2023; Stensaker et al., 2009; Said et al., 2015; Khare, 2021), which leaves room for more studies about working cultures at universities that focus on staff. The research that exists concerning academic staff has often focused on internationalisation as it implicates and affects researchers and researcher culture such as academic mobility (Bilecen & Van Mol, 2017; Coey, 2018; Davies, 2020; Dervin, 2011), some with a critical view of power dynamics and gendered consequences (Schaer et al., 2017; Sang & Calvard, 2019). There are also studies at the more macro level in terms of understanding different institutions' approaches towards internationalisation (Luijten-Lub, 2007; Elkin et al., 2008; Rao & Hosein, 2020) or policies for the internationalisation of higher education and mobility in Europe (Bianchini, 2019). Some researchers have also called for more knowledge about specific topics, such as the effects of internationalisation on the academic labour market (Probst & Goastellec, 2013). Discussions of internationalisation vary greatly from country to country (Teichler, 2017), and it is therefore important to anchor any empirical exploration in national sociopolitical contexts. This shows the necessity of more closely examining organisational cultures at universities in a context of increased internationalisation.

Through analysis of various facets of internationalisation and its relationship with gender and diversity, this thesis can be read as a resource for those interested in internationalisation, in current university and higher education studies, and as a contribution to feminist organisational studies. This thesis is also a contribution to the field that explores gender and diversity dynamics within internationalisation in academia. The goal of the empirical analysis has not been to find out whether internationalisation is good or bad, whether it has gone ‘too far’ or not far enough, but rather to explore both how internationalisation is conceptualised through policies and in discourses, and how people in a Norwegian university setting experience it. In the conclusion, I launch an alternative vision for internationalisation that I hope will be an inspiration to other universities beyond this context: to work towards *sustainable internationalisation.*

## Research question and scope of thesis

This thesis explores the dynamics of internationalisation between national policies, organisational priorities at NTNU, and everyday life experiences of university staff. The exploration is based on a feminist approach towards internationalisation, where I am particularly interested in eliciting the dynamics and tensions that arise between internationalisation, gender equality and diversity as discursive representations, and how these tensions are experienced in everyday life and practice. In the first part of this thesis, I will examine internationalisation as it is conceptualised in Norwegian policies, and analyse the findings through theories of power, social justice and inequality. I will then empirically explore internationalisation at NTNU through four empirical research articles that explore elements that I have identified as key parts of internationalisation, as they empirically appear at NTNU.

The main research question of this thesis is: *How is internationalisation conceptualised in discourses and policies, and how does it shape academic work-cultures?*

In order to respond to this, my empirical explorations are driven by two connected questions: How is internationalisation conceptualised in discourses and in the everyday sense-making and practices of university staff? And: How does internationalisation shape dynamics of gender equality, diversity and inclusion at the level of policies and discourses, and how does this shape the experiences of university staff?

This thesis wishes to encapsulate and explore the complexities of internationalisation as a phenomenon in Norwegian academia: how it is conceptualised in policies and discourses, exploring some of the ways it is experienced in academic cultures, as well as gender, diversity and class dynamics within the empirical situation. I consider all these elements as relevant parts of the work-culture. Work-culture in this context broadly means the shared values, beliefs and assumptions that are developed over time in an organisation, becoming embedded in its structures. In organisations, ideologies, social norms and expectations for workers and what is considered the 'ideal worker' might rest on such practices that are part of the organisation's history and identity, and that these shared beliefs, values, ideals and practices affect the lives and expectations of workers (Lewis, 2001). I base the analysis on the work of Joan Acker, which assumes that such values, assumptions and beliefs, as well as the traditions, hierarchies and social norms within the work-culture, will be affected by the dynamics of gender, diversity and class (Acker, 2012).

The methodological framework I will be using to explore these dynamics and tensions is situational analysis (SA) as developed by Adele Clarke. Situational analysis is a poststructuralist and interpretive methodology that is based on grounded theory, where the goal is to unpack and explore the different elements with a situation, and how they relate to each other, embracing complexities and exploring the complete situation from multiple angles. It is also a method with feminist, anti-racist roots that is critical towards power dynamics and hierarchies (Clarke, 2005; Clarke et al., 2018). This means that for this project, *internationalisation itself is explored as the unit of analysis.* The focus of this thesis has therefore been to draw the 'big picture' with a close-up of the most interesting aspects of the situation (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 117). Within the situational analysis, I have chosen to focus on one organisation – NTNU – as the site to be able to explore internationalisation in a work-culture within the scope of a thesis. The main research question is empirically phrased in a way that is open for an inductive exploration of internationalisation.

These topics are explored through a framework of feminist organisational theories that are critical of power dynamics, and in the cross-cutting analysis I will use Joan Acker's theories of inequalities and structural gendered and racialised power dynamics to explore organisational culture in academia between micro, meso and macro levels. The thesis's focus on discourses and on people's lived experience comes from SA's poststructuralist and interpretive focus. I have both analysed discourses, and analysed how people interpret and enact institutional policies.

Together, the four research articles shed light on how internationalisation is conceptualised and how it is experienced. The first research article explores internationalisation in NTNU's policies and its implications for researcher ideals, through the lens of gender equality. The second article goes beyond the textual discourses and unpacks the work practices of administrative staff at NTNU, the invisible labour concerning internationalisation, and how they perceive the changing organisational culture around them. The third article examines how the university administrators frame international diversity and what is missing from their perspective. The fourth article analyses how language practices and tensions between the use of Norwegian and English are experienced and dealt with in working life at NTNU. Each of these four topics highlights an important dimension within internationalisation at NTNU – namely, its relationships with gender equality, invisible labour, international diversity and language tensions. Through this empirical analysis, internationalisation is explored both in policy and in practice. I base the analysis on the idea presented by Herschberg et al. (2018) that discourses on the macro level have implications for attitudes and ideals on the micro level. I am interested in how discourses in the academic sector, especially those in policies, impact and shape both policies and workers' experiences at universities.

The way that internationalisation is examined is to deconstruct its meaning-making within textual policies, and to analyse how internationalisation is conceptualised as a discourse in academia and within an institution. The other side of the coin – lived experience – is explored through qualitative research interviews, which is a method that is suited for exploring people's life experiences, perception of events and knowledge (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Much of the research that focuses on internationalisation – or a phenomenon connected to this, such as mobility – focuses on its implications for researchers and researcher culture. Such research includes publishing and researcher ideals (Lund, 2012), the precariousness and recruitment of early career researchers (Herschberg et al., 2018) and how academics can balance long hours in academia with family concerns (Sang et al., 2015). Through interviews with university administrators and labour union representatives, the thesis employs situational analysis' concept of looking for *silences and implicated actors* (Clarke, 2019). Within university culture, the administrative staff's views and experiences of internationalisation – as policy, discourse and in their work – offer an alternative perspective for its effects on university working culture. In the text, I use the term 'university culture' to describe the organisational culture at a university.

As a whole, this thesis explores how internationalisation is conceptualised as both policies and discourses, as well as some of the ways in which it affects lived experience in an academic work-culture. The analysis illustrates some of the discursive implications, the concept of invisible labour, and key challenges for Norwegian universities as they attempt to find a balance between being Norwegian institutions and globally oriented knowledge-institutions. Applying a feminist theoretical framework, the analysis maintains a critical view of gender and diversity dynamics within organisations related to power. By placing internationalisation at the centre, examining its different components and the relations within it, and by exploring the university through the focus of administrative staff, the analysis provides new insights into how internationalisation shapes academic work-cultures.

## The relationship between internationalisation, gender and diversity

A project focusing on internationalisation in a university culture could have been examined from multiple different angles. I have chosen to view internationalisation through a feminist lens, with a research interest in the topics of gender and diversity, which are two important elements within the context of internationalisation in Norwegian academia.

I have used gender equality as a deductive lens in the analysis of internationalisation, as this is an interesting link particularly in the Nordic region. Gender equality in the workplace has been an important cultural and political ideal in Norway for several years (Danielsen et al., 2015; Rasmussen, 2019). Today, all institutions for higher education and research are required to have an institutional focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, and supranational organisations such as the EU (which determines funding) also impose top-down implementations for inclusion in research (Duarte et al., 2023). Policies for gender equality and policies for internationalisation have long been treated as separate fields. However, the action plan of the Research Council from 2021 states that international mobility needs to maintain gender balance and perspectives in research and innovation (Egeland & Vabø, 2022). I have used Joan Acker's theories of inequality regimes to explore the discursive links between internationalisation, gender and international diversity, and have viewed gender and diversity as conceptual categories, as patterns of difference and processes in the social world rather than fixed categories (Acker, 2006, 2012).

In nearly all contexts where internationalisation is brought up, the international mobility of students and staff is identified as a key element. The Norwegian government has long had ambitions for internationalisation 'at home', which means that, in addition to tying itself to projects and institutions abroad, there is a focus on bringing international influences on Norwegian universities. International diversity is inextricably linked with internationalisation, and in many ways, research is international by nature, as it crosses borders (Frølich, 2004).

Academic mobility's high priority within internationalisation discussions is therefore not unexpected.

As already stated in the introduction, this thesis does not treat mobility and international diversity as a neutral phenomenon that will help academia to fulfil its ambitions, but as migration that is happening in a world of inherent power structures where not everybody has the resources to be mobile (Dervin, 2011) and in a Norwegian setting where 'diversity' and cultural differences have long been controversial and difficult topics to talk about (Gullestad, 2002). Norwegian research has presented internationalisation as something that is positive and even necessary for universities for fulfilling their societal commitments, warning against what they saw as a pivoting of internationalisation towards something negative (Knutsen & Wig, 2018), as well as calling for greater focus not only on internationalisation but also on taking seriously the 'diversity' that comes with it (Langford et al., 2019). Having a focus on diversity dynamics, and including an empirical exploration of international and linguistic diversity, can be seen as an answer to this call.

With internationalisation having been a prioritised policy for several years, it is pertinent to examine the discussions about the dilemmas, consequences and crossroads that apply to Norwegian academia (Erdal et al., 2019). One survey from the Norwegian academic sector that examines attitudes and experiences concerning internationalisation and diversity shows that, although young researchers in Norway in general respond positively towards internationalisation, both gender and being born abroad are tied to discrimination across disciplines in Norwegian academia, and institutions have some way to go in utilising the diversity that internationalisation brings. Especially young international researchers are in a precarious situation (The Young Academy of Norway, 2019) Erdal et al. (2019) referred to this survey when they argued that, with increased international diversity, we need more discussions concerning topics such as power, representation and equal treatment, as well as concerning discrimination through formal and informal processes in a work-life marked by competition for scarce resources.

Increased internationalisation has also brought with it linguistic diversity among researchers in universities, which means that English is often the lingua franca in different research environments, as well as the more widespread use of English in channels such as teaching, cooperation and publishing. Political and societal concerns about the future of the Norwegian language in academia have been rising in recent years. Research articles that have explored international researchers' perspectives have shown that not being proficient in Norwegian is one of the key barriers to inclusion for international researchers in Norway (Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2016; Flikke et al., 2020). I have therefore included language – specifically, practices and tensions between the use of Norwegian and English – as part of this project, which is empirically explored in research article 4 (Language practices and institutional power). In this article, language practices are explored through the lens of institutional power.

This framework of institutional power is important as this thesis views universities as organisations. This is based on Joan Acker's classic view of organisations as inequality regimes, where inequalities are baked into the organisations and constructions are often presented as neutral (Acker, 1990, 2006). The thesis treats universities as organisations, which is based on some models of inequality, where power is distributed across lines that are inherently gendered and racialised to privilege white male bodies as the model for work (Acker, 2006). I use this framework to examine how seemingly neutral phenomena in academic processes might create gendered inequalities, and to analyse dynamic processes of power and privilege in organisational practices (van den Brink & Benschop, 2012; Woods et al., 2021). Both the theoretical and the methodological framework have feminist perspectives on how discourses are tied to power, and an analytic gaze towards invisibilities and silences in the empirical field.

### Norwegian academia and work-culture

Before I go into the analysis, I wish to further elaborate on the particularities of the context in which the study was undertaken. The modern Norwegian university has gone from providing elite education to education for the masses, free of school fees and with student loans accessible to students of all socioeconomic classes. This is a strategy for the Norwegian government, partly for individuals' quality of life and partly to qualify the population for a changing labour market to meet societal needs, and as part of the transition for Norway to become a 'Kunnskapssamfunn' or knowledge-based society (Damsgaard, 2019). As described by Christensen et al.:

> Arguably, the Nordic region is at the forefront in the transition of what is often referred to as 'the knowledge society' or 'the knowledge economy' of the post-war era. If we add to this the relatively egalitarian distribution of knowledge and the publicly funded education in this region, and the significant and growing role assigned to expert advice

> and knowledge-based policy-making in these political systems, we could even talk of the Nordic countries as ‘knowledge-democracies’. (Christensen et al., 2017, p. 239)

In the Nordic welfare states, the public sector is large and welfare services enjoy a high degree of power. Through strong trade unions, the state and professions have traditionally had a strong alliance (Lund & Nilsen, 2020). This, in combination with historic low tolerance of social inequality, means that there is a sense of trust in academics as experts, but also strong societal expectations for institutions such as universities to benefit Norwegian society and citizens.

This is important to mention because it ties to societal views of academia and why both Norwegian language use and national focus are so important – it is one of the arenas where internationalisation is positioned as a threat. Norway’s first universities were established relatively late in a European context, and with access initially restricted for women (Sørensen, 2023; Owesen, 2022). During the 1970s, there was a large increase of students at Norwegian universities, giving birth to the so-called modern ‘masseuniversitet’ or ‘mass-university’, which has entailed a large rise in the number of students, including a strong increase in female students across disciplines (Rasmussen, 2019; Vabø & Aamodt, 2005). The rise of the Norwegian welfare state has also entailed work-line policies that aim to facilitate especially female participation in the workforce. A so-called female-friendly welfare state has generous public care services aimed at families, children and the elderly, with low tolerance of social inequality and a cultural and political focus on gender equality. The focus on gender equality can be seen as part of the Norwegian self-image as a ‘regime of goodness’ and as a role model in developmental aid. Nevertheless, gender inequalities persist, including in academia (Lund & Nilsen, 2020).

Although women have entered universities since the 1990s, both as students and later as researchers (Rasmussen, 2019), across Europe and in the Nordic countries, women tend to be underrepresented in academic top positions, are less likely to be offered tenured positions and are less likely to receive research grants (Miland, 2020). In Norway, there are gendered imbalances both vertically (between positions) and horizontally; women in academia tend to work in the arts and social sciences, whilst there are more men among natural sciences and technology, which hints that there are gendered aspects of recruitment and of men’s and women’s choices, but also that gendered imbalances are happening on a structural level between the status and organising of different disciplines (Henningsen & Liestøl, 2022). Internationalisation is often presented as a threat to gender equality, as it brings with it expectations of mobility and career expectations that might conflict with family responsibilities, potentially leaving young female academics especially vulnerable, as shown in research both from Norway (Egeland & Vabø, 2022; Brandser & Sümer, 2020) and internationally (Tan et al., 2020).

Gender equality in academia has been part of research policies in the Nordic countries longer than in most European countries, which shows its important status (Miland, 2020). Discussions around women's access to studies and higher education can be seen as a common thread running through discussions of gender equality (Owesen, 2022), and are therefore worth considering in this context.

There are two dimensions to gender equality and diversity. On a formal level, NTNU and other universities are, as employers, committed to working actively and strategically towards equality and against discrimination (The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud). Meanwhile, as I have already described, gender equality is also an important cultural ideal, and has become a goal in and of itself (Aarseth et al., 2022). Norway's cultural way of viewing gender equality as something that should be ensured through public welfare and political measures such as gender quotas (Sørensen, 2013) represents an interesting divergence in globalisation: it is one of the areas where Norway as a nation has supposed that the EU should not have influence, as we have found the 'solution' (Holst et al., 2019). This is in concurrence with historic scepticism towards the EU and European integration in Norway (Ibid.), but my reading of internationalisation in academia shows that this is a sector where European integration and the EU's programmes have been viewed much more favourably. This is an example of how a gendered dimension can have connections with several different elements within a situation, and how academia might separate itself from other parts of society.

The way in which universities and higher education institutions are being managed has undergone fundamental changes in the past 20 years, with greater focus on competition and standardised goals for knowledge production, research and education, including an increased focus on 'excellence' (Aarseth et al., 2022). During the 2000s, the universities were freed from direct departmental control, and a new model was implemented for economic results-based ways of governing the sector, based on outputs such as 'production' of students and publications, with strategic ruling competing for the best students and staff, as well as competing for external research funds in line with the EU's research policies.

This can be seen in context with international neoliberalism, new public management, and strategic management of resources in a 'knowledge market' (Rasmussen, 2019). This is in line with the EU's policies for the academic sector (Ibid.). Despite not being a member state, Norway has been very active in implementing the European Union's and European initiatives, and throughout the 2010s and 2020s, participation in the EU's programmes such as Horizon Europe has continued to be an important goal, as we will see when we examine internationalisation in national policies. Norway participated in the Bologna Process in the early 2000s, which meant adopting a higher education system based on bachelor's and master's degrees with a system of credits that could be easily readable and comparable, which facilitated both the mobility of students across Europe and European cooperation in quality assurance (Haukland, 2014). This coincided with the Quality Reform in Norway, which enabled colleges to become universities (Ibid.). Today, most Norwegian universities are expected to participate in European programmes such as Erasmus. As this thesis will show, this is an important backdrop for the ways in which internationalisation is conceptualised in policies for the academic sector.

As mentioned previously, there are some notable characteristics of how Norwegian work-life is organised. This includes the fact that there are strong organisations within the labour market that negotiate and represent employees to safeguard their rights, a tax-funded welfare state with universal benefits, public welfare services, universalistic systems aimed at promoting equality, and a strong focus on the right and duty to work, which ties in with the distribution of benefits (Bungum et al., 2015; Lund & Nilsen, 2020). Norwegian work-life can also be described as having regulation of working hours, with a strong work-environmental law regulating work-life, as well as local cooperation between representatives of employers and employees (Børve, 2008). This also means that organisational cultures at universities have some characteristics that might stand out compared to global academia. These include local cooperation between labour unions and employers, channels for university democracy and a culture for participation, and a relatively flat leadership hierarchy where leaders and people in permanent academic positions are not necessarily figures of strict authority. This thesis treats organisational culture at universities as having some cultural ideals regarding how work-life is supposed to be organised. The thesis highlights and explores some of the tensions between these elements in academic work-cultures through the lens of power.

## Methodological frameworks for studying academia

In this thesis, I treat the internationalisation of Norwegian academia as the situation, the unit to be analysed. I use a multi-sited research method, basing the analysis on both a study of documents and qualitative research interviews. This has allowed me to expand the research focus to how internationalisation presents as policies, in discourse and as lived experience. Part of what I have set out to do is to unpack the concept of 'internationalisation' and how implicit understandings colour the way it is conceptualised- rather than present it as a neutral policy.

The idea for this project grew out of my work as a research assistant on the project 'International Diversity at NTNU' (INTMANG). For the INTMANG project, I interviewed 26 staff members at NTNU, including people from the central administration as well as researchers, department leaders and administrators in three different research departments, about topics such as onboarding, social inclusion and language. The result was a research report, and the focus was practical: What were people's common experiences of topics such as onboarding routines and language practices, and what could NTNU do to improve their systems. During the interviews and analysis, I began to feel that there was more to this situation concerning mobility and inclusion/exclusion than the research report would allow me to explore. I could see links between the practical issues that people were talking about concerning inclusion, language and diversity within academia, and the common thread that encompassed them all was the phenomenon of internationalisation. Although the word was being used in some contexts that were especially connected to increased international mobility, it was strikingly hard to grasp any coherent meaning of the concept.

I therefore set out to conduct a research project to explore internationalisation in Norwegian academia. One early ambition was to explore tensions between policies, discourses and lived experiences. This grew out of the observation from the INTMANG project that both researchers and administrative workers tended to be ambivalent towards textual policies, and that people in the same department could present different interpretations of social situations and issues such as language practices and social inclusion. To explore these tensions, I was aware that I wanted to have an empirically oriented method, which would merge with a feminist organisational theoretical framework and provide me with the tools to critically explore power dynamics. I therefore chose to apply situational analysis as the methodological framework. This is a framework that is designed to address social and political phenomena from multiple angles, allowing for an empirical exploration of how internationalisation is conceptualised. It is also a methodology with feminist roots, which has allowed for the critical exploration of power dynamics relating to gender, diversity and class within internationalisation, by actively looking to disrupt existing hierarchies and look for those actors who are not usually represented in the field (Clarke, 2019).

## Situational analysis

Situational analysis is a methodology that was developed by Adele Clarke. Situational analysis (SA) has its roots within ethnography, symbolic interactionism and pragmatist philosophy. It was developed from grounded theory, which is a methodological approach developed by Strauss and Glaser (Clarke, 2005). As a research method, grounded theory (GT) has a goal to be faithful to the understandings and perspectives of the people who are studied on their own terms (Ibid.). In developing SA from GT, Adele Clarke maintains grounded theory's focus on inductive methods and the closeness to the empirical field. However, SA expands GT around an interpretive turn. This is done primarily by including theoretical and epistemological standpoints such as postmodernism and poststructuralism, and including discourses and other non-human elements in the analysis (Clarke et al., 2018).

SA can be seen as an extension of GT, sharing its pragmatism and interactionism, including a focus on how elements are relationally connected in the social world, but SA takes into account non-human elements, Strauss's social worlds arenas and Foucault's discourse analysis, which positions it as a post-humanist methodology (Clarke & Charmaz, 2019). "The most innovative part of SA as a project is to *also* bring the social – *the full situation of inquiry* – further around the interpretive turn" (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 13). One key element in Adele Clarke's project of developing SA from GT was to note the importance of discourses in social life. An SA project should therefore include the discourses that are present in the empirical field that we study (Clarke, 2005; Clarke et al., 2018, p. 217). The inclusion of discourses has been a crucial part of this thesis, as the way in which internationalisation is conceptualised through discourses is a key feature in the situational analysis.

"In SA, *the situation of inquiry itself broadly conceived becomes the key unit of analysis*" (Clarke et al., 2016, p. 12). The situation is defined empirically, where the researcher enters the empirical field with a flexibility towards the elements that are present, not merely what she expected to find in advance. What defines the boundaries of 'the situation' is determined by the empirical field, as it appears in the research project (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 49). This means that the research poses questions concerning one specific situation, positioned in a certain time and place, and answers them by analysing partial perspectives (Ibid., p. 48). "Situational analyses seek to analyze a particular situation of interest through the specification, rerepresentation and subsequent examination of the most salient elements in that situation and their relations. Some of these elements have traditionally been discussed as context" (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 50). One important aspect of the 'situation' is that it comprises both the actors and elements within the social situation, as well as the relations between them: "Everything *in* the situation *both constitutes and affects* most everything else in the situation in some way(s)" (Clarke, 2016, p. 98). The analysis should include a focus on discourses and other non-human elements.

SA's social matrix does not draw distinct differences between the macro-meso-micro levels, where the macro levels are considered external context to the situation studied. Rather, this matrix collapses such strict levels into considering different elements with the situational matrix, where all elements should be studied empirically (Clarke et al., 2018; Clarke, 2016). Rather than drawing up dualisms between actors versus structures or clear distinctions between macro-meso-micro levels in social life, Clarke's understanding of the social matrix is that a situation is messy and complex, with all relevant elements, actors and discourses being part of the social situation without a clear distinction between the local-global or human-non-human elements (Clarke et al., 2018; Clarke, 2016). In this thesis, I define national policies as a macro level, NTNU as a meso level and individual experiences as a micro level of social life, and explore the tensions between them. By referring to these three levels, I am not attempting to reinstate them, but it has been useful during the analysis to explore the tensions between them as analytical dimensions within the social situation. The situational analysis of internationalisation, which will be further explored in this introductory essay, further illustrates these tensions.

Analysing the situation based on this framework means not looking for streamlined stories and commonalities, where actors and discourses align, but rather embracing the fact that social life is messy and complex, and the researcher is encouraged to look for differences, change, ambivalence and contradictions in the empirical field, remembering that all the phenomena we are studying, and we ourselves as researchers, are all situated within a certain sociopolitical context (Clarke, 2007; Clarke et al., 2018).

One key assumption within the SA framework is to acknowledge that researchers and those we study are all embodied and situated. Research is in itself an activity that is positioned within a particular situation, as researchers are not blank slates when entering the research field. All the knowledge that is produced is therefore considered situated and embodied. Clarke's reasoning for this view builds on the ontological and epistemological framework of Donna Haraway's (1988) concept of situated knowledges. SA research thus goes against the positivist idea that researchers are blank slates. Leaning on Haraway, Clarke et al. (2018) argue that all knowers are embodied, and that knowledge production itself is embodied, as research itself is an action within a situation (Ibid., p. 42). Based on this perspective, the early part of the project built upon my initial findings from the INTMANG project, while also applying a feminist theoretical framework that is concerned with gendered and racialised power dynamics.

Clarke pays particular attention to power dynamics and gives some concrete strategies for the SA researcher to pursue this: "Analyzing power is especially important in SA as an explicitly feminist and anti-racist method, and is pursued through several strategies" (Clarke, 2019, p. 16). The strategy I have employed the most in this project has been to "specify whether there are *implicated actors* in the situation under study" (Clarke, 2019, p. 16). Looking for implicated actors who are discursively represented by others but do not themselves speak is a tool that is used for examining those kinds of power that are more subtle (Ibid.). The danger is that in seeking to represent a simple and clean version of the empirical field, we might simply end up reproducing the narratives of those who speak and represent themselves in the situation. By embracing the mess and complexities of social life, SA aims to unpack and represent some of the diverse voices of those with less power in the empirical field (Clarke, 2019, p. 17).

Clarke (2019) describes SA as a method which provides tools for analysing how power and inequality affect people both individually and in groups – analysing who has power, who speaks, who is silenced and who are the implicated actors- those who do not speak themselves but are discursively represented by actors with greater power in the situation. The analysis includes both blatant and subtle uses of power, primarily through the analysis of actors and discourses; all actors and discourses in the situation are supposed to be represented in the project, which disrupts traditional hierarchies that are taken for granted (Ibid.). This representation is a key feature in SA as a critical, poststructuralist and interpretive methodology (Clarke, 2019). The interpretive turn from which SA was developed also incorporated critiques from social movements such as civil rights, anti-racism, LGBT and feminist movements. Insights from critiques of how mainstream research practices reproduce systems of class, race and gender have generated critical approaches, especially the feminist adage that “lived experience matters” (Clarke, 2019, p. 9.).

Within an SA project, there is no such thing as irrelevant context that exists outside of the specific research focus being studied: rather, I have included all elements that have appeared in the empirical situation, whether it be on the global scale, in external discourses, key events or lived experience in the workplace (Clarke, 2005, 2019). A situational analysis includes not only human participants but also non-human actors that are parts of the situation which we study, such as technologies. Including these helps to elucidate complexities and bring in perspectives that might be marginalised within the situation (Clarke et al., 2018). This has included both actors and discourses. “SA explicitly takes the nonhuman elements in the situation of inquiry into account both materially and discursively” (Ibid., p. 91). Viewing a situation from the perspective of SA means acknowledging that we are constantly surrounded by discourses, either visual, narrative, historical, textual or oral. We participate in both reproducing them and consuming them (Clarke et al., 2018). The research strategy has been to map both the elements of the situation and the relations between them (Clarke, 2019).

This framework has been useful for this project because I have been interested in how power works and the power dynamics that are present in the situation of internationalisation. When presenting the theoretical framework, I will discuss the topic of categories within power in more detail. The methodological framework directs the attention to how power is mediated through discourses within institutions. The constructivist and poststructuralist roots of SA have also provided me with a research interest in internationalisation as lived experience. The goal of the research is not just to unfold and investigate the social world but also to look for those who often do not speak or are not prioritised in research or in the empirical field (Clarke, 2019; Clarke et al., 2018; Clarke, 2016). The focus on power leads to two analytical goals within an SA project: to be critical of existing hierarchies, and to be mindful of discursive representations.

### A situational analysis of internationalisation

What does it mean that I have conducted a situational analysis of how internationalisation is conceptualised in discourses and policies, and how it shapes academic work-cultures? As mentioned above, doing a situational analysis means that the research question has been empirically phrased and has shaped the way that this project explores internationalisation from different angles. I have treated the internationalisation of Norwegian academia as the key unit of analysis. The situation that draws the limit for what is relevant has always been ‘internationalisation’, not NTNU or Norwegian academia. Norwegian political and cultural elements have been treated as important parts of the situation only in that they relate to internationalisation as foils or contrasts to academia. Within this situation, I have used NTNU as an empirical site to explore different elements within the situation and their relations to each other, which is a key research interest within SA.

I have used abductive research methods to explore the situation of internationalisation. This means that I have conducted empirical research, conceptualised the data, and then returned to the empirical sampling based on early analysis. I was aware that in all research projects there remains a risk of prematurely closing analytical possibilities as articles and drafts starts to take shape (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 196). I have achieved this by mapping and alternating between generating/gathering empirical data and theoretical sampling of the data, until I found nothing substantially new that was relevant (Clarke et al., 2018). I therefore used the tools of continuously drawing out situational maps, the relations within them and the social worlds. I did this to ensure that fundamental elements of the situation of inquiry that I had not been aware of but that appeared empirically were given their due place. This enabled me to make note of new ideas and directions (Ibid., p. 197). Using abductive logics, the ‘situation’ of internationalisation has been treated as elastic; I have used inductive logics to allow the situation to unfold empirically, before conceptualising the findings and allowing these findings to guide the further exploration.

With this framework, this project treats the internationalisation of Norwegian academia as situated in a particular context, constructed in the social world through discourses, with key elements that are all related to each other. Through a theoretical framework that is critical towards power dynamics, I have searched for all empirical elements within the situation and their relations with each other. This has been a multi-sited research project, including the discourse materials that exist in Norwegian academia through textual discourses, as well as the discourse materials produced by actors within NTNU. The decision to include a focus on lived experience, was based on the poststructuralist idea that people’s experiences and sense-making are important in their social life. In this way, the analysis explores the tensions between these levels that have appeared empirically in national policies (macro level), in the organisational culture at NTNU, (meso level) and among staff (micro level).

The fact that the project includes a focus on the relationship between internationalisation, gender and diversity comes partly from situational analysis' roots in feminist research with the aim of being critical of power structures and hierarchies (Clarke, 2019) and partly from the existing literature on feminist analyses of work and organisation showing the power dynamics in academia and organisational life (Acker, 1990; 2006; 2012; Smith, 2005). In this project, I have viewed both gender and diversity as both discursive and social constructions, and as relevant parts of people's lived experience, with the theoretical assumption that they are tied to power relations in the social world.

Based in SA's roots as a methodology that is interested in power, I have used the framework of feminist organisational theories. This means that I have specifically treated 'gender' as a deductive lens. International diversity is something that has appeared empirically from the abductive method. By using this inductive strategy, international diversity and language tensions have appeared as two important parts of the internationalisation situation, both in academia and at NTNU. These were elements in my initial messy situational map but rose as important elements through the importance they seem to have empirically, thereby illustrating the usefulness of the abductive approach. This research process has resulted in four research articles. The first article comprises a critical discourse analysis of NTNU's policies concerning internationalisation, using a deductive framework of looking for gender as a category. The second research article is the result of the interviews with university administrators, exploring their perspectives on internationalisation from the views of the people managing the everyday work-life behind the organisational discourses. The third research article appeared inductively and explores an interesting topic that appeared during the interviews: how the administrators frame key issues concerning international diversity at NTNU. The fourth research article explores language tensions – another inductive topic that appeared important – and comprises a large interview pool of both university administrators and researchers. These four research articles focus on NTNU as an empirical site. To also include extant discourse material and acknowledge that there is no such thing as irrelevant context outside of the situation, this first part of the thesis also includes an exploration of internationalisation in national policies for academia. In the cross-cutting analysis, I view all four research articles in the context of feminist organisational theories.

In analysing how gender and diversity are related to internationalisation, I have actively used the concept of 'silence' as an analytical tool. This was important in choosing interviewees. In choosing interviewees, I was inspired by SA's question of who often gets to self-represent in the field, and who is either not present or present but represented by others without speaking in the field (Clarke, 2016, p. 94), which led me to the perspective of university administrators. Using SA tools, I soon found that research on academia tends to focus on either students or researchers, whilst there has been less research on the people who work to *manage* internationalisation – university administrators – especially studies focusing on their lived experience and perspectives on Norwegian universities. I therefore decided to start the interview process by interviewing people working in the university administration connected to different parts of internationalisation processes, including labour union representatives. Later, when writing research article 4 concerning language tensions at NTNU, I would also incorporate interview material from the INTMANG project with researchers, department leaders, and local and central administrators, to diversify the voices in the complex area of language practices. However, the interviews used to explore invisible labour and perspectives on internationalisation were those conducted with university administrators.

Gender was included in my interview guide and was something I brought up during the interviews, but my empirical findings on this topic were not substantial; most recognised that gender might be a relevant dimension within internationalisation and in academia, but they did not see it as a large issue in their own work-lives or at NTNU. I have therefore not explored it in the articles that are based on interview material. This might be considered one of the weaknesses of an empirically oriented situational analysis – that it in some ways limits the researcher's possibilities by bringing in underlying structures that the interviewees are unconscious of. Research has also shown that the university organisation in Norwegian academia has several gendered blind spots (Flikke, 2022; Thun, 2020). However, I have applied gender dynamics as a deductive lens in the analysis through the conscious use of SA's concept of 'blindness' and 'silences' in the empirical exploration. I have used gender as a deductive lens in the analysis of policy documents explored in research article 1, and instead focused the analysis of the qualitative interviews on what empirically appeared important here. As SA is a very empirically oriented methodology, this concept of looking for silences in the empirical material is a useful tool to avoid reproducing blind spots. Through this approach, international diversity and language tensions have been uncovered and unpacked as important elements within the empirical situation of internationalisation at NTNU.

