UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
PEDAGOŠKA FAKULTETA

SINA WESTA

AKADEMSKA SVOBODA V POUČEVANJU V VISOKEM ŠOLSTVU V EVROPI IN V AZIJSKO-PACIFIŠKEM OBMOČJU

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE AND THE ASIA PACIFIC RIM

DOKTORSKA DISERTACIJA

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MENTOR: PROF. DR. PAVEL ZGAGA

LJUBLJANA, 2017

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my dear mother who supported me my whole life in all matters and my husband Freddy who gave me strength in my work and life. I want to thank both of them for the trust they always have in me, their unreserved support, and their love.

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First of all, I want to thank my family for all the loving and caring support given during my pursuit of my doctorate. They always had motivating words and helped me to keep going even in hard times. My family was the source of my strength and never gave up believing in me and my skills. I want to say special thanks to Freddy who took care of me not only in my academic endeavour but also in my private life. I also want to thank my mother for the support she gave me from Munich and her lovely visits to Ljubljana. She has believed in me throughout my life and has been a driving force in my academic work.

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Abstract

This study and thesis are based on a research project conducted within the framework of the Marie Curie Initial Training Network UNIKE (Universities in Knowledge Economies).

Key words: *Academic Freedom, Asia-Pacific-Rim, Europe, Higher Education Teaching, Italy, National University of Singapore, Role of Universities, Singapore, University Autonomy, University of Bologna*

This thesis is concerned with the issue of academic freedom and teaching in higher education. Academic freedom – the right of the individual scholar to follow truth without fear of punishment (Berdahl 2010) – is along with university autonomy – the freedom of the individual university to run its own affairs without outside interference (Anderson and Johnson 1998) – one of the two key academic values in universities. Even if these academic values seem to be well elaborated in the relevant literature and research, there is still one widely neglected aspect: academic freedom in higher education teaching. Despite the fact that teaching is and always has been a key role of universities (Ridder-Symoens 2002; Zonta 2002) it is less promoted and valued in comparison with research in contemporary universities (Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995). Therefore, this work attempts to connect these two neglected and under-researched issues of academic freedom and teaching in higher education. It provides an updated account of academic freedom in university teaching in Europe and the Asia Pacific Rim as the two regions of concern in the UNIKE project.

A qualitative research design based on interpretative comparison (Custers et al. 2015; 2016) frames this study. In this respect, two case studies (one with the University of Bologna and one with the National University of Singapore) were conducted. The data collection includes policy and document analysis as well as semi-structured in-depth interviews with academics from different disciplines and at different career stages – 11 from the University of Bologna and 7 from the National University of Singapore. Thematic analysis is used as a data analysis method (Braun and Clark 2006). The overall aims of the project are to analyse the recent situation of academic freedom and teaching in higher education, to gather diverse individual experiences of higher education teachers and to provide a detailed account of academic freedom in higher

education teaching by contextualising the individual experience within each cultural, regional, national and institutional context.

This thesis concludes by pointing out that the policy context between Italy and Singapore concerning academic freedom is very different. Whereas academic freedom is visible and adopted in regional and national policies in the case of Italy, there is almost no mention of academic freedom within the Singaporean case. The situation is similar at the institutional level.

Despite the very different policy context, the core meaning of academic freedom from the interviewees' perspective differs more between individuals based on their (disciplinary) background than between the different cultural contexts. Nevertheless, the degree of academic freedom that academics experience is dependent not only on the individual situation but also on regional, national, and institutional policies. Next to these influence factors, the immediate academic community, the career stage and the point of reference seem to be essential for the experience of academic freedom.

Overall, academic freedom in teaching is perceived as important by almost all interviewees regardless of which university they are from. The reasoning behind this perception is that without academic freedom it is almost impossible to encourage critical thinking and to introduce diverse and sometimes controversial ideas on a certain topic in class.

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List of Acronyms

AAUP	-	American Association of University Professors
ANVUR	-	Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca
APRU	-	Association of Pacific-Rim Universities
ASA	-	Association for Southeast Asia
ASEAN	-	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	-	Asia-Europe Meeting
DNA	-	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
EHEA	-	European Higher Education Area
EU	-	European Union
IAAP	-	International Advisory Panel
MCO	-	Magna Charta Observatory
NPM	-	New Public Management
NUS	-	National University of Singapore
OECD	-	The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
PAP	-	People's Action Party
PIRLS	-	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	-	Programme for International Student Assessment
QA	-	Quality Assurance

R&D	-	Research and Design
REF	-	Research Excellence Framework
TEF	-	Teaching Excellence Framework
TIMSS	-	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UK	-	United Kingdom
UNESCO	-	United Nations of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIKE	-	Universities in the Knowledge Economy
US	-	United States of America

Akademska svoboda v poučevanju v visokem šolstvu v Evropi in azijsko-pacifiškem območju

Razširjeni povzetek

Disertacija temelji na raziskovalnem projektu UNIKE ("Universities in Knowledge Economy"), ki je bil izveden v okviru Marie Curie mreže začetnega usposabljanja (Initial Training Network).

Ključne besede: *akademska svoboda, avtonomija univerze, azijsko-pacifiško območje, Evropa, Italija, Nacionalna univerza Singapur, Singapur, Univerza v Bologni, visokošolsko poučevanje, vloga univerz*

Disertacija se ukvarja z vprašanjem akademske svobode in poučevanja v visokem šolstvu. *Akademska svoboda* – pravica posameznega raziskovalca, da sledi resnici brez strahu pred kaznovanjem (Berdahl 2010) je – skupaj z *avtonomijo univerze*, t.j. svobodo posamezne univerze, da vodi svoje zadeve brez poseganja od zunaj (Anderson in Johnson 1998) – ena izmed dveh ključnih akademskih vrednot. Čeprav se zdi, da sta v relevantni literaturi in raziskavah ti akademski vrednoti dobro utemeljeni, še vedno obstaja občutno zapostavljen vidik: akademska svoboda v visokošolskem poučevanju. Kljub dejstvu, da poučevanje je – in je vedno bilo – ena ključnih vlog univerz, je na sodobnih univerzah v primerjavi z raziskovanjem manj promovirano in slabše vrednoteno. Zato ta študija poskuša povezati ti dve zapostavljeni in premalo raziskani vprašanji akademske svobode in poučevanja v visokem šolstvu. Poleg tega prinaša tudi obravnavo akademske svobode v visokošolskem poučevanju v Evropi in pacifiškemu delu Azije kot dveh regijah, ki jima je bil v okviru projekta UNIKE namenjen poseben interes.

Študijo podpira kvalitativna raziskovalna zasnova, ki temelji na interpretativni primerjavi (Custers et al. 2015, 2016). S tega vidika sta bili izvedeni dve študiji primerov, ena na Univerzi v Bologni in ena na Nacionalni univerzi Singapur. Zbiranje podatkov vključuje analizo politik in dokumentov kot tudi poglobljene polstrukturirane intervjuje z akademiki z obeh univerz in iz različnih disciplin oz. na različnih stopnjah poklicne kariere. Kot metoda analize podatkov (Braun in Clark 2006) je uporabljena tematska analiza. Splošni cilji projekta so sledeči:

analizirati sodobne pogoje akademske svobode v razmerju do visokošolskega poučevanja, zbrati različne individualne izkušnje visokošolskih učiteljev in prispevati podroben opis akademske svobode v visokošolskem poučevanju s kontekstualizacijo individualnih izkušenj znotraj posameznih kulturnih, regionalnih, nacionalnih in institucionalnih kontekstov.

Univerze se danes obravnava kot institucije, ki so ključne za razvoj družbe v gospodarskem in kulturnem smislu (Maguire 2010). Kot del globalnega trga so postale kompleksne organizacije, ki se jih upravlja zlasti z metodami novega javnega menedžmenta (Becker 2009; Ball 2008; Anderson in Johnson 1998). Današnji izzivi univerz so pogosto povzeti z izrazi, kot so *globalizacija in globalizem* (Beck 1997), prehod iz *edukacije za demokracijo* v *edukacijo za dobiče*k (Nussbaum 2010), univerze kot del globalnega trga (Anderson in Johnson 1998) ali kot del družbe znanja (Aarrevaara 2010; van der Wende 2008) ipd.

V tem kontekstu je glavni izziv za univerze, kako poiskati "ravnovesje med naravo visokega šolstva kot javne dobrine in komercializacijo njihovih storitev ob hkratni ohranitvi temeljnih vrednot akademskega etosa" (International Conference on Ethical… 2004, 3), "etosa, ki temelji na načelih spoštovanja dostojanstva in fizične in psihične integritete ljudi, vseživljenjskega učenja, napredka v znanju in izboljšanja kakovosti, inkluzivne edukacije, participativne demokracije, aktivnega državljanstva in nediskriminacije" (ibid., 2004, 2).

V sodobni diskusiji se ti dve ključni akademski vrednoti, *akademska svoboda* in *avtonomija univerze,* najprej ne obravnavata kot odprt problem (Kamba 2000, Moddie 1996; Shils 1994). Videni sta kot pogoj za sledenje resnici, da bi zavarovali "dolgoročne perspektive v prid kratkoročnih trendov" (Hamilton 2000, 212) ter služili družbi kot celoti in osebnemu razvoju posameznikov (Rüegg 2011). Na prvi pogled se torej zdi, da sta koncepta dobro opredeljena. To nedvomno velja za avtonomijo univerze, ki je bila deležna velike pozornosti v razpravah o novem javnem menedžmentu in managerializmu v visokem šolstvu. Nekateri akademiki, kot npr. Zgaga (2012a) zato trdijo, da je danes znova potreben refleksiven premik od avtonomije univerze k akademski svobodi. Predvsem v obliki razprav o svobodi govora je bila akademska svoboda dolgo časa deležna večjega zanimanja na področju raziskav in založništva. Čeprav so akademske vrednote v raziskavah in literaturi splošno razširjena in večkrat omenjena tema, ostaja akademska svoboda v visokošolskem poučevanju eden izmed v veliki meri zapostavljenih in premalo raziskanih vidikov.

Kljub dejstvu, da je poučevanje bilo in še naprej ostaja osrednja naloga univerz, se v primerjavi z raziskovanjem manj promovira in slabše vrednoti (Boden in Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer in Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995). V srednjem veku je evropska univerza nastala kot izraz sodelovanja v poučevanju in učenju (Zonta 2002), in tudi Humboldt je kasneje potrdil poučevanje kot eno izmed dveh glavnih nalog nemškega modela univerze (Ridder-Symoens, 2002). Humboldtov koncept *Lehr- und Lernfreiheit*, ki vključuje ključno dimenzijo akademske svobode v visokošolskem poučevanju in učenju, se še vedno dojema kot tista prava dediščina evropske univerze (Blasi 2002), ki je pomembno prispevala k uspehu Univerze v Berlinu.

Če se na kratko ozremo na status akademske svobode v visokošolskem poučevanju in v zvezi s tem pogledamo v zgodovino univerze, se pokaže, da imajo univerze dolgo tradicijo in da imajo zato akademske vrednote svoje korenine v eni izmed – poleg Cerkve – najstarejših institucij (Zonta 2002). Čeprav se je evropska univerza pojavila v srednjem veku, lahko ideji akademske svobode sledimo vse do antične Grčije, npr. v Platonovih spisih. Ko govorimo o akademski svobodi, je zato pomembno, da razumemo njen zgodovinski kontekst.

Ker ima akademska svoboda v sodobnem času trdne povezave z drugima dvema konceptoma, in sicer z avtonomijo univerze in odgovornostjo, ki jo ima univerza do družbe, ne moremo upoštevati zgolj preteklosti, temveč tudi dinamičen kontekst sodobnosti.

V sedanjem obdobju se vloga univerze spreminja, kar pa ni prvič v zgodovini, saj so bile univerze vedno odvisne od duha časa, v katerem so obstajale (Rüegg 2011; Gascoigne 1998). Danes se univerze vse bolj spreminjajo v institucije, ki morajo služiti ekonomiji s tem, da proizvajajo praktične inovacije in usposabljajo za zaposlitev povsem pripravljene strokovnjake (glej na primer Wright v tisku; Boden in Epstein 2011; Nedeva 2007; Bleiklie in Byrkjeflot 2002). Družbena odgovornost univerz je zato vgrajena v njeno spreminjajočo se vlogo in trojno poslanstvo, ki vključuje raziskovanje, poučevanje in t.im. tretjo misijo.

Medtem ko sta raziskovanje in poučevanje tradicionalni vlogi univerz, ki sta bili najkasneje od von Humboldta dalje dobro povezani, je tretja misija precej nov koncept. V akademskih krogih se raziskovanje v primerjavi s poučevanjem bolje vrednoti (Altbach 2002; Kerr, 1995); nekateri akademiki celo trdijo, da pridobivajo čas za izvedbo raziskav na račun poučevanja (Boden in Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer in Shelley 2006). Poučevanje in raziskovanje sta se s premikom h komercializaciji visokega šolstva in naraščajočim trendom kvantifikacije in optimizacije akademskega dela (Moosmayer 2011) močno spremenila. Poučevanje v visokem šolstvu je pod

vse večjim vplivom masifikacije (Trow 2007; Blasi 2002), raziskovanje pa vse bolj določa zahteva, da mora pritegniti več zunanjih finančnih sredstev, bodisi s strani agencij za financiranje ali zasebnega sektorja (Boden in Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer in Shelley 2006). Tudi enotnost poučevanja in raziskovanja je pod pritiskom (Meyer 2012; Scott 2004).

Zato so morale univerze znova premisliti svoje naloge od *prizadevanja po znanju zavoljo znanja samega* do *produkcije znanja in inovacij* ter od *izobraževanja kritično mislečih in prihodnjih raziskovalcev* do *usposabljanja za zaposlovanje na trgu dela*. Tretjo misijo je mogoče razumeti kot formalen način preoblikovanja nalog univerz. V kombinaciji z upadajočim zaupanjem v akademski poklic (Carvalho 2012; Trakman 2008) ima tovrstna transformacija ključnih vlog univerz gotovo tudi učinke na ključni akademski vrednoti avtonomije univerze in akademske svobode.

Tradicionalno se je avtonomija univerze obravnavala kot predpogoj za akademsko svobodo (Anderson in Johnson 1998) in je temeljila na neodvisnosti univerze od države v akademskih zadevah. V bolj sodobnem pomenu pa se *avtonomija univerze* nanaša predvsem na vodstveno, upravno in finančno avtonomijo (Zgaga 2012a). Z drugimi besedami, za mnoge univerze to pomeni, da so izpostavljene pritiskom, da delujejo kot panoge in podjetja (Becker 2009; Ball 2008; Anderson in Johnson 1998), saj morajo skrbeti za svojo finančno vzdržnost. Zato avtonomija univerze ni več razumljena kot zaščitni dejavnik akademske svobode, pač pa je po mnenju mnogih akademikov lahko celo nevarna zanjo (glej na primer Zgaga et al. 2015; Erkkilä in Piironen 2014; Zgaga 2012a; Wright in Øreberg 2011).

Akademska svoboda ni enoznačen koncept, saj njene definicije segajo od svobode govora (Hayes, citirano v McCrae 2011) do definicij, ki se osredotočajo na z akademsko svobodo povezano družbeno odgovornostjo (Aarrevaara 2010; Manan 2000). Podobno kot velja za raznolikost definicij o akademski svobodi, so precej različni tudi konteksti visokošolskih politik, že zgolj znotraj zahodnih držav. Medtem ko se na Danskem akademska svoboda npr. nanaša le na svobodo raziskovanja, se v slovenskem in ameriškem kontekstu nanaša tudi na poučevanje. V Sloveniji se akademsko svobodo razume kot pravico, ki se uveljavlja znotraj akademske skupnosti, medtem ko v ZDA akademska svoboda pomeni zaščito posameznega akademika pred lastno univerzo in s tem tudi akademsko skupnostjo (glej na primer Danish Government 2011 za Dansko; Slovene Constitution 2013 in Legislative and Legal Service 2013 za Slovenijo; Cary Nelson 2014 in AAUP 2016d za ZDA).

Kljub tem različnim pomenom bi lahko izvorom koncepta akademske svobode, kot že omenjeno, sledili vse do antične Grčije, npr. do Platonove prispodobe o votlini (Plato 1998 [360 pr.n.š.]) in njegovega povzetka Sokratove obrambe pred sodiščem (Plato 2004 [pred 387 pr.n.š.]), ki dajeta dobre razloge, zakaj je akademska svoboda pomembna za širjenje znanja in "iskanje resnice". Diskusija o tem, komu pripada akademska svoboda, doslej še ni bila odločena. Obstajajo dobri argumenti tako v prid akademske skupnosti kot tudi v korist akademikov kot posameznikov. Akademska skupnost res lahko zagotovi okvir za zagotavljanje kakovosti in podporo razvoju novih idej, lahko pa tudi prepreči manj priljubljene raziskovalne pristope, interpretacije in teorije, npr. s tem, da vpliva na kolegialni pregled in s tem tudi na objavo in financiranje določenih raziskovalnih projektov. Kar zadeva poučevanje, lahko akademska skupnost zagotavlja pomoč in supervizijo, vendar pa lahko akademikom tudi prepreči poučevanje določenih kontroverznih tem.

Čeprav je akademska svoboda zakoreninjena v evropski zgodovini, se ji vse več pozornosti namenja tudi drugod po svetu, kar je razvidno tudi iz publikacij, ki jih na to temo izdajajo osrednje vladne in nevladne institucije, ki delujejo na mednarodni ravni, npr. UNESCO, Ameriško združenje univerzitetnih profesorjev 'Scholars at Risk', Evropski svet, Svet Evrope in, nenazadnje, Observatorij Magna Charta. Tudi vrednotne izjave o akademski svobodi, kakršne npr. vsebuje *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988), so deležne vse večje podpore s strani univerz z vseh kontinentov.

Glede na povečano zanimanje za evropske vrednote ta disertacija akademske svobode ne obravnava le z evropskega vidika, temveč vključuje tudi poglede iz azijsko-pacifiškega območja. Primerjava ene najstarejših univerz iz osrčja Evrope, namreč Univerze v Bologni, s precej novejšo univerzo na azijskem razpotju, namreč Nacionalne univerze Singapur, je namenjena oblikovanju kompleksne in raznolike predstave o akademski svobodi. Z namenom proučitve raznolikosti v razumevanju akademske svobode v poučevanju, si ta študija zastavlja naslednja raziskovalna vprašanja:

> *Kaj pomeni akademska svoboda – predvsem akademska svoboda v visokošolskem poučevanju – v različnih kulturnih prostorih?*

Vključno s podvprašanji:

> *Kaj akademska svoboda v povezavi s poučevanjem pomeni akademikom, ki so zaposleni na Univerzi v Bologni oziroma na Nacionalni univerzi Singapur?*

Kakšen je smisel in pomen akademske svobode v vsakodnevnih praksah akademikov?

Kateri dejavniki vplivajo na izkušnje akademikov z akademsko svobodo na Univerzi v Bologni in Nacionalni univerzi Singapur?

V kolikšni meri je akademska svoboda – zlasti akademska svoboda v visokošolskem poučevanju – pomembna za akademike z Univerze v Bologni in Nacionalne univerze Singapur?

Da bi odgovorili na raziskovalna vprašanja, se v tem delu opiram na kvalitativen raziskovalni pristop, imenovan "interpretativna primerjava" (Custers et al. 2016). Ta pristop je zasnovan na temelju interpretacije drugega reda in ima štiri glavne metodološke implikacije: (1) uporabo enote primerjave namesto enote analize, (2) obravnavanje pomena, (3) priznavanje prepletenosti znanja in družbenega delovanja in (4) priznavanje pozicionalnosti raziskovalca. Z drugimi besedami, nakazuje na predpostavko, da neposreden in neoviran dostop do realnosti ni mogoč, kar je skladno z Burrovo (1995) idejo, da je znanje ustvarjeno v naših vsakdanjih interakcijah, tem pa pripada tudi raziskovalna situacija. Zato je potrebno upoštevati položaj raziskovalca ali raziskovalke, saj je aktivno vključen oz. vključena v raziskovalni proces. Uporaba enote primerjave namesto enote analize pomeni, da se v raziskovalni situaciji upošteva, da ni jasne opredelitve zadevnega koncepta, temveč je intervjuvanec vir oblikovanja koncepta. V središču so zato pomeni koncepta in ne terminologija, povezana s konceptom. Naslednja pomembna ključna točka interpretativne primerjave je upoštevanje konteksta, saj so izkušnje in zgodbe vedno vgrajene v določeno okolje in čas. S sprejetjem tega novega raziskovalnega pristopa daje ta študija možnost proučitve dodatnega metodološkega raziskovalnega vprašanja, ki natančneje sprašuje:

Kakšne so praktične koristi, ki jih interpretativna primerjava ponuja za poglobitev razumevanja akademske svobode v različnih kulturnih prostorih?

To praktično pomeni, da študija temelji na kvalitativni raziskovalni zasnovi, ki se osredotoča na zgodbe udeležencev intervjujev (11 akademikov z Univerze v Bologni in 7 akademikov z Nacionalne univerze Singapur). Pri polstrukturiranih poglobljenih intervjujih je za vzpostavitev okvirnega konteksta uporabljena analiza politik v regionalnih, nacionalnih in institucionalnih dokumentih. V vzorcu je poseben poudarek namenjen raznolikosti med intervjuvanci, zato so v študiji sodelovali akademiki iz različnih disciplin in na različnih stopnjah poklicne kariere. Metoda analize podatkov je tematska analiza po Clarku in Braunu

(2006), saj velja za ustrezno orodje za prepoznavo vzorcev in za opis različnih vidikov raziskovalne teme. Z drugimi besedami, tako se lahko prikaže kontekst kot tudi individualne izkušnje in zato služi kot trdna osnova za proučevanje teme raziskovanja. Poleg tega ponuja pregled vzorcev, vključenih v podatke in lahko zato prikaže podobnosti in razlike med različnimi viri, področji in kulturami, tako da teme izhajajo iz podatkov samih in jih ne postavlja raziskovalec (Bryman 2008; Braun in Clarke 2006).

Ker bi podroben opis vsakega posameznega primera presegel obseg tega razširjenega povzetka, tu podajam le nekaj dokaj posplošenih odgovorov na raziskovalna vprašanja. V tem smislu posploševanje ne pomeni, da lahko odgovore posplošimo na celotno populacijo akademikov, temveč pomeni, da so nekatere razlike med primeri in posameznimi intervjuvanci izgubljene zaradi samega povzemanja in primerjanja posameznih zgodb.

Pred podajo odgovorov na raziskovalna vprašanja pa želim dodati še nekaj splošnih stavkov o različnih kontekstih, značilnih za posamezen primer. Medtem ko je v italijanskem primeru akademska svoboda v regionalnih in nacionalnih politikah vidna in sprejeta, v singapurskem primeru omemb akademske svobode v dokumentih skoraj ne zasledimo. Podobno velja za institucionalno raven. V obeh primerih se kaže močna povezava med avtonomijo univerze in odgovornostjo. Čeprav se je okolje akademskih vrednot zaradi zgoraj omenjenih trendov kvantifikacije (Moosmayer 2011) in komercializacije visokega šolstva (Jongbloed, Enders in Salerno 2008) spremenilo, v italijanskem primeru še vedno odraža tradicionalne akademske vrednote, ne glede na to, da je opazen premik k sodobnemu razumevanju odgovornosti. V singapurskem primeru pa je glavni poudarek na konkurenci in vodilnem svetovnem položaju kot gonilnima silama univerzitetnih reform, ki vključujejo tudi počasi rastoč trend v smeri sodobnega pomena avtonomije univerze s poudarkom na upravni, finančni in vodstveni avtonomiji (Zgaga 2012a). Med primeroma zato obstaja očitna razlika: v enem primeru je akademska svoboda uradno priznana, v drugem primeru ni niti omenjena.

V tej luči je odgovor na vprašanje *Kaj pomeni akademska svoboda – predvsem akademska svoboda v visokošolskem poučevanju – v različnih kulturnih prostorih?* morda presenetljiv, saj se z vidika intervjuvancev temeljni pomen akademske svobode bolj razlikuje glede na posameznikovo (disciplinarno) ozadje kot glede na različno kulturno okolje. Z drugimi besedami, predpostavke, ideje in občutljivost za akademsko svobodo so bolj podobni med Italijo in Singapurjem nasploh kot med vsakim posameznim akademikom. Vendar pa je zaradi precej različnih kontekstov visokošolskih politik akademska svoboda, kakor jo doživljajo

akademiki, odvisna ne samo od posamezne situacije, temveč tudi od regionalnih, nacionalnih in institucionalnih politik. Zdi se, da je za izkušnjo akademske svobode poleg teh dejavnikov bistvena tudi neposredna akademska skupnost in faza poklicne kariere. Nižji akademski rang ni nujno povezan z nižjo stopnjo svobode, saj so se nekateri intervjuvanci iz Italije celo odločili, da namesto prizadevanja po akademski karieri v profesuri ostanejo na mestu raziskovalca, da bi si zagotovili manj obveznosti s poučevanjem in s tem več svobode. Kar se zdi vplivno, torej ni poklicni status, temveč praktične izkušnje oziroma, z drugimi besedami, čas na delovnem mestu. Pri presoji mere lastne svobode se je zanimivo ozreti tudi na referenčne točke, ki jih intervjuvanci postavljajo v svojih primerjavah. Ni presenetljivo, da so tisti, ki so vzpostavljali referenčno točko glede na čas ali kraj, kjer oz. ko je bilo dano več akademske svobode, ocenili lastno situacijo precej negativno; tisti, ki so navajali v tem pogledu manj ugodne razmere, pa so ocenili lastno situacijo na bolj pozitiven način.

Odgovori na podvprašanja zagotovijo nekoliko več podrobnosti o pravkar navedeni trditvi. *Kaj akademska svoboda v povezavi s poučevanjem pomeni akademikom, ki so zaposleni na Univerzi v Bologni oz. na Nacionalni univerzi Singapur?* Na splošno so akademsko svobodo v poučevanju skoraj vsi intervjuvanci dojemali kot pomembno, ne glede na to, s katere univerze so. Razlog v ozadju tega dojemanja je, da je brez akademske svobode v razredu skoraj nemogoče spodbujati kritično mišljenje in uvajati različne in včasih sporne ideje o določeni temi. Na to se je posebej skliceval akademik iz Singapurja, ki poučuje družbene vede. Kljub temu, da jasna obrazložitev pomembnosti svobode v poučevanju s strani večine intervjuvancev ni izrazita, jih večina občuti, kako pomembna je za dejavnosti, povezane z njihovim poučevanjem. Vendar pa ob tem tudi sprejemajo, da mora poučevanje potekati v organiziranem okolju, ki študentom omogoča koherentne študijske programe in časovno razporeditev. Vsi akademiki menijo, da imajo pri poučevanju dovolj svobode, seveda znotraj omenjenega vzpostavljenega okvira.

Kakšen je smisel in pomen akademske svobode v vsakodnevnih praksah akademikov? je drugo podvprašanje te študije. Odgovor nanj govori v prid akademski svobodi, saj je akademska svoboda pomembna za akademike iz obeh kontekstov in se dojema kot nujen pogoj za akademsko delo. Kljub takšni ugotovitvi pa vsi v študiji sodelujoči akademiki niso bili zmožni takoj povezati akademske svobode s svojim vsakodnevnim delom. To velja še posebej za primer z Univerze v Bologni. Takšno pomanjkanje zavedanja je bilo jasno opazno, ko je eden izmed udeležencev odgovoril na vprašanja o akademski svobodi s pripombo, da se opravičuje,

ampak da nima nobenih težav z akademsko svobodo. Kasneje je v pogovoru odkril, da ima nekaj resnih vprašanj glede postopkov evalvacije in kvantifikacije akademskega dela, ki vplivajo na njegovo akademsko svobodo. Nazadnje, pred koncem intervjuja, je odkrito priznal, da se je ob svojem prvem vtisu motil. Ta primer pokaže, da za razmišljanje o akademski svobodi potrebujemo čas in ukvarjanje s temo, saj ima akademska svoboda nekaj prav subtilnih dimenzij. Še več, ta primer afirmira idejo interpretativne primerjave, po kateri znanja ne moremo samo nabirati, temveč se ustvarja v medsebojnem odnosu med raziskovalcem in intervjuvancem.

Kot smo že navedli pri odgovoru na glavno raziskovalno vprašanje, je mera doživljanja akademske svobode odvisna od mnogih dejavnikov, ki vključujejo pravni okvir, izkušnje, akademsko disciplino, raziskovalno področje in mikro klimo znotraj določene šole, fakultete ali raziskovalne enote. Intervjuji tudi pokažejo, da akademska svoboda ni edina spremenljivka, ki ustvarja dobro akademsko vzdušje, pač pa spadajo med zelo vplivne dejavnike tudi financiranje, raziskovalno sodelovanje in mednarodno okolje. Na splošno so v študiji sodelujoči akademiki z obeh institucij zadovoljni s svojim položajem.

Po ukvarjanju z vprašanji o akademski svobodi nasploh obravnava tretje podvprašanje povezavo med akademsko svobodo in poučevanjem. Točneje, *V kolikšni meri je akademska svoboda – zlasti akademska svoboda v visokošolskem poučevanju – pomembna za akademike z Univerze v Bologni in Nacionalne univerze Singapur*? Na splošno se akademska svoboda v poučevanju tako v Italiji kot Singapurju dojema kot pomembna, saj – kadar se izvaja na odgovoren in strokoven način – podpira učenje in motivacijo študentov. Vendar pa obstajajo znotraj univerze tudi primeri, ko se z akademsko svobodo zapostavlja dolžnosti do študentov, npr. z neustrezno podporo in svetovanjem. Skrb glede manjkajoče družbene odgovornosti, ki bi morala biti ekvivalent akademski svobodi, je izrazil intervjuvanec iz Italije. Kljub temu negativnemu stališču kažejo udeleženci študije z obeh univerz naklonjenost do svojih pedagoških dejavnosti tudi takrat, kadar dajejo prednost raziskovanju pred poučevanjem. Primerjava izjav akademikov o akademski svobodi in raziskovanju na eni strani ter o akademski svobodi in poučevanju na drugi strani pokaže, da se akademiki bolj zavedajo svobode raziskovanja kot svobode poučevanja. To kaže, da je akademska svoboda v poučevanju bodisi manj pomembna od akademske svobode v raziskovanju ali pa, da primanjkuje zavedanja o pomenu akademske svobode v poučevanju.

Zadnje raziskovalno vprašanje, na katerega je potrebno odgovoriti, je metodološko vprašanje *Kakšne so praktične koristi, ki jih interpretativna primerjava ponuja za poglobitev razumevanja akademske svobode v različnih kulturnih prostorih*? Na splošno se je uporaba raziskovalnega pristopa interpretativne primerjave izkazala za koristno v več pogledih. V pogovoru z udeleženci intervjujev lahko poglobi razumevanje akademske svobode, ko se prikažejo njeni nepredvideni in skriti vidiki. Uporaba enote primerjave namesto enote analize je še posebej omogočila prikazati npr. tiste dimenzije akademske svobode, ki so skrite v opisih tradicionalne vloge univerz. Ta pristop poleg tega podpira iskanje nepričakovanih dejavnikov vpliva na akademsko svobodo, kot so npr. množični mediji. Uporaba odprtih vprašanj in moja nenaklonjenost temu, da bi podala kakršne koli opredelitve koncepta, sta preprečili izključno naravnanost na očitne vidike akademske svobode, ki so v akademski literaturi že splošno znani. V kritičnem odnosu do sebe same kot dejavnika, ki vpliva na podatke intervjujev in njihovo analizo, sem lahko intervjuvancem podala različne razlage nekaterih opisov in referenčnih točk. Na splošno zato menim, da je interpretativna primerjava ustrezno orodje za poglabljanje razumevanja kompleksnega koncepta, saj omogoča osredotočenje na raznolikost pomenov in vključevanje koncepta tako v širši kot tudi v individualen kontekst.

Kljub tem prednostim pa interpretativna primerjava ne more voditi do posploševanja rezultatov oziroma do jasne in edine definicije ali opisa določenega koncepta. V tej študiji je velikost vzorca precej majhna in zato ne more služiti kot osnova za primerjanje položaja akademske svobode v Italiji in Singapurju oziroma na Univerzi v Bologni in na Nacionalni univerzi Singapur. Lahko zagotovi le vpogled v to, kako kontekst in politike na različnih ravneh vplivajo na izkušnje akademske svobode posameznih akademikov. Pristop te študije lahko zato obravnavamo kot izhodišče za prikaz pluralnosti koncepta, ki se pogosto sprejema kot samoumeven in se le redko ukvarja z ravnjo individualnih izkušenj. Nadaljnje raziskave so potrebne, da bi razumeli akademsko svobodo, kot izhaja iz evropskega konteksta, obenem pa se v medkulturni perspektivi zanjo pojavlja vse večji mednarodni interes.

Čeprav ni mogoče strniti končne definicije ali skupnega razumevanja koncepta akademske svobode in njenega odnosa do visokošolskega poučevanja, lahko ta študija glede na ugotovitve iz terenskega dela vseeno poda nekatera konkretna priporočila. Ta priporočila bi lahko upoštevale tako vlade in nevladne organizacije kot tudi univerze in/ali skupine akademikov, ki se ukvarjajo z vprašanji akademske svobode. Nanašajo se na komunikacijo med univerzami, akademiki in družbo z namenom ohranjanja in razvoja odnosa, ki temelji na zaupanju. Poleg

tega vključujejo tudi evalvacijo akademskega dela, saj so evalvacijski procesi na sodobnih univerzah ključnega pomena za karierno napredovanje akademikov in so zato pomemben dejavnik usmerjanja njihovega dela. Na koncu je podanih nekaj priporočil, ki lahko izboljšajo razumevanje in komunikacijo o akademski svobodi, vključno z razpravo o vlogi univerz v družbi in avtonomiji univerze kot medsebojno povezanima konceptoma.

1. Komunikacija med univerzami, akademiki in družbo:
   a) Potrebna je večja jasnost glede poslanstev in trenutnih vlog univerz kot tudi glede akademskih vrednot.
   b) Da bi širši javnosti razložili različne in kompleksne vloge univerz in potrebo po akademski svobodi, je potrebno izboljšati komunikacijo med univerzami in javnostjo.
   c) Da bi posredovali strokovno znanje in akademska vprašanja na enostaven in razumljiv način, potrebujejo akademiki ustrezna znanja in orodja.
   d) Da bi razvili potrebne komunikacijske spretnosti in platforme za odprt dialog med akademiki in javnostjo, mora biti akademikom na voljo ustrezna podpora.

2. Evalvacije akademskega dela:

   a) Da bi znotraj akademske skupnosti pripravili konkretne predloge, je potrebno spodbujati resne diskusije o ustreznosti evalvacijskih metod,.
   b) Na podlagi tovrstnih odprtih razprav je potrebno vzpostaviti premišljene evalvacijske metode.
   c) Za bolj kompleksne evalvacije je potrebno zagotoviti čas in sredstva.

3. Varovanje akademske svobode:

   a) Da se med različnimi kulturami in deležniki izboljša dialog na to temo, je potrebno medsebojno spoštovanje različnih pomenov akademske svobode.
   b) Da bi utrli pot za pluralnost idej in razmišljanj, ki niso omejene z določenimi mišljenjskimi šolami, je potrebno vzpostaviti jasne politike, ki varujejo ne samo akademsko svobodo akademske skupnosti, temveč tudi posameznih akademikov.
   c) Med akademskimi disciplinami, univerzami in državami je potrebno vzpostaviti odprt dialog o akademski svobodi in tudi o njenih subtilnih dimenzijah.
   d) Za odprt dialog med člani akademske skupnosti je zato potrebno zagotoviti prostor in čas.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

On the 18th of September 2015, on a sunny and warm late summer morning neatly dressed people are gathering in front of the Aula Magna Santa Lucia in Bologna. The atmosphere is rather relaxed, and people are chatting cheerfully about the upcoming event and the beautiful historic location. The curiosity about what will happen increases suddenly when a group of strangely dressed young men and women comes around the corner. They look like a mixture of pirates and medieval aristocrats or nobleman. Carrying flags and banners with cryptic symbols, they are now the centre of attention. Gracefully they mingle in their ancient capes with the people dressed in modern clothes. Pedestrians observing the scene are probably wondering about the occasion. Is it a wedding, a funeral or one of the many student celebrations taking place in Bologna? In fact, most of the people waiting for a major annual event belong to the academic community. Some of them are first time visitors; others know the following ritual very well as it is the 27th Ceremony of the Signature of the Magna Charta Universitatum. "Ceremony" is probably the most appropriate word to describe what happens in the following hours. After the doors to the aula are opened people are entering astonished a room that looks more like a church than just an aula. The air is full of excitement and everyone can feel that something important is about to happen. After waiting for quite a while the moderator starts to announce several groups of academics entering the hall. Among these groups are university rectors, heads of schools and faculties and more important the new signatories of the Magna Charta Universitatum. Each group crosses the aula through the central corridor dressed in festive cloaks to take their reserved seats. The moderator announces the last group to enter the hall and everybody rises. It is the president of the University of Bologna as well as the president and the honorary president of the Magna Charta Observatory. Somehow it seems like the whole assemblage is brought back to earlier times. There seem to be three types of people walking down the aisle, the first group looks very proud and festive, the second one seems to wonder what they are doing there and the third passes by like casual bystanders. After a series of speeches, the main part of the event happens, and photographers gather at the front of the hall to capture the all-important act of signing the Magna Charta Universitatum. More speeches are to follow, and finally the important groups of academics leave the hall in the same way as they entered, dressed in their ancient robes through the middle corridor. Is this all just a ridiculous and old-fashioned theatre? Or is it a meaningful tribute of academics to hold up dearly held academic values?

Since 1988, academics have been gathering yearly to sign the Magna Charta Universitatum in the above-described ceremony. This tradition started with 388 rectors and university leaders from Europe. Only 27 years later, the mark of 800 universities was exceeded and not only European universities pay their tribute to this document: 85 countries from all continents now have universities who are in favour of the traditional academic values – academic freedom, university autonomy, and the unity of teaching and research (Magna Charta Observatory 2016a). Even if the Magna Charta Universitatum is often considered to be Eurocentric, following these traditional values and taking on the challenge to serve society as whole appears to be a global desire. Each of these values plays a role in contemporary universities as well as in the history of universities.

University autonomy – the freedom of the individual university to run its own affairs without interference from the outside (Anderson and Johnson 1998) – is seen as a precondition but not a guarantee for academic freedom. It is meant to provide each single university with the tools to realise their objectives independently from the state, the church and increasingly from the private sector. Today university autonomy refers not only to the traditional autonomy in teaching and learning but also includes financial, administrative and managerial autonomy (Zgaga 2012a). Enlarging the traditional autonomy of universities is not seen as an entirely positive development in academia as it is often connected with funding cuts and the demand for universities to act like businesses and enterprises (Becker 2009; Ball 2008; Anderson and Johnson 1998). In the environment of marketisation of higher education, universities are challenged to find a balance between university education as a public good and the commercialisation of services (International Conferences on Ethical… 2004).

Academic freedom – the right of the individual scholar to follow truth without fear of punishment (Berdahl 2010) – is seen as key for the academic community to fulfil their obligation towards their students, science and society as a whole. Only knowledge and an obligation to the greater good should guide the academics' endeavours and not politics, market demands, or ideology. Therefore, academic freedom embedded in an autonomous university is widely seen as a condition for following truth, for securing "long term perspectives in favour of short-term fashions" (Hamilton 2000, 212), for serving society as a whole and for the personal development of individuals (Rüegg 2011). Academic freedom is understood differently in different contexts. Whereas, for example, in Denmark it only refers to research freedom (Danish Government 2011), the Magna Charta Universitatum (Magna Charta

Observatory 2016 [1988]) emphasises a broader view that also includes the freedom of teaching and learning. Academic freedom itself can be put at risk in several ways, including the fear of being sentenced by the own nation state, facing violence, losing one's job within academia, endangering one's own or the institution's reputation, and facing financial cuts. Not only direct attacks on academic freedom are happening but also less obvious pressure, such hidden agendas, norms, and expectations, can intimidate academic freedom. Oftentimes, threads to academic freedom result in self-censorship, manipulation of research results, publication of unfinished research, a highly selective teaching agenda or the negligence of educating critical thinkers.

The concepts of university autonomy and academic freedom are strongly tied to the idea that universities and academics naturally embrace a *responsible attitude towards society, their students and knowledge.* The fulfilment of this responsibility is usually the main justification for receiving privileges in comparison to other professions. As early as in the Middle Ages, pursuing teaching and learning for the sake of knowledge itself was a core task of universities (Zonta 2002). Today higher education institutions are seen as institutions that are essential for the development of society in economic and cultural terms (Maguire 2010). Education and innovative research are perceived as key drivers for progress in the modern knowledge economy (van der Wende 2008; Aarrevaara 2010). Contemporary universities are assumed to serve three missions, teaching, research, and the third mission, referring to activities connected to a new set of responsibilities associated with issues around participation, social engagement, and general contributions to society and the economy (Nedeva 2007).

The unity of teaching and research is stated as one distinct feature of universities in the Magna Charta Universitatum. This idea might derive from the fact that universities from the Middle Ages on were formed as a community of students and teachers pursuing together the quest for knowledge (Zonta 2002; Rüegg 1992). Von Humboldt reemphasised the unity of teaching and research as learning and teaching in a university should be based on state-of-the-art research, yet at the same time, engaging in teaching and learning also meant engaging in research (Ridder-Symoens 2002). Today, with the trend of establishing research- and teaching-focused universities worldwide, this unity is challenged (Meyer 2012; Scott 2004). Nevertheless, the idea that teaching in higher education has to be based on recent developments in research is a strong motive.

Overall, the previously mentioned core academic values seem to be well elaborated in research and literature at first glance. Undoubtedly, this is true for university autonomy, which has certainly attracted attention in discussions around New Public Management and managerialism in higher education (Nybom 2012; Carnegie and Tuck 2010; Ball 2008; Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot 2002). Hence, some academics, such as Zgaga (2012a), argue that a return from discussions about university autonomy towards academic freedom is needed. Academic freedom is already a growing concern in the area of research and publishing, especially in the form of discussions around the freedom of speech (see for example Wright 2014; Woelert 2013; Meyer 2012). However, even if academic values are common and often-mentioned topics in research and literature, one largely neglected and under-researched aspect remains: academic freedom in higher education teaching. Even if the interest in higher education teaching is on the rise with initiatives like the *Teaching Excellence Framework* (Office for International Statistics 2016) in the UK and the development of teaching and learning centres within universities all over the world it is still less promoted and valued in comparison to research (Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995). It seems to be widely assumed that a good researcher is automatically a good teacher (Harland and Pickering 2011), yet the issue of didactical training for university teachers is only a slowly growing concern, which is clearly seen in the discourse about "teaching excellence" (Skelton 2007). Skelton (2007) argues that university teachers are often given autonomy in their teaching without the necessary didactic training. Meanwhile, academic freedom is perceived as a condition for making professional judgements about curriculum and teaching methodology to support students in their professional and personal development.

Due to the lack of research on the issue of academic freedom in teaching, this thesis focuses exactly on these relationships and investigates the individual meanings of academic freedom in teaching for academics. On a more general level, it also gives an insight to the status of key academic values connected to academic freedom, both in teaching and research, namely university autonomy, universities' responsibility towards society, their students, and knowledge, as well as the relationship between teaching and research in contemporary universities. To obtain diverse insight into the meaning and perceptions of academic freedom, not only from a policy but mainly from an individual perspective, this thesis will focus on two culturally different contexts.

It will firstly investigate the individual perceptions of academic freedom in teaching for academics from the University of Bologna, which is one of the oldest universities, and hence has a long tradition. In this respect, it will also show how academic freedom is situated in a particular European case and how the regional policies are developed in national policies of Italy and a specific institutional setting, namely the University of Bologna.

Secondly, it depicts the meaning and perception of academic freedom for academics working at the National University of Singapore, which is again embedded in the regional, national and institutional contexts. Taking an example from Asia is meant to depict a non-European view on academic freedom as this value is often perceived as alien to non-Western contexts (Zha 2012). Despite this assumption, academic values are clearly seen and recognised in non-European countries, which can be seen in the growing number of non-Western signatory universities of the Magna Charta Universitatum. After presenting both cases, this thesis will draw a qualitative comparison between these culturally different spaces.

By answering the following research questions:

> What does academic freedom – especially academic freedom in higher education teaching – mean in different cultural spaces?

Including the sub-questions:

> What does academic freedom in relation to teaching mean for academics working at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore?
> What is the meaning and significance of academic freedom in the daily practices of academics?
> Which factors influence academics' experiences of academic freedom at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore?
> To what extent is academic freedom – in particular, academic freedom in higher education teaching – important for academics at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore?

I will argue that academic freedom is a complex concept that is perceived differently by individuals according to the cultural, regional, national, institutional, and especially the individual contexts. One's own experience and own point of reference for comparing the personal situation play a significant role when evaluating academic values. Due to the

significance of the individual situation – which includes the career stage, the role in the own faculty, the close academic community, and superiors – inter-individual differences are often more incisive than cultural differences are. Nevertheless, the policy context plays an important role for framing the working conditions and setting a framework for the possibility to exercise and experience academic freedom. Furthermore, I will show that academic freedom especially in teaching is a complex issue that not only includes open attacks on academic freedom but inherits many sublet dimensions. Hence, I will argue that a continuous dialogue about academic freedom is needed even in a legal environment in which academic freedom is granted. Academic freedom is important not only in research but also in teaching in order to maintain a high educational level. This is true not only for academics at the University of Bologna but also for those working at the National University of Singapore. Aspects of the importance of freedom in academic work can be found in both cultural contexts; therefore, academic freedom seems to be important also outside Europe and the Western world from a contemporary perspective at least for some academics at the National University of Singapore.

To answer the research questions, this work will draw on a qualitative research design. The choice to use a predominantly qualitative approach is based on the research topic as it tries to gather a more complete, detailed, and complex overview of the topic than a purely quantitative design would allow (Punch 2005). The research process is composed of multiple methods to obtain a broad and comprehensive picture of the research problem. It includes, on one hand, an analysis of policy texts in order to frame the regional, national, and institutional contexts of each case. On the other hand, semi-structured in depth-interviews with academics from different disciplines and at different career stages from both universities are included. The policy analysis is meant to contextualise each case and to show to what extent the experience and perception of academic freedom depend on the context. The interviews with academics from both universities depict the individual dimensions of academic freedom and situate a rather complex and abstract concept in the day-to-day situations of academics.

The methodological and theoretical framework of the project is based on Elder-Vass's (2012) combination of realist theory with social constructionism, outlined in his book "The reality of social construction". This seems to be beneficial as it combines different theoretical approaches in a coherent way by developing a social theory that draws mainly on sociology and philosophy, but also includes arguments advanced by psychology, history, and linguistics. Additionally, his theoretical stance is a contemporary way of looking at the world and thus

provides a good frame to investigate experiences and perceptions of academic freedom in contemporary universities. In particular, the idea of norm circles, which will be outlined in Chapter 4.2, is a good tool to explain in which situations academic freedom is or is not exercised.

In alignment with the theoretical framework, the data is approached from an interpretative perspective (Denzin 2001). The core method of analysis of the empirical and documentary data is thematic analysis. The main reason for using one method of data analysis for all data is that it secures the comparability of different sources of data. Thematic analysis is chosen as it is an appropriate tool to identify patterns and to describe a variety of aspects of the research topic. In other words, it can depict the context as well as individual experiences and hence serves as a solid basis for the exploration of the research topic (Braun and Clark 2006). Furthermore, it gives an overview of patterns included in the data and, therefore, can depict similarities and differences between different sources, places and cultures (Bryman 2008; Braun and Clarke 2006).

In order to combine the dimension of comparison with an interpretative research design, a research methodology that was developed by three UNIKE fellows and me structures and guides the data collection, analysis and presentation of this study. Using this new approach that we call "interpretative comparison" leads to an additional methodological research question that supplements the previously stated theoretical and conceptual research questions.

> What are the practical benefits that interpretative comparison offers for deepening the understanding of academic freedom in different cultural spaces?

This thesis shows that interpretative comparison has benefits for researching certain aspects of academic freedom. It is suitable for depicting a diverse picture of the concept and for illuminating rather subtle dimensions of academic freedom that are not predominant in research and literature on academic freedom. This approach is also useful for depicting counter-discourses on academic freedom and for investigating the concept from the perspective of the interviewees without implying a certain definition. Nevertheless, interpretative comparison is not an appropriate tool for measuring the degree of academic freedom, judging the situation of academic freedom in a certain context, or providing a final definition of the concept. It aims at depicting diversity instead of generalisation.

This monograph consists of six chapters. Whereas the first chapter serves as an introduction to the whole text, the second chapter sets the scene by giving an insight into the perception of academic values over time. It depicts the state-of-the-art knowledge about academic freedom and teaching in contemporary universities and shows how academic values are justified in different times and cultures. As an overview of the topics, it deals with academic freedom in different regions and places without focusing solely on Europe and the Asia Pacific Rim. This chapter starts with a short overview of the history of universities in relation to academic values in order to contextualise the topic. In the following part, it engages with the key concepts of this thesis. First, it discusses the role of contemporary universities including its relation with society, research, teaching and learning and the third mission of modern universities. Second, it describes the relationship of university autonomy with different governance systems and its relationship to academic freedom. The third part of this chapter finally engages with academic freedom, the key concept of this work, by giving some preliminary definitions, by justifying it and elaborating on the problem of the ownership – the academic community or the individual – of academic freedom.

The third chapter complements the rather theoretical and scholarly based second chapter by showing how academic freedom is implemented in practice. In the first part, different accounts of academic freedom from non-governmental and governmental institutions, such as the already mentioned Magna Charta Observatory, the Council of Europe and the European Council, the American Association of University Professors, Scholars at Risk and UNESCO, are given. This includes the discussion of their key publications and policies on the topic. Next, to outline the status of academic freedom, this part is meant to depict that academic freedom is not only a European or Western concept but a global concern. The second part of this chapter engages with two recent studies conducted by Estermann, Nokkala, and Steinel (2011) and by Beiter, Karran, and Appiagyei-Atua (2016). This part is not so much interested in the results of these studies but rather discusses their methodological approach to depict to what extent academic freedom and university autonomy are measurable variables. Based on the results of this discussion, this part shows why a qualitative approach of the topic is valuable. Next to this again predominantly scholarly and political overview of academic freedom and connected concepts, the third part of this chapter describes how the topic is approached in academic media, taking University World News, one of the biggest academic online newspapers, as an example. Here, the chapter draws on a comprehensive evaluation of news articles published between January 2014 and December 2015. Finally, Chapter 3 adds some concluding remarks

and depicts some more forgotten and subtle aspects of academic freedom that can be experienced in an academic's life but are rarely the topic of media or public discussions.

