Great Expectations: Change and Continuity in Academic Roles and Tasks

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Abstract

This study explores the changing expectations towards the work of senior academics in Norway. By utilizing role theory concepts, as well as literature on university branding and academic recruitment, it examines how academic roles and tasks have changed, as well as the "ideal academic" depicted by universities themselves at the hiring stage. Data for this paper was collected from ten public universities in Norway over a period of 20 years and includes job advertisements (N = 1,744) for professor and associate professor positions. The study found that higher education institutions (HEIs) have become more specific when describing their expectations of academics, increasingly using job advertisements as marketing and branding artifacts. The analysis also demonstrated that universities in Norway behave strategically and have organizational goals in mind during the hiring process of new academics. The results related to role change are less conclusive but indicate that there is a general trend towards focusing on research quality and metrics, as well as acquiring research funding from external sources as part of a researcher role. Teaching expectations also increased, but more in the light of meeting organizational teaching needs, than being an integral part of academic life. Finally, there are increasing expectations towards third mission activities, while the administrative role is strategically unadvertised, as it is a less attractive part of academic job.

Practical Relevance

➤ The findings of this study highlight the increasing expectations for three out of the four main academic roles (research, teaching, and the third mission), indicating growing pressure and demands on Norwegian academics over the past two decades, with a high likelihood of this trend continuing. However, policy reforms should accompany these increasing expectations by introducing a clear set of indicators related primarily to teaching and the third mission roles and defining their weight in relation to academic hiring and career progression.

➤ Job advertisement indicators related to research and teaching roles are nearly identical at the beginning and end of the observed period, signifying the continuing dominance of the Humboldtian model in Norway. This may indicate a desire for stability in the Norwegian higher education sector, given the significant reform processes over the past twenty years, and represents an adequate policy approach.

➤ Public universities, influenced by a neo-liberal (NPM/managerial) agenda in Norwegian higher education, are increasingly relying on branding and rationalization efforts, evident from the growing complexity in the structure and content of job advertisements for professor and associate professor positions.

➤ University administrators are increasingly favoring more detailed job descriptions, hoping that this strategy will attract a higher number of high-quality candidates who will, in turn, contribute to fulfilling organizational goals. This trend should continue for Norwegian higher education to remain competitive in the international market for attracting the best and brightest, both academic staff and students.

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Introduction

Academics must balance multiple roles, as well as various tasks contained within those roles. In the scholarly literature, the most common distinction is made between three, or in some cases four, main academic role categories – research, teaching, administration, and, more recently, third mission activities (Bentley & Kyvik, 2012). In assessments of the functions of universities in social systems, research and teaching roles have been considered the most significant (Höhle & Teichler, 2013). Various tasks related to the administrative role are typically seen as burdensome, and numerous efforts are made to minimize them (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). Due to the rising trend of marketization in higher education (HE) (Teixeira & Dill, 2011) and the growing recognition of universities as facilitators of economic growth (Uslu et al., 2019) and regional development (Benneworth et al., 2016), academics are also increasingly expected to play greater parts in their role as entrepreneurs (Marzocchi et al., 2019) and act as income generators, usually as part of the newly added university third mission. Finally, given increased pressure to be socially responsible (Pinheiro et al., 2015), academics are compelled to be active in a wide array of tasks that are external to their main university work but are considered beneficial to society. Such tasks are usually classified under societal engagement/service/dissemination and generally considered to be a non-profit part of the third mission (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). This evolution in academic roles and tasks has been recognized by scholars as an ongoing global process (Aarrevaara et al., 2021; Teichler et al., 2013).