## Sensitising concepts from institutional ethnography

Situational analysis is the methodological framework of this thesis. However, while immersing myself in the field through the multi-sited research strategy, I realised that the research project could benefit from bringing in other analytical concepts, as long as they did not conflict with the aims of situational analysis. For this work, I have found several useful concepts in the work of feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith. Adele Clarke (2019, p. 9) refers to Dorothy Smith as a pioneer within feminist research. Smith developed the methodology of institutional ethnography (IE), which is a method of inquiry that is especially useful for studying organisations and policies. The sensitising concepts chosen from Smith largely coincide with the feminist organisational theories of Joan Acker, which I will come back to later.

Institutional ethnography is a method that examines the local sites of people's experiences and makes visible how these are connected to a larger web of social relations (Smith, 2005, p. 29). IE has increasingly gained recognition in Norway in the past decade, and is a method of inquiry that lends itself well to be combined with other theories as long as they share the ontological ambition to unpack social relations rather than prematurely categorising them (Lund & Nilsen, 2020). There are some key differences between Smith's sociology and situational analysis, which I will come back to later, and this thesis is not a hybrid project. I have however found it useful to employ the following concepts from Smith in the empirical field: *standpoints, institutions as textual complex, institutional discourses, local-translocal, work-knowledges* and *ruling relations.*

IE is a method of inquiry that uses subject positions as the starting point, thus differing from Clarke's emphasis on the situation as the key unit of analysis. Smith's epistemology directs the researcher to begin the institutional exploration in the local, lived actualities of people's lives in the everyday world, identifying people's *standpoints* and using them as the starting point from which to study institutional processes (Smith, 2005). In developing IE, Smith wanted to examine how socially constructed 'facts' work to coordinate activities of people acting within organisations, and she was especially interested in how texts function as mediators or rulers of institutional power. Through texts, people in interconnected institutional positions operate within a regime that coordinates their actions. The goal of this research is a sociology that opens things up, to produce knowledge that is useful to people (DeVault, 2023). Thus, Smith's approach has been useful in making visible how internationalisation shapes subject positions and experiences within the working culture at NTNU.

*Institutions* themselves are presented as complexes embedded in the *ruling relations* that are organised around a certain function. Ruling relations refers to:

> That extraordinary yet ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across space and time and organize our everyday lives – the corporations, government bureaucracies, academic and professional discourses, mass media, and the complex of relations that interconnect them. (Smith, 2005, p. 10)

The ruling relations are mediated through text between the local and translocal, and shape people's and institutions' consciousness, their activities and organisation (Smith, 2005). Institutions are thus not singular forms, but "complexes of relations" that are mediated through texts that connect local activities to translocal activities, that interconnect everyday lives across time and space (Ibid., p. 10). In all institutions, there are social relations and organisations that are mediated through texts that coordinate what people do and how they think within the institution (Ibid., p. 227). Textual and spoken *institutional discourses* are widely read and interpreted among participants of the institutions, which might lead to people knowing how to speak it – what Smith calls 'institutional capture'. However, according to Smith, people within the institution still have some agency in the institutional processes. Dominant discourses do not move from the top level down in a straight line; rather, people participate in reproducing discourses through the text-reader conversation, with the potential to both participate and disrupt them through their agency and actions (Smith, 2005). This view of discourses rests on Michel Foucault's view that discourses locate systems of knowledge-making beyond individuals, to ways of speaking or writing about a phenomenon (Ibid., p. 17).

Norman Fairclough, whose critical discourse analysis I use in this analysis, Dorothy Smith and Adele Clarke all connect the way in which discourses exist in the social world to modes of power. These processes lead to activities being similar across local settings, although workers still have agency, and will interpret and translate them to local settings in their own ways, through an active text-reader conversation (Lund, 2012; Smith, 2005). The way in which institutions use language and texts to coordinate people's work and activities is seen as a way of expressing power (Smith, 2005).

I am also inspired by the way that Smith views work: *work* is not merely what people are paid to do and what is in their job description, but rather "anything that people do that takes time, effort and intent" (Smith, 2005, p. 229). In IE, this view is supposed to orient the researcher towards what people are actually doing as they participate in the institutional process (Ibid.). I have used this concept in my project to explore the hidden sides of a university administrator's work, especially concerning the many institutional facets of internationalisation, and how this work is hidden within the university. In this analysis, which can be read about in research article 2, I especially employed Smith's concept of *work-knowledges*. This term refers to "what people know of and in their work and how it is coordinated with the work of others" (Smith, 2005, p. 229). I have used this as a tool to unpack some of the invisible labour performed behind internationalisation as an institutional discourse.

Viewed from this perspective, the internationalisation of Norwegian academia is a phenomenon that is promoted and conceptualised in national policies, and textually mediated to universities as national institutions. From this perspective, all research activities, such as teaching, publishing and research, participate in Smith's 'ruling relations' – i.e., translocal processes that standardise local activities and hook them onto larger policies and discourses (Lund, 2012). This is now, however, a straight top-down process, as the way that policies such as internationalisation is conceptualised at the local institutional level will also have some bottom-up effects for the national level. This tension between local-translocal rests on people's agency. Discourses around internationalisation are mediated through texts, which are interpreted and reproduced by universities through translocal activities. The way in which universities appropriate them and embed them into local processes will then influence the experiences and activities of workers within the institution. Textual discourses organise and coordinate people's experiences, perspectives and activities in everyday life, but across all levels there are possibilities for resistance and for the local to influence the translocal. Both institutions (as represented by those who shape institutional policies) and the workers within them have possibilities to express institutional loyalty and reproduce the discourses, but they also have agency to resist or shape the way in which they are reproduced (Smith, 2005). There will always be local influences on the way that discourses are embedded and translated, both top-down and bottom-up, which makes it possible to study changes and tensions in the social process as SA directs.

These sensitising concepts have been used as inspiration to enable insights into how institutions such as universities use texts to shape discourses, which shapes people's work lives and knowledges. This has been especially useful as an analytical gaze to examine the relationship between the different levels and the importance of text and textual discourses, within the framework of a multi-sited situational analysis.

## Multi-sited data gathering and empirical material

To capture as many elements within the situation as possible, as well as the relations between them, this thesis has been a multi-sited project. This means that, inspired by SA, I have examined multiple kinds of genres of data from the situation (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 228) as the empirical data. This has included written texts that comprise discourse materials, as well as interviews. I have used four different types of method: analytical mapping as laid out in SA, documents and texts, critical discourse analysis of text, and qualitative research interviews. The documents represent policies and discourses, whilst the interviews explore internationalisation as a lived experience.

## Research methods for a situational analysis

### Mapping

Mapping is an important research strategy tool within the methodology of SA. I started the research project by immersing myself in the field of academia, using internationalisation as a key word. Because I started this project at the very start of the corona pandemic in March 2020, this immersion took place through policy documents from the Norwegian government, NTNU's policy documents (concerning both internationalisation and more general topics), and national and researcher media articles that discussed internationalisation or a phenomenon connected to it. As part of this institutional exploration, I have also observed committee meetings relating to different parts of the internationalisation work at NTNU, and paid close attention to the media and public debate around this topic.

From this, I drew up an initial situational map, which is the first type of map that is created in an SA project (Clarke et al., 2018). A situational map should include all potentially analytically relevant elements within a situation – both human and non-human, including relevant discourses– as framed by the researcher and those within the situation. The key is to include all things that really matter within the situation of inquiry (Ibid., pp. 128–129). I drew several of these types of maps in which all elements in the situation of internationalisation were included, both human and non-human. The first messy maps included elements that I assumed would be important (where I used my previous knowledge as a resource, made possible by situational analysis' acknowledgement that rather than hiding our pre-existing knowledge we should acknowledge it), and the rest were empirical. I used these maps to construct the internationalisation of Norwegian academia as it appeared empirically, noting both commonalities and differences between the different levels.

After the first situational maps were finished, I started to make relational maps. The purpose of the relational map is to find "*relations among the various elements*" (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 138). This map should be based on the messy situational map and develop the empirical analysis further by exploring the relationship between different elements, including human and non-human, such as people and discourses, finding out whether they matter to each other, as well as how and why (Ibid.). The primary round of qualitative research interviews was completed a few months into the project, in the autumn of 2020, and these perspectives and positions were added in both the situational and relational maps. One assumption within SA is that "everything *in* the situation *both constitutes and affects* most everything else in the situation in some way(s)" (Clarke, 2016, p. 98). After identifying those elements in the situation that appeared to be most relevant, the next step was to explore the relations between them, including between human and non-human aspects. I identified people's relationships with discourses as one such relevant element, noting the tensions that had appeared in the interviews for the INTMANG project. How people relate to institutional discourses has been part of what I explored in research article 2 (administrative perspectives on internationalisation).

The last type of map I drew were social worlds/arenas maps. The purpose of these is to explore how to make *collective* sense of the empirical world: what are the different groups that people and collectives are participating in? I drew circles to find where there were patterns, collective actors and groups with shared interests, and how they relate to each other (Clarke et al., 2018). The goal of these maps is to "locate the research project in its broader situation vis-à-vis organizational and institutional actors active in the situation, not to focus narrowly on the project per se" (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 154). I have used these maps to map out the social worlds within NTNU, as they are present both in the textual discourses and in the interview material. Drawing and redrawing these maps constitute analytical exercises that enable the drawing and testing of boundaries of the situation of internationalisation, allowing the empirical field to be the boundary for what is relevant.

The maps have thus been used both as entry paths into the data and as analytical exercises (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 106) to engage with the empirical field abductively.

### Documents and texts

The first part of the multi-sited data material comprised textual documents. Texts and policies are important both in SA and for Smith. The focus on policies is part of Clarke's intention to show the interested parties within the situation (Clarke, 2005). The importance of the inclusion of discourses is because I assume, like Clarke et al. (2018), that "language influences how people see, understand and interpret everything around them" (Ibid., p. 219). Textual discourses are also important in the way that Smith views institutions, as I have described above. Inspired by SA's claim that there is no such thing as irrelevant context to a social situation, I have not only included discourse material that I have produced based on people within the situation, but have also included extant discourse material, produced by people active in the situation (Ibid.). I have chosen to focus on policies that directly concern the way in which internationalisation is conceptualised.

The chosen documents were selected through a thematic organising of documents and texts. The extant discourse material for this project comprised national policy documents, which were taken from the Norwegian government's digital archives. I have traced the word 'internationalisation' since its inception and until the spring of 2024 through all documents, which generated over 1,000 results. The method I used for this process was a simple thematic analysis. The documents were first skimmed, and I made notes as to where internationalisation appears, its frequency and the particular ways in which it was described. I read more thoroughly those documents that were particularly related to research and higher education. This job was made easier by the fact that the policies tended to refer to and build on each other in summaries or when they were recommending changes. I traced internationalisation as far back as I could find in NTNU's policies on a detailed level, reading all relevant documents and making notes of where I found either the word internationalisation or the concept of international orientations in activities for students or researchers. I then constructed a timeline over the most important milestones, and sorted out which themes could be identified across the policies. Throughout this analysis, I have been mindful of SA's ambition to not only look for a streamlined, simplified story but to also look for changes, opposition and ambivalence. This analysis has been included as a discursive backdrop to NTNU's internationalisation policies as part of the institutional network in which they participate (Smith, 2005).

The way in which I approached the document analysis of NTNU's policies was a little different. I began this data gathering by searching NTNU's digital archives for all their institutional documents, both those meant for external use, such as official plans, and the available drafts, meeting notes from committees and strategy documents. Similarly to the strategy in thematically sorting the national documents, I traced the word ‘internationalisation’ and searched for the word ‘international’ in all these documents. I sorted through all documents, making a timeline of when the word internationalisation first appeared, and making notes of what types of documents mentioned this phenomenon, how it was mentioned, the frequency, whether the wording was positive or negative, and what contexts and other concepts it was connected to. I could trace ambitions concerning increased internationalisation in internal documents as far back as 1999, which surprised me and shows that NTNU was slightly ahead of the curve. After the first initial readings and early analysis, I selected seven key documents that were the most relevant and decided to let them become the data material for the first article I wrote (Flikke, 2022). For this analysis I used the method of critical discourse analysis.

### Critical discourse analysis

Situational analysis opens for the inclusion of analysis of written text and textual discourses as elements within the social situation being studied, but does not provide detailed guidance on how to concretely conduct a discourse analysis. Smith’s sensitising concepts provide tools to identify texts and discourses within an institution, what they are, and how they impact people’s work-lives and knowledge, but not how to analyse them and their relations with each other. ‘Discourse analysis’ is a common term for many different practices that share the same assumption that language influences how people see and understand the world around them (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 219). Because discourse analysis is such a broad term, I found it necessary to choose one method with which to analyse the textual discourses in the documents. I chose to use critical discourse analysis, as developed by Norman Fairclough.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a method that is well suited to studying policies. CDA brings together language studies with a critical social analysis. The focus is both on discourses and on the relation between discourses and other elements in the social world, including institutions and power relations. CDA has normative elements; the goal is not simply to describe the discourses but to explain structures with the aim of changing them (Fairclough, 2012, p. 9). From this perspective, discourses are ways of representing the world – as elements in the social process, as part of the way that meaning-making happens through language (Fairclough, 2010, 2012). Fairclough is concerned not only with discourses in themselves but also with their interrelatedness: discourses are related to each other, but also to other social elements (Fairclough, 2012). Fairclough has a dialectical view of discourses, and is concerned not only with the internal elements but also the external relations they have with other objects (Fairclough, 2010, 2012). This interrelated relationship between discourses is well suited to the goal of SA to find the relations between various elements. I have used SA and CDA in combination to explore both the relations between discourses and other elements in the situation, and the relations between different discourses as they are present in texts.

Fairclough has written extensively about CDA since the 1990s, and there are several discussions around this method. When applying CDA to textual documents, I have used the following steps. I concretely analysed texts to find the textual discourses through the linguistic analysis of wordings and phrasings. Then, I analysed the interdiscursive relationships in the text: how different discourses, genres and styles are drawn upon, and how they are articulated together. I also seriously considered the normative aspect of CDA, in that phenomena are explained with a view to how problems can be righted, examining both how things exist and how they should ideally exist (Fairclough, 2010). One key aspect I have taken from CDA is the connection between textual discourses and other elements in the social practice (Fairclough, 2010, 2012). I have chosen power, which is a key theme in CDA. CDA has a primary focus on the effect of power relations and inequalities, and the discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities. Discourses might be ideological and used by people in power to represent the world in certain ways. While this is not inherently wrong, Fairclough argues that this is a way in which discourses are used to sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough, 2010). One further point within CDA is that that ideologies in discourses might also be found in what is “unsaid” (Ibid., p. 27), which I have used as a further motivation to look for silences.

Viewing the textual policies from this perspective, internationalisation is a phenomenon in academia that is constructed in a certain way through linguistic tools such as phrasings and arguments, repeated until they shape a discourse that is then repeated through the different levels from the macro level to the different universities. The first part of the CDA of internationalisation was to see how the textual sense-making around internationalisation happens in policies: how internationalisation is described and presented, whether the words used are positive or negative, and how language is used to imbue this phenomenon with a certain meaning. I have assumed that the way in which it is argued for will reveal the worldview of the people shaping the discourses (Fairclough, 2010). Key questions to ask were: What sorts of words are connected to internationalisation? How is it conceptualised and promoted? Are there positive or negative connotations? In what types of documents does it appear, and how frequently? This also included a timelapse perspective of when the word first appeared and whether the meaning or connotations changed over time, which allowed me to see developments in the discourses. The second part that is important in CDA is the inter-relationality between discourses: how some ways of operationalising internationalisation become dominant, whilst other interpretations or strands of critique might not get the same status or place in the texts. I have also used this as a tool to look for the changes and ambivalences that Clarke points out.

This is the strategy of analysis by which I have viewed the textual empirical material in this thesis. This includes how I have conducted the thematic organising of national policies concerning internationalisation, as well as being the research method for the discourse analysis in two of the research articles in the thesis. For the first research article, I had to use one specific method, and I chose Fairclough's critical discourse analysis of key documents from 2006 to 2018. I also used Fairclough as the method of analysis in research article 3, as his perspective on competing discourses and power provided a relevant tool to extract the interviewees' criticisms of employer-employee relationships and diversity.

Fairclough refers to CDA as a transdisciplinary analysis that should have a transdisciplinary methodology, allowing for various entry points into the discourse analysis, as discourses should not be seen in isolation but always in relation to other elements (Fairclough, 2010, p. 5). I therefore view it as useful to apply CDA as a research strategy within the situational analysis. The analysis of text and discourses and the critical view of power dynamics as concepts merges well within a situational analysis, despite some ontological and epistemological differences. One key difference is that CDA is based upon a realist social ontology, where social events and structures are seen as part of social reality (Fairclough, 2010, p. 74), which differs from SA's poststructuralist perspective. Discourses have material consequences in the social world, and power works through discourses, as it affects the distribution of resources. However, Fairclough's drawing of connections between textual discourses to power and material consequences in the social world is an ontological stance that I believe supports Clarke's fundamental idea of including discourses in a situational analysis research project. Both methods are concerned with power dynamics and with the role played by discourses in the social world. I therefore consider CDA, alongside the sensitising concepts from Dorothy Smith, to have been a useful tool for the situational analysis.

### Qualitative research interviews

The other part of my data material comprises qualitative research interviews. This research method was chosen to explore internationalisation as lived experience. I conducted 12 interviews specifically for this project. In choosing the interviewees, I examined the policies and the previous research literature, and found that there tends to be a high focus on internationalisation as it pertains to researchers, students, researcher culture, and activities such as publishing, research cooperation and mobility. What I identified as an under-studied field that might be interesting to explore was the experiences and perspectives of people working in the university administration, especially those concerned with internationalisation. I therefore started looking at NTNU's webpages about people who had different roles relating to internationalisation.

I started the interview process in September 2020, with five interviews with people working in a unit in the central administration of NTNU managing internationalisation and mobility, as well as two people working in the Human Resources division. I also recruited two representatives of large labour unions at the university. I included these to incorporate a perspective of people working directly in contact with employees from all over the university, both Norwegian and with an international background, and because this is a group that I had rarely seen in the research literature on Norwegian academia. As this process has a methodological and theoretical framework focusing on gender and diversity, I also contacted someone who specialises in these topics at NTNU. By choosing these interviewees as the basis by which to explore perceptions and experiences with internationalisation, this project fulfils Smith's ambition to give a voice to experience-based knowledge that is often not represented in the institution (Homanen, 2020).

All the interviews were initially intended to last for about one hour. Some were conducted in less time, around 45 minutes, others went a little beyond, but most were finished by around the one-hour mark. I contacted the interviewees through their work-emails and invited them to an hour-long interview about internationalisation, either physically or digitally. I offered the digital solution to show respect for the ongoing corona pandemic, which at that time did not require full isolation, but local considerations and caution, with individuals drawing their own boundaries for interaction and travel. I had no trouble recruiting interviewees as all the people whom I contacted responded quickly and positively to the project and the invitation. I attribute this both to their interest in their work field and to the fact that I contacted them as an NTNU insider, specifying why I wanted to talk to them in particular, and showing flexibility as to how and when the interviews could happen. All interviews took place in the interviewee's own offices or in meeting rooms close to either my or their workspaces in NTNU's locales, with the exception of three interviews, which took place via the Teams digital platform.

The interview guide included open-ended questions about what their work responsibilities were; what internationalisation meant from their perspective; what its positive and perhaps more challenging sides are, for both Norway and NTNU; what could be improved; and how they communicate work topics with others (such as how they discuss topics with their co-workers and with leaders). I also asked about their relationship to policies and institutional guidelines, what documents were particularly relevant in their work, and whether there were any documents that they felt I should familiarise myself with in this research project. This was intended both as a learning opportunity for me and as an opportunity to examine the administrator's relationship with the institution and textual discourses. One methodological challenge regarding 'getting behind' the textual discourses was how to avoid the 'institutional captures' – i.e., the situation whereby both the researcher and the interviewee are familiar with the institutional discourses, and the lived experience gets subsumed by this (Smith, 2005). During research article 2, I therefore focused on unpacking how the interviewees responded to the question regarding internationalisation as a discourse and as a concept at NTNU, and the language they used. As I had already started the analysis of internationalisation as a textual discourse at NTNU, the first analysis of this part of the interviews included looking at the language the interviewees used – looking for signs of both institutional capture and change and opposition (i.e., SA) – which led me to identify what I call 'institutional ruptures' in the article.

Using inductive methods in exploration of the institution, I asked each interviewee whom they cooperated with and whether they knew somebody whom they thought I should talk to. Through this method I also contacted and spoke to two senior advisors who were involved or had been involved in processes that could supplement the interview material. I contacted these two people in August 2021 to supplement the material. For these supplementary interviews I tweaked the interview guide a little; after asking them about their work and perspectives on internationalisation, both in their workplace and at NTNU, I specifically inquired about the projects they were or had been involved in that had led to my interest in speaking to them. In addition to questions about their responsibilities and perspectives on internationalisation, I asked about the specific areas that they had been involved in, how this process had come to be, what was positive, what had improved at NTNU and what could still be improved. I also included one question about how they saw language practices at NTNU, as this was something that had come up during all the previous interviews and that I had included as a key feature in my situational maps. After these two rounds of interviews, I ended up with 12 carefully selected key interviewees who represented both themselves and the university administration, and provided perspectives on the university culture. After completing these, I conducted an initial thematic sorting of the interviews before sending them out to be transcribed, and found that there was a richness in the material that allowed me to conclude the interview process.

All interviews were recorded and sent for transcription. I also took notes during and immediately after each interview, which I included as part of the early analytical reflections, using the principle of writing memos in SA (Clarke et al., 2018). After each interview, I sorted and coded the findings thematically, drawing up maps of how the interviewees experienced and viewed internationalisation, what they saw as positive or challenging, their relationship with textual discourses, and how they responded to the question of gender considerations and how internationalisation affects different groups. I also made notes about content that had come up that was not part of the interview guide, or anything that surprised me, and included these in the situational, relational and social worlds/arenas maps as empirical findings. Through a thematic organising of the topics the interviewees spoke about, especially how they answered the question of how internationalisation affects different 'groups' at the university, I constructed research article 3 focusing on how the administrators framed international diversity at NTNU and some of the key issues that were experienced.

When constructing the interview guide, I struggled for a while with how to incorporate questions of diversity, as this is a term that, in many fields, carries specific connotations. I was aware that the way in which I phrased questions of 'diversity' would influence my responses. My solution was to include a question that concerned whether internationalisation is the same for everybody, or whether it affects some *groups* differently than others. The phrasing of this question was deliberately open-ended in order to note what kind of 'categories' people would bring up, to possibly unveil what is seen as important in the empirical field. I made a note of how they interpreted the question of 'groups' and what their first responses were. After some of the interviewees brought up international diversity and it became a key part of my situational map, I began to ask administrators about international diversity within the situation of internationalisation if they did not bring it up themselves.

Through interviews, I was able to unpack some of the experiences, thoughts and perceptions around how internationalisation affects the work-culture at NTNU. Participants were asked about their perception of internationalisation as a phenomenon, what it means at their university, their relationship to university policies, what they saw as positive and what they saw as lacking. I constructed the interview guide to capture two sides to their stories: one being the interviewees' own experiences of their work, and the other being how they experience the work-culture at the university around them. I included this as a topic because it would be interesting to hear the perspectives of people who work with researchers, local and central administrators, and leaders.

Language tensions also appeared as empirically important, as all the administrators mentioned the tensions between the use of Norwegian and the increased use of English – usually unprompted by me. At the same time, concerns about the widespread use of English in Norwegian academia became a topic in the public debate and politics, with a new law for universities calling for more use of Norwegian. Whilst concern about the anglicisation of academia is nothing new (such concerns have been raised in Norway since the 1970s (Linn, 2016)), there is relatively little research on it in a Norwegian context. I therefore felt that this was worth a full exploration in a research article.

The university administrators I had interviewed were mainly Norwegian or had full proficiency in the Norwegian language, probably because Norwegian is the primary language of the university administration. In order to fully explore the complexities and 'mess' (i.e. situational analysis), I therefore included interview material from the INTMANG project for the final article included in the thesis. This comprised 26 qualitative research interviews that I had conducted either myself or together with professors connected to the project, which resulted in the research report*: International diversity at NTNU: A qualitative study of the experiences of incoming researchers, management and administrative staff*. This interview pool included: department leaders, local administrators, central administrators, and researchers in all categories from PhD students to professors across three disciplines at NTNU. These had also been one-hour long qualitative interviews with people working at NTNU, who were contacted through their work-emails and invited to speak about their experiences regarding NTNU as a workplace. Language had been a part of these interviews and a topic in the following research report, but on a practical level, and I felt that there was more here to be explored through the context of internationalisation, power dynamics and patterns of inequalities. This has been explored in research article 4, which I co-wrote with my supervisor Siri Øyslebø Sørensen.

The situational analysis of the internationalisation of Norwegian academia is thus fulfilled by four empirical research articles: a critical discourse analysis of NTNU's internationalisation policies (article 1), an institutional ethnography of internationalisation as work-knowledge of university administrators (article 2), an analysis of international diversity from the administrators' perspectives (article 3), and an analysis of tensions between the use of Norwegian and English at NTNU (article 4). Before this empirical exploration, I will analyse national policies for internationalisation, and analyse the four research articles in context through the framework of feminist organisational theories.

## Epistemological reflections

After presenting the various methodological approaches used in this project, it is necessary to reflect on some of the epistemological questions that arise when using different analytical approaches and concepts. Situational analysis has been the methodological frame for this thesis, and Clarke's research strategies have informed the research project. I have brought in concepts from Smith's institutional ethnography and used Fairclough's critical discourse analysis to help with the empirical analysis in the situational analysis.

SA and IE have different epistemological bases. SA argues for moving the analytical focus beyond the subject to centring the *situation,* using mapping as a tool for exploring and unpacking as many facets of the empirical field as possible, including discourses. The poststructuralist principles of SA also mean there is a focus on lived experience, which is where I draw the inspiration to analyse both policies and experience, and the tensions between them. By contrast, Smith's IE has an epistemology where the researcher should begin the exploration of the institution from the perspective of people who do not occupy positions of power, identifying alternative standpoints (Smith, 2005). SA is a methodology with certain methods, and IE is a method of inquiry. However, they both share an epistemological interest in the exploration and discovery of the empirical field. They also share an interest in discourses, the critical analysis of power and feminist roots, which is appropriate for a research project with an interest in gender and diversity dynamics.

Power is a key word in both these frameworks. Smith is interested in how power is enacted through textual discourses that coordinate people's activities beyond their workplaces in ruling-relations, from the local to the translocal level. Although I find several strengths in SA's empirical orientation, Smith contributes with the perspective that translocal discourses affect local contexts, and that institutions have both local and translocal elements. I find this stepwise exploration starting with local people's lives as a good inspiration for laying out the research project, as it fits with SA's open-ended empirically driven research process. I am not the first to combine Smith's IE with other feminist studies – Homanen used IE in a hybrid project with Haraway's feminist studies of technoscience. Homanen (2020) uses these two theories in a hybrid project and shows that rather than attempting to reconcile their differences and fusing them into one smooth theory, researchers can explore different sides of the empirical field. Similarly, I have not attempted to merge Smith's institutional ethnography with situational analysis to create a new methodology. Rather, I have used situational analysis as the methodology, and used some concepts from Smith as analytical tools to enrich the situational analysis of internationalisation.

Similarly, CDA as developed by Fairclough as a strategy of analysis has also been a useful tool for the situational analysis. SA argues that discourses are a key feature of the social world, and Smith argues that textual discourses are a key way of exerting power. This is also Fairclough's ontological approach. He argues that discourses have material consequences in the social world, which can be studied by analysing the dominant discourses in institutions, who gets represented, and who does not. Through a concrete linguistic study of documents, this method has been helpful in analysing the role that discourses play in internationalisation as a situation. CDA's idea of discourses as having material consequences has also strengthened the thesis's focus on how conceptualisations of internationalisation might have material consequences in the social world. Using a social realist discourse analysis has therefore aided in the analysis.

These tools have been especially useful in the empirical analysis of the research articles. In research article 1, CDA is the analytical tool used for analysing the textual discourses in NTNU's internationalisation policies, and in research article 2, I have applied IE as the main method for exploring the standpoints and work-knowledges of the university administrators. For the complete situational analysis for the thesis, I have used their shared interest in discourses and power dynamics to approach the different elements within internationalisation from different angles.

### Weaknesses and limits in the methodology

There have been some practical issues in the situational analysis. One central question, which is discussed by Clarke et al. (2018), is how to define the boundaries of a situation, as it will be impossible for one PhD thesis to include and analyse *all* elements within the situation. I have taken seriously SA's approach to letting the empirical exploration draw the natural boundary, and stopped when I felt that I had enough material to explore tensions and a multitude of perspectives. I gathered and analysed textual documents and completed interviews, using mapping to form pictures of the social world until the outline of the four research articles became clear. After these pictures had formed, I stopped looking for new data material, but this does not mean that there was nothing new in the empirical field. I acknowledge that there probably are elements within internationalisation, relations between them or different perspectives that I have not explored. Using a methodology with roots in grounded theory, one risks becoming *too* focused on purely the empirical field, neglecting insight into the research field, especially when it comes to theory (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 59). I have tried to avoid this by using the abductive method suggested in the SA readings on which I have based this thesis, and treating the empirical situation as elastic as I expand both the empirical and theoretical mapping. It is, nevertheless, important to acknowledge that this is a situational analysis that has been carried out in a situated context and approached from someone with a particular interest in SA's feminist strategies.

One ethical concern has arisen in choosing whether to openly identify NTNU. The purpose of naming NTNU has not been to name and shame the institution or figures who have worked to conceptualise and implement internationalisation in the way that it has happened; rather, identifying NTNU as the empirical site allows me to give some context about the size, history and organisation, which I consider relevant for the analysis.

As I have based this study partly on interviews with people in very distinct roles in the university administration, one ethical concern with naming the university has been how to anonymise the interviewees who work in specific administrative roles. To ensure the anonymity of my interviewees, I have, as far as possible, minimised the information given about them. In the text, I have limited the information about their work-roles and background information to that which I consider to be relevant for the analysis, such as whether people have an international background when that is relevant, how long they have worked at the university or whether they have previous experience at the university which they draw upon during the interviews. In research article 2, where the analysis rests on the interviews with administrators and I felt it necessary to provide direct quotes and some background information about them, I gave them pseudonyms that showed their gender but not national background or specific work-role. An extra step has been to anonymise the university in the research articles where these interviews feature. This has been done because an international or Norwegian audience who reads the articles do not need to know which university this study takes place in but can search for this information if they are interested.

The fact that I chose to interview 12 administrators might be considered a weakness as this is a very limited set of data, which is why I chose to include the interviews I had already conducted with department leaders, administrators, PhD students, postdocs, researchers, associate professors and professors across three departments/disciplines. This has allowed me to bring in more voices from the empirical field and enrich the analysis.

Conducting feminist studies also involves turning the academic lens towards ourselves, and examining the power structures we are a part of as researchers (Wolf, 1993). Here it is necessary to reflect a little on my own embedded situatedness as a researcher. As a researcher, I have not entered the field as a neutral witness, but have rather produced situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988) as a white, Norwegian cis woman with a background in gender studies. This has informed my research strategy: my early decision to identify gender as an interesting element of internationalisation was informed by my previous interest. My decision to allow gender to be a deductive lens while having an inductive approach towards diversity was an attempt to prevent the research from being locked into my own ideas at an early stage, as SA's research process suggests. However, this has probably influenced the way in which gender and diversity dynamics are explored in the analysis. It is possible that the interviewees considered my department and project, and focused specifically on gender and diversity in the way that they did because they thought this was what I wanted to hear. I cannot make grand statements about international diversity in Norwegian academia, both because there was relatively little data material and because I have not set out to interview a group of international researchers specifically about this topic. The goal of this thesis should therefore be considered as a contribution of empirical knowledge, and the empirical findings show *some* of the gender and diversity dynamics within academia, not a complete picture.

The relatively limited scope of the data material and the choice of NTNU as the site also raise questions about the relevance of the findings beyond the scope of NTNU. The focus on internationalisation in Norwegian *academia* as the situation of study and the inclusion of national policies has broadened the scope beyond NTNU. NTNU is also a part of wider global and national processes through the translocal textual discourses, which means that there will be recognisable features and effects for other universities. The findings should therefore be recognisable to other universities, although their local contexts and situatedness will influence their relationship with internationalisation and gender and diversity dynamics.

This thesis is focused on gender and diversity as the social categories within the situation of internationalisation. Narrowing the research focus down to these two has allowed for analysis within the scope of a thesis, but there are other social categories that are also relevant within discussions of power in academia, such as socioeconomic class, sexuality and gender identity, or disability and ableism. Another aspect of diversity that I have not considered in this thesis but that could have been explored further is epistemic diversity, in questioning who produces knowledge, whose knowledge is considered valid and what consequences this has for researchers (Aarseth et al., 2022).

I tried to avoid an early locking of diversity by asking broadly about different 'groups' within internationalisation, but I did specifically bring up gender and international diversity if the interviewees did not bring it up themselves. But using this empirically oriented research strategy, one might say that the reason different kinds of diversity did not appear was because I was not looking for them. On the one hand, the empirical material has revealed surprises to me, such as the way in which administrators framed international diversity issues through the lens of power, and the importance of language tensions, which I have found inductively and included in the maps, eventually expanding it into independent research articles. The fact that these types of diversity did not appear during the interviews when I asked broadly about whether internationalisation affects different groups differently might also point to the fact that 'gender' and 'international diversity' are topics that are already given much attention in academia, whilst sexuality, disability and socioeconomic class questions are newer areas in equality work and might not be as visible. If I had introduced these topics into the interview situation, interesting results might have appeared. I suspect that there are many other elements within the situation beyond gender and diversity dynamics within internationalisation that I have not identified and that might be further explored in future research.

## The site of NTNU

I chose to focus the situational analysis on one specific university: the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). NTNU makes an interesting case because it is a university that has heavily prioritised the internationalisation of research and higher education since the 1990s. It has therefore been consistent with or even ahead of national priorities. It is also interesting as a university that has thousands of employees and spans many disciplines – not just the STEM fields, which have always been international. NTNU is Norway's largest university and was one of the earliest universities to implement strategies for internationalisation, and has given it a high priority in its institutional policies for decades.