Chapter 4 engages with the theoretical and methodological framework of this study and states the research problem as well as the research questions. Based on the research problem that is drawn from the theoretical and practical considerations about academic freedom outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, this chapter shows how the methodological framework can be applied to the research topic. In the first part, the chapter engages with Elder-Vass' (2012) ontological considerations and his combination of social constructionism and critical realism. The focus here is on the application of his approach to the topic of academic freedom. The third part of the chapter outlines more epistemological and methodological considerations that go hand in hand with Elder-Vass' consideration. It explains what the interpretative comparison developed by Custers et al. (2015; 2016) as the underlying research principle is and how it is adopted in this study. The final two parts of this chapter give insight into the concrete research design of the study and describe the research process, including practicalities, participants of the study and ethical considerations.

The fifth chapter of this work finally presents the results from the fieldwork described in the previous chapter. It engages with two case studies conducted at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore. To present the data in a more reader-friendly manner, both cases are presented separately before giving a comparative account. For comparability, both cases are presented along the same structure. The case of the University of Bologna is presented first and the case of the National University of Singapore second. Both presentations follow a logic that starts from the macro-level and ends with the micro-level. This is not meant to imply that one level is superior to the other but provides an ordering element that ends with the main part, namely the individual experiences of academics. In other words, the data presentation starts from a regional level over the national and institutional levels towards the individual perspectives of the academics. Whereas the regional, national and institutional level are meant to provide the context, the main focus is drawn on the individual cases that are based on qualitative in-depth interviews with academics from each university. After presenting each case separately, the last part of this chapter gives a comparative account of each case and ends with a conclusion and the answers to the research questions stated in Chapter 4.

The final chapter of this monograph concludes this thesis by bringing together theory and the results of the study and hence provides a comprehensive picture of the cases described in

Chapter 5. A link between this study and existing literature and publications is also an issue of this chapter. Furthermore, it depicts the limitations of the study and possible venues for future research on the topic. The chapter closes by giving some concrete recommendations on academic freedom that can be taken from the two case studies.

CHAPTER 2: Understanding Academic Freedom: Key Concepts and Scholarly Discussions

> *The word 'university' derives from the Latin word 'universitas' which means 'the whole'. In Late Latin, the word is connected to the word 'universus' that can be translated into 'society, guild'. Today our understanding of a university is "an institution at the highest level of education where you can study for a degree or do research"* (Oxford University Press2014, 886).

It is no wonder that the name of the *university* derives from Latin as Latin was the lingua franca in the first universities. Most academics can still identify with the meaning of the word itself. Academics and other stakeholders are, for example, still talking about the academic community which could be seen as the *guild* of academics. One important aspect of universities is also to serve *society* as a whole and to educate the *whole* person on a broader level than a vocational school would do. Thus, in one way or another, the meaning of *whole*, *society*, and *guild* are and always were important parts of a university. Furthermore, the word *academia* that derives from academy has a long tradition.

> *The word 'academia' means "The environment or community concerned with the pursuit of research, education, and scholarship" and derives from the word academy* (Oxford Living Dictionaries 2016a). *An academy is a "place of study or training in a special field" and is based on the teaching school of Plato. The word origin comes from "Late Middle English (denoting the garden where Plato taught): from French académie or Latin academia, from Greek akadēmeia, from Akadēmos, the hero after whom Plato's garden was named"* (Oxford Living Dictionaries 2016b).

Here we can see the long tradition of the idea that education and the pursuit of research are a matter of one joint community. I will come back to these roots later in this chapter when I argue that the core idea of academic freedom can be seen with Plato and Socrates in ancient Greece.

Even if the roots of academia and academic freedom are much older, the contemporary idea of universities started some centuries later, in the 12th century. During the long history of universities, their role in society changed repeatedly according to their status, social position, and the zeitgeist in society (Rüegg 2011; Gascoigne 1998). However, the organisational form has remained more or less the same since the Middle Ages (Meyer 2012). Maassen, Neave, and Jongbloed (1999) argue that this was only possible due to the perception that universities

do add value to society. In other words, they fulfil a social role which is usually named as a reason for the maintenance of university autonomy and academic freedom (Kamba 2000; Moodie 1996; Shils 1994).

Academic freedom is a key concept of this thesis. To consider academic freedom, it is also necessary to look at two other concepts: university autonomy and the social responsibility of universities. Zgaga (2012a) describes these three aspects as a triangle that is inherent in the university. University autonomy, the independence of the university from the state, the church and, currently, also the economy is often seen as a condition for academic freedom. Academic freedom itself is perceived as important to fulfil the social responsibility that is inherent in the idea of the university. Therefore, academic freedom is argued to be essential in order to serve society as a whole. Due to the interconnectedness of the three aspects of academic freedom, university autonomy, and social responsibility, this chapter will engage not only with academic freedom but also with the other two aspects. This chapter will start by sketching out the *history of universities* to depict the long tradition of academic values and to put them into a historical perspective as this is needed in order to receive a more complete and complex picture. The second part of the chapter then illustrates the roles, missions and tasks of contemporary universities. It focuses on the *role of universities in society including their social responsibility* and *the relationship between teaching and research* as the main tasks of universities. Based on this outline, the third and fourth parts examine the role and significance of *university autonomy* and *academic freedom* for fulfilling the diverse roles of universities. It explains what these concepts mean, why they are considered to be important, and how they are seen today.

2.1 A Short History of the University

2.1.1 The First Universities in the Middle Ages

As one of the oldest institutions, next to the church, the European university has a long history that started in the Middle Ages. There are three theories about how universities came to be. Firstly, the tradition theory claims that 12th century universities were strongly linked to Arabic educational institutions, the Byzantine civilisation, and monasteries in the High Middle Ages. Secondly the intellect theory assumes that universities were founded as centres for free knowledge development due to the increased interest in knowledge itself. Thirdly, the social

theory understands universities as a community of people that work, live and study together. A combination of all three theories comes probably closest to reality (Zonta 2002).

One possible combination is offered by Blasi (2002) who makes socio-economic changes responsible for the emergence of universities. He explains that in the period after the Roman Empire, when society was mainly based on agriculture and the power was within monasteries and castles, the need for institutions like universities was not a given. After, the barbaric invasions ended in the 10th and 11th centuries, the feeling of security and the living conditions improved and hence the population started to grow. With this increase in population and mass movements from the country side to the cities the need for raising agricultural production, manufacturing, and trade became a necessity. This led to an interest in knowledge, which could no longer be satisfied by the liberal arts education of this time. Knowledge that goes beyond the *trivium* consisting of grammar, rhetoric and logic and the *quatrivium* consisting of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy became essential for the growing population in the cities. With better infra-structure in traffic and communication, ideas and knowledge from the Byzantine and Arabic world became accessible and the interest in Greek physicians' and philosophers' writings that were preserved in Arab translations as well as in Roman law revived.

Driven by the search for knowledge, the first universities were formed in the 12th century as free-spirited alliances between students and teachers. At the beginning, there were two main forms of universities. Firstly, the *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* was established in Bologna that was formed by students who "exercised control over the academic staff in matters of teaching and pay" (Zonta 2002, 29). Secondly, the *universitas magistrorum* was formed in Paris, which was "[t]he university of teachers (not scholars), which was divided into faculties. Students were merely members of the university" (ibid., 29). Both types of universities were present in the Middle Ages but in the future the Paris model established itself.

Soon, universities were divided into the four classical faculties: philosophy, theology, law, and medicine. In general, universities were open to everyone who wanted to pursue knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself. Nevertheless, the hegemony of the Church led to religious discrimination until the 16th century. Thus, only Christian men were able to join a university (ibid.). In order to become a student, one had to attach himself to a particular teacher, hence the relationship between students and teachers was strong. In comparison to earlier times, the teacher in the Middle Ages did not have the ultimate power to assess the performance of the

student. The academic community in each faculty jointly decided "whether they should recommend to the chancellor the award of the licentia docendi and the acceptance of the pupil as a colleague" (Rüegg 1992, 23). Similarly to the decision about who became a member of the academic community, the responsibility for the advancement of knowledge was shared in the early universities. Due to this responsibility, some scholars even transferred all their money and properties to the university (ibid.). Overall, universities were financially independent from the ruler but some of them received indirect funding from the Pope as they were allowed to offer their services in the name of the Church to the population. Those universities were also given property and were transferred taxes by the Church (Zonta 2002).

Mobility of scholars was also a main feature of the Middle Age university as about 10 per cent of students moved between almost 70 universities until the end of the Middle Ages (ibid.). This number is higher than today's mobility rates within Europe even if they are increasing again. In 1998/1999, the share of foreign students was 4.6 percent and in 2006/2007 6.9 per cent (Wächter and Ferencez 2012). In comparison to today, Europe in the Middle Ages was organised differently as nations did not exist during this time. Hence, Europe can only be seen as a "European space" that was defined by a common religious identity within the Christian belief system and the uniform Latin language within universities (de Witt and Merkx 2012). In the Middle Ages, degrees were recognised at all European universities (Zonta 2002). The mobility of scholars and students, as well as the knowledge exchange beyond the borders of this time, led to a common culture in all European universities. In other words, universities were the same all over Europe without embracing local particularities. With this interest in general knowledge and the separation from local authorities, the Pope and the Emperor both understood universities as institutions that were capable of securing the ideological support and intellectual framework to maintain the unity of the Christian world and the Holy Empire. In turn, they gave universities the privilege of experiencing *academic freedom* and *university autonomy* concerning the local authorities (Rüegg 2002).

Overall, universities in the Middle Ages had two fundamental roles "on one hand, establishing the theoretical foundations of the knowledge to critical analysis and expanding it and, on the other hand, providing theoretical training in the practical solution of problems of importance to society" (Zonta 2002, 27). In other words, universities were devoted to science and teaching (Rüegg 1992). This double role is a recurring theme in the history of universities has yet to

disappear, even though the emphasis on one or the other changed, and other roles, like today's *third mission*, were added.

In the beginning, lectures and public debates took place in the streets, private homes or churches. Soon, universities started to rent buildings and to teach according to a fixed curriculum. Seals and other symbols of authority were developed, and teaching staff was paid to deliver the content of the curriculum. The curriculum was oriented at training university teachers. In other words, it should educate members of the academic community and was not meant to prepare students for the work outside of the university. Hence, university degrees did not provide any entitlement to follow a profession, as the education was focused on theory and not practice. Nevertheless, only a few students who attended the university intended to become a university teacher. Most students aimed at gaining a position in the public sphere, such as becoming a priest, medical doctor, educator, governmental administrator or lawyer. With this aspiration of students, a university degree became a distinctive sign of an educated élite in society with a high social status (ibid.).

In science, the *quest for truth* was the centre of attention. In this quest, the connection to the Arab world was of utmost importance, as lost texts from ancient Greece were rediscovered in their Arabic translations. Moreover, new knowledge that was less influenced by the Christian belief system was a valuable source (Zonta 2002). Despite the interest in this knowledge, the university was strongly attached to the Christian belief system, and knowledge was seen as a gift from God and hence a public good (Rüegg 2002).

Ethical values played a significant role in the university of the Middle Ages. On one hand, this included values connected to science and teaching. These values were called *amor sciendi* and consisted of "intellectual integrity, broad learning, and conceptual clarity" (Rüegg 1992, 32). On the other hand, "virtues like humility, love of one's neighbour, piety, fatherly solicitude towards students, loyalty and collegial solidarity towards the university, and deference towards ecclesiastical and earthly incumbents of high university offices" (ibid., 32) were promoted. Overall, the ethical values of universities were based on Christian ideas and beliefs. In this respect the emergence of the university took place within the Church but it was also an emancipation from it with, for example, the interest in the Arabic world of knowledge (Zonta 2002).

2.1.2 Modern Age Universities: Humanism and its Ossification

Until the 16th century, universities throughout Europe were organised in a similar way as self-governing legal entities in their quest for knowledge (Meyer 2012). Nevertheless, certain aspects within the universities started to change as early as in the 13th century (Ridder-Symoens 2002). Zonta (2002) summarises these changes with three words: expansion, professionalisation, and differentiation. In the final consequence, the new developments almost led to the extinction of the university as an institution.

From the Middle Ages onward, more and more universities were founded. After the University of Bologna (founded 1088) and the University of Paris (founded 1150) had been established, other universities with an excellent reputation, such as Salamanca (founded 1218), Padua (founded 1222), Edinburgh (founded 1583), Kraków (founded 1364) and Vienna (founded 1365) followed. Some newer universities were set up in Halle (founded 1502), Leiden (founded 1575), and Göttingen (founded 1734) (Rüegg 2002). The emergence of new universities was also related to increased employment of university graduates in the public sphere – if we use modern language – and the social prestige that was connected to a university degree (Rüegg 1992).

The training of civil servants and church officials soon became the primary goal of universities under the influence of Humanism. In the spirit of professionalisation, the theoretical focus of the Middle Age university shifted towards a practical orientation. Knowledge was no longer pursued primarily for its own sake but was to provide practical benefits to society. The focus in humanism was on the *vita activa* which meant the practical application of knowledge and education in society. The training of the social élite into gentlemen devoted to civility, civilisation, and culture was now regarded more important than educating university teachers (Rüegg 1996). Thus, the self-esteem of teachers grew as they saw themselves as important persons for the advancement of society (Zonta 2002). Overall, Humanism was interested in the modernisation of the university, its tradition, instruction methods and the content of the subjects (Ridder-Symoens 2002).

The practical orientation of universities was also connected to the increased influence of the local powers and the concurrent decreased power of the church. Consequently, local particularities within different parts of the empire and its universities emerged. The commitment towards universal knowledge was transformed into the interest in knowledge that

was capable of advancing the region (Zonta 2002). As borders between countries were stressed by the rulers of the 15th and 16th centuries, mobility became difficult and mobile scholars the object of suspicion (Blasi 2002). Due to these developments, universities lost their European character (Zonta 2002). Overall, rulers saw universities as a symbol of their power and gradually withdrew autonomy from the institution and academic freedom from the individual scholar and the academic community (Blasi 2002).

Despite the hindered mobility in Europe, academics did not lose the connection to scholars from other nations entirely, as from the 15th century onward, a so-called *Republic of Letters* emerged. Thousands of letters between academics were written to exchange ideas and knowledge as well as values and norms (Ridder-Symoens 2002). In this republic of letters, boarders, politics, and confession were not important. The main aim was to further intellectual discussions among the academic community (Rüegg 2002). This form of European dialogue between scholars was enhanced by the invention of the printing press and the improved postal system under the regime of Charles V (Ridder-Symoens 2002).

In the 17th century, it turned out that the modernisation of the university had gone too far, and many universities vanished. They had been transformed into "(glorified) boarding schools for the sons of the rich" (ibid., 78). The modified subjects that were taught to the élite were rather worldly than intellectual and included "modern languages, horseback riding, fencing and dance" (Ridder-Symoens 2002, 78). Rüegg explains that "humanist leaning towards the vita activa and the civility of the honnête homme degenerated in most universities into sterile knowledge and superficial culture captivatingly caricatured in the comedies of Molière" (2002, 44). Universities did still follow their vocation of teaching students based on traditional knowledge (Blasi 2002), but scientific developments were no longer made in universities but in specialised institutions (Ridder-Symoens 2002; Zonta 2002). Rüegg (1992) claims that the less academic values were respected the greater was the chance of a decline in scientific work. This was especially true for universities that had a greater local orientation. As universities lost their vital role in society and served only the élite, they were banned by French revolutionaries in 1793.

2.1.3 Humboldt Reinventing the University

Nevertheless, the university as an institution prevented its almost extinction due to its liberal modernisation. The turning point was symbolised by the foundation of Berlin University in 1810. The founder of this university, Wilhelm von Humboldt, was not only a scholar but an influential statesman as he convinced the King of Prussia to open a university based on Schleiermacher's ideas (Rüegg 2002). The return to the investigation of the roots of knowledge and away from knowledge for the pure sake of its practical application distinguished universities again from vocational colleges and, therefore, secured and reinforced their role in society (Ridder-Symoens 2002). The emergence of the new university was also due to severe changes in society and can be seen as the end phase of the Napoleonic era. Recent changes included the emergence of nation-states, industrialisation, and a growing interest in the idea of democracy. Humboldt and Schleiermacher, in this respect, were also influenced by the new classical German philosophers, such as Hegel and Kant, who shaped the idea of *Wissenschaft.*

Humboldt's or more precisely Schleiermacher's ideal of a university was a place where professors and students were able to devote themselves entirely to *Wissenschaft* (science) with all the necessary freedom and solitude (von Humboldt 1997 [1809]). Ideally, a Humboldtian university is a place for thinking and learning, which is understood as a form of theoretical work leading to the highest form of knowledge (Zgaga 2009). All members of the university are foremost obliged to science and the collaborative advancement of knowledge as a continuing process. The whole organisation of the university as an institution has to be guided by this inner logic (von Humboldt 1997 [1809]). These aspects are also reflected in the tasks of a university as

> *[i]n Schleiermacher's view the function of a university was not to teach accepted knowledge that could be directly used as the colleges did, but to demonstrate how that knowledge was discovered, awaken the idea of science in students' minds and encourage them to think back to the fundamental laws of science in their every act* (Rüegg 2002, 45).

With this return to the theoretical foundation of knowledge, Schleiermacher distanced himself from the practical orientation of Humanism. Research at the University of Berlin should again question the essence of things and humanity instead of focusing on the practical application of knowledge. Schleiermacher described the core process of research as follows: "scientific

thought, awakened by philosophical teaching, to move from the centre and penetrate more deeply into individual detail, to seek, compile and create its own judgement confirming, through its accuracy, natural science and the coherency of universal knowledge" (Schleiermacher cited in Rüegg 2002, 47).

To realise this re-discovered role of a university and to allow real theoretical work, the freedom of the individual scholar was inevitable. From Humboldt's perspective, a professor should have *Lehrfreiheit*, the freedom to teach, and *Lernfreiheit*, the freedom to conduct research without interference of teaching obligations and independent from state objectives and aspects of usefulness. To build an intellectual community and awaken the idea of science not only does the professor need freedom but also the student should have *Lernfreiheit*, the freedom to learn including the release of a schooling type curriculum as well as the right and obligation to contribute actively and constructively to the advancement of knowledge (Kopetz 2002). The interconnectedness of higher learning and research as two sides of the same coin lead to the importance of the *Einheit der Wissenschaft* (unity of science). In other words, research and learning on a university level go hand in hand according to Schleiermacher's ideas (Ridder-Symoens 2002) as well as ideas of German classical philosophy in general.

Freedom had a very high value in the university that Humboldt imagined, and it "applied equally to the manner of studying, subject matter and the university's relations with the public authorities" (Rüegg 2002, 45). The role of the state in a university should be restricted to two duties. Firstly, to protect the freedom of scholars and the university and secondly, to appoint scholars. Humboldt was in favour of making universities financially independent by transferring them land and buildings (ibid.). However, Humboldt's wishes were not granted fully as the Humboldtian University was never entirely autonomous. It was tight to King Frederick William III who appointed Humboldt to reform the Prussian education system (Perkin 2006). Humboldt was also a minister in Prussia but resigned from his office soon after the foundation of the University of Berlin. The king did not transfer land to universities, which happened later in the US, and academic freedom was restricted in 1819 due to increasing student demonstrations. Academic freedom would not be re-established until 1848 (Rüegg 2002). Again, the university was caught in the paradox of being dependent on one power for protecting its freedom and needing the freedom to pursue its mission. In comparison to the Middle Ages, the source of power changed from the Pope to the King and universities were no

longer financially independent but increasingly relied on the economic support of the state, which remains true for most universities in Europe (Perkin 2006).

Despite, the fact that Humboldt's ideal of a university was not fully implemented in Prussia, it became a great success not only in Europe. From the 1830s on, the French government showed interest in this new university and students from America and England came to be educated in Prussia. The whole idea of the Humboldtian University was even exported to the United States and Japan. Japan implemented university reforms that were closest to von Humboldt's ideas (Rüegg 2002). In this respect, academic values have been part of the Japanese university system for a long time (Yamamoto 2015). In other countries all over the world, Humboldtian ideas were implemented in a rather implicit way (Ridder-Symoens 2002). Still, it can be stated that the Humboldtian university model was definitely influential, not only for the development of modern Western universities (Blasi 2002; Ridder-Symoens 2002). Nevertheless, not all the ideas that we ascribe today to the University of Berlin are directly related to Humboldt or Schleiermacher, as some of them arose before and others after the foundation of the Berlin University (Ash 2006). Nevertheless, even if we see the Humboldtian University like Ash as a myth, this myth still influences contemporary ideas of the university and its history.

2.1.4 The Heritage of the European University in Europe and Beyond

Even if universities have changed quite a lot in history, some features and discussions points remain in contemporary universities. Among the most dominate features are discussions about the mission and vision of universities, the relationship between and the understanding of theory and practice, the role of an international academic community, the unity of teaching and research, as well as academic values, especially university autonomy and academic freedom.

The main mission of universities from the Middle Ages onward was to transfer scientific knowledge to young Christian men. Even if the restriction to Christian men seems exclusive from today's perspectives, it was a sign of social change in the Middle Ages. As higher education was a tool for gaining social prestige that was not based on birth and wealth but on knowledge without the means of forming a new caste but advancing knowledge for the benefit of society (Brizzi 2002). In this spirit, the target group of higher education has increased ever since. Inclusive higher education for all genders, religions, social classes and handicapped people is the long-term aim from today's perspective.

The idea about how to educate the younger generations changed over time. In the Middle Ages, it was the scholastic method, in humanism the experimental-inductive method, and later a mixture of both (Ridder-Symoens 2002). Today, student-centred learning is the emerging educational paradigm, not only in higher education. Even though the pedagogical paradigms have changed over the decades, the aim of European university education has always been to teach rational and critical thinking (ibid.). The idea of critical thinking and rationality is also increasingly important in other regions of the world, and European ideas about the university are exported but also influenced by more global developments. To what extent teaching critical thinking is possible is and always was dependent on the political and ideological conditions of the time and the place (Brizzi 2002).

From their beginning, universities had to adopt to new political orders and demands of society as they are seen as crucial elements of society. Nevertheless, universities are rather conservative institutions that do not change easily (Ridder-Symoens 2002). New fields of study, for example, were always seen as suspicious and not fitting into a university. In more recent days, the introduction of new disciplines "that did not fit in the classification of science imposed by classical authors, such as management, veterinary medicine, architecture, and the conduct of war" (ibid., 81) have been a matter of discussion.

This criticism is also related to the old dispute about theory and practice in universities. To what extent universities should prepare students for the job market outside of academia is today, as in the time of humanism, again a burning topic. Especially with the emergence of the knowledge economy, universities are pressured to educate a broader population to satisfy the needs of the economy. This transformation of the universities started after the Second World War with the development of new technology that demanded a society of information and not of industry. With the increased demand of knowledge universities had to educated ever increasing numbers of students, what led to the phenomenon of the *mass university* (Trow 2007; Blasi 2002). Another point where the dispute about the theoretical or practical orientation becomes visible is the transformation or integration of special colleges into universities (Rüegg 2002).

University autonomy and academic freedom are still considered to be key variables that supported the modernisation of the university and are seen as the real heritage of the Humboldtian University that spread around the world. University autonomy in this traditional idea of the university is based on a corporate model of decision-making and the traditional

academic freedom relates to teaching, study and research. Not only are universities in Europe striving for corporate governance model and individual freedom; universities, for example, in US also put an emphasis on the importance of these values (ibid.). The idea of academic freedom and university autonomy has spread all around the world but it is again under threat with the development of business like models in higher education. Universities, as shown in more detail in the following part, are increasingly asked to consider the market and focus on efficiency, external funding that is bound to practical research, and the education of employees for the job market (Ridder-Symoens 2002).

Similarly, as with academic values, the combination of teaching and research is perceived as a factor responsible for the success of the Humboldtian university (Blasi 2002; Ridder-Symoens 2002). Today, academics see the combination of research and teaching as a distinctive element of universities. The current transformation of the university from a teaching towards a learning institution reflects the need to reinvent the medieval university as the desire of all members of the academic community to learn is emphasised (Masschelein and Simons 2013; Nussbaum 2010; Boden and Nedeva 2010). Thus, the quest for knowledge and the transmission of knowledge are still the central aim of contemporary universities (Blasi 2002).

Last, a remaining principle of universities is their international character. As in the Middle Ages, scholars strive to connect with other scholars in order to promote and advance their knowledge. This can be seen especially in the form of internationalisation strategies that are nowadays part of almost every university as well as in the form of the establishment of regional policy initiatives and governmental cooperation, such as the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process 2014), student mobility schemes such as ERASMUS programmes (European Commission 2016a), and the rise of international conferences and journals.

Overall, the key concerns of universities and academics have not changed significantly but the challenges to adopt to new societal and cultural needs sustained throughout the history of universities. Hence, it is important to keep history in mind as the understanding and changes in the meaning of key concepts, such as academic freedom and university autonomy, cannot be understood completely without considering their long tradition. The following parts of this chapter will elaborate in more detail on key concepts and principles that are essential for understanding academic freedom in contemporary universities. As I have shown above, academic freedom is and always was bound to the role of universities in society and its demand to add value to society in the form of advancing society not only in economic but also in cultural

and ethical terms. Hence, before engaging with university autonomy and academic freedom, the next section will depict the role of 21st century universities in society.

2.2 The Role of Contemporary Universities in Society

2.2.1 Universities and Society

As previously shown universities always had a close relationship with society and knowledge and there is and was always a link between those two. Generally speaking, universities have two major obligations towards society that are both connected to knowledge. First, they are places in which knowledge is advanced and, secondly, they are places in which this knowledge is passed on to younger generations. Traditionally, universities did not focus on the application of knowledge but the inquiry of knowledge for its own sake. This changed over time, and today universities are challenged again to produce directly useful knowledge for society and, in particular, for the economy. In addition, to the traditional task of teaching and research a third aspect emerged in contemporary universities, the so called third-mission, which is also known under terms such as "service to society", "community engagement", and so on, as a connecting element between universities and society. I will come back in more detail to each of the three missions in the following parts of this chapter.

With the emergence of the knowledge economy, applicative knowledge became more and more important in the 21st century. Hence, universities as institutions of knowledge are perceived as essential factors for the development of society in economic and cultural terms (Maguire 2010). At the same time, as the need for knowledge increased the world became more globalised through new technology, infrastructure and improved communication channels. Globalisation is seen by many scholars as one of the most influential factors on universities (Maguire 2010; Arshad-Ayaz 2009; Becker 2009; Ball 2008). For universities themselves, globalisation means that the exchange of knowledge, innovative ideas and persons, such as students, scientists and teachers, is easier and even inevitable (Beck 1997). The exchange of people and knowledge across different regions and cultures made the environment within universities and the academic space more complex (Smerek 2010) and stressed comparisons between single universities and countries as part of the globalised knowledge society (van der Wende 2008). In this spirit, universities are made responsible by policy makers for the creation and

maintenance of the economic advantages of a nation or even a region as in the European case (Maguire 2010). University rankings and the managerialisation of universities highlight the pure economic dimension of globalisation in the case of universities (Beck 1997).

In today's environment, the main challenge for universities is to find a "balance between the nature of higher education as a public good and the commercialization of its services, while at the same time preserving the core values of the academic ethos" (International Conference on Ethical…2004, 3). Universities need to find the balance between "long-term perspectives" and "short term fashions" (Hamilton 2000, 212). They are also asked to conduct research that is beneficial for the advancement of knowledge and society and at the same time they are measured according to the immediate usefulness of research results. Thus, research is caught between a focus on applied research that is directly useful and the advancement of basic research that only shows its effect in the long term. The educational aims of universities with the massification of universities, is today not primarily tight to educating future academics but individuals that can enter the job market outside academia (Trow 2007; Blasi 2002).

The struggle to balance the modern requirement and traditional values shows the strong relationship between universities and society and the continuous negotiation process of the role of universities in society. As universities are rather conservative institutions that are reluctant to change, they attempt to retain traditional values and vocations (Ridder-Symoens 2002). Therefore, many academics criticise reforms that relate to the pure adoption of economic requests to produce ready-made employees and useful knowledge (see for example Wright 2014; Boden and Epstein 2011; Nedeva 2007; Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot 2002). The fear that universities will lose their distinctive element in comparison to, for example, vocational or high schools is also present in academia. In this respect, Magalhães and Veiga (2013) ask the question "What makes higher education higher?".

Masschelein and Simons (2015), advocate reclaiming universities as pedagogical spaces. They criticise the service-orientation within higher education and the demand of European policies for a fast and efficient education that is oriented towards learning outcomes. They see universities as crucial places in which culture is passed on to the new generation. Passing on culture does not mean imposing culture on the younger generations but opening up a space where culture can be discussed and changed. In their work, Masschelein and Simons refer to Arendt's definition of culture as "the mode of intercourse of man with the things in the world" (Arendt cited in Masschelein and Simons 2015, 155). Hence, the university should be a place

where the community of scholars and students come together to have free time that is devoted to culture. This understanding of time and of the university as social meeting place contradicts the modern idea of the university as a space in which qualifications and skills can be acquired in an efficient way.

In summary, it can be stated that the ideas about the role of universities and their obligation towards society is changing. Universities are being turned into institutions that are strategically important for the advancement of the economy. This shift in the vocation of universities, which still triggers resistance of the academic community, can be most clearly seen in the different roles of universities, *research, teaching and learning* and *the third mission*. Hence, the following parts will show major trends in these areas that also impact the understanding and validity of academic freedom and university autonomy.

2.2.2 Research as Driving Factor for Academic Success

Research is the most prestigious task that universities fulfil and the main obligation of academics (Teichler 2012). Therefore, the success of academics in the recruitment and promotion process is highly dependent on research outcomes, measured in the form of the number of publications and research grants received from outside the university (Moosmayer 2011; Kerr 1995). Most academics also value research over teaching in their work, as it is generally more important for their academic reputation and thereby makes career progress more likely (Moosmayer 2011). Some academics even argue that they have to buy their time out of teaching in order to engage in research and that they have to find their own funding to cover research costs and time invested into research (Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006). In other words, they see teaching as an unpleasant side-effect of their work and research as the main task. The higher status of research in comparison to teaching can also be seen as professors and more established academics usually have less teaching obligation and hence more time to engage in research because it is more likely that established professors receive research grants (Meyer 2012). In summary, it can be stated that academics tend to focus more on research than on teaching as research is more important for their individual career development and as universities perceive research as being beneficial for their reputation. Nevertheless, academics are pressured to secure their own funding for research activities and the time invested in research.

As already mentioned, there is an increased need for universities to receive funding from different agents such as the state, economy, and other stakeholders. This is also due to the development towards mass-education that increased the costs of universities, and most states are no longer able to finance them in an appropriate way. In this light, research is today seen as an income source for universities and, therefore, is not the only valuable in the sense of adding new knowledge to the general knowledge base. With knowledge being profitable and powerful, in the long-term universities do not always disseminate knowledge immediately as the application for patents may take some years (Meyer 2012). Universities are forced to take the most out of their innovation, which may conflict with their obligation to pass on knowledge to the younger generations and create knowledge for the public good and not for economic advantages. Other effects of the economic need to produce income for research are, for example, that the choice of a research topic often derives from the demand of the financiers and not from a need of knowledge in society or from the research interests of the scholar. Overall, universities are increasingly dependent on research agreements with financiers (Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006).

In connection to the demand that research must have a direct benefit for the funder, the university, and the researcher, a shift from basic to applied research happened. Some authors summarise this *under the shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge*. The transition means a shift from research that is defined by academics in line with their discipline towards research that engages with the problems and needs of society from a multi-disciplinary perspective (Gibbons et al. 1994). Other authors claim that the idea of Mode 2 knowledge and research is not new but started in 16th century Europe (Pestre 2003). Taking the history of universities into account, the idea of the usefulness of knowledge and its application to needs and problems of the time was already an issue in Humanism. Nevertheless, to what extent research aiming at solving practical problems was interdisciplinary in Humanism is questionable.

2.2.3 Teaching and Learning

In contrast to the high prestige that research has in the academic community, teaching is often seen as an unpleasant side-effect of academic work (Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006). In the promotion and hiring of academics, the fact that one has teaching

experience is often enough. There seems to be less ambition to prove teaching abilities than research and publication skills. This situation was precisely described by Kerr:

> *Society hopes that professors will not neglect their teaching responsibilities but rewards them almost entirely for research and publications. This is most true at the large and prestigious universities. Clichés such as 'good research and good teaching go together' notwithstanding, professors often find that they must choose between teaching and research-oriented activities when allocating their time. Rewards for good teaching are usually limited to outstanding teacher awards, which are given to only a small percentage of good teachers and usually bestow little money and fleeting prestige. Punishments for poor teaching are also rare* (1995, 9).

This trend of not focusing on teaching is slowly being replaced by a movement to improve higher education teaching, which had long been perceived for as a black box. As Kerr points out, the assumption that a good researcher is automatically a good teacher persisted over decades. Furthermore, Skelton (2005) observes that policy makers show an increasing interest in raising teaching performances in higher education and in 2016, the United Kingdom took the lead in formalising the call for excellence in teaching. The "Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)" the counterpart to the "Research Excellence Framework (REF)" is to be introduced in 2017/2018. The TEF aims at

> *identifying, rewarding and encouraging the highest quality of teaching within Higher Education Institution (HEIs). It also aims to benefit students, offering a wider range of courses to suit their needs and to better ensure graduate employability while ensuring that diversity and social mobility are accounted for across all institutions. It is proposed that, from the start of the 2017/18 academic year, assessments will be made by an expert panel drawing on a set of metrics related to teaching quality and student outcomes together with information supplied by the Educational Institutions* (Office for National Statistics 2016, 3).

From this excerpt of the TEF, it is obvious that its main aim is student employability, student outcomes, and measurement of teaching quality. Student evaluations of academic teaching performance have also been introduced in several countries, and there are some programmes for junior academics in which they receive training in teaching. Often student performance is

seen as an indicator of teaching success and universities try to avoid high drop-out rates as they put the institution in a bad light.

The focus on measurable outcomes reflects the same trend of focusing on economic gains as seen in the area of research. Overall, the discourse in teaching and learning shifted to a customer-based approach towards teaching and to the demand to raise the job opportunities for graduates so that the high tuition fees pay off (Boden and Nedeva 2010). The scene is now defined by the term *employability*, and universities are increasingly expected to produce readymade employees instead of "educated individuals" (Rüegg 2011). Student learning in this view needs to be managed and is expected to lead to employment outside of academia as there are not enough jobs for the increasing student number in universities (Meyer 2012). This leads to the effect that "academic study that does not lead directly to a valued and paid role in society may be sacrificed in favour of training people for particular jobs (with obvious costs for the study of the humanities and a boom for the study of science)" (ibid., 209).

Contrary to the focus on student employability, academics see themselves still as professionals in the area of teaching, and they ask for trust from students and society. Professionalism in this respect means that academics draw on their own knowledge and experience in order to make valid judgements in the best interests of their students and society. This idea of the moral aspect of teaching is based on the assumption that teaching involves ethical and moral processes and is more than just passing on skills (Fitzmaurice 2008). Fitzmaurice cited Kennedy to make the strong responsibility that teachers specifically have when he describes the teacher "as responsible for advancing the capacities and potentialities of the next generation. This is a very large responsibility, and it is the essence of academic duty" (Kennedy cited in Fitzmaurice 2008, 347). Hence, teaching can only be understood as a value-laden process (Harland and Pickering 2011) which should involve ethics and a responsibility to educate the full person as assumed in the original idea of humanism (Rüegg 2011). Thus, good or even excellent teaching cannot easily be quantified and measured as the long-term effects cannot be seen immediately. Moreover, teaching and learning, in an institutionalised way, rely on the relationship between the teacher and student.

Next to the focus on practical research and teaching, the combination of teaching and research in one institution and the employment of academics who are simultaneously teachers and researchers has changed in recent decades. With the demand for high research outputs, it is likely that universities will increasingly focus on supporting a small amount of excellent

research professors and employing research assistants to support these professors. Teaching in this scenario will be conducted mainly by teaching-only staff (Meyer 2012). The trend of the emergence of teaching-only universities that are no longer engaged in research activities is also visible today. The inclusion of more practical oriented and less research focused institution such as *Fachhochschulen*, polytechnics, and professional schools in the higher education sector is also changing higher education teaching away from the classical critical and scientific thinking towards a more practical set of skills that can be applied on the job market (Scott 2004). Hence, the landscape and aims of higher education is changing and universities have to reconsider what knowledge they need to pass on to students.

2.2.4 The Third Mission of Universities

Next to research and teaching, universities are today asked to fulfil the so-called *third mission*, which refers to the interaction of universities with the wider society including the private sector. It includes activities and responsibilities that emerged around the issues of *participation*, *social engagement*, and *general contribution to society and economy* (Nedeva 2007).

The third mission is not a new idea as university has always interacted with society and even the Middle Age university served, for example, the citizens by offering services in the name of the church (Zonta 2002); research in , for example, medicine and law are also by nature aligned to society. Nevertheless, the focus in this time did not lie on community engagement or the education for the job market, if we use modern terms. Zgaga (2017) names several synonyms that are connected to today's third mission: "public service", "social dimension", "outreach and engagement", "civic/citizen education", "education for democratic citizenship and/or culture".

According to Zgaga (2017), this third role of universities next to teaching and research has its roots in the early 19th century and derives from America. Whereas the European universities were focused on science and saw the contribution to society as a side effect (Bok 1982), universities in the America started collaborating with external partners much earlier and also saw their mission in shaping their local communities (Pinheiro, Langa and Pausits 2015).

In the 20th century, the discussion on the third role of universities was carried further by John Dewey who observed that in the 18th century, education became a civic function with the rise

of nation states. Education in this time not only had the function of educating individuals but citizens for the nation state (Zgaga 2017). With the movement towards democracy, the education of a democratic citizen was the primary focus but, as Zgaga (2017) points out, there are multiple meanings of democratic citizenship education.

In modern times, with the focus on accountability and the economic benefits of teaching and research the so-called *third mission* gained importance. The third mission in this context can be seen both as a form of the commercialisation of higher education, as explicated later, and as a form of community engagement and the dissemination of knowledge (Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno 2008).

In relation to teaching, the third mission explicates the need to educate employees as outlined in the last section. "[T]he third mission creates the overall imperative to shift from providing social and cultural capital to professional elites to preparing the workers of the knowledge society by equipping them with fairly practical and technical skills and knowledge" (Nedeva 2007, 95). With the call for the third mission, it is no longer up to the universities to decide on how to prepare good citizens, but it is up to the state to decide on which skills and attributes a good citizen should have by defining the nature of a *good citizen* (Boden and Nedeva 2010).

Overall, the third mission seems not to be a new idea, as academics and universities were always engaged and interested in the greater good of society as shown in the previous parts. Hence, some academics (see for example, Boden and Nedeva 2010; Nedeva 2007) claim that with the introduction of the third mission a previously natural connection between universities and society became a formalised demand of governments, society, and the economy towards universities.

In summary, it can be said that the role of universities and its core function of teaching, research and the third mission have changed. This eroded the traditional idea of the university not the first time and the Humboldtian University model is today an issue of renegotiation. The unity of teaching and research is no longer taken for granted, and the aim of university education targeted at an intellectual élite has been transformed into mass education. Hence, universities have to rethink their tasks from *the quest for knowledge for its own sake* towards *the production of knowledge and innovation* and from *educating critical thinkers and future researchers* towards *training employees for the job market*. The third mission can be seen as a formal way of reformulating the tasks of universities. This transformation of the core roles of universities

and the change of communication and trust with the wider society certainly has effects on the key academic values university autonomy and academic freedom. The next sections of this chapter engage exactly with these effects and changes in the perception of academic values.

2.3 University Autonomy

2.3.1 Shared Governance: The Traditional Model of University Governance and its Relation to University Autonomy

University governance as the structuring element of university life is strongly connected to university autonomy. Changes in governance structures thus impact university autonomy and academic freedom and vice versa. Carnegie and Tuck describe university governance by stating that "[a]cademic governance encompasses governance of the teaching and learning activities and research activities of universities. Therefore, academic governance relates to scholarship" (2010, 436). They argue that as the university is the place of scholarship academic governance is crucial for fulfilling universities role and its obligation towards society.

The most traditional governance model since the beginning of the university is the shared or collegial governance model. In the first universities, the decision about teaching and research were either made by the students in the Bologna Model or by teachers in the Paris Model (Zonta 2002). As the Paris model prevailed, shared governance has included academic staff. It is based on the election of members of the academic community into governing boards, senates and other decision making structures (Trakman 2008). The inclusion of academics in governance is seen as important because universities are value-laden institutions with a strong affiliation towards scientific and organisational values. In order to sustain these values governance needs to be placed within the academic community (Scott 2004). Collegial governance is based on the principle of *academic democracy* and *collegiality* and the trust of governments and society in academic professionalism (Carvalho 2012; Trakman 2008). Among others, Carvalho (2012) argues today that academic governance based on democracy should consist of all members of the academic community, including students and non-academic staff, as real democracy should involve every member of the academic community.

Today, shared governance systems are still supported by most academics (Trakman 2008). This traditional governance model also ensures university autonomy as universities and more

precisely academics within the university have the power to decide independently about matters of teaching and research. University autonomy in this governance model means independence from the state in matters of research and teaching. However, universities can never be entirely independent from the state as the state provides the legal framework in which universities operate. Zgaga (2012a) argues, in this respect, that absolute autonomy can never exists as universities are always related in one way or another to society and the state. Hence, university autonomy is a matter of ongoing negotiations between the state and universities and is dependent on time and space.

The main justification for shared governance is and always was that academics are the most knowledgeable persons about the inner structures, values, and goals of the university. Hence, they are the most competent to make professional decisions concerning all matters of the university. Nevertheless, collegial governance is today often described as ineffective as academics lack managerial skills (Teichler 2015; Trakman 2008). This criticism and decreasing trust in academics as professionals led to the emergence of new governance structures within higher education (Schimak 2005).

2.3.2 The Managed University: A Move towards New Public Management

The decreasing trust in academics as professionals reflects a more general trend in the public sector which calls for more control and restrictions from governments, not at least due to the attempt to reduce taxes and to shrink the social welfare-state. The aim of reforms in the public sector, including higher education, was to increase the quality and the efficiency of services (Ball 2008; Ferlie, Musselin and Andresani 2008).

In order to achieve more accountability, efficiency, and quality a gradual shift from collegial governance structures towards an entrepreneurial and market-driven governance system occurred (Nybom 2012). The introduction of managerialism and the more defined new public management (NPM) replaced the traditional administrative procedures with management techniques taken from the private sector. In this respect, the focus of higher education shifted from social towards economic demands. Research, teaching, and learning are increasingly managed, quantified and optimised concerning outcomes and outputs (Moosmayer 2011). In summary, it can be stated that the previously collegial management was turned from a bottom-up towards a top-down approach (Aarrevaara 2010). Nevertheless, there is not one uniform

direction in governance changes and even within Europe there is still not one common governance system (Teichler 2012).

Different authors describe different governance changes and their likely impacts on higher education. Ferlie, Musselin, and Andresani (2008), for example, identified three prototypes of narratives of public sector reforms that also apply to higher education: first, the new public management narrative; second, the network governance narrative; third, the Neo-Weberian narrative. I will elaborate in this part on Ferlie, Musselin, and Andresani (2008) as their approach addresses the issue of concern in a complex way and makes a good synthesis with reference to practical examples. In comparison to other authors, they do not rely on predictions for the future but give a comprehensive picture of the current state of higher education governance, which is important in obtaining insight into contemporary university governance.

The new public management (NPM) narrative is mainly based on the concept of efficiency and competition between universities and other higher education institutions. This includes the possibility of the disappearance of failing universities, real price developments for student fees as well as research contracts based on their effective costs and value for money. The student's role in this model is the role of a consumer who is in the position of demanding high teaching quality. Monitoring and measuring the performance outcomes in the form of audit and checking systems is also a core feature of the NPM approach. This feature is aligned with a thorough setting of targets and performance indicators by governments and should result in the concentration of funds in the highest performing institutions. For the institution and for the individual, performance-related pay is a means to enhance quality. Professional management is an important part of NPM. Hence, the move away from elected rectors and executive board members towards professional managers from the private sector is a distinctive feature. Academics who remain in management positions are asked to adopt a managerial approach in their work, without focusing on academic matters.

The network governance narrative in opposition to NPM does not focus on market-driven reforms but on networks established between different universities and other stakeholders. The management in this case is based on self-steering and the self-organisation of networks. The principles used in network governance focus on "leading edge knowledge, organisational learning, joint problem recognition and solving capacity and best practice diffuse through these networks and drive up quality across the system" (ibid., 338). In other words, professional self-regulation that is comparable to the traditional collegial governance systems is at the heart of

this narrative. Through the increased interest in networks between universities and agencies outside academia, the difference to traditional governance is the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the steering process of higher education. Overall, the environment in which higher education takes place is much more complex as governments, private sector and non-governmental organisations are involved in networks, steering and decision-making processes. The role of the government remains important as it is the coordinating agency between public and private interests. The management of the networks is based on soft management, team-based leadership, and the participation of several stakeholders. Accountability is guaranteed through an open dialogue between participants and other interest groups in higher education. The team aspect and team performances are valued higher and are more important than individual achievements. In summary, this approach is based on collaboration between research teams, and the administration and control are exercised by various interest groups in higher education (ibid.).

The neo-Weberian narrative is based on traditional Weberian principles and their combination with neo-Weberian ideas. The state in this approach is of utmost importance for the development of solutions for social and political problems. Hence, universities need to be steered by the state in order to provide solutions to current problems. As the state is assumed to be responsible for safeguarding its citizen's interests, citizens and students need to be actively involved in matters concerning higher education. This involvement includes, for example, consultation of citizens and focus groups with citizens. The core value is representative democracy, which entails the process of election for management positions. Decisions on higher education need to be based on debates by elected politicians. The focus in higher education lies much more on the achievement of results than on rule-and-regulation conformity. Hence, the adoptions of simplified administrative processes and of bottom-up steering models are a feature of the neo-Weberian narrative. Universities are seen as "public services with a distinctive status, culture, and terms and conditions; in the higher education system" (ibid., 339). Therefore, university managers need to be aware of the distinct values in higher education which can only be secured if they come from within academia. At the same time, however, they need to be professional managers that are capable of securing the needs of citizens.

Regardless of in which direction the new governance changes, it is clear that the overall structure of universities is or already has changed. Even, if the neo-Weberian and the network

governance narratives exist the most prevalent reforms in higher education are connected to the increase of efficiency and accountability taken from managerialism (e.g. Carnegie and Tuck 2010; Ball 2008; Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot 2002). Greenwood (2013) argues in this respect that the problem with the new management approach is that it does not pay enough attention to the overall mission of the university; this includes ethical values and artistic contribution. In other words, the critique of the new management regimes in higher education is mainly based on the arguments that are made in favour of collegial governance.

2.3.3 University Autonomy: From Social Responsibility towards Accountability

University autonomy is seen as an important value as it provides a framework in which academic freedom can be exercised. The major aim of university autonomy was to secure academic freedom and the independence of academic endeavours from power, especially from the state (Zgaga 2012a). Hence, it is often regarded as a condition but not a guarantee for academic freedom (Anderson and Johnson 1998). Traditionally, as for example, reflected in the Humboldtian university, university autonomy includes decisions about research and teaching. Today, managerial and financial autonomy is added to the idea of the independence of universities from the state (Zgaga 2012a). Nevertheless, the state still plays a significant role in shaping universities as it provides the legal framework in which universities function and as it is still a major provider of university funding.

The introduction of new management regimes entailed a shift in the idea of university autonomy. In the traditional system of governance, it is assumed that universities need to be independent from the state and other stakeholders in order to pursue their missions of teaching and research and to serve society and the individual in the long term (Rüegg 2011; Hamilton 2000). The idea of university autonomy was traditionally based on the trust that society and the state had in the professional judgement of academics as a community (Carvalho 2012; Trakman 2008). University autonomy was thus based on values inherent in the university and democratic decision making. University autonomy and academic freedom in the traditional sense were based on the assumption that academics and universities act in a social responsible way. Today university autonomy has a strong connection to the concept of accountability, which replaced the less measurable concept of social responsibility.

With the decline of trust in the academic community, the concept of accountability gained importance. It is no longer the academic community and the society in the broader sense that universities have to be accountable to but the state which wants to measure the outcomes of universities. In other words, universities and academics not only have to do valuable work in the eyes of their peers but have to provide concrete outcomes of their work. Academic work thus has to be efficient. This trend can be seen in many countries throughout the world, see for example, Churchman and King (2009) for Australia, Houston, Meyer and Shelley (2006) for New Zealand, Berdahl (2010) for the United States, and Musselin (2013) for the United Kingdom.

Erkkilä and Piironen (2014) evaluate the connection of university autonomy and accountability in Europe. They argue that the contemporary idea of university autonomy is conceptualised differently than its traditional idea that was meant to enhance academic endeavour and supports academic freedom. The new conception of university autonomy draws on ideas of autonomous management in higher education and research. They argue that

> *University autonomy is now discussed primarily in its institutional form, incorporating managerial efficiency instead of collegial deliberation and perceiving obstacles to autonomy as emanating from excessive public regulation of financial and organisational matters, rather than from intolerant public opinion, governmental censure or the commodification of higher education. It is treated as an instrument for efficiency and quality, or as a pre-requisite for survival. Autonomy is increasingly seen as the managerial property of the university leadership, and not as the property of the entire academic community* (ibid., 184).

Therefore, university autonomy today is no longer a value that supports the academic community and makes universities and their academic endeavour independent from state control but puts the pressure on universities to be sustainable in financial and managerial terms. This entails close cooperation with the private sector as a potential funder for universities. Zgaga (2012a) makes a similar point when he depicts the traditional tension between the state and universities that is extended in current times to universities, the state and economy as key negotiation partners. University autonomy traditionally was meant to safeguard academic freedom and to protect universities and academics from state interference in academic matters. According to Zgaga (2012a), traditional conceptions of university autonomy did not include managerial and financial autonomy but focused solely on academic work and the pursuit of

knowledge. Today, the focus in discussions on university autonomy is no longer on the independence of academics and universities from the state but on their financial and managerial autonomy. Zgaga (2012a) refers in this respect to a change from a philosophical understanding of university autonomy to an economic conception.