While research-teaching-administration has been well established in the scientific community as a "realistic" representation of academic work, in recent years this notion has been challenged by two main streams of research. One group of scholars has begun critical discussions regarding whether there are really only three roles. The main argument of this group is that the existing triad is too rigid to capture the increasingly complex array of academic activities resulting from academic roles being unbundled (Gehrke & Kezar, 2015; Macfarlane, 2011; Neely & Tucker, 2010) into a myriad of specialized roles, including research and teaching-only positions, instructional designer roles, and various entrepreneurial roles (Coates & Kezar, 2022; Krause, 2009; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Martin et al. (2018) argue that a possible explanation for this could be that previous studies have tended to focus on the atomistic experience of being an academic and the ways in which academics understand and prioritize pre-defined and separate elements of their work, thus re-producing this restricted view (p. 2374). Furthermore, the inclusion of the third mission in a university's portfolio of activities (B. R. Clark, 1998) only serves to exacerbate the already existing confusion. The third mission is predominantly perceived as a process of transforming research outcomes into commercial products, thereby augmenting the scope of applied research conducted within academic institutions (Schnurbus & Edvardsson, 2022). While some authors focus more on third mission "for-profit" elements, others include its "not-for-profit" activities, such as the dissemination of knowledge to the broader community and organizations, promotion of entrepreneurial skills, innovation, and the enhancement of social welfare, and the development of human capital (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). While this addition of a new mission to the university's two pre-existing activities (research and teaching) is quite well captured in the literature, there is still a lack of research on how this idea is translated into the daily work of academics (Knudsen et al., 2021). Moreover, given that evaluation and professional progression hinge primarily on scholarly achievements within the fields of research and teaching, involving academics in third mission endeavors is frequently considered unneeded or even bothersome as it obstructs customary academic pursuits (Huyghe & Knockaert, 2015).

On the other end of the spectrum, another stream of literature does not question academic roles per se, instead calling for their further integration. In addition to the classic Humboldtian value of integration between teaching and research (Colbeck, 1998), and given that administration already exists at the intersection of all academic activities, some scholars have called for a third mission to be integrated into both research and teaching in order for it to be better accepted within the academic community (Ćulum, 2015; Ćulum et al., 2013; Macfarlane, 2011; Reymert & Thune, 2022), and also to ensure synergies and long term sustainability of these roles (Pinheiro & Pulkkinen, 2023).

Considering academics' claims of the increasing complexity of scholarly work, it is perhaps surprising that research on the new expectations towards academic roles and tasks, as well as the possible reshuffling of existing ones, has been relatively limited. Each academic role can be seen as a category comprised of one or several tasks, and each task as an activity that has organizational relevance. Therefore, when referring to academic work, most scholars (Borlaug et al., 2022; Clegg, 2008; Coates & Kezar, 2022; Henkel, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008; Poutanen, 2022; Whitchurch, 2012; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013) tend to make use of already well-established role categories, without unpacking the complexity and expected activities that comprise these roles. In addition, pre-defined categories do not allow for additional, possibly novel, roles to come to the fore.

However, some research has been done to shed light on this topic in European, Anglo-Saxon, as well as Norwegian contexts. For example, Kyvik (2013) identified and analyzed six main tasks included in the academic researcher role in Norwegian academia, including networking, collaboration, doing, managing, publishing, and evaluating research. Brokjøb et al. (2022) also discussed the rationale behind applying for external research funding as part of the research role. In terms of the teaching role, Höhle and Teichler's (2013) study outlines the following related ten tasks: classroom lecturing, individualized instruction, learning in projects/groups, practice instruction or laboratory work, ICT-based learning or computer-assisted learning, distance education, face-to-face interaction with students outside class, electronic communication (e-mail) with students, development of course material, and curriculum/program development. Finally, the third mission tends to be the most ambiguous, still requiring a broader and deeper scientific discourse for its elucidation. For instance, Ćulum et al.'s (2015; 2013) as well Schnurbus and Edvardsson (2022) studies revealed that various and sometimes completely different issues are discussed in the context of third mission, including technology transfer/innovation/commercial activities (which overlap with research), internal services (which overlap with management and administration), civic activities (which overlap with both research and teaching), and organized service functions (e.g., university hospitals, various projects with marginalized populations) for the welfare of the community (region).

The common problem with most of the existing studies, as noted by Rosewell and Ashwin (2018), is that the predominant approach for studying academic roles has largely relied on pre-defined role categories and tasks. In addition, focusing on a single point in time, existing research has not allowed for a better understanding of the changes in expectations towards academic roles and tasks over time. The aim of this paper is to fill this knowledge gap by examining stability and change in expectations towards academic roles. In approaching this problem, the paper raises the following two main questions:

1. How are academic roles defined and "ideal" employees depicted by universities themselves?
2. To what extent have academic role expectations (outlined in descriptions of ideal role incumbents) changed over time?