NTNU is an empirical site within the situation of the internationalisation of academia. Focusing the empirical exploration on one organisation has allowed me to explore the question of how internationalisation is conceptualised and how it shapes academic work-cultures. Using one empirical site has also enabled the analysis to examine how discourses around internationalisation on the macro level affect both organisational culture in a large internationally oriented university, as well as how discourses shape people's experiences. Inspired by Rebecca Lund (2012) and her development of institutional ethnography in the study of universities, I view NTNU as an institution that is not only a local institution with its own history, norms and traditions, but is also connected to larger translocal discourses around internationalisation mediated through text. NTNU both participates in reproducing internationalisation as a discursive policy phenomenon and is part of a larger translocal network of universities and the academic sector.

"Organizations are historically, geographically, and politically located" (Acker, 2012, p. 106). NTNU, as it exists today, is the result of several structural changes and mergers with other higher education and research institutions. According to its own webpages (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2024a), it can trace its roots as a research academy back to 1760. In 1910, the Norwegian Institute of Technology (NTH) was established, which became a university in 1968, and then NTNU in 1996 after a fusion between NTH and Allmennviteskapelige høgskole (AVH), which included other disciplines such as the humanities, teaching, science and social studies, as well as the researcher museum, medical faculty, academy of arts and music conservatory. This made NTNU a university with a broad range of disciplines, although it has maintained its priority on natural sciences and technology. In 2016, NTNU also merged with three local colleges in Gjøvik, Ålesund and Trøndelag. The result is a university that stretches across nine faculties and 55 research departments. The university webpages (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2024b) also mention the fact that more than 4,000 of its students are international, and that over half of their students are women, which shows a consciousness of what society expects and values from large organisations.

Establishing a university in Norway and specifically in Trondheim made it possible for students to gain a higher education ‘at home’ where they previously would have had to travel to other parts of the country or abroad. This is worth noting in these times when ‘internationalisation’ often concerns international researchers and students who immigrate to Norway.

Since the late 1990s, through all the mergers, internationalisation has remained an important goal and something that the university has branded itself with, remaining a priority area. This particular history is worth noting as the natural sciences have always been internationally focused. For many years, NTNU’s slogan was to be ‘internationally excellent’. NTH was one of the earliest universities in Norway to implement an institutional focus on internationalisation as a willed-for policy for the university. It might not be a coincidence that this agenda is ‘naturally’ highly prioritised in a university that has a historical focus on the STEM fields, as these fields have always had an international orientation. My analysis of NTNU’s policies for internationalisation (detailed in the first research article) shows that NTNU’s ambition has manifested in a high degree of academic mobility, national diversity among students and staff, the increasing use of English, and a focus on international cooperation and participation at the institutional and individual researcher level. With such a one-sided development towards ‘internationalisation’, NTNU is an interesting site to explore both the conceptualisation as it happens in policies and some of the experiences behind the slogans.

Focusing on NTNU means that the findings of the articles are situated within this local context, of NTNU, but I do not believe that the findings will be unique to this university. Rather, the analysis sheds light on some challenges and questions that will be relevant to other universities, especially the large internationally oriented ones, and also raises some implications for the national academic sector. Although the research articles are empirically focused on NTNU, this thesis also includes a detailed study of how internationalisation is conceptualised in national textual discourses, as no institution exists in a vacuum.

## Summaries of the articles

This thesis examines the internationalisation of Norwegian academia as a situation from multiple sites, exploring the empirical research question of how internationalisation is conceptualised and how it is experienced in a university culture. The four research articles empirically examine this at NTNU as the site, whilst the analysis at the end of this introductory essay examines universities as inequality regimes at the macro (national, other research), meso (NTNU as an organisation) and micro (implications for workers) levels. Before the analysis, it is necessary to introduce each of the independent research articles.

### Article 1: Internationalisation of Norwegian academia: Gender equality as a blind spot

**Published in Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning (2022)**

This first research article unpacks how internationalisation is conceptualised in policies at NTNU using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. After tracing the word internationalisation in NTNU's institutional policies, which are publicly available online, I ended up with a selection of documents: NTNU's official plans, reports, and strategies, as well as the five action plans for internationalisation that have been launched since the late 1990s, and well as four international action plans for internationalisation from 2009–2018. I decided to select documents from between 2006 and 2018, because this was the period when NTNU had the most focus on establishing internationalisation as an organisational goal and policy.

I based the discourse analysis on the assumption that internationalisation is not a neutral policy goal but is something that is constructed, and on Fairclough's social realist perspective that policies have implications on social life. Part of the analysis was therefore concerned with identifying which kinds of researcher ideals are baked into the policies for internationalisation. With a gendered perspective as the discursive lens, I identified some strong themes within the discourses used in the documents.

Based on Fairclough's readings, the analysis is interested in how words and phrasings form patterns that construct meaning within organisations, how discourses are used to express institutional power where some discourses are more dominant than others, and how different discourses are related to each other within texts. The analysis showed that NTNU conceptualises internationalisation to centre around some key arenas: international orientations in higher education, student and researcher mobility, international recruitment, cooperation with ‘low and median income countries’, and cooperation with excellent researcher environments. NTNU’s internationalisation ambitions also have a large focus on the EU, European research programmes, Erasmus and the European knowledge market.

One finding that was interesting was how internationalisation and excellence are discursively linked, normalised and presented as positive. Internationalisation to a high degree concerns ‘recruiting the best’, fostering ‘excellent’ research environments, and ensuring that researchers and research have ‘high international standards’. I question the implications that these continued discourses, plans and strategies have on the organisational culture, especially concerning researchers. In the institutional documents, there seems to be little reflection on the potentially negative or challenging effects of international orientations at the institutional or individual level. What these discourses imply is that the ideal researcher for the university is a person who works to fulfil the university’s ambitions to be ‘internationally excellent’ – somebody who is mobile, has international networks, participates in global knowledge markets through travel and cooperation, brings in external researcher funds, recruits internationally and publishes in highly ranked international journals. In several places, international excellence is directly tied to the allocation of the university’s resources, with explicit wishes to prioritise resources towards those with the potential to become internationally excellent. This researcher ideal is presented as something neutral and merit-based; the implication is that everybody has equal opportunities to achieve it, ignoring some real-life barriers and inequalities. For example, there is little reflection on how lengthy maternity leaves, family obligations that restrict travel, or time spent supervising and teaching rather than publishing will affect researchers’ linear careers as they pursue these lofty goals. I find that the discourses concerning internationalisation generally do not open for questions concerning researcher culture, or implications beyond researcher or student activities.

One key finding from this article is that gender appears to be a blind spot in NTNU’s internationalisation policies. In the documents, gender *was* mentioned frequently; for example, concern was expressed over a lack of gender balance in STEM fields, and the lack of women professors. At the same time, I did not find a discursive link between the internationalisation and the topics related to it and questions concerning gender equality. The article problematises this in the context of what research shows about existing gendered barriers and inequalities in academia.

## Article 2: Invisible, and not enough: University administration's perspectives on their role in internationalisation

**Submitted for publication to Globalisation, Society and Education**

Whereas article 1 (*Internationalisation and gender equality*) deconstructed how internationalisation is conceptualised in NTNU's policy documents, the second article goes beyond these discourses and begins mapping internationalisation as lived experience. This article is based on ten of the interviews I conducted with people working on managing various parts of the internationalisation process: those working with international researchers and mobility, HR, policies and first-line responses. The article explores their perspectives on internationalisation, both in policies and in their perceptions of how it affects the organisational culture as well as their own work positions. They are especially interesting as their work puts them into contact with academic staff, administration, leaders and central administration, and by interviewing them, this article provided me with an alternative perspective on internationalisation.

The article uses Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography as the method, and applies many of the same concepts that are used as sensitising concepts for the cross-cutting analysis in the thesis. Employing situational analysis and institutional ethnography's gaze of who usually speaks, and who is usually silenced, I found that we do not usually hear from people working in administrative or supportive positions within the university. In this exploration, I found Dorothy Smith's concepts of work-knowledges and work useful: work is not just what people are paid to do, but everything they do in their work that takes time, efforts and energy (Smith, 2005). By posing these relatively neutral questions to administrative workers, I have analysed how internationalisation affects organisational cultures in the shape of how the university handles international diversity, different work-cultures, the role of policies, and what happens 'behind the scenes' of academic activities that we unusually associate with internationalisation in academia: teaching and research. Part of the motivation to focus on administrative staff has been to look for gaps and silences in academia.

In the interview guide, I asked administrators questions concerning what internationalisation means from their perspective, their experiences with it, its possibilities and potential challenges, how it affects NTNU as an organisation, who they cooperate with, and how they communicate work topics with others (such as how they discuss topics with their co-workers and with leaders). Work-experiences were unpacked by analysing their responses to questions concerning how they work and who they cooperate with. Usually, within a classic IE study, I would have asked questions about what they do in practice to unpack subject positions and practices. My approach was slightly different: I asked about their perspectives on internationalisation as a policy, their relationship with institutional policies, and how they work with it. From this, I elicited work knowledge concerning the tensions between policies and practices and the work that is connected to internationalisation beyond researcher activities.

The interviews show that administrators largely concur with official discourses: they present internationalisation as something that is relevant, important and expected of Norwegian academia and of NTNU; they are supportive of the internationalisation project of NTNU, and largely associate it with researcher activities such as academic mobility of students and staff, cooperation and international recruitment. However, they also expressed dissatisfaction with some of the ways in which it becomes conceptualised in the organisational culture in practice.

The article unpacks some of the invisible work that this part of the university administration performs: removing internationalisation from its place as a positive sort of 'buzzword', they instead present internationalisation as concerning casework, managing bureaucracy, the onboarding and inclusion of international researchers, and assisting researchers both coming to NTNU and going abroad by managing the practical details, etc. Strategies and policies are seen as important, but more as a background to most of their work. Some of the interviewees worked in shaping policies and guidelines, but the consensus remained that the institution can implement as many nice policy plans as they want, but it will not work without also focusing on the practical work that this requires.

This might be interpreted as administrators being frustrated relating specifically to their own work, but using Smith's analytical framework, this article showed that the frustrations went above the problematics of their own work. One theme running through the interviews was a wish for the university to reflect more on the qualitative value rather than the quantitative side of internationalisation; rather than focusing on international recruitment for its own sake, they should ask who is being recruited, and why, and how they are received and included. Another important finding is that they described a kind of race towards internationalisation without a corresponding allocation of additional resources to follow it up. This related not only to the resources to handle an increased caseload, but also to adapting the university culture to accommodate the large influx of international researchers, and to giving academics the support they need to actually do the work that underpins activities such as international recruitment and cooperation. They were not advocating for more administrative reforms; on the contrary, NTNU seems to have implemented many reforms and changes that many people are tired of. This finding dispels the myth that all administrators are pushing for the greater bureaucratisation of universities. It also dispels the idea that administrators are becoming too professionalised; rather, they themselves pointed out that specialised knowledge is necessary with increased globalisation because the bureaucracy requires more specialised knowledge on topics such as the EU, which is an area that my policy analysis shows is a key part of NTNU's internationalisation ambition. In the next article, I continue to explore the experiences of people working in the university administration, in the context of the institutional discourses.

### Article 3: Identifying what is missing: International diversity and inclusion in Norwegian academia

**Published in Nordic Journal of Social Research (2024)**

Based on the interviews with the university administrators, I also found another important topic that kept appearing that was worth exploring in a dedicated article. Out of curiosity regarding discursive representations of gender and diversity in academia, I asked the administrators quite broadly whether internationalisation is the same for everybody, whether there was somebody who stood out in their work, or anybody whose needs had to be taken into consideration. In this way, I hoped to see which kind of categories the person I spoke to themselves brought up. A lot of the administrators were very concerned about international researchers as a group and how the university handles its responsibilities as employers to an international staff group. The interviewees who were particularly concerned with these either worked or had previously worked in direct relation to international researchers – through labour unions, or as HR workers or senior advisors in central administrative positions – and this article primarily rests on these interviews.

On the surface level during the interviews, international mobility was described as something that is both positive and expected as part of internationalisation. It was seen as difficult to imagine that a university might function as a purely Norwegian institution conducting internal recruitment. This is in line with the administrators' support of internationalisation as a project for NTNU, as their issues were primarily with how it is conceptualised and how it affects the academic work-culture. Part of the problematic are issues concerning work-culture, language, and expectations between NTNU as an employer and international researchers as a group.

During the interviews, I got the sense that the interviewees were careful not to describe international workers as a ‘problem’ when broaching this subject. They showed a high level of awareness of power dynamics within the organisation, and mostly placed the responsibility for facilitating good work-environments either on leaders or on the university as an institution. Although they highlighted that most international diversity happens relatively frictionless – especially in research environments with a high degree of international turnover, and where most leaders are doing a good job maintaining their staff group – they still perceive that the university has some issues with not openly communicating how work-life in Norway is socially organised or how to handle difficulties with international diversity. Key characteristics of Norwegian work-life that they see as important are: that Norwegian universities have a relatively flat hierarchy compared to many other countries, meaning that leaders are not figures of authority who need to be obeyed, and that there is a culture for staff participation and positivity towards organising in labour unions to ensure employee rights, especially the low threshold for negotiating pay levels.

Difficulties with international diversity that were brought up related especially to language and to a culture where it might be difficult to speak up about issues, such as somebody behaving in a way that is not expected of them in a Norwegian workplace. Out of fear of not respecting cultural differences or of appearing discriminatory, people might not tell their international co-worker that they have violated a social norm, meaning that this person might not be corrected and might lose popularity without knowing what they have done wrong. One interviewee identified this as a ‘culture of silence’, which means that it is difficult to have honest and open communications about the challenging sides of international diversity in the workplace. I put this into a context where cultural differences are often seen as something problematic in Norway, which raises the following questions. Do Norwegian work-places reward those who wish to adapt and punish differences? If the goal is assimilation, then what is the point of diversity and international recruitment?

I use Acker’s model of inequality regimes as well as Fairclough’s focus on discourses to see how the interviewees used words, phrasings and arguments to present the situation, and where they place the responsibility. These tools allowed me to see that they were conscious of power hierarchies within NTNU, and that international researchers were presented as a vulnerable group within Norwegian workplaces. Although they are considered elite migrants and are resourceful in many ways, this article highlights that many things about how work-life is socially constructed might be invisible. This can have both social repercussions and concrete negative consequences, such as international researchers losing out on pay levels at a group level because they accept the offer given to them, whilst Norwegians might benefit from being organised or individually asking for pay negotiations, as they know it is their right and cannot be sanctioned. It is important to note that these issues are more structural and recur year after year at a group level, and they are not described as widespread at NTNU. However, such perceptions do point to some issues that touch on power dynamics in academic institutions.

As in article 2 *(University administrators' perspectives on internationalisation*), regarding the topic of diversity, the interviewees called for some critical reflection about what NTNU and Norwegian academia want to gain from international diversity, what kinds of consequences it can have in workplaces, and how they can facilitate good work-environments. In this article, the interviewees called for a shift in focus when it comes to institutional priorities of internationalisation – not only on quantitative recruitment, but on how Norwegian universities take care of those who are here, and how they manage their role as employers. The institutional focus has tended to be on the quantitative counting of nationalities and international researchers, and not necessarily on the quality of onboarding and inclusion routines, especially in a large institution where there are differences in local work-cultures and the degree of internationalisation. This is an interesting aspect of the internationalisation phenomenon in Norway.

One implication of the article is that we should not assume that highly skilled labour migrants, even those who are recruited and actively welcomed to Norway, do not face challenges around integration, inclusion and incorporation into their workplaces, nor can we assume that academia is exempt from some of the issues around diversity that exist in other international workplaces.

## Article 4: Language practices in the tension between scholarly prestige and institutional power: A study of negotiations between English and Norwegian at a university in Norway

**Published in the Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development (2024)**

This article focuses on an important and visible part of the increased internationalisation of Norwegian academia: linguistic diversity. It was co-written with my supervisor Siri Øyslebø Sørensen, and explores language tensions at NTNU between the use of Norwegian and English. The backdrop of the article is that there is increased concern in Norway about the perceived domination of English over Norwegian as the disciplinary and working language in academia. With this article, we hope to contribute with empirical knowledge and by analysing language through a lens of power, rather than positioning English as an inherent threat to Norwegian in academia.

The article is based on 38 interviews: in addition to the 12 interviews I had completed with university administrators in 2020-2021, we also incorporated the 26 interviews I had conducted at NTNU in 2019 as a research assistant on the research project 'International diversity at NTNU' (INTMANG). The article explores the lived experiences of department leaders, local administrators, central administrators, and both Norwegian and international researchers, including PhD students, postdocs, researchers, associate professors and professors across three different research environments. Common for all 38 interviews was that language was not the main topic, but that it kept appearing as an important and current aspect of people's work-life experiences at NTNU.

We used thematic analysis to sort through what the interviewees had talked about regarding language. We used the approach laid out by Terry et al. (2017) to examine the interview transcripts, first identifying where language was spoken of, then coding the different experiences and perceptions of each interviewee and seeing whether there were common patterns and how meaning was conceptualised. By sorting through the stories in the interviews, we identified three pivotal points where language becomes particularly important: the onboarding/arrival of international researchers to Norway, how people navigate daily work-lives in bilingual workplaces, and when workers navigate the university as a societal institution.

The article shows how 'language' as a topic in international academia is today seen as a binary choice between Norwegian and English. However, this was not a straightforward result, where Norwegians were concerned about protecting their language and international researchers staying in Norway for short periods wished for more English; rather, the interviewees told us of several considerations that they take in the everyday navigation of bilingualism. Language choices seem to be influenced by the wish to be considerate on both 'sides', and people's preferences were not marked by simple categories; we talked to both professors, who are contractually required to learn Norwegian but who were not invested, and PhD students, who were not required to learn Norwegian but who were learning voluntarily. Almost everybody was concerned with protecting Norwegian as a small, marginalised language.

Although English is widely accepted as the language for research activities, Norwegian seems to be the institutional language. NTNU, for all its international ambitions, is still a Norwegian societal institution, and the administrative work – sitting on committees, participating in leadership fora, etc. – is still marked by Norwegian as the working language. This means that department leaders need to maintain a core staff group who are proficient in Norwegian to manage such tasks. Language practices is a complex issue, with tensions across formal and informal social practices, and there are differences between language practices in everyday research departments and in institutional processes. Although using English is often unproblematic in international departments, performing administrative tasks and sitting in leadership groups at the higher levels requires some degree of Norwegian proficiency. This excludes all international researchers and staff who are not yet at a proficient level. Rather than this being a 'chore', we identify this as Norwegian proficiency being a gatekeeper to positions of power and roles that could be the key to gaining a permanent position in Norwegian academia.

The analysis viewed language practices and linguistic diversity through a lens of power dynamics. One finding contradicts the belief that international researchers not knowing Norwegian is a kind of resource – a way to avoid doing the administrative work required by researchers, and rather focusing on their own research. Instead, it bars the researcher from fully participating in the university as an institution, being excluded from certain committee work, many leadership forums or channels for university democracy, and in some cases from teaching Norwegian students, which is a necessary part of building academic merit to gain a full position. For Norwegian researchers, English is already part of their researcher lives – partly because of expectations for internationalisation: to publish in international journals, to attend conferences, to go abroad for cooperation or research stays, and to apply for international funding. It would therefore be a simplification to say that international researchers are those responsible for bringing English to Norwegian academia.

The analysis showed that the consequences of the language situation largely become individualised; it requires more work for leaders in organising their workplaces, translation work for administrative staff and ‘labour’ in the sense of consideration for others by Norwegian workers, and international researchers work to learn the language but miss out on participating in certain parts of the university until they have mastered it.

Together, these four independent research articles explore internationalisation at NTNU empirically. In the overarching analysis, I will discuss these findings in a broader context. Before this, I will begin by discussing the research question of how internationalisation is conceptualised in policies and discourses.

## Internationalisation in national policies

This thesis explores internationalisation as a situation in Norwegian academia. Each of the four research articles analyses one element of internationalisation at NTNU, using it as the empirical site. For the situational analysis of academia, I will now examine how internationalisation is conceptualised in textual discourses in national policies. For this examination, I have conducted a thematic organising and sorting. I base this examination on Fairclough's ontological assumption that textual discourses matter in the social world, and that institutions' and governments' ways of shaping discourses are a way of representing certain world views (Fairclough, 2010). Textual discourses at the national level also exist at the macro level, being part of the situation at NTNU according to SA. The policies chosen are official and digitally available on the government's webpages. I have worked through these documents to map out a timeline of when internationalisation first became important and how it was presented and discussed in various forms of national policies. Showing the common themes within these policies also reveals the interested parties within the situation (Clarke et al., 2018); there are others outside universities who have an interest in policies for the sector. How they choose to frame the situation in policies shapes the room for manoeuvre of institutions (Smith, 2005).

### National policies

Since the 1990s, there have been policy documents from the Norwegian government that regulate internationalisation through textual discourses. A word-search on the phrase 'internationalisation' in those government policies that are available online generates almost 1,500 hits. The word appears in all forms of government documents: from Official Norwegian Reports (NOU), budgetary plans, legislative propositions to the Parliament (Storting), White Papers, laws, regulations, press releases, reports, plans and strategies, and concessions. I have approached this examination through a thematic sorting, before selecting some key documents for closer analysis. Although this has not been a complete discursive analysis, I have used strategies from CDA in this examination: making note of how internationalisation is linguistically presented through positive or negative words, phrasings and arguments, and in which contexts, to make visible how it is conceptualised in national policies.

One major underlying theme within the policies is that internationalisation is treated as something that is inevitable for Norway: it is already happening on the global stage, and is therefore something that Norway needs to recognise and adapt to. For the most part, internationalisation is presented as something positive for individual researchers, for students and for Norway as a nation. The overarching goal across the policies is how Norway can maximise the positive sides and, as far as possible, minimise the negative sides of the global internationalisation of academia.

On a superficial level, internationalisation is generally presented as something desirable and positive, which is a discursive strategy that I recognise from NTNU's policies. In the national policies, a lack of internationalisation is construed as a problem that needs fixing. The view that globalisation is inevitable and poses some threats to national interests is not unique to this case, and both national policies and universities might adapt various types of response to this perceived threat (Taylor, 2010a). However, a close reading shows signs of ambivalence, especially in the policies that have emerged in the late 2010s. This close reading will be presented in the following text.

## Milestones in policies for internationalisation

The word internationalisation first started appearing in 1993–1994 and has since become a fixed part of policies and the worldview across several sectors. In the Norwegian policies set by the government for colleges, higher education institutions and universities, there were mentions of internationalisation already in the early 1990s, with a wish for more research collaborations, especially with institutions in Europe. From 1999, the word was mentioned more regularly in documents discussing economy, competency and organisation of the higher education sector.

Internationalisation became a major strategy for the entire academic sector with the Quality Reform in 2000. The Quality Reform was implemented in 2003 as the Norwegian follow-up to the Bologna Process. It reformed both study programmes and ways of ruling, with the goal of ensuring higher quality in research and higher education (Egeland & Bergene, 2012, p. 15). The Quality Reform of higher education highlighted that national knowledge policy needed to be viewed in an international perspective. In this document, internationalisation is presented as "an important and willed-for development", which entails both new challenges and new *interesting possibilities*. To both take advantage of new possibilities on the global market and contribute to them, Norway needs to "maintain and develop a broad knowledgebase" (Meld. St. 27 (2000-2001), p. 15), which means academic mobility for both students and staff abroad and in Norway, and cooperation and network-building. The institutions should also adapt to being measured by international standards for both research and education.

Internationalisation was an important part of the Quality Reform, and it brought forth wishes for increased international orientations for academic institutions, students and staff (NOU 2020: 3). These included: the standardisation of higher education and making student exchange easier, a political will towards more participation in international programmes, participation in international research collaborations and facilitation to accept more international researchers. This reform also included a wish for more study programmes to be available in English to facilitate this international orientation (Vabø & Aamodt, 2005). The Quality Reform produced discursive policies both on the institutional level and as expectations for the activities and priorities of individual researchers.

In the Quality Reform, key areas were raised that are still important today: internationalisation should be a key component in higher education, with mobility of students, and universities should develop some study programmes in English. There was a focus on the institutional level, where institutions should participate in international programmes, have deals for cooperation, stimulate mobility, and develop cultures whereby the institutions are attractive workplaces for international staff to arrive or cooperate. Internationalisation is also tied to economic concerns: although knowledge and research have always been internationally oriented, "What is new is that strong market forces now increasingly see education and research as an area of economic profit. This poses a new challenge for our institutions, which should serve more goals than purely economic ones" (Meld. St. 27 (2000-2001), p. 14). In later documents, the focus would begin to shift to also include more individual focus on researchers and students. The Quality Reform was a foundational policy that is often referred to in relation to why internationalisation continues to be important to both research and higher education, and it especially contributed to discursively tying it to quality in research and education. Later policies would also present an international orientation in research and higher education as a prerequisite for quality: exchanges of students and staff and cooperation are presented as necessary to solve major societal challenges, as well as to support foreign policy, development and business-political interests, and to provide society with the competencies and skills that are necessary for transitions in Norwegian business life.

The focus gained by internationalisation should be interpreted and understood in the context of other developments in Norwegian academia. In the public information documents such as White Papers and Official Norwegian Reports (NOUs) from 2000 until the 2010s, a great will is expressed to restructure Norwegian higher education and research institutions and programmes. There have been several mergers between institutions for research and higher education to create fewer and bigger institutions – supposedly to make them more robust in order to handle the pressure of internationalisation, as well as interdisciplinary research and competition for funds for internationalisation. In 2006, the government announced a public committee to investigate the structure of the university and college sector with regard to societal needs and increased internationalisation. These reforms laid the groundwork for the shaping of the academic sector, and all designated internationalisation as an important topic to be worked towards.

One of the reasons why this conceptualisation is so important is that internationalisation is not merely a lofty goal but also has material consequences. This is evident in quotes such as: “The increasing internationalisation of research should have real consequences for national priorities” (Meld. St. 20 (2004-2005), p. 24). Examples of such consequences laid out in this document are maintaining a disciplinary broadness that enables us to use international research, and building up Norwegian environments in areas that are seen to be either important or upcoming internationally. The goal is to solve societal challenges and ensure future “value creation” (Ibid.). Other examples of internationalisation having material consequences are the fact that, since the early 2000s, Norway has also established several national organs to manage internationalisation in academia and education. In 2003, SIU (Centre for Internationalisation of Education) was established. In 2018, DIKU (Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills) was established to promote quality in higher education and responsibility for internationalisation in the whole of the educational sector, which shows that internationalisation is not limited to higher education and research. This also shows a political will to prioritise and allocate resources towards the project rather than maintaining it as a “buzzword” (Meld. St. 20 (2004-2005), p. 10).

### What themes can be identified across the policies?

The documents, laws and reports tend to reference each other and use the same language, reinforcing the same way of presenting internationalisation into textual discourses. My close examination has revealed some common themes that appear across the documents, which further shows how it is conceptualised. The main common topics are: that internationalisation tends to be presented as slightly different in academia than in many other sectors, that there is a strategic language that is used and tied to what society needs from academia, and that there is a strong presence of Europeanisation. I also explore some of the signs of resistance and opposition towards internationalisation in the policies, especially in the newer documents, and show one of the key findings: signs of balancing issues between global and national concerns.

### 1. Academia is the exception

The internationalisation of research and higher education has run parallel to the internationalisation of Norwegian society and business life, but there tend to be differences in how it is mentioned. In most policy areas, internationalisation is given some space to be problematised, with its potential challenges and how Norway might adapt to overcome them, such as making finance systems, trading, oil, fish and security more international and therefore more complex. Norway, which describes itself as a "small, open economy" (Meld. St. 20 (2004-2005), p. 91), is through a general globalisation linked to the rest of the world, which affects its society, business life, oil industry, fishing, finances and security, bringing them closer together with the rest of the world. There seems to be a high level of willingness to adapt and take advantage of possibilities. In such policies, internationalisation is often understood in terms of market-based economics, with a wish to take advantage of the possibilities of global markets.

In contrast, when internationalisation is brought up in the context of higher education, research, knowledge-production or the academic sector in general, the language tends to be more positive. This is a sector where internationalisation is perceived and presented as being inevitable. This is hardly surprising as researcher activities have historically been internationally oriented, but what is interesting is the way that 'internationalisation' as a concept is given overarching importance for academia as a strategic goal. Although there is still acknowledgement that there are challenges with the internationalisation of academia, the focus tends to be more on how to solve these so that we can continue to move forward. As shown in this quote:

> Internationalisation of both higher education and research has been increasing in recent decades. Strengthening the nation's ability to meet the challenges and possibilities this

> development offers has been a key motivation for both the quality reform and the structural reform. Internationalisation means that researchers are updated about the international research front, and can also draw in such research results in their own research and education, that students and researchers can travel abroad on study and research visits, and that international researchers and students can apply to Norwegian seats of learning. (NOU 2020: 3, p. 62) (all citations of Norwegian papers are my translations).

Here we see that increased internationalisation is conceptualised to include mostly students and researchers, and outgoing and incoming mobility, and that internationalisation has been a reason for reforms in the sector.

In the early 2000s, the policies were concerned with both how increased internationalisation brings new challenges, as well as opportunities for the knowledge policy, and a fear that those who are not part of the development would be marginalised. The perception was that this was something that was happening both internally within the EU and (already) on global business markets – the mobility of people, the breaking down of barriers for education, travel, cooperation and work, and other EU rules and regulations that Norway must follow.

I see tendencies that the high focus on internationalisation allows it to be mainstreamed into general policies for academia: it is a fundamental goal, and an international orientation in research is thought to strengthen quality. Because it is so normalised, the question is often not ‘What is internationalisation?’ or “Why should we work towards it?”, but “How, and what could hinder it?”. It is often mentioned in the context of the economy and budget funds, as internationalisation is costly, such as funding SIU and ensuring that Norway can achieve cooperation and participate in international programmes. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the government wanted to increase investment in the internationalisation of Norwegian research and allow it to influence how resources were channelled in academia. The EU’s framing programmes for research are presented as especially important, and are tied to quality in research and innovation in business life and public sector.

This finding would begin to explain why academia seems to be the one exception where Norway does not lead protectionist policies: academia is seen as a place where the nation can benefit more by turning towards the global surface than by protecting Norwegian knowledge-production and researchers. There is little room in these policies for a national focus on research, either by choice or by willingness. This is a backdrop that cements internationalisation as inevitable for the Norwegian academic sector, and this is interesting as Norway applies a protectionist policy in many other areas, such as agriculture (Espeli, 2008). The discursive tying together of international orientation and quality in research, which is a national goal for Norway, is an important dimension of the way that internationalisation is conceptualised.

## 2. Strategic wielding of internationalisation

Implicitly and explicitly, internationalisation tends to have a strategic component in national policies, concerning both higher education and research. This strategic component began back in 1998, with phrasings such as Norwegian research environments being attractive collaboration partners internationally, having international research environments, being at the international forefront of research and competing for research funds. Already at this point there was a will to funnel resources towards institutions and research environments with 'high quality', further tying internationalisation and quality discursively together (Meld. St. 39 (1998-99)).

The main reason why internationalisation has been presented as positive is that in research and higher education it is almost exclusively tied to opportunities abroad that Norway can take advantage of, and to increased quality and relevance. Internationalisation is described as a tool to strengthen research, and it is mentioned that it is difficult to see how Norwegian researchers can become excellent without participating in international cooperation, and large societal challenges are international by nature. The language thus goes beyond describing internationalisation as something positive; it is described as 'fundamental' and a 'prerequisite' for quality in research, and as something that "must be given much attention going forward" (NOU 2008: 3, p. 168).

I argue that these policies show that the Norwegian governmental systems are strategic and use internationalisation as internationalism – defined in Sørensen (2023) as serving political and economic interests, such as national competition and business interests for generating values. Sørensen put this on academic leadership, I put the focus here on national leadership (Sørensen, 2023, p. 94). For example, one of the reasons why student mobility is useful is because knowledge of culture and language is important for society, especially in business life – to work in an open world economy, and for people to gain access to international work life. There is an increasing need for citizens and employees with international experience and broad cultural and language competencies. Internationalisation is presented as being of central importance for adjustments and value-creation, and as a tool to increase Norwegian competitiveness internationally.

The strategic conceptualisation can, on the national level, be tied to how these discourses position academia and higher education: as institutions that should serve national interests and benefit Norwegian society. There is a high focus on recruitment and how to attract good researchers and students to Norway, how to bring in funding that will benefit the nation economically and how to profile Norway internationally – all ways in which academic institutions can serve national interests, innovation, society and business. It is also mentioned in several places that the knowledge that academia produces should be for the benefit of business life, and aid in value-creation, adaptation and welfare for the good of national interests and Norwegian society. As shown in this quote:

> The government works towards increased internationalisation of research, and one goal is strengthened participation in the EU's framing programmes. To increase research collaborations with the EU will contribute to elevating the quality in Norwegian research, strengthen innovation abilities and value-creation, and make us better adapted to meet large societal changes (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018, p. 59).

This is part of the purpose for both international orientations in research, international recruitment and internationalisation of higher education; what is called 'internationalisation at home'. Internationalisation is presented as something that is key to strengthening the quality and relevance of research and higher education, and this elevated level will in turn aid in further attracting the best researchers and students to Norway – 'quality' as defined by the Quality Reform.

Through universities and colleges, internationalisation from this perspective becomes a process by which Norway as a nation can take advantage of increased globalisation. The way that internationalisation is presented such also displays the knowledge-culture in Norwegian politics. Norway is based on a social-democratic knowledge regime that has a high level of faith in the state with regard to redistribution and ensuring social inclusion and equality (Aasen et al., 2013). Norway's ideology of welfare, equality and social democracy provides a background for how universities are seen in Norway: as being regulated by the Ministry of Education and Research, and being equal, non-elitist, public, free of charge and open to all (Widerberg, 2020). The knowledge culture in Norway has been described as a 'knowledge democracy': rather than having elite institutions, cultural principles have tended more towards egalitarian principles of knowledge sharing, with free public education, knowledge-based policy making and a high level of trust in expert advice (Christensen et al., 2017, p. 239).