This economic view on academic values such as university autonomy is also reflected in the relationship between the state and universities. The state no longer attempts to steer universities directly; rather it sets quality criteria and standards that universities have to fulfil in order to receive state funding. The difficult process of repeated negotiations between the state and universities about autonomy is thus replaced by competition between universities for state funding. Instead of trying to restrict the degree of autonomy, the state now gives full autonomy in the sense of managerial and financial autonomy to universities. At the same time, universities receive the responsibility for their survival in the market place and are made accountable for their work and achievements.

The notion of accountability has a great influence on contemporary universities. Erkkilä and Piironen (2014) show that universities and academics were always made accountable for their work but that the locus of accountability changed with the focus on the economic dimension in the public sector. "Instead of being responsible to their academic peers and students, the academic institutions are now assumed to be responsible to the whole society, primarily in an economic sense" (ibid., 186). Similarly to Zgaga (2012a) and other authors (such as Zgaga et al. 2015; Wright and Ørberg 2011),they argue that the narrow view of university autonomy in an economic sense no longer protects academic freedom but might even hinder it.

Erkkilä and Piironen (2014) argue that the trend towards institutional autonomy and its compelling institutions to accountability is mainly justified by relying on a competitive logic. Competition is seen as a tool for stimulating quality and efficiency. University rankings play a significant role in this competitive logic as rankings are an easy way to compare university according to set criteria. How these criteria are developed and to what extent university rankings are able to depict the complexity of higher education and research is questioned by many authors (see for example O'Connell 2013; Robertson and Olds 2012). Nevertheless, the competitive logic and the manifestation of international rankings, benchmarking and a technical understanding of university autonomy are part of contemporary universities and higher education policies.

Dale (2013) refers to risk management when he takes the practical implications of university rankings and other benchmarking exercises into account. He states that the system of quality assurance (QA) that is usually named as one mechanism to make universities accountable for their action is replaced by risk management due to the introduction of international rankings. Dale describes quality assurance as follows:

> *QA is to assure stakeholders that minimum standards have been met, usually through the use of administrative mechanisms, and this leaves little room for, and little incentive to, the use of QA as a means of distinguishing one institution from another* (ibid., 8).

This understanding of quality assurance stands not necessarily in contradiction with university autonomy and academic freedom as it only focuses on the minimum and leaves plenty of room for manoeuvring for individuals and the institution itself. This is especially true when taking into account the fact that absolute autonomy can never be reached and might even harm academia itself as a connection between universities and society is necessary to fulfil universities' social responsibilities and to validate new knowledge (Zgaga 2012a).

However, in the age of competition and rankings, Dale (2013) argues that universities need to strive for being the best and hence to be distinguishable from other universities. In order, to score high in rankings, universities all around the world learned fast what behaviour they need to adopt to increase or at least not to decrease their place in rankings. Therefore, universities, states or even regions like Europe created policies that avoid any risk of falling in rankings. The management of risk is, according to Dale (2013), the key driving policy factor in contemporary universities. Concerning university autonomy, this form of university management as avoiding risk can become highly restrictive as, for example, controversial courses or the focus on controversial research agendas is suppressed as the risk of harming the universities' reputation and ranking outcomes is rated too high.

In summary, it can be stated that a shift from university autonomy based on universities' social responsibility is slowly being replaced by a technical understanding of university autonomy that focuses less on academic matters and more on finances and management. Overall, this shift also has major implications on academic freedom as university management has increased power, and this management is not necessarily coming from inside academia. With fear about reputation there is no real freedom to decide what to teach and what to research as decisions about this matter are mainly based on financial considerations. Consequently, the course or

programme that will attract more students and can earn more money will be favoured over others and the same is true for research that sustains funding streams and reputation.

2.4 Academic Freedom

2.4.1 Definitions of Academic Freedom

In the previous section, I pointed out that the view on university governance and university autonomy is changing and that this has great effects on academic freedom. I also have made clear that increasing university autonomy is very high on the agenda of policy makers, governments and universities. With the increased focus on university autonomy, the idea of academic freedom is often neglected. Whereas in the Humboldtian university model the institutional independence from the state in academic matters and the academic freedom of the individual academic and the academic community were in the forefront, university autonomy today means mainly financial and managerial autonomy, and academic freedom is less and less in focus. Hence, Zgaga (2012a) argues that academia should reflectively refocus on academic freedom as it is more important for academic advancement than university autonomy. The modern view on university autonomy can even hinder academic freedom instead of supporting it (Zgaga et al. 2015; Erkkilä and Piironen 2014; Zgaga 2012a; Wright andØrberg 2011). In refocusing on academic freedom, the healthy balance between managerial and financial matters and academic matters can be established again.

After stating that academic freedom is endangered and that it is important for academics, the question is: what does academic freedom mean? The next section of this chapter will suggest some scholarly definitions of academic freedom and show with some national examples how academic freedom is understood differently in different countries around the world. The overall aim here is to depict the diversity of understandings of academic freedom and to show that academic freedom is not fixed. The understanding and meaning of academic freedom varies between scholars and also between different contexts.

There are many definitions of academic freedom, most of them derive from Europe, the United States and other Western-oriented countries. Most of these definitions try to describe the areas in which academic freedom should be granted, what it should be used for, and what it should protect academics from. One good example for such a definition can be taken from Berdahl:

> *Academic freedom I define as the right of the scholar in his/her teaching and research to follow truth where it seems to lead without fear of punishment for having violated some political, social or religious orthodoxy* (2010, 2).

Or another one taken from Moodie:

> *"ACADEMIC FREEDOM" typically is taken to mean, at least in British senior common rooms and among faculty members in the United States, that academics and scholars should be free to pursue and proclaim the truth in both teaching and research without interference from unqualified outsiders* (1996, 129).

Both definitions state research and teaching to be the areas in which freedom needs to be granted and define outside rules and interferences as the source of danger for academic freedom. Moodie even specifies the place in which his definition applies. This already hints that academic freedom is not a universal concept that is understood everywhere in the same way. In contrast to Moodie and Berdahl, Manan goes one step further as he defines the kind of freedom that academics have when he states

> *academic possess intellectual freedom but not moral freedom. They are free to express their ideas, but not free to express their behaviour* (2000, 265).

Similarly to Manan, Aarrevaara points to the direction of social responsibility, when he describes academic freedom as

> *a fundamental principle for universities, and with it comes the idea of responsibility of all members of the scholarly community. In the knowledge society, academic freedom relating to teaching and research must also exist 'virtually', outside classrooms where there is little scope for control by those who distribute research resources* (2010, 59-60).

He also extends the idea of academic freedom to places outside the classroom as universities are not limited to the local space in modern societies.

Boden and Epstein focus in their definition of academic freedom more on the individual and see the source of academic freedom not within the state or society that gives freedom to academics but in the university as an institution:

> *Universities have a tradition of privileging certain categories of people by providing them with the place and space in which they could develop the intra and inter-psychic freedom to exercise defiant imagination, either collectively or in isolation. This is academic freedom. Having this freedom does not, of course, mean that it will be exercised* (2011, 478).

What their definition also clearly indicates is that academic freedom is an option for academics and that academics can refuse to make use of the freedom given to them. They clearly see academic freedom as privilege without referring to duties that go hand in hand with academic freedom.

Other academics claim that academic freedom should not be restricted to academia but should be granted to everybody. In contrast to the previously given definitions, this definition of academic freedom restricts academic freedom to the freedom of speech and does not specifically include teaching or research.

> *academic freedom is absolute. Free speech cannot be granted selectively, or it is not free speech at all* (Hayes cited in McCrae 2011, 131).

In summary, it can be stated that academic freedom has many facets and is not understood in the same way, even within the academic community. Almost all definitions emphasise another aspect of academic freedom. What they all have in common is that freedom is important for academics even if the understanding of it varies. Calhoun challenges us to think more deeply about academic freedom:

> *But I want to challenge us not to let either the heroic stories of the past or the history of terrible abuses narrow our understanding of academic freedom and the issues faced in contemporary universities. When we think of academic freedom we are apt to think of individuals with something to say and political repression of their speech. But academic freedom is not just a matter of free speech and individual rights. It is a matter of institutions and public purposes* (2009, 561).

It is striking that all of these definitions come from the Western world, and this has a clear reason as academic freedom is routed in the ideas and values of the West. Zha points to this very clearly, when he states "I attempt to answer the question of whether or not it is practicable to adopt Western norms and values of academic freedom and university autonomy to the

Chinese university" (2012, 210). This quote not only shows that academic freedom is not a valid concept in the whole world but rather European centered but it also shows that the concepts of academic freedom and university autonomy are part of international discussions. It also showcases the interest of Eastern scholars in the concept and shows that academic freedom is part of their discussions. Chapter Three will go in more details about the growing concern regarding academic freedom and university autonomy world-wide. The fact that academic freedom and university autonomy are often understood as European or Western concepts is also the reason that this chapter mainly focused on the history and developments in Western higher education and universities as it deals with mainly Western and European concepts.

In order to show how different academic freedom is understood even within the Western world, the next section will focus on some selected national[1] examples. Using these examples is meant to emphasis the plurality of understandings regarding academic freedom. I will use the examples of the US, Denmark, and Slovenia as they offer three different views on academic freedom.

Academic freedom in the US includes, as in most definitions of it, the freedom to teach and to research for academics but also the freedom to learn for students. This aligns well with Humboldt's idea about academic freedom. In his presentation during the UNIKE workshop in Roehampton, Cary Nelson (2014) pointed out that academic freedom is not the same as the freedom of speech that is guaranteed by the US constitution. The difference is that freedom of speech protects the individual from punishments by the state whereas academic freedom is not meant to protect the individual scholar from the state but from the university and hence from the employer. This is important as academics need to be able to follow their own conscience without interference from the employer.

Overall, there are three cornerstones that need to be given in order to protect academic freedom as defined in the US context. First, academic freedom has to be ensured through laws and principles. In other words, the legal framework of the country must safeguard and support academic freedom. Second, academics must have job security so as to be protected from the

[1] The national examples taken for this part are inspired by the UNIKE workshop in Roehampton, 8-10 September 2014. I want to express special thanks to the partners of the UNIKE project as they gathered material on academic freedom from their countries in preparation for the workshop. This material was very helpful for this section of my thesis. I also want to thank Cary Nelson for his inspiring presentation during the workshop about the US case.

university. They need to obtain tenure after a defined probation time in order to freely fulfil their role. And third, shared governance is essential for academic freedom. During his presentation, Cary Nelson (2014) also pointed out what academic freedom means and what it does not. Summarising his talk, it can be stated that:

1. Academic freedom is NOT the right to impose views on the student, BUT to show them different views.
2. Academic freedom does NOT mean that a student is excused from mastering course material, BUT it protects student's beliefs.
3. Academic freedom does NOT protect someone from being criticised, BUT from being fired due to criticism.
4. Academic freedom does NOT protect someone from disciplinary actions, BUT ensures a fair treatment during the disciplinary process and the structure to complain about unfair treatment.
5. Academic freedom does NOT mean that someone can abandon their responsibilities.
6. Academic freedom means that you have the right to be heard and to elaborate on certain topics with only short interruptions.

In contrast to many other countries, academic freedom in Denmark does not include the freedom to teach but only the freedom to conduct research. Academic freedom itself is not mentioned in any policy documents in Denmark, but the individual freedom to express one's own views is protected. Denmark's University Law does not mention academic freedom itself but states that a university has freedom in research. The law also gives the responsibility for protecting research freedom and ethics of the individual and the institution to the university (Danish Government 2011, part 1, clause 2, sub-clause 2). Therefore, it is not the state, as in the US, that protects academics from the university as their employer but the university that has to safeguard the freedom of research of its members. Nevertheless, the research freedom is mentioned in the law it is not the full freedom of research as the choice of the research topics always needs to meet the research profile of the university in which the scholar works. Academics also need to use the free time that is available aside from their allocated tasks for research (Danish Government 2011, part 1, clause 14). In other words, research freedom is only given during the left over-time between other tasks. More precisely, research freedom in the Danish case means the freedom to decide on the research topic and the research methods.

In Slovenia, as my third and last example, fundamental freedoms including freedom of thought, speech, press and conscience are part of the constitution. The same constitution also states that "freedom of scientific and artistic endeavour shall be guaranteed" (Slovene Constitution 2013, Art. 58) which is also mentioned in the Higher Education Act of Slovenia. The Higher Education Act (Legislative and Legal Service 2013) also regulates the freedom of teaching and learning as well as the freedom of research. In respect to teaching and learning, the freedoms of a university include the establishment and adoption of education and scientific research programmes, the determination of education regimes as well as the determination of forms and periods of the student assessment. Research freedom in the Slovene case refers to the freedom of artistic production and knowledge mediation. Artistic production in this case does not mean the production of a piece of art but to research in the area of art such as the study of art history. In other words, academics should be free to investigate knowledge in all knowledge areas. Moreover, universities in Slovenia have basic managerial and financial freedoms as "[s]tate universities and state institutions of higher education shall be autonomous. The manner in which they regulate their finances shall be regulated by law" (Slovene Constitution 2013, Art. 58). Overall, universities in Slovenia are based on a cooperative management model in which the individual academics are involved in processes of election, selection and internal regulation. That is also the reason that the term *academic freedom* is not prevalent in discussions and why university autonomy is in the focus of policy documents. As members of the academic community, academics are hence responsible for the organisation of the university and for protecting their individual freedoms.

Looking only in short at these three examples of how academic freedom is applied in different national contexts, it becomes clear that there are very different understandings of academic freedom. Whereas in Slovenia academics are seen as part of an academic community, academics in the US need to be protected from exactly this community through their academic freedom. The aspects that are included in academic freedom are also very different as most scholars in Denmark do not assume that freedom should also apply to teaching, which is absolutely normal in Slovenia and the US.

If there are so many different ideas about academic freedom, there are two striking questions. Why do we need academic freedom? And who should be protected from whom when we talk about academic freedom? Attempting to answer the first question might give insight into what elements of freedom academics and students need. Thinking about the second question is

important in order to see the relationship between the freedom of the university and the freedom of the individual from the institution itself. Hence, the next two sections of this chapter will elaborate further on the posed questions.

2.4.2 Why do we need Academic Freedom?

It is difficult to trace the origin of the idea of academic freedom and its justification. For universities, academic freedom was always an important part of seeking *truth* to use the more traditional term as I have shown in the history of universities. The idea that a free mind is necessary for the advancement of ideas and thoughts is nevertheless much older. Its roots can be found in ancient philosophy, and many authors make a relation between philosophers and the idea of academic freedom.

As there are many philosophers that can be referred to when talking about academic freedom and the space in this thesis is not sufficient to discuss all of them, I attempt try to go back as far as possible in history to trace the roots of academic freedom. I want to refer to two examples from ancient Greek philosophy, from which the word *academia* derives, to show why academic freedom is important to discover new things, to think outside the box, and to develop innovative ideas to use a more contemporary terminology. First, I want to use Plato's *allegory of the cave* to show that the freedom to follow unusual ways is necessary to get a deeper insight in the world that surrounds us. Next Plato's story can tell about the pain and the difficulty that knowledge can bring with it and hence the responsibility that is bound to knowledge. Second, I want to refer to Plato's report on Socrates speech *Apology* to depict a more political view of the importance of academic freedom for the good of all members in society.

In his allegory of the cave, Plato presents a dialogue between Socrates and his student Glaucon. The aim of the discussion is to show Glaucon the difference and difficulties of enlightenment in comparison to non-enlightenment about the nature of reality. To fulfil this aim, Socrates describes a society of humans who live from their childhood onward in a cave with their legs and necks bound so that they can only see what happens in front of them. Behind them there is a fire burning and between the fire and the prisoners (what Socrates calls the humans captured in the cave) are objects like vessels, statutes, and caved animals carried around, so that the prisoners can see the shadows of the objects in front of them. Everything the prisoners know are the shadows of these objects which make their reality as they do not know anything else.

Therefore, the shadows as Glaucon has to agree are the reality and whole world for the prisoners as they do not have access to other parts of their cave (Plato 1998 [360 B.C.E.]).

Applying this part of the story to academic freedom shows that we cannot find the real world and knowledge if we are bound, or restricted, in any form. If we are not free to move and to experience what is out there, we do not have a chance of fully understanding what is happening. This physical aspect of being chained can also be translated to the mind: if the mind is too restricted through norms, regulations, and other threatening factors, it cannot move and discover the world as it is bound to the conventions of society. Hence, we need freedom to think, walk, see, and experience the world to receive deep knowledge about it. Freedom of mind and body are important to receive knowledge that is different from what we already know.

In the second part of the conversation, Socrates describes and develops together with Glaucon what would happen if one of the prisoners would be unchained and able to move around. They think about the prisoner who first is scared to discover the new world and who has pain when seeing the light of the fire directly. After exploring the cave, the prisoner might leave the cave and even see the real sun and will suffer again great pain because he will be blinded by the sun. Suffering, the prisoner will start thinking about the world and discover that he only saw shadows of images in the cave and that the real world is totally different from what he knew before. In the truest sense, he will be enlightened by the sun in the world outside the cave (ibid.).

This second part of the story shows quite well how painful new knowledge and new things can be for the individual. Being torn between pain and fear and curiosity and enlightenment is not always easy and demands for bravery. Hence, academic freedom and the possibility to discover the unknown is not only a gift but might also be a burden when the quest for knowledge is the centre of one's ambition. Academic freedom, in Socrates' story the freedom from physical chains, is not only a privileged but also a duty.

In the last part of the story, Socrates asks Glaucon if he does not think that the prisoner who saw the sun would have the desire to go back to the cave and to enlighten all the others. Glaucon sees this as a very probable desire, and together they think about what the prisoner might experience going back. First, Socrates suggest that in the cave there might be competition about predicting and interpreting the next shadow that might appear on the wall. They come to the conclusion that after seeing the real world the returning prisoner would no longer be interested

in this habit and in the pride that one can take in being the best fortune teller. When the prisoner returns to the cave, he is also blinded – this time not by light but by darkness. In short, his fellows will think that he lost sight because he cannot see the shadows clearly anymore. Therefore, he would lose his status in the old community. If the desire to unchain his fellows becomes too strong, and he starts telling them about the outer world they probably would not believe him as he is blind in their reality. Both Socrates and Glaucon agreed that if the enlightened prisoner attempted to force his fellow prisoners to leave the cave that they would probably kill him (ibid.).

Taking the ending of the story with the escaped prisoner, there are only two possibilities for him: either not to return to the cave or to be killed by his fellows. Socrates and Glaucon agree that introducing the new knowledge to the prisoners is a challenge that can only succeed if the group of people wants to know and is not blind. In terms of academic freedom, this means that passing on knowledge, and especially controversial knowledge, is not an easy task. It also shows that knowledge can be isolating and that controversial knowledge might exclude the individual from the community. Freedom to move and think thus must be applied to the student and the teacher so that they can discover the world together. In this way, the allegory of the cave is about freedom but at the same time and even more so about learning and teaching and Socrates concludes that:

> *Whereas, our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of the good* (ibid.).

When Socrates was sentenced to death due to accusations that he corrupted youth with his teaching methods and because he showed impiety towards the pantheon of Athens, he made another statement that can be related to academic freedom. In his *Apology*, written down by Plato, he attempts to make the jury and Athenians aware of the effects of sending him to death. He claims that to become a good citizen and human being, you need someone who makes you aware of your own person and your own shortcomings. He sees himself as a person who fulfilled this task several times as he was known for revealing the arrogance of important

Athenians. Hence, he claims that it is necessary to allow critical voices in order to become a better person.

> *SOCRATES: I say, then, to you, O Athenians! who have condemned me to death, that immediately after my death a* punishment will overtake you, far more severe, *by Jupiter! than that which you have inflicted on me. For you have done this,* thinking you should be freed from the necessity of giving an account of your lives. *The very contrary, however, as I affirm, will happen to you. Your accusers will be more numerous, whom I have now restrained, though you did not perceive it; and they will be more severe, in as much as they are younger, and you will be more indignant. For* if you think that by putting men to death you will restrain any one from upbraiding you because you do not live well, you are much mistaken; for this method of escape is neither possible nor honorable; but that other is most honorable and most easy, *not to put a check upon others, but for a man to take heed to himself how he may be most perfect. Having predicted thus much to those of you who have condemned me, I take my leave of you* (Plato 2004 [before 387 B.C.E.]; emphasis added).

In this speech, Socrates points out that even if you restrict people from speaking the truth about others and the world, it will not be successful as there will be always people from the younger generation that will pick up this task. In other words, it is neither right nor possible to forbid people to tell truth. Academic freedom is thus necessary to tell what Socrates termed "truth" even if this truth is not favoured by those in power. In order to prevent death or other suffering, as in Socrates' case, academics should be free from these concerns from today's point of view. They should be able to search for truth and pass on knowledge to the younger generations and thus serve society as a whole.

Summarising, there are good explanations and reasons for academic freedom that can be found in the writing of ancient Greek philosophy. Of course, since then thousands of years have passed and the world has changed massively, but still we can identify these ancient Greek philosophers as a source of the idea of academic freedom. Hence, the idea of academic freedom in the sense of having the freedom to pursue and disseminate knowledge is not new and was always an issue. Academic freedom nevertheless, does not mean that academics should have the freedom to do whatever they want but it means to have the freedom to advance and discover "new" knowledge that is important to understand the world, as shown in the allegory of the cave and to make society and individuals better in the form of showing them their weaknesses

and thus give them the possibility to change in the right way. Judging what knowledge is "real", is not always easy as it might be far from what we already know, as in the example of the cave. Therefore, openness to new ways of thinking and new ideas is crucial in research and teaching. Academic freedom is also connected to a strong responsibility to the people: that we hold the mirror in front of their eyes as Socrates did in his speech to the jury. Academic freedom is thus, also connected to values and value systems, as Socrates assumes that arrogance is not a desirable characteristic.

2.4.3 Academic Freedom: Protecting Who from Whom?

After giving some possible reasoning for academic freedom the question is now, who should be protected from whom. There is not an easy answer to this question and, as stated several times, this is also due to the fact academic freedom is not absolute but relational and depending on the time, space and the ongoing negotiations between different stakeholders involved in matters of higher education. Therefore, this part will not give a definite answer to the questions but depict possible answers by drawing on the previously outlined scholars, philosophers, national policies, and the history of universities.

Drawing on the ideas of Plato's allegory of the cave (Plato 1998 [360 B.C.E.]), it is clear that the individual needs the freedom to explore the world and hence, knowledge. The society and other people engaged in knowledge are presented as a danger. In other words, the individual is the main source that needs the freedom to learn and to discover. Taking Socrates speech as reported in Plato's text *Apology* (Plato 2004 [before 387 B.C.E.]), it is again the individual who needs the freedom to speak truth to the rest of the world to better them and society. Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier, values play a significant role in judging what is perceived as good and as bad; therefore, society itself has an influence on individuals who search for truth through an implied value system.

In the Middle Ages university, academic freedom should have protected the university from the ruler and also from interference of the Church. Therefore, academics should be protected from forces outside of academia. It was the academic community that was there to judge what valid knowledge is and what is not. Therefore, the academic community had shared responsibilities for knowledge. In the ideal type of a university developed a few centuries later by von Humboldt and Schleiermacher, the individual academic was to be protected from the

interference of the state. The main task of the state was to secure the freedom of the university and the individual scholar. Thus, freedom should apply to the individual and the institution. Going from Socrates and Plato to modern times, it can be seen that the academic community gained more importance but that the freedom of the individual has remained important.

This clash between the freedom of the individual and the responsibility of the academic community is still visible in the contemporary university landscape. In the US, the idea of academic freedom clearly focuses on the protection of the individual from the institution but also from the state (Nelson 2014). Thus, the individual academic needs to be protected from other academics in order to follow their own ideas. Plato's allegory of the cave might give a good reason for this focus on the individual. In contrast, in the Slovene case the focus is on the academic community that is responsible in the shared governance model for academic matters. Therefore, the power is within the academic community and the individual has to create his or her space through active engagement in the university community. Peer review points also in the direction of freedom for the academic community and for the individual that participates in an appropriate way in this community. Focusing on the academic community instead of the individual has a clear benefit as it is a process of quality control and helps to further academic progress by providing mutual critical feedback. Academic endeavour in this view is a process that involves a group of people to validate knowledge and depict possible pitfalls. While ensuring quality and the adoption of academic values, such as dignity and honesty, the academic community can also be a danger for the individual academic who does not fit in the same research, teaching, and thinking traditions. In this manner, new ideas and solutions can be put aside by excluding these academics from academia. Taking the example of the cave this focus on the community can mean that the whole community stays blind because the knowledge presented to them seems to be too absurd to engage with. Hence, open-mindedness of academics for new ideas, approaches and methods is key for knowledge advancement.

The balance between the freedom of the individual and the control and freedom of the academic community is a challenge: there are two parts that might need freedom from each other. First, the individual that needs to have a certain degree of freedom from the group of other academics in order to allow new methods and ideas to emerge. Second, the individual and the academic community who need freedom from outside powers such as the state, the church, economy, and society in order to have time to engage in knowledge for its own sake and to focus also on knowledge that might be controversial or unusual at first sight. The freedom of the individual,

I think, is crucial for the emergence of new ideas that differ from the hegemonic knowledge. Nevertheless, I think that the academic community is also important as ideas need to be tried out and knowledge needs to be put back in relation to other academics and society as a whole. Only through presenting and critically analysing ideas and knowledge can they be advanced.

2.5 Summary

What I have shown in this chapter is that academic values have a long history; in the case of academic freedom, it might be even longer than the history of universities themselves. Academic values cannot be viewed in separation from each other as they only make sense when they are put into perspective. Hence, I argued that for the understanding of academic freedom it is also important to take university autonomy and its relation to academic governance as well as the relation between universities and the society into account. I have also shown that even if academic freedom is well elaborated, there is still no agreement about what academic freedom is exactly. There are many different understandings of academic freedom whereas the modern view of university autonomy is much clearer as it focuses on economic aspects, such as financial and managerial independence from the state. I have also shown that with this new view on university autonomy and governance changes the relationship between academic freedom and university autonomy has changed. Whereas university autonomy was meant to ensure academic freedom, it might today even endanger academic freedom (Zgaga et al. 2015; Erkkilä and Piironen 2014; Zgaga 2012a; Wright and Ørberg2011). Therefore, it is important to consider academic freedom in this new light and to ask if academic freedom is still needed in an age in which universities are meant to produce ready-made employees and to produce useful knowledge. If universities and academics are not striving for new and controversial knowledge and trying to promote critical thinking, it is questionable if justifications for academic freedom are still valid.

Next, to show current governance changes and the changed social contract between the state and universities, I have shown in this chapter that research is much more valued than teaching. Despite the fact that teaching historically was always a major task of universities. Academic freedom in teaching is also less promoted than academic freedom in research. In Denmark, it is not even part of the idea of academic freedom. Nevertheless, freedom in teaching and studying was traditionally very important for universities. Therefore, I would argue that

considering academic freedom in higher education teaching is important as without freedom in teaching it is almost impossible to talk about controversial topics and to stimulate critical thinking. In order to sustain this traditional aim of higher education, academic freedom in teaching is crucial. But the question here is: Does academia still focus on critical and theoretical thinking or is the main aim of higher education to train students according to a fixed set of skills? If the latter is the answer of contemporary universities, academic freedom might no longer be necessary in teaching.

After introducing the key concepts of this thesis from a rather scholarly perspective, the next chapter will engage with academic freedom and its relation to higher education teaching from a more practical perspective. Therefore, this chapter will discuss international and intergovernmental policies on academic freedom. Furthermore, it describes some studies that tried to measure academic freedom in a rather quantitative way. It will also outline discussions about academic freedom taken from University World News, as one of the biggest online media outlets that engages with academic matters on a weekly basis. Finally, the chapter will introduce an example of restricting academic freedom that might be considered as so minor that they hardly make it into public discussions.

CHAPTER 3: Academic Freedom in Practice

This chapter engages with more practical aspects and the application of academic freedom. The first part of the chapter will introduce institutions that are concerned with academic freedom on an international level and their strategic papers. It will draw on some of most widely known of such papers and their respective institutions, (1) the Magna Charta Universitatum and the later founded Magna Charta Observatory, (2) The Council of Europe and the European Council, (3) The American Association of University Professors and Scholars at Risk, and (4) UNESCO's recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel. The second part of this chapter will introduce studies that were aiming at measuring and comparing the degree of academic freedom and university autonomy in different countries. The third part will depict how academic freedom is presented in online media that focuses on academic matters. To accomplish this it engages with articles published in the biggest weekly online newspapers on higher education, namely *University World Ne*ws. This part will show how academic freedom was presented and to what extent it is related to higher education teaching between January 2014 and December 2015. In the last part of the chapter, I will give a less obvious example that shows how academic freedom might be threatened in day-to-day situations. Therefore, this part will draw on silenced aspects concerning academic freedom to make the point that academic freedom is a value that not only needs protection in obvious cases but also in the day-to-day work of academics.

3.1 Academic Freedom a Global Concern

As I have already touched on in the last chapter of this thesis, academic freedom even if it is a European value, attracts a growing international interest. Traditionally, the idea of academic freedom was routed in European philosophy and the European idea of the university. Nevertheless, with the spread of the European university model all around the world and in times of globalisation not only Europeans consider and reflect on this academic value (see for example Blasi 2002; Ridder-Symoens 2002; Rüegg 2002). Hence, academic freedom is discussed by several authors from different parts of the world (see, for example, Bruneau 2015 for North America; Yamamoto 2015 for Japan; Zha 2012 for China; Finkin and Post 2009 for the US). The growing global interest in academic freedom is also reflected in the publication of strategic papers deriving from international agencies. In the next section, I will engage with

some of the most known documents and organisations in this respect. This list of organisations and documents is not sufficient but includes probably the most influential ones. I will engage with (1) the Magna Charta Universitatum and the Magna Charta Observatory; (2) The Council of Europe and the European Council; (3) The American Association of University Professors and Scholars at Risk; and (4) UNESCO and its Recommendation on the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel.

Next to these organisations and associated documents there also is, for example, the Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education (World University Service 1988) or in Africa the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (ARISA, COCOSA, IDMASA, IFMASA, SUASA and UDASA 1990), and the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (Symposium on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Intellectuals 1990). For a more comprehensive list of declaration and documents on academic freedom, see Zgaga's (2010) feasibility study that was commissioned by the Council of Europe. Due to the limitations of space, I cannot discuss each of these documents especially as there are more and more statements on university missions and academic values emerging all over the world. The Copenhagen Declaration on the Purpose of the University in the 21st century (UNIKE 2016) that was drafted and is open for editing suggestion is just one example that derived from the project in which this PhD thesis is embedded. This also shows the need of academics to continue discussions on academic values and to make their standpoint clear in a time when universities are undergoing massive change.

3.1.1 The Magna Charta Universitatum and the Magna Charta Observatory

The *Magna Charta Universitatum* is probably the most influential contemporary strategic paper concerned with academic values. It started off as a European idea and was proposed by the University of Bologna in 1986. The idea of drafting a document that states the basic principles and the role of academics can be seen as a reaction to modern challenges. The academics drafting and initiating the Magna Charta Universitatum had understood that the world was going to change massively in the future and that new demands would be laid down for universities. In order to avoid universities would gradually being transformed into "venerable cultural museums" (Calzolari 2008, 18) universities and academics had to react

rapidly to confront new threats. "These threats represented the principles of autonomy, academic freedom and responsibility, as preconditions for any involvement in the new ventures that the global society was somewhat confusedly, but increasingly, formulating" (ibid., 18). Academics from other universities saw the same need and supported the idea of drafting such a value statement. Hence, in 1987 delegates of 80 European Universities elected a board to draft the Magna Charta Universitatum, which finally happened in January 1988 in Barcelona. In the same year on the 18th September, the document was signed by 388 university rectors and heads of universities that gathered to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna. In the meantime, the Magna Charta Universitatum is no longer a pure European ideal but spread throughout the world. By 2015, it had been voluntarily signed by university leaders from 805 universities located in 85 different countries spread over all continents (Magna Charta Observatory 2016b). Thus, the Magna Charta Universitatum made the jump from being an entirely European strategic paper towards an internationally recognised and adopted value statement on higher education.

With the increasing number of signatories, the annual ceremony of signing the Magna Charta Universitatum was no longer sufficient. Therefore, in the year, 2000 the European University Association and the University of Bologna decided to found an observatory that should act on behalf of the Magna Charta Universitatum in the form of monitoring, enhancing, and advising on issues related to university autonomy and academic freedom. With the creation of the *Magna Charta Observatory*, now every September before the signatory ceremony of new supporters of the Magna Charta Universitatum, a congress on related issues is organised. The Observatory acts on behalf of the signatories of the document and is independent of any political or other interest group. All signatory universities represented by their rectors and other university leaders are connected to the Observatory in the form of their commitment to the principles laid down in the Magna Charta Universitatum (Magna Charta Observatory 2016a).

The principles that are laid down in the Magna Charta Universitatum are the necessary basic elements that must be granted in order to enable universities to follow their vocation now and in the future. Universities in this document are understood as "centres of culture, knowledge and research" (Magna Charta Observatory 2016 [1988], 1). Great value is put on the concept of academic freedom as this is perceived as necessary for following the mission of universities. University autonomy in comparison to today's view point is not a major concern of the document. University autonomy is perceived as a distinct feature of the organisational form of

the university. It is to mention at this point that the meaning of university autonomy changed between the time the Magna Charta Universitatum was drafted and today. As already touched upon in the last chapter and will be outlined further in Chapter 5, university autonomy in the traditional sense is based on collegial governance whereas today it is primarily understood as managerial and financial autonomy. The only time when it is mentioned, the document states: "The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organised because of geography and historical heritage […]" (ibid., 1). With this statement, the Magna Charta Universitatum also emphasis that there is not one single university model but that a diverse university landscape exists and should be respected.

In contrast to university autonomy, academic freedom plays a major role in the document as it is emphasised repeatedly. It refers to the freedom in teaching and research for academics by stating "research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power" (ibid., 1) and proclaims that student freedom must be safeguarded. Governments and universities should be responsible for securing these freedoms. In return for the freedom given to members of the university, they should adopt a certain attitude.

> *Rejecting intolerance and always open to dialogue, a university is an ideal meeting-ground for teachers capable of imparting their knowledge and well equipped to develop it by research and innovation and for students entitled, able and willing to enrich their minds with that knowledge.* (ibid., 1)

In other words, universities and academia have to respect diverse opinions and have to question knowledge and culture before transferring it to society. They have to adopt an open-minded attitude towards criticism and encourage serious discussions with society and the academic community.

Next to this attitude towards knowledge, students, and research, the role of universities in society is described in the document. The social role of the university is to educate future generations to respect their "natural environment" and the "great harmonies"; building "centers of culture, knowledge and research"; and following the humanist tradition of education (ibid., 1). In other words, the university has rather broad educational aims that are sustainable over time in favouring long-term perspectives rather than short-term outputs (Hamilton 2000). The

whole person is targeted within this educational ideal as assumed in the humanist tradition (Rüegg 2011).

Next to university autonomy, academic freedom and the social role of universities, the document also considers the relationship between teachers and students as well as between teaching and research. The teacher is described as the person who imparts knowledge on the students and students take on the receptive part in the form of being "able and willing to enrich their minds with knowledge (Magna Charta Observatory 2016 [1988], 1). Hence, students and teachers are not seen as active contributors to knowledge production to the same degree as in the Humboldtian university model. However, in the 2000s, the concept of student-centred learning emerges which will be discussed in the light of the Bologna process in Chapter 5.

Regarding the relationship between teaching and research, the Magna Charta Universitatum draws on von Humboldt's idea and emphasise the inseparability of teaching and research. Research is of major importance as it is a requirement for teaching updated knowledge and ensuring that universities are flexible and adaptable to developments in society. Even if the Magna Charta Universitatum reflects the combination of teaching and research, it is a child of its time and thus there are signs that research is more important than teaching. This can be seen as research is always mentioned first and teaching second. Another example is that the recruitment of teachers must obey the principle that research is inseparable from teaching. In other words, in the recruitment process, it is most important to reflect on the research skills of the scholar rather than his or her teaching performance. This reflects the trend that teaching is less promoted and valued in comparison to research in contemporary universities (Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995).

Despite the fact that the Magna Charta Universitatum is meant to promote and safeguard academic values it falls short in giving definitions of their meanings and in defining the persons that belong to the academic community. This might be due to the fact that the Magna Charta Universitatum acknowledges and appreciates the great variety of organisational and structural forms of universities due to diverse local, cultural and historical influence factors.

Overall, the Magna Charta Universitatum reflects a very European idea of academic freedom, which is often criticised by non-European academics (interview with a member from the Magna Charta Observatory governing board, conducted November 2014). Nevertheless, it finds great reception within the international academic community. In other words, the

European idea of a university seems to be a popular concept for higher education internationally, and academic values, in particular, are perceived as important by the signatories of the Magna Charta Universitatum.

3.1.2 A European Perspective on Academic Freedom: The Council of Europe and the European Council

As the roots of academic values can be seen in the European university model, I will show in the following part how academic freedom is seen within Europe. There are two major European organisations that are engaged with matters such as education, human rights, and academic freedom, namely the Council of Europe and the European Council. Both play a rather different role within Europe. Another framing policy initiative within Europe is the Bologna Process which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.1.

The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 which was followed by the establishment of the Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1950 and the European Economic Community in 1957 which were the forerunners of today's European Union. The foundation of the Council of Europe was based on the experience of two world wars and aimed at establishing European peace based on the values of human rights and democracy (Council of Europe 2016a). The Council of Europe includes 48 countries of which 28 are members of the European Union and describes itself as the "continent's leading human rights organisation" (Council of Europe 2016b). The Parliamentary Assembly and the European Court of Humans Rights are just two important subsections of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 2016c).

There are several publications of the Council of Europe that are significant when considering academic freedom. One of them is the *Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom*s (Council of Europe 1950) that regulates basic freedoms. Two kinds of freedoms are of special concern here. First the freedom of thought, conscience and religion which states that:

> *1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.*

> *2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, or the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others* (ibid., Art. 9).

And second, the freedom of expression:

> *1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.*
>
> *2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary* (ibid., Art 10).

Both articles show very nicely that there is not an absolute freedom as Zgaga argues (2012a), but that freedom is always restricted by other laws and conventions and, therefore, subject to negotiations. Nevertheless, having outlined such freedoms in the form of a convention is important to create an open system based on democracy and distinguishes a region and/or state from totalitarian systems in which academic freedom cannot take place.

Academic freedom and university autonomy are also protected by Recommendation 1762 published by the Parliamentary Assembly (2006a) which is part of the Council of Europe. This document refers directly to the Magna Charta Universitatum and describes:

> *4. In accordance with the Magna Charta Universitatum, the Assembly reaffirms the right to academic freedom and university autonomy which comprises the following principles:*

> *4.1. academic freedom in research and in training should guarantee freedom of expression and of action, freedom to disseminate information and freedom to conduct research and distribute knowledge and truth without restriction;*
>
> *4.2. the institutional autonomy of universities should be a manifestation of an independent commitment to the traditional and still essential cultural and social mission of the university, in terms of intellectually beneficial policy, good governance and efficient management* (ibid., 1).

Next to explaining what academic freedom and university autonomy mean in Europe, the document also states why these values are important when it continues:

> *4.3. history has proven that violations of academic freedom and university autonomy have always resulted in intellectual relapse, and consequently in social and economic stagnation* (ibid., 1).

Despite the need to open universities to society and to respond to the new needs of society as stated in the document, academic values should still be protected and need to be adopted.

> *7. It may be true that the academic freedom of researchers, scholars and teachers and the institutional autonomy of universities need to be readjusted to meet contemporary conditions, but these principles should also be reaffirmed and guaranteed by law, preferably in the constitution. As testified by frequent assessments and evaluations carried out internationally, the academic mission to meet the requirements and needs of the modern world and contemporary societies can be best performed when universities are morally and intellectually independent of all political or religious authority and economic power* (ibid., 1).

This recommendation also received a reply from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in which they acknowledge the importance of the topic and assure their support for academic freedom (Parliamentary Assembly 2007). This document also mentions the adoption of the Rec(2007)6 on the public responsibility for higher education and research drawn by the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research. Strangely enough, this document disappeared from the website of the Council of Europe and cannot be traced back today.

The report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education on academic freedom and university autonomy (Parliamentary Assembly 2006b) also reflects on and states the Recommendation 1762 as a draft recommendation. It even discusses the issue in more detail and points towards some important aspects. Next to this, the document makes the connection between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Magna Charter Observatory clear when stating that:

> *The Assembly resolves to co-operate with the Observatory of the Magna Charta Universitatum in monitoring the observance of the principles of academic freedom and university autonomy in Europe, thus adding a European parliamentary dimension to the work of the Observatory* (ibid., 1).

In opposition to, for example, the Magna Charta Universitatum or Recommendation 1762, this document introduces the dimension of accountability and quality assurance as a controlling element for higher education.

> *The academic mission to meet the requirements and needs of the modern world and contemporary societies can be best carried out when universities are morally and intellectually independent of all political or religious authority and economic power. Accountability, transparency and quality assurance are pre-conditions for granting universities academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Continued observation of these values is essential* (ibid., 1).

In this respect, it later stresses the importance of defining public responsibility:

> *In its effort to support the Bologna process, and following its earlier emphasis on legislative reform, the Council of Europe stresses the importance of better definitions of the public responsibility both of governments and of higher education institutions in shaping tomorrow's European society…* (ibid., 1).

The document itself does not define public responsibility, probably due to the fact that it acknowledges that a social contract needs to be based on continuous negotiations between different stakeholders.

> *The contract between institutions of higher education and research implies a negotiated university, i.e., an institution with an 'open future' that is constantly re-engineered by*

> *reflections shared with partners on what makes appropriate academic behaviour; appropriate both in terms of responsiveness to the making of Europe and in terms of responsibility for stating the values that can support the integration project of the Europeans. This means the liberty to choose, the freedom to be – for all the partners entrusted with the future development of the continent; they are very much the people now defining the content and methods of the European Higher Education (and Research) Area developed through the Bologna Process on the premises of the Bologna Magna Charta: the universities are already the common blood of Europe. They may reveal to Europeans their common identity* (ibid., 1).

Overall, it can be stated that the Council of Europe is in favour of protecting academic freedom and university autonomy by acknowledging that the exact content needs to be negotiated in the light of an ever changing environment. Nevertheless, it also introduces the more contemporary notion of accountability and quality assurance, which seems to be a natural act for an intergovernmental organisation from today's perspective. Academic freedom and university autonomy seen from the perspective of the Council of Europe seem to be an important and necessary good for society and universities.

Next to the Council of Europe, the European Council is engaged with higher education in Europe. The European Council was established in 1974 as "an informal forum for discussion between heads of state or government of the EU member states" (European Council 2016a, 1) and acquired formal status under the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. Since 2009, with the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council is now one of seven EU institutions. The role of the European Council is to define "the EU's overall political direction and priorities" (ibid., 1). Therefore, it is interesting to see that the European Council published in 2000 based on the *Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom*s the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, which refers next to the right of liberty and security, the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the freedom of expression and information, and the freedom of assembly and association, also directly to academic freedom.

> *The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected* (ibid., Art. 13).

This shows that academic freedom is not only protected by the Council of Europe that mainly deals with human rights and values but also within European institutions that are mainly

interested in political strategy and policy. In the year 2000, the Charter was not legally binding but with the entry into the Treaty of Lisbon, this changed in 2009 (European Commission 2016b). The document was republished in 2012 by the European Council.

In 2014, the European Council has also adopted a strategic agenda for the EU, which includes (1) jobs, growth and competitiveness; (2) empowering and protecting citizens; (3) energy and climate policies; (4) freedom, security, and justice; and (5) the EU as a strong global player (European Council 2016b). Even if the fourth item on the list suggests that the new agenda still engages with freedoms, only security and a legal framework but no freedoms are mentioned in this point. In summary, it can be stated that academic freedom finds recognition in EU's political sphere but is no priority. Hence, the Council of Europe is much more significant as an institution to protect academic freedom and human rights.

3.1.3 Academic Freedom in the US: The American Association of University Professors and Scholars at Risk

As already mentioned, interest in academic freedom and university autonomy only revived after World War II in Europe as there was no time or space to discuss such issues during the time of the two world wars. Nevertheless, the idea of academic freedom and university autonomy did not vanish in this period as it was a vivid issue in the US. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) played a major role in securing these values.

The idea of founding AAUP an organisation that is dedicated to protecting and promoting academic freedom was born when Arthur O. Lovejoy watched how the well-known economist Edwards Ross was fired because Lealand Stanford of Stanford Universities did not like his views on political issues such as immigration and monopolies. Hence, he organised together with John Dewey a meeting in 1915 in order to form an organisation to ensure academic freedom. The AAUP was born from this initiative while academic freedom was still a new concept in America. From this day on, the AAUP worked hard to protect academic freedom and to fight for the rights of the academic profession (AAUP 2016a). As the AAUP's work is restricted to America, it is less known on a global level but it has still played a major role in further carrying out the idea of academic freedom.

Within the AAUP there are two committees of special interest for this thesis: first, Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure and second, the Committee on Teaching, Research and Publication. Whereas the committee on Teaching Research and Publication engages with issues of working conditions such as teaching evaluation, assessment, curriculum, and workload, Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure promotes and protects academic freedom through the development and publications of policies and reports. It also engages in investigative activities when a case of threatening academic freedom or tenure are brought to the attention of the committee. In other words, the AAUP not only supports academics with stating clear guidelines but is also engaged in supporting academics on a practical level when their rights are endangered (AAUP 2016b). Among the special tasks of Committee A is also to recommend that administrators from an institution that does not protect and adhere academic freedom are put on a list of censured administrators that is publicly available on their website. The committee also assist censored administrators in changing their institution and finally to be removed from the list. Other than punishing administrators, Committee A also offers an award to recognise outstanding contributions in respect to academic freedom (AAUP 2016c).

There are several reports and recommendations about academic freedom available from the AAUP. The *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* (AAUP 1970 [1925]) is the current statement that lays down the principles on which AAUP works. This document has a long history, which shows that new demands and situations lead to the need to update even documents on basic values. The first statement was published in 1915 with the foundation of the AAUP and was officially endorsed during an AAUP meeting between December 1915 and January 1916. The next step was to formulate a shorter statement, which was initiated by the American Council of Education in 1925; this statement was called *the 1925 Conference Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure* and was endorsed by the Association of American Colleges (later known as the Association of American Colleges and Universities) in 1925 and by the AAUP in 1926. Following several joint conferences between the Association of American Colleges and AAUP, the new *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* was published and endorsed. After 30 years of experience with the statement, the decision was made to formulate interpretations in order to make the statement clearer in relation to academic practice. (AAUP 2016d).

In the following, I will refer to exactly this last statement with interpreting comments as it is the most developed one that also has a relation to academic practices. It also gives the best

insight into academic freedom from today's perspective. There are three, main statements on academic freedom in this document. The first one refers to academic freedom in research:

> *Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution* (AAUP 1970[1925], 2).

The second one to academic freedom in teaching

> *Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment* (ibid., 2).

In the comments to this section, its states clearly that controversy is welcome and even necessary in higher education. The aim of including the restriction to the subject is to avoid the inclusion of intrusive material without any relation to the subject but not to discourage controversial topics. This is also reflected in the report on Controversy in the Classroom, which emphasises that the restriction to the subject is meant in a wide sense, for example, a course in history that is concerned with the history of war can in this respect refer to the Iraq war even if the Iraq war is not part of the title of the course. AAUP wants to distance itself in this report from student "watchdogs" who take the subject restriction too narrowly and want to prevent professors from engaging in a critical way with contemporary issues (AAUP 2016e).

The third one is concerned with the rights of professors as private citizens:

> *College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make*

> *every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution* (AAUP 1970[1925], 2).

Overall, these three points show clearly which rights academics have, but they also depict the responsibility that comes with these rights. By adding the comments, some of the statements were made clearer and prevented further miss-readings of the text as in the case of academic freedom and teaching. It is also interesting to see that as in most of the documents on academic freedom, freedom in research is mentioned before freedom of teaching even if the statement refers to professors as teachers.

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, there is a strong relationship between academic freedom and tenure in America, which already becomes clear from the title of the statement. Hence, the following parts of the statement describe in detail what tenure means and under which conditions it needs to be granted and under which conditions the university can still fire a professor. The procedure to acquire tenure is also part of this section. I will not go into detail here but state that tenure is seen as important in securing academic freedom.

Next to the AAUP, there is another organisation with roots in the US that is engaged in protecting academic freedom, namely Scholars at Risk. Scholars at Risk was born in the US but in comparison to the AAUP it is concerned with protecting academic freedom on a global scale. The network of Scholars at Risk not only includes institutions but also gives individuals the opportunity to join. Scholars at Risk is a rather young network that started in 1999 at the University of Chicago and was officially launched with a major conference in the year 2000. From this point, Scholars at Risk extended its network and started to cooperate with partner networks around the world (Scholars at Risk 2016). They describe their mission as follows:

> *By arranging temporary academic positions at member universities and colleges, Scholars at Risk offers safety to scholars facing grave threats, so scholars' ideas are not lost and they can keep working until conditions improve and they are able to return to their home countries.*
>
> *Scholars at Risk also provides advisory services for visiting scholars and their hosts, campaigns for scholars who are imprisoned or silenced in their home countries, monitoring of attacks on higher education communities worldwide, and leadership in deploying new tools and strategies for promoting academic freedom and improving respect for university values everywhere* (ibid., 1).

Or, in short, they are involved in "protecting scholars and the freedom to think, question and share ideas" (ibid., 1). Nowadays, the network also organises many seminars and workshops on the topic of academic freedom and protecting academics. They are also active in publishing reports and to raise awareness about concrete matters of academic freedom world-wide (ibid.). They are the biggest network that protects academics at a practical level by arranging work, work permits, and petitions for individual scholars. Overall, Scholars at Risk are engaged with major attacks on academic freedom and have already helped many academics under threat.

3.1.4 UNESCO and its Recommendation on the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel

Another major organisation that is engaged with academic freedom on an inter-governmental basis is UNESCO (United Nations of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which was founded in 1945. The reason for establishing UNESCO was to promote and fight for long-lasting peace on the basis of humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity (UNESCO 2016a). In 2016, UNESCO represented 195 member states and 10 associate members from around the globe (UNESCO 2016b). The aims of UNESCO are to create networks between governments that enable solidarity by:

> *Mobilizing for education: so that every child, boy or girl, has access to quality education as a fundamental human right and as a prerequisite for human development.*
> *Building intercultural understanding: through protection of heritage and support for cultural diversity. UNESCO created the idea of World Heritage to protect sites of outstanding universal value.*
> *Pursuing scientific cooperation: such as early warning systems for tsunamis or trans-boundary water management agreements, to strengthen ties between nations and societies.*
> *Protecting freedom of expression: an essential condition for democracy, development and human dignity* (UNESCO 2016a).