To gauge whether and how academic role expectations have changed, this article investigates how the roles and tasks of senior academics (professors and associate professors) have been framed in job advertisements over a period of twenty years (2000–2020) at ten public research universities in Norway. In addition to contributing to an increasingly vibrant literature on the reshaping of academic roles, and the use of marketing and branding tools in academic recruitment, this paper provides an understanding of role theory concepts related to changes in expectations in occupational roles. Throughout the following sections, the paper outlines the theoretical and conceptual positioning and provides an outline of Norwegian HE with special focus on the use of job advertisements in university branding and academic recruitment, followed by methods, data analysis, discussion, and conclusion sections.

Roles: Expectations and Hierarchization

General notions of roles and basic concepts

The focus of this study is on academic roles—what they are comprised of and how they have changed due to shifts in expectations from the academic profession and changes in the way the academic system operates. Therefore, role theory offers a valuable conceptual and analytical tool by clarifying how external expectations motivate change and/or continuity in academic roles and the various tasks included in those roles.

Role theory sees organizations (including universities) as a complex arrangement of many collective cycles of behavior. The basic unit of organizational life, or molar unit of behavior, is a *task*. Tasks are recurring activities that have organizational relevance, are held in the form of role expectations, and afford some sense of closure after completion. One or more of those recurrent tasks, which are interconnected in one way or another, creates a *role*. Finally, an *office* is a point (location) in an organizational space, defined by one or more roles and subsequently one or more tasks (Katz & Khan, 1966, pp. 179–180). Scholars (Bess & Dee, 2008; R. Turner, 2002) also point out that roles are relational concepts, as they have meaning only in relation to other roles. These researchers have also acknowledged that roles have certain expectations attached to them and are manifested as expected behaviors (Anglin et al., 2022). Therefore, this study deals with *expected roles*, as the information on the actual behavior of the role incumbents cannot be extracted from the job advertisements (Lavigne & Sá, 2021; Pilcher et al., 2021). An expected role can be defined as a "set of expectations for the behavior, in context, of an object person (or position) that are held consensually by one or more subject persons (or are attributed by them to others)" (Biddle, 1979, p. 210).

Role expectations and change

In addition to the idea of the office, (expected) roles and tasks, several other concepts and propositions from role theory are central to this paper. The first is the notion of role expectations. Role theory asserts that human behavior in an organizational setting will, to a certain degree, be affected by expectations from others present in the setting and the expectations outlined in formal written rules, as well as informal norms and values. These constitute *external role expectations* (Bess & Dee, 2008). Based on this assumption, it can be deduced that changes in external expectations will lead, at least partially, to changes in role behavior (Kyvik, 2013) and as such to a modified role. Whether or not this will be the case depends on a complex set of symbolic, material, and financial incentives, as well as sanctions by those directing role expectations. In addition, role behavior is influenced by incumbents' own *personal (internal) expectations*, although to a lesser extent (R. Turner, 2002). Both external and internal role expectations are founding elements of the *role episode*, in which outer role occupants send direct external expectations to role incumbents, who through their work and feedback can exploit personal agency in processing, renegotiating, and redefining a role and its constitutive tasks, leading to at least partially modified behavior. This process is circular (Katz & Khan, 1966).

The second set of concepts revolves around the notion of *role change*. There are two main ways role change can occur. Quantitatively, a new role can be created, or an established role can be dissolved—a total number of roles that can be attributed to any given office can either increase or decrease, causing roles to differ in their breadth. Roles can also change either by the addition or subtraction of tasks and the rights attached to them (role depth). A role can also change qualitatively by means of changes in the relative salience of the role's composing elements, by the substitution of those elements, by a gain or loss of power or prestige, and/or by the reinterpretation of its meaning (Defazio et al., 2020; R. Turner, 1990).