This gives context to statements in the national policies highlighting that universities are funded by taxpayers and should produce knowledge that is useful to Norwegian society. The policies often draw a connection between innovation, research and education in language that reveals a focus on their usefulness for Norway as a nation, for business, for society and for work-life. In national policies, research and higher education are sometimes presented as a triangle, together with innovation, with the idea that internationalisation in one area will strengthen the others, with the common goal of strengthening Norwegian competitiveness.

The language also tends to be rather quantitative, and measures progress in the shape of things such as funding, the number of participants in programmes or the number of exchange students. The need to report on progress has led to internationalisation being presented as something we can measure, such as how well researchers perform in the competition for EU funds and participation in the ERA, how Norway is ranked in terms of publications, and how many international researchers and students there are at universities and colleges. References are made to international developments, such as global challenges, and quick developments in international engagements and particularly in the EU, which demand clear priorities and goal-oriented measures to increase 'Norway's return of investments', as well as access to investments and resources abroad. This language concerning 'investments' discursively solidifies internationalisation in a market-based logics discourse.

## 3. Europeanisation of Norwegian academia

Cooperation and participation in the European Union's (EU) knowledge policies and programmes often take centre stage in the internationalisation policies. This has primarily, but not exclusively, taken place through close cooperation and participation with the EU through European Economic Area (EEA) deals. In an NOU report from 2012 by the Foreign Ministry about the EU deals, the EU is presented as the most important and committed partner for Norway's international work. Through EEA deals, Norway "fully participates" in the EU's programmes for research, education and innovations (NOU 2012: 2, p. 372). International cooperation is considered to be taken for granted to ensure quality through access to new knowledge and competencies created in international networks, and internationalisation is consequently one of the main priorities.

This happens to such a degree that we can ask whether the internationalisation of Norwegian academia bears tints of Europeanisation, if we follow the definition that the EU influences and impacts state policies, practices and politics (Dørum, 2020). The same trends towards Europeanisation can also be seen in the internationalisation of business life, with the development towards working with the EU/EEA area going as far back as 2001. The continued goal is to strengthen participation in the EU's knowledge market and programmes, especially the framing programmes such as Horizon 2020- Research and Innovation. Participation in Horizon 2020 is presented as necessary to reach the overarching goals in the government's strategy for research and innovation cooperation with the EU**.** Such a focus on the EU often differs from other geographical areas, such as cooperation with, for example, 'third world countries', which focus more on what Norway can and should do in such cooperations – in contrast with the EU, which is presented as having more possibilities and that Norway might benefit from participating in.

There is a general trend that internationalisation in higher education receives more attention than it does in research – both of which contribute to the free movement of qualified labour between EU countries. This means that more attention is given to student mobility than researcher mobility. This might be connected to a perception that mobility and cooperation between researchers is already happening and happens more on an individual level, whereas everything relating to higher education tends to be more facilitated through rules, programmes and international deals, especially with the EU. There is little formal EU/EEA regulation of research and higher education, but this is an area where Norway, through the EEA, participates in a complex European cooperation, through various programmes (NOU 2012: 2, p. 590). Together with such concrete examples, a generally high focus on the European knowledge market and European programmes for research, education and mobility throughout the policies that discuss internationalisation leads me to conclude that that the concept of Europeanisation is relevant for most areas of Norwegian academia.

I also see some ties between internationalisation, diversity and gender being drawn up in some of the policies. I mention this here as the internationalisation of Norwegian academia and the increased focus on the EU have happened simultaneously with greater attention being paid to gender equality within the EU, where one area of focus has been to ensure equality in all its policy areas through gender mainstreaming (Holst et al., 2019). The common denominator between these topics is the quality and strategic use of human resources, as well as social justice arguments, which is hardly surprising given the high level of focus that gender equality has been given in Norway. Like internationalisation, gender equality is not something that takes place in a vacuum. However, I do not see that this is a connection that has been made much in national policies. When gender is mentioned, it is sometimes from a perspective of justice and equal opportunity, but also with market-based logics, such as bringing up that "quality in research demands equality" (Meld. St. 30 (2008-2009), p. 93). The argument is that to ensure quality in research and higher education, the best people need to be recruited, regardless of their gender. This ties gender equality to the idea of quality that has been defined by the Quality Reform, and to a market-based logic.

### 4. Signs of resistance and opposition

What I have presented so far appears to be a discursive one-track route towards the internationalisation of research and education with positive language and baked-in assumptions that this is something inevitable that Norway needs to adapt to. But this does not mean that there is no room for questions or doubt in the policies. As advised by SA, I have actively looked for signs of opposition, change and disruptive voices in the empirical material. In recent documents, internationalisation is described as one of the biggest changes in the research sector in recent years, as there have been fewer large strategic and political reforms since the early 2000s, and some ambivalence is appearing:

> The internationalisation of the Norwegian research system that is described above has, among other things, contributed to increased quality in Norwegian research, and there is reason to believe that the strong growth in the number of researchers with an international background has also contributed positively to this. At the same time, several debates from recent years have shown that the quick changes have also created challenges, connected to, among other things, the preservation of Norwegian as a disciplinary language and Norwegian research topics and research perspectives. Strong growth in the number of international researchers is also linked to the problem of temporality, as a large number of these are hired on temporary contracts. A high level of access to an international workforce can also cover other underlying challenges, such

as the weak recruitment of Norwegian students to the STEM fields. (Meld. St. 5 (2022-2023), p. 72).

Although the academic mobility of researchers is presented as desirable both for longer and short-term stays and cooperation, having a large number of foreigners can also present problems in workplaces. The issue of migration and multiculturalism in connection to internationalisation is discussed in other sectors, such as workplaces and in the rest of the educational system. In the academic sector, one main issue that has been raised for decades is what this means for the Norwegian language. There remains a political goal for more student exchanges. The number of people with an international background coming to the Norwegian research and higher education sector will increase, and mobility will bring more diversity. The presence of a lot of foreigners in disciplinary staff can make it challenging to maintain Norwegian as a disciplinary language.

Strands of opposition have appeared in single documents since the early 2000s. In documents from as early as 2004, I have found some concern about how internationalisation would affect the particularities of Norwegian work-life in general, with more competition and changed conditions (NOU 2004: 5, p. 51), and concerns continue to be raised about the consequences of the migration of workers. Although not specific to the university sector, many of the same challenges would present themselves across work-life including in the knowledge sector. At one point, there was some criticism of the large focus on the EU and the EEA, but this seems to be an outlier in an otherwise high focus on how to tie Norway to the EU/European knowledge market in strategic ways to gain benefits and gain access to human and economic resources.

Some concerns have been raised in two concrete instances. In 2005, one document described internationalisation as challenging the Nordic identity and cultural unity (Meld. St. 43 (2004-2005), p. 7). The strong Europeanisation seems to confirm these fears, although I cannot say for sure that it has eclipsed Nordic cooperation relations outside academia. Another concern that was expressed is that the pressure of internationalisation can also lead to pressure on single researchers, which could cause them to take short-cuts in their rush to publish. Another nuance was identified in a report about humanities: strategies for internationalisation in Norwegian research were primarily developed in reference to the natural sciences, and then applied without necessary adaptations to the humanities. I cannot see that the corona pandemic has had any long-term impact on the policy level. One document mentions how the increased demands of internationalisation make the researcher role more complex (Meld. St. 30 (2008-2009), p. 106), but these concerns are not ‘dealbreakers’: the solution is not to halt internationalisation but rather to solve these issues so that the project might continue.

The policies express a wish to encourage institutions to have a more conscious and overarching approach to internationalisation – especially when it comes to recruitment. I therefore define the critical voices more as representing a sense of ambivalence rather than outright opposition within the policies. Because of the strong language that has tied internationalisation to quality and resources, it is doubtful that a true reversal in political discourses would be possible in the short term without positioning internationalisation differently and not only tying internationalisation to more negative words but also tying ‘Norwegian’ researchers, research and students to quality and excellence. I am also cautious as to how such a discursive shift would be possible without positioning international researchers and staff as problematic. I will come back to this point in the overarching analysis, where I will discuss the findings from the research articles in light of this context.

### Interpreting the ambivalence: Norway in a difficult balance

Viewing these common topics together, I see some patterns where internationalisation touches upon different and sometimes conflicting perspectives and interests. Two examples of these concern whether Norway should focus on cooperation with the other Nordic countries or with the European ‘knowledge market’. I also see some ambivalence in how Norway as a small country might manage the somewhat lofty goal of simultaneously maximising the benefits and minimising the potential disadvantages of the internationalisation of higher education. I define the ambivalence towards internationalisation as concerns in how to balance different perspectives, concerns, and interests. Managing this balance becomes especially difficult considering the role that universities have: to produce knowledge for policies and to provide experts who can provide advice when needed – aspects that signal strong responsibilities towards Norwegian society. On the other hand, however, there are the demands and conditions of the global academic knowledge market.

In the early 2020s, after two decades of strong discursive positioning of internationalisation as a mainly positive concept, the pendulum seems to have begun to swing in the other direction, as internationalisation is now presented as ‘comprehensive’ with a slightly more ambivalent tone. One of the themes that illustrates this is that of language practices. The balance between maintaining Norwegian and making space for English illustrates the needs of universities to navigate contradictory expectations and responsibilities. In the early 2000s, there was no particular law concerning the protection of Norwegian as a disciplinary or educational language. In the early 2020s, this began to change, and in 2023 an action plan was launched with a focus on facilitating Norwegian as a disciplinary language in academia. In a press release introducing this plan the then-minister of Research and Education stated that:

> The preservation and development of a Norwegian disciplinary language is part of the societal obligation of Norwegian universities and colleges. They are institutions that are financed by the Norwegian society, and ought to be of use for society and business life in Norway. They will conduct research and provide good education, contribute to innovation and disseminate knowledge to the Norwegian society. This is a commitment. (Ministry of Education and Research & Ministry of Equality and Culture, 2023a).

Although he also stated that this focus on Norwegian is no opposition to internationalisation, this quote illustrates the fact that the English language's perceived domination over Norwegian is viewed with political concern. In the most recent action plan for Norwegian as a disciplinary language (Ministry of Education and Research & Ministry of Equality and Culture, 2023b), internationalisation is not necessarily presented as something negative, but it is brought up that internationalisation must be implemented in such a way that we can still maintain a viable Norwegian professional and disciplinary language, as we cannot expect any other countries to do this for us. Institutions have been tasked with creating language policy guidelines or language strategies. This call for more language strategies refers back to Linn's research, which has shown that Norway is a country that has a tradition for policies focused on language planning (Ljosland, 2014; Linn, 2016).

So far in this introductory essay, I have presented a methodological framework with an abductive research strategy, focusing on unpacking the empirical situation of internationalisation. The national policies that conceptualise internationalisation are an important part of this analysis. In the four research articles, I will further explore different facets of how internationalisation is conceptualised and some of the ways in which it shapes academic work-cultures at NTNU. This analysis will have a focus on the dynamics of gender, diversity, class, inclusion and power, resting on the theoretical framework of Joan Acker's feminist organisational studies.

## Theoretical framework: Social inequalities within organisations

In analysing the situation of internationalisation at the university in this thesis, I have found several useful concepts in feminist organisational theories. These theories have provided a useful lens through which to analyse internationalisation both in textual policies and as an empirical situation at NTNU. Although many organisational theories have viewed organisations as gender-blind, feminist organisational theories instead argue that gender inequalities are central to all behaviours within an organisation, which rests on the assumption that both gender and gendered power relations are defining features of most organisations (Irefin et al., 2012). Feminist theories have often been marginalised and silenced in management and organisational studies, because of their disruptive potential to the established social order of knowledge production (Bell et al., 2020). There is a correlation between feminist concerns and organisational issues, as many people are affected by organisational processes and discourses (Calás & Smircich, 1999). For a long time, questions around gender, race, class, ethnicity and sexuality were absent in management and organisational theories and studies. Joan Acker is often credited with giving scholars the theory that explain how organisations are gendered phenomena, as she critiqued organisational studies for not including a gendered perspective (Nkomo & Rodriguez, 2019).

Joans Acker's texts and thinking about gendered processes in organisations also remain influential in contemporary Nordic research (e.g. Holter et al., 2022; Korvajärvi, 2021; Seierstad, 2011). Acker's own empirical cases in Sweden showed that the Nordic woman-friendly work-life co-exists with many of the same exclusions as American work-life, such as sex segregation in hierarchies in the workplace, persistent gender segregation in working life, gendered wage gaps and women dominating low-status, low-wage jobs (Healy et al, 2019 p. 39). Writings on the ideal academic, such as those that can be found in Lund (2015, 2018), can also be considered as a development of Acker's concept of the ideal worker. I therefore consider Acker's models as relevant to apply as the theoretical framework in a thesis focusing on Norwegian academia. My research interests for this thesis have been power dynamics relating to gender and international diversity within the situation of internationalisation, with topics such as language, distribution of power and authority, work tasks and social inclusion. Acker's analytical model of inequality regimes has been a useful tool for this exploration.

## Social inequalities in organisations: Acker's framework

To fully explore Joan Acker's theoretical stance, I will now examine some of her most influential works in more detail. This is necessary in order to understand how I have employed this framework to analyse the dynamics of gender, diversity and class in the situation of internationalisation in Norwegian academia and at the site of NTNU as an organisation.

Whilst Acker's first stated writing about gender in organisations in the 1970s, her 1990 article *Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations* is still frequently cited as a foundational source for the theorising of gender in organisations. This article presents a systematic theory of gender and organisations, where Acker rejects the idea of organisations as gender neutral. Instead, she argues that gender, race and class are embedded within organisations, through processes that create inequalities (Acker, 1990).

One key factor of Acker's early critique of organisations is that seemingly gender-neutral standards of organisations hide how gender is embedded in both organisations and in the 'ideal workers' within them:

> Abstract jobs and hierarchies, common concepts in organizational thinking, assume a disembodied and universal worker. This worker is actually a man; men's bodies, sexuality, and relationships to procreation and paid work are subsumed in the image of the worker. Images of men's bodies and masculinity pervade organizational processes, marginalizing women and contributing to the maintenance of gender segregation in organizations. (Acker, 1990, p. 139)

Both concrete jobs in organisations and the seemingly disembodied abstract 'ideal worker' within an organisation are gendered, racialised and embodied (Acker, 1990, 2006). In my analysis, I will use this concept to examine how conceptualisations of work and internationalisation shape the constructions of 'the ideal worker' and work distribution in academia.

In the 2006 article *Inequality regimes: Gender, race and class in organization***,** Acker builds on her previous work on the gendering of organisations and reconceptualises this approach to add the social categories of race and class, conceptualising a model for intersectionality in work organisations (Acker, 2006, p. 443) as they are usually present in organisations (Ibid., p. 444). Inequality regimes are a way of analysing race, gender and class practices within organisations. Inequality regimes are interconnecting organisational processes that both produce and maintain these relations: this model sees ways of organising as gendered and racialised (Acker, 2012,

p. 109). Acker defines inequality regimes thusly: “All organizations have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations” (Acker, 2006, p. 443).

This article argues that feminist scholars studying inequalities in organisations need to look at the intersections of several social categories as complex and mutually reinforcing (Ibid., p. 442). These may be in terms of formal power differentials between employment categories, but they can also be fluid and complex, as well as changing. Inequality regimes are linked to inequalities in wider society, and can be either very visible in the organisational structure or more invisible in everyday work-life (Acker, 2006). Inequalities in organisations are described as:

> Systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations. Organizations vary in the degree to which these disparities are present and in how severe they are. Equality rarely exists in control over goals and resources, while pay and other monetary rewards are usually unequal. Other disparities may be less evident, or a high degree of equality might exist in particular areas, such as employment security and benefits. (Acker, 2006, p. 443)

The bases for inequality that are the focus of this article are class, gender and race. The focus on ‘race’ is a product of Acker’s situatedness in an American context and is in itself a contested concept. In this thesis, I have not used ‘race’ as the concept but have rather used this term to build the scope of the thesis to include international diversity. To avoid locking the analysis into preconceived ideas of ‘race’ as per SA’s inductive logics, I have used the race part of the inequality model to sensitise the research project towards international diversity. I have also used her inequality model to explore linguistic diversity as part of the situation of international diversity that might create differences in the workplace.

Although it has not been a main category in the analysis of power dimensions, I have also used Acker’s concept of ‘class’ to examine this aspect of power dynamics related to gender and diversity. Like race, class is not a clear and uncontroversial topic, especially if we apply it to Norway today. I include class as a relevant inequality model for this thesis in the same way as

Acker chooses to use it: class relating to hierarchies within the organisation, and the distribution of authority, employment and wages (Acker, 2006, 2012).

In her book *Class questions: Feminist answers* (2012), Acker revisited the topic of class, linking it to racialised and gendered processes. She argues that all organisations have inequality regimes where class relations are both created and recreated in everyday work-life, and that “these class relations are gendered and racialized” (Acker, 2012, p. 131). She describes how the importance of class, especially linked with gender, has been another blind spot for many male academics. Particularly relevant for this thesis has been the linking of class and gender to unpaid labour. There are ongoing practices and processes where gendering and racialisation are integral to the production and reproduction of class inequalities in work relations, as they exist in the capitalist work systems with which Acker is concerned (Acker, 2012). By including not only gender but also dynamics of diversity and class as processes that are linked and co-produced in organisations, I hope to contribute to the field of organisational studies’ incorporation of questions of class and race – topics that have long been ignored in the field (Nkomo & Rodriguez, 2019).

Using this ‘Ackerian’ perspective in the analysis means viewing gender, race and class as conceptual categories that are produced through activities and practices, as embodied people coordinate and interpret everyday life practices within gendered and racialised distributions of both power and inequality (Acker, 2012, p. 7). Acker links these practices by viewing organisational practices such as hiring, wage setting, expectations of performance and job designs as being based on a model that ignores outside obligations, which is not unproblematic when considering the gendered disparities with regard to reproductive responsibility and housework (Acker, 2006, 2012).

Acker argues that “organisational hierarchies are intrinsically class hierarchies” (Acker, 2012, p. 111). There will always be disparities in work rights, rewards, power and autonomy, and these are often present along lines of gender, race, class, age, physical ability and sexuality – which differences matters and how will vary depending on local sociocultural contexts (Ibid.). Gender is present in all organisations and is almost always linked to class; historically in the USA, managerial ranks would be filled with men, and lower status and lower paid positions, often in service to managers higher up, would be filled by women. Although the situation is improving, this is a historic element that I feel is worth including (Acker, 2006, p. 444), as it gives some context to findings in academia that I will return to later. In the USA context, race has been a very important dimension for inequality. Other bases that Acker mentions are sexuality, religion and age, but she posits that they are not as “embedded in organising processes as are gender, race and class” (Ibid., p. 445).

Organisations have different practices and processes in place to achieve their goals, and Acker (2006) argues that these processes also shape how organisations produce inequalities when it comes to gender, class and race. Practices include how work is organised, hiring and recruitment practices, as well as informal practices in the workplace, and they are often tied with textual material. Informal practices are shaped by people’s assumptions about gender/race/class, which inform codes of conduct and behaviour. These practices are also connected, such as how women might be put into roles relating to service and customer interactions on a personal level, whilst men might be groomed for managerial positions and given tasks with more prestige within the organisation (Acker, 2006, p. 451). Because gender and race are inscribed into organisations, people associate certain gendered and racialised bodies to be inherently more suited to certain positions, thereby creating expectations that maintain inequality regimes in ways that are often invisible to people in everyday working life (Acker 1990, 2006, 2012).

In Acker’s view, inequality regimes are flexible and vary depending on local context. Therefore, I do not assume that all her theories will be applicable to a study of Norwegian academia. Of particular interest to me are her concepts about how inequalities tend to be complex and often invisible, and the notion of the ideal worker. One thing that *is* applicable is that women who prioritise work above family obligations might find it easier to succeed in managerial positions (Acker, 2006, p. 445), which is part of the reason why gendered organisation is so important in maintaining gender inequalities and the unequal distribution of women in organisational class hierarchies (Ibid., p. 448). This is a clash that we still see in academic positions in Europe, and is an example of how masculinised patterns in work roles disfavour women even when there is no individual discrimination by the leadership (Acker, 2006). Gender segregation is complex; men and women might work in the same places, but they inhabit different jobs of different tasks and status – for example, male and female doctors specialise in different fields, or men and women are given different types of tasks in the workplace, grooming them for different positions in the future (Ibid., p. 446). This creates gendered imbalances on a structural level that might seem to be the result of individual choices. This notion that what seem like individual cases and choices are part of bigger gendered structures is a key piece of feminist critique.

Acker (2012) writes that racialised and gendered inequalities can be reproduced through several arenas, through recruitment and hiring, wage-setting, supervisory practices and informal social interactions. All these might be based on assumptions or perceptions that affect organisational processes. Although social justice movements have made great strides in ensuring legal protection against overt discrimination, the invisible ways in which jobs and hierarchies are gendered and racialised, or the ways in which these categories inform assumptions, ideals and interactions in social processes are harder to point out and combat (Acker, 2012, p. 120). For women, small incidents might add up to a pattern of discrimination that is invisible from the outside (Acker, 2012) – what are termed as micro-aggressions (Gressgård, 2014).

In market ideologies, inequalities in wealth and status can be justified as the natural hierarchical ordering of responsibilities and labour. The issue here is that the gendered, racialised and class aspects influences access to power, authority, wages and other resources are often invisible in such claims (Acker, 2012, p. 121). In academia, even if it is natural that there are more junior researchers on temporary contracts than professors in full positions, it is not 'natural' if there are more male professors in full positions and more women and international workers on temporary contracts. Inequalities in organisations are also shaped by conditions in working life, such as downsizing, the exporting of jobs and decreases in job security (Acker, 2006, p. 458), which is a relevant element as temporality is a key feature in academia that also has gendered consequences (Thun, 2019). Acker's inequality regimes are tied to hierarchies in the workplace, which might be very firm, but may also be more fluid. They are usually both gendered and racialised, especially at the top of large organisations (Acker, 2006, p. 445).

This point about fluidity interested me as it makes the inequality regimes more insidious; they can adapt to new systems, even to superficial ideals of equity, and if they are invisible, they are harder to fight. Acker writes that there are different degrees of visibility of inequalities within organisations, or different degrees of awareness of them. Organisations might take steps to hide inequalities concerning wages, for example. People belonging to dominant groups might also not see the way in which they are privileged (Acker, 2006, p. 452), and challenging and changing inequality regimes is possible, but difficult, as advantage is hard to give up by those who benefit from it (Acker, 2006, p. 455).

The way in which jobs are gendered and segregated is an integral part of both organisational and technological change, even if the specific ways in which this happens can change (Acker, 1990, p. 145). Due to the ways in which organisations are structured in our societies, it will be very difficult to change the underlying organisational inequalities – especially those relating to class. Successful efforts have often been made by tackling specific inequality-producing mechanisms rather than large systems, and a involving a joint effort by social movements with legislative support both outside and inside the organisation. There are also waves within this; acts of legislation might be implemented in the institution, but after a time lose their impact or even be undermined (Acker, 2006, p. 456). However, we can change the way in which power flows between these positions. Acker's analysis therefore has a certain normative element, similar to that of Fairclough (2010), who posits that if researchers make social injustices visible, there is the possibility to provide alternatives and maybe enact social change. Organisational efforts to change inequality regimes often fail, but more knowledge about how specific inequality regimes function may help us to understand what works and what does not (Acker, 2012).

### Gender and diversity as discursive concepts

Analysing inequality regimes is a strategy for analysing the mutual production of gender, race and class inequalities in work organisations (Acker, 2006, p. 459). Acker refers to gender, race and class as 'conceptual categories' that are constructed through social practices of production (Acker, 2012, p. 5). I am inspired by this view, along with others who use Acker to define gender as "the socially constructed patterning of masculinity and femininity and of the relationship between men and women" (Irefin et al., 2012, p. 16). There are slight differences in how gender, race and class are viewed: whilst gender refers to "pervasive patterns of differences" (Acker, 2012, p. 5), race is "socially and politically constructed around definitions of skin colour and other physical characteristics" and is connected to inequalities in power and access to resources, as well as being connected to questions of inclusion and exclusion (Acker, 2012, p. 6). In comparison, Acker's definition of class is more complex, but it is similarly tied to inequalities regarding economics and power (Ibid.). This is the basis upon which I view gender and diversity in this project: as social constructions that have material consequences when connected to the concepts of power and access to resources.

As gender is a fundamental part of Acker's model, as well as being an important part of situational analysis, I have used gender as a deductive point of entry into the project, whilst I have treated 'diversity' as a discursive construct that should be studied inductively. The result of this analytical model is that gender has been used as a discursive lens in the policy analysis, whilst international diversity has been tied to academic work cultures and workplace power dynamics. I have also studied language practices as a pattern of inequality.

The point about gender being a part of social processes is important to Acker and positions this framework as a structuralist one. This is not, however, in conflict with the poststructuralist methodological framework. To merge these two, I use Acker's inequality regimes model as a basis for exploring power dynamics in organisations, whilst Clarke informs the project's empirical orientation with a focus on people's experiences and the mess of social life beyond strict categories. Acker views them in a structural, processual perspective, whereas I have been inspired by Clarke's poststructuralism and view gender and diversity as discursive constructions. I acknowledge Acker's idea that gender, race and class are created and recreated in everyday work-life practices and relations, but I study how they discursively manifest in documents and interviews, assuming that they are constructed in social life and made visible for me as a researcher in textual and spoken discourses.

The use of inequality models with openness to the field has enabled international diversity and differences in working culture to become a dimension. Based on the inductive finding, diversity is conceptualised to concern international diversity. The way in which I have incorporated power dynamics into diversity is to not treat international researchers as a privileged group of elite migrants, but rather as outsiders within a Norwegian system, which might be inherently challenging in terms of language capabilities, social inclusion, career opportunities and knowledge about Norwegian work-culture.

Acker posits that class, race and gender are complex and ongoing practices, and as they are socially constructed processes, the inequality regimes may look different depending on the context (Acker, 2012). In this thesis, I am especially interested in using the inequality regimes as a model for analysing gender and diversity in academia- more specifically gendered and racialised power dynamics, as something which is socially constructed and embedded in a certain organisational process and history. Similarly to Woods et al. (2021), I am interested in dynamic processes of power and privilege in organisational processes, not static categories.

### How to view organisations?

To be able to study how internationalisation is conceptualised and shapes academic work-cultures, it is necessary to establish how I view organisations.

I view organisations through the lens of texts from the methodological and theoretical framework. Universities are institutions that are gathered around certain activities that are governed through text, which are not only local but also have translocal elements which hooks them up to wider systems (Smith, 2001, 2005). For universities, their central activities that connect them to wider discourses are primarily teaching and researching (Lund, 2012). All institutions have certain institutional discourses that organise systems of knowledge and knowledge production, that coordinate people's activities and that subsume the actualities of people's lives (Smith, 2005). From this perspective, internationalisation becomes a part of the institutional discourses in academia, mediated through texts from national policies to universities, and through the university's official and internal texts becomes a part of the actualities of administrative workers, researchers and students. Although, according to Smith, people have some agency in the text-reader relationship in how discourses are reproduced, discourses are still a key element where institutions enact power in deciding the institutional priorities and activities of people's work-lives (Fairclough, 2010). What happens at the global and national level affects organisational culture at the meso level, which in turn influences the academic work-culture in which individuals experience their everyday work. This process of power is dynamic, with individuals and organisations shaping academic culture through powers which discursively lay down organisational identity and work-life norms.

From Acker's perspective, organisations are not neutral or objective organisations that are inherently 'logical'; rather, there are distinct organisational logics where every job has a place within a hierarchy, which is taken for granted and connected to responsibility and job complexity, at least in theory. Workers are not abstract and disembodied; rather, real workers are bodied, situated and gendered (Acker, 1990, p. 150). Gaps between seemingly neutral organisational discourses and social realities leave room for invisible hierarchies and power dynamics, which can be both gendered and racialised.

Organisations use control mechanisms to maintain the power of managers and to ensure that employees behave in a way that furthers the organisation's goals (Acker, 2006, p. 454). Organisations have many textual tools, such as work rules, labour contracts and managerial directives, as well as systems for job evaluation (Acker, 1990, p. 147). This is an important point that links Acker to the wider interest that this thesis has in texts as tools for coordinating activities in the workplace, especially Smith's sensitising concepts. Texts are essential to the objectification of people, as they can appear in multiple sites and therefore influence, standardise and regulate people's activities across local spaces, hooking them onto translocal processes (Smith, 2001). From this perspective, organisations such as NTNU use textual institutional discourses to present internationalisation as an important goal, which coordinates the activities of staff by, for example, prioritising international mobility and publishing in international journals as key activities for researchers.

Acker's framework is structuralist and is concerned with the policies and practices, interactions and structures that perpetuate unequal power, rewards and opportunities, and how these are gendered, racialised and connected to class in organisations (Acker, 1998). This happens through social relations as well as textual discourses, which opens for this project's focus on the tensions between policies, discourses and lived experiences. Viewing organisations through an 'Ackerian' lens, universities are built on certain ways of organising work-life, with expectations for work-norms and behaviour, hierarchies and the distribution of authority and power that are embedded in gendered and racialised structures, as well as being connected to class within the workplace. The inequalities that result from these hidden structures produce and reproduce complex inequalities within universities.

Institutional discourses are important both within institutions themselves and between the individual institutions and the wider institutions of which they are a part (Smith, 2005). I assume that, as institutions, universities will have certain systems that shape inequality regimes, but that these will not be formal systems of oppression but rather structures of social interactions, expectations and behaviour that produce and reproduce dynamics within social life at NTNU (Acker, 1998, 2006, 2012). I also base the analysis upon Acker's key idea that inequalities and the ways in which they are embedded into organisations might be invisible in everyday life, particularly to groups who are not affected by the processes that create inequalities (Acker, 2006, p. 452). Social processes that rest on both wider societal culture and the embedded situated hierarchy and academic culture within NTNU influence gender and power dynamics in the ways in which internationalisation is conceptualised and experienced in the organisational culture.

## Feminist lenses on Norwegian academia

Having a gender perspective and conducting feminist research are not the same thing. A gender perspective means looking for and exploring through a gender lens or paying particular attention to the way that gender is seen. Feminist research has many definitions. Feminism challenges and aims to challenge the oppression, marginalisation and exclusion of women in social, economic and organisational life. Perhaps because of this, feminism often exists at the periphery of dominant organisational and management studies (Bell et al., 2020). Feminist theories challenge the idea that organisations are rational, neutral and meritocratic in the way that the hiring, promoting and rewarding of employees takes place, and show that social categories structure the division of labour in the intersections between gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and ability. Although it is possible that meritocratic ideals may exist in the workplace, in recruitment practices, perceptions of who is suited for what type of work may be influenced by gendered and racialised stereotypes (Acker, 2006; Benschop, 2021).

I have both had a research interest in gender and diversity dynamics and employ a critical gaze towards power dynamics and social justice. Based on the methodological and theoretical framework, I consider internationalisation, gender dynamics, international diversity, academic work-cultures and language practices as sociocultural phenomena that are socially, culturally and politically constructed and situated within a certain time and place in Norwegian academia. Inspired by Acker, I consider how the way in which internationalisation is conceptualised in policies, interpreted and reproduced in social life into academic work-cultures is both gendered, racialised and affected by class (i.e., hierarchies and the distribution of power and resources) in academia. We know little about the complex relationship between these discursive constructions in Norwegian academia, and an empirical analysis is therefore worth prioritising.

Acker (2006) argues that racialised and gendered inequality patterns are reproduced even as organisational practices change, through both organisational decision-making and everyday interactions. This framework can be applied to an analysis of academia, and can be viewed as a reason why more women enter academia, but in disciplines with lower status, lower prestige and less publishing than men, which not only presents as a gendered imbalance but also contributes to gendered differences in publishing patterns (Henningsen & Liestøl, 2022). It might also explain why women still report doing the most 'academic housework', meaning gendered responsibilities and under-valued academic chores associated with caring, which can be time-consuming and might negatively affect their career progression (MacFarlane & Burg, 2019; Lund, 2015). This is in line with women doing what Acker called 'organisational housekeeping' (Acker, 2006, p. 447) and persistent gendered divisions of labour within academia (Irefin et al., 2012). Inspired by Benschop (2021), part of this project's ambition is to make visible inequalities and to show some of the lived realities of people dealing with the internationalisation of Norwegian academia, who do not participate in the shaping of institutional or national discourses but who are affected by its implications.

The fact that this thesis is a feminist project means that I am interested in gendered and diversity dynamics within the situation of internationalisation. I view these topics as tied to class as a conceptual category linked to access to power and resources (Acker, 2012) and power relations within academia, using NTNU as the empirical site for the situational analysis. The main research question of the thesis is: How is internationalisation conceptualised in discourses and policies, and how does it shape academic work-cultures? There are also sub-questions concerning the everyday sense-making and practices of university staff, and how internationalisation shapes dynamics of gender equality, diversity and inclusion at the level of policies and discourses. In the next part of this introductory essay, I will discuss these questions through Acker's framework of inequality regimes related to gender, race and class, viewing the empirical findings from the thesis in context. At the end of the analysis, I will launch an alternative way forward for the internationalisation of Norwegian academia.

## Analysis: Internationalisation in context

### Discursive conceptualisation of internationalisation: Strategic adaptation to Europe

Let us address the first part of the main research question of this thesis – How is internationalisation conceptualised in policies and discourses? – by examining both national governmental policies and texts from NTNU. There are strong similarities between the ways in which internationalisation is conceptualised in national policies and in NTNU's policies. Both in national and NTNU policies, internationalisation is treated as an inevitable part of our globalised world – something that is happening externally, and that both Norway and its universities and higher education institutions need to adapt to.