Hence, UNESCO is an organisation that is engaged in educational and scientific issues on a global scale. UNESCO also advocates "holistic policies that are capable of addressing the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development" (ibid.). In this respect, they publish recommendations such as the one concerning the Status of Higher-

Education Teaching Personnel published in 1997, which is of significance with regards to academic freedom. This recommendation is an addition to the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers from 1966 which engages with education, training, working conditions in the broadest sense, social security and the status of school-level teachers, whereas the recommendation from 1997 focuses on higher education teaching personnel. Both recommendations were born out of the need to have an instrument that sets international standards for the teaching profession to respond to a challenge addressed by the 2007 World Teachers' Day Message:

> *The challenge is more than one of numbers. The quality of teachers and teaching is also essential to good learning outcomes. This implies an education system that attracts and retains a well-trained, motivated, effective and gender-balanced teaching staff; it implies a system that supports teachers in the classroom, as well as in their continued professional development. Dissatisfaction with loss in status, low salaries, poor teaching and learning conditions, and lack of career progression or adequate professional training have driven large numbers of teachers out of the profession, sometimes after only a few years of service* (ILO/UNESCO 2008, 3).

Concerning academic freedom, the recommendation from 1966 is interesting as it states that all teachers should possess academic freedom.

> *The teaching profession should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties. Since teachers are particularly qualified to judge the teaching aids and methods most suitable for their pupils, they should be given the essential role in the choice and the adaptation of teaching material, the selection of textbooks and the application of teaching methods, within the framework of approved programmes, and with the assistance of the educational authorities* (ILO/UNESCO 2008 [1966], 32).

Despite this section, the UNESCO recommendation from 1997 is much more significant for academic freedom in higher education teaching. Therefore, I will engage with it in more detail in the following part. Comparing the Magna Charta Universitatum and the UNESCO recommendation from 1997, a major difference in their supporters becomes evident. Whereas the Magna Charta Universitatum is signed by university leadership, the UNESCO recommendation similarly to the Council of Europe and the European Council publications is supported by governments. Another difference is the audience of the document, as the Magna

Charta Universitatum started as a European initiative and the UNESCO recommendation was targeted at an international audience from its beginning. Despite these differences, both documents as well as the other ones described in this chapter refer to and support academic freedom. The UNESCO recommendation goes into much more detail than the Magna Charta Universitatum or the 1940 statement from AAUP do, as it is not a value statement but a concrete set of recommendations. The UNESCO recommendation is based on the assumption that higher education teaching personnel plays a significant role in advancing higher education. Hence, it engages with the status and rights of higher education teachers. In this respect, it also refers to academic freedom and university autonomy as it considers

> *that the right to education, teaching and research can only be fully enjoyed in an atmosphere of academic freedom and autonomy for institutions of higher education and that the open communication of findings, hypotheses and opinions lies at the very heart of higher education and provides the strongest guarantee of the accuracy and objectivity of scholarship and research* (UNESCO 1997, 1).

Universities in the document are described as

> *Institutions of higher education, and more particularly universities, are communities of scholars preserving, disseminating and expressing freely their opinions on traditional knowledge and culture, and pursuing new knowledge without constriction by prescribed doctrines. The pursuit of new knowledge and its application lie at the heart of the mandate of such institutions of higher education. In higher education institutions where original research is not required, higher-education teaching personnel should maintain and develop knowledge of their subject through scholarship and improved pedagogical skills* (ibid., 2).

As in the Magna Charta Universitatum, the spirit of critical thinking and open-dialogue is present in this idea of a university. In contrast, the combination of research and teaching is not a requirement for a university, and the main interest of the document lies in higher education teaching and not research, as the name already implies. Nevertheless, the document describes in detail the freedom of the individual in teaching

> *Higher-education teaching personnel have the right to teach without any interference, subject to accepted professional principles including professional responsibility and intellectual rigour with regard to standards and methods of teaching. Higher-education*

> *teaching personnel should not be forced to instruct against their own best knowledge and conscience or be forced to use curricula and methods contrary to national and international human rights standards. Higher education teaching personnel should play a significant role in determining the curriculum.* (ibid., 5)

and research

> *Higher-education teaching personnel have a right to carry out research work without any interference, or any suppression, in accordance with their professional responsibility and subject to nationally and internationally recognized professional principles of intellectual rigour, scientific inquiry and research ethics. They should also have the right to publish and communicate the conclusions of the research of which they are authors or co-authors, as stated in paragraph 12 of this Recommendation.* (ibid., 5).

In this respect, the document gives a clear picture of what it considers to be academic freedom in teaching and research. In return for this freedom higher education teaching personnel has certain duties. This includes on the one hand duties towards the students including, "to teach students effectively", "to be fair", "to encourage free exchange of ideas", to guide students, to cover the minimum content of the subject and to improve own pedagogical skills (ibid., 5). And on the other hand, duties concerning research include "to conduct scholarly research", "to disseminate the results", to base research on honest search for knowledge, to act ethically towards research participants and to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with local laws and regulations. The document also mentions duties toward the institution, colleagues, and society (ibid., 5). As in the American idea of academic freedom, tenure is seen as a major procedural factor that safeguards academic freedom. Collegial self-governance is not only presented as a right but also as a duty for all academics.

In summary, it can be stated that the UNESCO recommendation is very clear about the rights and duties of academic teachers. Nevertheless, it acknowledges the diversity, cultural, legal, regulations and traditions of higher education in its member states. In comparison to the Magna Charta Universitatum it is much more concrete and detailed. Hence, it poses a rather instrumental and practical character whereas the Magna Charta Universitatum reflects an idea or philosophy to which universities are attached. As the UNESCO recommendations are adopted by states and not by universities, it can be assumed that it is legally more binding. In

contrast, the Magna Charta Universitatum is a better tool to hold universities themselves responsible for safeguarding academic freedom.

3.2 Measuring University Autonomy and Academic Freedom?

In an "age of measurement", as Biesta (2010) describes our contemporary education landscape, it is not surprising that academic values are also quantified. In order to protect, evaluate and compare the status of academic values in different nations, regional and university score cards to measure academic values have gained some interest. Hence, there exist some studies that attempt to quantify academic freedom and university autonomy. Even thinking about measuring academic freedom or university autonomy was not possible before the focus on measurement emerged. Whereas the meaning of academic freedom, and the freedom of the individual scholar has not changed lately, the meaning of university autonomy, and the independence of the institution from the state shifted from an autonomy based on collegial governance towards a more managerial and financial idea of autonomy. I have outlined this in Chapter 2, but it is important to bear this in mind when engaging with the studies described in the following section.

One of the most recent studies that uses score cards to describe the status of university autonomy was conducted by Estermann, Nokkala, and Steinel (2011). The study "provides a detailed and accurate picture of the current status of institutional autonomy in 26 different European countries" (ibid., 12). The overall aim is

> *to serve multiple purposes, such as the benchmarking of national policies and awareness-raising among universities. It is intended to act as a reference for further studies and provide a comparable set of data to establish relations between autonomy and other concepts, such as performance, funding, quality, and access and retention in European higher education* (ibid., 12).

The questionnaire for the study and the development of the weighting systems of different aspects of university autonomy involved four stages (1) the development of indicators and restrictions; (2) the design and testing of the questionnaire; (3) data collection; and (4) the development of scorecards. Four aspects of university autonomy were depicted in the questionnaire. Each of the aspects included the question about recent developments to depict

changes in comparison to previous studies. The first aspect was organisational autonomy which includes executive leadership, internal academic structures, creating legal entities, and governing bodies. The second one was financial autonomy comprising the allocations of public funding and maintaining surplus on public funding, borrowing money, ownership of land and buildings, and students' financial contributions. Staffing autonomy with the subcategories recruitment of staff, staff salary, dismissal of staff, and staff promotions was the third aspect. The last was academic autonomy depicting overall student numbers, admission mechanisms, introduction and terminations of degree programmes, language of instruction, quality assurance mechanisms and providers, and designing academic content. The information from the questionnaire was filled in by the rector conferences of the participating countries or experts appointed by the rector conference. Therefore, the answers were not provided by normal academics or university leaders of each single university but only by a representing body, which can easily lead to biased responses. Thus, the study might not reflect the real status of university autonomy in a country but only the version of it that the rector's conference wants to promote. All questionnaires were followed up with interviews with the respondents in order to gain a more detailed and comprehensive picture of the status of university autonomy in the respective country and to depict the variances between theory and practice.

I will not go into detail about the result of the study as this would exceed the scope of this thesis. Instead, I will focus on the potential and the drawbacks that this study design has. First, the study makes it possible to discern differences in university autonomy between countries. Indeed, this can be as the authors claim of great value for benchmarking national higher education systems. It can also provide a good reference point for further studies and raise awareness about the issue. Nevertheless, the focus on numbers can be easily misused and shifted towards the normative dimension of comparative research (Välimaa 2008). The aspect of normative comparative research and its problems will be elaborated on in the next chapter. Another criticism can be seen in the group of respondents, which I already outlined in the previous paragraph.

For now, I focus on another problem, namely the problem of defining values. As described in the previous chapter, there is not one single definition of academic values. Hence, putting such a complex concept as university autonomy into a matrix of numbers can be problematic. The authors of this study also acknowledge this when they state:

> *a reliable comparison of university autonomy across borders is highly challenging. Autonomy is a concept that is understood very differently across Europe; associated perceptions and terminology tend to vary quite significantly. This is due not only to differing legal frameworks but also to the historical and cultural settings that define institutional autonomy in each country. Indeed, the establishment of a single set of restrictions for all indicators proved very difficult in some cases. In order to enable general comparisons, complex and diverse situations had to be simplified, which may have led to specific situations in some systems being reflected in somewhat less detail than would have been desirable* (Estermann, Nokkala and Steinel 2011, 18).

Therefore, score-cards as well as rankings and benchmarking exercises can provide several benefits, especially as they can be easily used to communicate problems in a straightforward way. Nevertheless, these studies are not able to deepen the understanding of a particular concept, as they have to rely on definitions made by the researchers themselves. Even if these definitions are created and developed with several stakeholders, they still do not provide insight into how academics working within universities experience these values. Thus, the data can only reflect aspects that are included in the definition. Moreover, the aspects that were considered in this study refer rather to the new managerial idea of autonomy than to the traditional idea of an autonomous institution that is based on academic self-governance.

Another eminent and very recent study that is concerned with measuring academic values was conducted by Karran, Appiagyei-Atua, and Beiter. A comprehensive report of the study that is concerned with evaluating the status of academic freedom in Europe and Africa is not yet available. Therefore, in this part, I will draw on a publication by the authors that is only concerned with academic freedom in Europe and does not include data on Africa. Overall, the study looks at academic freedom from a legal perspective and draws on the evaluation of countries "constitutions, laws on higher education and other relevant legislation" (Beiter, Karran and Appiagyei-Atua 2016, 597). The study is based on the UNESCO recommendations concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel that I described in the previous part of this chapter. The authors, two of whom are lawyers, give a more concrete insight into the validity of the UNESCO recommendation. They describe the document as not a legally but politically binding for the member states of UNESCO. Furthermore, they point out that this recommendation is significant as it "concretizes international human rights requirements in respect of academic freedom – a right under international human rights law" (ibid., 597).

Whereas in the study of Estermann, Nokkala and Steinel (2011) the meaning of university autonomy is based on the research of the authors, Beiter, Karran and Appiagyei-Atua (2016) base their definition of academic freedom on the evaluation of a document that is assumed to be of legal and political interest. The score cards included four categories: (1) the ratification of international agreements and constitutional protection; (2) the express protection of academic freedom in higher education legislation; (3) the protection of institutional autonomy in higher education legislation; (4) the protection of self-governance in higher education legislation. These categories show that academic freedom was not seen as single value but includes university autonomy and self-governance in this study. Thus, it is a rather broad definition of the concept. As each of the categories was weighted equally for the final score of a country it is worth looking at rankings of each separate category and not only on the final results. Overall, Beiter, Karran, and Appiagyei-Atua come to the conclusion that academic freedom is a value under threat in Europe. They point out that

> *Overall, the state of the legal protection of the right to academic freedom in Europe appears to be one of "illhealth." Increasingly, European countries are merely paying lip service to this important right. While the concept of institutional autonomy is being misconstrued, self-governance in higher education institutions and employment security are being subjected to rigorous processes of erosion* (ibid., 598).

This rather negative result stands in opposition to the results of the score cards on university autonomy as the authors state:

> *When comparing the regulatory frameworks in which institutions operate to those of previous decades, it emerged that the level of university autonomy has indeed increased over the long term. Despite the numerous restrictions that still curtail autonomy, interviewees generally rated their system's level of institutional freedom as satisfactory in comparison to the past. Only in a small minority of countries was the prevailing level of autonomy regarded as unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, in a number of countries, changes following the adoption of austerity measures were considered to have reduced financial and staffing autonomy alike. And when levels of institutional freedom were compared to other systems, many interviewees felt that their autonomy was markedly lower than that of institutions in other countries* (Estermann, Nokkala and Steinel 2011, 66).

One reason for this is certainly the different understanding that underpins the idea of university autonomy. Whereas, Beiter, Karran and Appiagyei-Atua (2016) assume a rather traditional form of university autonomy that includes, for example, self-governance, the study from Estermann, Nokkala, and Steinel (2011) is based on the new form of managerial autonomy, as pointed out earlier.

In summary, the study from Beiter, Karran, and Appiagyei-Atua cannot provide an insight into the experience of academic freedom on an individual level or give an overview of diverse understandings and meanings of the concept. Nevertheless, this study in comparison to the study from Estermann, Nokkala, and Steinel (2011) provides a well-grounded point for reference, as this legal evaluation of academic freedom can, for example, support the idea that university autonomy is reshaped in the form of managerial autonomy and hence no longer protects academic freedom (Zgaga et al. 2015; Erkkilä and Piironen 2014; Zgaga 2012a).

3.3 Academic Freedom an Insight into Academic Media Accounts

As measuring academic freedom in the form of numbers cannot really give an insight into what academic freedom means in recent years in the everyday practices of academics, this part of the chapter will take a closer look at some more concrete examples of academic freedom. It will also show how academic freedom is reported in the media. Therefore, it draws on the biggest international weekly online newspapers that is concerned with academic issues, namely *University World News*. This online newspaper describes itself as the first global window on higher education and states:

> *With international competition and collaboration between universities growing apace, it has never been more important for higher education managers, researchers, scholars and public officials to keep abreast of developments in their field and in rival and partner institutions worldwide. University World News is the first high-quality truly international newspaper and website, dedicated to providing such coverage. Supported by some of the world's most experienced education journalists, and aimed at higher education readers worldwide, it is offering a weekly emailed newspaper plus access to a dedicated news website – free of charge* (University World News 2016).

Next to drawing on their own journalists, University World News also links their website to interesting articles from newspapers such as the New York Times, Jerusalem Post and Aljazeera or websites such as Times Higher Education etcetera. Academics are also free to submit their contributions and commentaries on current higher education developments. Hence, University World News is a comprehensive newspaper that depicts developments in the university sector on a global scale. It even has some special issues on academic freedom and thus is of particular interest for this thesis.

To obtain an insight into how academic freedom is presented, what issues are raised concerning academic freedom, and to what extent academic freedom is related to higher education teaching, the next part will draw on articles published in University World News between January 2014 and December 2015. For the content analysis for this section, all articles that were related in one form or another to academic freedom as well as to the relationship between academic freedom and higher education teaching were taken into consideration.

The analysis of one year of articles in this newspaper resulted in four major topic groups connected to academic freedom and teaching. The first one was concerned with the status of academic freedom and teaching in constitutions, official documents and agreements. These articles dealt with policy changes – most of the time to the worst. A second and very significant share was made up of articles that reported on situations in which academic freedom was under attack. These articles usually engaged with cases in which academics lost their job or were sent to jail. The third and fourth topics were both concerned with the combination of teaching and academic freedom. One depicted the problem of teaching towards a certain political ideology or a country's standpoint. The other one was concerned with the aspect of academic freedom in defining and deciding on teaching methods, subjects and teaching content. In the next part I will give some examples for each of the topics to clarify what each of the topics means in practice.

Regarding the status of academic freedom in policy papers, constitutions, and other regulations, a wide array of policy areas can influence academic freedom. More obviously, changes in the higher education law can endanger academic freedom. One example is a case in Myanmar that became public in January 2014. The new proposed bill that was meant to modernise higher education was highly criticised by academics and students as it lacked the concept of university autonomy and was not based on a dialogue between the government and other stakeholders (Waa 2014). This topic was an issue in the media over the whole year and was still not solved

by November 2015 as the continuing student protests resulted in a hunger strike, because the government had not adopted the promised changes to the education law (Myint 2015). The example of Myanmar reflects well that higher education policies are developed in processes of sometimes long and drastic negotiations between the state and other stakeholders, even if the government does not want to make amendments to the law. It also shows that the academic community, not only in Europe, is eager to include academic values in higher education policies.

Not only academic values but also teaching is highly influenced by higher education policies. A good example for this is the case of Japan that tried to change history books that should also be used in higher education teaching. The changes of the content of history was a specific concern of the neighbouring Asian countries as the denial of Japan's history especially in the Second World War could destroy the peace in the region (The New York Times 2014). Hence, academic matters not only influence higher education but also broader political developments. This case shows well how higher education and politics are interconnected on several levels.

Not only laws related directly to higher education can influence the possibility to exercise academic freedom. The introduction of the terror bill in the UK was an issue mentioned in connection with academic freedom. As the new terror bill that should save youth to be drawn into terrorist ideas was seen to endanger the freedom of speech and more specifically academic freedom (O'Malley 2015). Another example is the ban of a famous professor from New York University who worked at a branch campus in Abu Dhabi. The professor was banned due to the accusation that he was behaving more as an activist than an academic. Therefore, he was denied further visas to enter the country. The article does not state exactly what the professor did but made a connection between the incident and academic freedom (Mangan 2015). In summary, it can be stated that academic freedom is not only an issue of higher education laws but can also be affected by several other regulations, such as immigration, visas, and security issues.

Next to rather negative examples there were also positive policy changes visible within the news articles. In Tunisia, the adoption of a constitutional provision to protect academic freedom was drafted (Makoni 2014) and in India the accreditation agencies were granted full autonomy, which was evaluated positively by academics, because they can now draw on experts in the evaluation of higher education quality (Mishra 2014). This is not to say that the developments in these countries are only positive, as headlines for India also state that "university autonomy

eroded in four-year degree battle" (Meeta 2014). Nevertheless, it shows that developments are never entirely bad or good. It also shows that the context is very important, as in other countries an increased autonomy of accreditation agencies might be judged negatively depending on the perception of accreditation within the academic community and comparisons with the old systems. Thus, talking about academic values can mean an improvement, stagnation, or weakening in relation to the starting position. What might be an improvement in one country might be a step backwards in another country.

The majority of articles that engage with academic freedom was concerned with attacks on it. Attack, censorship, backlash, fear, eroded academic freedom, outcry, and threat are just some of the words used in these articles to describe what is going on in higher education. Threats to academics were a major issue within these articles. The dangers ranged from arresting and jailing academics to suspending them from work due to their academic work or their political position.

One of the biggest cases was that of Salaita in the US who was not given the job that he was promised due to his blog articles on the Palestine conflict. He took a position at Illinois University but did not have a final contract when he moved to Illinois. The university withdrew their job offer that he assumed to be already fixed. Finally, Salaita went to court as he saw his academic freedom and freedom of speech attacked. Some academics supported Salaita in his endeavour others stated that he legally did not have academic freedom as there was no employment contract (Wilson 2015). In the end, Salaita agreed to settle the case before the trial, he received US$600,000 plus legal costs but not his position at the University of Illinois (Al Jazeera and Associated Press 2015).

The Salaita case is only one of many that were concerned with academics losing their job due to their political and academic positions, but it shows well that academic freedom is also an issue in countries that have a well-established legal framework to protect academic freedom. Another quite extreme case is a professor from a Chinese university who was sentenced to the maximum jail penalty after a two-year process. He was accused of being part of the separatist movement of the Uihgur region but, according to international and national colleagues, he was trying to peacefully build bridges between different cultures in the region. The EU, US and other organisations criticised China for this sentence as it is against China's commitments towards human rights. Furthermore, three of his students were accused of separatism (Sharma

2014). This case shows well that academic freedom is not only fought for by academics but sometimes also by foreign governments and other non-governmental organisations.

The boycott of Israel's academics and universities is an attack on academic freedom that comes from within the academic community. Academics from all around the world, including Canada, the US, France and the UK, started to boycott academics due to their failure to help resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The boycott of Israel divided the academic community as some universities even started to withdraw their membership from the academic association due to their cultural and intellectual boycott of Israel's universities as it is an offence against academic freedom (Schmidt 2014). This shows that academic freedom and exercising it is not only an issue of power relations between states but can also derive from conflicts within the academic community.

Another example that depicts conflicts of academic freedom within universities can be taken from Turkey. Turkish academics are increasingly threatened by the control of their university rectors as the rectors have too many rights and hence can be seen as dictators according to a report drafted by 76 academics from 47 universities (Hurriyet Daily News 2015). This problem is nevertheless not an entire internal academic problem but rather a problem of changing structures due to Erdogan's attempts to control academics. It is to note here that academic freedom in Turkey is a re-occurring issue; since then, especially in the light of the summer 2016, when the political situation increasingly restricted freedoms of citizens and academics.

The attacks on academic freedom are very severe as they can not only put individuals in danger but can also lead to self-censorship which in turn endangers the vocation of universities. Self-censorship might lead to not telling the truth, not educating students in critical thinking, but in accordance with a certain ideology and neglecting new research venues and social improvements. The article about an Associate Professor from Malaysia depicts this problem and connected fears very well as it states:

> *Malaysia's sedition blitz, which included charging a law lecturer, has created a climate of fear which will lead to self-censorship among academics and students in institutions of higher learning, a forum on academic freedom was told, writes Eileen Ng for The Malaysian Insider. If the fear continues, it will be an unhealthy development which will further cripple the roles of universities as a place to cultivate critical thinking, debate*

and feedback, said academics at the forum at University Malaya (The Malaysian Insider 2014).

Academic freedom is related in some articles more closely to aspects of teaching and especially the demand to teach in favour of a certain political position or a countries standpoint. In this respect, I already gave the example of changing history books in Japan. The establishment of Confucius Institutes in universities all over the world is another such issue. In Canada, academics raised the concern that these institutes teach the view point of China's government and therefore influence Canadian undergraduate students. Hence, Canadian universities asked for the closing of these institutes (Ghoreishi 2014). The discussion about the Confucius Institutes also happened in the US, where academics feared that academic freedom and university autonomy is not guaranteed in the institutes, which would contradict US law. Other academics argue in favour of the Confucius Institutes and state that one cannot exclude the aspect of culture and history when talking about academic values and higher education general (Gow 2014).

Teaching methods and content are also issues that can be connected with academic freedom. A lecturer in Israel, for example, took his Palestinian students on a trip to Auschwitz as he thought that learning about the Holocaust would benefit peace in Israel, and that his students could learn a lot. Despite his well-argued position, he was attacked by the public for doing so and received no support from his university and colleagues. He described this as a clear sign that academic freedom does not exist in this case as he just wanted to follow truth and educate his students. Finally, he quit his job (Yaakov 2014).

Another article poses the question of whether teaching sensitive topics that might disturb students will still happen in a world of customer satisfaction. This article argued that when we start focusing entirely on students' wishes and needs in higher education, some students might no longer be interested in hearing about disturbing topics in class. The author asks if teaching those topics will be still possible when student satisfaction is the most important source of measuring teaching quality (Lowe 2015).

These two examples show clearly that academic freedom is not only a matter of free speech and research but also a matter of higher education teaching. In comparison to other topics, the interrelatedness of teaching and academic freedom was not so frequently present in articles from University World News. This supports again the idea that the link between academic

freedom and teaching is less visible and in people's minds when thinking about academic values.

In summary, it can be said that there are varied issues in contemporary societies and universities that are related to academic freedom and teaching. These issues arise in countries all over the world, regardless of the legal status of academic freedom is in the respective country. Therefore, academic freedom can never be achieved fully or once and for all. It is rather a continuing process of negotiations that helps to improve or worsen the individual situation. That is also why academics and students as, for example in the case of Myanmar, do not give in and continue fighting for a better future for themselves.

3.4 Some Concluding Remarks: Forgotten Aspects of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is present in literature, research and academic as well as public discussions. Not only higher education policies, but also the general situation in one country have an effect on academic freedom as it is embedded in a wider legal framework. Academic freedom is often mentioned when it comes under threat and when policies are changing. The risks for academic freedom not only lie in the outside world but also within the academic community. Student choices can also influence to what extent a teacher can teach what he or she thinks is important, as the article on teaching sensitive topics shows. The academic community can also restrict academic freedom as the case of Israel has shown. Hence, academic freedom needs to be negotiated constantly with several stakeholders such as academics, students, governments, religious institutions and economy.

In this chapter, I have shown that there are different ways of looking at academic freedom and its connection to teaching. There are policies as well as political and value statements that engage with academic freedom. Some researchers even try to quantify values, such as academic freedom. Hence, the landscape of reporting on academic freedom is very diverse. Nevertheless, there is still one aspect missing, namely the very subtle dimension of academic freedom. It can be assumed that the majority of academics at least in Europe and the Western world do not experience severe threats to it. Hence, they might think that it is not an issue for them. This might result in a situation in which the awareness of academic freedom is weakened and academics stop fighting for it.

Nevertheless, I think it is important to mention that academic freedom and problems with it can take place on a very subtle level. I assert that it is important to sustain the idea of academic freedom and the connected social responsibility. Thus, I want to give an example from my own experience as a doctoral student to make clear what I mean by the subtle dimension of academic freedom. When I handed in my proposal for my dissertation to the faculty, I learned that I would have to change the title that I thought best presented my thesis. Originally, I planned to name this work: *Academic Freedom in Higher Education Teaching: A Comparative Perspective on Europe and the Asia Pacific Rim*. This name was not possible due to two problems. First, this title was too long to be accepted; second, I was not allowed to use a colon in the title. Overall, I believe that as an author who has academic freedom I should be allowed to name my thesis in the way that best represents the content. The argument for changing the title was also very weak as it only stated that these are the formal rules. I asked myself: Is there a rationale behind these rules? There was nothing wrong with my title that would have prevented me from writing a thesis that meets the standards, so asking me to change my title was not connected to supporting me in my academic endeavour or protecting me from doing work that would not meet academic standards. Not being able to decide on the name of the own dissertation could be clearly seen as an issue of academic freedom as the rule forbidding a colon in my case certainly has no good reason, especially as colons are widely used in academic writing and titles of academic articles and books. The length of the title might have a reason as an overly long title might be confusing for the reader and not easy to remember; however, still these reasons are not very convincing for me. Nevertheless, it is only a minor and non-significant aspect which does not really harm academic work and success. That was also why I decided not to fight for my title but to make it fit to the technical guidelines and to call this work *Academic Freedom in Teaching in Higher Education in Europe and the Asia Pacific Rim.* Contentwise the new title still represents the topic of this thesis but it omits the idea of comparison. Working on the issue of academic freedom, I still question if this was the right decision. As I already outlined, academic freedom is a matter of negotiation, and if academics stop fighting for it in their own universities how can it be sustained in the long-term.

There is the question regarding in which cases it is worth fighting for academic freedom and in which cases the fight would take too much energy from the truly important work. Having said that, it is important to be aware even of such small cases in which academic freedom is an issue in order to remain attentive to emerging problems with academic freedom. This might prevent a scenario in which academics only realise that there is a problem when it is already

too late. In this respect, it is sometimes important to step back and reflect on academic freedom in one's own life. Consequently, it is necessary to look at things that are kept in silence because they are considered as not being important enough to be discussed and made public.

CHAPTER 4: Theoretical and Methodological Framework of the Study

After giving an insight into what academic freedom means in the literature, in academic media and, in international policies, and how it is related to university autonomy and to academics' and universities' social responsibility this chapter will focus on the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the empirical part of this research project. The chapter will start by outlining the problem statement and the research questions. The second part of this chapter will then present the ontological considerations and assumptions on which this study is based. In the third part of the chapter, the research approach of interpretative comparison will be introduced. This part will argue that interpretative comparison is a useful approach for deepening the understanding of academic freedom. The final two parts will then give a more detailed account of the specific research design, the research methods, and the practicalities of this study.

4.1 Problem Statement and Research Questions

In the previous chapters, I have argued that academic freedom is strongly connected with the concept of university autonomy and the assumption that universities and academics adopt a social responsibility for society, the individual student, and the advancement of knowledge. I have outlined that academic freedom, is important for academics in order to pursue knowledge that might be controversial and/or is not necessarily bound to the concept of usefulness. I have also shown that academic freedom is not only important for research but in the same way for teaching. As the aim of universities is to educate individuals as critical thinkers, responsible citizens and as individuals that are knowledgeable in the engagement, and the discovery and pursuit of knowledge, academics need the freedom to discuss and teach controversial and innovative ideas and topics. They also need to be free to adopt, develop, and engage in new teaching methods and to apply them in their daily practices. Despite the fact that academic freedom is widely assumed to be important for academic endeavours, which can be seen in the amount of research, policy documents, interest statements, and its publicity in media concerned with academic matters, there is still no common understanding of academic freedom. In other words academic freedom is not a straightforward concept but its meaning is dependent on the context. Especially with governance changes and the re-conceptualisation of university

autonomy, it seems to be important to refocus on academic freedom in order to maintain a critical position within universities.

Next, to show that academic freedom is a complex concept with various meanings in different cultural spaces, I have argued in the previous parts that teaching is a neglected task of universities. Even if the interest in teaching, teaching quality and teaching methodologies has increased in higher education, there is still too little research on the interconnectedness of teaching and academic freedom. As I have shown with the example of Plato's allegory of the cave academic freedom is crucial for teaching and also learning. As a result, this thesis tries to fill in two gaps. First, it engages with the diversity of meanings about academic freedom and second, it makes a connection between academic freedom and teaching as one of the core duties of universities and academics. I will pursue these aims by taking the University of Bologna as a European example and the National University of Singapore as an example from the Asia-Pacific-Rim as case studies. The reasoning for choosing these two cases will be given in Chapter 4.4, which deals with the concrete research design.

The main question that this thesis engages with is:

> What does academic freedom – especially academic freedom in higher education teaching – mean in different cultural spaces?

This research question will be answered by focusing on the following sub-questions:

> What does academic freedom in relation to teaching mean for academics working at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore?
>
> What is the meaning and significance of academic freedom in the daily practices of academics?
>
> Which factors influence academics' experiences of academic freedom at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore?
>
> To what extent is academic freedom – in particular academic freedom in higher education teaching – important for academics at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore?

Next, to these theoretical and conceptual questions this thesis will answer the methodological question:

What are the practical benefits that interpretative comparison offers for deepening the understanding of academic freedom in different cultural spaces?

4.2 Ontological Considerations: Elder-Vass Social Realism

Ontological and epistemological considerations have a long history and philosophers have always engaged in ontological questions, such as "what is the essence of life and nature?"; "how did our world come into being?" and in epistemological questions such as "what is truth?"; "what is knowledge?"; and "how can we discover truth and/or knowledge?". I already mentioned one ancient example in chapter 2 with Plato's allegory of the cave. Among more contemporary philosophers that engaged with these questions are, for example, Kant (1868), Foucault (1972) or Bourdieu (1890), to name a few. Despite, these classic authors there are also more contemporary ones, and I will draw on one of them in this thesis. I will base my work on Elder-Vass (2012) idea of combining realism with social constructions. I have chosen to refer in my thesis to Elder-Vass as his approach offers a new way of looking at the social world and thus makes it easier to look at contemporary understanding of concepts from a modern perspective. Elder-Vass' ontology offers a framework that has many benefits when looking at academic freedom, as I will show later in this chapter. He also refers to established academics in social science such as Searle, Berger and Luckmann, Smith, and Bashkar. Overall, Elder-Vass' ontology is rooted in ideas taken from the English-speaking tradition and hence misses traditional European concepts and beliefs. Despite this drawback, I still believe that his modern approach is beneficial for looking at academic freedom and hence I use his ontology in this thesis bearing in mind possible gaps.

In contrast to many social scientists, Elder-Vass beliefs that there is no natural contradiction between realist and social constructionist ideas. His social theory draws on arguments developed in different social disciplines, such as sociology and philosophy but also on linguistic, history, psychology and even literary theorists. Therefore, his framework fits well for understanding a complex phenomenon such as academic freedom that is not directly observable as it is not only based on concrete rules and regulations but also on the perceptions of them and the individual's assumptions about the world and reality.

Elder-Vass generally agrees with the key assumption of social constructionism, which "is the argument that the ways in which we collectively think and communicate about the world affect the way that the world is" (Elder-Vass 2012, 4). In other words, the social world is not fixed and predefined but dependent on the way in which individuals and groups interpret and communicate about it. Hence, human beings build their own reality that in turn influences how they experience and perceive this reality. Reality is not just "out there" and framing our lives but it is created jointly by its inhabitants. In this respect, social constructionism claims "that changing the ways in which people collectively think and/or communicate about the world in itself constitutes a change with significance for the social world" (ibid., 5). Elder-Vass refers here to Ian Hackings who stresses that anything that is constructed could also be constructed differently. In other words, there is no predefined social reality but the world we live in is a matter of a continuous process of social construction. As examples for this Elder-Vass refers the construction of beliefs about sex taken from Beauvoir and construction of money taken from Hacking. In extreme forms of social constructionism these key assumptions lead to the conclusion that there is no reality and that the social world is only based on the construction of humans. The biological aspect of sex, for example, gets lost in these extreme forms and the physical and natural structures and rules do not find any recognition.

Hence, for me, these extreme forms of social construction inherit too many contradictions as some things even exist when people interpret them differently. We could for example, agree that two animals having sex are not having sex but are only communicating about food, nevertheless it is probable that these animals will have off-spring after a certain amount of time. Even, if we do not make a connection between the sexual act and the child's birth and if the whole world agrees to construct it differently the child would still be born. What is constructed in this example is not the fact that sex leads to childbirth, but our knowledge about it. Hence, there are real things in the world that are not constructed. Nevertheless, there are many other things that would not exist without human construction and agreement, such as money. This dispute between "real" things and construction has a long tradition in philosophy and goes back to the differentiation between *natural objectivity* and *cultural spontaneity*. Whereas natural objectivity relies on the idea of determinism, cultural spontaneity assumes that humans have power over their world as they have the freedom to jointly construct their reality. Again, Plato's allegory of the cave is a good example here as the inhabitants of the cave construct their reality of shadows without knowing about the world outside the cave. As social sciences are particularly interested in social processes, I do agree with Elder-Vass that we have to take into

account that there are real things but there are also things that come into being and are changed by processes of social construction.

Elder-Vass (2012) argues that social construction plays a major role in creating, changing, and seeing the world. Nevertheless, there are real things that influence these constructions. Thus, there is an interplay between the "real world" and social construction. What is socially constructed can become real and hence can influence future social constructions of things and, in turn, what is "real" can influence the process of social construction. What influences social constructions according to Elder-Vass (2012) is the theory of causal power. Elder-Vass refers in this respect to Bhaskar who claims that "causation is a product of the causal powers of things" (1975 cited in Elder-Vass 2012, 16). Elder-Vass calls these things *entities.* The theory of causal powers does not assume that causal powers produce a fixed outcome. It is the interplay between different causal powers that lead to specific events. Therefore, it is not enough to understand the different causal powers that are involved in a specific event, but one must understand the complex system in which the involved causal powers of things interact with each other. In other words, it is not enough to have all parts of a jigsaw puzzle but to see the whole picture one needs to pay attention to the order of the different pieces and their interplay between them within the picture. The interplay between causal powers is called a (*generative) mechanism*, and the order of the different parts is called *structure*. Therefore, an event or entity depends "upon (i) the set of parts; (ii) the powers of those parts; and (iii) the set of relations between these parts that are characteristic (and definitive) of entities of this type" (ibid., 17). Causal powers are also not one leading force but only tendencies that make an event more or less likely. Different causal powers can also frustrate or enforce one and another. Summarising, Elder-Vass states:

> *If this understanding of causal power is correct, then, entities possess causal powers as a result of mechanisms that depend on their structure and events are caused by interactions between multiple such causal powers* (ibid., 18).

In order to understand and explain an event, we need to engage with two sorts of things taken from Lawson (1997 cited in Elder-Vass 2012). First, we have to identify the causal powers involved and the mechanism that produced them which is called *retroduction*. Second, we have to look at actual events and try "to identify the set of causal powers that interact to make the event happen (or at least a significant set of powers) and the way how the causal powers interact" (Lawson 1997, 221 cited in Elder-Vass 2012, 19). This process is called *retrodiction*.

According to Elder-Vass, only the combination of both can lead to a theoretical understanding of causal powers and depict the complexity of the real world.

At first glance, the theory of causal powers seems to be rather taken from the natural science that already depicted their small entities such as atoms or DNA. The questions is now, are there any small entities in the social science and, if so, what do they look like? What is it that makes things, ideas, rules and culture? Elder-Vass (2012) argues that one can follow these things back to material things which are most of the times people. Hence, he claims that all social entities are composed of material parts, the human. Social structures such as culture, language, rules, and ideas are in this ontology social entities that possess causal power. In other words, social entities include humans as their parts but they can also include other kinds of things. Our modern traffic, for example, is made of humans who drive their cars according to set rules and regulations that are made up by a group of humans. However, to understand the entity of traffic one needs also to take cars, bikes and bicycles into consideration. Thus, traffic could be seen as a *hybrid entity* which is made up of humans, bikes, signs, traffics lights and so on. The rules and regulations are the *structure* of the traffic and are most of the time socially constructed as there is not a natural way of controlling traffic. How the cars and other participants in the traffic react to each other is then the *mechanism* of the event traffic.

Norm circles are a particular social entity that is of utmost importance when it comes to understanding social structures and the social world.

> *A norm circle is a group of people who are committed to endorsing and enforcing a particular norm. Such groups are social entities with people as their parts, and because of the ways in which the members of such groups interact (a mechanism) they have causal power to produce a tendency in individuals to follow standardised practice* (ibid., 22-23).

There are three kinds of norm circles. First, the proximal norm circle, which includes people who actively and directly endorse and/or enforce a norm in front of a person; this might be for example, parents, and teachers for a child. Second, the imagined norm circle, which everyone embraces next to the proximate norm circle. The imagined norm circle is created through generalisation; a child for example, that experiences that the same norm is endorsed by teachers, parents and the friend's parents might assume that all adults endorse this norm even if this might not be true. Elder-Vass stresses the difference between an imaginary group that

does not exist at all and an imagined group that does exist but the extent of the group is imagined by the individual. An imagined norm circle is the latter one. Elder-Vass compares this type of norm circle with Gidden's (1984) *practical consciousness* and Bourdieu's *habitus* (1890). Third is the actual norm circle, which is the real group of people who endorse and/or enforce a norm. In opposition to the approximate norm circle, this norm circle includes all members of the group and not only those who are known by the individual. Consequently, this group is very difficult to observe.

Norm circles can have different effects on the individual. A proximal norm circle "causally influences an individual to adopt a norm in the first place […]" (Elder-Vass 2012, 25), an imagined norm circle "[…] determines when (i.e. in whose presence) the individual believes norm conformance will be enforced and this therefore influences when they are likely to conform to it […]" (ibid., 25) and an actual norm circle "[…] determines when actual endorsing/enforcing behaviour is likely to occur." (ibid., 25). He "suggest[s] that in each case the causally significant force is the actual norm circle, but that its effects on the individual are mediated through his or her proximal and imaged norm circles" (ibid., 26). In other words, for the individual the significant norm circles in interpreting and acting in the world are the proximate and the imagined norm circle as the actual norm circle is not known.

A norm circle does not lead to the concrete behaviour of an individual as different norm circles are at play at all times for an individual. It is, rather, a causal power that increases a disposition for certain behaviour. There might be, for example, the norm of the family not to tell a lie, but the company norm not to tell the full truth about the annual accounts to the public. In this case, it depends on the individual to decide which tendency to follow. It is not only the individual who is influenced by norm circles but each person acts as a representative of a norm circle when he or she enforces and/or endorses a particular norm. The individual is also aware that other people share the same norm and that they will act in a similar way to endorse and/or enforce this norm. Thus, endorsing and/or enforcing a norm can be used as an instrument and not all individuals who endorse and/or enforce a norm need to be fully committed to it. As norm circles are dependent on the people who embrace and enact them, norm circles are produced by a process of social construction. This means they can be changed when the majority of people stops enforcing and/or endorsing a particular norm or start to endorse and/or enforces a different set of norms. Hence, norm circles are socially constructed and can be

changed with changing communication and behaviour. Different norm circles can overlap in many points as families, schools, and society usually adopt a similar set of norms. In short:

> *What norm circles produce in individuals is a set of beliefs or dispositions regarding appropriate behaviour; the influence of the norm circle, we may say, is mediated through these beliefs or dispositions. And these beliefs or dispositions do not in themselves compel individuals to conform to the norm concerned. Rather, they create a tendency to observe the norm concerned. But individuals have many dispositions, both normative and otherwise, and what they do in a given situation depends on how these many dispositions interact in a particular context* (ibid., 27).

Elder-Vass (2012), also gives a reasonable explanation of what culture is in relation to the concept of norm circles. Culture, according to Elder-Vass, is a real thing that influences our behaviour, dispositions and beliefs. It "does not take the form of a collective consciousness or a collective archive, but the form of a collective itself, a group of human being" (ibid., 44). In other words, culture is made up of real groups of people that enforce and endorse a particular set of rules, norms and regulations. Culture, in its complexity, is not made up of one norm circle but includes multiple norm circles that overlap significantly. Which norm circles form the cultural space depends on their power, size and the significance of the group of people living and endorsing its norms, rules and regulations. Hence, culture itself is not static but changes when its norm circles change in their size and/or significance and/or newly emerge. In this respect "[i]t is not a question of whether some norms disappear and others appear in the archive that matters here; it is a question of which norms can secure the allegiance of the population" (ibid., 47).

Thus, culture is a set of norm circles that makes the living of people within one society possible as conflicts can be avoided through the alliance to a similar set of rules, norms and regulations. Elder-Vass argues that not every person has to understand norms in exactly the same way. Concerning academic freedom, this can explain why the understanding of it varies between people who simultaneously promote this value. In order to belong to a norm circles it is sufficient that the individual understandings of norms are similar enough to endorse and/or enforce the same behaviour. Culture, is thus, a complex phenomenon that is related to the history by passing on norms through proximate norm circles to the next generation. Nevertheless, it is fluid and can be changed through changes in the behaviour of groups of people.

Texts play a significant role in the formation of modern cultures "as we are well trained and equipped to understand texts in modern society in a way that we are able to capture the idea of the author in an adequate way" (ibid., 45). Which texts are important in one society depends again on the norm circles that endorse and/or enforce them. In higher education studies, this relates to the idea that not all policies are adapted immediately in the intended form in the university life as they might not be enforced by the norm circles that play a role within the university as an institution. In summary Elder-Vass states that:

> *Culture, it has argued, is produced by norm circles, and indeed culture and normativity are one and the same. […] Cultural content exists as the beliefs of individuals and attains an objective aspect only through being endorsed by norm circles as culture. Norm circles as such, however, cannot 'know' the beliefs they are endorsing. The consequence is that what is endorsed is not an unambiguously and homogenously shared idea. Instead, what is endorsed is a potentially heterogeneous collection of individual beliefs and dispositions, but a set that can be seen to converge at the level of the specific behaviours that they generate* (ibid., 50).

With regards to institutions such as universities, norm circles play a significant role as they endorse and/or enforce norms, rules and regulations that guide the individual. Elder-Vass (2012) refers here to Searle's theory about the way in which institutional facts are created. In short and using Elder-Vass concepts of norm circles, this means that institutional facts are created through norm circles within the institution. This also means that individuals within the institution will behave according to their proximate norm circle and their imagined norm circle within the institution. In this way, individuals endorse and enforce the norms on behalf of the group and assign, for example, functions to things like the number of publications. If the majority of members of the institution, especially those in power positions, decide and act in manner that, for example, publications are important for the career advancement it will become a fact that only those will advance in their career who publish. Again, Elder-Vass does not assume that there is only one single norm circle. Institutional facts are created through the interplay between different external and internal norm circles that might overlap and/or contradict each other. Again, these institutional facts that emerge in the process of negotiations between different norm circles are not fixed and can be changed when the majority stops to enforce and/or endorse certain norms and regulations or starts to enforce and/or endorse another

or new rules. In other words, institutional facts are real and are derived from real groups but they are at the same time socially constructed.

Concerning knowledge, norm circles play a significant role. Elder-Vass argues that:

> *Knowledge, […], is a variety of believe and thus a property of individuals, but there are social reasons why we credit some of our beliefs (and not others) with the quality of being knowledge. Central to the argument will be the concept of intersecting epistemological circles: groups of people who endorse particular epistemological regimes for specific types of knowledge, and epistemic circles: groups of people who endorse particular claims as valid knowledge. Both may be seen as discursive circles, since they regulate what may be said and what should be not said when making knowledge claims. The acceptance of any specific knowledge claim as such may be attributed in part to the influence of such circles, but this model also allows for the influence of the wider social forces on knowledge and thus supports a moderate social constructionism that remains consistent with social realism* (ibid., 208).

In higher education, this theory can be easily adopted as universities work with, create, and pass on knowledge. Taking Elder-Vass' (2012) argument, the norm circles that endorse and/or enforce knowledge over other ideas and beliefs are academics themselves as quality assurance and the acceptance of ideas is usually a matter of peer review. Nevertheless, the last decision about which knowledge produced and created in universities is useful and important is also a matter of other stakeholders, such as the state and economy. Hence, there are many norm circles from within and outside of universities that judge and promote certain knowledge. Therefore, different norm circles in the form of different interest groups take part in judging which knowledge is worthwhile and counts as real knowledge. Creating a curriculum, for example, is an important step in judging which ideas and what knowledge is important and should be passed on to students. The focus here lies not only on the knowledge that makes it into the curriculum but also on the ideas that are left out. Thus, knowledge scientific or not is socially constructed as knowledge always means favouring some ideas over others.

Norm circles are of importance when it comes to understanding the behaviour, tendencies, and decisions of individual human beings. In the case of this thesis, they can be a powerful tool to explain how academic freedom is understood in different cultures and how it is practiced as they can, for example, explain self-censorship. It is also a good tool to see the impact of the

globalised world on ideas such as academic freedom and to point out why and weather they are understood in a similar or different way. Furthermore, in the work with interviewees the awareness of norm circles can be a good tool for understanding and interpreting the answers of participants which will be shown in the following part of this thesis.

4.3 Epistemological and Methodological Considerations: Interpretative Comparison as the Underlying Research Principle[2]

Taking the combination of realism and social constructions presented in the previous part as an underlying understanding of how things come into being, this part of the thesis will now elaborate on the epistemological considerations that underpin the empirical part of this thesis. As Elder-Vass (2012) points out, a human being can be seen as a smaller part of an entity. Therefore, humans can give us an insight in their view of the world and the way in which they interpret their surroundings. In order to receive this insight into human thought and their ideas about reality, a qualitative research design will be adopted.

This study is based on a comparative research design as it engages with the concept of academic freedom in different cultural contexts. Comparison is used as it provides several benefits to explore diverse meanings of a concept in comparison to single country studies. One clear advantage of comparative studies is that it enables us to learn about different situations and hence challenges our "national and local superstitions" (Bleiklie 2014, 382). This process of challenging our own assumptions that are influenced by our particular cultural background gives us a better understanding of the variety of possibilities that exist when looking at a certain phenomenon or concept. In this respect, the "comparative approach is seen as one of the most fruitful in higher education studies, since it allows researchers to broaden their observation

[2] Interpretative Comparison is a research approach that was developed by myself and three other UNIKE PhD fellows: Benedikte Custer (University of Porto), Jie Gao (Aarhus University), and Katja Jönsas (Roehampton University). We developed this framework due to similar problems when trying to adopt a comparative research design for our PhD projects that takes an interpretative stance into account. We felt that none of the traditional ways of doing comparative research suited our research aim fully and thus we started to meet regularly to discuss our fieldwork and to theorize our approach to comparison in our studies. Thus, the word "we" in this section of the thesis refers to named authors. We are very grateful for the valuable feedback provided by the participants of the UNIKE Oslo winter school in 2015 where we presented our core idea the first time and especially to our discussants Tatiana Fumasoli (University of Oslo), Roger Dale (University of Bristol), and Susann Wright (Aarhus University). At the Higher Education Conference in Amsterdam 2016 where we presented a more advanced version of interpretative comparison, we again received excellent feedback by our discussant Pavel Zgaga (University of Ljubljana) and our chair António Magalhães (University of Porto).

base and to achieve a more extensive and reliable understanding of the phenomena observed" (Reale 2014, 409). Furthermore, comparative research is able to enhance the conceptual understanding of a phenomenon as it forces the researcher or research group to engage with multinational groups on a theoretical basis (Bleiklie 2014). Comparative research can also help to highlight the dynamics within a particular system by contrasting it with other systems (Kosmützky and Nokkala 2014). Finally, comparative research can lead us "toward new queries, new puzzles, new sequences and perhaps new data" (Rothblatt and Wittrock 1993, 7). With these benefits, comparative research is an appropriate tool for understanding a complex and relational concept such as academic freedom.

Due to its benefits, adopting a comparative research design seems to be very natural in educational research. Today comparative studies such as TIMSS, PISA, and PIRLS regularly organised by the OECD are not only of interest to policy makers but also make newspaper headlines. Comparison between different institutions, countries, and regions are key elements of higher education steering processes in an age of risk management (Dale 2013) and the introduction of a competitive logic in education (Erkkilä and Piironen 2014), as I have argued in Chapter 2. Hence, Nóvoa, and Yariv-Mashal argue that comparative research is no longer primarily used to deepen the understanding of a phenomenon or concept "but mainly as a way of governing […] a mode of governance" (2003, 429). Välimaa (2008) refers to this development as the normative dimension of comparative research on which basis our group concluded that "[r]esults of comparative research often cross over the line of description and explanation and unintentionally or not, join the idea of league tables and hierarchies" (Custers et al. 2015, 4). In conclusion, it can be said that comparative research does not always draw on the benefits that this method can offer but is often used as a governing and steering tool.

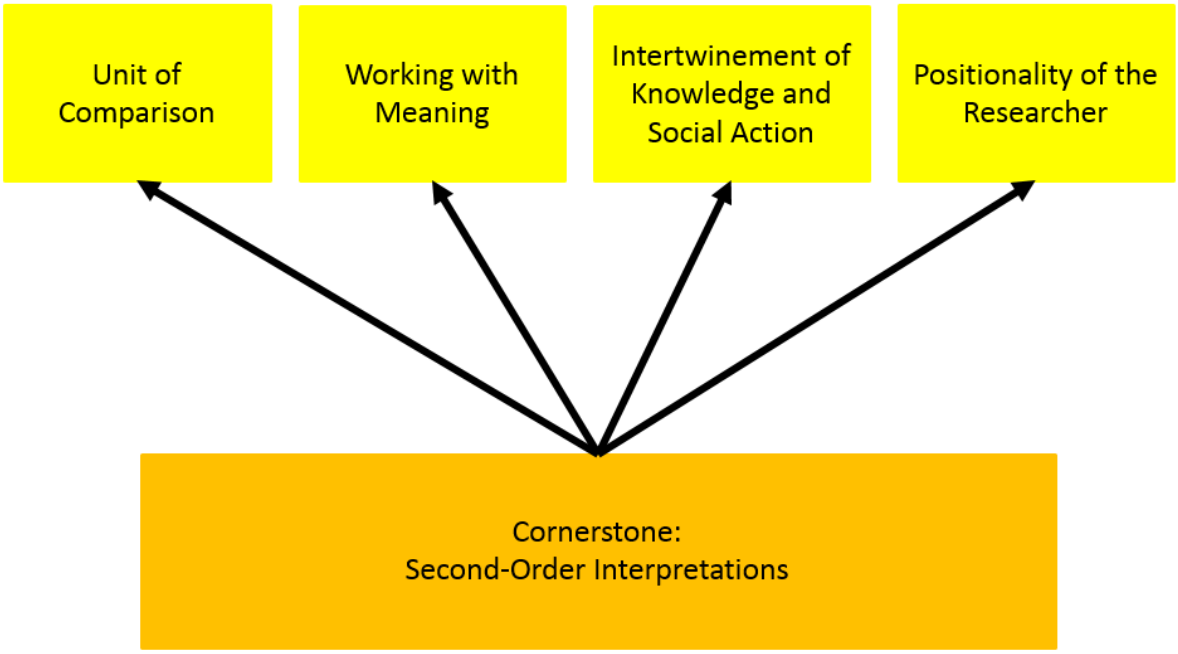
In order to avoid these pitfalls and to refocus on possible advantages of comparative research, this study will draw on interpretative comparison. As:

> *Interpretative comparison provides an epistemic advantage to dominant ways of doing comparison because it critically engages with taken-for-granted concepts and categories used as units of analysis in comparative higher education research. This critical engagement is important because comparison in higher education often feeds into normative understandings and standardized practices. By contextualising units of analysis through engaging with local interpretations, understandings, and meanings*

> *interpretative comparison offers a valuable alternative to the dominant way of doing comparative higher education research* (Custers et al. 2016, 1).

Interpretative comparison is based on the cornerstone of second-order interpretation and has four major methodological implications, namely, (1) using a unit of comparison instead of drawing on a unit of analysis, (2) working with meaning; (3) acknowledging the intertwinement of knowledge and social action, and (4) acknowledging the positionality of the researcher (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual structure of interpretative comparison (adopted from Custers et al. 2016, 6)



The cornerstone *second order interpretation* is based on the assumption that an unconstrained and unmediated access to reality is not possible. This is in line with Burr's (1995) statement that our knowledge is constructed in our daily interactions with each other. Hence, an interpretative comparison is based on social constructionism and the idea that "observations are always mediated and interpreted by the individual" (Custers et al. 2016). As we assume that the social world is not straightforward and cannot be observed in an unproblematic way,

we rely on what Andersen calls a "second order observation", as an "observation of an observation as an observation" (2003, VII). In other words, the researcher cannot interpret the reality of the participant but only the participants' interpretations of their reality. In short, in our approach, comparison takes place:

> *at a second order, where people's interpretations of 'what is out there' are compared and analysed. The emphasis of the studies then is not on measuring quantifiable variables of performance indicators, but on the understanding of social processes. In short, in our interpretative perspective we interpret the interpretations of our respondents* (Custers et al. 2016, 7).

Overall, interpretative comparison is not tied to a particular ontology but can be adopted in several research paradigms. The only requirement for using interpretative comparison is the assumption that one cannot observe the social phenomena and concepts connected to it directly. Hence, this research approach fits well to Elder-Vass' ontological considerations outlined in the previous part. According to Elder-Vass (2012), the individual human being is the smallest part to which we can trace back social process. Thus, through conversations with exactly these "small parts" of entities, we can start understanding the structures, mechanisms and social powers that lead to the emergence of a social phenomenon. As our social world is constructed and changed through norm circles, looking at these norm circles can give insight into the behaviour, perceptions and ideas of people. In this work, I assume that we can only understand which norm circles, imagined or proximate, are at play when talking to the people who embrace, reject, and/or experience them. Therefore, interpretative comparison is an appropriate tool to engage with the interpretations of people about their reality and the norm circles at play. Especially with regards to academic freedom which might be restricted and/or granted through different proximate and imagined norm circles, I think it is important to understand the interpretations of academics about their perceptions, interpretations, and observations.

Drawing on second-order interpretations, as mentioned earlier, has four major methodological implications. The first is focusing on the *unit of comparison* instead of on the unit of analysis. A unit of comparison refers to the subject we compare: in this thesis, to academic freedom. Interpretative comparison avoids using a unit of analysis as it is often used in normative approaches to comparative research. By using a unit of comparison, we want to distance ourselves from drawing on a unit of analysis that is predefined and on which basis the topic is explored. As interpretative comparison is inspired by an interpretative perspective, we "inverse

this reasoning and claim that we cannot really define the topic/issue before we have the knowledge of how these issues are brought into being by the interpretations and social practices of actors" (Custer et al. 2016). Or, using Elder-Vass' (2012) terminology, we cannot define the social entity before we know its parts, their structure and the underlying mechanisms. The focus in interpretative comparison is then not on *what is out there* but on the question of *how the world comes into being*. Using Andersen's words, we look at how "the world […] emerges in specific ways" (2003, XIII):

> *Consequently, the second order perspective constitutes our units of comparison. As such, in this view, we take a distance from a perspective on reality which is foundational, fixed and independent of our mind. This means that the idea of a direct and unmediated access to the empirical world is abandoned and knowledge can no longer be seen as the mirror of a world "out there" (Schwandt, 2003; 197). As such, the immediate relation between what exists and what we understand to exist is being problematized. Whereas in normative comparative approaches to higher education terms are defined and considered as unproblematic, our way is to inquire the terms themselves (Slaughter, 2001: 391). Since we consider the conceptions themselves as being created through human experience, and the terms are in their turn being influenced by language (Burr, 1995), we relate this to what Burr calls "A critical stance towards taken-for-granted-knowledge" (Burr, 1995: 2). Therefore, the terms used are considered as shifting and changing, constantly shaped by multiple factors* (Custers et al 2016, 7-8).

On a practical level, this means that we are not working with "clear definitions of the phenomena we study. Rather, we study and interpret how these phenomena are understood by our respondents" (ibid., 8). This also relates well to the literature and research on academic freedom that I have presented in the previous chapters. As I have pointed out, there are several different meanings of the phrase "academic freedom". This has the consequence that when adopting a rather normative approach to comparative research, I as a researcher would have to choose which definitions and meanings of academic freedom are the most appropriate ones. Referencing to one specific meaning of academic freedom over other meanings would consequently prevent me from engaging with academic freedom critically and from understanding multiple facets of the concept. In other words, adopting a unit of comparison allows for more variety when looking at a certain concept. The research aim is, thus, not to

clearly define a concept or phenomena but to depict the phenomena in all its complexity and its varied meanings.

The interest in different meanings leads to the second methodological consequence of drawing on second-order interpretations, the *work with meaning.* We focus on the meaning of concepts to avoid the pitfall that essentialised units of analysis usually

> *dictate a reified relationship between the signified and the signifier. This might be misleading, especially when the units of comparison are abstract ideas, imaginaries, or discourses that hardly can be uniformly signified across different social contexts. Working with predefined concepts may lead to the assumption that there are straightforward relationships between names and meaning* (ibid., 9).

Interpretative comparison sees this assumption as problematic as often things that are called by the same name mean different things and things called by different names mean the same thing. Drawing on the literature on academic freedom, one example would be the differentiation between freedom of speech and academic freedom. As I have depicted in Chapter 2, Hayes (cited in McCrae, 2011) claims that academic freedom is universal and should apply to all humans. In contrast to academics who see academic freedom as distinctive to academia, he uses academic freedom as a synonym for freedom of speech. Whereas, other academics such as Calhoun state that "academic freedom is not just a matter of free speech and individual rights. It is a matter of institutions and public purposes" (Calhoun 2009, 561). Thus, the contradiction here does not derive from the content but from the different meanings of the concept of academic freedom. Consequently, interpretative comparison does not focus on the naming of concepts but on their meaning. "In other words, in interpretative comparison, the units of comparison might be compared to empty boxes with preamble borders and containing lots of meanings" (Custers et al. 2016, 9).

The third methodological implication of our approach is the intertwinement of knowledge and social action. As from the perspective of social constructionism that also aligns with Elder-Vass' (2012) ontology "knowledge is constructed among people through their daily interactions in the course of social life, and what we regard as 'truth' varies historically and cross-culturally" (Custer et al. 2016, 10), knowledge is not a matter of an objective observation of the world but an outcome of social processes and interactions. In other words, knowledge is produced through social processes that lead to the acknowledgment of certain ideas as

knowledge and hence privilege them over other ideas. Consequently, knowledge cannot be seen as isolated from the social contexts in which it occurs. Interpretative comparison highlights the aspect that knowledge is not fixed and stable by considering

> *the historical and cultural specificity of these concepts by scrutinizing the social processes constitutive of the studied actions and the interlinkages between these social interactions and the constructed knowledge. By doing so, we acknowledge and highlight the political nature in the process of construction, prioritizing and erasing of certain units of comparison in individual or institutional interpretations and representations. In this way, knowledge and social action are to be seen as closely interlinked to each other and at the same time social (inter)action feeds into our knowledge of the world* (ibid., 11).

The last consequence of adopting an interpretative comparative research approach is connected to the fact that knowledge is constructed in social situations. As knowledge about social phenomena is not something that we can observe in a neutral way, the *positionality of the researcher* in the research process needs to be thoroughly considered. As the researcher is the main research instrument it is not a variable that can be kept out of sight when looking at the research process and the research results (Savin-Baden and Major, 2012). Research is then seen as a process of knowledge creation in which the researcher actively participates. This participation in the process is not only restricted to the data analysis but also to the process of data collection. Collecting qualitative data in the form of interviews has thus the consequence that the researcher as a person influences the information and ideas exchanged during the interview. Elder-Vass' (2012) concept of norm circles comes into play here as the interviewee might have, for example, own imageries about the researcher and might adopt his or her own behaviour to these assumptions. This does not imply that the participant lies or consciously withholds information but it recognises that different social situations lead to different outcomes. Knowledge is thus created during the social process of the interview and cannot be detached from the researcher and the research situation. This effect is not limited to interview situations but occurs in all research situations that rely on exchanges between human beings. Therefore, in the process of data analysis the possible impact that the researcher has on the data including the focus on a particular sub-theme, the selection of examples, and so forth, needs to be considered and reflected on.

4.4 Research Design

After explicating my research aim, my ontological standpoint, and the research paradigm that underpins this thesis, the next part of this chapter will go into more details about the concrete research design of the empirical work. As stated above, this research project is concerned with deepening the understanding of academic freedom, particularly in the area of higher education teaching. Achieving this goal is best possible via interviews with academics. More precisely, the insight into academics' experiences were gathered with the help of semi-structured in-depth interviews (about one hour each) as they allowed me to gain a deeper insight into the accounts of my interviewees than short interviews would have done. The choice of semi-structured interviews is based on their ability to lead the data collection process but they are also open to new perspectives and opinions of the interviewees (Silverman 2011), which aligns well with interpretative comparative research. Using semi-structured interviews helped me to focus on the research aim of understanding academic freedom from the perspective of my interviewees. The choice of conducting the interviews with academics was based on the fact that academics are the ones who conduct higher education teaching and who experience (or not) academic freedom in their daily work. Students could also give an insight into their experience of academic freedom as academic freedom at least in the idea of von Humboldt should also apply to students but as this thesis is concerned with higher education teaching they cannot provide information about the experience of academic freedom in teaching. Hence, academics are the centre of this thesis, which does not mean that academic freedom for students or in research are less valuable topics of research.

Due to my claim that academic freedom and its experience are highly dependent on the context, which is also reflected in the approach of interpretative comparison, two cases were selected for this research study. Selecting two universities for the empirical work made it feasible to obtain an insight into the universities as institutions, as well as in their national and regional background. As one of the aims of interpretative comparison is to achieve diversity and to gain a complex picture of the phenomenon, two universities from very different regions were selected for the study, namely the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore.

The University of Bologna, as one of the oldest universities, founded in 1088, and the place where the Magna Charta Universitatum (1988) was signed, and the Magna Charter Observatory (MCO) is hosted, is a good example of a traditional university in the heart of Europe that is

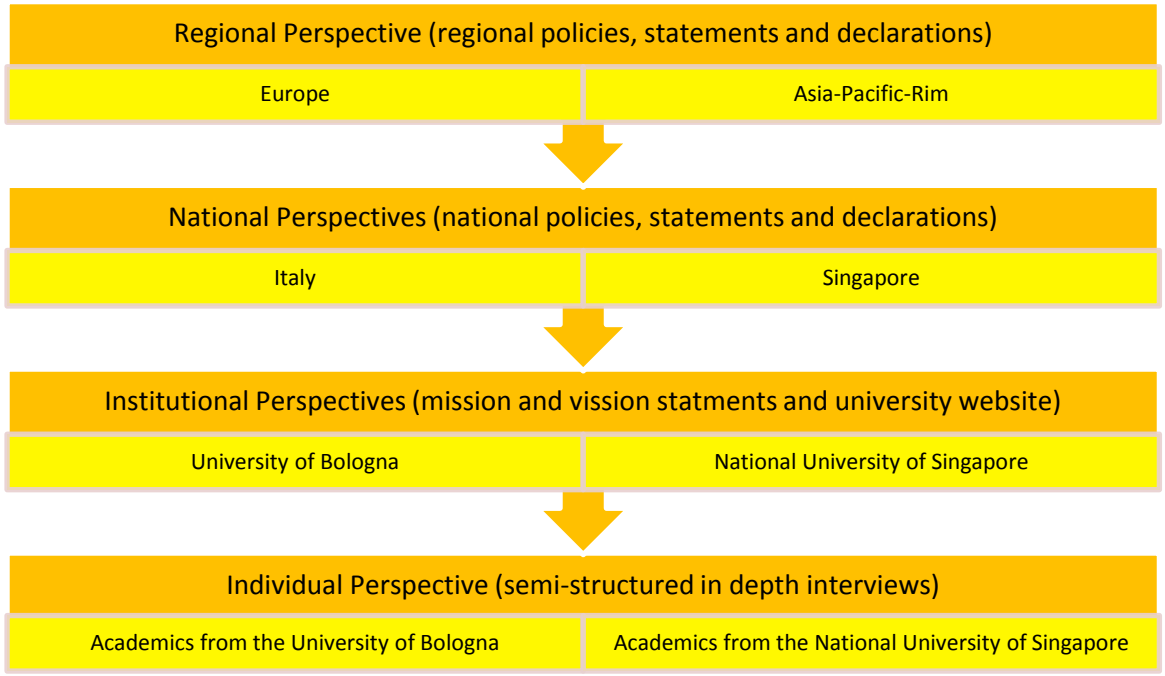
related to academic values. Italy is also a good case for depicting the European idea of a university as Italy is very active in adopting the Bologna Process, and as Bologna was where the first joint declaration of the Bologna Process was signed.

The National University of Singapore is a rather new university, founded in 1905, which is situated in Asia. As outlined earlier academic freedom is considered to be a European-centred value, thus it is valuable to get an insight into the understanding of academic freedom from a non-European perspective. The National University of Singapore (NUS) was also the host of the Association of Pacific-Rim Universities (APRU) during the period in which the study was conducted. Therefore, it can be seen as a place that is concerned and involved in university developments in this region.

Another reason for choosing these two universities was that MCO, APRU and NUS are associated partners of the UNIKE project and that the UNIKE project is concerned with the regions of Europe and the Asia-Pacific-Rim.

As already mentioned, interpretive comparison claims that context plays a major role in understanding a concept from a complex perspective. Therefore, in addition to the interviews with academics from the University of Bologna and NUS a documentary analysis was conducted. Taking a deeper look at national and regional policies and the current legal framework in which the two universities operate was meant to map the situation in which the interviewees work on a day to day basis. Taking Elder-Vass' claim that norm circles are also active on an institutional level, it was evident that it is not enough to look only at regional and national policies but also at institutional policies. Thus, official university statements, for example, mission and vision statements and the university websites, were included in the process of data analysis. Overall, the research project included sources that depict the context and sources that depict the daily work of academics. Context and individual experiences, as explained earlier, influence each other and thus are important to get a deeper insight into the meaning of academic freedom. Figure 2 gives an overview of the data that was collected for this research project. The order of the different parts is not meant to depict a hierarchy between them but to show the move from a macro- over a meso- towards a micro-level.

Figure 2: Data collected from macro- to micro-levels



The main method of data analysis for the interview and documentary data was thematic analysis. The main reason for using one single data analysis method is that it secures the comparability of different sources. Thematic analysis was chosen as it is an appropriate tool to identify patterns and to describe a variety of aspects of the research topic. In other words, it can depict the context and the individual experiences of academics and hence serves as a solid basis for the exploration of the research topic (Braun and Clark 2006). Furthermore, it gives an overview of patterns included in the data and, therefore, can depict similarities and differences between different sources, areas and cultures (Bryman 2008; Braun and Clark 2006). The growing acceptance of thematic analysis as a data analysis technique in its own right can be seen on its increasing usage (Bryman 2008). Using thematic analysis is a way of being open to new emerging themes in the data and thus provides a framework for discovering the diversity of meanings of academic freedom. In other words, by focusing on the meaning and grouping meanings to different themes, thematic analysis can emphasis the *work with meaning* as a core element of interpretative comparison.

This research study is able to give insight into diverse meanings of academic freedom and to point out why academic freedom is important for academics. It can also show what teaching means in the daily work of academics and how teaching is connected to academic freedom.

Nevertheless, the results of this study cannot be generalised as the sample size is too small. Another limitation of the study is that it will not provide the reader with a final definition or meaning of academic freedom as it focuses on the variety of meanings. Hence, a general judgement about the status of academic freedom in Asia and Europe cannot be made. In this respect, the aim of this work is not to provide a definition of academic freedom, to judge whether academics in one country are more free than in another country or to assess the degree of academic freedom in the case of Singapore or Italy. Despite these limitations, this thesis can provide a framework on which basis the communication about academic freedom can be improved by acknowledging its diverse meanings and cultural particularities. It can also give an insight into the subtle dimension of academic freedom that is often neglected in research and literature and thus raise awareness and reflections on the concept.

4.5 The Research Process: Practicalities, Participants and Ethical Considerations

The interviews for the empirical part of this thesis took place between October 2015 and March 2016. As the document and policy analysis is meant to map the context of the participants, all documents and policies are those that were valid during the time in which the interviews were conducted. The selection of interviewees was based on two principles to ensure rich data. First, the sample group should be diverse in order to obtain insights into different experiences and opinions. Therefore, the sample of interviewees should include participants at different career stages, from different disciplines as well as males and females. Second, the participants of the interviews should be motivated and generally interested in sharing their ideas on the topic to achieve an open atmosphere during the interview. This was important to secure rich and deep data. The best way to achieve these goals was a mixture of purposive and convenient sampling. Purposive sampling should secure a diverse group of participants, while convenient sampling through a contact person within each university should assure that a more trustful relationship between me and my participants be established even before the interview. Obtaining access through one or two contact persons at each institution combined with the recruitment of participants via an individual invitation e-mail based on the profile of participants ensured a diverse sample group of interviewees who were open and interested in supporting this research

project. The list of interviewees that participated in this research can be found in Table 1 for the University of Bologna and Table 2 for NUS.

Table 1: Interview Participants University of Bologna

Participant Code	**Gender**	**Discipline**	**Position**
I 1	Male	Statistics	Full professor; leadership position
I 2	Male	Medicine	Researcher
I 3	Female	Law	Full professor; leadership position
I 4	Female	Law	Junior Researcher
I 5	Male	Astronomy	Full professor; leadership position
I 6	Female	Bio-Technology	Full professor; leadership position
I 7	Male	Engineering	Full professor
I 8	Male	Mathematics	Full professor; leadership position
I 9	Male	Sociology	Researcher
I 10	Female	Political Science	Full professor
I 11	Male	Psychology	Full professor

Table 2: Interview Participants National University of Singapore

Participant Code	**Gender**	**Discipline**	**Position**
S 1	Male	Natural Science	Adjunct Lecturer, Researcher
S 2	Male	Natural Science	Professor, leadership position
S 3	Female	Natural Science	Lecturer, Researcher
S 4	Male	Applied Science	Lecturer, Researcher
S 5	Male	Humanities	Professor; leadership position
S 6	Female	Arts and Social Science	Professor, leadership position
S 7	Male	Arts and Social Science	Professor

In practical terms, it was much easier to obtain access to interviewees at the University of Bologna than at NUS. This is also reflected in the number of interviews conducted. Possible reasons for this will be discussed in the following chapter, as they might be related to the topic, the place and/or to cultural differences. The more precise description of the discipline of the interviewees in Italy compared to Singapore also has a practical reason that might be related to academic freedom. When conducting the interviews in Italy, my participants were not worried about their anonymity, and many of them would have even allowed me to use their full names in my thesis and publications. In order to secure coherence between both cases and between all participants, I will still only use the participant codes in the following chapters, but this

openness allowed me to define the discipline more precisely. In contrast to the Italian case, most but not all of my participants from Singapore were worried about their anonymity; in order to secure this, I was only able to name the broad discipline in the table above.

As explained in the previous part, the interviews were semi-structured; therefore, I used the same interview guide for all participants with some adaptations to take the cultural difference and the potentially difficult situation of talking about academic freedom in Singapore into account (see Box 1 and Box 2). After some warnings to talk about academic freedom in Singapore openly and the difficulties in recruiting participants in Singapore I decided not to include questions directly related to academic freedom in the interview guide. The initial plan when designing the interview guide for Singapore was to carefully approach the topic of academic freedom whenever the conversation was leading in this direction. Therefore, I did not include questions on academic freedom in the interview guide but changed this section into *ideas on educational aims, missions, and visions*. By not including questions on academic freedom, I wanted to prevent interviewees from seeing the topic in the interview guide by accident. I also told the interviewees from Singapore that I was mainly interested in higher education teaching and mentioned only shortly that I was also working on academic freedom. In other words, for the participants from Singapore, my primary research aim in the invitation e-mail was higher education teaching and only my secondary aim was academic freedom.

During the first interview, I changed this idea as I aimed at an open and honest atmosphere in the interview, and I realised that in fact it was not that difficult to talk about academic freedom in a personal conversation in Singapore. As I conducted the interviews in Italy first, I already knew the interview guide from Italy by heart and included the questions on academic freedom in the interviews in Singapore. This change in the attitude towards the interviews in Singapore will be also a part of the following chapter, as it can tell a lot about assumptions and expectations when discussing the issue of academic freedom. This is also the reason that I went in much detail about the changed interview guide for Singapore here.

Overall, the interview guide was only a *guide* to ensure that similar questions were asked in each interview; the order and exact formulation varied according to the dynamics of the conversation and the answers of the interviewees. The interview guides did include questions directly related to academic freedom, to regulations that might advance or hinder academic freedom and to teaching and research. They also included questions about the careers of the participants, which was meant to obtain insight in the individual context and career situation

of each participant. In order to map the individual experiences, ideas, assumptions, and preferences of each participant the interview guides were not only focused on academic freedom but tried to motivate participants to elaborate on topics related to academic freedom such as the role of universities in society and the ideal image of the university. Leaving space for related topics and not only for academic freedom and teaching enabled me to understand a more complex picture of the daily work of each participant and thus to contextualise the concepts under question

Box 1: Interview Guide University of Bologna

Interview Guide University of Bologna:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research and share with me your thoughts about academic freedom and your experiences. Everything you tell me will be absolutely anonymous. Is it Ok for you if I record the interview for the purpose of analysis? If you have any questions, please do ask them.

1. ***Your own story***
   - a. *What is your position in your university?*
   - b. *Work experience/years?*
   - c. *How did you get there?*
   - d. *Why did you choose this profession?*
   - e. *Why do you continue doing what you do?*
   - f. *Has your work changed over the years?*
   - g. *Why do you think it is important? / What is the role of universities in society?*

2. ***Teaching and Research***
   - a. *How would you describe your daily work? / Could you describe a normal working day?*
   - b. *Describe the relation between research and teaching in your daily work?*
   - c. *What is more important? Promotion?*
   - d. *What do you enjoy more? Why?*

3. ***Regulations and power relations***

   a. *Are there any regulations that bother/support you in your daily work? Which ones and why?*

   b. *Who makes these regulations? Who implements these regulations?*

   c. *If you could change one thing about your work/university what would it be?*

4. ***Academic freedom***

   a. *What does academic freedom mean to you?*

   b. *Have you encountered a situation in which your academic freedom was restricted?*

   c. *Do you think a certain degree of freedom is important to conduct your work properly? Which freedoms do you need? Why/Why not?*

5. ***Cool down***

   a. *How do you see the future of universities?*

   b. *Do you think your job will change in the next years?*

   c. *Do you think your freedom will improve/worsen? Why/why not?*

Thank you! Confidentiality re-assurance! Want info about study?

Box 2: Interview Guide NUS

Interview Guide NUS:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research and share with me your thoughts about academic freedom and your own experiences. Everything you tell me will be absolutely anonymous. Is it Ok for you if I record the interview for the purpose of analysis? If you have any questions, please do ask them.

1. ***Your own story***

   a. *What is your position in your university?*

   b. *Work experience/years?*

   c. *How did you get there?*

   d. *Why did you choose this profession?*

e. *Why do you continue, doing what you do?*

f. *Did your work change over the years?*

g. *Why do you think it is important? / What is the role of universities in society?*

2. ***Teaching and Research***

a. *How would you describe your daily work? / Could you describe a normal working day?*

b. *Describe the relation between research and teaching in your daily work?*

c. *What is more important? Promotion?*

d. *What do you enjoy more? Why?*

3. ***Regulations and power relations***

a. *Are there any regulations that bother/support you in your daily work? Which ones and why?*

b. *Who is it that makes these regulations? Who is it that implements these regulations?*

c. *If you could change one thing about your work/university what would it be?*

d. *If you would have to decide on one thing that should be kept in any case what would it be?*

4. ***Your idea about educational aims, missions, visions***

a. *What should a university graduate look like?*

b. *What is the relation between the university and society*

c. *What is the task of universities from your point of view / Why should they be funded?*

5. ***Cool down***

a. *How do you see the future of universities?*

b. *Do you think your job will change in the next years?*

c. *Do you think your freedom will improve/worsen? Why/why not?*

Thank you! Confidentiality re-assurance! Want info about study?

Overall, the research project received ethical approval from the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana, and followed its ethical guidelines as well as guidelines from the research sites. The focus concerning ethics was based on ethical guidelines for qualitative research. I drew on the four most common ethical principles in social research, avoiding lack of informed consent, deception, the invasion of privacy and avoiding harm, as highlighted by Bryman (2008). The first three principals were secured by receiving informed consent from the interview participants. The informed consent was given in the form of the e-mails exchanged in preparation of the interviews, which included information about the interview, the topic and the usage of the interview data. At the beginning of each interview, I also summarised the study details again and left space for the participant to raise questions. Additionally, I had in-depth conversations with participants about how to secure their anonymity and recorded all concerns about it. I agreed with all participants that I would contact them when I was in doubt about which details I could use and which ones would reveal their identity. Additionally, I did send the interview quotations used in the Chapter 5 to each participant to double check for accuracy and anonymity. Some of the interviewees might be identifiable through their stories presented here by colleagues but all of them agreed with the publication of their quotes as they did not mind being identified by their peers.

CHAPTER 5: Two case studies: The University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore

This chapter will present the results of the empirical work conducted for this thesis. It is divided into three parts. The first two parts present the cases of the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore separately and follow the same structure. The third part of this chapter then turns to the actual comparison between the two cases and provides a comprehensive overview. Whereas the first two parts focus on the presentation of the data from both cases, the third part of this chapter focuses on a deeper and comprehensive interpretation. In other words, the interpretations given in 5.1 and 5.2 will be rather superficial and are meant to point out distinctive features of each case. Chapter 5.3, however, contrasts the results from each case and thus offers the opportunity for a more comprehensive interpretation. Both cases are presented starting from the macro- over the meso- towards the micro-perspective. In other words, first an insight into the regional characteristics of Europe and the Asia Pacific Rim is given to provide the broad context. This is followed by presenting the national context of each case. The last part of each section then engages with the institutional context, depicting the current situation and self-presentation of each university to get an insight into the institutional mission and visions about higher education. Finally, each case will end by presenting the interview data and emerging themes connected with academic freedom and teaching.

5.1 A European Perspective on Academic Freedom: The University of Bologna

5.1.1 The Context

5.1.1.1 The European Higher Education Area: Framing Academic Freedom on a Regional Level

There is not one clearly defined Europe as Europe can be described from different perspectives; there is, for example, the geographical Europe, a historical idea about Europe and the European Union as well as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Despite these diverse understandings of Europe, after 15 years of searching for convergence of its higher education systems, today's Europe is probably the most coherent "higher education area" in the world.

Due to the topic of this thesis I will in the next parts refer to exactly this European Higher Education Area, which was declared with the start of the Bologna Process in 1999 and formally established in 2010 (Bologna Process 2010). The starting point of creating a common European Higher Education Area is the Sorbonne Joint Declaration (Bologna Process 1998) that was signed by ministers of education from France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The aim of the declaration was to *harmonise* higher education in order to increase and promote staff and student mobility and to build a common European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The idea of Ministers from France, Italy, Germany and the UK was extended to ministers from altogether 29 European states that signed the Bologna Declaration only one year later, in the same city and hall in which already the Magna Charta Universitatum was signed by university rectors in 1988. As only four countries signed the Sorbonne Declaration, it is often not counted as being part of the Bologna Process but rather as an initiative and a foundational document. The number of member states in the Bologna Process has increased ever since and exceeded the boarders of the European Union. By 2016, ten declarations and communiqués including the Sorbonne Declaration were signed, and 48 states plus the European Commission now collaborate in the Bologna Process (Bologna Process 2016).

Overall, the Bologna Process is complex and based on negotiations not only between ministers of education of the participating nation states but also with several other stakeholders, such as experts, university leaders, associations and students. The communiqués and declarations were not just drafted but are based on meetings between experts and other stakeholders within the framework of the Bologna Follow-up Group. To depict the complex system and the role of academic freedom and teaching in the background discussions of the Bologna Process would be a worthy topic for a separate PhD thesis but would exceed the scope of this work. Therefore, in the following, I will only draw on the main declarations and communiqués of the Bologna Process as they can be seen as the quintessence of the complex process of negotiations. These documents are just the "tip of the iceberg" and in their background are many drafts, studies, discussions and so on which would exceed the scope of this thesis. They were agreed and officially declared by the ministers of education at their biannual meetings and thus represent the "accord" or "common sense" within the EHEA.

The aim of the following section is not to describe the declarations and communiqués in full but to depict the status and role of academic freedom, university autonomy as well as teaching and research as these are the key concepts of this thesis. Therefore, I will not follow a

chronological discussion of the documents but depict the changes according to broader topics. First, I will show how the Bologna Process is connected to the Magna Charta Universitatum. Second, I will depict the role of universities that is laid down in the Bologna declarations and communiqués. Third, I will show how the focus on academic freedom has moved towards a focus on university autonomy and, lastly, I present how students and teachers are described.

The fact that the Bologna Declaration, as the first document deriving from the Bologna Process, was signed in the same city as the Magna Charta Universitatum is not a coincidence. All declarations and communiqués refer in one way or another to the values and missions of universities presented in the Magna Charta Universitatum. The Bologna Declaration (Bologna Process 1999) even states that

> *European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also* in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. *This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge* (ibid., 2 emphasis added).

Despite this first impression, there are major differences in the understanding of academic values in the Bologna Process and the Magna Charta Universitatum (Magna Charta Observatory 2016 [1988]). Most obvious in this respect is the shifting of focus away from social responsibility towards the concept of accountability and efficiency, which can also be seen in scholarly discussions of many authors (see for example Erkkilä and Piironen 2014; Dale 2013). This is also reflected in the shift from academic freedom towards institutional autonomy reflected, for example, in writings of Zgaga et al. (2015), Erkkilä and Piironen (2014), Zgaga (2012a) and Wright and Ørberg (2011). The idea of competition and comparison that I already outlined in Chapter 2 is also visible in Bologna documents and influences mainly the role of universities in society.

In general, the role of universities described in the Magna Charta Universitatum did not vanish in the Bologna declarations and communiqués but some commercial elements were added to it. The Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, for example, mentions the classical role of universities and states that

> *public policies will fully recognise the value of various missions of higher education, ranging from teaching and research to community service and engagement in social cohesion and cultural development* (Bologna Process 2009, p.2).

However, at another point, it uses the same wording as the London Communiqué (Bologna Process 2007) and adds the idea of employability and innovation to the role of universities.

> *preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society; preparing students for their future careers and enabling their personal development; creating and maintaining a broad, advanced knowledge base; and stimulating research and innovation* (Bologna Process 2007, 1; 2009, 1).

This quotation shows clearly that universities still inherit their traditional humanistic role as they are responsible for preparing students to be active citizens, promoting democracy, supporting the personal development and pursuing knowledge. Despite the focus on the traditional role of universities in society the citation also shows that other tasks are entering the discussion on the purposes and missions of higher education. This includes the preparation of students for the employment market and the demand for innovation, which are also recognised duties of universities within current academic writings (see for example Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006). Adding these two duties to the role of universities can easily prepare a shift towards the inclusion of vocational training in universities and therefore would mean a move away from the Humboldtian tradition. It reflects the new employability discourse in higher education in which universities are increasingly pressured to produce ready-made employees instead of well-educated individuals (Rüegg 2011). Within this new discourse, added to higher education policy, the demand to raise the job opportunities for students so that the ever-increasing tuition fees are worth their money can easily lead towards a customer-based approach of teaching instead of a more holistic education in which the learner plays a significant role in gaining new knowledge (Boden and Nedeva 2010).

The contradiction between traditional academic roles and a more modern commercial demand in the previously discussed citation is a good example of the fact that the Bologna declarations and communiqués are not drafted by one interest group but are an outcome of repeated negotiations between different interest groups. The idea to include "the full range of purposes of higher education" in the Bologna documents was, for example, strongly supported and

promoted by the Council of Europe but it took five years for this concept to enter a policy document (Zgaga 2012b).

Based on Magna Charta Universitatum, academic values find repeated reassurance in every single Bologna declaration and communiqués. In opposition to the Magna Charta Universitatum, the focus is not so much on an academic but on a modern understanding of university autonomy to which I will come back later. Academic freedom is rarely mentioned in its own right but becomes part of a bigger package together with non-discrimination, democracy and involvement of students and staff in the process of change. In contrast, university autonomy is mentioned more often and on its own but combined with the terms *quality assurance* and *accountability*. In other words, universities should receive more autonomy, especially on a managerial and financial level with the obligation to proof their success. They are pressured to act like enterprises and to produce outputs that have a direct use for society and economy. As the combination of university autonomy and accountability is the most significant change in the Bologna Process in comparison to the Magna Charta Universitatum, I will elaborate on this in more detail here to show how small changes in wording can change the understanding of a concept.

As already mentioned, the Bologna Declaration (Bologna Process 1999) relates directly to the Magna Charta Universitatum and hence acknowledges academic freedom and university autonomy. This changes latest with the Berlin Communiqué (Bologna Process 2003) in which university autonomy is no longer an independent value but bound to accountability and quality assurance, as it states

> *They [the ministers] also stress that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework* (ibid., 3).

University autonomy is still a visible value in this quotation, but the context changed. In this respect, university autonomy is no longer bound to a social obligation and the responsibility of the academic community to serve society but to the demand to fulfil national quality criteria. Therefore, universities are autonomous in the sense that they are responsible for aligning their endeavours with set measurement criteria. The document also states that "academic values should prevail" (ibid., 1) but does not give any clarification as to how and why.

The Bergen Communiqué (Bologna Process 2005) takes the instrumentalisation of university autonomy even a step further when it states that university autonomy is seen as a mean "to implement agreed reforms" (ibid., 5). Nevertheless, the document also stresses that universities need sustainable funding in order to pursue their diverse missions.

After this period of linking university autonomy with accountability and taking it as a mean to implement higher education reforms, the London Communiqué (Bologna Process 2007) restores university autonomy and academic freedom as values in their own right. It acknowledges that these values are inherent in the tradition of European higher education and can increase the attractiveness of the EHEA.

> *Developments over the last two years have brought us a significant step closer to the realisation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness* (ibid., 1).

Moreover, this document asks for "strong institutions, which are diverse, adequately funded, autonomous and accountable" (ibid., 2). Still, accountability is closely linked to autonomy also in this communiqué. The following Leuven-la-Neuve Communiqué (Bologna Process 2009) picks up similar ideas but claims that universities need to search for additional funding to guarantee their financial sustainability. On the one hand these documents reconsider the idea of academic freedom and university autonomy in their own right while on the other hand they stress the importance of employability, accountability and attracting external funding. This contradiction depicts again the mixture of different discourses within each of the documents, originating in different interest groups. Hence, the Bologna declarations and communiqués can be read and interpreted in many different ways.

The Budapest-Vienna Declaration (Bologna Process 2010) and the Bucharest Communiqué (Bologna Process 2012) are again demonstrating the strong relationship between university autonomy and accountability within the EHEA. University autonomy is never mentioned without accountability.

> *We [the ministers] commit to supporting the engagement of students and staff in governance structures at all levels and reiterate our commitment to autonomous and accountable higher education institutions that embrace academic freedom* (ibid., 2).

In other words, staff and students have the responsibility to govern universities and thus to create institutions that embrace academic freedom. The most important aspect for governments is to make universities accountable for their work.

In the latest Yerevan Communiqué (Bologna Process 2015), the idea of academic freedom and university autonomy is re-established, and the document states that:

> *We [the ministers] will support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions* (ibid., 2).

The state here not only plays a supportive role but also aims to protect students and academics. Despite the reassurance of academic freedom and university autonomy, the section that is concerned with concrete commitments by the supporting ministers does not mention academic freedom or university autonomy. It only describes actions that are connected to quality assurance, the recognition of degrees and prior learning as well as the widening of access to higher education. In other words, ministers support and protect academic freedom and university autonomy but there are no concrete actions related to this aim. Therefore, the contradiction between different views and priorities is also naturally embedded in this document.

Overall, it can be said that academic values such as university autonomy and less academic freedom are mentioned in the Bologna declarations and communiqués but that the understanding of them changed. Academic freedom is not clearly defined and only one value among others and university autonomy is a mean to embed quality assurance measurements, to make universities responsible for finding non-governmental funding and to deliver outcomes that meet the set criteria. In this respect, the *entrepreneurial* aspect of universities is emphasised. Hence, we can see clearly the shift from a philosophical understanding of university autonomy towards an economic conception to use Zgaga's (2012a) terminology or in other words, the trend to turn university autonomy into a managerial property described by Erkkilä and Piironen (2014). With the demand to secure external funding universities are increasingly dependent on money from the private sector and it is questionable if the private

sector supports academic freedom in research and teaching or if it focuses merely on outcomes. Institutional autonomy from the private sector and business stakeholders is therefore another concern that is connected to this development and recognised by authors such as Boden, and Epstein (2011) and Houston, Meyer, and Shelley (2006).

After discussing academic freedom and university autonomy in the Bologna declarations and communiqués, the next part of this section will evaluate the changes in the perception of teaching and learning over time and their status in the Bologna documents. Teaching and learning and the role of professors and students had already changed massively comparing the Humboldtian ideal type of a university and the university depicted in the Magna Charta Universitatum. In the Bologna declarations and communiqués, it is changing again but some of the spirit of the Humboldtian university model can still be discerned within the contradicting and overlapping discourses. The importance of interweaving research and teaching in one institution can be found in all documents arising from the Bologna Process.

However, combining life-long-learning emphasised in, for example, the Prague Communiqué (Bologna Process 2001) with the demand of cooperation with stakeholders outside the university, especially in the case of vocational training, is the opposite of the ideal Humboldtian University, which was strictly separated from vocational training (Kopetz 2002). *Lehr- und Lernfreiheit* in the Humdoldtian sense seem to be two forgotten ideas in the ministerial conference publications. The call for a focus on learning outcomes, structured programmes and curriculum even in doctoral education reflect the absolute opposite of the meaning of *Lehr- und Lernfreiheit* for the student as well as for the teacher. This strict structuring and missing space to explore culture is also criticised by Masschelein and Simons (2015) who advocate reclaiming the university as a space for free time and community.

By introducing the concept of student-centred higher education, the Bologna declarations and communiqués again change the image and role of the student within the university. At first glance, the focus on the needs and interests of students seems to be a progressive step towards the freedom of choice for students. However, analysing the context and phrasings within this discourse shows a rather different reality as

> *[S]tudent-centred learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles* (Bologna Process 2009, 3).

The student here is being constructed rather as a needy and helpless person not capable of making informed decisions about his or her learning without strict guidance from the teacher. The responsible and mature student disappeared with the discourse of student-centred education as the main aim is to take students by the hand and guide them through the challenging world of education. The production of learning outcomes becomes essential. Similar to the customer-approach of education explained in the previous section, a holistic view of education becomes more unlikely in a world with a strict curriculum and a focus on learning outcomes. The new challenge of university teaching seems to be the development of new ways of teaching students towards set outcomes in the shortest time possible and preparing them *efficiently* for the job market. It is questionable if there is any time left for the quest of knowledge and real theoretical work that was the core of the Humboldtian University model. This is also in line with Masschelein and Simons (2015) suggestion to reclaim the university as a place of free time for cultural engagement or the shift from *education for democracy* towards *education for profit* described by Nussbaum (2010).

Universities, from this point of view, seem rather like schools with set curricula and a teacher who is thoroughly controlling and supervising the student. Finally, this development challenges academics to ask the question "What makes higher education higher?" (Magalhães and Veiga 2013). This clash between different assumption and opinions on student-centred learning will be discussed again in respect to academics' ideas on education and teaching.

On the one hand, the Bologna Process as a uniting European effort to create an EHEA still includes elements of the humanistic European university. On the other hand, with a changing emphasis on economic aspects of higher education academic values have gained a new additional meaning in the policy discourse. Hence, the struggle between modern demands and the traditional idea of universities is visible in all policy documents deriving from the Bologna Process. This shows that there is not one dominant idea about how universities should be but that there are different discourse and interest groups who frame the policy background in the EHEA. Using Elder-Vass' (2012) terminology, there are different norm-circles that overlap but also contradict each other with regards to the policy sphere within Europe. Which of these norm circles are also influential on the ground level will be discussed in the following parts of this chapter.

5.1.1.2 Italy: Framing Academic Freedom on a National Level

As I have shown, academic freedom and university autonomy have a good foundation in Europe and North America. According to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2006a) described in Chapter 3.1.2, they should be even part of the national constitutions within Europe. This is true for Italy as academic freedom is a constitutional right. Article 3 protects the "freedom of art and science and the teaching thereof" and states that "[h]igher education institutions, universities and academics, have the right to establish their own regulations within the limits laid down by the law" (Senato della Repubblica 1948).

Despite, the fact that academic freedom and university autonomy are constitutional rights in Italy they were only lately adapted in practice (Moscati 2009). Traditionally, the Italian higher education system was highly centralised and bureaucratic (Luzzato and Moscati 2007) and hence based on central state control. This strong relationship between the state and the university has resulted in a weak relationship between universities and economy (Moscati 2014). Luzzato and Moscati (2007) describe the relationship between universities and economy as an "unwritten agreement of non-interference" (163). This system of non-interference worked well as long as universities were meant to educate the élite and companies were not in need of scientific innovation (ibid. 2007). In this respect, the training of highly skilled workforce as a key role of universities was never a strong pattern in Italian higher education (Moscati 2014). Therefore, the changing force in higher education was rather social than economic pressure. Social mobility pressure has resulted in open-access to higher education and hence to massification and connected challenges for higher education (Moscati 2009; Luzzato and Moscati 2007).

The implementation of academic freedom started in Italy after the reforms in the late 1960s (Ballarino and Perotti 2012). Reforms to introduce some freedom in framing statutes were only introduced in 1989 and freedom in managerial issues in 1993. Nevertheless, there was no freedom in defining curricula or deciding about degrees at this time as it was only introduced later on (Luzzato and Moscati 2007). Even if some reforms were already put into place in the 1960s, the Italian university system transformed only in the 1980s significantly due to changes on an EU level (Moscati 2014). This also is true for reforms concerning an increase in university autonomy. Thus, there is a clear connection between European higher education policies and national developments in Italy.

This official picture of slow change in increasing institutional autonomy is also reflected in the numbers concerning university autonomy and academic freedom from the two studies mentioned in Chapter 3. Concerning the score cards that measure university autonomy, Italy scored high in financial autonomy with 70% (7th place out of 28) but only 56% (18th place out of 28) in organisational autonomy, 57% (16th place out of 28) in academic autonomy and 49% (24th place out of 28) in staffing autonomy (Estermann, Nokkala and Steinel 2011).

Five years later, in 2016, the score cards developed by Beiter, Karran, and Appiagyei-Atua show a similar but slightly better picture. Italy is overall ranked in the medium high position on all scales and received an overall grade of D on a scale from A to F with a score of 57%. In comparison to the other European countries, this is above the average mean of 52.79%. As I have shown above, international agreements are adopted well in Italy and are reflected in the constitution; therefore, Italy scored 95% on this scale with an average score of 78.04%. It is to be mentioned here that Italy joined UNESCO in 1948 (UNESCO 2016b) and thus supported both recommendations concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (ILO/UNESCO 2008 [1966]; UNESCO 1997), which I elaborated on in Chapter 3. The protection of academic freedom as expressed in legal documents remained below the mean of 59.38% with only 50%. Similarly, the protection of institutional autonomy scored only 45% which is 1.29% percent below the mean and the protection of academic self-governance scored 40% with the average score of 42.99%. In contrast, Italy scored high in job security with 57.5% whereas the European average was only 37.28% (Beiter, Karran and Appiagyei-Atua 2016). Therefore, in the European comparison, Italy remained below average in both studies but still showed signs that academic freedom and university autonomy are part of the laws and find some protection.

The difference concerning university autonomy between the results of both studies might be connected to changes in the higher education law that were put into practice in 2010, in the same year in which the data for the study from Estermann, Nokkala, and Steinel (2011) was collected. Thus, the new reform might not be fully reflected in this study. It is also curious that Beiter, Karran, and Appiagyei-Atua (2016) had problems in their study as there are no official translations of the current Italian higher education law into the English language. This might have also been due to the recent reforms in Italy. Therefore, in the next part, I cannot rely on the original policies but have to draw on scholars to summarise the most recent higher education reforms in Italy.

The most recent higher education law in Italy is widely known under the name *Gelmini Reform* or more formally *Law 240/2011*. The reform was a comprehensive reform with the aim of increasing university autonomy (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015; Moscati 2012) and changed the entire governance structure and internal organisation of universities (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015). The idea of increasing university autonomy was applied in the spirit of the Bologna Process as it meant making universities directly responsible for their finances, teaching, and research. Thus, the reform did not improve university autonomy in the sense of self-governance but enhanced autonomy in the entrepreneurial sense (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015; Moscati 2012). In other words, university autonomy was introduced as a tool and not an end in itself (Luzzato and Moscati 2007). In this respect, the reform targeted many aspects other than university autonomy, including serious funding cuts, the reduction of faculties to a maximum of twelve per institution, the reduction of reappointments of university staff as well as the possibility of privatising universities (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015; Moscati 2012). The limitation of the number of faculties led to the merging of smaller units into bigger faculties with the aim of cutting faculties that do not benefit the employment market. All these changes to the higher education system can be seen as a mean to improve the competitiveness and direct usefulness of universities in Italy and features in the developments towards risk management (Dale 2013) and the focus on the commercial aspects of higher education (see for example Zgaga 2012a; Beck 1997).

The process and contracts for appointing young researchers were also changed with the reforms. Young researchers should no longer be employed with long-term contracts but work on short term contracts for three years. Only after serving on two short-term contracts are they considered for a permanent position as an associate professor.[3] In contrast, the salary for emerging researchers should be increased in order to make it easier to start an academic career. Another change in the financial area is the state funding for universities; following the reform, it is now dependent on the alliance with quality criteria. Similarly, academics should be paid according to their performance and not the years in the job. Nevertheless, the idea of performance-related pay for academics was never implemented (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015).

[3] An associate professor in Italy is a professor with tenure, which is comparable to an assistant professor in some other university systems. The Italian name is *Professore Associate*.

Evaluation was also an issue in the reform as the quality of universities should affect the financial support of the university by the state. Regular student evaluations of professors were introduced with the reform. Today, Quality Assurance in Italy is implemented by ANVUR (Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca), an agency responsible for the process of evaluation, which is an independent juridical entity and was established in 2010 by Presidential Decree no.76. Law 204/2011 gave ANVUR among others the role to evaluate and monitor the results of higher education in accordance with quality criteria set by the ministry as well as to develop objective verifications of the results. A negative evaluation can exclude academic staff from habilitation, career advancement, and selection for a certain position (ANVUR, 2011). The evaluations and judgements of ANVUR are based on externally set guidelines (EHEA 2007). Next to a set quality assurance system a code of ethics should prevent conflicts concerning the appointment of new staff and within the administration. This code of ethics should be drafted by each university independently (DIH 2014).