A linguistic analysis of policies shows that internationalisation is conceptualised to concern some common areas: international mobility for students and staff, international recruitment policies, international orientation in higher education, and international cooperation with other institutions/participation in transnational programmes. Another similarity is that there is a high level of focus on Europe, the European knowledge market and the European Union (EU), especially from NTNU. The EU is presented as being the most important partner and area for Norway to connect itself with, and there is a strong wish to tie Norwegian academia to researcher and student activities within the European area, especially on participating in programmes, such as Erasmus for facilitating student mobility and Horizon Europe for researchers. This can be seen as a pragmatic choice; Norway has geographical proximity and historic ties to Europe, and is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA). It might also be viewed as a self-strengthening process; participating in one system, such as the harmonisation of European higher education systems, has made it easier to facilitate student mobility, for example. It might also be that the EU enjoys respect as an institution and is therefore seen as a good source of potential research funds, and provides both prestige and a stamp of quality for research. The strong focus on Europe and the EU leads me to suggest that Norway's internationalisation of academia bears signs of *Europeanisation*, in terms of allowing the EU to have influence and domestic impact (Sedelmeier, 2011), which is an interesting finding for a non-member state. After all, researchers fulfilling the ambition to participate in international programmes, conferences and applications will have to meet specific standards and requirements set by the EU, including requirements for gender balance. This is yet another point where academia as a sector might be seen to break the societal trend and be more willingly subject to Europeanisation than other sectors.

Another common theme in textual policies is that I interpret internationalisation to have a very strategic component. Internationalisation is frequently portrayed in language that bears strong signs of market-based logics of production, quantifiably measuring performance, 'excellence' and working with 'the best'. In national policies, there is a strong focus on the triangle of research, higher education and innovation being useful to Norwegian society. Here, the internationalisation of higher education and research seems just as much instrumental as a research value in and of itself, and internationalisation in higher education often receives more attention than research. Policies on this level are often concerned with how a connection between innovation, research and higher education can be useful for Norwegian business, work-life, society and the nation, by attracting good students and researchers to Norway and producing useful knowledge. For national government policies, the question becomes how to minimise the challenges and maximise the possibilities so that the inevitable globalisation processes are useful to Norway as a nation and to Norwegian society.

Applying the concepts of Smith, we could say that these strategic ways of conceptualising internationalisation work as a textual discourse, shaping the institutional priorities from the macro national level to the meso level of organisational culture at NTNU. A simplified reading would be that NTNU is merely fulfilling the discursive ambitions of others. However, my data and analysis (Flikke, 2022) suggest that NTNU has prioritised internationalisation in internal strategy documents since 1999. They have allowed it to become part of their organisational identity and mainstreamed it into concerning almost all parts of their organisation, especially influencing researcher ambitions by pushing for strong international orientations in researcher activities. This shows a certain agency in how they have adapted to this national expectation. The strong ties that are being forged between internationalisation and excellence, although not unique to NTNU, can also be read as an expression of the organisation establishing their own identity and will.

These findings should be contextualised by the fact that NTNU has a particular history as a research and higher education institution that has been dominated by natural sciences and technology studies (which could be surmised from its name) – disciplines that, historically, have had a different relationship with internationalisation and excellence than the humanities and social sciences. The naturalisation of internationalisation might then be seen as expected, and call into question a need for further research exploring how internationalisation is experienced in different disciplines.

One interesting point of departure between the macro and the meso levels is that there are signs of conflict, resistance and opposition towards internationalisation in national policies, which are not as present in the textual discourses at NTNU. This is probably because national policies have more responsibilities to balance and consider than NTNU, which has a more coherent singular organisation to maintain. There are signs of ambivalence towards internationalisation in the national policies of the early 2000s, where it is described as having potential challenges, but resistance is clearest in the most recent policies from the 2020s. Internationalisation is particularly presented as a potential challenge to Norwegian working culture and language, which correlates with recent debates around the protection of the Norwegian language in academia. In NTNU's policies, there is less outright opposition, although it is worth noting that the ambition to be 'internationally excellent' has been removed from the latest goals for the university. However, a focus on international orientations largely remains in the textual discourses as a whole.

Through Smith's gaze, discourses are not merely imparted neutrally in a straight line, but there is agency, and room for actors to take part in shaping both ways – bottom-up and top-down – and texts and language are an expression of an institution's power (Smith, 2005). Through this perspective, we could say that NTNU has also contributed to the national internationalisation discourses by setting an example as a large university with some status and prestige within the academic community. There are relations not only between national academia and universities, but also between university institutions, as well as within universities among workers. This framework also includes an understanding that workers within institutions have agency in how they implement policies. Such relations are an important element within situational analysis and further shows the ways in which the macro and the meso level affect each other.

This is shown in different ways in all the research articles: how the strategic way in which internationalisation is conceptualised at NTNU to concern excellence, mobility and competition affects researcher ideals and the way in which institutional priorities are set and resources are channelled. This race towards strategic internationalisation means that much of the *work* behind the ambitions remains invisible, whether it is case-load and administrative handling of bureaucracy (as shown in article 2: *University administrators' perspectives on internationalisation*), work in managing bilingual work-environments (article 4: *Language practices and institutional power*) or reflections on how to incorporate international researchers into Norwegian work-life in a way that focuses on inclusion and avoiding systemic inequalities (article 3: *International diversity and inclusion in Norwegian academia*).

Internationalisation thus has an impact on organisational culture as it shapes institutional discourses and identity, and lays out institutional priorities that affect the work-lives of both administrative and researcher staff. The textual discourses conceptualising internationalisation lay out strategic priorities on both the institutional and individual levels: institutions should participate in international programmes and cooperations, while international researchers prioritise international mobility, with a strong focus on competitiveness and resources. I argue that while textual discourses influence universities, there is reason to take extra care in investigating how these discourses might affect work-culture as it is experienced on the micro level, as they shape the understandings and perspectives of workers as they live their everyday work-life within the university.

### Internationalisation as lived experience and work-culture

In the exploration of organisational work-culture, I chose to employ SA's and Smith's concept of silences, blind spots and missing perspectives in the empirical field to find out whose standpoints are not present. We have seen that internationalisation is often conceptualised to be presented as something that is inevitable and with a focus on activities for researchers, such as academic mobility and cooperating with good research environments. I identify this as internationalisation discursively being tied to researcher activities. Other research, such as that by Hamann and Zimmer (2017), has also shown that internationalisation has largely become an academic virtue. The interviews with administrative staff have shown some of the work that might become hidden when such discourses become dominant.

The analysis has aimed to go beyond internationalisation as researcher-discourse, and has unpacked some of the experiences that university administrators have with it, contributing with knowledge of their perspectives on internationalisation as policy and its effect on the university culture. Viewing academia as institutions with hierarchies and power dynamics, there seems to be a certain divide, where academic activities are given more prestige than the administrative running of the university. As I have explored thoroughly in article 2 (*University administrators' perspectives*), they were generally supportive towards 'internationalisation' as a project and brought up its many advantages, especially for researchers, supporting it as an implicit researcher discourse. However, they recognised that some of the facets of internationalisation have brought new challenges to Norwegian academia.

Three key parts of this were: international diversity, especially in the shape of differences in work-culture, tensions between practicing Norwegian and English, and how internationalisation affects the administrative organisational culture. The pattern of these challenges was that the increased tempo of internationalisation ambitions has not necessarily been followed up with a simultaneous increase in administrative resources. With increased expectations for internationalisation at NTNU, the caseload has increased, there is a need for more administrative resources to handle international bureaucracy related to activities such as mobility, cooperation and programmes, and the cases require more specialised competencies. Although systems at the university have improved since the early 2000s, there was a general sense that NTNU has also streamlined the organisation to make it more effective, with expectations that people should work 'smarter' while their workload increases and becomes more complex.

Although none of the interviewees mentioned this specifically by name, these strands of critique make sense if put into a context of increased neoliberalism. In the emerging field of critical university studies, I recognise this critique: that people are told to work smarter, that systems are cut, but that people are still expected to provide the same level of service to students, as well as pushing researchers towards activities that can be quantifiably measured, where concerns have been raised about the connections between academic cultures and neoliberal market-based economic logics across the world (see, for example, Morrish, 2017; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2022; Sørensen & Traweek, 2022; or Cannizzo, 2018). Some have tied internationalisation to these other developments: when universities aim to respond to globalisation and establish themselves in a competitive academic market, internationalisation becomes a strategic objective (Taylor, 2010b). This finding is consistent with other current research on academic cultures showing that ideas connected to market logics with competition, effectivization and standardisation subsume academic activities and views of knowledge to become tools for interests other than knowledge for its own sake (Sørensen, 2023). It is also an example of how globalisation brings with it changes in national and institutional management practices (Taylor, 2010a), and it shows how different facets of working culture and globalisation can affect each other. It also further shows how internationalisation is tied to a market-based logics system. This is also interesting as internationalisation is often presented as being related to researcher activities, and yet has happened simultaneously with reforms to management and control for both academic and administrative staff. With the context of increased strategic ruling, and a focus on producing results and strategic language to recruit ‘the best’ (Rasmussen, 2019; Flikke, 2022), we can say that new ways of ruling in academia, such as new public management and international neoliberalism, have affected the way in which internationalisation is conceptualised. The common denominator is a strategic and market-based logic running through the way that it is conceptualised, which affects the lived experiences of people working in the university administration.

From the perspective of several university administrators whom I interviewed at NTNU, leadership tends to merely look at the academic benefits of internationalisation in terms of cooperation and recruitment, and not always reflect on its potential challenges and the labour it involves from all staff groups, especially if we work with a widened concept of labour as time, energy and effort (Smith, 2005). The findings from my articles mirror the recent findings in the thesis of Charlotte Sørensen (2023): that leaderships seem to have an instrumental approach to internationalisation. Both our dissertations have also found that staff express both loyalty and resistance towards their institutions, showing ambivalence of staff within organisations. In my interviews, this manifests as loyalty towards internationalisation as a project for their institution, but resistance in the way that this affects the working culture for themselves and, as shown by article 3 (*International diversity and inclusion in Norwegian academia*), for international researchers.

The criticism that the administrators direct at the leadership is probably not unique for this specific case, but this dimension of increased internationalisation is something that is often missing from the wider debate. From this perspective, internationalisation is conceptualised into a culture that favours slim administrations, ‘effective’ working cultures, and work that can be measured and counted as productivity. This also matches with the findings from article 1 (*Internationalisation and gender equality*), which shows how internationalisation is tied to strategic goals, productivity that can be measured (such as publishing) and bringing in external funding from international funding bodies. The reason it is particularly interesting in this context is that there seems to be a discrepancy between the increased tempo of internationalisation and the focus on productivity in the shape of what can be measured. What gets lost in this process, according to the interviewees, are reflections on what kind of internationalisation we want, and what we really want to get out of it. This is a perspective that could be picked up in the wider debate around internationalisation in academia. It is slightly mentioned in government policies (e.g., NOU 2022: 2) that institutions could have a more conscious and overarching approach to internationalisation, especially when it comes to recruitment, but it could be further picked up and elaborated.

## Gendered perspectives on the university culture

Reflections on working culture and discourses become especially interesting if viewed through critical gendered perspectives. The way I have done this is by treating gender (and diversity) as discursive concepts, which are produced and reproduced in social interactions in ways that are tied to power dynamics of distribution of authority, wages and other resources (i.e., Acker's structuralist perspective). I have employed this framework to look at the structures that are baked into the organisational culture.

In article 1 (*Internationalisation and gender equality*), I explored some of the ways in which macro discourses are conceptualised into an organisation, and how there are implications that are baked into such discourses that might not be apparent or even intended. I applied a gendered perspective to show how discourses around internationalisation at NTNU are presented as gender-neutral. NTNU is not alone in this: since the 1990s, feminist researchers have been concerned with the gender-blindness of neoclassical economics and neoliberal policies for women. Neoliberalism has brought with it challenges such as the feminisation of labour, flexibilisation and casualisation (Cornwall et al., 2008, p. 2). Some argue that, even if it is not the cause of gender imbalances, it does not necessarily help either (Moratti, 2022). I put these findings into context with what we know from feminist critiques of work-conditions and globalisation.

Worldwide, there is a persistent underrepresentation of women in academia, which has been explained by them facing external barriers, such as gendered bias and unequal access to resources. Despite much work having been done to combat gender imbalance, there is a lack of gender balance in viewing numbers of publishing, hiring and the awarding of grants (Schmidt, 2023). Viewing this through a lens of social inequalities in organisations, we might say that the certain way of operationalising internationalisation is happening in a way that is presented as gender-blind, which could hide social realities. One example of this is increasing the focus on international mobility and expecting full commitment to academic life without acknowledging the fact that women in academia still report feeling more responsibility towards children and other family responsibilities than men (Brandser et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2020). This could also further contribute to letting the figure of an ideal researcher be male or disembodied and therefore imbued as male (Acker, 1990) in the cultural consciousness, meaning it could be harder for women to embody this role, especially in the natural sciences that continue to be male dominated. If mobility, competition and excellence are already skewed to statistically favour men above women, it would be reasonable to caution that continuing to focus on these elements as part of internationalisation strategies might have negative effects on gender balance in academia, especially if internationalisation continues to be presented as gender-blind in policies. If men on this conceptual level as a group gain easier access to positions of power and authority, we might also link the question of gender to class in academia, if we consider class in the form of practices that provide unequal access to and control over resources and means of provisioning (Acker, 2012, p. 68).

We might also implement a gender perspective on the relationship between university administration and researchers. Research from higher education institutions shows that the university administration tends to be invisible in research on academic institutions (Connell, 2019; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Szekeres, 2007). This might simply be because the university has core responsibilities for teaching and researching; however, employing Acker’s view of organisational hierarchies, it is no coincidence that more women work in the administration, and that it is ranked lower in the university hierarchy. This is also something that previous research has shown (Castleman & Allan, 1995). The fact that administrative work, which is not among the top levels of the organisation but is responsible for the everyday running of the university, is of lower status, and the fact that women tend to dominate this group, might legitimise each other as a class and gender inequality (Acker, 2006, p. 453), as the number of women in a job is consistently linked to a lower pay level (Acker, 2012, p. 57).

From a critical feminist gaze, the undervaluing and hierarchical ranking of administrative work and the practical side of internationalisation might be read as gender-coded – a remnant of keeping the practical activities (mainly performed by women) of keeping daily life running invisible. These types of activities do not become interesting until they can be organised to produce profit or control (Acker, 2012, p. 91). Similarly, the way in which female academics tend to dominate other types of academic fields can be seen as a way of placing them in a different social and economic value-realm than men (Acker, 2012, p. 89). A gendered analysis is therefore relevant, not only for which types of work are performed, but also for where men and women exist in academia and how this might affect the distribution of power and access to various resources.

The invisible worker who performs the daily running of the university would then implicitly be a female administrator, whilst the implied ‘internationally mobile, excellent, disembodied researcher' would be a male figure, as he is the one with historical minimal responsibilities in domestic family life (as discussed in article 1). This is especially true if we consider (Acker, 1990) that a job is a gendered concept with an inherent gender-based division of labour. This analysis thus points to a structural issue: it is questionable how far work towards gender balance might come with regard to the way that academia is organised. We might need to interrogate the notion of ideal academics and inherent expectations in academia through a gendered lens rather than looking at 'women' in academia as a group. Taking seriously the fact that gender is baked into the structures of the organisation and therefore invisible, the fact that gender is not treated as important in the research interviews becomes an empirical finding that might highlight the discourse of silence.

In a university culture, the push towards working smarter and producing the right outputs also calls into question who the ideal worker is and what kind of work is favoured by the institution (Lund, 2012; Acker, 1990, 2006). Discourses can be put into context with changes in models for financing and new systems for registering and measuring productivity and recruitment practices in Norwegian academia, where, for example, publishing in an international journal is formally ranked higher than other forms of dissemination, such as teaching books and media contributions (Brandser et al., 2022). When institutions and macro discourses prioritise publishing in journals, participating in international programmes and projects, and chasing 'excellence' standards, what might be downplayed by ambitious researchers is care-work directed at students who need it beyond producing candidates, the quality of research papers and dissemination to the Norwegian public. Such singular priorities might in turn put pressure on the family-friendly working culture that theoretically should exist in Norway, especially for young researchers feeling pressure to perform and prioritise internationalisation (Orning, 2016). There are also power differences within this group in terms of where they come from, which disciplines and co-workers they are arriving to, and their resources. Within this class, younger international researchers might be in especially precarious situations (The Young Academy of Norway, 2019), and female international academics might experience more pressure concerning mobility and balancing career demands with family responsibilities (Tan et al., 2020). Such recent empirical findings in academia show that Acker's model remains relevant, as she writes that the ideal worker is supposed to have minimal responsibilities in reproduction, and the way in which the labour market is organised means that dedication to care-work, family and unpaid domestic labour directly leads to less earnings and authority prospects, and when women do the bulk of this work, it leads to gendered differences in the work market (Acker, 2012, p. 61). This is a testament to how inequality regimes might persist even if the formal barriers to exclusion are removed.

Acker’s gendered perspectives are useful here as women statistically tend to perform more tasks that are not directly relevant to their own research (Egeland & Vabø, 2022) – what Heijstra et al. (2017) term as the ‘academic housework’. Recent research from Norway also shows that women and men occupy different disciplines, which affects publication numbers and makes this a problematic measurement for productivity (Aksnes et al., 2022). But the implications can also be stretched to asking what kind of academic work-environment we want to promote to all young researchers; for example, how standardised academic CVs highlight track records and awards and leave little room for projects performed out of a sense of idealism or societal commitment (Haaland et al., 2022). This dimension remains relevant, as it is doubtful that international mobility, the focus on researcher excellence or the standardised way of measuring productivity in academia will lose their positions, despite ‘internationalisation’ as a word losing some of its priority. As such, internationalisation poses some new challenges for gender equality in Norwegian academia.

However, it would be too simple to say that Norwegian culture is uniformly positive towards gender balance while the forces of globalisation are inherently a threat. I have shown how gender equality is a strong Norwegian ideal. Gender policy is also an area where Europeanisation has been very present. Interestingly, in the European research world, many requirements also come from the ‘outside’, such as the EU’s requirements. Since the 1990s, the EU has implemented policies to promote gender equality, partly under pressure from Nordic member states. At the same time, women in Scandinavia have been sceptical about how EU policies might influence Nordic standards of gender equality, hoping that the Nordic model might influence EU policies, from rights for individuals to programmes focusing on societal structures and gender roles (Dørum, 2020). During my interviews with department leaders and researchers in the STEM fields, one of the points made was that international recruitment might help gender balance, which they speculated as being because Norwegian women wish for jobs outside of academia for more security; there is a shortage of female researchers, especially on the tenured level. This gives reason to caution against simplistic ideas that gender balance is an inherently Norwegian idea that is being threatened by the forces of globalisation; rather, gender balance is part of internationalisation as it happens partly because of demands from the EU. Europeanisation can therefore be seen to aid gender balance. This is also something that other research has shown, especially in areas such as gender equality policies and rights for protection against discrimination (Holst et al., 2019). It is the strategic way that internationalisation is conceptualised, with its high focus on international mobility and publishing, that presents challenges, especially as these are presented as gender-neutral in an inherently gendered academic system.

### Viewing international diversity through theories of power

Similarly to how gender-blind discourses around internationalisation might mask social realities, research has also pointed out that academic mobility is not neutral, but might raise questions about who is included, epistemic justice and whose knowledge is allowed to circulate in global academia (Morley et al., 2018). In other words, it is important to also view international diversity as the result of academic mobility through lenses of power. International diversity, differences in working culture and multilingualism have appeared inductively as important parts of how internationalisation shapes academic work-cultures in interviews with researchers, administrative workers and department leaders.

It is difficult to make sweeping statements about a university culture as a whole, especially at a large university such as NTNU, as there are major differences between research departments in size, access to resources, history and degree of internationalisation. However, internationalisation as a national policy has clearly influenced NTNU's institutional discourses and priorities, which in turn has shaped its ideal workers in discursive ways that might not have been intended but that still produce some expectations for the activities and priorities of its staff. For researchers, I have analysed some of the ways in which these internationalisation discourses present the ideal worker, and for university administrators, I have unpacked some of their hidden labour and perspectives on the work-culture. Now, I will turn my attention to two other important phenomena within the situation of internationalisation: international diversity and the increased use of English.

University cultures are constructed in a combination of local practices, norms and traditions, and global influences, which in an internationally oriented university could come from all over the world. Despite researcher activities having international orientations, NTNU is still a Norwegian institution beholden to Norwegian laws, regulations and norms of how a workplace should be organised. For the further discussion of these topics, it will be interesting to take a closer look at how it manages its role as an employer of an international workforce through critical lenses of inequality regimes. One interesting element that my previous research on

NTNU has shown is that many research departments that are proud of their international diversity tend to have much more diversity among people on temporary contracts, whilst the smaller group of professors and leaders tends to be either Norwegian or white Europeans or Americans (Flikke et al., 2020). In line with studies referenced by Acker, the way in which positions of power were racialised was experienced most clearly by people from African countries (Acker, 2006, p. 452). If we apply a lens of inequalities relating to race/ethnicity (Acker 2006, 2012), we might also consider that insufficient inclusion of international researchers into the Nordic work model hints at institutional processes that create unequal access to and control over resources and provisioning. Those who have the most power within a situation will generally have the largest returns on the resource distribution (Acker, 2012, p. 56). Research article 3 (*International diversity and inclusion in Norwegian academia*) showed that information and knowledge about one's rights as a worker in Norway might directly influence the access to resources, in the shape of, for example, organising in labour unions or negotiating salary levels. Acker (2012) also mentions an example from America, where Asian immigrant women were seen as attractive employees in high-tech manufacturing firms in Silicon Valley because they were less likely to join unions.

In article 3, I applied this framework in order to analyse the university as an employer of an international staff group. Based on the perceptions of people who have worked especially with staff representation and support, that article highlighted some of the ways in which people who arrive in Norway with an international background are vulnerable as foreigners in the Norwegian system. This is because they often lack the inherent cultural knowledge about the ways in which the Norwegian/Nordic model for work-life is culturally organised. Some of these include formal benefits, such as holidays and welfare provision (e.g., parental leave), but others are less visible, such as relatively flat hierarchies where leaders are not figures of strict authority, or the culture of participating in shaping the workplace through cooperation between employers, the state and organisations representing employees (what in Norwegian is known as '*trepartssamarbeidet*'). At universities, there are several labour unions for different staff groups, as well as channels for democracy where staff can participate in shaping the organisation, such as local cooperation between employers and unions.

One further dimension to this analysis when applied to academia is that such imbalances happen in a globalised world where there are differences between the rich nations of the north and the poorer countries in the south (Maringe, 2010). Recent empirical research has shown a consistent work-life issue of discrimination that particularly affects job applicants from

African, Middle Eastern and South American countries (Midtbøen & Quillian, 2021), which hints at such global power structures still being a relevant dimension in discussions of diversity. Norwegian academia is not free from such structural problems, as academic migrants report issues with language barriers and structural discrimination (Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2016), as well as a lack of inclusion efforts from academic institutions (The Young Academy of Norway, 2019). This is an example of how social processes have material consequences, and that seemingly neutral discourses around academic mobility need to include a perspective on power dynamics. Tying together discursive concepts with material consequences in the social world, Gendered and racialised inequalities are not only social but also tied to inequalities in access to both money and power (Acker, 2012, p. 71), This analysis shows that the way in which internationalisation shapes academic work-cultures has implications for access to power and resources in ways that are gendered and tied to diversity matters.

My interviews show that there are recurring structural issues, where international researchers as a group are less aware of such benefits, and are less aware of the low threshold for negotiating salary or speaking against one's closest leader. Such issues seem to be on the systemic level, and are more about a lack of information than nefarious individuals withholding information, which mirrors Acker's posit that baked-in structures create *systems* of inequality independent of individual cases of discrimination. A lack of institutional communication might lead to imbalances in the distribution of wages, as international researchers could end up being paid less and to a lesser degree organised, which shows how discursive issues are tied to material consequences. From a perspective of social justice, this represents a problem in an internationally oriented workplace. Lack of communication can therefore strengthen inequality regimes along lines that are not necessarily directly racialised but that are related to organisational practices that produce wage inequalities (Acker, 2006, 2012).

The empirical material, if read through these critical lenses, might reveal that Norwegian academic institutions' hiring of international researchers, who are then systematically given the lowest wages possible and provided with little assistance (from employers) to ensure that this group is aware of their rights, can be seen as a form of organisational control of a vulnerable group (Acker, 2006, p. 454). This would mean that entrenched economic interests (Ibid., 460) are in place that might view it as beneficial to not actively inform all employees about wage levels. Although it is difficult to make such statements about the university culture based on the relatively few numbers of interviewees who brought this up, it is still a finding that could be examined as part of universities' strategies as employers of a multinational staff group. This critique rests on the macro and meso levels of organisational culture and awareness of existing inequalities – not on the level of individual managers, leaders or co-workers.

This is further complicated by the fact that diversity in academia is not simply about people's differences in work-culture, but how differences in research methods, knowledge and teaching styles are met and used; it is about epistemic diversity in perspectives and whose knowledge, experiences and approaches are considered worthy and 'scientific' (Aarseth et al., 2022). Members of the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF Committee) have questioned statements in researcher media where international researchers are presented as being little interested in Norwegian society, when recent surveys show that international researchers report working long hours and spending much time disseminating their work (Synnes & Zhao, 2024). Although it should be noted that members of this committee have an especially critical gaze towards academic institutions – viewing institutions as inequality regimes where information is a resource – we might then ask whether organisations reward those who try to adapt to the local culture, showing a preference for assimilation into pre-existing systems.

One relevant question to take from this analysis is: If international researchers are assimilated, what is then the point of international recruitment? The ways in which we view skills and certain jobs are gendered, classed and racialised; we culturally imbue them with meaning (Acker, 2012). The Nordic model of work is built on a tripartite relationship between free market logics, strong labour unions and a welfare state. Academia is an institution that operates partly on free market logics, with strong discourses around individuality and meritocracy. However, social and material inequalities might arise if Norwegian academics benefit from the other angles – the strong labour unions and welfare states – and international researchers do not.

This critical analysis can be further expanded across the inequality model to also include other social categories, although they have not been the focus of this thesis. An example of this could be queer individuals suppressing their gender identity and expression at work in order to fit into STEM fields in which personal identity should theoretically not matter, which could negatively affect their mental health and work performance (Boustani & Taylor, 2020). Another example is that high expectations for output and winning competition for research funding might also negatively impact researchers with mental or physical disabilities, as such academics might be reluctant to disclose their disabilities (Yerbury & Yerbury, 2021). In this light, it is positive that work has recently been conducted to incorporate more of these categories into discrimination laws (Suboticki & Sørensen, 2022). There is reason for caution as to whether increased internationalisation as conceptualised as competition, mobility and expectations for ‘excellence’ might further narrow the expectation of researcher ideals, further negatively impacting academics with disabilities. The Boustani & Taylor (2020) article also highlights how discursive norms around blindness for personal identity might implicitly favour those who already fit into the norm. This contributes to the inequality regimes in the workplace by narrowing the spaces for who is considered as belonging, and is therefore included, in academia. These are perspectives that I find are missing in the internationalisation debate, and which might hint at continued patterns of inequality in various forms.

Another core insight from article 3 (*International diversity and inclusion in Norwegian academia*) was that there seems to be a social culture in which bringing up challenges connected to cultural differences is difficult. This means that problems stemming from cultural misunderstandings (due to people being socialised in different work-cultures before meeting at NTNU) might not be communicated by either party, causing problems in the long term. This is made even more challenging by the fact that there seems to be a tendency for a certain social segregation, where international researchers might socialise among themselves, and Norwegians on the other side. When international researchers socialise among themselves, this means that they might also share problems and solutions in the workplace among themselves, meaning that once a misunderstanding or a certain idea has taken root in the employer-employee relationship, it can spread between international workers.

A lack of socialisation between Norwegians and international researchers therefore has a contagious effect on information and cultural understandings. This was something that administrators brought up but it can also be connected to inequality theories: social integration might not be the result of efforts to exclude but still points to the way in which social interactions in everyday life contribute to inequality regimes (Acker, 2006, p. 451). This illustrates the tensions when the global meets the local in institutions that are part of both communities. Language practices are another part of the vulnerability, as international researchers are navigating an unfamiliar system and a new country through a language barrier.

### Language practices and tensions

Language use can also be seen as part of the social practices in academia that produce inequalities. In a globalised academia that exists in a global context of power imbalances, language proficiency is part of the equality model that this thesis explores (Woods et al., 2021). As we saw in the national policies, the increased use of English in Norwegian academia has been presented as a strategic tool to ease international recruitment and mobility for students and staff. The continued high focus on researchers to prioritise international collaboration and participation in the global knowledge market also implies a systematic use of English. This coincides with the empirical findings from research article 4, that English is widely accepted as the language for researcher activities. However, the recent political efforts by the Norwegian government to protect the use of the Norwegian language in academia has a focus on international researchers learning Norwegian, and has resulted in new suggestions for expecting international researchers to learn Norwegian, which has caused some recent controversy in the sector.

If we apply Acker's inequality model in viewing the social practice of language use, this trend might reasonably be criticised for shifting the focus onto the international researchers on the micro level, when strong expectations for activities in English are discursively coming from the way in which researchers are expected to work. Research article 4 revealed an interesting dimension: whilst English has the higher status as researcher language, Norwegian is the language that is associated with institutional power. This is because Norwegian primarily remains the language for the administrational running of NTNU, as well as for leadership forums and channels for democracy. For several years, the internal channel for communication (*Innsida*) would also primarily post in Norwegian, although this has significantly improved with more English translations, partly as a response to the findings of the INTMANG project. We have also seen that funding bodies have placed greater value on international publications than dissemination to the Norwegian public. With regard to the way that internationalisation is conceptualised, many of NTNU's ambitions will be impossible to fulfil in Norwegian.

One thing that department leaders mentioned during several of the interviews was that international researchers who do not master Norwegian cannot be given tasks to teach or supervise undergraduate students who prefer Norwegian, and nor can they perform administrative work that requires Norwegian proficiency. They expressed concern then that these researchers might 'fly under the radar' and be 'allowed' to focus on their own research or teach at the graduate level, while their Norwegian co-workers carry an unfair burden to perform the less glamorous administrative work. Whilst this is a valid concern and should be addressed in the research departments where it occurs, I would caution against assuming that not knowing Norwegian is solely an advantage; rather, it can act as a gatekeeper to positions of power at NTNU. This is a hidden side to language proficiency being a social category that might control access to positions of authority and power.

If we view language practices through the perspective of inequality regimes, international researchers are thus rewarded for learning Norwegian, which might be a purely practical level but could also have symbolic dimensions of rewarding people who adapt to an already existing system. We might link these topics to complex questions of ethnic employment hierarchies from other parts of Norwegian work-life (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2018), such as the findings of research that it is not enough to merely open the door to international researchers and students; we also need to establish mechanisms for inclusion into the institution and everyday life, as well as equal opportunities (Stallivieri, 2019). This would also resolve the issues concerning epistemic justice and whose knowledge is considered valued that were brought up earlier in the text (as raised by Morley et al., 2018). The question of how to manage international diversity also goes to the heart of the issue for Norwegian universities to find a balance between being an internationalised arena and a local/national institution. Both instances have certain expectations of knowledge production, cooperation and dissemination, but in different contexts. How universities navigate these concerns has implications for the kind of work that is distributed, valued and expected for its workers, which in turn shapes the work conditions, experiences and culture of administrative and researcher staff.

Through my empirical inquiry, I define language practices as an expression of institutional power in controlling the mechanisms for inclusion/exclusion in the institution. This is another arena where questions should be raised about what kind of work is valued in academia, both formally and informally, through a lens of who has the most power and authority. A study from Iceland has shown that the academic housework (meaning the undervalued work tasks in academia) seems to disproportionately land on the more marginalised academics. This is not only gendered but also affects junior researchers more than seniors. The junior researchers are also socialised into a culture where individualisation and competition are highly valued, and taking work home and burnout almost count as status symbols (Heijstra et al., 2017). If internationalisation continues to be tied to competition, market-based logics and performance review, the academic culture fostered in Norway might further be affected by the global competitive academic culture, which means that academia might be further separated from other parts of Norwegian work-culture. Someone will still have to do the academic housework. For a junior researcher, publishing research articles in English is valued more highly on their resumé than dissemination in Norwegian to a Norwegian audience, although these are both important parts of being a researcher in Norway fulfilling the societal responsibility. I have previously drawn links between administrative work being undervalued and female-dominated in academia, and the administrative language being Norwegian might add to this hierarchy of work.

Language use is also tied to the issue of social inclusion/segregation in the workplace. My previous research on NTNU showed that, on a practical level, not being proficient in Norwegian might mean that international researchers self-exclude from social arenas such as the lunchroom, where Norwegian is mostly spoken (Flikke et al., 2020). This finding can be read in context of research article 3, as administrators pointed out that Norwegians and international researchers can tend to socialise in their own separate groups, partly to avoid having to switch languages. This segregation can mean that international researchers do not pick up on inherent knowledge about norms and expectations in Norwegian work-life even after years in Norway, and that misconceptions about international researchers might fluctuate between Norwegians, as people talk about each other but not with each other. This presents a systemic issue around integration and language, even in a large multicultural university, which might, over time, strengthen inequality regimes.

One part of situational analysis is to consider temporal elements within a situation (Clarke et al., 2018), and language is one arena where a temporal lens helps to unfold the complexities and dispel simple social 'truths'. When international researchers first arrive, using English and keeping them away from channels requiring Norwegian can be seen as a tool for inclusion, but it is not clear at what point this will shift to becoming a mechanism for exclusion by keeping certain tasks from them and barring them from full participation in the organisation. For leaders, administrators and co-workers, there might be extra labour involved with translating information to their international staff group and considerations in everyday life of whether to carry out formal and informal conversations in English or Norwegian. These two examples illustrate the importance of viewing social dynamics in the workplace not only as parts of systems with power but also with Smith's expanded view of work; language considerations and inclusion work take time, consideration and efforts from all parties. Such work should not be associated purely with the recruitment of international researchers; due to the way that internationalisation penetrates academic life, English is a part of researcher reality. The debate should therefore switch from which language dominates to a focus on how language functions both within institutions and in social life in the workplace, and whether language practices might influence access to resources, status or authority in the workplace.

## Structural challenges – Individual work and consequences

One of the most important points from the analysis above is that managing the different aspects of internationalisation, such as inclusion of international researchers or navigating multilingualism, is not effortless but takes work, and that the consequences often end up becoming individualised. This is also something that has been shown by other research from Norwegian universities (Bråten & Mikalsen, 2022). Some of the ‘work’ that my empirical analysis shows are department leaders trying to hand out tasks in Norwegian or English in a way that is fair, administrators translating information to English as they see it is necessary for parts of the staff group or managing complex bureaucratical cases, and researchers who are adapting to a changing researcher culture with varying expectations. This is one of the ways that internationalisation as a macro discourse affects the university culture.