Overall, the Gelmini Reform aimed at more autonomy, which is true in the managerial sense of the word. At the same time, this increased managerial autonomy means more self-responsibility for universities in financial terms. Similar trends can be observed in other European countries at the same time. In contrast the university was restructured with the effect of a reduced influence on decisions concerning their composition and their organisational and employment structure. In the Italian case, the focus on quality assurance might also mean a decrease in academic freedom due to reasons outlined in the previous chapters. Despite these changes, many authors claim that the reform neither increased university autonomy nor decrease the individual freedom of professors (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015; Ballarino and Perotti 2012; Moscati 2012). The decision-making process at Italian universities is still rather based on internal consensus than on steering at a distance (Donina, Meoli, and Palerari, 2015). Therefore, Italy provides still a good framework for exercising academic freedom at least on a practical level even if it is below the European average according to some studies such as the score cards from Beiter, Karran, and Appiagyei-Atua (2016) or the rather questionable study, as outlined in Chapter 3.2, from Estermann, Nokkala, and Steinel (2011).

5.1.1.3 The University of Bologna: Framing Academic Freedom on an Institutional Level

The University of Bologna is proud to rely on its long heritage; due to its history and role in developing the Magna Charta Universitatum, it can be seen as a place that has a strong attachment to academic values. Despite this, the University of Bologna also had to adjust to new policies such as the latest Gelmini reform which might endanger academic freedom in the long run through its focus on managerial autonomy. Hence, it is very interesting to see how the university presents itself to the public. For this purpose, the next part will rely on the website of the university and especially the strategic plan for 2013–2015 (Alma Mater Studiorum 2013) as they represent the official profile of the university that is accessible by everybody. Notwithstanding the rule that all universities have to draft an ethics statement, none has been published by the University of Bologna. During my research visit at the University of Bologna I learned that the statement is almost ready but in March 2017 it still was not available.

The University Bologna describes itself as

> *[p]roud of its heritage and its records; strong in its autonomy and the wealth of its knowledge; aware of its scientific and educational vocation and high social and moral responsibilities, the alma Mater aims to be a natural environment for the innovation of knowledge, the recognition of merit and the full education of its citizens* (ibid., 17).

It also focuses on its integration in the region as

> *The University of Bologna has a Multicampus structure, ensuring the opportunity to learn and promoting stable research activities throughout the region, aiming to improve the operations and quality of life for the university community* (Alma Mater Studiorum 2016).

Despite its long heritage, the University of Bologna is eager to adapt itself to the new challenges set by the unstable times and the Gelmini Reform. The main points from the reform that cause concerns are financial constraints, uncertainty in recruiting emerging researchers and an associated fear of brain drain, as well as problems with guaranteeing a significant number of degree programs in the light of employment limits. All these problems are part of the bigger issue of "continuing reduction of the grants from the national government mak[ing] it impossible to ensure the quality levels and sustainability of research and teaching activities in the medium term" (ibid., p. 25).

More general societal changes that the university had to adopt to are also seen as new challenges. Among them is the local and also national employment structure that does not offer many jobs for university graduates resulting from the weak link between universities and private sector. The reasons for this is the fact that the small businesses in and around Bologna cannot afford to employ qualified staff that was educated at the university. Bigger enterprises traditionally employ less qualified staff and train them within the company structures (Luzzato and Moscati 2007). The economic crises and the suspension of recruitment in the public service are also seen as negative factors for graduate employment. The focus on student employability in the strategic plan not only shows that the university is generally concerned about their students but that they included the mission set by the Bologna Process to prepare student for the job market fully. Hence, this contradicts the traditional Italian idea of the university which focuses on educating the élite instead of training highly qualified employees for the private sector (Moscati 2014). Other problems are the pressure to establish programs for improved student support and internationalisation as well as uncertainty on how and when the ministerial decree about the three-year programs will be implemented.

The strategic plan not only mentions these challenges but also gives clear suggestions on how to deal with them. The university wants to provide innovation in learning and knowledge transfer, to secure international funding and to enable students' and researchers' mobility. Furthermore, it focuses on cooperation with other universities as well as qualified public and private stakeholders. This aims at increasing quality standards, developing a sustainable internationalisation strategy and working on regional partnerships, as well as continuing the work of the university in such a way that financial cuts have the least possible negative effects on teaching, research, and the maintenance of a healthy academic community. Financing universities is a special problem of Italian higher education after the reforms as governments reduced the financial support for universities and universities themselves are not trained and often not able to deal with the issue of external fundraising (Luzzato and Moscati 2007).

Despite this modern spirit, the university is still attached to traditional academic values, as it has the goal to

> *[s]trive in all institutional areas to affirm the principles of university autonomy in order to reduce the centralist and bureaucratic interventions limiting the potential of the research and teaching programmes planning; the alma Mater is determined to define its strategies following its historical tradition as a wide-ranging University and in its*

> *distinctive Multicampus nature, but it is also aware that it must face a highly unstable situation* (Alma Mater Studiorum 2013, 5).

Overall, the strategic plan and the university website show that the University of Bologna is strongly attached to its mission while being simultaneously eager to remain a modern institution aware of new challenges and needs in society. Academic freedom itself is not mentioned on the university website or in the strategic plan but the importance of the academic community is emphasised and described as a

> *responsible community of students, teaching, administrative and technical staff, the alma Mater works to ensure that everyone, and in particular young people, can grow by experimenting the uniqueness of culture with rigour and passion, in a multitude of disciplinary and scientific languages* (ibid., 17).

In addition to providing this secure and supportive academic community, there is another sentence that can be interpreted as pointing towards academic freedom, as the university is

> *an institution open to both internal and external dialogue, pursues its goals in conformity with the values of autonomy, respect for diversity and social responsibility* (ibid., 19).

Autonomy from this section could refer to individual freedom, to institutional autonomy or to both. Nevertheless, it is not totally clear to what extent the University of Bologna supports academic freedom. From the whole document content and the University website, it is still seen that academic values and tradition play a major role in this university. The website also includes a link to the Magna Charta Observatory and hence an indirect reference to the Magna Charta Universitatum is made. Moreover, the University of Bologna hosts the Magna Charta Universitatum and is actively involved in organising and hosting the yearly conference of the Magna Charta Observatory. Therefore, academic values including academic freedom are visible for the participating students and academics as described at the beginning of this thesis.

5.1.2 Individual Perspectives on Academic Freedom: Results from the Interviews

The question now is how does this environment influence the individual experience of academics at the University of Bologna? As already mentioned in Chapter 4, the aim is not to

make generalisable statements but to obtain a diverse insight into the understanding of academic freedom, its importance and application in real life. Moreover, the data from the interviews gives an insight into higher education teaching and its relationship to research as well as in the perceived role of universities. The presentation of the results from the data will be structured into three major parts: (1) the role of universities in society; (2) the status and nature of higher education teaching; and (3) academic freedom. As university autonomy takes place on an institutional level, this issue was not a major concern in the interview data and was only mentioned when it had a direct influence on the work of academics. Therefore, university autonomy is not a stand-alone category in the data but is rather implicit in the other three parts.

5.1.2.1 The Role of Universities in Society

During the analysis of the data three main themes concerning the role of universities in society arose. The first one describes how academics see the role of universities in general, the second one is concerned with the concrete relationship between the university and society and the third one captures where academics feel that the university no longer fulfils its obligations towards society anymore.

From the interviews, it becomes clear that the role of universities is threefold and each of these tasks is also related to the relationship between society and the university. First, teaching and educating students is one of the major roles of universities. Teaching and education in this theme takes place on several levels and thus is very varied. Overall, universities should provide good education

> *... first of all the society and the family should have back ... a very good education for the young to prepare them for society…* (I8).

Preparing students involves many different aspects such as

> *... to teach ... students to become adults, to take their responsibility or at least to engage themselves in what they do, to see ... a goal in what they do, and to find the enthusiasm and reasons to do one thing instead of another thing ... to become responsible for themselves, towards their families and towards the institution ...* (I9).

> *… [universities] must transform the student from a … it is not just a technical knowledge … if the university is really working the final product of a university is the student [who] must be able to appreciate Dante or Beethoven or Bach even if the subject is group theory mathematics, so this is some sort of … super-structure that is above this … each particular subject…* (I5).

To achieve these aims, universities have a serious responsibility to the students, and many of the academics who participated in the interviews mentioned that helping students to find their way is important. Some examples for this are:

> *… to help our young people to make the right choice when they start university … to be efficient in the formation that we give …* (I8).

> *… they should be helped into this … and this is part of the higher education, the fact that you can choose what to deepen and how to do that … so which path you want to follow to do that … you might choose to maybe take two years more to finish university but accepting only very high grades in examinations or you might choose to finish in time quickly accepting lower grades … that's already a choice I think but it should be a choice made consciously* (I4).

Thus, students not only "need to be helped with knowledge" (I4) but universities need to be places "where the personality of someone may be build, expressed and discovered by the person itself" (I4).

Next to preparing students for life and society, universities are also responsible for educating students in their subjects

> *The first, of course, is to prepare people in their own specific field of application … that they are well-prepared … with a sort of uniform preparation but with 'uniform' I am not intending standard, I say that if you are … if I am preparing a mathematician here in Bologna the preparation must be uniform … that when I talk with a Chinese colleague, they have the same common basis, so 'uniform' in this sense* (I5).

Furthermore, a university should be "a social institution … producing a different kind of professionals" (I2).

In summary, it can be said that universities from the perspective of academics are there to educate students on a much broader basis than just preparing them for the job market. Academics have a responsibility to support and prepare students for work, life and society.

Research or (better) the *production* of knowledge is another important role of universities. Therefore, they are places where "knowledge is created" (I4) and "theoretical thinking" (I4) takes place. This knowledge for some of the academics should not only be produced and created but directly translated into society and practical use.

> *You can see the university as a place of knowledge … where you can receive this knowledge but I think the responsibility is not only to offer the knowledge to students or to other professions or other academics … I think also the knowledge should be translated to public because it is kind of a power … if you are able to transfer this knowledge, it means that you … it means that you contribute … to society* (I11).

In this respect, universities are also "socially more useful" (I7) in comparison to the private sector. Some academics also see universities as places where power is reproduced and created.

> *… [a university] is a strong hold of … the political power … and is an instrument of power for the political, for the élite … and one way of maintaining this power is to … deny … is to create [medical] doctors who reproduce the same kind of society…* (I2).

In this respect, universities are substantial stakeholders in creating the society of tomorrow as university graduates will move into power position and thus will be able to change or not to change the prevalent system.

Overall, the mission of universities can be described as "teaching, research and to create a community not only single persons" (I3). This also reflects the wide range of university missions that I described in Chapter 2, and shows that all of them are visible in academic life.

The relationship between the university and the society is not as straightforward as the multiple missions of universities. Some academics see a strong link between society and university while others see none.

Universities are related to society by educating students as described above but also by the kind of knowledge that some disciplines produce:

It is knowledge which is scientific … and technical knowledge which can be applied in industrial application … and so … I talk about knowledge which has applications … and relationships with industries are fundamental in order to be practical (I7).

Moreover, the teaching methodology can enhance the contact between university and society:

… there is a homeless community … there is all this kind of situations where health is destroyed and disease is produced, so our teaching is made … we call it university extension … so we try to extend university in the field … university - the students but also university as an institution … to understand what's happening out there (I2).

Another point why universities are important for society is their engagement with culture and science as

… science in particular and culture in general is of fundamental importance because it's what is making us human beings … This is what I am trying to say to students and from this point of view if you study ancient Greek or Mathematics or Music or Astronomy or Medicine is a little … is a small difference now … the important is that you do something which is not trivial, which is important for you … to make you a best … a better human being … for you and for the society (I5).

The relationship between universities and society is also described as a

… complex relationship of course but university … may … could contribute and have a part in a better society … a more inclusive and pluralistic society but its only one contribute … it's not a major … it is only one among many others (I3).

Despite this positive ambition, other academics cannot see a link between universities and society and express that

… to be honest in my field … this relation is not so clear because … maybe I am too technical, I focus on a specific technical … subject, field of interest, topic and so that could be … I have a very good relationship with other people from the university… so the scientific … I mean the relationship … my personal relationship with other scientific persons also involved in other scientific fields of research is quite good but I don't think it's so good with society in terms … you know the community or the city or whatever … not so strong (I6).

Other academics think that the relationship between society and universities was lost over time as there is today

> *… no relation at all, in my view, the university has completely lost … lost its mission … it doesn't produce any analysis of the present … of the society and on the other way the society doesn't ask it, or doesn't oblige it … to have a particular view of the society and to contribute to the making of the society … that we would like to see happen, so I think that at present there is no relation, except for the flow of money … that from the government passes to the university* (I9).

This evolving problem and ignorance between the university and society is also described by other academics:

> *… Italy as a country, this is very astonishing … I don't find in the bulk of the population a real interest for science or research in general this is … not a good thing for the Italian university system and people who study … of course, not by the majority of the population but there is a part of the mass-media … they look with some suspicion to people that are working in the university … they say well, after all they just spend … they spend money without producing anything, so there is a part of Italy that is not really convinced that culture is an important aspect of society* (I5).

This quote does not only show that universities are not sufficiently valued by society but also implies that universities are places where culture is preserved and passed on. Another academic also has an explanation for this problem and thinks that some work needs to be done in this respect, as she feels that she and other academics are lacking the skills to communicate complex issues to society and the "normal" people which might affect the connection between universities and society.

> *Because the Italian society is not aware of the importance of research … only for, you know, we need to study the cancer… From the communication point of view, I am terrible, I am not able because no one ever taught me … I am able to write a scientific paper but I am not so able … maybe it's my… I mean it's not easy to, you know, you are interested and it is not so easy to understand what I am saying … I mean you are young, clever, interested in … I mean so think about the normal people it is quite difficult and maybe we should also have this kind of competence in our background because, you know, it is important to be able and there are people who are able … it's*

their own nature … I am too strict … I am too scientific. I think it is an important point … communication (I6).

Nevertheless, education still seems to be perceived as important by families and students (I5).

The lack of interconnection between society and academia is only one point that academics think universities could do a better job in fulfilling their role. Providing free knowledge is another area in which academics are struggling due to the publication policies of journals.

> *… the other thing that we should give back … we should give back freely our knowledge … I am very pissed off by the international policy of the big editors … how can you share and diffuse your knowledge especially if it has been made with national funding… it should be free to everyone and it is not* (I8).

Another academic also criticises the adoption of the neo-liberal idea in universities and that

> *… Bologna University … unfortunately typical neo-liberal kind of university … producing diplomas … producing programs, curricula for the market out there and not producing people with enhanced critical attitude towards society able to become a very active citizen in a democratic society … it is just a tool an instrument of a neo-liberal society … it's really sad to see how it's been changing and how it has become something which is not producing … the kind of people who could really change the world … it's just producing people who … I mean servants … servants of power, there is no critical attitude in our students … I mean they come with so many ideals at the first year, especially medical students … the second year they already change and … then most of them are gradually oriented towards … first of all the profit-making profession … the doctor is the one making money, towards the private oriented kind of profession, sucked into the prevailing ideology that public is ineffective, inefficient we have to privatise* (I2).

Both these critics are influenced by the outside of the university and hence depict how society and economy influence universities and vice versa but there are also academics who see the problem within the university and blame academics for neglecting their duties towards the students and society.

> *It's not … that it's [the university] not able to … they the [professors] don't want to or they … it's much more comfortable for them … not to take this responsibility and to keep on going as they have always done, I think, so it's not a problem of skills or of resources … the university could change of course, but most colleagues that I see around me … are not interested in that because they would lose a part of their freedom in the sense of … in the end of not doing their work, not freedom in the sense of being free to … to conduct their work as they deem better… in the sense of social work or useful work* (I9).

This already shows that freedom is not always good and can also have negative consequences but I will come back to this later. Despite these rather negative views on the university and the University of Bologna specifically, there are also very positive words.

> *I think Bologna University overall is one of the best universities in Italy because it's a big university, we are not a polytechnic … so in Bologna you have people that basically cover all fields in a university … in the subjects … it's a very big university … so if you globally evaluate the university … certainly it's the best university and I found very very very nice colleagues here that share the same point of view … and also just from the rector… there is a an extreme sense of what is our duty with respect to society … so I found that Bologna University is a really excellent place to work in the Italian context and there is a lot of support, yes* (I5).

Thus, it seems that the individual context of each academic frames the experiences within the university; this shows that not only the policy context but also the close academic community and the faculty play a significant role in influencing the perceptions of people. Overall, the role of universities is described in a broad way and follows the tradition of the European university as well as modern developments, such as the demand for employability. From the academics' perspective, it is not certain that universities fulfil these varied duties towards their students and society. Nevertheless, many interviewees are ambitious about their work and do their best to fulfil their role in a responsible and reflective way.

5.1.2.2 The Status and Nature of Higher Education Teaching

As already mentioned, the main roles of universities are teaching and research. As I have shown in Chapter 2, teaching is often less valued and seems to be less important in comparison to research (see, for example, Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995). Therefore, in this part I will examine how academics understand teaching in higher education. I will also return to the point that universities do not live up to their responsibility towards students, according to one interviewee. In this section, I will focus on four issues. First, the perception of teaching in daily work; second, aspects that make a good teacher; third, teaching aims; and fourth the relationship between teaching and research.

Looking at the descriptions that academics give from their work it becomes clear that there are three groups of academics. The first group went into academia because they wanted to pursue research but most of them also enjoy teaching. The second group started an academic career because they wanted to teach in the first place but started to be interested in research as well. Finally, there is a group of academics who wanted to combine teaching and research and hence pursued an academic career. From this perspective, the preference of teaching or research is a very individual trait. Thus, looking at academics' motivation for entering and remaining in academia does not allow any firm conclusion about the status and role of teaching in comparison to research. All interviewees that participated in this study work as both university teachers and researchers.

Regarding career progress, the picture is much clearer, as several academics pointed out that teaching is not valued and does not count much for promotion.

> *But affecting career is not basically teaching, it is basically research. So even if you have high evaluations in teaching … but low research evaluations your career does not change, so it is kind of … we have to teach but teaching does not influence … what means you can invest more in research and not in teaching* (I11).

Or another one who states that

> *I know that but they should keep a bit more into consideration, for example, the teaching part because … there is no absolutely no … it's useless to teach … you have to do it but*

it's useless … in the end if you have the aim of being a professor the only thing you should do … it's research and write and that's it (I4).

The last statement is from a young academic who prefers to teach but now focuses on research because this is her weak point and she needs to improve in research. Nevertheless, there is also an academic who considers teaching to be important for the career:

I decided to … to remain researcher because otherwise … if I did the step forward as an associate professor … then I would have to teach much more and not in the frame that I like but … I would have to teach a given number of hours and in the traditional … framework of Italian teaching … that's to say as a lecturer (I9).

This academic also criticises the fact that there is no further development in teaching and that he needs to teach basic skills as his students are not well prepared for university.

It's always been the same … but when I started we were less students, there was a selection depending on many socio-graphic factors … which was before entering the university. Now there is not anymore this selection because we had a great increase … in the number of university students, which is good of course … but the university … well the system wasn't prepared for this and so … my personal reading of the process is that the university has completely forgotten it's students… what I have seen is that the university doesn't know its students, they are not followed by anyone, they are alone with themselves … and so, if they learn, if they have the skills … the ability to learn that's because their family probably gave them the tools … but otherwise the university doesn't give them formation … a sound formation … so ja they are left by themselves, they are completely alone, the institution doesn't take care of them (I9).

This is also the reason why he does not want to teach in the traditional way. He does not feel that he can support his students in the form of giving lectures but was looking for personal contact with students in order to provide some guidance for them. His claim that students are not well-prepared can be related to the issue of massification and the fact that Italy has no evaluation system of students before they enter the university (Moscati 2009). He continues by describing why there is no change in teaching, namely the

… tradition, I think it's tradition, yeah … tradition that means that most teachers today have … well, most of them are quite old and they have just known this one system, they

> *don't know … that it could be otherwise. Some of them have been abroad but probably they have looked more at research than at teaching abroad … so they have not … probably they have learned much from their colleagues abroad in the field of research but not so much … I think in the field of teaching and then … you know that's another typical character of Italy … institutions are very closed and self-referential so the university, I think is much more for the teachers than for the students, the students are kind of … back noise or of a side effect of the university* (I9).

Thus, he concludes that universities should become more customer oriented as this could be a solution for the problem.

> *… at least … as far as I know … there is more in other countries, there is more this … idea of a customer oriented university, so you must give a service in exchange for the taxes that the students pay* (I9).

Another academic sees a significant problem precisely in the idea of the student as a customer and consumer:

> *For example, now it's very fashionable in Italy to say that universities are like companies and students are like consumers … this is terrible, this is terrible, if you are a student you are much much much more than a consumer on one side, and on the other side this is a terrible and subtle bug in the mind of people …* (I5).

He further explains that the problem with this approach is that students expect to understand everything immediately as they are paying for being taught. Thus, he fears that students, academics, and society forget that learning is a long and strenuous process and that education cannot be delivered like any product in a supermarket. These two contradicting views on a customer based approach towards education and student-centred learning reflect the discussion that I already mentioned in the previous part of this chapter when I showed how I9 experiences his students as unprepared for university education. Due to this, he thinks that he has to adopt a rather schooling-type teaching attitude that involves a lot of caring and helping students to make the right decisions; in contrast, I5 sees his students as able learners who need to take on responsibility for their learning. Whereas, the view of I9 reflects more the discourses from the Bologna Process highlighted in 5.1.1.1, I5 represents an attitude towards the students that closer linked to the Humboldtian idea of higher education. None of these views is against the interest

of the students but the academics' experiences with students differ and thus their attitudes towards teaching and learning do so as well.

Next to the wish that teachers should care about their students, some other aspects of a good teacher are mentioned by the interviewees of this study. Teachers should be, for example, honest about their mistakes.

> *... if I do a physics problem at the blackboard ... and of course because it's natural ... I make some error ... I say look I made a stupid error and I will explain why I had this wrong idea in mind ... I don't try to say okay but I am professor we can change just by doing some hand waving ... so the first aspect of education is that we must be serious people believing in what we are doing ... no matter if it is Astronomy or Physics or Music or Latin or whatever* (I5).

Another idea about a good teacher is being serious and demanding

> *... it is not a matter of being tough on the students or not. It's a matter of being serious and also demanding ... but with motivation ... and I'm sure that ... well so far, I think I always had a very good relationship with students ... even if I think I'm demanding ...* (I7).

Or being fair

> *I can talk about what I see and what I see ... at least we try very much ... we concentrate a lot on that ... so on being fair... for example, this thing of the exams ... not doing them out of the dates fixed ... it's also a matter of fairness, so why should I say yes to you and no to someone else and if I say yes to you, I should say yes to everybody and then I'll be doing examination every day ...* (I4).

Overall, there are many ideas about how to be a good teacher, and the relationship between the students and the teachers seems to be very important for academics. Most academics had also clear educational aims regarding teaching, and this reflects their idea about the university. The academics in this study do not only want to focus on teaching skills for the job market but have a much broader educational aim for their students.

One academic explains that the aim of higher education teaching is

> *… critical thinking … capacity to understand the reliability of an empirical analysis … that's very important … the awareness about sources of data and I would say the capacity to organise a research or a debate or a discussion, a short paper, a short text. That's extremely important so awareness of concepts, of methods, sources of data assessment of empirical analysis, reliability and critical thinking. These things are key* (I10).

Another one expresses that

> *I think what is important to transfer to students is a positive attitude towards the topic. I think that they can understand … your energy in some way… they can have also a personal … not only a scientific background … so I have to teach them some technical knowledge … that is the duty but I think … on the other hand they can also have a personal relationship with the teacher and they can understand the importance of the … to find the right way … you know the right street for your life it is quite important to be strategically to find a job… and the integrity that is another … and also you know to work in order to get the results, that is not easy to learn … the university represents the first real step towards the job* (I6).

And a third one describes that students need

> *… to be confident in what they actually know … and be confident in in what they can develop from what they know … For me what I knew, my knowledge and methodology … I learned was the only thing … my only tools I had and this is the most valuable … maybe rhetoric but I think it's really the most valuable that you can have … and you can let the students have. I feel that in recent years, after the change in the educational system at the university level … this is not always so strong and not all the students actually know what they know … and several cases or the percentage of people who believe they are knowledgeable … while they are not knowledgeable … the percentage of these students is increasing and that is something that I notice* (I7).

These three examples from the interviews show well how complex teaching and teaching aims are. They range from acquiring skills, being prepared for work, passing on knowledge and methodology towards developing critical thinking, and learning to be confident in what you know. They also show that it is not always easy to pursue these aims as teaching is not a one-way street but is dependent on the relationship between the teacher and the student and on the

motivation, attitude, and prior knowledge of the students. Overall, it seems that the academics who took part in the study are all in favour of the humanist tradition of education that is also laid down in the Magna Charta Universitatum (Magna Charta Observatory 2016 [1988]) and is a major part of the European history of universities. Training for the job market and passing on skills is seen as important but not as a sufficient aim of higher education.

Another distinct feature since von Humboldt is the combination of research and teaching in one institution. As I have shown in Chapter 2, there is the trend that this combination of teaching and research is weakened (see for example Meyer 2012; Scott 2004). So, the next question is: Is there any relation between teaching and research for academics? Or, as pointed out by some interviewees and in the literature (Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006), is teaching just a side-effect of being a professor?

In contrast to one academic who points out that there is no relation at all between teaching and research, the combination of both is necessary and important for the other interviewees. He puts it like this:

> … *in my personal case, there's almost no relation between the two* … (I9).

Other academics see a strong relationship between teaching and research and I want to quote here from some of them as they can much better explain in their own words why they think that teaching and research have to go hand in hand.

> *There is no good teaching without research. And if you can put the result of your research into your teaching activities you can facilitate the studies of the student and stimulate in the student interest* (I3).

> *So there is a strong interaction between both dimensions. Teaching without the knowledge about the last generation upgrades in methods and techniques in market research is not possible …* (I1).

> *I am worried about the future because the state is not so much interested in investing money in research … and I think that if they cut the research aspect of this university, particularly in my scientific field we will be professors of a secondary school not of a university … in my personal experience … research is fundamental also for the teaching aspect of our activities because really you can improve … otherwise you can read a*

book and you can go … you know to explain to the student what you read … that is not the university that is a secondary school … Because really if you do research … you really need to, you know, using cutting-edge technology, you need to read a lot for your research … but when you go to the class and you are teaching … you transfer all that knowledge that is supported … that is pushed by the research that is the point… I give an example if you go to the shop you can eat the chocolate cake, you can enjoy the chocolate cake but if you learn how to make the chocolate cake, you can improve it, you can change it to your taste (I6).

However, not only research is important for good teaching: it can be also the other way around.

Well of course everyone says that there cannot be good teaching without research and vice versa, well for me even if it is a stereotype it is true. For mathematics, it is very true because teaching … even teaching the fundamental basic mathematics, in some way helps you to understand how to express mathematical ideas that are not so immediate and … there of course, there is a very strong relation between teaching and research … and … I try to correlate one with the other … it is not so easy (I8).

… the fact that you go back to your fundamentals helps you a lot because it challenges you and you are obliged to rethink the way you think usually in your daily work, your concepts, so it is … there is a tension between … in which way the concept is used in the research and the way the concept is, you know, used in your teaching … and the vet between the two creates a communication … so sometimes it happens eventually that you revise the concept and the way you use it because you understand that it doesn't give you the possibility to reply to even … to simple questions that come from your students (I10).

Teaching and research can even be combined with the application of knowledge and hence create a complete knowledge circle.

… we want to combine the production of knowledge with the reproduction of knowledge and with the implementation of knowledge … so research, teaching and fieldwork and also … the attempt to implement … to make knowledge practice … that's the centre of our work (I2).

In general, it seems that regardless of which discipline the academics are working in, when they have the chance to combine their teaching and research it is beneficial for both. Thus, academics do not want to resign from one or the other even when they are generally more drawn to one of the two tasks. Being a good researcher means being a better teacher and vice versa. In university education and research, from the perspective of the interviewees, both tasks are two sides of the same coin, which can improve each other.

Overall, the interviews at the University of Bologna show a similar trend as the literature in depicting that teaching seems to be less valued in comparison to research (see for example, Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995). Nevertheless, there are many academics who are ambitious teachers with high educational standards. At the same time, there are quite severe critical voices regarding education in the university. Having such a generally positive impression from the interviewees might be connected with the sample as they all knew that I am interested in teaching; thus, I assume that those who do not invest in teaching were not willing or asked to participate in the study. In summary, the results show that there is variety in opinions about the teaching quality at the university.

5.1.2.3 Academic Freedom

In this part of the data presentation, I come to one of the key topics of this thesis – academic freedom. I will start by giving some descriptions of academic freedom from my interviewees and by showing why academic freedom is perceived to be important. In the Italian case, none of the academics thought that academic freedom is not important for their work. After describing what academic freedom is, the next part will answer the question "Do you have academic freedom?" and will also give an insight into the relation between accountability and academic freedom. Finally, I will showcase some problems that academics have concerning academic freedom. These are not major problems but can still endanger successful academic work.

Academics have diverse ideas on the meaning of academic freedom, and there is also some confusion about the concept. One academic, for example, spontaneously referred to the concept of institutional autonomy and thought this might be identical to academic freedom. Not all of the interviewees were familiar with the concept at the beginning of the interview and had to

guess what it might mean. This is very interesting considering that the University of Bologna is the host of the Magna Charta Universitatum but might be connected to the fact that academic values are not clearly stated in the university profile, as shown above. Thus, even in Europe there is no common understanding of academic freedom. Despite some confusion with the concept, all academics could give their account of what they think academic freedom is. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, I did not give my own opinion about academic freedom or explained to the interviewees during the interview what it meant, as I aimed at getting my interviewees' point of view instead of reproducing definitions that are given in the literature.

For academics, academic freedom means several things, and I cite here several examples in order to showcase how varied the ideas about it are. At this point, I want to avoid changing the meaning of academic freedom through my own words and want to give the reader the possibility to get an insight into different ways of explaining what academic freedom means.

> *I would think that academic freedom is about freedom from the governing power … so if you just do your work of teaching and your research you are free from power, then if you … want to have more influence on the academic system … then of course you have to negotiate with the highest spheres and in the last instance with the government* (I9).

> *Academic freedom is that I am responsible … well academic freedom is in my perception … is something which is a must for … say philosophers … in humanities where you … or in politics, in political science in which you develop ideas … so and … you must be free to develop the ideas that you find consisting and motivating …* (I7).

> *… by academic freedom we understand that an academic just because of his position should be free to think and write and publish and produce the kind of knowledge he believes… should be important…* (I2).

> *Well, that you can select … on the basis of your … let's say professional … let's say competence, the topic, or the research question that you feel are most important in your field at the moment* (I10).

> *… it means that now I am old so … I am not joking I am serious … I am able to, I am better able to organise my time … so what we are doing is to divide … to share our time for these two different types of research. One is a finalised research which means that we have a grant from European programme, from private companies and so on and we*

get money for research … but generally the money we get for this is enough for doing also another type of research which is of our interest (I6).

That you are free to organise yourself even if being free to organise yourself is not always good because sometimes you need some organisational support … I have to do all on myself this can be seen as being free but it is not my main job … doing all these organisational aspects. It is needed to have more support on what is called organisational and financial support to have time to do what you are competent to do … (I11).

To have the freedom to collaborate (I11).

For teaching I think we are also protected by constitution … the freedom of teaching and topics. So, from this point of view we are free (I11).

In summary, it can be said that freedom in the eyes of interviewees applies to teaching, research and producing knowledge, collaboration, and the organisation of work. It also includes the freedom from governing power. Freedom is not always perceived as entirely positive, as the quote from I11 shows. It can also be overwhelming, when the necessary support for the work is missing.

Academic freedom is important to the interviewees for pursuing their careers in many ways but also for fulfilling the tasks of universities. First academic freedom is needed in order to have time to think as one of my interviewees explained.

I need time, maybe I need … two weeks just to think without doing anything and so this two weeks … what you say, that your production was zero … no it's just intellectual work is … it's like this … you cannot evaluate the amount of scientific work as you evaluate the amount of bureaucratic work … (I5).

This shows quite clearly the necessity of academic freedom for scientific work but also depicts the problem with the new system of measuring academic success to which I will return later. However, academic freedom is also a driving factor for research and teaching as it can be a source of motivation.

… you need to follow what is motivating you … what is the challenge that you feel that is motivating you, that is well … it's something which is really a very strong spring,

> *that's the very strong spring … without this… the government says you now … you person, you Bologna, you department, you universities, now have to study this … this maybe last for some years … but if that is forever … that will change the compelling force that we have inside to look for something new into some say routine work which is definitively not motivating* (I7).

This statement is in line with the idea that academic freedom is the basis for creativity in the work and thus a precondition for new ideas and innovation, to use contemporary vocabulary.

> *I think … it is important … there is, there should be some space left for creativity… that you should have some space to create … in the world of ideas …* (I10).

> *… they are free to follow their idea and then maybe in two years' time, it's time to see if their idea was right or not … but they have to be free to follow their idea, it's very important for the development of new strategies or new elements …* (I4).

In summary, academics claim that academic freedom is important to keep academics motivated and focused, to created new ideas, and to pursue the ideas that they think are important for the future of their discipline and society, in more general terms.

Overall, academics in Bologna felt that they have all the necessary freedom that they need. Academic freedom was fully reached in Italy after the Second World War, as one of my interviewees described.

> *… if you consider that in 1931 there were … so eighty years or so … there were about 1200 university professors and when the fascist regime Mussolini … obliged them to swear their loyalty, obedience to the regime, almost all of them … did sign - the swearing of the oath of loyalty to the regime. So, things have … evolved very much and we are now in a democratic system in Italy this is sure … in particular if you consider that our academic tradition was not a tradition of … much freedom from power, okay so I think that in the republican years after … after the Second World War, with the republican constitution the academy has become really free from power at least in … in the low ranks, okay…* (I9).

Some even continued an academic career

> *… because here you are free. … [the private companies] offered me an analytical work not a research position ... but here I am completely free … I feel free but also in the past I did not have the impression to be to be pushed or so* (I4).

In contrast to those academics who felt completely free, others consider that they have academic freedom but only in return for power

> *... if you don't ask for power then you have a very large autonomy, you can do almost everything you want. Within the laws of course, but you are very, very free to do anything you want. But then… you don't have to ask for resources or funds or money or power within the organisation etcetera. But if you … if you accept to leave all this aside then you are really, really free in Italy* (I9).

Power in this respect means:

> *Well, it is an institutional power, so within an institution you are … you are among those who take the decisions …* (I9).

Some academics also feel that academic freedom and problems with it might be connected to different academic disciplines.

> *… in my field … Astrophysics … I never had any problem of academic freedom … I imagine that academic freedom can be an issue in some more … society related disciplines …* (I5).

Another academic, who is just at the beginning of her career, makes a connection between freedom and experience, and explains that freedom increases with the time spend in academia.

> *Then I'm not totally free in the sense that … I should discuss before the topic that I'm choosing, the path that I'm following, the things that I'm doing … and this I think is also quite correct, because the limit of your freedom, the amount of freedom that you have … I think is directly linked … to your experience … But it's not so great yet, so for example I … my influence and that's an expression of my freedom, the way in which the students organise and work on their final dissertation because they have to discuss it with me* (I4).

Freedom here is seen as being independent of superior academics. This interviewee also makes a connection between her teaching and academic freedom as she considers her influence on students as an expression of her freedom, which is connected to a strong responsibility for the students.

> *… and I take my responsibility on them … so if I make something wrong … wrong in the sense … not wrong, exactly wrong but something that my professor is not … is not willing to do with that student then it's my responsibility directly. But it's also an expression of my freedom …* (I4).

Another academic talks about having freedom in teaching as well as in research.

> *… I mean in terms of research it [academic freedom] is considered as granted, you know, … as a granted principle, I would say, in terms of teaching, yes, because again we are free … but still you need to have this freedom which is also combined into the organisation of your teaching activities, so just to give a very simple example, imagine that you have a programme where you have ten courses and the programme is about administrative science, so you, each professor should be free, of course, because this is a way to allow the individual professor to give her or his best in the class, right? But still you should avoid overlapping … you should avoid overlapping in terms of content but also overlapping in terms of time, of schedule, this are silly details presumably but when you have this at a larger scale in a university … of course this starts to become important. So, yes, you have freedom but this freedom should be, you know, integrated into an organised setting …* (I10).

This quotation shows clearly that an academic's freedom needs to be guided by principles such as a clear study structure and a meaningful study content for the students. In other words, academic freedom needs to be incooperated in a responsible way in academic work. Hence, not everything that restricts an academic in his or her work is necessarily also a problem for academic freedom but might be a necessary structure or similar. The academic from above, for example, thinks that

> *… when I'm studying I feel completely free ... I'm working on a difficult topic which is the relationship between politics and justice but still I fell completely free* (I10).

In her explanations she also distinguishes between academic freedom and other details that guide her work when she continues

> *... what I feel is very important is the fact that when I'm writing, I want to have all the data on the basis of which I'm ... arguing something ... but this is something different, it's not to be free or not to be free ... it's just to be honest ... you are responsible for what you are saying that's also very important, you are accountable* (I10).

This quotation shows well that academics attempt to differentiate between academic freedom and other things that are connected to research and teaching ethics as well as to the responsibility for the student and society. This is not seen as a constraint of academic freedom but a necessary attitude in order to be a good researcher and teacher. In this respect, there are aspects of accountability that are important to sustain a healthy academic community. They are not seen as restrictions on academic freedom but more as an obligation that comes with it.

> *I never had any problem with the ... with academic freedom ... of course with ... but this is not an academic freedom issue, of course if I work on some problem with someone in the United States I will not do work on the same subject with someone in Germany…* (I5).

In other words, academic freedom means also a responsibility towards colleagues, and an ethical attitude frames the collaboration between different scholars. One's own academic peer group is seen as important to guide academics and to put pressure on them. Therefore, accountability is understood in a more traditional way of control within the academic community.

> *... of course, you need a sort of ... peer pressure, because I cannot say ... I am an astronomer, I have academic freedom and now I start to do astrology ... again, of course this is a borderline…* (I5).

This quotation also suggest that academic freedom should be exercised within one's own expertise.

Another way in which academics are guided in their work is the 'funding game' as one of my interviewees calls it.

> *You can select ... on the basis of your ... let's say professional ... let's say competence ... you can select the topic, or the research question that you feel is most important in your field at the moment. In this respect, you are free, of course ... if you ask for funding ... there are selection processes ... so you are free to apply for it [the funding] with your topic ... then of course you are compared with other topics ... so it might happen that your topic is considered to be less important than other topics, that's all part of the game* (I10).

Thus, freedom does not mean obtaining the funding for a research project – it just means the freedom to decide on a topic and to forward this topic to a funding agency. International competition hence creates a framework in which some research is funded and other research is not funded.

Not for all academics does the responsibility for society stop at creating knowledge on basis of well-conducted research and passing it on to students. It also includes the responsibility to apply knowledge.

> *So, to implement … to actually modify the practice … to modify the policies, the researcher, the academic should do something because most of academics … virtually all believe that the most important thing they should do … it's just to publish in a well-established journal that's it. Not for us it doesn't end there … the responsibility of the academic … I mean it [the academic] should do as much as possible to make sure that what … that whatever knowledge has been produced should be … will be translated into practice, into policy* (I2).

One academic even wishes for more control from society and expresses that academic freedom should be more constrained. It is the same academic who points out that universities do not fulfil their social responsibility towards students and society anymore. Therefore, he has come to the conclusion that

> *… well I think that they have struggled in the past generations … have struggled to get this freedom and now they just live on what they have gained. I think that if we were, we the academics today, were really challenged by society we couldn't resist the challenge and we should surrender a part of our academic freedom … I think that the government and the families and the state should really call her … call academy to its function. Yeah, I think that, now in this context we have too much freedom as university*

system, just like the students have too much freedom … to be students as they like, that means that most of the times … they are not students at all … and that means that most of the time the university is not a university at all in Italy … so not on the side of course, of the contents, that you have … you must have freedom on what you teach or what you choose to do research about but on what is your utility … your use in the society. I think that now … the Italian university should be constrained, should be obliged to answer to their stakeholders which are in the end the government and the society, ja. We have too much freedom just like our students have too much freedom and that means that we have lost the sense, the meaning of our work (I9).

I have shown above that most academics in academia are satisfied with the degree of academic freedom that they have and that they see a strong connection between freedom and an obligation towards society and their students. Nevertheless, the interviewees raised some topics that restrict and hinder their academic freedom.

The most obvious problem that many academics complain about is probably bureaucracy. Academics feel that the increased bureaucracy keeps them from doing their "real work". This administrative aspect of academic work was not directly linked to academic freedom in the interviews, so I will only give some short examples of it.

The bureaucracy takes a lot of time … that is not my job, so I mean it is not so supportive in doing your job (I6).

… we have a lot of bureaucracy so … my personal feeling is that I spent too much time with bureaucratic matters … much more than what I think would be normal in a standard country and so this is a little bit worrying to me because it's taking time from more important aspects… (I5).

Yeah, on one hand I understand the fact of a spending review, the fact that the university has economic problems like all the institutions … so I understand the rational of it, but sometimes I believe it can be a block. Because if I have, you know, to bring about all these documents … sometimes I am overwhelmed … with administrative documents and I say okay … than I prefer not to invite anyone because otherwise I lose too much time on that … (I4).

In other words, academics complain about the time and energy they lose in administrative processes. Sometimes this even keeps them from doing something good for their students, like inviting a guest lecturer. The relationship between academics and administration ranged from having a very good relationship and feeling supported to being left alone and then a very bad relationship. One academic even employs a secretary from her own funds for two days per week to deal with administration. Another academic sees the problem less so in administration but caused by academics themselves.

> *… but bureaucracy in the university is not … in Italy as far as I know … is not imposed from above but is a product … of the academics themselves, so we could at least in part make more simply … simplifyicate the bureaucracy but in the course of years … now actually you cannot … so now in Bologna, for example, you have as many teachers as we have secretaries and administrative personnel, we have three … about three-thousand teachers and about three-thousand secretaries and technicians etcetera, so now you cannot … you cannot make cuts … on the bureaucracy because now it's a job position … so it's a political problem, now we are really suffocated by bureaucracy it could have been done differently but they should have chosen to take another other way before … now it's true we are … we are a bit shocked by bureaucracy* (I9).

In other words, it is not only the outside world that is responsible for problems in universities but some of them are "homemade". Therefore, academic freedom is not only threatened from the outside but can also be an issue within the academic community.

One of them is the problem with well-established schools of thought that can prevent the emergence of new ideas and alternative ways of teaching.

> *… but I can see … that there are schools of thoughts in different solutions or also technical things have some … are based on some interpretations which are not so objective … even so, they may be presented in say, an objective way but they are … interpretations and the same facts … which are unique when you are … when now described qualitative or when you describe the results of an experiment the same facts can now be interpreted in different ways … and I see that there are schools of thought which are rather strict in promoting only their way of thinking and banning, literally banning the opposite way of thinking or alternative ways of thinking … that can also arrive at the freedom of teaching. But it's more a freedom of interpreting, so I can see*

> *that publishing in journals … you can see these fights, which are fights against different interpretations based on different interpretations and schools of people who made their career out of some interpretation … they strongly provoke the interpretation fighting against … I'm sure … that will prevent also people in their schools from teaching a subject in a different way …* (I7).

This shows, in the words of Elder-Vass (2012), how strong norm circles that are prevalent in one discipline can shape the knowledge that is produced in it. Such strong norm circles can also impact the individual freedom as the freedom of interpretation is not given in an atmosphere in which publications are guided by the current norm circles. Being led by academic disciplines makes it also not easy to change the discipline within the career as academics usually have to adapt to the rules of the particular discipline and prevalent norm circles within this academic discipline.

> *… [changing disciplines is] not easy because, of course, you have also to compromise with let's say you know … context in life … but you need to compromise because when you are evaluated, you are evaluated as a professor or candidate or applying professor in something … economics, sociology, political science, so … you should be able to show that you stand at this … the level that is requested for the position you are applying for … which is fine in my view, so I think you should, you know, try to keep a balance between what is requested by the institutional context which is important because it creates a sort of … an objective level of standard for all people that are, you know, doing work in a discipline … and what is in your mind, your scientific research, which is enriched by different disciplines, so that's I think, this is a big challenge, this is a big challenge, yeah* (I10).

Choosing a very different path in comparison to the usual approach in one discipline can also lead to a more severe reaction form the academic community.

> *So, the important intervention is upstream … is not on the actual disease itself, so that … that's our approach and that's also the reason why we are seen as a as a strange cell of political activism … actually we have been called as a heretic cell … within the school of medicine, but that was some years ago. Now there are, of course … since also the mainstream medical literature is talking about these things … also my colleagues have to acknowledge that. After all they have to come to terms with what we do* (I2).

In other words, sometimes dispute within the academic community is needed until a new approach is validated and taken seriously. This involves a lot of effort from the academics in establishing something new and is also dependent on some luck. This unit within the university, for example, benefitted from the fact that their approach found international recognition. Without these changes in their research area, it would have much more difficult to defend their position within their own faculty.

In the "age of measurement" (Biesta 2010), a new problem is emerging in the higher education landscape: the focus on numbers, which brought an emphasis on quantity instead of quality and had consequences not only for academic work but also for the experience of academic freedom. I will give one example from the data that is rather long but brings the idea to the point.

> *No, I think academic freedom … there is something more subtle that can make some problem with the academic freedom … so this is in my opinion the exceptional weight that is now put on the number of papers that you write, how many students you have, of course, some check is useful but you cannot classify people just saying oh you published ten papers, the other published nine papers … so let me explain in detail … because maybe I was wrong … when I said that in my case there is no problem with academic freedom, let me explain this with an example … For example in Astronomy, right now … in Astronomy we have two major lines of research, one is the huge big cooperation's, like people doing practical physics at CERN in Geneva … so you have collaborations of several hundred Astronomers working for … in what they call surveys, so of course, you need, like in Germany ESO … you need big telescopes and, of course, to have big telescopes you need countries and you need hundred peoples scores, so it's a huge huge investment … many people, so you can imagine when such a big project starts to produce, you write … you are hundreds of people, so you write hundred papers per year okay? Now let's look to the other aspect, like myself, people doing theoretical Astrophysics, you don't need telescopes … what you really need is time, because you have to think some problem … you have to start to work on this problem and maybe after a couple of months that you are working on the problem you just realise that it's a dead … dead way … and start again, so of course, if you … if you work on theory, I am not saying it's more difficult … it takes longer to produce something, by nature not just because you are lazy …* (I5).

Despite showing the problem of evaluations that are based on numbers, this section supports also the claim about the subtle dimensions of academic freedom that I made in Chapter 3.4. It shows that there are many subtle situations in which academic freedom is under threat and that without a deeper reflection most academics do not realise in their daily work that they have problems with their freedom. Therefore, it prevents them from fighting for a better position of their work. A continuous conversation about academic freedom within different disciplines, not only from a social science perspective, can enable academics to reconsider their rights and to take appropriate action when necessary.

The focus on numbers and on an evaluation based on numbers also has direct consequences for the freedom of choice for young academics.

> *... because young people … now they look, of course, because everyone will do the same what's the most probable … the most simple way to reach a position and they move in in the bigger projects and so less and less people are doing theory ... and so this is a subtle … an indirect effect for academic freedom, because you are in some sense forcing people to choose something to work on … and I think this is a problem, in fact I was discussing this with a colleague of Harvard University and remember that I … in this case, I am not blaming Italy, because this stupid way of counting papers was invented in the United States ... we know Americans they like to count everything, so they count papers but now, they realised that this is a problem and in fact this colleague tells me well yes this is true in many places they count papers, in Harvard we start again to read the papers so I think this … they realised that this approach at the end can be dangerous for the academic freedom …* (I5).

This problem is not only visible in research but also influences teaching and work with students, especially with regards to student assessment.

> *You cannot evaluate people just putting crosses on the mathematic examination and say okay, three are a yes, two are empty answers … so I evaluate the people … this is completely stupid you cannot judge a person like this. I prefer a white paper where people write on the paper … and so you can learn what they have right in their mind, what they have wrong in their mind, of course, this is a much more expensive, time consuming and also sometimes boring process but it is the only way … really to educate people…* (I5).

Similarly, the ever-increasing student numbers and seeing them as a source of income creates a problem for academia.

> *I'm not in favour of the argument which says that we receive from the government an amount of money which is proportionate to the numbers of students that we have … so we have to accept as many students as we can … because that is not a good economic argument to me … that is not leading to an institution which is at the end recognised for the quality of the graduates that its schools have… so if we want to be an institution known for the quality of the graduates we have to pursue the quality of the graduates … not accepting everyone that's the main iteration* (I7).

A rather unexpected threat to academic freedom is pointed out by one of the interviewees who makes the mass-media and politicians responsible for the focus on numbers and the confusion between quality and quantity.

> *… mass-media bla-bla-bla … it's twenty years that there is a campaign saying: oh you have the university … people working at the university are just not doing anything for the society bla-bla-bla … so the reaction for this attack was to say okay, so now we will … politicians, for example, they say now we will do a real control of the university … so this is understandable, this can be also right in some sense … and so how can you quantify for the public opinion, well if you count a product … a so extremely low level check just … how many papers you produce, okay? … there is a confusion between quantity and quality, I can produce tons of papers meaningless and so my university would be better just because I produce hundreds of papers ... meaningless, no but in the … in the public opinion this is a quantity that at least can be measured …* (I5).

The focus on measuring the outcome might be also connected to the decreased trust in the academic profession in Italy (Moscati 2009) and world-wide (Carvalho 2012; Trackman 2008). Despite the fact that universities did not establish this focus on quantitative measurement, they are involved in adopting it themselves.

> *… university system tries in some sense to defend … itself and the only possibility to reply to such low-level statement is just to present … look we are doing something … unfortunately a serious evaluation is a lot more complicate, more subtle, enters in aspects about quality that are completely above the average level of Italian electors* (I5).

Thus, he concludes that a proper analysis of the quality of higher education would need serious considerations and would be difficult to communicate to the public. This leads to one point that I made earlier, namely the difficulty of academics to communicate in a proper and straight forward way with society. In this respect, universities have not found an alternative way of proving their contribution to society and thus stick with quantitative measurement.

Another thing that bothers academics is the new structure of the university since the Gelmini Reform, the combination of different schools into bigger faculties (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015; Moscati 2012). This had clear consequences for the autonomy of campuses that are not placed within the city of Bologna.

> *We have experimented … a different model before the last reform and ten years ago, or also 5 years ago … we had more independence in our organisation and possibility to have control on the decision process. Now we have much minus autonomy in the decision process* (I1).