When I have analysed work-culture, I have focused both on researcher ideals and on international researchers as a group. Whilst there is work for leaders, researchers and administrative staff who are already part of the university system, this analysis identifies international researchers who arrive as ‘outsiders’ as a vulnerable group in the Norwegian system. From a lack of onboarding routines to the need for formal competence on specialised bureaucracy, or navigating unfamiliar social norms in the workplace, it is often those with less power who deal with the consequences in social everyday life. Learning Norwegian can also be seen as additional work for international researchers, which comes in addition to time spent dealing with unfamiliar systems on a temporary contract, which is exacerbated in the cases where their stay in Norway is tied to their work contract. Inclusion is work, but so is being the one who is or is not included. Systems producing inequality and skewed distribution of resources are often invisible in everyday life to people in the organisation (Acker, 1990, 2006, 2012). When criticism is aimed towards certain parts of academia, such as the perceived dominance of English over the Norwegian language, people should be mindful of the level to which they are directing their criticism, so that the blame does not end up being shifted purely onto international researchers for bringing English as the working language.

Acker (2006) believes that inequality regimes can be challenged and changed, but that this is difficult and will meet resistance by those in power, as it will be hard to give up the advantages of the current system. Those with authority in the academic system and who phrase the textual discourses are those who have succeeded in their respective fields and might therefore be blind to the way that systems are either changed or disadvantage others. Duarte et al. (2023) argue that the responsibility for change cannot be placed onto a vague sense of 'organisational culture', but that breaking the chain of structural injustices in academia requires a change among individual academic actors (both administrative staff and researchers) through collective power in communication and interpretative patterns (2023, p. 4). Projects aimed at changing inequalities in the workplace have often failed because they have not realised how deeply embedded various and complicated inequality regimes often are (Acker, 2012, p. 131). My interviews show that individuals are able and willing to work within the system, but that there are some challenges with the way that internationalisation affects the university culture that seem to be hidden in people's everyday work-lives, such as language barriers, hidden work tasks connected to international activities, and tensions resulting from differences in work-cultures that might be difficult to bring up. Making such systems and the processes that reproduce them visible might be seen as the first step towards changing them (Fairclough, 2010; Acker, 2012).

### Norwegian universities in a difficult balancing act

If I view the topics thus far discussed in context, it becomes clear that internationalisation, diversity, gender balance and organisational culture illustrate a difficult balancing act that Norwegian academia and universities are straddling when it comes to their responsibilities. On the one hand, universities are Norwegian institutions that are subject to national laws and regulations and societal responsibilities, such as teaching in Norwegian and having a focus on gender equality and inclusion- as well as maintaining Norwegian expectations for work-life culture. On the other hand, there are influences from the global academic community, including different academic cultures and expectations for working culture, as well as multilingualism. This balancing act is the result of the dual nature of research and higher education, and not something that Norwegian academia or any given university can choose to shy away from.

This balancing act goes to the core of what Norwegian universities want to be. Do they want to be internationally oriented knowledge-hubs practicing English, or national institutions that follow Norwegian work-culture, practice Norwegian and focus on their societal obligations? If the goal is a hybrid of both, awareness of the complexities this causes is needed so that tensions do not negatively impact individuals, such as is shown by the language situation.

With regard to the question of power dynamics within the situation of Norwegian academia, the macro level discourses might also be stretched to include global academic hierarchies. It can be easy to criticise Norwegian academia and universities for the strategic conceptualisation of internationalisation and the focus on investments, returns and adapting to a globalised academia, but in a global context, Norway is a small, geographically isolated country, with a marginalised language to protect. It can therefore be understandable that there is a high focus on choosing the right institutions to partner with, to form ties with the EU and to focus on how to exploit the resources that globalisation brings. However, I still posit that tying internationalisation strongly to market-based logics and accepting the increased competitiveness and need for efficiency is a choice. Norwegian academia still has the power to change these discourses, and universities have a responsibility to not let these ambitions override their responsibilities toward equality and inclusion.

## Concluding reflections: Going beyond dichotomies

Since the early 2000s, internationalisation has been presented as something that is expected and positive for Norwegian academia. In policy discourses, it is conceptualised in strategic, market-based logics, which has implications for both universities and the lives of the staff. The discourses affect researcher ideals on the conceptual level by presenting international activities as being important and valued in academia. Based on the interviews with university administrators, the high focus on internationalisation coincides with an effectivisation of university systems, with expectations for people to work 'smarter' and for systems to be slim. This contrasts with internationalisation bringing in more mobility and more complex bureaucracy in the shape of international programmes and cooperation. The management side of internationalisation – what it takes to run these operations beyond the disciplinary value – is a blind spot in the academic debates. I have seen little opposition to internationalisation as a project, but the sense-making processes are influenced by the fact that the social situation is complex. Language tensions illustrate this: while English is much used in everyday work-life, especially among researchers at NTNU, it still requires *work* in the shape of translation and inclusion in the workplace. Language also forms a pattern of inequality, as it might shape access to work and positions of power at NTNU.

This thesis has also explored some of the gender and diversity dynamics in the academic work-culture. The empirical analysis leaves room to problematise ideas that internationalisation is a gender-blind phenomenon, as many of the activities associated with it are gendered and might contribute to a gender gap. However, international recruitment and Europeanisation in the shape of tying Norwegian academia to the European knowledge market might also help with gender balance, as Norway is not the only country where gender balance is seen as important. Diversity dynamics are especially important when considering Norwegian universities as workplaces that are built around Norwegian cultural and political ideals of what organisations and workplaces should look like. I have identified some of the ways in which such hidden structures and lack of communication might disfavour international researchers who do not possess inherent knowledge about all the work-rights that are available in the Norwegian system.

Current political developments show signs of halting the quick race towards increased internationalisation in Norwegian academia. I view this halting as something positive, as it provides the opportunity to reflect a bit more normatively on what we want out of internationalisation, and to analyse what it has meant for Norwegian academia. However, I will caution against narrowing down the debate towards simplistic dichotomies. The debate should not necessarily concern whether internationalisation has gone too far or not far enough; rather, internationalisation might look very different in the social situation depending on whether you work in the university administration, in a scientific position and in what discipline, whether you have a temporal or permanent contract, and how international your work-environment is. Research from other countries, such as Turkey, also shows that academics feel the loss of internationalisation as something negative (Doğan, 2023). None of the administrators I have interviewed have suggested stopping the internationalisation project or halting international recruitment (which is seen as essential for the academic development of a small nation such as Norway). One takeaway from this analysis would thus be to consider the internationalisation of academia specifically in local contexts, taking into consideration the size, discipline and focus of different units within the university.

One might also take this opportunity to discuss more broadly what type of work is valued in a university culture that prioritises internationalisation to a high degree. The issue is not, for example, that some international researchers are unable or unwilling to focus on dissemination to the Norwegian public when *all* researchers, including Norwegians, are expected to rather focus on bringing in external funding and publish in English. This would be especially important when reflecting on the researcher culture that junior researchers are being brought up in.

I would also advise against positioning gender equality as a Norwegian ideal that is being threatened by the forces of globalisation. As previously shown, international recruitment and a European focus on gender balance (although binary) can be seen to aid gender balance in academia.

The analysis also dispels the line drawn between the administrative and the researcher sides, and can hopefully mediate some of the tensions between administrators and researchers in many universities. On a formal level, internationalisation has led to changes in university administration, with the building up of central and local resources, and the administrators highlighted the need for more resources. But- they were not advocating for more bureaucratisation – they want systems to be in place so that they can aid the university in the internationalisation project.

This thesis has shown that internationalisation in itself is not a problem for Norwegian academia; it is not something that Norway or its universities can or should ignore. No small country would benefit from closing its borders and looking inwards, especially not an institution as inherently global as academia and knowledge production/ higher education. In the concluding remarks, I focus on what I identify as issues with the current way in which internationalisation is conceptualised; namely, that it is happening in a neoliberal context, with strategic language connected to competition and excellence. In policies, this manifests as narrow researcher ideals that be at odds with Norwegian work-life and considerations for gender balance. I have also seen that issues tend to be presented as dichotomies – either for or against internationalisation, a choice between Norwegian and English, the interests of either Norwegian or international researchers. I have shown why such dichotomies are both problematic from a social justice standpoint, but are also impractical assumptions to make about university cultures. Shedding light on how internationalisation is discursively constructed also means that we have the possibility to alter it.

## The way forward: Sustainable internationalisation

Feminist critique does not simply exist to point out all the flaws within an organisation, but can also serve as a tool to envision alternative value systems and new approaches to organisational change (Benschop, 2021). Given that this thesis is being written at a time when internationalisation is being slowly phased out, at least on the surface, it would be interesting to reflect on its potential roles in Norwegian academia in the future.

For all the talk of strategic internationalisation, I would like to launch an alternative: 'sustainable internationalisation'. This suggestion is inspired by Östlund & Shih (2022), who use the term 'responsible internationalisation' in the context of a Swedish higher education institution. In this text, they give some suggestions for how to overcome the challenges that internationalisation brings to their institution, such as shifting the focus from quantifiable objectives to qualitative internationalisation efforts, and focusing on strengthening international competencies among staff, from leaders to researchers, to ensure that the needs of foreign staff and students are met.

By sustainable, I mean internationalisation that is freed from neoliberal/economic logic. Whilst it makes sense to focus on how to adapt to a global international market and take advantage of the possibilities, we can remove internationalisation from the pure focus on investments, excellence and viewing academia as a 'knowledge market' to reflect more on what type of academic work-culture this language brings.

For the researcher community, this would also mean that we could question the inherent logic of tying international dimensions to quality. I agree with statements from the researchers in my material arguing that research cannot be purely oriented towards Norway – especially not in the natural sciences, where scientific communities within the national borders are small. However, policies where internationalisation and quality are tied together and where vague ideas of 'excellence' are the gold standard lead to a focus on publishing in English in international journals, on mobility stays abroad and on international cooperation. This inherently undervalues publishing in Norwegian, dissemination to the Norwegian public, and other 'academic housework' that cannot be measured but is important in the running of the university, such as the emotional labour involved in supervising students and supporting early-career researchers. Sustainable internationalisation would mean a reflection on what type of work is valued in academia.

It would be a simplification if we allow the debate to be simply about being for or against internationalisation; rather, we should take this opportunity to ask questions such as: How can academic institutions foster good work-environments while still adapting to global influences? For Norway, this would mean how to carry forth an academic work-culture that continues the tripartite Nordic model that combines free market logics with strong labour unions and a comprehensive welfare state (Lund & Nilsen, 2020). One important element here would be to allow openness about the gendered dynamics at play in the tensions between global competitions, and about a work-culture that is specifically adapted to suit gender equality, with a willingness to acknowledge that some aspects such as international recruitment might also be necessary to aid gender balance.

I am concerned that a discursive turn from internationalisation might manifests in an increase of nationalism. I call for reflections on what the internationalisation of Norwegian academia actually means, while, similarly to Zgaga (2020), wishing to protect such questions from populist discourses. Rather than asking which parts of Norwegian academic and societal culture we want to conserve, develop or protect, criticism can easily slide into a perception that internationalisation is an inherent threat towards an essential Norwegian culture. Rather, inequality regimes work to advantage and disadvantage based on gendered and racialised perceptions of ideal workers, work-distribution and access to resources in ways that might be invisible in everyday life. One important part of the racialised inequality regimes in this material is that international researchers are seen as a group that is vulnerable in the Norwegian work-system due to a lack of inherent cultural knowledge about the way that Norwegian work-life in academia is culturally organised.

An increase in rhetoric about preserving the Norwegian language and what is good about Norway might be interpreted in such a way that could marginalise international researchers – both those who are already here and those whom we need to recruit in the future. A discursive shift towards nationalism could also have negative impacts for Norwegian academia's reputation on a global scale. With high turnover, especially in the researcher community, hostility is noticed and distributed. Norway cannot necessarily pick and choose whom to headhunt (i.e., by only prioritising the recruitment of the star researchers that everybody wants).

Similarly, the debate about language should not be dichotomised but nuanced. The empirical analysis has shown that it is unproductive to associate an increased use of English as being directly tied to the recruitment of international researchers, as English is already part of

Norwegian researcher life as a result of internationalisation ambitions for the strategic benefit of Norway as a nation. Sustainable internationalisation would mean that we acknowledge the position that all languages have in academia – recognising that multilingualism is complex, but that Norwegian academia is bilingual, as well as the advantages or disadvantages of *both* languages. As this thesis (particularly research article 4) has shown, knowledge of the Norwegian language is a resource in academia. The public discourses around it being suppressed should be taken seriously, but we cannot ignore the position that it still holds – as a gatekeeper for access to many parts of the university.

Sustainable internationalisation would also shift the focus from a quantifiable focus on how many international scholars and students are recruited, towards also ensuring onboarding routines, clear language guidelines and following up with necessary resources to do the work at the local departments. On a normative level, we could also ask not only how many international researchers work in a department but also how diversity is spread through positions of power. Having a person with an international background as principal, dean or department leader, or in other positions of power within the university, will not only have a symbolic effect but also contribute to cultural and epistemic diversity. Having people with an international background in positions of power would also show that diversity does not end with recruitment to temporary researcher positions, but that the university has a work-culture where people thrive and rise through the ranks in the long term. For such inclusion work to be effective in practice beyond discourses of 'we strive towards diversity', this would mean following the advice of Tienari et al. (2010) to avoid standardisation and to understand the established power structures, practices and actors that are in place locally where people have their everyday work-lives.

Following up on the university administrators' perspectives, we could also focus more on the resources that internationalisation requires to be successful. I would also suggest that institutions consider the situatedness of internationalisation and not just what it means for the entire institution. An internationally oriented research environment might require more administrative support to maintain the different tasks and more access to Norwegian courses for their staff group, whilst a smaller unit might require more focus on work-environments in order to prevent social segregation. One size of internationalisation does *not necessarily* fit all. Much of this could be solved if universities work towards marrying their societal responsibilities and their responsibilities as employers of a diverse staff group with their lofty internationalisation ambitions, opening for nuances and strategies for internationalisation rooted in the local levels. This could ensure that ambitions for internationalisation on the macro level in national policies find their footing in local work-cultures, meaning that it will be more sustainable in the long term at universities. In this way, internationalisation need not be stopped, nor borders closed, but the race towards a strategic, market-based version of internationalisation could be paused and opened towards alternative approaches to make it more sustainable and inclusive.

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# Research articles

## Article 1: Internationalization of Norwegian academia: Gender equality as a blind-spot (Translated version)


### Samandrag

Det er vanleg å omtale norsk akademia som stadig meir internasjonalt orientert, men det er ikkje alltid like klart kva det mykje brukte ordet internasjonalisering faktisk inneber i akademia. Denne artikkelen utforskar forholdet mellom internasjonalisering, eksellense og balanse mellom kjønna i akademia ved å gjere ein kritisk diskursanalyse av NTNU sin internasjonaliseringspolitikk frå 2006 til 2018. Analysen viser at det manglar ein link mellom internasjonaliseringspolitikken, balanse mellom kjønn og internasjonalt mangfald som viser bevisstheit om korleis desse tema heng saman og påverkar kvarandre i dagens akademia. For NTNU handlar internasjonalisering i stor grad om internasjonal mobilitet for studentar og forskarar, internasjonal rekruttering, samarbeid om forsking og tilknyting til den europeiske kunnskapsmarknaden. Universitetet har eit stort fokus på forskingseksellense og mål om å bli internasjonalt framifrå. Internasjonalisering blir strategisk operasjonalisert til å handle om rekruttering av internasjonalt framifrå forskarar, ressursprioritering av dei beste, toppforsking og samarbeid med framifrå internasjonale fagmiljø. Eksellensediskursen formar ein ideell forskar med internasjonal erfaring og internasjonalt nettverk og som driv med toppforsking, og i politikkdokumenta er denne diskursen merittbasert og kjønnsnøytral. Artikkelen viser korleis ein kjønnsnøytral diskurs om internasjonalisering potensielt har sterke kjønna implikasjonar og konsekvensar.



**Nøkkelord:** internasjonalisering, akademia, diskursanalyse, dokumentanalyse, politikk, likestilling, kjønnsbalanse, forskarideal



### Abstract

Norwegian academia is often described as increasingly more internationally oriented, but it is not always clear what the much-used phrase “internationalization” really entails. This article explores the relationship between internationalization, research excellence and gender-balance in academia by doing a critical discourse analysis of NTNUs internationalization-policy from 2006-2018. The analysis shows a missing link between internationalization-policy, gender-balance and international diversity that demonstrates an awareness of how these themes are intertwined in today’s academia. For NTNU, internationalization to a large degree means international mobility for students and researchers, international recruitment, research-cooperation, and connection to the European knowledge-market. NTNU has a big focus on research excellence and a goal to become “internationally excellent”. Internationalization is strategically operationalized to entail recruitment of excellent international researchers, priority of resources towards “the best”, “top-research” and cooperation with excellent international institutions. This discourse shapes an ideal researcher with international experience and network who does “top research”, and in the policy-documents this discourse is presented as merit-based and gender-neutral. However, this article shows how a gender-neutral internationalization discourse potentially has strong gendered implications and consequences.

**Keywords:** Internationalization, academia, discourse analysis, document-analysis, politics, gender equality, gender balance, researcher-ideals

## Introduction

Today, internationalisation is rapidly developing in Norway and receives broad political support, where national guidelines for the higher education sector facilitate targeted and strategic internationalisation in the form of exchange, mobility, collaboration and participation in international programmes (NOU 2020: 3:62). All Norwegian universities are currently required to conduct strategic internationalisation work within the fields of research and education (Report to the Storting No. 14 (2008-2009):17). As an institution, academia has always been internationally oriented, but it is only in recent years that internationalisation has become a goal in itself (Flobakk-Sitter and Hybertsen 2021). This is related to an increased degree of goal and strategy management and competition, where Norwegian universities must conduct research and educate students, while at the same time being measured in international rankings in what is fierce global competition for research funding. In addition, there are increasing numbers of women and a constant focus on gender balance and gender equality at Norwegian universities (Rasmussen 2019). These rapid developments allow new directions to be taken but also create dilemmas for Norwegian academia (Erdal, Knutsen and Midtbøen 2019). In addition, this development represents changes in policy, discourses, objectives and governance that the universities, administration, managers and researchers must adapt to on an institutional and personal level.

Norwegian universities are precariously poised between representing Norwegian workplaces with welfare benefits, and working to become internationally oriented and so-called universities of excellence. Many have questioned whether we can maintain the ideal of gender equality in Norwegian academia while at the same time internationalising research, measuring it in the Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, and placing increasingly value in prestigious research and outstanding researchers (Brandser and Sümer 2017; Henningsen and Liestøl 2013; Lund 2012; Orupabo and Mangset 2021 Orning

2016). While gender equality is a constant topic in academic debates, research has shown that policy strategies in academia are often presented as gender-neutral. At the intersection between policy, university strategies, global academia and Norwegian work culture and the ideal of gender equality, the policy standardisation towards internationalisation hardly gives room to critical and normative debates. This results in rapid changes taking place at the same time as us having little knowledge about the consequences they have for Norwegian universities, changes in expectations and requirements for researchers, and what possible gendered implications this will have.

This article will contribute empirical knowledge from a Norwegian university using the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), the largest university in Norway, as an example. In the article, I discuss the following question: What is the discursive meaning of NTNU's internationalisation policy, and who is the ideal researcher according to these discourses? This question will be explored using Norman Fairclough's (2010) critical discourse analysis. Through this method, I analyse textual language use, formulations and narratives, and how these form discourses in NTNU's strategy documents. My starting point is that institutions use discourses to express power and shape perceptions of reality, and that the way this happens has consequences for social life.

## Previous research on change processes in academia

As internationalisation becomes an increasingly greater part of academic politics, researchers have questioned internationalisation as policy discourse and how this discourse presents an ideologically neutral and knowledge-driven policy that is positive for research and higher education (Morley, Alexiadou, Garaz, Gonzáles-Monteagudo and Taba 2018). The high profile of the term 'internationalisation' means that it is used to describe a number of different elements, and many have called for discussion on how it is used (Knight 2011). Jane Knight has identified five myths that have arisen about internationalisation: 1) that international students on campus will produce more international culture on campus, 2) that scoring high in international rankings is the same as quality, 3) that international goals and networks lead to prestige and attractiveness for the university, 4) that international accreditation is the same as quality, and 5) that international marketing of the university is the same as internationalisation. A common element in several of these myths is that internationalisation is perceived as something that can be quantitatively counted and measured. According to Knight (2011), this quantitative focus does not capture the complexity of internationalisation, and she argues that we need to study the intended and unintended consequences of the internationalisation of academia. A recent analysis of education policy documents in Norway shows that internationalisation is a key term in Norway, but that its meaning is unclear (Flobakk-Sitter and Hybertsen 2021). This analysis shows that the discourse is characterised by globalisation, student mobility and internationalisation on campus, and that it is perceived as being key to quality in research and education, without this being documented beyond general claims. There are also unclear rules for implementation, which gives universities freedom in how they operationalise internationalisation (Flobakk-Sitter and Hybertsen 2021).

Both Norwegian and foreign research identifies mobility as a key mechanism in the practice of internationalisation. While European policies are strongly oriented towards academic mobility, knowledge markets continue to be strongly national, and academic recruits face many obstacles when building their careers (Morley et al. 2018; Musselin 2004). There is a lot of research interest in academic culture and mobility from a gender perspective. Inge Henningsen and Knut Liestøl (2013) have identified a paradox in that gender equality and gender balance are cultural and political goals in Norway, while policy strategies in the higher education sector are often presented as gender neutral, and gender equality is often not linked to other strategic goals for the sector. Research on gender in academia has revealed a hierarchy of prestige between academic communities that, combined with institutional codes and gender stereotypes, contributes to an uneven distribution between the sexes in senior-level positions and research management (Brandser and Sümer 2017). Recruitment case studies in Norwegian academia have shown that there is often a focus on gender equality and diversity at an early stage in the recruitment process, but in the final, crucial stages, the focus is placed on narrow criteria that implicitly favour men and hide structural disadvantages for women and researchers with a foreign background (Moratti 2020; Orupabo and Mangset 2021).

In a study of doctoral research fellows with care responsibilities in Norway, Sara Orning (2016) has shown that internationalisation represents a strong institutional rhetoric. Through interviews, both doctoral research fellows and supervisors expressed an opinion that spending periods of study abroad and publishing work in foreign journals are important in the competition for permanent positions. It was also revealed that internationalisation and gender balance are two considerations that intersect because the positive aspects of flexible working hours come into conflict with uncertainty, time constraints, pressure to complete projects in the prescribed time, and pressure to prioritise research over care responsibilities for children.

Together with increased international competition, publication and research excellence to become a top researcher, this puts pressure on nationally educated researchers in Norway.

In European research, too, the high focus on excellence is linked to stricter requirements regarding internationalisation, competition, productivity and requirements for researchers to comply with the principles of research funding (Salminen-Karlsson, Wolffram and Almgren 2018). A study in recruitment practices from the Netherlands argues that the discourse of excellence is presented as universal and gender-neutral, but in practice ends up as a male ideal at universities because of gender norms, such as assessments that women will not be able to manage the tough academic competition as well as their male colleagues (Van den Brink and Benschop 2011). In an interview study of female academics in Norway, Gry Brandser and Sevil Sümer (2020) have shown how excellency requirements have an individualising effect and lead to increased competition and rivalry between colleagues, and according to this study, this particularly affects women's academic careers because women face more social barriers in positions of power than their male colleagues do. Bente Rasmussen (2019) is of the opinion that increased strategic management in Norwegian academia builds a discursive image of academia as a free and open global knowledge market characterised by mobile and independent researchers. In this neoliberal understanding of academia, she argues that structures are made invisible and differences between the sexes reduced to a result of women's personal choices and prioritisations. This also leads to increased pressure on all employees regarding strategic initiatives, obtaining external funding and establishing international networks.

These discourses on internationalisation have concrete consequences at universities. For example, when it comes to standard texts in job announcements, some faculties at NTNU have begun to place more emphasis on how many international publications researchers should have, rather than teaching qualifications (Rasmussen 2019). Rebecca Lund (2012) has taken a closer look at this: Through interviews with female academics in Finland, she has shown that the ideal academic is an ideal characterised by ever-greater performance, excellence in research and pressure to publish in highly ranked international journals. Lund includes a gender dimension in her analysis and argues that there are cultural and social barriers that make this ideal difficult for women to achieve. However, the picture is not entirely clear: A study conducted in Sweden, Norway and Finland found that international recruitment increased female representation at universities, especially in temporary positions (Pietilä, Drange, Silander and Vabø 2021). Agnete Vabø (2020) argues that more research is needed on the consequences of internationalisation for working conditions in research and higher education.

Against this backdrop, it is possible to explore what type of meaning a Norwegian university gives to its internationalisation policy, and how this is linked to other goals and phenomena in the sector.

## Methodology and empirical data

NTNU is the largest university in Norway with its headquarters in Trondheim and campuses in Ålesund and Gjøvik. NTNU was founded in 1996 and has been merged several times with other institutions (ntnu.no). According to NTNU, they have a clear technological and scientific profile and are primarily responsible for higher technology education in Norway, but also offer broad educational provision within medicine, the humanities, educational knowledge and the arts. On its website, NTNU profiles itself with the fact that 42 percent of its academic employees are women, and that approximately 35 percent are international researchers. NTNU is a university that has focused on internationalisation for many years, and which has integrated internationalisation into its general strategies and developed its own international action plans (SIU 2013:10). NTNU has several institutional public documents that can be used in a discourse analysis to find out how the university operationalises internationalisation, what their policy actually means, and which can be critically studied to find implications in the discourses. This article is based on a discourse analysis of selected documents dated between 2006–2018, the period when NTNU had the greatest focus on establishing its visions of becoming internationally outstanding in 2020. These key documents include the university's main strategies that came out between 2006 and 2018, reports and plans where these topics are discussed, and the four international action plans that were adopted from 2009 to 2018. I treat the documents as part of a network of internal and external documents that produce institutional discourses. The language used in the documents shows how the university has treated, produced and reproduced internationalisation over several years, what type of terminology and formulations are repeated and become dominant discourses, and how internationalisation is linked to other relevant phenomena and strategic goals.

### Critical discourses of power

In the article, I conduct a critical discourse analysis of the documents based on a method developed by Norman Fairclough. This method is well suited for analysing textual discourse and the relationship between text and discursive practices in organisations (Fariclough 2010:117). According to this method, discourses are a specific way of representing the world, and in an organisation, discourses construct social reality and help shape people's perceptions of the world. These discourses can be stable over time, coexist or conflict with each other (Fairclough 2010). Seen from perspective, internationalisation discourses at NTNU are constructed by people and are produced and reproduced to shape institutional realities. This analysis has two elements: Firstly, I analyse choice of words, formulations, arguments and narratives in order to identify these forms of discourses in the documents. I also explore the inter-discursive relationship between the discourses, where I analyse the relationship between discourses, which of them are dominant, and what is not represented but rather implicated in the language used. The analysis is normative and not just descriptive (Fairclough 2010:11), where I am critical of what is potentially lacking in the dominant discourses, and how this can affect the social process at the university beyond discourses. An important part of this analysis is that discourse and non-discursive social phenomena are interrelated, i.e. that discourses have real consequences in the social world, and that power and discourses are linked through power being partly expressed and working through discourses (Fairclough 2010).

I will use critical discourse analysis to find arguments, perceptions and attitudes that are expressed in textual discourse through the use of language, where the strategy documents are not only described, but are an important part of shaping institutional perceptions of reality (Asdal 2015). I have used this method to find the frequency of words and terms in the various documents, which ones are repeated and become dominant language, and which ones either disappear over time or receive less attention. I have then analysed the specific use of language in order to investigate the types of meaning and modes of expression found in the institutional documents. Through this analysis, I have found some discursive premises ingrained in the strategy documents. In the article, I refer to the university or NTNU as a single voice, not to individual authors of documents. This is because this is how one refers to oneself in the documents, and because it is not the individual who is important within discourse analysis, but different views, interests, and groups are represented in the form of discourses.

## What does internationalisation at NTNU entail?

As early as 1999, NTNU established a focus area that would contribute to NTNU becoming an international university (NTNU 2008:25), and made internationalisation a common thread, both implicitly and explicitly, running through their main strategies, action plans, reports and plans. NTNU's strategy from 2018 to 2025 makes it clear that "NTNU is internationally oriented and is a significant contributor to global knowledge development" (2018a:30). The foundation of NTNU's international collaboration is described as: "Our participation in the international research front provides high academic quality. Research activity at NTNU is increasingly financed from international sources and in collaboration between researchers in different countries" (2018a:30). This is based on the fact that: "Internationalisation is a prerequisite for high-quality development. Being nationally and internationally visible makes us attractive partners for collaboration with the best. This requires robust academic communities with distinct profiles, clear priorities and academic concentration" (NTNU 2011b:5). In all the strategy documents, internationalisation is normalised and presented as something positive that the university will work actively for, especially in accordance with quantitative measurements, where NTNU is to have a good reputation regarding international academic evaluations and have outstanding academic communities assessed through international peer reviews. Being international and having high quality is discursively linked together through formulations such as internationalisation is "a prerequisite for high-quality development" (NTNU 2011b:4).

At the same time as internationalisation is incorporated into NTNU's strategies, they are concretised in the international action plans from 2009 to 2018. Here, four main elements are presented as key areas of the discourse on internationalisation. These main elements are: 1) *international mobility* for researchers and students, including both long-term and short-term mobility for researchers, and that the university engages in international recruitment, 2) NTNU's *educational programmes* must be international. This is presented as being useful for individuals in an international labour market, for academic communities and research groups to gain international experience, and as an important tool for strengthening quality and relevance in education. In addition to permanent academic employees, postdoctoral fellows and doctoral research fellows being internationally mobile, NTNU must have 3) an active policy for *recruiting good foreign researchers* to various positions, and NTNU must also actively utilise national and international sources to finance researcher mobility. Fierce international competition from other institutions and the business sector make this an area of risk where NTNU must prioritise resources in order to improve reception routines (NTNU 2012). 4) Each action plan emphasises that *cooperation with the EU and EEA* is a top priority for NTNU's international collaboration (NTNU 2014:6). This means that NTNU will continuously strengthen its participation in the European education, research and innovation area in its action plans, "actively utilise the funding system in *Erasmus+* to support European educational cooperation" (NTNU 2014:8) and orientate itself towards the European market for cooperation on education and research. Here, we see that the discourse on internationalisation is not only an overarching ambition, but that it encompasses various policy areas, such as recruitment, employment policy, education and expectations of researchers and academic communities.

Through their strategy and vision documents, internationalisation is established as a dominant institutional discourse that is textually reproduced year after year. Through the use of words with positive connotations, such as increased quality and relevance, outstanding, best and top research, the discourse on internationalisation is presented as a positive discourse that is important for the university to develop in the future and adapt to the international academic market.

## A strategic collective concept

Through a discourse analysis of these strategy documents, we can see how NTNU uses institutional language to construct a specific perception of reality and position itself as a university. There are some interdiscursive tensions in these texts, that are expressed through the relationship between the discourses and the recurring themes that are emphasised. NTNU sees its international ambitions in the context of being part of a global knowledge market and that the world is facing complex global challenges that require collaboration and solutions (NTNU 2008). NTNU positions itself in its strategies as having a global social responsibility, that their research is part of the international academic community, and that the academic communities have a responsibility to contribute to knowledge development. This is also NTNU's role as a Norwegian university (NTNU 2011b). This responsibility includes NTNU collaborating with low- and middle-income countries on education, research, capacity building and innovation for mutual academic benefit and skills development (NTNU 2014, 2018b).

The second dimension, the one that receives most attention in the strategies, is the more ambitious side of NTNU's international orientation. The use of language is characterised by formulations describing NTNU as an internationally recognised knowledge institution that will "set the premises for knowledge development" in order to meet the challenges facing the international community, and create value both internationally and in Norway and build competence in order to participate in, contribute to and initiate future international research projects (NTNU 2011b, 2014, 2018a). The discourses show a strong awareness that they are ranked according to "international quality standards in a highly competitive knowledge market" (NTNU 2011a:1), and this leads to a strong focus on the fact that the international orientation must be strategic: In the document, a lot of attention is given to how NTNU will internationally orientate itself in order to prioritise collaboration with specific outstanding international institutions and academic communities, where the university will recruit excellent students and researchers, and all units will identify their most important international partners and collaborate with outstanding international academic communities (NTNU 2008, 2011a, 2014, 2018b).

Through a critical discourse analysis, we can say that internationalisation largely becomes a kind of collective concept for all the relationships in which research and education are part of. In these discourses, there is no room for NTNU to stop and reflect on these developments, but the words used are about participation in development, impact, collaboration and utilisation of funding sources. Through a strategic operationalisation of internationalisation, NTNU can position itself to not only be exposed to competition, but to be a university that can also compete *for* the best researchers and research grants and climb the international rankings. Further analysis shows that NTNU links these discourses to internal organisation, where resources are prioritised so that it is the best educators, researchers and academic groups that get opportunities for development (NTNU 2011b). Allocation of internal research resources must be based on "strategic considerations and to a greater extent on documented results" (NTNU 2012:13). Here, we see NTNU discursively constructing an image of a competitive academia and linking this with strategic management and resource prioritisation. This is an example of document discourse influencing social reality in institutions (Fairclough 2010). Other examples of specific consequences of discourse are that faculties, departments and academic communities must facilitate international mobility, recruitment and increased use of English. In addition, researchers are given an incentive to go the extra mile in their research, partake in periods of research abroad and publish their work in highly ranked international journals, preferably in collaboration with international academic communities and researchers (NTNU 2008, 2012, 2018a). These discursive prioritisations therefore have consequences both at institutional and individual levels at the university.