The decreased autonomy is based on the problem that now all decisions need to be signed off by the main part of the university, which involves a lot of travel between the campuses. This often results in poor management due to a delay caused by a complex communication process. Therefore, not only academic freedom but also university autonomy are influenced by new policies and a changing environment. Overall, academics felt that they have enough or even too much freedom in their work.

In summary, it can be stated that the experience of academic freedom and the status of teaching is related to regional, national, and institutional policies but is also highly dependent on the individual situation of each academic. In general, academic freedom seems to be granted in Italy, but there still are emerging problems with academic freedom. The academics of this study were often not immediately aware of these problems but needed some time to reflect on the topic until they were able to reconsider their situation from another standpoint. From this point of view, I can conclude that a reflection on academic freedom is important in order to depict the subtle aspects of academic freedom and to raise awareness about the concept.

Teaching is – as reflected in many documents and policies but also in academic publications (such as Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Kerr 1995) – less valued in comparison to research. This stands in contradiction with academics' claim that teaching and research inform each other and are dependent on each other. In other words,

an increase in quality in one area will probably have a positive effect on the other area. Thus, some academics raise the point that teaching and research need to be rebalanced in the evaluation processes.

The role of universities and teaching aims are very diverse according to my interviewees; in this respect, they go beyond the policy discourse and remain attached to traditional academic values. The academic community can enhance academic work but it also has the power to block new ideas and innovation. This raises again the question I pointed out in Chapter 2.4.3. Who possesses academic freedom: the academic community or the individual? According to my interview data, academic peer review is very important to maintain high quality research and education. Thus, the balance between the freedom of the individual and the control of the community needs to be found repeatedly.

In the next part of this chapter, I present my second case study with the National University of Singapore. I will conclude this chapter by comparing both cases and by offering a deeper analysis of the results.

5.2 An Asian Perspective on Academic Freedom: The National University of Singapore

5.2.1 The Context

5.2.1.1 Asia-Pacific-Rim: Framing Academic Freedom on a Regional Level

In comparison to Europe, which is a rather coherent higher education area due to the Bologna Process, the Asia-Pacific-Rim is structured in a quite vague way. It is a huge area and not a region in the conventional sense, which covers very different countries and very different higher education systems. Thus, there are many different understandings about what constitutes the Asian region or even more broad the Asia-Pacific-Rim. Nevertheless, the Asian region has a long history of interconnectedness. Duara (2015) describes Asia as a networked region that was linked in earlier times by the terrestrial land and later the maritime silk routes. The connection between empires along this road were destroyed and re-organised in the course of history. The driving force in establishing and re-establishing "enormous civilizational and technological connections" (ibid., 15) between Asian countries were trade and religious

networks. Hence, the Asian region did not depend on territorial, economic, cultural and political homogenization but on plurality that could still foster economic exchange (ibid.). In modern times intergovernmental initiatives have appeared that integrate individual countries into the region in the political and economic sense. This is also true for the Pacific-Rim with the Association of Pacific-Rim Universities (APRU) as an initiative for higher education in this geographical area.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) can be considered among the most visible links of this type in Asia. It was founded in 1976 by the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. ASEAN was a follow-up association that was based on the Association for Southeast Asia (ASA). Transforming one association into another is known in Europe, as the European Economic Community was also the basis for the later-founded European Union. The ASEAN Declaration is the first document that sets the basis for the new association (ASEAN 2016a). Today, ASEAN includes ten different Asian countries (ASEAN 2016b) and works under the motto "One Vision, One Identity, One Community" (ASEAN 2016c). The primary aim of ASEAN is "to strengthen further the existing bonds of regional solidarity and cooperation" (ASEAN 1967, 1) due to their acknowledgement:

> *that in an increasingly interdependent world, the cherished ideals of peace, freedom, social justice and economic well-being are best attained by fostering good understanding good neighbourliness and meaningful cooperation among the countries of the region already bound together by ties of history and culture* (ASEAN 1967, 1).

This aim suggests that peace, freedom, and social justice are well established values also in Asia. Therefore, freedom – although in this formulation it is not understood as academic freedom – is not an unknown legal term in the region. The aims of ASEAN, like those of the European Union, are rather broad, and they also comprise issues connected to higher education such as

> *3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administratif fields;*
>
> *4. To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres;[…]*

6. To promote South-East Asian studies;[…] (ibid., 2-3).

Two of the purposes refer to education and higher education in the broad sense: Point 3 asks for cooperation in science, and Point 4 is concerned with training and research facilities. Nevertheless, ASEAN does not provide any particular recommendations or publications on values such as academic freedom or university autonomy. In 2015, ASEAN established regional cooperation for education in the form of regular ASEAN Education Ministers' Meetings. The following main priorities in education were agreed

> *(i) Promoting ASEAN Awareness among ASEAN citizens, particularly youth; (ii) Strengthening ASEAN identity through education; (iii) Building ASEAN human resources in the field of education; and (iv) Strengthening ASEAN University Networking* (ASEAN 2016d).

In other words, Asia represented through ASEAN is a region that fosters cooperation between member states also in education. Higher education has a particular role as ASEAN aims at establishing a strong university network. Nevertheless, Asia does not intend to homogenise the region. Hence, there is not a strong higher education area visible as in the case of EHEA. In other words, ASEAN is a networked region and not a "supra- or federated nation type of region" (Duara 2015, 15) like the European Union.

Next to ASEAN, there is another major international organisation that is concerned with the region that includes South East Asian countries including Singapore: the Association of Pacific-Rim Universities (APRU). In comparison to ASEAN, APRU is not an organisation based on the cooperation of governments but on the cooperation of single research universities. APRU was founded in 1997 by the presidents of the California Institute of Technology, the University of California Berkeley, the University of California Los Angeles and the University of Southern California, which are outside the Asian region. The founders vision for establishing APRU

> *was to establish a premier alliance of research universities as an advisory body to international organisations, governments and business on the development of science and innovation as well as on the broader development of higher education. The vision now encompasses focusing new knowledge on the global challenges affecting the region* (APRU 2016a).

There, APRU aimed at framing and influencing the higher education landscape in the region. This vision was well received in the broad Pacific Rim area as APRU in 2016 had 42 member universities from Australia, Canada, Chile, China and Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, and the USA (APRU 2016b). In other words, APRU represents the universities in the Pacific region including several Asian ones. APRU focuses today on three thematic priorities that seek to

> *…advance the aspirations of its members and contribute to global society by:*
>
> *1) Shaping Asia-Pacific Higher Education and Research*
>
> > *APRU universities can together shape the policy environment for higher education and research and influence social, economic, political and cultural forces that impact the future of universities.*
>
> *2) Creating Asia-Pacific Global Leaders […]*
>
> *3) Partnering on Solutions to Asia-Pacific Challenges*
>
> > *[…] with partners from government and business, international organiszations, other universities and community leaders […]* (APRU 2012, 4).

In other words, as already mentioned, APRU wants to shape the higher education landscape in the Pacific-Rim. Overall, APRU is interested in the idea of world class leadership and wants to educate world leaders in its member institutions. Consideration of these statements leads to the impression that APRU is mainly interested in the economic dimension of higher education and research that is affiliated to rankings and benchmarking. APRU's members are also oriented towards a practical use of higher education and research as they state that they want to work on solutions to challenges.

In the area of education and research, APRU has three priorities for shaping higher education:

> *To advance opportunities in education and research, promoting quality teaching and learning through innovation and professional development, in the context of international competition and funding challenges.*
>
> *To build networks of academic leaders and specialists for capacity-building, connecting international expertise to national and institutional challenges.*

> *To partner with other international organisations to ensure that the consortium plays a significant and influential policy role as the leading alliance of research universities in the region* (APRU 2016c).

These aims should be reached by combining "policy research, innovative practice and academic leadership networks" (APRU 2016c). These statements make it even clearer that APRU is highly interested in improving teaching and research and in making them competitive on the global market. In other words, APRU's mission and vision reflects very much the spirit of contemporary university policy that is oriented towards measurement, as outlined in Chapter 2. Similarly to ASEAN, APRU is not intending to harmonise higher education in the region but to support single universities in achieving world-class status and in establishing a strong network between those world-class research universities. To use Duara's (2015) words, APRU can be described as a networked region concerning higher education in the Pacific-Rim.

Next to this rather economic view on higher education and research, APRU relates to traditional academic values when its states in its impact report that "[u]niversities offer forums for debate and public dialogue. With an established culture of academic freedom, they have long played a traditional role as the critical conscience for society" (APRU 2016d). However, this is the only place in which a reference to academic freedom can be found. Even if universities from countries that have legal protection of academic freedom, such as the USA and Canada, are involved in APRU academic values do not seem to play a major role in their published documents and their mission and vision statements. This fact might be connected to the status of academic freedom in other member countries of APRU. The status and importance of academic values is not naturally a given in all countries as academic freedom is still a Western value that is spreading slowly over the world (see for example Zha 2012).

Overall, freedom and especially academic freedom are not extensively elaborated by associations that represent the Asia-Pacific Rim, combining the Pacific-Rim in which APRU is active and the Asian Nations represented by ASEAN. Academic values are not mentioned in this context to be important for advancing higher education and research despite one exception in the impact report of APRU. However, some Asian university rectors expressed their support of academic freedom and university autonomy by signing the Magna Charta Universitatum. Among them are universities from China, Cambodia, India, Japan, and the Philippines (Magna Charta Observatory 2016c).

5.2.1.2 Singapore: Framing Academic Freedom on a National Level

This relative lack of awareness of the concept of academic freedom is also reflected in the case of Singapore which is a member of the ASEAN and has hosted APRU at the National University of Singapore until 2015. This is not obvious from the beginning considering that Singapore was a British colony and adopted after the independence from Malaya in 1965 the British higher education system. The adherence to the British university system was based on the fact that most statesmen were still educated in Britain and the desire that Singaporean diplomas were recognised there. During this time, universities in Singapore were state financed in order to secure academic autonomy (Kim 2001).

Later on, the People's Action Party (PAP) decided to move from the British-American towards the Swiss-German model of education which meant a move from general liberal education for all towards a technical or vocational education for most of the students (Kim 2001). With the aspiration to turn Singapore in an economically successful nation combined with the fact that Singapore has only few resources, PAP understood that higher education is essential for economic growth and that innovation and R&D (research and design) can be strong income sources for the country (Wong, Ho and Singh 2007). Thus, PAP saw the need to nationally manage the university system, justified by the claim that universities and academics "lack the will to tackle economic strategies" (Kim 2001, 170). The state started to directly intervene in matters of selection and admission of students, curricula design and delivery, organisation of examinations, staff appointment and promotion as well as in financial management to secure the national aims of nation building and economic transformation (ibid.).

Overall, Singapore belongs together with Japan, China, Hong-Kong China, Korea and Taiwan to the Confucian education zone (Marginson 2011) and is today described as a post-Confucian system (Marginson 2016). The Confucian idea is not only visible within education but applies to the whole country, hence Singapore is based on the shared values of Confucianism. This includes that the nation stands above the community and society above the self, that the family is perceived as the basic unity of society; that the community supports and respects the individuals and that the focus is on consensus instead of conflict which goes in line with the state aim of religious and racial harmony (Kim 2001). In other words, the Confucian tradition emphasises loyalty to the state in order to facilitate national integration and to implement national development planning (Shin 2015).

Confucian education can be described as a continuing and holistic process. The central aim is to learn to be a human through the principle of *self-cultivation* of all man. This includes, for example, self-restraint, self-correction and self-improvement (Kim 2001). Marginson (2011) points towards four interdependent elements to describe the Confucian model. First, a strong shaping of structures, funding and priorities by the nation state; second "a tendency to universal tertiary participation, partly financed by growing levels of household funding of tuition, sustained by a private duty, grounded in Confucian values, to invest in education" (ibid., 587); third, the paradigm of *one chance* national examinations to foster social competition, university hierarchies and the commitment of families to invest in education; and fourth "accelerated public investment in research and 'world-class' universities" (ibid., 587). The focus on competition, world-class universities and financial support of universities by the state will be re-occurring topics in this Chapter.

Drawing on Kong, Olds (2007) describes three main phases of higher education policy reforms in Singapore. The first phase from 1965 to 1986 aimed at building technological know-how, the second phase from 1985 to 1995 intended to expand science and technology and the last phase from 1995 to 2005 was meant to foster creativity and innovation. From the 1980s on the quality of higher education was targeted by higher education policy with the ultimate goal of turning Singapore into a hub of education (Mok 2010). Todays, deputy Prime Minister expressed this aim as follows:

> *Our vision, in shorthand notation, is to become the Boston of the East. Boston is not just MIT or Harvard. The greater Boston area boasts of over 200 universities, colleges, research institutes and thousands of companies. It is a focal point of creative energy; a hive of intellectual, research, commercial and social activity. We want to create an oasis of talent in Singapore: a knowledge hub, an ''ideas-exchange'', a confluence of people and idea streams, an incubator for inspiration* (Teo Chee Hean cited in Olds 2007, 959).

Singapore's approach to policies concerning higher education quality was rather thoughtful and included two stages. The first stage was based on a thorough review of the higher education system and based on this the introduction of reforms. This stage included the introduction of an International Advisory Panel (IAAP) in order to receive advices on a national as well as institutional level from leading international academics, curriculum changes to foster broad-based and cross-disciplinary higher education, the introduction of innovative teaching and

assessment methods to encourage creative and critical thinking, and a more flexible admission policy for university students. Next to teaching developments, the reform aimed at strengthening the role of universities in the knowledge creation "through postgraduate and research education in universities" (Mok 2010, 424). The second stage was the incorporation of public universities. This included an increased operational autonomy for the two leading universities, the National University of Singapore and the Nanyang Technological University and the development of stronger internal management structures within these universities. Despite, the move towards university autonomy the state secured its control over universities by the rule that the statutory boards have to ask for approval from the government for important decisions (Mok 2010).

In comparison to Europe, Singapore has a long history of informal bans of certain topics and the expression of "oppositional views" (Altbach 2001, 213). Among banned topics certainly are religious topics, local corruption and topics that raise questions about governmental policies and politics in the country. In order to maintain silence on such banned topics there are serious penalties for raising sensitive issues in the classroom and funding often depends on "appropriate academic and political behavior on the part of the faculty" (ibid., 213). In this respect, university staff in Singapore is treated as government employees (Mukherjee and Wong 2011) and there is a lot of overlapping between politicians, university staff and university leaders (Kim 2001). Today, the phrase *academic freedom* does not appear at all in Singapore's higher education laws, which include the Singapore Management University Act Chapter 302A (The Law Revision Commission 2014), the Education Act Chapter 87 (The Law Revision Commission 1987), and the National University of Singapore (Corporatisation) Act Chapter 204A (The Law Revision Commission 2006). The same is true for *individual rights of academics or students*.

Nevertheless, the word *autonomy* can be found in some of the publications and press releases of the Ministry of Education (see for example MOE 2005a; 2005b; 2002). The phrase *university autonomy* in this document and the press releases refers entirely to the more modern idea of autonomy, which means autonomy in organisational and financial terms. This is not only visible in governmental publications but also scholarly discussions (see for example, Marginson 2011; Mukherjee and Wong 2011; Mok 2010; Olds 2007). Autonomy in Singapore, as today in many other places, is strongly bound to accountability and is meant to increase the chances of each of the institutions to become a world-leading university that can enhance the

economic and cultural advantages of Singapore and its citizens. In other words, autonomy in the Singaporean context is a mean to the end of advancement and achieving world-leadership (MOE 2005a; 2005b; 2002).

Freedoms in general are part of Singaporean law as the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (The Law Revision Commission 1999) includes a section on fundamental liberties. This section refers to the liberty of the person, the prohibition of slavery and forced labour, the protection against retrospective criminal laws and repeated trials, equal protection to the prohibition of banishment and freedom of movement, the freedom of speech, assembly and association, the freedom of religion, and rights in respect of education. Out of these general (or civic) freedoms, the most relevant ones for a discussion on academic freedom as very specific freedoms are probably the following: right of free speech, assembly and association. In this respect, the constitution states

> *14. […]*
>
> > *(a) every citizen of Singapore has the right to freedom of speech and expression;*
> >
> > *(b) all citizens of Singapore have the right to assemble peaceably and without arms; and*
> >
> > *(c) all citizens of Singapore have the right to form associations.*
>
> *(2) Parliament may by law impose*
>
> > *[…] such restrictions as it considers necessary or expedient in the interest of the security of Singapore or any part thereof, friendly relations with other countries, public order or morality and restrictions designed to protect the privileges* of *Parliament or to provide against contempt of court, defamation or incitement to any offence; […]* (ibid., Art. 14).

As this excerpt of the constitution shows, personal freedoms or civil liberties are guaranteed but under many conditions. They are, first of all, limited to citizens of Singapore and thus do not apply to visitors or foreigners. For higher education, this means, for example, that visiting academics cannot rely on the right to freedom of speech. There is also a wide range of possibilities given to the state for restricting individual freedoms not only on basis of security

but also on moral or public reasons. Thus, the freedom of speech is not laid down in a very secure way as there is a lot of room for manoeuvre to punish free expression.

Another part of the constitution engages specifically with rights in respect to education. Non-discrimination is the main concern of this article.

> *16.—(1) Without prejudice to the generality of Article 12, there shall be no discrimination against any citizen of Singapore on the grounds only of religion, race, descent or place of birth* (ibid., Art 16).

This is the only part of the constitution that is engaged with the rights of students and other members of the academic community. In other words, students and academics have the right to be educated and to educate without discrimination. This paragraph also refers to the state aim of religious and racial harmony (Kim 2001). Academic freedom itself is not mentioned in this document.

Considering other legal texts from Singapore another document is significant for academic freedom and university autonomy. The *Internal Security Act* (The Law Revision Commission 2011) includes a paragraph on the control of admission to institutions of higher education and states that

> *42.—(1) […] no person shall, […], be admitted as a student to any institution of «higher» «education» […] unless he holds a certificate of suitability for admission thereto issued to him […]*
>
> *(2) Any person requiring a certificate of suitability for admission to any institution of «higher» «education» shall apply therefore in writing to the Director of «Education»; and the Director of «Education», […] shall issue the certificate unless there appear to him to be reasonable grounds for believing that the applicant, if admitted to the institution in question, would be likely to promote, or otherwise participate in, action prejudicial to the interests or security of Singapore or any part thereof.* [...] (ibid., Art 42).

In short, this means that every student that studies at a university in Singapore needs to be approved by the state. Therefore, the state has control over admission of students and great influence on the future of students who are not granted the study allowance. This article can

make the admission of foreign students especially difficult. During my research visit at APRU, I also learned that a similar rule applies to all employees at Singaporean universities. Thus, for one foreign colleague from APRU it took some time to get the working permit as APRU was situated within the National University of Singapore, and the final decision on his employment was in the hands of the state. Other countries have security checks and issue working permits as well, but they usually have no direct influence on the appointment of staff and students, especially not if they have the nationality of the state in question. Therefore, this security act can be seen as highly restrictive also to university autonomy and academic freedom and not only to personal freedoms.

This security check of foreigners and students is also in line with the fact that

> *[A]cademic faculty members are effectively state employees, and university administrators are usually government appointees, tasked to carry out government policies. As such, they tend to have much less autonomy than public universities in Europe, let alone the private universities in the United States* (Wong, Ho and Singh 2007, 942).

Therefore, the state exercises concrete control over universities and their staff, even if they are given more autonomy in organisational and financial matters, as described above.

Even if academic freedom is not part of Singapore's legislation, there is still one option for local academics and students to claim academic freedom and university autonomy. As Singapore became a member state of UNESCO in 2007 (UNESCO 2016b), it automatically acknowledged UNESCO's recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (1997). Therefore, academic freedom in teaching and research as well as university autonomy should be protected in Singapore (see also Chapter 3 of this thesis). On this basis, academics in Singapore could claim – theoretically but not legally – their right to academic freedom. There are other indications that academics in Singapore are not entirely controlled by the state as Singaporeans dare to publish controversial books that are even sold in bookstores all over the country and published by the university press.

The book "Hard Choices – Challenging the Singapore Consensus" (Low and Vadaketh 2014) is only one example. It is a collection of essays that suggest a radical change in national policies and politics based on the changing political situation in an international context. The book also elaborates on political changes that might endanger the consensus that the PAP government

has maintained over the last decades. The book received world-wide attention and is described by book critics as "the most stimulating and provocative book ever written on public policy in Singapore" (Vikram Khanna, Business Times).[4] Despite the provocative nature of the book that critically engages with Singaporean politics (often seen as a taboo topic), neither the publishing university nor the authors had to suffer any kind of punishment. This proves that there is room for free speech and academic freedom even if academic freedom is not protected by law. Having this contradiction between the law and the practice of at least some academics to publish very controversial books makes it even more interesting to see how regular academics experience their situation in Singapore. Before, looking at this aspect the next section of this chapter will first engage with the National University of Singapore to capture the immediate environment in which academics work.

5.2.1.3 The National University of Singapore: Framing Academic Freedom on an Institutional Level

In comparison to the University of Bologna, the National University of Singapore has a rather short history as it was only established under its current name in 1980. Nevertheless, NUS can draw on earlier experiences as a university. The roots of NUS lie in the foundation of a medical school in 1905 which developed into the University of Malaya and was renamed in University of Singapore in 1962 due to Singapore's independence from Malaysia (NUS 2016b). Todays' National University of Singapore is in fact a merger of this University of Singapore and the Nanyang University. The reason for merging these two universities was the perceived need to have one single strong national university (NUS 2016b; Mukherjee and Wong 2011; Kim 2001). In other words, becoming a leading university is an essential part of NUSs' history (Mok 2010). In the first ten years, NUS focus was on teaching but since the 1990s it shifted towards research. Today NUS is the most important university in Singapore in respect to producing R&D outcome and it attracts international staff and students due to its high performance in university rankings and its teaching and research quality (Wong, Ho and Singh 2007).

In order to evaluate current institutional values of NUS, I will focus in the following as in the case of the University of Bologna, on the image that the National University of Singapore

[4] Book critic accessed August 2016 from http://nuspress.nus.edu.sg/products/hard-choices?variant=1245116120

presents on their website and in official documents. Opening the university website, the first thing a reader sees is that the National University of Singapore ranks on 11th place of Asia's most innovative universities (NUS 2016a). This depicts the competitive character that was already visible in the documents from APRU and which is part of NUS history.

The mission and vision of the university do not use many words, as the NUS at a Glance brochure shows:

> *Vision*
>
> > *A leading global university centred in Asia, influencing the future*
>
> *Mission*
>
> > *To transform the way people think and do things through education, research and service* (NUS 2016b, 1).

Like the first impression from the homepage of the university, the mission and vision statement emphasises the focus on world leadership and excellence in teaching, research, and service. The National University of Singapore also has a clear conception of how to reach this goal of world leadership. Important in this respect is the equipment of students with life skills and not only knowledge from textbooks, the employment of world leading professors, interdisciplinary and high-level research, entrepreneurial education offers, partnerships with other leading universities and research organisations and global networks, artistic and cultural events and courses, as well as community work that creates a value for society (ibid.). This list indicates the direction of a broad view on education as not only the subject content seems to matter at the National University of Singapore. The university also points to their well-developed engagement with the local community.

For its student, the National University of Singapore advertises that it offers

> *Infinite possibilities. We offer a global and Asian experience that is broad, deep and rigorous. An NUS education is recognised as among the best in Asia, and the world. Whichever undergraduate or graduate programme you choose, your experience will be intellectually fulfilling within and outside the classroom* (NUS 2016c).

In respect to research, it describes itself as

A Leading Research - Intensive University in the Heart of Asia

Consistently ranked as one of the top universities in Asia and the world, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is internationally respected for its high-quality research in science, technology and the humanities — and, increasingly, at the interfaces between these areas. In 2015, the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings named NUS the top institution in Asia and 26th in the world. NUS' performance in this year's QS World University Rankings was impressive as we rose ten positions to take 12th place in the international ranking exercise (NUS 2016d).

Once more, the image that NUS reflects concerning teaching and learning as well as research is rather based on the understanding of measurement and excellence than on academic values or tradition. In other words, the tradition that NUS inherits is world-leadership and excellence.

In line with regional and national policies and documents, academic freedom is a "foreign word" in the language of the university; this is not a criticism but an observation. The history and culturally different context to Europe even suggest that academic values are seen differently in Singapore in comparison to Italy. In this respect, it could be said that the academic values that are significant in Singapore and at the National University of Singapore are quality, excellence and a strong connection between society and the universities, reflecting the Confucian education model (Marginson 2011; Kim 2001).

The Status and Regulations of the National University of Singapore reflect the same image as found on their website. Academic freedom and the rights of students and academics are not mentioned. The statues are concerned with eight issues: (1) interpretations – in which academic freedom or university autonomy are not mentioned; (2) the senate and senate delegacy; (3) faculties, special constituent schools and academic units; (4) research institutes; (5) student associations and activities; (6) discipline with respect to students; (7) gifts to the university; and (8) the National University of Singapore endowment fund. Interestingly, the section on student associations states that these associations need to be approved by trustees and only one student association is allowed to engage in political matters as the text states that

[N]o constituent body, other than the Students' Political Association (a constituent body of the Union as prescribed by the Statutes and Regulations), may engage in or make pronouncements on matters of a political nature. The Board of Trustees may, in

its absolute discretion, decide whether any matter is of a political nature (NUS 2016e, Statue 5 Art 4a).

Concerning academic staff and their rights, the document has nothing to say. Thus, academic freedom for students and academics is not stipulated in any official document from the university. This leads to the conclusion that neither Singapore nor the National University of Singapore have introduced the UNESCO recommendations concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (1997) into relevant legislation.

5.2.2 Individual Perspectives on Academic Freedom: Results from the Interviews

In comparison to the document analysis, the interview data that I will present in the next part does not seem that negative, as academics generally enjoy working at the National University of Singapore and do not complain about the lack of academic freedom. At this point, it is interesting to mention that almost the entire academic staff working at the National University of Singapore has an international background as most of them have at least one academic degree from another university outside of Singapore. Among them are highly ranked universities in the US and the UK. In my search for interviewees, it was impossible to get an interview with an academic who spent his/her whole study and work life in Singapore. One reason for it might be Singapore's efforts to strengthen the import model of internationalisation which means that Singapore's best students are send to excellent universities in foreign countries (Mukherjee and Wong 2011; Olds 2007) combined with the aspiration to attract the best of the best for the public service (Kim 2001). This is important to bear in mind, as all academics I talked to have an academic experience in the Western university system. Hence, in the conversations with my interviewees comparisons between Asia and the Western world were a very common topic, not the least due to my own background as a PhD candidate coming from Europe.

This is also a limitation of this study as I was, to a much greater extent, an outsider in Singapore in comparison to Italy. Academics might have presented a more positive view of their situation to an outsider than they would have presented to someone knowing the system. Especially as the pre-assumption that academic freedom is not a given in Asia and Singapore is prevalent in Europe. As I already mentioned in Chapter 4, I was warned several times to speak too openly about academic freedom in Singapore which shows that there is an assumed problem with the

topic itself from a Western perspective. However, it might have been in some points beneficial that I come from Europe and not from Singapore as academics explained the differences between Europe and Asia in more detail and did not assume that I already know the system. Thus, I obtained very detailed insight into the Asian culture from my interviewees' perspectives. For some of the academics, it might have also been easier to talk to a stranger who is not part of their system about sensitive issues and there are signs for this in the interviews. This effect of my own person on the interview situation highlights the significance of the positionality of the researcher (Custers et al. 2016; 2015) that I outlined in Chapter 4.3.

The presentation of the data from the interviews will follow the same structure as that of the Italian case. Similarly, the final interpretation of the results will be part of Chapter 5.3, which compares both cases. Hence, the next parts will first discuss the role of universities in society, the status of higher education teaching in contrast to research and then academic freedom. Despite the same overall structure the single parts will follow their own logic according to the emerging themes in the data analysis and thus the separate sections will not touch on exactly the same issues that I elaborated on in the case of the University of Bologna.

I want to indicate here to a particularity when reporting the interview data. As anonymity was a major concern in the case of Singapore, I replaced in all interview excerpts that I use the concrete discipline by [in my/our discipline] or [in my/our research area]. I have done this for all interviews in order to allow for coherence between the different interviews.

5.2.2.1 The Role of Universities in Society

The role of universities was presented in different ways in the interview data from the National University of Singapore. Four main themes arose during the data analysis. The first is the general role of universities in society, which includes three subthemes, namely the more traditional role and the contemporary role of universities as well as the specific situations of social sciences and humanities, which came up as an important topic in some interviews, due to particular challenges that these academic disciplines face in contemporary universities. Whereas the first theme focuses on the more general role of universities in society, the second is concerned with the returns of universities to society or, in other words, with the social responsibility of universities. As I already mentioned, the comparison between Europe or the Western world with Asia was a repeated topic within the interviews and thus forms the third

theme. This theme includes rather general comparisons between Europe and Asia that are present in the interview data. The fourth theme engages with the intriguing fact that almost all academics working at the National University of Singapore have already worked abroad before taking their position at NUS. It engages with reasons for this international character within the staff of NUS.

Similarly to the Italian case, academics make a distinction between the classical role of universities and its more contemporary adaptations. A university, in the traditional sense, is according to one academic:

> *Traditionally, a university is there … to give something back to society, to educate students for their life not only for work. Investigating knowledge is also important, I mean knowledge for its own sake not only for producing money* (S7).

Another academic sees universities as places in which basic research is done:

> *I think in a university in comparison to the private sector we should focus on knowledge … knowledge that has a high theoretical value, knowledge that can help us to understand the world … I mean knowledge that leads to new technological advancements … that benefits companies is also important but it is not the kind of knowledge we focus on in the university. Research in a university is not so much about solving practical problems, it is about discovery, it's an open journey that helps us to understand …* (S3).

One academic also points out that Asia has oriented its higher education towards the traditional European idea of universities that encompasses a humanistic education.

> *Well, I would say that by large ... developed Asia like ... places like Japan, or even Singapore and Hong Kong and so on ... which had pretty much developed in the 20th century ... tried to develop ... so you know ... they followed European models, American models and that of that time ... so they still have quite a bit of humanistic education. India, also China to a lesser extend but still ... you know ... humanistic education moved there ... so in some ways ... that was quite developed … I don't think that there was any essentially ... some Asian value in education that you can find. Some people may say that but that's very romantic ... I think that … the temporal patterns were different ... right, so there was a humanistic education ... there still is but it was always*

subordinated financially and institutionally to science. In a way that was not the case in central Europe before the 1980s or 1990s (S5).

This quotation shows that higher education in Singapore has some of its roots in Europe or in the Western World, but that the focus when adopting the system into local circumstances was not the same. It also depicts the emphasis in Singapore on science and technology (Kim 2001). Thus, it already shows a difference between the traditional university and the commercial university influenced by financial interests. In respect to the contemporary role of the university, one interviewee points out that universities are changing and adapting to new needs of society.

Well, I think the role of the university had been undergone major changes… I think that universities globally are becoming extremely neo-liberal and instrumentalist in the production of work … work is generated towards a rational and the traditional role of humanities and social science which I think was developed basically in Europe … is now implicitly disregard and being replaced by a science model of knowledge production where people do the research not based on a contextual understanding of the society but much more upon specific projects and quantitative knowledge … (S5).

This quotation shows that academic criticism of neo-liberalism is not exclusively a Western feature but can also be observed in Singapore. It also gives a hint that the idea of the university is routed in Europe and that Asia has adapted it but also reinterpreted it. Furthermore, it points into the direction that the *new idea* about science and education can be problematic as it loses the contextual understanding of social phenomena. In this respect, the focus on smaller, more narrowly focused research projects can hinder a more holistic understanding of problems, concepts and phenomena. The same academic also identifies that the humanist idea of universities was abandoned and replaced by the task to "produce money" (S5).

This old university model had become eroded and the university has become a centre for … in fact it has become a centre for producing money because, you know, people are told … we the university will give you money if you bring us more money, right? So we are given seed money for research so that you can get external funds, this is the science model and what happens to knowledge in that process … but that's not really the index that they are looking for the deliverable … they are much more happy with how much money you have got rather than with the product … so in that sense the

> *university is changing from creating citizens, from creating an autonomous centre of thought in the nation … in the world to something that is much more productive, so that's my opinion* (S5).

In other words, academics see a shift from the responsibility to educate citizens and to pursue knowledge and truth towards a profit orientation. Universities in this new sense are seen as institutions that earn money by investing in knowledge production that is also reflected in the literature (see for example, Moosmayer 2011; Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno 2008). Therefore, research that has a direct return in an economic sense is favoured in comparison to knowledge that might be important in the long run without having an immediate return.

In this environment, academics perceive particular challenges for humanities and social science. They see the new focus on money making and practical use of education as a danger, and one of them points out that

> *I think that humanities and social science has to also adopt … to a larger theme or branch but I think this disregard* [the focus on the science model and production] *… so this is a very difficult and dangerous track* (S5).

Despite these challenges, there seems to be an investment and interest in social science and humanities, not only in Singapore but throughout Asia:

> *But I still think … and if you look at also the humanistic social science all over Asia whether it's China, India or it's something … China actually ironically has more humanistic … is investing more in humanistic although they are doing it also in the same money kind of way … but because they are interested in having a strong history to China's historical … and that's the case with India, too and so yeah … it's a little bit more secure …* (S5).

Nevertheless, the lower status of social science can be seen in funding streams.

> *… so research funding, it's still fairly uneven … there are certainly more sources of funding in science and technology sectors … having said that … we certainly have not access to funding of the same size … there are sources of funding from the ministry of education, the university that will also support social sciences or humanities research*

so … certainly we could do more but a shortage of research funding is certainly … it's not a major issue right now (S6).

This quotation shows not only that social sciences and humanities are less funded which reflects, for example, the fact that Singapore stopped state bursaries for social sciences in the 1970s in order to promote technical subjects (Kim 2001), but it also depicts a theme to which I will return in the part on academic freedom, namely the generous funding of research in Singapore. Most of the interviews show that funding is not a concern for academics at the National University of Singapore, regardless of their discipline. I will also show that the interest in humanistic education is growing in the section on the status and nature of higher education teaching.

During the interviews, academics also offer concrete examples of what a university gives back to society and the community. One academic who does research on rather applied topics said that

… [what I do] is certainly more relevant to … you know paying back to society … and I am really feeling … like I am contributing to something global … (S1).

Despite this clear idea that he contributes to society, this academic sees a problem in communicating the clear benefit of basic research to the public.

Maybe the public does not understand where the money is going to … right because they don't see … especially like in academic research … probably what we do here in [this research centre] is very much translational so there is a very clear output, so you have input which is the money and you have the output which is the results … in the university it is very much different because we are talking about basic research … the problem is that the question they are trying to answer may seem like it has no practical need … so university is at the forefront … they do very upstream research that might not immediately be important to people and they [the people] might think it is useless … (S1).

Another one explains how research conducted in universities can contribute to a larger goal.

… research is all about discovery, you discover something that is … I mean whatever you discover it's exciting it has some impact … so you know … whatever you do …

research I think it has benefit whether … so it depends on what is your quantum of discovery … in which area it influences but they are all important … (S2).

He continues by describing what a university should give back in return for the money that is invested in research.

… I think it is mainly … well so far it is discovery and discovery can mean publications, yes of course, I think the modern world is very interested in making discovery that is of commercial importance … it's not so easy always, I think the first importance for all research is to publish something that is meaningful, I mean complete something that is being able to be published, I mean a lot of things we do in [our research area] are not commercialised … (S2).

In most interviews, the focus is on research as the main duty of universities but some interviewees also mentioned the education of students.

… I think it is important to educate students for their life in our society, they need to take on responsibility for what they do. They should be also grateful for their education and do their best to contribute to the future in a meaningful way … (S4).

As research is very important, Singapore invests a lot in creating well-established research centres

… they [the government and university] put a lot of money in research and why? Because they think that this commercial reason … they wanna create an industry, they wanna create a workforce that is highly sophisticated … so they call it a research hub they compare it with Silicon Valley … and they want to be like this … (S2).

Despite the changing environment and the focus on numbers, rankings, and income through research, one academic points out that not only a high rank but the philosophy behind it counts in academia.

… but I think … to me the ranking isn't all that important … we have a good ranking but it is … for me it is important what we do … you know we want to have a philosophy of collaboration, we want to have a philosophy of trying to be the best, we want … we wanna be the … in our field the leaders … so we have set an agenda for ourselves …

and that's what we do we try to cultivate leaders here, good leaders, future leaders … (S2).

Thus, educating leaders and not only responsible citizens is the task of universities. Overall, many of the interview quotes reflect the university mission of becoming and being world-leaders and excellent in research and education that is at the core of Singapore's idea on higher education (see for example, Marginson 2011; Mukherjee and Wong 2011; Mok 2010). Despite, this there are many other goals of higher education visible in the interviews such as educating democratic citizens and critical thinkers.

As I already mentioned, comparisons between Europe and Asia were a repeated topic in the interviews. I include these comparisons in this section as they provide a good basis for the following parts and depict similarities and differences between the European and the Asian idea of the university. One interviewee depicts that developments in higher education are slower in Asia than in the Western world; this is also true for the focus on money and direct outcomes.

> *… and very interesting … this trend has developed much more in Europe than in North-America or Asia … In Asia once they realise that Europe changes they will also begin to change, they already began to change, to move in that direction [the direction of the science model of knowledge production] …* (S5).

Moreover, the attitude of students and teachers towards higher education is different in Asia:

> *… in Singapore we are definitively more efficient … I mean in Singapore it maybe the learning attitude – it is maybe biased because I am a Singaporean – it's definitively more serious …* (S1).

Some interviewees also contest major stereotypes that the Western world has concerning the Asian education system.

> *… I think again in Singapore … I mean the … even the school system is changing … I mean, of course … I think that this idea that the Asian education system is pretty much rote learning … and I don't want to get in a debate, there a some places where rote learning is important, for example, you cannot learn a language properly if you don't start with sort of memorising … but I think the general impression is that Asian systems*

focus too much on that … and not allows the more communicative approach to learning things … I would say that this completely changed at a university level … (S6).

This quote reflects Singapore's plan to introducing more creative and alternative teaching and assessment methods in order to foster critical and creative thinking (Mok 2010). Another interviewee explains that he had to get used to working in Singapore after his experiences of studying in the US

… the Asian culture is very different from the Western culture … in Asian culture people are a little bit more shy … I wouldn't wanna generalise but at least from my own experience … they are a little bit more laid back so … but in general you have to be quite aggressive when you want answers from an Asian crowd, whereas in the western part especially in the US people would just shout the answer or ask the question without any hesitation … (S1).

In summary, according to my interviewees, there are similarities between Asia and Europe as the Asian higher education system was and still is influenced by Europe and the US. Nevertheless, there are also differences due to a different culture and history.

The interviewees of my study were able to make concrete comparisons between Asia and Europe or the US, as all of them had spent time abroad. There might be many reasons for the fact that almost all academics at the National University of Singapore have a degree from a university outside of Asia and most of the time from highly ranked universities. One of this explanations might be the import strategy of internationalisation that Singapore favours (Mukherjee and Wong 2011; Olds 2007) as mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 5.2.2 combined with the aim to attract the best students for the public service (Kim 2001). Speaking about this phenomenon one participant has a spontaneous idea for a possible explanation.

So I think that every university is bit run like a sort of … like a company because rankings are very important, so I don't know what goes in the ranking criteria, but if there is a criteria saying you're … your faculty should be of … from a PhD from some particular place … then obviously the school will try to meet that criteria and also you cannot deny that other international schools are much better than our own university, so of course, some of the reason might be to hire them … who come back from good schools to train the own students, that might be a reason why the faculty had done a lot of work oversea … so you know everything is very competitive these days … (S1).

In other words, going abroad is not a real choice as this experience is essential for getting a job at a university. This shows also that universities in Singapore are not closed as they allow academics into their system who might be liberal and who have experienced a university systems that is based on the ideas of academic freedom and university autonomy, for example in the US or Europe. I will return to this point later in this chapter.

5.2.2.2 The Status and Nature of Higher Education Teaching

In this part of the chapter, I will show how education and research are related with each other and what teaching means in universities. From the interview data four main themes arose. This includes, as in the Italian case, the relationship between teaching and research. Secondly, the importance and status of teaching for one's own career and thirdly, the support of excellent and good students by the state. Lastly, this part will engage with educational aims of academics. In this respect the particularity of humanistic and social science education will be mentioned once again as these disciplines can benefit, according to some interviewees, from a modern education of students that adopts to the new needs of the employment market.

Academics in Singapore point out that there is a connection between teaching and research and that both are beneficial for each other. One academic, for example explains

> *I would say they [teaching and research] are definitively connected ... it depends on the level if you ask me ... if you are on a high school level research is probably too complicated ... but for example, when I am teaching at a PhD level you have to be aware of what is going on in the literature ... people will call you out, hey this is not true, two weeks before this paper came out in this journal ... and this is you know what they say* (S1).

Therefore, research is important to inform teaching on a higher education level with the state of the art knowledge. The opposite counts as well for this academic, as demanding students can also help to improve research

> *... because it makes you read more ... because when you do hands on research you can do that basically all day and then you don't catch up with reading ... and that is something that will improve* (S1).

In this sense, being involved in teaching makes applied research more theoretically founded. The beneficial effect of the combination of teaching and research is not only valid for applied science but also for arts and social science.

> *I think that teaching and research belong together in a university. That is what makes university education what it is. Students need to understand scientific methods and how knowledge is produced … and you can only show them these things if you know a lot about research. On the other hand, students can help you to frame concepts … in a clear way as a concept is only good enough when you are able to explain it to students in the classroom* (S7).

Another academic points out that

> *… they [teaching and research] are absolutely connected …* (S2).

He explains further that he is involved in evidence-based teaching methods and continued by saying that

> *… not necessarily, I don't think you need research experience to be a good teacher, and a lot of our people don't conduct research but often they do because you know it works both ways when you are good in evidence based methods you are also good in research because you can't really … it becomes a natural part of your work, but some people are just practitioners …* (S2).

In other words, good teaching and good research can complement each other but they do not necessarily need to be connected with each other.

In comparison to research, teaching seems to be important but less valued from the perspective of academics.

> *… teaching and educating students is important for me but what really counts after all is the money that you attract with your research … so I would say doing well in teaching is important to be an academic but being an excellent researcher is even more important. At the end it is the grants you receive and the research output that is important for your career* (S4).

Another academic points out that she likes teaching but research is her real passion.

> *... I became an academic because in private sector it is impossible to do research ... the facilities are not that strong, people there do no research ... so I became an academic to do research and teaching comes along with the job. Do not understand me wrong I like teaching and the work with students but my real passion is research* (S3).

The involvement in teaching also changes during one's career, as an established professor said

> *... as you do get more senior, here your teaching duties get reduced ... I am not sure that is a really good thing because sometimes junior people they don't have a strong teaching philosophy or a strong teaching style ... in a way it's a bit an experiment so they ... not everyone teaches well, what is good I think that's always ... that's another big question ... so I became quite interested in teaching so although ... so I have two interests I think the more dominant interest is research ...* (S2).

This sense that young academics are not well developed in their teaching style and methods is also reflected in the statement of a young academic, who expresses that

> *... teaching is always a challenge ... you need to know exactly what you are saying and everything behind what you are talking about and you need to be very clear ... I try my best to do it well* (S1).

Most of the interviewees from the National University of Singapore see their main interest in research and not in teaching. They also feel more rewarded for their success in research than for being a good teacher. Teaching is described as a task that needs to be practiced, and there is no hint in the interviews about what a good teacher is or is not.

Despite the impression that teaching is less promoted, the Singaporean state supported good teaching after independence and invested in teaching as well as research facilities. It also has a good student-teacher ratio (Kim 2001) and excellent and good students are offered many scholarships, even to study abroad. One of my interviewees went to the US with such a scholarship and explained to me

> *So, I also like teaching and in Singapore ... there are several opportunities to get scholarships depending on your grades ... so if you would do pretty well, they will give you the opportunity to sign up ... and I applied for a teaching scholarship for the*

ministry of education … so this scholarship basically founds your undergraduate studies and then you come back and work for them for six years in teaching (S1).

For this young academic, an interest in teaching was the major motivation to pursue higher education but during his studies he discovered his interest in research and re-negotiated his scholarship. Thus, he was able to continue his studies and to finish a PhD. He was also able to postpone his teaching obligations for the state. The case of this interviewee shows that on the one hand Singapore supports students who want to pursue education abroad and is also flexible in adopting to changing situations of students. On the other hand, the scholarships are a guarantee that excellent students return to Singapore after their studies as they have agreed to long-term obligation for the state. Thus, this scholarship scheme can be seen as Singapore's strategy to educate citizens in élite universities without the associated fear of brain drain. They can also strengthen the ties between citizens who are grateful to the state for the opportunity to study abroad.

The educational aims of academics are widely spread and not only focused on skills for the employment market even if employability is a major concern. It is obvious that all academics I talked to are aware of their educational aims and, thus, I will use my interviewees own words to emphasise the variety of educational aims. A student should, for example,

… have the appreciation of the major that he took, he definitively should understand how the subject has come to the state of today … so he must have learned everything classical all the way to the modern day and needs to be able to practise the studies … so to be a [in my discipline] graduate you should be able to do all the lab work, yeah they are not meant to know everything but … that person if he is very interested in that subject he should continue and improve there is no end … (S1).

In other words, they need to be knowledgeable in their fields of study and able to apply this knowledge. Additionally, this quotation points out that education and the striving for knowledge never ends as it is an ongoing journey. Another academic asserts that

… I think most important is that students learn to appreciate knowledge and that … they understand that learning involves a lot of effort and discipline … it is not like I can just put the knowledge into their heads … they need to be interested and motivated in their studies or they won't be successful … students also need to know that knowledge

is a responsibility and that they have to act in a responsible way because they are privileged to have access to it … (S3).

The interest in knowledge and research can best be awakened in the form of exposing students to research.

… when we expose young people to research they see a different view of things and then … some of them will become interested … (S2).

Educational aims are also connected with employability. According to some of the interviewees, social science and humanities can provide added value for the job market as

… the service sector requires skills which have more to do with communication, expression, the ability to be flexible, to be able to think outside the box … social science and humanities provide actually a very good foundation for those kind of jobs … (S6).

The need for skills that can be enforced by social sciences and humanities are also beneficial for the professional life of students, because

… today you need to be flexible when you think in the old [times] … you had a one life career, today you have one life of careers … so our sense is that having a basic degree that doesn't lock you in any kind of specialised sort of major way … so where you gain some basic skills that allow you to yeah to go in many directions … (S6).

From this interviewee's point of view, an open-ended education is thus most beneficial for the student as well as for economy. This statement gives also an explanation why social science and humanities are important even if they are, as shown above, less funded. This trend is also reflected in the fact that

… the numbers have increased … and we have more and more students in the social science … sometimes when the parents hear that their child wants to study social science they are shocked … (S6).

According to this interviewee parents are "shocked" as social science education was not valued high in earlier times in Singapore, but this is changing today.

In summary, this academic describes a very wide educational aim that can be achieved in humanities and social sciences.

> *I think very important is writing skills and communication … what I see as important for any graduate that we produce in social sciences would be the core skills … to be able to write, to be able to express themselves and to be able to communicate in personal communications … that's what we see in any course … and then, secondly, of course critical thinking skills … of course you can train it in any discipline but in social sciences I think that there is a great opportunity to help students to see not in a very linear fashion but to appreciate the fact that … there are always different views in any kind of subject … as you know in our kind of subjects there is never only one answer to questions … and I would say the third one would be … social engagement … that's sort of, students need to be able to relate what they do in the classroom to the social, economic and cultural issues* (S6).

In some places, it seems that this academic is advocating for an educational ideal that can be satisfied best within the social sciences and the humanities.

In summary, according to the interviewees, educational aims in higher education involve the training of basic skills that can be adopted in a flexible way, methodological and subject-specific knowledge, discipline, the ability to work hard, a responsible attitude as well as social skills. Education, according to interviewees, is meant to serve the economy by educating a well-prepared work force but also to educate individuals who can thrive in the modern world and who are able and willing to engage with the local community and the wider society.

5.2.2.3 Academic Freedom

Talking about academic freedom was not always easy in Singapore. As I already described in Chapter 4, my approach in this regard changed during my fieldwork. Despite including questions about academic freedom in my interview guide, it was still not easy to introduce the topic as I had to be careful not to imply that academic freedom is a problem in Singapore. Just the simple impression when talking to academics from Europe and also Asia that academic freedom is a "delicate topic" can tell a lot about the status of academic freedom. This is also reflected in the quantity of interview excerpts that I have on this topic as I had to focus longer on other topics to create an open and trustful relationship. In this respect, I did spend some time in the beginning and at the end of each interview to verify which information I could use and which information might be problematic. This concern about anonymity might be a first hint

that academics in Singapore are under more pressure and control than in Italy. Some of them were genuinely concerned about the impact of the interview on their future career.

Nevertheless, the academics who talked to me were free to decide on this issue, and they openly shared their stories and impressions and were critical towards the Singaporean university system. Thus, I did not have the impression that my interviewees tried to promote the benefits of their university and underestimated the challenges of control. I rather had the impression that my interviewees were prepared to share their personal stories about their academic career. Overall, during the interviews, there was no major difference between Italy and Singapore in the openness of my interviewees.

The fact that it was much more difficult to find interviewees for my study might be connected to my research topic and an implicit fear of academics to talk to me. Nevertheless, there could have been several other reasons as my contact persons in Singapore were more hesitant to suggest interviewees as they did not want to overload their staff with more work. When I heard this reasoning the first time, I immediately felt that my contact person was afraid that academics would not say no to the interview if they were asked by their superior, which suggest a strongly hierarchical system. The time I spend in Singapore was also shorter than the time I spend in Bologna which made the contact with locals more difficult. Overall, there are many reasons for my difficulty in finding appropriate interviewees in Singapore and I can only speculate which ones are the most influential ones. Thus, I want to focus on the interviews and the ideas about academic freedom that my interviewees shared with me.

In respect to academic freedom, four main themes evolved during the data analysis. These themes are best described with four questions. What does academic freedom mean? Where is academic freedom given? Where is it restricted? And what are the benefits of working in Singapore?

In comparison to the University of Bologna, it was much harder to obtain clear ideas on the meaning of academic freedom due to the above-stated reasons. One academic includes his idea on academic freedom naturally in his description of the role of universities.

> *So, what I am saying to answer your question is that the old role of humanistic education of the university as a centre of knowledge production … knowledge that is beneficial to society but also knowledge that is autonomous from political ecologies …*

> *knowledge that is autonomous from establishment right, whether it is neo-liberal capitalism or the state power* (S5).