## International and outstanding – the same thing?

High international ambitions and strategic initiatives are often associated with the word 'outstanding' in the strategy documents. Being internationally outstanding is an explicit and consistent ambition in NTNU's general strategies: NTNU shall have an outstanding study environment, be the most attractive student city in Europe and be ranked among the 20 best in Europe in recognised rankings, and in quotes such as: "Outstanding basic research communities are necessary for a university with ambitions" (NTNU 2012:11). Collaboration with outstanding academic communities can strengthen quality in education and research (NTNU 2014:6). Through such formulations in the strategies, being international and outstanding become discursively intertwined: The goal of being outstanding is largely about being so according to international standards, and international is of course about who is internationally excellent and ranks high in international measurements and has a good reputation in international academic evaluations (NTNU 2011b). This forms a strong discourse of excellence in the institutional documents. Research excellence and quality are also discursively linked where excellence is raised as a standard in research. This is in contrast to attempts to expand and improve the standards that evaluations of academic research are based on, such as the DORA declaration NTNU signed in 2018. As a result, both internationalisation and excellence become both means and goals for the university.

This means that excellence contributes to the strong trend towards internationalisation that NTNU is planning for. On the one hand, being internationally oriented is an end in itself (for example by recruiting internationally and participating in international research programmes), while on the other hand, strategic internationalisation is a means of attracting both human and material resources. The goal of becoming internationally outstanding is also used as a basis for various activities, including a focus on international recruitment and mobility, both of which are presented as key areas for internationalisation. The discourse of excellence means that the focus is also about recruiting the best students and researchers, and that employees should associate themselves with outstanding international academic communities. Through repetition of these words and positive language, these two discourses steer the university towards high international goals and more strategic management of recruitment and resource utilisation (NTNU 2018a). This discursive standardisation in the documents necessitates a critical exploration of the implications this has for research life and research ideals.

## Gender-neutral discourse on internationalisation with gendered implications

The strategic way in which NTNU operationalises internationalisation largely deals with international mobility, publishing in international journals, international recruitment and connection to the European knowledge market, especially with regard to funding and collaboration. The strong discourses on internationalisation and excellence are linked to specific recruitment and resource allocation practices, and have consequences for how the strategy documents refer to employees at the university. As mentioned, there is a major focus here on recruiting the best and prioritising top-level research in order to win global academic competitions for human and financial resources, and researchers will be given incentives for international mobility, publication and to "go the extra mile in their research". Analysed through Fairclough's (2010) power-critical perspective, it is worth asking questions about who benefits from this direction in the discourses. From a strategic point of view, this research ideal has several advantages for the university: Outstanding researchers involve prestige, reputation and financial resources for NTNU. This can be read as an institutional expression of power, where we can investigate the side that is not expressed as strongly in the document.

The ideal researcher that these discourses depict is internationally mobile, has an international network, preferably in an outstanding academic community and university, and publishes in English in international journals. The pressure to achieve skills and experience in order to become what the university perceives as a top researcher is expressed through an institutional willingness to prioritise resources for those who have the potential to become outstanding top researchers. There is no opportunity to problematise or reflect on what it means to be a outstanding researcher, what this researcher is, or what conditions at the university can facilitate or prevent researchers from achieving these skills. The discourses used to describe researchers are gender-neutral and merit-based. The implication is that the ideal researcher is about qualifications, not about the researcher's gender, class or nationality. Here, a tension arises between neutral institutional discourses and documented experiences from academic life. Not all researchers have the personal, social or economic prerequisites to be internationally mobile (Pietilä et al. 2021).

This touches on the tension Norwegian universities experience between international academic competitive culture and Norwegian society with the ideal of gender balance and a family-friendly welfare state. The idea that women can both build academic careers and have a family is important for the Norwegian welfare state's ideal of gender equality and it has improved the balance between the sexes in academia (Rasmussen 2019:91). As an employer, NTNU is also obligated to work actively for gender equality and prevent discrimination based on ethnicity and gender (Section 25 of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act 2017). Where gender balance is a topic in NTNU's internal strategy documents that are not action plans for gender equality and diversity, it is often with very specific ambitions: NTNU wants to prioritise women for academic positions, especially within the fields of science and technology (NTNU 2008, 2011): "In priority areas, we must seek staff members with expertise from internationally leading academic environments, and have suitable mechanisms for this. NTNU has a particular challenge in recruiting more women to technology and science" (NTNU 2011b:9). Recruiting women and internationally outstanding researchers is not seen in context, neither how international recruitment can have a positive or negative impact on gender balance.

There are many connections between gender balance and internationalisation, and as the analyses of the strategy documents show, this represents a blind spot in internationalisation policy. This may indicate that gender is treated as a niche issue that is separated from other important policies. As it is now, the discourse does not facilitate the investigation of gendered consequences of pressure on international mobility or a strong focus on publication points and on the writing of applications. All researchers can experience this pressure in both positive and negative ways, but we have a lot of knowledge about how this can have a particularly negative impact on women. This is due to the fact that women in academia often spend more time on teaching and tasks that go unnoticed in the organisation, and women who prioritise teaching or family responsibilities outside academia have a structural disadvantage when trying to become top researchers (Lund 2012; Orupabo and Mangset 2021). This also involves an age dimension, where women over the age of 35 are much less mobile than their male colleagues, and studies of time spent at university and university colleges show that having children greatly affects women's working hours negatively (Egeland and Bergene 2012; Pietilä et al. 2021).

Children and family responsibilities can also influence what happens within academic institutions, such as women's participation in international research collaborations, publications and measurements of productivity (Uhly, Visser and Zippel 2017). If one presents a research ideal as bodiless and neutral with constantly acquired skills, international experience and uninterrupted career development, one runs the risk of the ideal researcher being a male figure (Acker 1990; Pietilä et al. 2021; Tan, Sağlamer, Cağlayan, O'Hagan, O'Connor, Baisner, Myers, Apostolov, and Topuzova 2020). This can also be read as a conscious choice in which the university sets the standard for the ideal researcher and leaves it up to the researchers themselves to meet these ideals according to measurable quantitative standards seen by institutions with the power to define what is wanted and valued in terms of skills and merits. The fact that this is linked to recruitment and employment policies without a gender dimension means that problems can arise in the intersection between policy and social reality, where men get paid for research periods abroad and high prioritisation of their careers, even if they have small children, because they have an invisible female partner who has been willing to deprioritise their research time and stays abroad during a critical career phase.

The discourses in the strategy documents facilitate a standardisation towards internationalisation and prioritisation of internationally outstanding research and researchers. This article highlights the problematic nature of this discourse being gender-blind, but this is also about the broader value issues regarding Norwegian academia. We can question the value of international rankings and of the great focus on publishing, and critically investigate the consequences of pressure on mobility. Prioritisation of researchers and research that can help NTNU become internationally outstanding also implies a hierarchy of researchers and academic communities that can lead to negative consequences for work culture, good social working environments and the flat social hierarchy that international researchers highlight as being positive in Norwegian academia (Flikke, Gullikstad, Kristensen, Lagesen and Sørensen 2020). Knowledge is needed about how these complex themes are connected in politics and more broadly in the academic discourse, and we need to open seemingly neutral discourses in order to gain more awareness of how competition, pressure on mobility and focus on excellence in research have gendered dimensions.

## Conclusion

In this article, I have conducted a critical discourse analysis of the meaning of NTNU's internationalisation policy from 2006 to 2018, and investigated where discursive tensions exist and the implications this meaning has. We have seen NTNU's strategy documents operationalise internationalisation to largely focus on international orientation in education, mobility for researchers and students, international recruitment, collaboration with what are referred to as low- and middle-income countries and outstanding international communities, and great focus on the EU and the European knowledge market. In the article, I have conducted a critical analysis of this use of language and found that the institutional discourse is characterised by strategic management and a strong discourse of excellence in which the core activities of the university are directed towards becoming internationally outstanding. There is a standardisation in the strategy documents where internationalisation and excellence are presented as positive, and there are no opportunities to reflect on the consequences these developments have for university culture. These discourses are used to depict a research ideal in which the ideal researcher is internationally mobile, has international networks, obtains external research funding and publishes in highly ranked international journals.

Such a research ideal is characterised by a discourse on what type of research will be most useful and prestigious for the status of the university and its reputation, and the goal of becoming internationally outstanding. The fact that this research ideal is ingrained in the institutional discourses over several years is neither unproblematic nor coincidental. Placing increased pressure on mobility, international orientation and focus on what the university perceives as top-level research is part of a discursive language of power and can in practice lead to pressure on individual employees, and from a larger social perspective, it can affect the working environment and work culture. Although researchers of all genders may experience these pressures, the article has shown that this ideal can be particularly problematic for female researchers. In the strategy documents, the research ideal is presented as gender-neutral and merit-based, which is consistent with national policy discourse. At the same time, this is in contrast to all the knowledge we have about the gendered sociocultural barriers that exist in academia: structural gender imbalance at universities, gendered expectations of behaviour, greater demands for care responsibilities in the family and implicit prejudice and discrimination in recruitment practices and resource allocation in academia. It is therefore a problem that gender equality appears to be a blind spot in the internationalisation policy of the largest university in Norway. What is needed is a clarification and discussion of the links between gender and internationalisation in academic institutional policy that can address the complex relationship between internationalisation, gender balance, work culture, recruitment, excellence and career development.

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# Article 2: Invisible, and not enough: University Administration's Perspectives on their role in internationalisation (Version submitted for publication in 2023)

Internationalisation has long been an important policy among European higher education institutions. While much research focuses on the effects this has had on scientific community, we have less knowledge about the perspectives of the university administration. This study takes place in Norway and explores the work-practices of 9 people working in key positions in the university administration in managing increased internationalisation. These interviews show that while administrators are loyal to the internationalisation-project, they perceive a discrepancy between increasing number of international activities and slower organisational adaptation to manage the tasks this brings. By unpacking the work they do, this article problematizes claims that university administrators are too 'professionalised'.

Keywords: university administration; internationalisation; institutional ethnography; Norway

This paper is submitted for publication and is therefore not included.

# Article 3: Identifying What is Missing: International Diversity and Inclusion in Norwegian Academia (Accepted version)

## Abstract

With increased internationalisation and academic migration, today Norwegian universities are workplaces with an internationally diverse workforce. Research on international workers reveals challenges concerning topics such as language practices and social inclusion. This article contributes to knowledge about diversity and the university working culture from a perspective we know relatively little about: university administrators. Through organisational theories of inequality, power and discourses, the article explores how administrators frame international diversity, and identifies what is missing, from their perspective. The interviews show a paradox in the way that Norwegian academia handles diversity: on the one hand, internationalisation and international recruitment are prioritised and presented as positive, but on the other hand, there seems to be a culture of silence about the challenging aspects of cultural differences. Distribution of information about social expectations and how working life is culturally organised is not neutral, but can affect people's social inclusion, the extent to which they are organised in labour unions, and even their salary development. The article reveals some of the ways that international researchers are vulnerable in the imbalanced employer-employee relationship at Norwegian universities.

**Keywords**
international diversity, Norway, social integration, universities, working rights, employment rights

## Introduction

International recruitment has long been a strategy used in Norwegian academia to raise the quality of research and education. As a result, today around one fourth of scientific staff in research and higher education have an international background, a number which is significantly higher than for most other aspects of Norwegian working life (Vabø, 2020). This development has led to debate of such topics as language practices, inclusion and working conditions at universities. The local working culture can be particularly challenging, as international staff often come from academic working cultures that practice longer working days and competitive working styles, which may contrast with local working cultures (ibid.). Norwegian working culture is characterised by a focus on work-life balance and an orientation towards gender equality, which is facilitated through a welfare state that ensures kindergarten provision and parental leave for both genders (Innstrand, 2010; Rasmussen, 2019). At the same time, research shows that many early-career researchers find a healthy work-life balance hard to maintain, as they climb the academic career ladder (Sørensen & Kristensen, 2022). Nordic universities balance between being state-funded organisations with societal responsibilities, and disciplinary internationalism (Kuteeva, Kaufhold & Hynninen, 2022). This makes Norwegian universities interesting sites for exploring issues around mobility, working conditions, inclusion and diversity.

When Norwegian working life becomes more diverse, employers play a significant role in facilitating participation in the workforce, expanding diversity in top-level positions and utilising human resources, and many use diversity management as a tool for leadership (Fedreheim et al., 2022). Despite a few studies mapping the inclusion of international researchers (Bråten & Mikalsen, 2022; Flikke et al, 2020; Maximova-Mentzoni et al, 2016), more knowledge is needed concerning how Norwegian universities manage and perceive their responsibilities towards an international staff group. While there is a growing body of research focusing on the voices of international researchers, this article explores the topic through the perspective of people working in different units of the university administration. This article discusses the question: how do university administrators frame international diversity, and what is missing from their perspective?

This question is discussed on the basis of 12 interviews with university administrators working at a large Norwegian university. The interviewees were human resources advisers, senior managers managing academic mobility, onboarding and policy development, and labour union representatives. I chose to explore the experiences of these three groups because they work with coordinating and managing various aspects of the running of the university, and they support and encounter scientific staff from both Norwegian and international backgrounds at critical times in the course of their work, such as onboarding or workplace conflict. Administrators in such positions fulfil several key roles for the university, against the backdrop of globalisation, internationalisation, and diversity, yet we know little about their working conditions and their views of the organisational culture of which they are part (Hunter, 2018). By analysing their experiences, the article gives a perspective on the organisational culture that is often not prioritised.

## Diversity, working culture and power in academia

This article is part of a body of research which is interested in how universities are caught between internationalisation on the one hand and local practices on the other (Yanaprasart & Lüdi, 2018), and of transnational research which analyses academic mobility through the lens of power (Kovba & Gribovod, 2020). International mobility and the exchange of students and academic staff is not a new phenomenon, but during the past years has become an important goal for nearly all higher institution and research institutions (Dervin, 2011). While much data exists concerning international students, there has been less critical research of the mobility of academics. The research that does exist shows that academic migration is a complex phenomenon with positive aspects, such as transcultural learning and cross-cultural competences, but also has darker sides, since international researchers might also experience otherness, isolation and epistemic exclusion (Morley et al, 2018). Research has often focused on whether who speaks and who is silenced in academia is gendered, but there is also increasing focus on transnational researchers (Rajendran & Bardoel, 2022). Research from across the world has shown that many universities show little interest in embracing diversity and difference beyond utilising international researchers to facilitate international collaboration, and that international researchers themselves tend to camouflage or downplay cultural differences (Guerin & Green, 2014). Transnational academics and international teachers have received relatively little attention in migration studies, perhaps because the phenomenon of highly educated people migrating for work has been deemed 'elite migration', as opposed to the migration of less resourceful people who have less capital and fewer politically facilitated ways of crossing borders (Koh & Sin, 2019).

This article views the university through the framework of organisational theory, especially the work of Joan Acker on the organisation of work and power relations in organisations. According to Acker, 'All organizations have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations' (Acker, 2006, p. 443). Inequality in organisations relates to systematic disparities between, among other things: power and control over resources, opportunities, work distribution, pay, and respect. People in powerful positions might reward certain behaviour and practices, which might benefit some groups over others (Acker, 2006). In institutions, certain bodies are the norm, and others are 'strangers' (Ahmed, 2012). From this perspective, international researchers arrive at a university which is built around a Norwegian idea of what is normative and expected, and we can thus question how differences are treated.

When arriving at Norwegian campuses, international researchers also bring with them working cultures, norms and expectations from their respective home countries. In this article, I am interested in the different aspects of working culture, which broadly means shared beliefs, values and assumptions embedded over time within an organisation, which might not always be visible or conscious, but are developed over time and affect the expectations of workers (Lewis, 2001). The Nordic model, in the shape of a strong welfare state, and requiring staff participation and cooperation, makes Norway and other Nordic countries stand out in the international job market. At the same time, research shows that local work cultures might come under pressure in the meeting with increased internationalisation (Børve & Kvande 2018).

Inequality regimes are linked to inequality in the politics, history, and culture of the organisations (Acker, 2006). It is therefore relevant to consider the particular role of diversity in Norway and Norwegian academia. Higher education institutions in Norway are increasingly recruiting internationally, which leads to greater ethnic and national diversity on campuses (Askvik & Drange, 2019). Ethnic diversity in academia might relate to foreigners who migrate to Norway to take up an academic position, or to people from immigrant backgrounds who have received at least part of their education in Norway. We increasingly separate these two categories statistically (Mesna, 2017). Diversity in academia is rather peculiar because it can concern diversity in representation, but also epistemic diversity in the shape of different perspectives and methodological approaches (Aarseth et al., 2022). This article discusses the group 'international staff' at the university, meaning people who have been born abroad and have emigrated to Norway for a work position. While there are large internal differences within this group relating to people's backgrounds, family situation, work position and time spent in Norway, reading European and Norwegian research on this group indicates that there are some common structural challenges.

Despite strong calls for change, issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusivity remain pervasive in academia (Prince & Francis, 2023). International research shows that 'people of colour' tend to be underrepresented, especially in senior positions (Gabriel, 2016). In European working life, research shows a steady problem of discrimination against immigrants and second-generation immigrants, especially towards jobseekers from countries in Africa, the

Middle East and South America (Midtbøen & Quillian, 2021). A survey completed by the Young Academy of Norway shows that younger researchers in Norway tend to be positive towards internationalisation. Meanwhile, this same report shows that gender and being born in another country are systematically tied to the experience of discrimination in academia, and 30 per cent of all international researchers in Norway think that employers do not do enough to ensure inclusion (the Young Academy of Norway, 2019). These findings imply that research institutions have room for improvement when it comes to ensuring inclusion in the workplace and reflecting the need for more focus on how academia handles and utilises diversity among researchers (Erdal et al., 2019). Research from Norway shows that academic migrants often experience structural discrimination, difficulties in climbing the academic career ladder, and challenges with insufficient Norwegian skills (Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2016), language barriers, onboarding complications and a lack of social integration (Flikke et al., 2020), besides challenges in dealing with Norwegian bureaucracy issues, which also tend to be individualised (Bråten & Mikalsen, 2022).

## Method

The university in this study is organised around eight faculties, with a combined 55 research departments, spanning the areas of natural sciences, arts, social sciences, pedagogy and healthcare. At the centre of the organisation is a joint administration with 11 divisions that, according to their website, provide administrative and technical services, advice and assistance to the management and the faculties. One office is designated for managing student mobility, and a team under the Human Resources division is responsible for mobility and internationalisation. This group oversees, among other things, counselling services for staff at the university and they host courses for international researchers on topics like housing, taxes, and Norwegian working culture, and provide aid for researchers going on research stays abroad. They are primarily responsible for aiding permanent staff and researchers making research stays abroad, while the faculties themselves are responsible for the onboarding of researchers they recruit, and for their own internationally mobile Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers.

The data material on which this article is built consists of 12 semi-structured hour-long interviews. I interviewed people working in key positions, managing, and coordinating different parts of the internationalisation process, especially international migration. I started by interviewing five people working in the team for mobility and internationalisation, and by asking about their networks, I identified and recruited five people working in key positions on topics such as Human Resources, international collaboration, recruitment or equality and diversity. To supplement perspectives on working conditions, I also interviewed two representatives from large labour unions at the university, who work to assist its members with topics such as working conditions and salary. All were contacted through their work email addresses, which are publicly available on the university's website.

The interviews took place as part of my Ph.D. project on internationalisation in Norwegian academia, and the interviewees were asked about their attitudes, perspectives and experiences concerning the broad concept of 'internationalisation' in Norwegian academia and at their university, discussing their relationship with policies, and the university's structures for internationalisation and international diversity. This article is an exploration of the topics they discussed relating to diversity issues. Several administrators were very concerned with topics related to international diversity, such as challenges around language practices, onboarding, clash of working cultures, and practices of inclusion and exclusion, and they often described similar challenges independently of each other.

The interviews are analysed through discourse analysis, which entails studying how knowledge and meaning is produced within certain contexts, and then systematising the different ways of speaking and making different perspectives visible (Talja, 1999). More specifically, I use Critical Discourse Analysis, as developed by Norman Fairclough (2010). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is interested in how people use language to represent the world in particular ways. According to Fairclough, people can choose to either reproduce certain discourses or express opposition towards dominant societal structures and ways of representing the world. Within CDA, one supposes that the way people speak of certain phenomena influences our social reality. Discourses are not treated as objects, but as complex relational systems whereby people communicate through text and speech. Discourses have both internal and external parts, and the analysis includes the relationship between discourses and other social phenomena (Fairclough, 2010). The discourse analysis in this article is two-fold: on the one hand, I have analysed the thematic content of the discourse, meaning the way my interviewees speak and represent diversity. I do this by discussing what they are concerned with, what they represent as positive, and what is presented as more problematic and challenging. In the other part of the analysis, I connect the discourses to the social phenomenon of power, which is a crucial element in CDA. Power relations shape discourses, and there will always be power holders within an institution, and others with less access to shape the discourses and thereby shape the institution of which they are a part (Fairclough, 2001). I will therefore explore where the interviewees express opposition to current practices, and where they place the responsibility for what they perceive to be problematic within the institution.

## Constructions of cultural differences and communications

One important context for the discussion of international diversity is that the topics of immigration, cultural differences and integration are controversial in Norway, and tend to be sensationalised in the Norwegian media (Gullestad, 2017). There are several ways to relate to the vague concept of 'cultural differences', and paradoxically, diversity is often presented as something positive, while 'differences' tend to be viewed as problematic (Eriksen, 2007). Because diversity is such a broad and controversial topic, I was curious about how the interviewees would choose to speak about it. According to CDA, people can use certain words, arguments and phrasings to represent the world in certain ways, presenting it positively or negatively, and shifting accountability for what they see as problematic (Fairclough, 2010). Out of curiosity about discursive framings, the administrators were asked quite broadly about the different 'groups' at the university to see if, and how, various categories were constructed. A few administrators did not touch on the subject of diversity, but referred to formal categories such as temporary or permanent staff, or administrative and scientific workers. If I asked about cultural differences, they either claimed that culture does not matter and that all conflicts are individual and concern personality, or that culture might play a role, but that this was not something they themselves had experienced. However, most administrators, especially those who work or have previously worked directly with international staff, framed international diversity as an important phenomenon at the university.

## A culture of silence?

Almost all the administrators mentioned how international diversity increases as a natural aspect of internationalisation. During the interviews, 'diversity' was presented as concerning nationality, culture, and language, and was in particular connected to the scientific community and academic migration. Both international diversity and mobility were framed as normal and positive. Two of the interviewees expressed the benefits of internationalisation this way: 'You get a socialisation, cultural understanding that I think contributes to increased, better cooperation in the projects' and 'Mobility and internationalisation contributes to our scientific staff maintaining an international level.' However, there appeared to be some friction between international diversity as a phenomenon, the institutional policies, and how the university works to facilitate this.

For several decades, internationalisation has been a priority area in the university's main strategies, and since 2009, regular action plans for internationalisation have been published, detailing goals for international recruitment, collaboration and the mobility of students and staff. In 2018, equality policies also began to include diversity, which in the first action plan was conceptualised to include international staff. The newest action plan for equality and diversity also has a section on the inclusion of international staff and students.

During the interviews, I asked about internal guidelines and policies and received ambivalent responses. Several administrators described how part of their job is to contribute towards shaping institutional guidelines for internationalisation and mobility, and they mentioned how they had worked to raise awareness of issues, for example ensuring that information material in English is available to accommodate international staff. For others, however, institutional policies functioned as a framework, as something necessary for the different units at the university to be on the same page, but not something that everybody was interested in or even aware of. There seemed to be a certain gap whereby some in the central administration made sure they were up to date, while others paid little attention to guidelines in everyday case management. There also seemed to be a perceived discrepancy between the official institutional policies of the university, and what happened in everyday life. Several administrators mentioned a great focus on international recruitment from leadership and in policies, but not necessarily a concurrent investment in the practical work of onboarding and inclusion when the international researchers had arrived at the university. As one labour union representative said, speaking on behalf of the university as a workplace:

> Yes, because there is a lot of focus on precisely this, how to recruit international staff, we should have international researchers, but then there is something about how we facilitate how it actually works when they come here, too.

The critique of this process can be thereby be summed up as: if a university brands itself as international, it is not enough to focus solely on recruitment, since onboarding routines, local working culture, different working methods and how people learn from each other must also be taken into consideration

One particularly critical voice was a woman who worked with equality and diversity. She connected the social inclusion of international researchers not just to onboarding, but to the department's existing culture for dealing with cultural differences. She claimed that Norway is characterised by a culture of silence around cultural differences. She had herself emigrated to Norway several years before, and spoke on behalf of herself and the international researchers she had come into contact with through her work, when claiming that within the university, there is a tendency to claim on a surface level that culture does not matter, but underneath the surface there were 'an infinite number of these cultural components'. These cultural components can relate to what people bring with them in their cultural baggage in the form of expectations of working methods, how one interacts at work, and authority and roles in a hierarchy, and were connected to people's national background and previous work experience. Through her job, she had the impression that in academia, people do not dare to speak honestly about several facets of diversity, but prefer to count nationalities at their departments and to use diversity as a sort of buzzword. The reason that such a 'culture of silence' is problematic, according to this interviewee, is that people might not dare to communicate openly to international researchers regarding the local working culture, expectations and social norms, nor bring up things they find challenging. International researchers might then go on to infringe social expectations and rules they did not know existed, such as travelling abroad without seeking permission to do so in advance, or the rare example of international leaders who might exert pressure on women on maternity leave to come back to work quickly.

These findings should be contextualised by this interviewee's special interest in diversity. She also pointed out that as well as her mentioning that such examples are rare and not the norm in international working environments. Nevertheless, this raises an interesting point: particular facets of local and Norwegian working cultures are not automatically visible to international researchers, and might remain unspoken, if leaders and co-workers are reluctant to tell their co-workers that they have broken a social norm, out of fear of not respecting cultural differences. This is an issue, according to this administrator, because individual international researchers might become unpopular and gain a negative reputation without necessarily knowing what they have done wrong. The issues concerning tensions which are not spoken of out loud were also brought up by others, as one senior adviser said:

> Then it can be easy to blame the international staff, that those who have been hired are not good enough or that they have been like so or like so. But it can just as well be that [the university] has not understood how one actually has to work, if one wants to have a proper international environment.

One element of the criticism relates to people's experience of their own work. One Human Resources adviser claimed that international diversity had led to an increase in the number of cases of conflict, and was frustrated that she and others had to spend time and resources clearing up conflicts that, in her opinion, could have been avoided if all parties had communicated clearly and managed expectations early in the working relationship. Language differences are an additional challenge brought up by all the administrators. When several parties are sitting around a table and English is the second or third language for all those involved, the risk of misinterpretations and misunderstandings will increase, which other research (e.g. Knapp, 2011; Mauranen, 2006) has also shown.

Social integration was also framed as an important issue. According to administrative staff who work to support scientific staff in research departments, many international researchers are not socially integrated into their professional environments, which can lead to them socialising amongst themselves. One of the administrators expressed the risk of misunderstandings as the result of lack of communication thusly: 'It is a bit scary when international people speak amongst themselves, because sometimes misunderstandings about laws and guidelines at the university will form'. Through their work, administrators have heard the viewpoints of both 'groups': Norwegians come to them with reactions to the way that some international researchers are behaving, while in international environments, perceptions circulate about how foreigners are discriminated against and how it is harder for them to gain academic positions than their Norwegian co-workers. In a show of loyalty towards the university, several administrators were concerned about what people with negative experiences would go on to say about the university in international circles and how this could affect the university's reputation.

While such loyalty to the university was in place, several people spoke with feeling on behalf of international researchers and pointed out the many ways that a lack of social integration disadvantages them. For example, navigating bureaucracy is difficult to do on your own, while people who are not socially included or who unwittingly infringe social norms are not invited to join important research projects or applications. I interpret this as an awareness of the power structure in the institution, which shaped the way that the administrators discursively framed diversity. They were careful to mention that international diversity is something positive and not in itself inherently problematic. Issues primarily arise due to misunderstandings and poor communication between leaders and employees, because people are socialised in different working cultures. Several people also mentioned that it is the employer who has the authority and tools to implement inclusion measures. I interpret this as a deliberate strategy, where the focus on what is problematic is shifted from international researchers (who were described by one adviser as the ‘underdog’ in the working relationship) to the organisational culture and communication practices. This strategy lifts the problems from the more vulnerable group to university systems.

## International researchers in a Norwegian system

One facet of employee rights and the imbalance of power between employer and employees was explored particularly in interviews with Human Resources advisers and labour union representatives. They expressed a knowledge of Norwegian working life and brought up characteristics they saw as especially important, such as: a relatively flat leadership structure, university democracy with channels for staff participation, and a culture positive towards union membership and local democracy. However, they questioned whether the benefits of being an employee within this system were equally available to all workers.

Continuing with discussions concerning communication, the issue these interviewees presented was that the university might not realise how much information their international staff group needed about the Norwegian system. From roles of working directly with international researchers, they have seen how challenging it can be to interpret, understand and navigate their role within a system that is very dissimilar to what many of them are used to. What is needed from the university is communication: ‘That one actually has to make people aware, both international staff and the international leaders, that there are other rules in Norwegian working life than a lot of other places in the world.’ If people are overwhelmed by bureaucracy or miss onboarding steps, deadlines might be missed and in extreme cases people might struggle to find housing or receive pay for their initial stay in Norway. This concurs with how structural issues become problems that individuals must solve (Bråten & Mikalsen, 2022). Since the onboarding phase is already expensive, this could highlight differences between researchers who have the economic resources to be mobile, and those who do not (Dervin, 2011).

Another example related to employee rights is that many international workers at the university are not organised in labour unions or subject to any form of staff representation. The administrators speculated that one reason could be that people arrive from countries where unions are either corrupt or where employers might discourage efforts to organise. Not all international staff know or understand that unionisation in Norway is viewed as something normal and is even encouraged by employers and leaders. This knowledge gap is seen as problematic because international staff are particularly alone in Norwegian working life. One disquieting trend had been noticed:

> I have seen it in connection with pay negotiations over and over, that international researchers are lower paid. And for some I think it is, it is tough, because you have people with doctorates who are placed in low engineering codes, who do a very important job on the projects they are in, sit in, and who are given extremely low wages. I mean they are paid so far down that the best paid cleaners at [the university] have a better salary than them.

While statements such as ‘It is very suspicious that there are so many foreigners who end up in that situation’ express strong empathy with international researchers, none of my interviewees suggested that this was a conscious or nefarious plan on the part of employers, or that this is a problem faced by all international staff. The criticism was at a systemic level: one senior adviser thought that it might be seen as economically beneficial for employers to give international researchers a relatively low pay offer when they are first hired. This can be connected to the topic of knowledge of norms and customs in Norwegian working life. People who are recruited internationally often do not have any way of knowing the normal cost and pay levels in Norway, and the initial pay offer might seem high, compared to salary levels in their respective home countries, without a Norwegian basis of comparison. Framing this as an employer’s responsibility, these administrators presented this as an issue that recurs year after year, and that international staff stand out from their Norwegian co-workers in the statistics:

> And that means that they will slow down, salary-wise they slow down in comparison to others who work with them, who are in exactly the same position as them. And maybe [they] work on the same project, but their pay is very different.

Due to the lack of social integration with Norwegian co-workers mentioned above, where such knowledge is more readily discussed and shared, people might have lived and worked at the university for years without ever being aware of the low threshold for pay negotiations with their closest leader. One challenge is that even when the university distributes information, international workers might need different arguments and explanations than their Norwegian co-workers. Several administrators have caught on to this and have been raising awareness through labour union material and information channels, but they cannot catch all cases. While they acknowledge that it is the employees' responsibility to familiarise themselves with the local culture and system upon arrival, they express consideration of international workers who have the added difficulty of navigating unfamiliar systems, social norms, and expectations through a language barrier. The result that they feared was that international researchers as a group could end up in a weaker position in Norwegian working life.

## Discussion: Knowledge as a resource

We might interpret the interviewees' care not to present international workers as a 'problem' as reproducing societal discourses where diversity is meant to be presented as something positive. Connecting diversity to thoughts about social justice is also a trend in other parts of national working life (Gullikstad, 2010). However, it is clear that many of the depicted positive aspects of international diversity: meeting of different working cultures, languages, fresh perspectives and different routines, also represent potential sources of conflict. Considering how language is used to represent the world, the administrators treat diversity through frames of justice, inclusion and employee rights.

Knowledge of how working life is culturally organised is framed as a precondition for both social inclusion and access to economic resources. Social integration can reduce power imbalances: the more integrated into Norwegian working life one is, the more knowledge one will probably gain. The responsibility for correcting issues was overwhelmingly assigned to the university as an employer, and there was sympathy with international researchers, who were presented as vulnerable in a Norwegian system where onboarding is complicated, social norms are implicit and must be learned, and it might be hard to know what to ask for. Naturally, there are nuances within these discourses, since most leaders are doing a good job with managing international staff groups, systems have been improving over time and some international staff have high expectations that cannot reasonably be met. But the fact that the administrators place the primary responsibility for communication and integration on the employer, and not the employee, is an important element to which we can connect Fairclough's (2001, 2013) focus on power within institutions.

Reading the interviews through this perspective, I argue that information that is distributed, who are insiders and who are outsiders (e.g. Ahmed, 2006), and who have to adapt to local cultures, are not neutral processes, but linked to the distribution of resources. Who is organised in labour unions might not seem important, until it becomes connected to salary progression. It might seem obvious for Norwegians to take up issues in the workplace with their department leader, but some international researchers might treat leaders as figures of authority who should not be questioned, because this is what they are used to. Analysing the interviews, the issues do not seem to concern deliberate discrimination, but to be part of a system where knowledge and understanding of local working cultures both in departments and at the university, as well as social norms, expectations, and your rights as an employee, are tools to be integrated and used to navigate both the Norwegian system and the local workplace.

The university has implemented plans for diversity and inclusion, and administrative systems are in place to theoretically ensure onboarding, inclusion and efforts to give information to international staff, but administrators question how well this is followed up in practice. As one adviser put it: when people struggle to find a way into the social working environment and other parts of the working culture, it can be easy for employers to say that it is people's own responsibility to handle this, without taking into consideration that people have been trained in different ways of viewing and organising working life. Here, we see that systems of exclusion and inclusion mean that the consequences of exclusion might be organisational, but that these consequences become individualised. This correlates with Acker's (2006) view of organisations: we might say that invisible structures at the university are distributing power, information and economic resources through inequality regimes based on who is integrated closer to the Norwegian standard, and who is not. If certain topics are left unspoken of due to an institutional culture of silence, this could strengthen the inequality regimes through making it harder for people to be integrated into the work environment.

What is needed, according to the administrators, is two-fold: On the one hand, fairly simple measures could be implemented, such as having information available in English, or procedures to ensure that as many of the international staff group as possible are able to attend courses on Norwegian working life, and language classes. The other dimension is more complex and relates to organisational culture, with openness towards both the positive and challenging aspects of international diversity, rather than a continued culture of silence. Without such honesty, it will be hard for universities to map out what kind of work is necessary for facilitating good international working environments. When there is a lack of such information, there is a risk that international workers can end up being less organised, being paid less, and being less aware of their employee rights than their Norwegian colleagues.

## Conclusion

This article has used organisational theories of inequalities and power to explore diversity at a large Norwegian university. By using critical discourse analysis, I have shown that administrative workers presented international diversity as being related to different languages, nationalities and working cultures, and as something positive for Norwegian academia. They framed diversity issues as being connected to different working cultures, as the result of poor communication between employers and employees, and not the fault of international researchers, who were positioned as a vulnerable group in Norwegian working life.

I have used critical discourse analysis to identify that information about the rights and expectations you have as an employee in Norway can sometimes be hidden within the university. Who has access to such information is not neutral, but linked to the distribution of social status and economic resources. Social integration and access to resources are tied together: if international researchers are not fully integrated into the social life and communicate with Norwegian co-workers, they are also at greater risk of missing clues as to how working life is culturally organised. One of the administrators identified a 'culture of silence' at the university regarding cultural differences, which masks issues and disadvantages international researchers. While policies have been implemented to manage internationalisation and diversity, it seems that more practical facilitation is still needed. Suggestions from the interviews have been language courses, better onboarding routines, and fostering a general culture of open communication about norms and expectations at the university.

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# Article 4: Language Practices in the Tension between Scholarly Prestige and Institutional Power: A Study of Negotiations between English and Norwegian at a University in Norway (Accepted version)

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## Abstract

This article explores the tensions between the use of English and Norwegian in the everyday lives of employees at a public university in Norway. The university is responsible for educating a large proportion of students for the Norwegian labour market, while also pursuing greater internationalisation. The qualitative interview study includes the voices of researchers with both international and Norwegian backgrounds, administrative staff, and department leaders. In the article, we analyse how language practices are negotiated in the institution, and how language functions as a device for inclusion or exclusion. We have identified three key domains in which language is activated as an inclusion/exclusion device: first, in the onboarding phase; secondly, when navigating bilingual workplaces; and thirdly, while participating in the life of the university as a societal institution. We find that both scientific and administrative staff navigate according to practical concerns, aiming to balance different and sometimes conflicting interests. Our analysis shows how maintaining bilingualism requires work and effort by everyone involved and that this work and its consequences are largely individualised. While academic prestige and power are associated with the use of English, Norwegian skills function as a gatekeeper to positions of power within the university.

**Key words:** language practices, Norway, universities, inclusion, power, academic migration

## Introduction

Since the late 1990s, international researcher mobility has intensified, and across Europe there is increased use of English in countries of which it is not the national language (Hultgren, 2014). This is also the case in Norway, where universities have been expected to work strategically towards greater internationalisation in terms of publishing, cooperating with institutions abroad and prioritising international mobility for students and staff (Flikke, 2022). In 2021, 32 per cent of researchers in Norwegian academia were born abroad and had emigrated to Norway, which implies that their primary language is not Norwegian (Steine, 2023). Consequentially, English is increasingly being used not only for external affairs and international outreach, but also for various activities and in the daily running of universities.

Nordic universities have been described as balancing between being national institutions and international places of knowledge exchange, and the use of the national language or English can be seen as a manifestation of this balancing act (Kuteeva, Kaufhold & Hynninen, 2022). The situation of Nordic-English bilingualism in Nordic universities has been described as paradoxical in the research literature: On the one hand, the use of English is presented as positive and desirable – in line with the ideals of internationalisation, while on the other hand, the situation has also sparked concern that Nordic countries are in danger of losing their national languages (Hultgren, Gregersen & Thørgersen, 2014).

While all universities may embody a duality of nationalism versus disciplinary internationalism, Nordic universities have a societal responsibility in that they are state-funded organisations intended to serve the interests of the nation – and part of this mandate is to ensure and develop the national language, in this case Norwegian, as an academic language (Kuteeva, Kaufhold & Hynninen, 2022). The Nordic countries have some of the world's highest proficiencies in English (Linn, 2016), and together with increased use of English in academia, this development has been described as Norwegian 'losing out' to English. (Ljosland, 2014a). Concerns about English domination have led to recent political efforts to preserve the Norwegian language in the academic sector (Ministry of Education and Research, 2023). These efforts are not new, and due to a long tradition of language planning in Norwegian politics, most universities have language policies in place (Linn, 2016). However, research shows that language policies do not necessarily influence the choices that people make in their everyday lives (Hynninen, 2016). Research has also emphasised the practical challenges of communication, interaction and integration that especially arise in universities in smaller countries with unique languages and more recent traditions for incoming researcher mobility (Sin, Antonowicz & Wiers-Jenssen, 2012). There is still a need for more empirical research about how people working at the university themselves experience and negotiate language practices in their everyday lives at the university.

This article studies language processes, experiences and perceptions at an internationally oriented university in Norway. In line with suggestions from Linn (2010), we have chosen to study bottom-up language practices, to draw out the diversity of voices. The research question we seek to answer is: *How is the relation between the use of English and Norwegian experienced and dealt with in everyday working life, and how does this affect people in different situations within the university?* We explore these questions through a conceptualisation of inclusion/exclusion. The article is based on 38 interviews with researchers from many different national backgrounds, including Norway, department leaders, and people working in the central administration and as department administrators. In response to increased national expectations to maintain and develop the Norwegian language in academia, this university implemented new language guidelines in 2023 which focuses on parallel use between increasing competencies in English and maintaining a Norwegian disciplinary language. These policies included a high focus on Norwegian as the main institutional language and can be seen as the culmination of concerns regarding English domination in Norwegian academia. This article explores practical empirical experiences beyond the policies. In this political landscape, and despite the fact that employees represent a high variation of primary languages, questions around language are often ciphered into binary choices between Norwegian and English. The interviews show that English is seen as the dominant academic language for research activities, while Norwegian is the institutional language used for teaching and administrative processes, functioning as a gatekeeper to certain positions of authority at the university.

## Language use at the university – patterns of dominance

Historically, the language tensions in Norway have been between two language variations: *Nynorsk* (New Norwegian), based on local dialects, and *Bokmål*, influenced by Danish. Tensions between language practices and preferences are therefore not something new in Norway. The increasing presence of English in society has been raising concerns since the

1970s and 1980s, and by 2004, English was positioned as a threat to a united, vulnerable Norwegian language (Linn, 2016). In 2005 and 2008, growing anxiety about the Norwegian language remaining effective in Norway began to influence policies for higher education and research (Linn, 2010). In 2009, growing awareness of how greater internationalisation presented challenges for the Norwegian language resulted in universities being given more responsibility to maintain and develop a Norwegian disciplinary language. This has manifested in requirements of using Norwegian as the 'primary language' of teaching, and the responsibility on individual academics to reach proficiency to use Norwegian in their work. Academia has been a particular area in which Norwegian has been thought to lose influence to English – leading to strong discourses on safeguarding Norwegian (Bull, 2022; Thingnes, 2022).

Multilingualism is not something static, but a "dynamic phenomenon that is constructed and reconstructed over time" (Björklund & Björklund, 2023). However, one consistent aspect of English in the Nordics is its long history of being used as a main language for research publication and as a medium of instruction, including in higher education (Kuteeva, 2023). Empirical investigation of the changing language practices in Scandinavian universities spans from linguistic studies to mapping of attitudes and preferences for language use in teaching and research. A large-scale survey of the use of English in university teaching in Sweden found that "English is typically used as an additional or auxiliary language in parallel with Swedish" (Bolton and Kuteeva 2012). Studies have shown that researchers in both Denmark and Sweden, despite being perceived as having few objections to using English in publications, have concerns about the dominance of English over Danish and Swedish (Olsson & Sheridan, 2012).

The power relation between English as lingua franca and smaller languages is subject to several studies. A study by Garrett and Balsà (2014) of university students in Catalonia and Wales points to the difficulties of merging internationalisation with maintaining minority languages. Altbach (2007) terms the US and the UK as academic superpowers which ensure that English is the dominant language in global academia, which he argues comes at the expense of national languages and locally important research topics. Others argue for the necessity of not overestimating the role of 'English as power', but instead exploring *how* language works in the internationalisation of universities (Haberland & Mortensen, 2012). A qualitative survey of researchers from 14 countries with official languages other than English showed how English was mainly perceived to be of instrumental value and was used across all scientific disciplines, and was not seen as threatening national or local languages (Podhovnik, 2015). The use of

English was seen to signal belonging to the academic community and was linked to perceptions of status in the sense that by using English in addition to their other languages, the researchers lend "to themselves the image of successful, international, bilingual or multilingual members of the scientific community" (Podhovnik, 2015, pp. 50-51).

In the Nordic countries, there has been particular focus on policies on parallel language use ─ between national language and English (Hynninen, 2016). In a critical analysis of how English influences academic workplaces, Bortoluzzi (2016) attempts to take the language debate beyond the discussion of what the dominant language should be. She argues – in line with the social justice perspective on inclusion ─ for linguistic diversity; that academia, education and research should use flexible and creative multilingual communication, which starts from local languages and community languages. Working environments with linguistic diversity should be marked by flexibility, variety, creativity, adaptability, and linguistic and cultural respect (Bortoluzzi, 2016). Other research points to how institutional social inclusion policies tend to be blind to the role played by language proficiency, and often lack an understanding of the realities of communication (Piller & Takahashi, 2011).

In the analysis, we draw on two concepts to understand the bilingual practices and the effect of those practices: code-switching and inclusion/exclusion. Code-switching is a key concept in studies of bilingual speech and can be described as a verbal action which creates communicative and social meaning (Auer, 1998). Inclusion and exclusion refer to the status someone (or something) has in relation to a group or a structure. Inclusion has been strongly associated with mainstreaming, suggesting that, at an individual level, inclusion is about adjustment to fit in with the established norms of a given setting (Bacon, 2019). However, the concepts are also associated with a normative understanding of allowing difference and avoiding marginalisation. Research shows that, despite ambitions of diversity, people are often expected to conform to the mainstream organisational culture (Mor Barak, 2015). In this article, we use the concepts of inclusion/exclusion as an approach to help us analyse the organisational practices that encompass inclusion and exclusion in the everyday life of a workplace. We study the effects of code-switching in terms of exclusionary/inclusive processes.

## Method and case

The institution forms a context of local processes that should be taken into account when studying interactions in which languages alternate (Auer, 1998). The university this study focuses on is one of Norway's largest, with an international profile and a broad range of study programmes in the social sciences, medicine, natural sciences, arts and technology. The university developed policy guidelines for language practices in 2009, which were updated in 2022 and primarily focused on parallel-language use, with priority given to protecting Norwegian. As an employer, the university requires staff in permanent positions to acquire Norwegian skills. The university had some general language guidelines from 2009, which stipulated a 2-year period for permanent staff to acquire Norwegian skills. In 2023, new language guidelines were implemented, giving more detailed institutional recommendations and expectations. These new language guidelines positions the university as a parallel language institution with English being the primary non-Scandinavian language. Within these policies there is a high focus on Norwegian as the main language for teaching, the administration as well as being the main institutional language. Permanent staff who do not already master a Scandinavian language are here expected to acquire Norwegian skills on a B2 level within 3 years, and to continuously develop their language skills. To follow up, the university offers Norwegian courses for staff, in which departments are to encourage and accommodate participation. Still, the policies put the responsibility to do the work on the individual level without allocating additional resources to follow up the ambitions.

We have conducted 38 interviews with people working at different campuses and in different units. All the interviews were conducted by the first author. The interviews were completed in connection with two different projects concerning internationalisation, inclusion, and diversity. The first group consisted of 12 advisors working in different parts of the central administration working on mobility and internationalisation, such as counselling services to staff, helping with housing or organising seminars and courses for international researchers. The interviews took place primarily in 2020, with select follow-up interviews in 2021. They were strategically recruited and interviewed primarily in capacity of their professional role at the university. The main topic of the interviews concerned their experiences with and perspectives on internationalisation at their university. Language was not originally part of the interview guide, but came up as an important subject for most of the informants, showing its relevance in the university.

The other group of interviews were conducted in 2019 and consisted of staff across three different departments, spanning social sciences, natural sciences, and technologies, as well as one centre of excellence. We set out to interview people with various nationalities who were positioned differently within the departments in order to explore international diversity in practice, including topics such as onboarding, social inclusion and language experiences. The interview group included department leaders, local administrative staff on the department level, as well as scientific staff: PhD students, postdocs, associate professors, and professors. The interviewees represent geographic origins from Europe, North America, South America, Asia, and Africa, with a majority from Europe. Among the scientific staff, interviews took place both in Norwegian and English based on the language the interviewees were most comfortable with. By contrast, the vast majority of administrative staff interviewees were proficient in Norwegian, which we might connect to Norwegian being the primary administrative language. All potential interviewees were found on the university's website and were contacted via their work email addresses with an open invitation to an hour-long semi-structured interview in either Norwegian or English. We might assume that those who responded did so because they had an interest in the topics. Through the variation of nationalities, primary languages, work-positions and workplaces, the interview pool represents a multitude of voices and perspectives from across the university.

The interviews are analysed via thematic analysis. We based the analysis on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), who define Thematic Analysis (TA) as a method for "identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). A 'theme' is here defined as something that captures something important in the data material relating to the research question, and not necessarily what is most quantifiable (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We used this method to find patterns of meaning within the interview transcripts by coding specific patterns regarding what the interviewees told us about their language experiences, inspired by the approach laid out in (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). We used the coding process to find the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of the different language practices at the university. During the interviews it was clear that the increased use of English was perceived as crucial to the experience of working at the university.

## Results

Through a thematic analysis we identified three key domains where language tensions are particularly apparent: on onboarding of international researchers to the university and to

Norway, in the daily language practices in international working environments, and in experiences of navigating the university as a societal institution.

## Arriving and staying in Norway

The first key domain we identified, which was brought up by both international researchers themselves and administrative staff, concerned the immigration and the onboarding of international researchers. When a scholar with an international background arrives in Norway, it is highly unlikely that they have previously learned Norwegian, and due to a high turnover rate there will always be somebody at the university who does not yet understand any Norwegian. In the first immigration phase, language was first and foremost perceived as instrumental, as a practical issue in searching for information, and navigating Norwegian bureaucratic systems and the private housing market. Administrative staff at the university are in place to assist international staff with these processes – to explain and translate. Yet most international researchers we talked to described Norway as a place where you can easily manage in everyday interactions by speaking English. Among the international researchers we interviewed there was a common experience of locals being generally proficient in English and willing to accommodate non-native speakers, illustrated by statements such as: *"You hear a lot of English in (the city). Being in Norway where many people speak English really well makes your life easy."* One internationally recruited professor even told us that the generally high level of English proficiency was one of the issues she considered when she chose to bring her family to Norway.

However, the administrative staff talked not only about how they could assist incoming scholars on their arrival, but were also highly concerned about how international researchers would be able to settle in a long-term perspective. They linked language at the practical level to inclusion and belonging, and were concerned with how important it is for people to learn Norwegian. In these interviews, Norwegian language proficiency was described as a tool to navigate the bureaucratic processes and as important for integration in both the organisation and in society, as well as for the likelihood of the researcher being socially included and their sense of 'being at home' in Norwegian society at large. Encouraging incoming scholars to attend Norwegian language courses was consequentially seen as a tool to keep researchers at the university.

The sense of mastering Norwegian as a prerequisite for being included was not, however, limited to a long-term perspective when we talked to the international researchers. Despite being able to sort out most of their everyday interactions by using English, several also expressed a sense of missing out and being left out from activities taking place in Norwegian.

As a postdoc told us:

*"I do feel the urge to learn Norwegian so I am able to interact better with my colleagues here and also outside university as well. There are a lot of things happening, talks, events, and a lot of it is in Norwegian. More than I expected. So yeah, I am actually a bit sad that there are very interesting things that are going on, but I am not able to attend right now because I don't speak Norwegian. Yeah, so language for me is a barrier now."*

In this quote we see how a lack of proficiency in Norwegian leads to feeling barred from attending many social, cultural or political events, which is also a barrier to socialising with colleagues at the university in informal arenas. The feeling of being excluded by a lack of ability to understand and speak Norwegian led this researcher to attend Norwegian classes even though she is not required to do so when on a short-term postdoc contract. Many of the researchers we interviewed reported making an effort to be included.

In fact, most of the international researchers we spoke to did describe a motivation to learn the Norwegian language. However, they expressed practical concern and frustration related to the fact that Norwegian coursework and language learning came in addition to all their other work of research, teaching and dissemination. As one professor said: *"Nobody has got time for that"*. Many also explained how learning Norwegian was not simply a matter of hours spent, but also relied on personal capacity and interest. The administrative staff tasked with supporting incoming scholars also acknowledged that completing the Norwegian language courses required time and energy. They, however, saw the obstacle to learning as mainly practical, related to time constraints and conflicting obligations that made course attendance difficult.

In contrast, an English-speaking professor who, under his contract with the university, was supposed to learn Norwegian as he had a permanent position, could not find the motivation to learn Norwegian as he did not see any point in it, due to the marginal position of the language in an international setting:

*“But you know here, in Norway it is small enough and out of the way enough, that, you know, once you leave Norway, if you speak the best Norwegian there ever was, it is useless. You know, so you have, people have to learn English here so that they can interface with the rest of the world. (…) But that makes that much slower to learn. Right, because you don’t have this imperative, you know you can get by with English.”*

In contrast to the postdoc who focused on inclusion during the time she was staying in Norway, this professor takes another position and relates more to an international stage where the local, Norwegian language is of no use as a means of communication.

International scholars who wanted to integrate into the local community saw the Norwegian language as key to achieving this. This was not exclusively linked to envisioning a long-term future in Norway, which also reveals an inherent paradox of inclusion and exclusion embedded in the use of English. Extensive use of English is perceived as inclusive by creating accessibility and enabling communication, although the local population’s proficiency in English was also perceived as an impediment to actively learning and practising Norwegian – which in turn created a sense of exclusion for some of our international interviewees. As one international PhD student described: *“If I try to talk to my friends in Norwegian, they don’t want to listen to me struggling like they don’t want to listen to me mumbling about small statement in Norwegian, they would immediately switch to English.”* Code-switching can therefore be an inclusion mechanism in the short-term, but exclusionary in the long-term perspective. This also becomes a question of planning and accommodation in bilingual research environments.

## Navigating bilingual working environments

Both administrative and research staff working in research departments painted a positive picture of working in bilingual research departments, as many of the departments at the university practise English as the working language in research, which makes it relatively easy to arrive as a non-native speaker. Norwegian-speaking researchers, department leaders and administrative workers described using English as a tool to make sure everybody was included in the disciplinary and social working environment. However, when we dug beneath the surface level, tensions started to appear between formal planning and informal social practices. Two main areas where tensions become apparent are department meetings and communal lunches.

One important finding is that managing bilingual practices, incorporating English alongside with Norwegian, requires increased effort and more work for department leaders, the administration and Norwegian speaking staff. Several of the interviewees described how bilingualism meant that it had become more difficult to organise staff meetings; on the one hand, Norwegian-speaking staff prefer to have at least some meetings in Norwegian. Particularly concerning subjects such as the working environment, they feel that they can express themselves better in Norwegian. Most of the international researchers expressed that they understood this preference, but they were also clear about how meetings held in Norwegian automatically excluded those who were not proficient. This exclusion was experienced not only by newly-arrived international researchers, but also by all those who did not feel they had mastered the language.

During the interviews it became evident that there seemed to be little awareness of institutional guidelines to manage language practices. People tended to rely on their own interpretations and experiences, and highlighted flexibility and adaptability to manage different and sometimes conflicting language preferences. Some examples of language accommodation that people used are: organising research-related meetings in English and meetings concerning the working environment and administrative issues in Norwegian, or combining written information in English and oral presentation in Norwegian. Another strategy was to start the meeting in Norwegian and to switch if a non-proficient speaker participated. This code-switching was often based on perceptions of the language preferences of co-workers. Leaders and Norwegian-speaking researchers with leadership responsibilities were reluctant to organise too many meetings in Norwegian, even among permanent staff, who are contractually obliged to learn Norwegian after two years' residency, as they understood that achieving proficiency to the point where you can freely express yourself in Norwegian normally takes longer than two years.

Two subtle language barriers were described by many international researchers. One was when meetings organised in English ended, and people reverted to Norwegian in the breaks. Another social barrier was related to feeling like a burden to others, as in this example shared by an international PhD student:

"*Like probably I, could take this conversation with you in Norwegian, probably yes. It would take much longer and you would have to be much more patient with me. (laughter). And sometimes people they don't have this patience for inclusion, that I think is the big challenge to address. How can I include more people and be effective at the same time? Because being effective I think is also kind of the Norwegian DNA (laughter)*".

This quote points to the mutual efforts it takes for both language learners and those already fluent in a language to communicate, when the primary function of the conversation is not language learning, but rather sharing information for other professional or social purposes.

The discomfort related to slowing down conversation, as expressed in the quote above, becomes particularly apparent in the informal social arena of the lunchroom. In Norway, the communal lunch culture is usually to meet up and eat with your co-workers in a communal room halfway through the working day, and this is usually an important time to socialise with your co-workers. Interviewees with Norwegian as their primary language did not perceive any language barrier in this situation, as they described how they would simply talk Norwegian amongst themselves as the norm, and then switch to English if a non-speaker arrived in the room. This flexibility was presented as a conscious act of inclusion. However, when international researchers talked about the same situation, they often described how they felt that their presence would pressure people to speak English, and impede the conversation. An international associate professor explained:

*"I find, that unless you already have other persons (in the room) who are international, that people will start talking English but I wouldn't say they intend it, we are reflexive and this action that we do we don't actually realising we are doing them. So it is easier for them to interact and to talk in the Norwegian."*

Causing others to change their preferred language might be part of the reason why many international researchers often avoided the communal lunchroom. Thus, the intention of being inclusive by consciously code-switching is ambiguous, and it does not change how those who speak both Norwegian and English are privileged in the sense that they are the ones to actively define the situation.

Another difficulty with bilingual communication is that language proficiency is not always enough for full social inclusion. One PhD student who had lived in Norway for several years described making efforts to self-include by speaking Norwegian with his co-workers, but he would often miss cultural references and common jokes that Norwegians had grown up with and used to bond over. A lack of common cultural frameworks presented a social barrier for him, even if nobody had made any effort to exclude him. This aspect was also acknowledged as a problem by some Norwegian speakers, as one professor who tutors many international students and PhD candidates said: "*You can speak English in the everyday, and, and at work, meaning at the university and in class … but when you are in more merry settings all, all humour, all jokes and such, that's in Norwegian."* There is reason to suppose that this social distance will be felt more acutely in research departments where international researchers are a minority.

## Participating in the university as a societal institution

During the interviews, we were told about several challenges that international researchers face when manoeuvring to university processes for which the Norwegian language is mandatory. The main areas where this was brought up were related to teaching, administrative processes, and participating in decision-making bodies. Here, Norwegian language proficiency becomes key to inclusion not only socially, but into the institutional life of the university.

While English is more common in higher education in Norway, our interviewees experienced that students preferred to be taught in Norwegian, especially at the undergraduate level. The education of students is still tightly linked to a formal, societal responsibility to educate students who are going to enter the Norwegian job market, and who are expected to acquire a professional and disciplinary vocabulary in Norwegian. This meant that some of the international researchers had trouble finding classes to teach. Missing out on this is especially precarious for early-career researchers who might need teaching experience as a ticket to getting a permanent position in academia. Language proficiency in Norwegian thus becomes an inclusion mechanism for future careers in Norway. For leaders, these language requirements meant that they needed to maintain a core staff group who could handle teaching in Norwegian. This was also related to administrative duties that can only be performed by Norwegian speakers.

While you can live a scientific life at the university, publishing, socialising and researching in English, the central administrative staff presented their working language as being Norwegian. This included both internal communication amongst themselves and for most of the administrative running of the university, which limits both who can be hired for administrative positions and which information reaches non-Norwegian speaking researchers. Administrative staff reported how they observed that many international workers struggled to find and sort relevant information. Many also made conscious efforts to help out, both as a practical way to perform their own job, and also as a way to include the international scholars more fully into the organisation, to prevent them from being isolated.

For many international researchers, Norwegian as the administrative working language was perceived as more than a practical language barrier. More importantly, they saw the use of Norwegian as the primary language for internal university communication, public seminars and meetings, and annual leadership meetings for local leaders, as a matter of participation and democracy. One PhD student described the situation like this:

*"On a more formal level I would say still to sit in some committees and to be involved in certain maybe decisions, you need to be fully aware of all the details and those are naturally discussed in Norwegian or like the documents are in Norwegian or you need to, I don't know, interface maybe with the faculty or even higher level, so you need to master the language. And this is something that sometimes I regret because I know that to a certain extent as long as I don't speak good Norwegian, I will not have full access to the information, and I will not be able maybe even to contribute or steer some processes".*

This is not limited to people who are at the university on a temporary contract, since even some researchers and associate professors described not truly being a part of the running of the organisation, as they were not asked to join committees and other important forums, as this associate professor experienced:

"*I haven't been invited onto any committees or anything like that, and I can't tell if that is out of respect for being new or because all the committee work happens in Norwegian. And nobody thinks like, everybody thinks it is more troubled to do it in English than to have me on a committee (laughter).*"

Many perceived the monolingual practice as if the university, as an institution, was implicitly telling them that you need to be proficient in Norwegian to have influence – to be able to participate fully in the organisation. As described by one PhD student, who said: *"Language limits what I can do, where I can go, which seminars I can attend, which positions I can have."* On the one hand, keeping non-proficient speakers from Norwegian-speaking forums can be seen as generosity. On the other hand, this means that non-Norwegian speakers might be grouped as 'foreigners' and excluded from important aspects of the university.

One problem for leaders is the organisation of the division of work, because it is not always easy to accommodate people who are learning, but not proficient. From a management perspective, in a hectic working day, ideals for inclusion often lose out to consideration of who can get the task completed fastest. This can result in Norwegian-speaking staff covering bachelor-level teaching and administrative tasks that their international co-workers are not asked to do, or capable of doing, due to a lack of language skills. Language proficiency thus has consequences for who one can recruit and how the running of the department can be organised. So even if smaller communities like international research groups can practice English in their everyday working lives, the university retains the national language privilege by protecting the institutionalised use of Norwegian.

## Discussion

The interviews show a clear pattern of English being positioned as the dominant academic language of research activities such as international collaboration and publishing, while the institutional language of administrative work and leadership roles is Norwegian. There seems to be some ambivalence concerning the role that English should play in teaching Norwegian students.

Language tensions appear to run alongside the university's identity and responsibilities. Using Norwegian is primarily tied up with the university's societal responsibilities as a state-funded institution with a responsibility to maintain local languages (Kuteeva, Kaufhold & Hynninen, 2022). What the interviewees describe about teaching in Norwegian universities in their own language, maintaining a disciplinary language and preparing them for Norwegian working life, mirrors findings from other Nordic countries (e.g. Hultgren, Gregersen & Thørgersen, 2014).

When describing everyday working life, most of our interviewees had different ways of viewing language use: The administration viewed Norwegian proficiency as an important integration tool and a way for people to stay in Norway. Department leaders and researchers described using English as a deliberate tool for inclusion in a workplace where non-proficient speakers might always be working. International researchers were motivated to learn Norwegian to varying degrees; some to self-include socially, while others experienced few issues with simply using English for the time being. While flexible bilingualism seems to be the norm to accommodate well-functioning working environments, the interviewees highlight the frictions between language planning, such as organising meetings in English, and everyday practice, where conversation and humour often slide into Norwegian. This concurs with previous research showing that language planning and policy are not always followed up in everyday language practice (Bull 2022, Hynninen, 2016, Ljosland, 2014b). We argue that this shows how people are strategically code-switching according to the specific situation, and not necessarily considering language principles.

Maintaining bilingual practice is not something that happens automatically; it requires work and effort from everyone involved, and this work and its consequences are to a high degree individualised for department leaders, administration, and researchers. This becomes especially clear if we view 'work' not just as what people are paid to do, but as everything that takes time, energy and effort (Smith, 2005). We can therefore say that there is no such thing as effortless inclusion. Nor is the code-switching that occurs at the micro-level neutral, but something that happens at the individual level in a balancing act between strategic planning, social inclusion efforts or as acts of generosity towards co-workers. For leaders, there is both labour and effort involved in making conscious efforts related to the division of work and in managing personnel resources, as shown in the example of requiring Norwegian proficiency for tasks such as teaching and administrative work. For administrative staff, the main effort lies in providing translation and explanations. For international researchers, not being proficient in Norwegian is experienced as a barrier, particularly in social settings with Norwegian speakers. The question for many PhD students and postdocs is how much time and energy to invest in a language that may help them to get a permanent position in Norway, but which might be fruitless if they are to leave again after a few years.

We can also tie parallel language practices to the issue of unequal power relations (De Costa, 2019). While parallel-language use and code-switching can function relatively frictionless in local department settings, this does not change the fact that the administrative language for internal communications, as well as the organisation of many important committee meetings, is Norwegian. This connects the Norwegian language to institutional power. While English will probably retain its position for research activities, such as being the lingua franca for collaborations and for publishing, requiring Norwegian proficiency for full participation implies that the university expects people to work to learn the language and to self-include, while those who do not work to integrate are barred from full participation. Mastering Norwegian is necessary to get full access to all institutional information, attend certain committees and sometimes even aim for leadership positions that require administrative functions, in addition to some teaching responsibilities. English proficiency among staff also needs to be good enough to meet expectations of international orientations in researcher activities. In practice, leaders need to both maintain a core staff group who can perform administrative work and teaching in Norwegian, but also to hire staff with English proficiencies good enough to maintain international standards in activities such as collaborations and publishing. This dual expectation might affect hiring practices and work distribution, as well as the relationship and cooperation between staff. Even though English is connected to scholarly prestige, Norwegian skills can here be seen as a gatekeeper to positions of power within the university.

## Conclusion

If the goal is to create an inclusive university where relatively small languages such as Norwegian can be cultivated as an academic language, while still maintaining academic mobility and cooperation, we argue that there is a need to emphasise inter-connectedness of languages, rather than competition. This approach can also avoid the trap of perceiving inclusion of marginalized groups as a 'cost' and threat to the mainstream (McArthur, 2021). A majority of our interviewees have English as the second language, meaning that there are also many other languages who are silenced in the everyday working-life at the university. Instead of maintaining the idea of the two competing languages, we argue that several languages can present as resources when navigating different parts of work life, as people are using them to code-switch. This means shifting focus away from what the dominant language should be (i.e. Bortoluzzi, 2016) and towards a recognition of the complexities of communication. Our findings show that people's language practices are situated, and that code-switching depends on local social contexts. This means that all-encompassing language policies might not be effective in changing everyday practices, which coincides with previous research (Hynninen, 2016). Future research could also focus on all the languages which are silenced in the situation when the dominant debate moves beyond the binaries of academically minorised languages such as Norwegian, and English.

Throughout our analysis we have highlighted how demarcations of inclusion/exclusion are creating paradoxes without clear answers when it comes to language choices. Our findings show that it does not make sense to simply divide groups by whether they are Norwegian or international researchers. Researchers and policymakers should therefore be cautious about making a simplistic division between assuming that 'Norwegian speakers' only want to protect their language and that 'international researchers' are solely focused on demanding increased

English use. Instead, attention should be directed towards relational aspects of language practices. Maintaining inclusive bilingual working environments requires patience, work and an effort from all workers, and institutional inclusion cannot be the sole responsibility of individuals.

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# Appendix: Interview guide

(Translated from Norwegian)

**<u>Introduction</u>**

- Can you start by telling me: Who are you?
- What does your work involve? (roles, responsibilities, work-tasks)
  - How did you end up with this job?

**<u>Main questions</u>**

- My project is about understandings of and experiences with internationalisation. I would like to know, from your perspective: What *is* internationalisation?
- What is internationalisation *in practice* from your position?
- Can you tell me how you work with internationalisation?
- To what degree does it affect your workplace/everyday work-life?
- Has this changed over time?
  - Follow up: experiences
  - Advantages and disadvantages
  - Possibilities and challenges
- What do you think internationalisation is, in the university sector?
- From your perspective: How does internationalisation affect NTNU as an organisation?
  - What does it give?
  - What does it take/require?
- What about your own work – what gives you energy and what takes energy?
- Can you tell me how you cooperate with others when it comes to internationalisation?
- Do you have any thoughts about how it affects other parts of NTNU?
- When you talk about internationalisation with close co-workers, what do you talk about?
- Is there a difference between what you say here and how you express yourself in different forums – with leaders, for example? Or do you feel that you can speak freely in all forums?
  - Are you ever conscious of how you talk about internationalisation? Are there any places where you hold back?
- How is internationalisation a topic? What do you talk about?
  - Do you have any thoughts about how your co-workers feel about this topic?
- Is internationalisation the same for everybody? Do any groups stand out? Are there any groups that require particular consideration?
  - Note which categories they themselves use, follow-up for clarification.
- What kind of direction do you think NTNU will take in the future, when it comes to internationalisation?
  - What they think, hope, fear

- I have read some of NTNU’s policies for internationalisation – among other things, a message that they do not want corona to ‘disrupt their thinking’ and that the lull in international exchange is temporary. What do you think about that?
- Do you have any documents, policies or guidelines that you deal with when you work with internationalisation?
- If I should want to read up on it, are you aware of any particular documents that I should familiarise myself with?

**Final questions**

- I am in the early stages of my project and am interested in learning more about this.
  - Can you think of anybody who it would be particularly interesting for me to talk to?
  - Do you know of any meetings or similar that are taking place in which I might take part?
  - Are there any documents that are relevant that you have not already mentioned?
- Do you have anything else that you wish to add that we have not already talked about, or do you have any questions for me?

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