This implies that academic freedom is important for knowledge production. It also argues that academic freedom is connected to a responsibility for society and a greater good.

Another academic does not use the phrase "academic freedom" but asserts that research is not a straight forward endeavour and that the outcome is often unclear. Thus, academics need time to make discoveries.

> *Sometimes you need a series of discoveries before it leads to something big … research is like that! You don't know where it is going to lead* (S2).

This can also be interpreted as a conviction that academics need the freedom to follow knowledge even if it does not have an immediate outcome.

Some of the academics talked much more clearly about academic freedom and one of them states that

> *… academic freedom means … the freedom to do research and to have appropriate tools for it. It means that you can work in a team and decide on a topic that is important to advance your discipline* (S3).

Another one points out that

> *… of course, you need some freedom because you know your field best and you talk to practitioners about their needs … so you're responsible that your research has some impact, I mean not immediately but in the long-term. Having freedom does not mean to stop communicating with your environment … you need to be aware of their needs and you have to contribute to society… but for doing this you need to be free to follow your own way of discovery because if we all do the same things in the same way there is no place for creativity and innovation* (S4).

In other words, freedom in research is important for academics in Singapore even if they do not necessarily call it academic freedom. Academic freedom is not only necessary in research but also part of teaching as some academics explain that they do have academic freedom in teaching.

… and so the faculty is free to innovate and use different kinds of pedagogic that would encourage discussion … and sort of yeah debate … (S6).

According to this interviewee, academic freedom in teaching is not only important for the teacher but can also enhance open discussions and finally critical thinking, as the interviewee explains later. This attitude towards teaching certainly has effects on the students.

And you should see these young students … I mean they … are fearless, they now say whatever they want … but it's changing, it's generational … (S5).

Next to highlighting a change, this also depicts that it was not always possible to speak freely in class without fear in Singapore and points into the direction of a more liberal future there. The freedom in teaching is nevertheless restricted through the general structure of the university, study programmes and courses.

… they [the leadership of the university] will look at the complete list of their faculty and they will look at their interest … so they will match what you have done in your PhD with what you are teaching … obviously you have to follow the general structure right, if they want you to cover a certain topic then you have to put it in … but I do know that you have freedom to structure it and of course, someone has to approve it when you come up with a plan (S1).

Returning to the topic of the change in academic culture towards a more open and critical atmosphere, one interviewee compared Singapore to other Asian countries.

I think more than any other country … probably Singapore has handled its … has balanced its authoritarianism better than most, so there are certain topics that are banned … banned say particular, you can't say anything personal about any of the political leaders or the dynasty or whatever but there are a few other things … also that you can't really say but its lower than in China; I think you can say a whole bunch of things I mean the … so the limitations are much more restricted and once again the last five to seven years have in fact been an extraordinary transmission here in Singapore … you know they have these elections; I don't know how much you follow the Singapore politics because the actual party [PAP], *the majority party has declined in its majority levels by five percent every five years right …* (S5).

So, even if there are restrictions to academic freedom it could be worse. Nevertheless,

> *... the government is also exercising control and it made some decisions that have scared a lot of people out but it's by no means heading to disaster…* (S5).

Another academic even sees the clearness about banned topics as an advantage for exercising his freedom when he points out that

> *... at least I exactly know what I can talk and what I cannot talk about* (S7).

He compares his situation with that of Europe and comes to the conclusion that taboos in Singapore are much clearer and this prevents him from worrying about what he can say and what he cannot say. In contrast, his experience in Europe was much more complex as he never knew which topics are taboo and which ones are not.

Another academic explains that he always felt appreciated and supported in Singapore as the university wanted to have him as an employee but mentioned that funding is a difficult issue, as it is not reliable.

> *As far as my own work is concerned, and I told you, I have been very productive ... they have been very generous. Institutionally there is no real clearance in the budget in the long term and that is ... you are always worried about what's going to happen with the money… I mean there is not much clarity in the whole process of funding ... I think that is also happening in a lot of other places due to economic crisis, but you know Singapore is very rich they should not have to do that, but maybe that's also their sense of accountability and to make sure that you are giving all the deliverables and so on ... but it makes this ... unless you have a few years where you can plan your educational projects ... it becomes a little bit harder…* (S5).

Nevertheless, he also acknowledges that this is not particular to the National University of Singapore or Singapore as a whole but a more global problem. He also points out that a liberal approach to his research was not always easy for the university even if they appointed him for the benefit of the university as an institution.

> *... and we know that Singapore has not had ... is not very liberal. You know we have to be a comprehensive university we have to have everything ... so it was as if the ... 20th century model where you have to have it [social science and humanities] whether you*

reason it or not. I think over that seven years they are beginning to feel that that can make a lot of trouble … and the new trend in any case is to produce more money so if they can't bring in more money forget them … (S5).

Strong hierarchies within the academic community also seem to be a challenge for academics as they are not as free as, for example, in the US to exchange their ideas with their peers

I learned to enjoy [working in Singapore] … five years in the US is very different, people are a lot more vocal ... people are a lot more egger to discuss on science … there is no difference between a student and a professor … everyone interacts as they were equal … people [here] are very shy and … so people who are lower rank may not talk to me … I might not talk to people with a higher rank because I know the culture … it takes a bit for people to open-up to each other… so it's always a little bit, much slower (S1).

Not only political pressure but also funding streams are seen as influential for academic work as they offer an option for steering the work at a distance.

… if they give you only money when you collaborate than you start collaborating … (S2).

Despite these rather minor challenges with academic freedom that can probably be found in many places, some academics see real restrictions to their freedom.

… it is not as autonomous, not as near as autonomous in these developing Asian nations [in comparison to the western world] because of course the states were much more concerned about productive knowledge, right … knowledge that will be here … to nation building and state building and so the autonomy factor was reduced but it was still there … (S5).

In other words, universities in Asia play a major role in nation building whereas European universities are seen as more distant to state interests which is also reflected in scholarly discussions such as Kim (2001). At this point, I want to refer back to a previously mentioned statement of the same interviewee in which he points towards a humanist university that is – in his eyes – autonomous from the state and other ideologies. In the previous part, he also points out that the Singaporean system is and was oriented towards the European university model. In other words, the concept of autonomy exists in the Asian university but is less distinctive.

Another insightful point in the interviews was when one interviewee mentions, before continuing with his elaborations, that

> *… and here I want you to ask me before you quote because I do not want to get excluded* (S7).

To secure anonymity and to fulfil this demand, I will not use his further words as this sentence seems for me much more significant in describing the situation of academic freedom in Singapore than his following elaborations.

Despite these rather drastic signs that academic freedom is restricted at least in some areas, the academics I talked to feel very satisfied with their work at the National University of Singapore. This might be connected to the fact that most of the academics that participated in the interviews are not working on topics or in academic disciplines that interfere with national interests, thus they do not feel any restrictions to their academic freedom. Some of them feel secure as they know exactly what restrictions there are to academic freedom and others feel that they are in a position to negotiate with and even challenge the university due to a privilege position, certain skills and a high research output, and reputation.

In comparison to other countries, the money that Singapore offers to academics appears in interviews as one of the most prevalent benefits.

> *… [government was putting a lot of money in research] so that meant research was booming and it still is, so I have been in the right place at the right time because in Europe, in the US funding has been cut so badly that now even if you have a very good grant it is almost impossible to get the money … and that meant that you could do so much more [here] because without the money you cannot do anything … even if [you have] got great ideas. I have been given everything that I needed because in the US you would be much more stressed to produce more … and you know in Europe finding research funding is very tough* (S2).

> *I enjoy working here, it is just a good place because I know that there are no major funding cuts and that I will keep my job when I do good work. This is good to know especially if you have a young family* (S3).

There also seems to be less pressure on academics to produce research outcomes.

> *… you know I could not have this kind of live anywhere else … you know in the US, right you would be much more stressed to produce more and the work … the work environment is much more complicated and in Europe when you are trying to get research funding it is really tough … here I can do my research time … so my time is research time … so it gives me a lot of time to distribute my research … you don't find a place like this anywhere in the world, you know I have good collaborators, I have good funding … so there are lots of advantages of working here and very few disadvantages* (S2).

In addition, the international atmosphere and the possibility of becoming involved with researchers from Asia, Europe and the US at home is also appreciated.

> *That's a huge strength, Singapore has become for me at least … for a person like me the cross-roads of the world … somebody from the other … is coming whether from Europe, or from the UK or from India, China or from Japan or the US or from … there is always somebody coming and the base of it … it has always been a cross-road of different people that were settling and they [the Singaporeans] had to live with them … so in a sense it is a micro-cosmos of Asia and it's too small a country to have very strong nationalism … and so it sees its strength in uniting Asia and connecting Asia and enabling Asia, so for a long time we had several India-China projects…* (S5).

The circumstance that Singapore has developed into an international research hub shows that it is not a closed and controlling system, as it allows a steady exchange between academics from different cultures, not at least for economic benefits and prestige.

From my own experience, I can also say that there was no problem entering Singapore, conducting my research with agreement of the university or leaving the country with my interview data. Overall, I was cautious but did not feel restricted in my research in any way.

5.3 A Comparative Account of the two Cases

In the final part of this chapter, I will engage with comparing both cases. As mentioned earlier on the idea of comparing Italy and Singapore is not to judge whether one country performs better in respect to academic freedom or higher education teaching than the other or to give a

final definition of academic freedom. The aim of the comparison is to show how academic freedom is perceived and understood on an individual level and to see if the different cultural contexts of both cases influence the perception of academic freedom and higher education teaching. Therefore, the result of this comparison will draw a complex picture of the individual experiences in the light of different contexts. Nevertheless, when drawing on both cases, some nuances in each case will be lost as some form of generalisation is necessary in order to come to a conclusion for a comparative account. Generalising in this context does not mean that I make propositions that count for the whole population but means that I will depict the most significant aspects that arose during the interviews and the data analysis. The comparison between the two cases will follow a similar logic as the presentation of the data and includes the comparison of (1) the context of each case; (2) the perceived role of universities in society; (3) the status and nature of higher education teaching; and (4) the status of academic freedom. After comparing both cases, the final part of this subsection will provide, hopefully, an answer to the research questions posed in Chapter 4.

5.3.1 Comparing the Context

The document analysis gives evidence that universities have a wide range of mission in both contexts. In the European case, there are two parallel discourses on the role and mission of the universities. On the one hand, the traditional humanistic idea of the university remains visible within the EHEA while on the other hand, more commercially focused missions related to issues, such as employability, competitiveness and accountability are added. Of course, these issues are also put at the front in the universities in the EHEA.

In the Pacific-Rim and Asia, attention is given to global leadership, competition and excellence; these concepts can often be found in the policy documents. Improving research and teaching is of utmost importance for the region in order to be competitive and to become a leading region in the higher education and research sector. Despite this focus on excellence, other missions of universities and underlying values find recognition as well. At a general level, references to values such as peace, freedom and justice can be identified in the policy documents. The aim of ASEAN (2016d) is to strengthen the regional identity and to raise awareness of the region among young citizens. APRU (2016d) also states that universities should be places for dialogue and discussion.

These trends are also reflected on the national and institutional level in each case. Whereas, in Europe, Italy and the University of Bologna the aim of higher education is somewhere between competition, direct returns, and the humanistic tradition of higher education and basic research, the primary focus in the Asia-Pacific-Rim, Singapore and the National University of Singapore is on excellence, which does not per se exclude humanistic education, basic research and social engagement.

In summary, it can be said that universities in both cases have multiple missions and have to balance different demands of society. The difference between both cases is hence not the plurality of university missions but the focus on one or another. A similar conclusion can be made for teaching. In both cases, higher education teaching has several aims ranging from educating citizens, helping students in their development towards their preparation for the labour market. The difference between both cases is again the focus: in Singapore more on excellence and in Europe more on accountability.

The context of both cases in regard to academic freedom is very different. On a regional level, academic freedom is a recognised value within the EHEA. In Asia, defined here as the ASEAN region, this value is not visible in policies and official documents. In the Pacific-Rim, represented through APRU (2016d) as an institution that joins leading universities in the area, academic freedom is mentioned only once in an official document.

A similar trend is seen on the national level. Italy provides a framework in which academic freedom is legally protected; it is even constitutionally guaranteed (Senato della Repubblica 1948). Nevertheless, as on a regional level, the status of academic freedom is changing with the introduction of new policies and a focus on university autonomy in the sense of entrepreneurial autonomy instead of academic self-governance (see also, Erkkilä and Piironen 2014; Zgaga 2012a; Wright and Ørberg 2011). In Singapore, academic freedom is not part of any legal document and freedoms in a more general sense are highly restricted – at least from the Western perspective – not only due to security issues but also on the basis of morality (see also Altbach 2001; Kim 2001).

This is also reflected in institutional documents and the website of the National University of Singapore. Freedoms and rights of academics and/or students are not mentioned in a single case. Even if the official documents and the university website of the University of Bologna do not refer to academic freedom directly, there are still some hints that academic freedom is a

respected value. These can be seen in the reference to academic tradition, which means, in the European sense, academic freedom, the focus on the academic community as well as the mentioning of autonomy. The reference to the Magna Charta Observatory on the University of Bologna website and the fact that the University of Bologna hosts this institution also points in the direction that academic values such as university autonomy in the classical sense and academic freedom are highly valued.

Overall, it can be summarised that despite some changes in the legislation, Europe, Italy and the University of Bologna provide a framework in which academic freedom is highlighted and can be exercised without any major restrictions. The case of Singapore, as a part of Asia, and the National University of Singapore is different as academic freedom does not find protection in legal documents and is not a highlighted concept in policies. Even if Singapore has joined UNESCO (2016b), it has not adopted the UNESCO (1997) recommendation concerning the status of higher education teaching personnel in its legislation. Therefore, the legal status of academic freedom is very different in both contexts.

How this looks on the grass-roots level will be shown in the next sections, in which a comparison between the individual perspectives of both cases takes place. As in the previous parts, the comparison will follow a similar logic. I will first depict the similarities and differences in the role of universities in society, second the status and role of higher education teaching, and third the conceptions and perceptions of academic freedom.

5.3.2 Comparing the Role of Universities in Society

From my interviewees' perspectives, universities have multiple missions in both cases. In the Italian case, two main tasks of universities are visible. Universities have the duty to educate students for life, society and work. In this respect, academics see their responsibility in supporting students in their development in a broad and not only economic sense. At the same time, universities conduct research and hence "produce" knowledge. Some academics saw their responsibility concerning research not only in "producing" or "discovering knowledge" and passing it on to future generations but also in applying this knowledge themselves in practical settings. Universities are also described as institutions that are essential for the reproduction of power and are thus important for maintaining or changing the prevalent power structures by

educating future leaders in society. Finally, creating a coherent academic community was also mentioned as a task of universities.

In the Singaporean case, the difference between the traditional and the modern role of universities is made clear by the interviewees of this study. The traditional university model is described as being based on the European tradition of humanistic education which includes educating students for life, creating citizens, and enhancing their autonomous thought. Further, in research the aim of the traditional university is to *produce* knowledge for its own sake or theoretical knowledge that can help human kind to understand the world they life in (Zonta 2002). In other words, the traditional European university model is also visible in interviewees' descriptions of the university mission in Singapore.

Nevertheless, the contemporary role of universities is described in more commercial terms. Universities in this respect should "produce money" (S5) and hence are perceived as instruments in a neo-liberal way; as a result they focus on "quantitative knowledge" (S5) and "rational science" (S5). Research is mainly developed in small, narrowly conceptualised research projects and hence easily neglects the broader context of the discipline. According to my interviewees, the traditional and the contemporary role of universities overlap and exist at the same time not only in Asia but also and sometimes even more in the Western world. Of course, this causes some tension in the academic fields that can be considered as overlapping in diverse university systems.

In the Italian case, the interviewees refer mainly to the traditional role of universities. The commercial aspect of higher education and research is less prevalent but still visible. The interviewees also describe educating students for the employment market and research for the private sector to make money as tasks of universities. Thus, the neo-liberal university is already present in the daily work of academics at the University of Bologna. The change towards the neo-liberal university is rather perceived as a failure to fulfil the social obligation of universities than as a new emerging mission like in the Singaporean case. In this respect, they believe that universities shift their focus from educating critical thinkers to *knowledge produc*tion in research and teaching (see for example Moosmayer 2011; Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno 2008) for the neo-liberal *knowledge society* (see for example, Aarrevaara 2010; van der Wende 2008).

To summarise, it can be said that academics in Italy as well as in Singapore demonstrate a broad idea of the role of universities in general. This idea paradoxically combines humanistic

education on the one side with a focus on commercial production and profit on the other side. Educating students for society was mentioned in both cases, this not only includes the training of the workforce but also the education of responsible citizens, cultivating good leaders and creating a better society. Community engagement was mentioned in Singapore as well as in Italy as a way of connecting universities with society. Creating a philosophy of collaboration and adding to culture and science as a significant aspect of being a human being is also observed in interviews.

Most of the interviewed academics observe research to be another contact point between universities and society. In this respect, producing theoretical knowledge that can be applied is a major concern in both cases. Publications are an obvious way of contributing to a knowledge base and hence to society in an indirect way. One interviewee from Italy reported the problem that there is today usually no free access to academic publications which can prevent the distribution of knowledge within the academic community and society. Interviewees in both cases point out that the communication between universities and society needs to be improved as they see a lack in convincing the public about the importance of public funding for research and education. They also describe the communication of universities missions as poor. Therefore, improvement in this area is needed according to some academics of this study.

There are points where universities do not manage to contribute to society and these aspects were mainly visible in the Italian case. Problems, for example, arise when universities do not care enough about their students and are too technical in the way they produce and communicate research. Not only universities are described as a source of problems in the relationship between them and society but also the general attitude of the public towards the university which includes politicians and especially the mass media. Some academics claimed in this respect that society does not appreciate science and culture. This might be also due to the described problems in communication.

Despite the similarities in describing the missions of universities and their connection with society, there seem to be major cultural differences between Singapore and Italy. Singaporeans described themselves, for example, as more shy, serious, and less open for discussion. Some of them have the feeling that the focus on neo-liberal ideas was and still is less visible in Asian universities in comparison to Europe and the US.

Overall, the impression that there is a stronger focus on excellence in Singapore is not only visible from the document analysis but also from the interviews. One example for this, is the reason given for educating citizens abroad. One reason for employing academics with international study and/or work experience is the belief that they might have a positive influence on rankings as well as on educational and research quality. When talking about the relationship between the university and society, Italian academics seemed to be more critical about their own system which might be connected to my person as a researcher and/or to the less liberal atmosphere in Singapore and/or the specific situation of each of my interviewees.

In summary, it can be stated that there are many similarities in the ways academics from the National University of Singapore and the University of Bologna perceive and describe the role of universities. This can be connected to globalisation as well as to the fact that all interviewees from Singapore have international experience in working and/or studying abroad. In the interviews, interpersonal differences are more distinct than cultural differences as overlapping ideas on higher education can be found in both cases. This leads to the conclusion that not only does the broad context influence individuals but also the micro-context and the specific individual situation.

5.3.3 Comparing the Status and Nature of Higher Education Teaching

The role of teaching within higher education seems to be perceived in a similar way. In both cases, there were three types of academics, those who initially aimed at teaching but also enjoyed research, those who entered academia because of research but also enjoyed teaching and those who wanted to combine both aspects. Like the literature suggests (see for example Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006, Altbach 2002; Kerr 1996) teaching seems to be less valued when it comes to the appointment of academics and their promotion. Being a good teacher is thus an added value but being a productive and good researcher is even more important. Only one academic from Italy asserted that teaching is important for career advancement. Overall, with taking on leadership positions and becoming more senior, the teaching obligations seem to decrease in both cases.

In the Singapore case, one academic describes teaching as a challenge, and this was also reflected in the statement of another academic who stated that teaching is always a bit of an experiment. The adoption of a teaching philosophy and teaching style was, in this respect,

considered to be important. The issue that teaching is not a naturally given ability for academics is also noted in one interview from Italy. One academic claims that there is no further development in teaching skills and that visits to other universities are usually not used for inspiring the own teaching but for improving research skills.

Educational aims were described in Singapore and Italy from rather humanistic standpoints (Rüegg 2011), and academics in Singapore see an advantage of social science and humanities. In the case of Singapore, according to the interviewees, educational aims are related to subject knowledge, knowledge about research methods and technologies, the appreciation of knowledge, the insight that education never ends, discipline and hard work, as well as the insight that knowledge is a privilege. University education and, in particular, social science and humanities education in Singapore should also aim at teaching basic skills that can be applied in a flexible way, writing skills, communication skills, the ability to express one's ideas and thoughts, critical thinking, community engagement, as well as the ability to apply knowledge and skills in economic and cultural situations.

In the Italian case, critical thinking, the ability to organise research, debates and texts, the understanding of the reliability of empirical analysis, the awareness about concepts and research methods, a positive attitude towards the topic, rhetoric, technical and content knowledge, the insight that hard work is needed to achieve results, the ability to make strategic decisions in order to get a job, as well as the appreciation of culture, knowledge and science are perceived as important educational aims.

Overall, it can be stated that educational aims in both cases cover a wide range from practical and theoretical knowledge over soft skills, like communication and writings skills, towards more abstract educational aims such as critical thinking and the appreciation of knowledge, culture, and hard work. In other words, higher education needs to educate the individual to thrive in society, to behave in a responsible way and to prepare students for concrete situations such as the labour market. Theoretical and methodological knowledge and its application are also a major aim. To achieve these goals, some academics from Italy describe a good teacher as someone who is honest about his/her mistakes and beliefs, fair, serious, demanding, and caring in respect to students.

Whereas some academics from the University of Bologna do not see a real support structure for students within the country or the institution, Singapore seems to have a well-perceived

scholarship programme for good students from diverse disciplines. These scholarships bind the students to the country as they usually have to work for the state for a certain period in return for the scholarship. In Italy, many academics complain that the best students usually leave the country to work somewhere else. This fear of brain drain was not visible in the Singaporean case. Without making a final judgement, which would be impossible due to the small sample size, it seems like Singapore has developed better strategies to keep the best graduates and best scholars within the country whereas Italy loses many excellent students in international competition. This is not surprising as Singapore has invested a lot in diverse internationalisation strategies that include the import model, in which students acquire skills and education at foreign universities in order to bring their knowledge back to the home country (Olds 2007).

The combination and interweaving of teaching and research was perceived as valuable in both cases but not by all academics. In both contexts, some academics point out that there is no relationship between their teaching and research or that being engaged in research is not a necessity for being a good teacher and vice versa. Thus, they might not see a problem in dividing teaching and research task between academics and/or different institutions as it is often criticised by scholars such as Meyer (2012) or Scott (2004). Nevertheless, most academics see benefits in combining both tasks, regardless of whether their primary interest lies in teaching or research. Teaching can be beneficial for research as it helps to frame concepts very precisely and gives the possibility to test the usefulness of complex concepts when explaining a simple phenomenon to students. Teaching is also a steady reminder of the fundamentals of a subject that might be lost when engaging only in complex issues. Moreover, being a teacher demands academics to be up to date with the most recent literature and it can also provide an incentive to proceed from applied to theoretical research. Not only does teaching enhance research but the same is true for the opposite case. Research informs teaching with the newest methods, knowledge and technologies and can stimulate interest in students. In fact, some academics point out that university teaching that is not based on research would be nothing more than secondary-level education.

Overall, there is no major difference between Singapore and Italy with regard to ideas about teaching. Similar educational aims can be found in both cases and teaching is less valued in comparison to research which also is argued by many scholars (Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995). To what extent

cultural differences have an influence on the classroom situation cannot be judged from this study as some form of direct observation would be needed to answer this question. Therefore, the conclusion that can be made here is that there are cultural differences with regards to communication, hierarchies and openness but that the overall perception of higher education teaching is very similar in both cases. There are more inter-individual differences based on one's own teaching experiences than inter-cultural differences.

5.3.4 Comparing Conceptions and Perceptions of Academic Freedom

Concerning academic freedom, both cases differ, and I have already elaborated on the difference in the data collection process. I have also depicted how assumptions on the status of academic freedom in Singapore influenced my interview guides and the research process in general. These practical considerations can imply that academic freedom is perceived differently in both contexts. I will not go into detail here as I have done so in earlier parts of this thesis (Chapter 4.5 and 5.2.2).

Academics in both contexts have an understanding of what academic freedom means, and it is not the case that academics at the University of Bologna are better informed about it than those working at the National University of Singapore. Academic freedom is seen in both cases as applying to research and teaching. In the Italian case, academic freedom means freedom in teaching, research and producing knowledge, the freedom to collaborate with a variety of stakeholders and to organise one's own work. Furthermore, it includes the freedom from governing power. Academic freedom is not always seen as entirely positive as the freedom to organise and plan work can also be overwhelming without the necessary support from technicians and administrators. Academic freedom is perceived to be important for allowing for time to think, as a condition for long-lasting motivation, innovations and creativity. Due to the nature of research, the freedom to fail in one project needs to be given as the outcome of research is never clear at the beginning of the process. In order to develop new ideas, concepts and innovations, new directions need to be taken which might result in a dead end.

In the Singaporean case, academic freedom is described in a similar – and partly overlapping with Italy – way as it also focuses on the freedom to choose one's own research topic and method, to produce knowledge that is autonomous from political ecologies, allowing time for discovery and as a space for creativity and innovation. Hence, the assumptions about the

meaning of academic freedom are very similar to the interviewed Italian academics. In the case of the National University of Singapore, one academic also adds that a researcher needs appropriate tools and infra-structure in order to exercise his or her freedom.

Academics in both contexts think that they have academic freedom in their daily work. Nevertheless, there are restrictions. It is interesting to mention here that not all academics were immediately aware of these restrictions and sometimes they only discovered them during the interview. This proves that academic freedom can be a very subtle matter or – as in the case of Singapore – an outspoken problem for some academics. The interview data also shows that academic freedom should not be treated absolute and that absolute freedom would not even be desirable and hence reflects scholarly arguments (Zgaga 2012a).

In Italy, academics claim that they do have academic freedom but that this was not always given in the history, for example, during the fascist regime. Some academics felt completely free. Others think that they have to resign from a power position in order to exercise the freedom they need. Some interviewees also mentioned that academic freedom is probably more an issue of social sciences than of natural sciences. Academics feel free in their teaching within the organisational structure of courses and study programmes. Freedom in choosing the research topics and methods as well as the possibility of applying for funding seems to be given in Italy. Personal work experience is also related to academic freedom as freedom usually increases during the academic career which is also an observable claim in scholarly writings (see for example Meyer 2012). The social responsibility that is connected to academic freedom is acknowledged by all interviewees. Thus, they distinguish between restrictions to their freedom and duties that come along with academic freedom. They name here, for example, the duty to work on topics that are related to one's own expertise, the responsibility to students and hence organisational restrictions to the freedom in teaching, the competition for funding and the need for some form of peer pressure, which could be described as the traditional idea of accountability (Teichler 2015; Erikklä and Piironen 2014; Zgaga 2012a). Academic freedom is also described as problematic: from the perspective of one of interviewees, academics sometimes do not fulfil their obligation towards students and society. Therefore, he argues in favour of restricting academic freedom in the sense of being free to not do the work which seems to be possible in Italy.

In Singapore, academic freedom is exercised in teaching which includes decision making regarding the teaching content, methods and pedagogies, within the framework of the study

programme and institutional rules, of course. This might be connected to policy reforms in this direction (Mok 2010). An increase in freedom can be observed in today's student behaviour as they have become "fearless" (S5) in recent years. Academics also feel that they can conduct their research and that they have the appropriate tools for doing so. Most of them also think that they can say almost anything they want. However, one of them (S7) fears that he would experience negative consequences when one of his statements would be made publicly in this thesis. On the other hand, he acknowledges the benefits of knowing exactly what he can say and what he cannot say. Thus, the situation is not that easy in Singapore in all cases.

In both cases restrictions to academic freedom that are not experienced as positive for the academic work are mentioned. In the Italian case these restriction were much more subtle but in the long-term not less important to consider. A differentiation between external and internal aspects of academic freedom is visible in the interviews. On the side of external aspects that hinder academic freedom, the pressure on quantification and measurement of academic output is seen as a major problem (see also Moosmayer 2011). This can have a restricting effect on the choice of research topic for young academics to secure promotion. Another negative effect can also be seen in the form of student evaluation as quality is seen as more important than quantity – but "the age of measurement" (Biesta 2010) focused on the opposite. The role of mass-media and politicians in promoting the confusion between quality and quantity is emphasised. The new university structure with less faculties (Donina, Meoli and Palerari 2015; Moscati 2012) is also seen as problematic for the autonomy of campuses far away from the main campus. Next to these external restriction, the academic community can also have an influence on the experience of individual academic freedom. Well-established schools of thought are described as a source for preventing and frustrating new research venues, innovative methods and unusual interpretations. To use Elder-Vass (2012) words, these epistemological norm circles seem to have power within the universities and thus can restrict the freedom of the individual to teach or conduct research in an uncommon way. Self-censorship was not mentioned in any interview.

The restrictions on academic freedom in Singapore are much clearer as there are explicitly banned topics such as saying anything negative about political leaders or the idea that Singapore has scared a lot of people out of the country (see also Altbach 2001; Kim 2001). Still academics have the feeling that they are in a better position than academics in other Asian countries like China. This proves well that academic freedom is a matter of reference.

Comparing Europe with Singapore would probably lead to the conclusion that academic freedom is better protected in Europe but comparing the Singaporean situation with the Asian region leads to the conclusion that the everyday practice of academic freedom is not that bad. Especially, as Singapore seems to become more liberal in the last ten years according to some interviewees. In this respect judging on the degree of academics freedom can never be absolute but depends on the point of reference. One interviewee even appreciates the openness about banned topics and points out that in comparison to other countries he at least knows what he can say without fear of punishment. This gives him the security to talk open about all other issues. Strong hierarchies between different ranks are also perceived as a challenge for exchanging research ideas and results. Funding is described as tool for steering at a distance which also applies to other contexts than Singapore and was also mentioned in the case of Italy.

Despite, these restrictions to academic freedom in Singapore and the description that Singapore – compared to the West – is not known for its liberal approach, academics enjoy working in Singapore. They express that they have better research funding, more job security and less pressure to produce research outputs in comparison to Europe or the US. They also enjoy the international flair of the academic community and regularly visiting foreign researchers. Hence, Singapore cannot be described as a closed system; rather the opposite is the case taking into account that most academics studied and worked abroad before joining the National University of Singapore. For the academics who work, for example, in natural science academic freedom and the restrictions to talk about certain topics does not apply in their work and they feel free and well-supported in following their research and teaching interests.

Coming to the connection between academic freedom and teaching it is clear from the interviews that academic freedom also applies to teaching and not only to research. For some academics it is essential to have the freedom to decide on teaching methods and formats in order to fulfil their responsibility towards the students. Other academics on the other hand, could not see a real connection between teaching and academic freedom. What can be said is that academic freedom in teaching is a complex issue as teaching needs to be aligned towards a certain study programme and course structure. Some topics also need to be covered and hence not all teaching activities can be directly related to the own research interests. Nevertheless, influence factors that are known from research on academic freedom such as the focus on quantity can be also a problem for academic freedom in teaching when, for example, a certain

form of assessment becomes prevalent. Thus, the "age of measurement" (Biesta 2010) is a problem for academic freedom in teaching.

5.3.5 Conclusions and Answers to the Research Questions

In the final part of this chapter I will engage with the research questions asked in Chapter 4. During my comparison of the two cases, I have already attempted to answer them in detail but rather implicitly. Therefore, in this part I will provide short and comprehensive answers and refer for more details to the previous parts of this chapter.

The main question of this study was: *What does academic freedom – especially academic freedom in higher education teaching – mean in different cultural spaces?* A short answer to this question is that the meaning of academic freedom and especially academic freedom in higher education teaching is diverse. The core meaning differs more between individuals based on their (disciplinary) experience than between different (academic) cultures. The degree of academic freedom, nevertheless, is dependent also on the regional, national, institutional, and disciplinary contexts. Next to this, the research community and career stage seem to be influential on the individual experience of academic freedom. What matters as well is the point of reference when judging the own situation. Comparing one's own situation to a place or time when more freedom was given will lead to a negative judgement and comparing one's own situation to a place or time that was worse will lead to a more positive evaluation of the own position.

Answering the following sub-questions will provide more details: *What does academic freedom in relation to teaching mean for academics working at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore?* Academic freedom in teaching is perceived as important in both contexts to prompt critical thinking and to introduce diverse ideas on a certain topic. This was especially asserted by an academic from arts and social science in Singapore. Nevertheless, making own decisions on teaching matters is perceived as important by most academics and only a few could not imagine a situation in which academic freedom in teaching is not important. Therefore, academic freedom in teaching is important for academics in both places and usually also given within the structural and legal framework, of course.

What is the meaning and significance of academic freedom in the daily practices of academics? Overall, academic freedom is important for academics in both contexts as it is perceived as a necessary condition for academic work. Nevertheless, during the interviews, not all academics were immediately able to connect their work with academic freedom; this is especially true for the case of Italy. In this respect, some academics only discovered during the interview – which can be seen as process of reflection on the topic – that they might have some concerns with academic freedom. The degree of academic freedom, as already mentioned, varies according to many factors such as the legal framework, one's work experience, the discipline, the research area and the micro climate within a school or faculty. Hence, the individually perceived degree of academic freedom is very different from case to case. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that academic freedom is not the only issue that provides a good atmosphere for academics as funding, research collaboration and an international environment also play a significant role. Overall, the academics that participated in this study feel rather satisfied with their situation despite some drawbacks.

Which factors influence academics' experiences of academic freedom at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore? As already mentioned, the experience of academic freedom depends on the policy context as well as on the individual situation and the reference point that is used when evaluating one's own situation. Therefore, there are different norm circles at play that influence the perception and experience of academic freedom. Among them are, the own peer group in form of established schools of thoughts, politicians and policies, the perception of higher education, academics and universities in society and the mass-media.

To what extent is academic freedom – in particular academic freedom in higher education teaching – important for academics at the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore? Academic freedom in teaching is perceived as important as it can enhance student learning and student motivation. Nevertheless, not all academics take their responsibility that comes along with academic freedom seriously: one interviewee from Italy points out that students do not find appropriate support and guidance within the university. Still, the data shows that there is a clearer picture on why academic freedom is important in research than in teaching.

Next, answering these theoretical and conceptual questions, I also wanted to investigate a more methodological question. *What are the practical benefits that interpretative comparison offers*

for deepening the understanding of academic freedom in different cultural spaces? Using an interpretative comparative research design proved to be beneficial for deepening the understanding of academic freedom. Working with meaning and drawing on a unit of comparison also enabled me to see aspects of academic freedom that were not directly named. An example for this is the case in which the concept of academic freedom was hidden in the description of the traditional role of universities in one interview from Singapore. Approaching this study without a specific definition of academic freedom made it possible to pinpoint dimensions of it that are not immediately obvious when thinking about academic freedom. One example is the role of the mass-media in restricting and framing academic freedom. I also tried to ask open-ended questions and avoided giving descriptions of the concepts to prevent the tendency to talk about dominant assumptions about academic freedom. This also made it more likely that academics in Singapore open-up to me and talked rather openly about their situation. In this respect, they did not mention only positive or negative experiences and views but their stories were balanced and oriented towards their personal experience of working within the university. Being aware of the positionality of the researcher as described in Chapter 4.3 enhanced the criticality of my data analysis, and I pointed towards this issue from time to time in this chapter. I tried not only to take my personal biases into account when analysing the data but the influence of my person as being a PhD student from Europe. Therefore, I could reflect in a deeper way on my problems with finding interviewees in Singapore, my own attitude towards planning the interviews, and on the effect of my person on the answers of my interviewees. I tried to be as open as possible about these things in this thesis as I think that this is important for allowing the reader to engage in an informed way with my conclusions and claims.

Overall, I believe that interpretative comparison can offer a good way for deepening the understanding of a concept or phenomenon by embedding it into the broader and the individual context. Therefore, it is an appropriate tool for enhancing the insight into diverse meanings of concepts. Nevertheless, it is not useful for developing a concrete definition, for comparing on a quantitative basis, or for producing results that can be generalised. Thus, this study gives an insight into academic freedom at the moment of the study and in two particular places. It provided a basis on which one can critically engage with a complex concept that is often assumed to be universal but has not one clear definition or idea behind it.

CHAPTER 6: Summary and Conclusion

In this thesis, I started by describing a seemingly old-fashioned and curious ceremony that is taking place on a yearly basis – the Ceremony of the Signature of the Magna Charta Universitatum. From wondering why this event is valued so highly and attracts more and more universities and their rectors from countries all-around the world, I moved towards looking at a certain academic value, namely academic freedom. At first glance, it seemed like academic values are well-elaborated on and find recognition in many policy texts and academic publications. Nevertheless, the literature review revealed that there is still a neglected aspect with regard to academic values, namely academic freedom in higher education teaching.

What was clear from the beginning on and especially after looking at the history of universities was that academic freedom cannot be seriously evaluated without including connected academic values, such as university autonomy as well as the role of universities in society and their social obligation in return for academic freedom and university autonomy. Therefore, I looked at all these issues from a theoretical perspective.

Concerning the role of universities in society, I showed that there is not one main and clear distinct university mission but that the role of universities in society is changing according to time and space (Rüegg 2011; Gascoigne 1998). This is also happening right now as, in addition to the traditional university roles such as teaching and research, a third mission has recently emerged, which includes aspects that refer to a new set of responsibilities which are associated with social engagement, a contribution to society and economy as well as participation (Nedeva 2007). In other words, the third mission can be seen as a mean to making universities strategically important for the advancement of economy and leads to the commercialisation of higher education (Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno 2008). Consequently, some academics claim that the introduction of the term "third mission" has replaced the natural connection between universities and society (Boden and Nedeva 2010; Nedeva 2007).

In addition to this rather new definition of universities' connection with society, teaching and research are key tasks of universities. Similarly to the third mission, teaching and research are more and more focused on quantifiable measurements in order to optimise their outputs (Moosmayer 2011). This development goes hand in hand with the decrease of trust in the academic profession (Carvalho 2012; Trakman 2008), the focus on disciplines that have good

student employability rates (Meyer 2012), and research that finds external financiers due to economic interests (Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006).

Comparing the status of research and teaching the literature shows quite clearly that research is valued higher (Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995) and that teaching is often seen as a side-effect of academic work (Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006). Therefore, teaching is also less discussed with regard to academic freedom even if teaching quality is a growing concern in contemporary universities (Skelton 2007).

Overall, the mission of universities is not only a decision of the academic community but part of a negotiation process between different stakeholders. Especially as universities are part of a certain government and cultural space, the concrete mission also depends on the policy background and the academic culture in a certain space.

University autonomy is the second concept that is closely linked to academic freedom. It refers traditionally to the autonomy in academic matters but includes today mainly financial, administrative and organisational autonomy (Zgaga 2012a). Therefore, university autonomy that was seen as a precondition of academic freedom (Anderson and Johnson 1998) is today often considered as endangering or conflicting with academic freedom (Zgaga et al 2015; Zgaga 2012a; Wright and Ørberg 2011). This is not in the least caused by the strong connection between accountability and university autonomy, which turned university autonomy into a managerial property (Erkkilä and Piironen 2014) or, to use Zgaga's (2012a) words, to a shift from a philosophical understanding of university autonomy to an economic conception. Hence, changes in governance structures and the understanding of university autonomy lead to the call for refocusing on academic freedom in order to follow traditional university missions of serving society in a long-term perspective (Hamilton 2000) and to support individuals in their personal development (Rüegg 2011).

This call for the importance of academic freedom is also one of the main reason that this thesis focuses on academic freedom and not university autonomy. The less valued status of teaching in comparison to research is also relevant. I showed in the chapter on academic freedom that a definition of this concept is not as easy as assumed at the beginning. Different scholars emphasise different aspects of academic freedom and definitions range from the freedom of speech (Hayes cited in McCrae 2011) towards definitions that put an emphasis on the social

responsibility that comes with academic freedom (see for example Aarevaara 2010; Manan 2000). Similarly to the diverse academic definitions, I have also shown with the examples of the US, Denmark and Slovenia that academic freedom can mean something very different in different countries and under different legislation. Thus, academic freedom is a concept which is complex and not easy to capture as the understanding varies immensely.

Nevertheless, there are some good reasons for arguing in favour of academic freedom that can be traced back even to ancient Greece. Plato's writings about Socrates speeches and dialogues as the "apology" (Plato 2004 [before 387 B.C.E.]) and the "allegory of the cave" (Plato 1998 [360 B.C.E.]) hint in this direction. What remains an open question is the ownership of academic freedom. Is it the individual or the academic community? There are good arguments for both cases. On one hand, the academic community is crucial for evaluating and enhancing the academic work of individual scholars. On the other, it is possible that established academic groups prevent the publication and support of research that is against their own approaches and ideals. Hence, the academic community can prevent researchers and academics from teaching and/or researching uncommon and controversial topics. In conclusion, it can be said that probably a healthy balance between the power and rights of the academic community and the individual is the most suitable approach.

I concluded the theoretical part of this thesis by stating that academic freedom is always relational to other academic values and the current role of universities in society as there is still no general agreement about what academic freedom exactly is. I also pointed out that teaching, even if it always was a major task of universities, is less promoted compared to research (Meyer 2012; Boden and Epstein 2011; Houston, Meyer and Shelley 2006; Altbach 2002; Kerr 1995). Therefore, I argued that it is important to consider academic freedom in teaching, because without it, it is almost impossible to teach controversial topics and to stimulate critical thinking. Surely this argument only counts in the case that critical thinking is still perceived as an educational aim of universities. Otherwise, it will be difficult to argue in favour of academic freedom in higher education teaching.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I shifted from rather theoretical conceptions and considerations of academic freedom towards its practical application. I have shown that academic freedom is part of many different governmental and non-governmental institutions and their publications, such as the Magna Charta Universitatum and the Magna Charta Observatory, the role of the Council of Europe and the European Council, the American

Association of University Professors, Scholars at Risk and UNESCO with its recommendations on the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel. In this part, I have depicted that the understanding of academic freedom and its relationship to university autonomy has changed over time and is not coherently understood in different policies. Nevertheless, the documents and organisations that protect academic values not only in Europe but worldwide show that academic freedom is a global concern.

Following this official account of well-known organisations, I presented two studies that attempt to measure university autonomy (Esterman, Nokkala and Setinel 2011) and academic freedom (Beiter, Karran and Appiagyei-Atua 2016) in the form of score cards. I argued that this quantitative way of looking at academic values has some validity for referencing and comparing the superficial facts about academic freedom but cannot improve the understanding of such a complex concept. Due to a missing recognised definition of academic freedom, I argued in favour of a qualitative research design to enhance the understanding of the concept.

In the following two parts of the chapter, I showed how academic freedom and the connected concepts of university autonomy and teaching are presented in academic media, taking University World News as an example. The analysis of newspaper articles published between January 2014 and December 2015 showed that there is a variety of issues concerning academic freedom that arise in universities and countries all over the world regardless of the legal status of academic freedom in the specific country is. Therefore, academic freedom is a global concern that is talked and written about. The articles also show that academic freedom is a relational value that can never be achieved fully as it always depends on repeated negotiations between different stakeholders. Academic freedom thus depends on academics fighting for their interests and academic freedom.

Despite the number of articles on issues related to academic freedom and its connection to teaching, there are also subtler dimensions of academic freedom that even changed, for example, the title of this thesis. In this respect, I argued that it is important to openly discuss the issue of academic freedom and evaluate rules and guidelines on whether they make sense or unnecessarily restrict academic freedom.

Through my fieldwork that was described in Chapter 4, I aimed at depicting exactly these forgotten or hidden aspects of academic freedom. Therefore, I adopted a research design that is based on interpretative comparison and aimed at depicting diversity and plurality, situating

a case in the context and being reflective about the research approach (Custers et al. 2015; 2016). The fieldwork of this study is based on policy and document analysis to frame the context and qualitative interviewees with academics form different disciplines and at different career stages form the University of Bologna and the National University of Singapore to capture their individual perspectives.

The fieldwork showed several aspects but most importantly it depicted that intra-individual differences are much more significant as regards academic freedom than inter-cultural differences are. The individual experiences are nevertheless embedded in a broader context which includes not only the regional, national and institutional policies but also (disciplinary) experiences, (academic) cultures, and the career stage. Therefore, the close academic community is often more significant for the individual than the policy context. Nevertheless, the degree of academic freedom and the space to manoeuvre in one's own work is dependent on the regional, national, and institutional contexts. Another important aspect for judging the degree of academic freedom is also the point of reference when comparing one's own situation with other places as a comparison with a time or place where more freedom was given will lead to a rather negative view on the present situation and vice versa.

Concerning the relation between teaching and academic freedom, academics from both universities thought that freedom is important in order to stimulate critical thinking and to include diverse ideas on a certain topic. The importance of academic freedom in teaching was especially asserted by academics from arts and social science, and this shows that the academic discipline can play a significant role in the daily experiences of academics. Academic freedom in teaching, according to the interviewees, seems to be given in both contexts but always in connection to certain structural requirements in order to secure coherent course programmes.

Academic freedom is perceived as important in both contexts for academic work, and most of the academics feel comfortable working in their universities. Nevertheless, there are restrictions to academic freedom in more obvious ways in the case of Singapore or in a subtler version in Italy. Therefore, the fieldwork showed that academic freedom is a matter that needs to be elaborated on repeatedly and cannot be taken for granted.

All academics that took part in this study recognised the responsibility that comes with an academic position and academic freedom. Nevertheless, there is no coherent answer concerning the question of whether universities and academics fulfil their obligation. This was

especially an issue of one interviewee from the University of Bologna. The issue of communicating the role of universities and the importance of academic freedom was raised in both cases, and it seems that not all academics are confident in communicating with society and the public around them.

Overall, the research design based on interpretative comparison (Custer et al. 2015; 2016) turned out to be beneficial for deepening the understanding of academic freedom. The work with a unit of comparison instead of a unit of analysis enabled me, for example, to depict aspects of academic freedom that were not directly named and hidden in descriptions of connected issues. It also offered the possibility that dimensions of academic freedom that are not obvious or elaborated on in the literature could emerge during the fieldwork. The focus on the stories of the interviewees without pre-given definitions or judgements on the status of academic freedom in Singapore also led to the effect that positive as well as negative aspects and experiences were raised. Particular benefit was also taken from the assumption that the researcher takes on a certain positionality in the research process as this enabled me to reflect more critically about the data collection process, the data that was gained, and the data analysis, which I have shown several times in this text.

Overall, interpretative comparison offers many benefits to deepening the understanding of a concept from the grass-roots level without losing the connection to the individual context of each interviewee. It is especially strong in depicting diversity in meanings of a concept but lacks the ability to produce generalisable results or concrete definitions. Consequently, it helps to critically engage with a concept without taken a certain definition as the starting point.

Despite the strength of the research approach, this study has (as every research project does) limitations. In this respect, the results of the study as mentioned above are not generalisable, not at least due to the small sample size concerning participants at each institution as well as concerning the number of institutions and countries. The sample method of this study that resulted due to problems with access should be rethought as well. All interviewees of the study were interested in the topic and motivated to participate in the study, which has several benefits for gaining in-depth views but also leads to a biased pool of interviewees, which might neglect some controversial views. Therefore, this study is just a snapshot of the situation of some academics at a certain time, but it still can depict issues concerning academic freedom and higher education teaching.

For future research, a deeper analysis of the background processes behind the policy texts would be needed in order to get an even deeper insight into the shaping of the concept of "academic freedom". Furthermore, other stakeholders should be added, not only to see academic freedom from an academic perspective but also from, for example, the students', the media's, the politicians' and the parents' perspective. This could very much enhance and deepen the understanding from more varied perspectives and help to understand academic freedom in an even more complete way.

Due to the limitations and results of this study, future research on the topic is still needed as academic freedom is not as well-elaborated on as assumed at first. There is also a lack of comprehensive overviews of the topic in different cultural spaces. Thus, discussing academic values from an intercultural perspective would enhance different understandings that co-exist and are often confused. Next to the intercultural perspective on academic values, a contemporary analysis of universities' mission is needed in order to judge whether academic freedom is still needed or if universities shift towards training future employees and producing research innovation (Ridder-Symoens 2002). In the latter case, it would be difficult to argue in favour of academic freedom.

Despite the need for future research, and the inablility to generalise the results of this study it is still possible to make some concrete recommendation concerning academic freedom based on the accounts of the interviewees that took part. These recommendations can be taken into account by policy makers, university leaders as well as academics themselves to enhance the situation of academic freedom and to stipulate further discussions on the topic. The recommendations are not so much based on the literature review for this work but reflect the perspective of ground-level academics based on their daily experiences. There are three topics that guide the recommendations. First, *communication between universities, academics, and society*, second, *evaluations of academic work*, and third *safeguarding academic freedom*. Enhancing the communication between universities, academics and society was an often-mentioned topic in the interviews, as this was seen as a reason for a decreasing trust of politicians, the public and the media in academics and universities. The interviews also showed that this decrease in trust has negatively impacted academic freedom by strengthening the focus on numbers and evaluation. Therefore, evaluations of academic work are also influential on the subject academic freedom as they guide academic practices and careers. Last but not least, the

study also depicted some more general ideas about how the academic community and policy makers can safeguard and communicate about academic freedom.

1. Communication between universities, academics, and society:

a) There needs to be more clarity on the missions and current roles of universities as well as on academic values.
b) In order to explain the diverse and complex roles of universities and the need for academic freedom to the broader public, the communication between universities and the public needs to be improved.
c) Therefore, academics need appropriate skills and tools to communicate their expert knowledge and academic issues in an easy and understandable way.
d) Support should be offered to academics to develop the necessary communication skills and platforms for an open-dialogue between academics and the public must be provided.

2. Evaluations of academic work

a) Serious discussions about appropriate evaluation methods need to be stimulated in order to make concrete suggestions come from within the academic community.
b) Based on these open discussions, serious evaluation methods need to be put in place.
c) The time and resources for more complex evaluations need to be provided.

3. Safeguarding Academic Freedom

a) A mutual understanding and appreciation of different meanings of academic freedom is needed in order to enhance dialogue between different cultures and stakeholders on the topic.
b) Clear policies need to be in place that protect not only the academic freedom of the academic community but also the individual academic in order to pave the way for a plurality of ideas and thoughts.
c) Open dialogue about academic freedom and its subtle dimensions needs to be established across disciplines, universities, and countries.
d) Therefore, space and time need to be provided for open-dialogue between members of the academic community.

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