Hierarchization of role expectations

As universities are complex organizations, characterized as loosely coupled structures (Elken & Vukasovic, 2019; Weick, 1976) with multiple cultures (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008) and a diverse set of interests, academics must play multiple roles, including the triad of research-teaching-administration and recently added third mission. Some scholars argue that teaching and research roles are becoming ever more complex and demanding (Carton & Ungureanu, 2018). In addition, academic role expectations extend far beyond research and teaching. As noted above,

external role expectations in academic settings emanate from several role senders, including the state, various external stakeholders, the university, academic peers, and the disciplinary community (Krause, 2009). Academics are increasingly expected to be entrepreneurial, contribute to society, and take part in promotional activities in their organizations, etc. (Hermanowicz, 2018). According to role theory, as job demands increase over time, academics have to engage in the hierarchization of role expectations (Anglin et al., 2022), in which case, the activities that are subject to stronger pressures (either externally from leadership and peers or internally from intrinsic motivation, prestige, and the desire to be successful), have higher saliency (prestige and incentives), urgency (deadlines for paper submissions or periods of more intensive teaching), and legitimacy (research and teaching have stronger foundations than service), or have stronger sanctions for non-compliance will thus gain priority (Brew et al., 2018; Kraimer et al., 2019).

Branding and Academic Recruitment

The analysis of job advertisements reflecting role expectations and role change, needs to be understood in the context of the broader process of rationalization (Lee & Ramirez, 2023; Ramirez, 2006, 2010) and marketization efforts in HE (Avramović et al., 2021; Teixeira & Dill, 2011) as well as the increased contest for the best and the brightest, both staff and students. Job advertisements serve as a tool for higher education institutions to promote and differentiate themselves from their competitors. These documents are just one aspect of the branding activities employed by the HE sector, which have been borrowed from business organizations (Aula et al., 2015). In this increasingly competitive and resource strained university environment, the importance of proper branding (or in some cases re-branding) is rising (P. Clark et al., 2020). Brands have traditionally been considered "identifiers" that differentiate goods or services from those of competitors (Kuoppakangas et al., 2020).

Generally, there are two main views regarding the purpose of universities' use of branding strategies and artefacts. One is rather optimistic and in line with the traditional definition, seeing branding as an instrument for improving the market position and reputation of HEIs by developing a competitive advantage based on a set of unique characteristics through clear and effective communication to "customers" (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). Branding also lends new meaning to long-standing academic categories. As Drori (2013) notes, branding brings market logic and managerialism to the university and heightens the sense of academic competition. In this way, the university is transformed into a "proper organization". In addition, emphasis on branding is also accompanied by a redefinition of what a university does – there is emphasis on knowledge creation, teaching, and excellence in research. Finally, branding shifts the tone of the core aspects of academic work as excellence becomes a differentiation strategy rather than solely a professional duty (pp. 3-5).

The other view represents an opposite position, where branding in HE is used more as a symbol through which universities demonstrate their conformity to their institutional environments. In other words, it is more important to be similar than to differentiate. However, this is often done unintentionally. It is a paradox that branding, or what is meant to lead to differentiation, may in fact lead to a conformity that prevents organizations from expressing their unique features (e.g., by using buzzwords such as "world class", "flagship", "leading" etc. or by simply following the same strategies and using the same artefacts as others) (Kuoppakangas et al., 2020; Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009; Wille et al., 2020).

The use of job advertisements in studying academic role expectations, recruitment and branding is on the rise in recent years (see Lavigne & Sá (2021); Pitt & Mewburn (2016); Johnson & Zlotnik, (2005); and Pilcher et al., (2021). These documents represent one of the artefacts that universities increasingly use as part of branding communication, to promote and distinguish themselves from the other competitors in the hiring process of academics (Kheovichai, 2014; Thellefsen et al., 2006). Even though job advertisements are far from being the most efficient branding tool (Drori et al., 2013), they are important as a step in one's academic journey towards a desired position, and the image they convey and the message they communicate set the tone for future steps in the recruitment (Orupabo & Mangset, 2022).

As a branding artifact (Thellefsen et al., 2006), a job advertisement is a readily available formal statement of a particular institution's expectations concerning the roles and qualifications associated with a position. They serve as public signals for candidates and university members regarding what to expect from the role incumbent (Lavigne & Sá, 2021). An effective job advertisement is not only able to positively affect the perceived attractiveness of an organization through text and images, but it can also prevent jobseekers from actively searching for additional vacancies (Liu, 2020). As artifacts, job advertisements communicate certain qualities and values, and by applying to a vacant position, job seekers wish to become part of the community that shares these qualities and values (Delmestri et al., 2015). As such, job advertisements may serve not only to attract desirable candidates, but also to discourage those from applying who do not have the proper skills or do not share the same values as the hiring organization (Cooman & Pepermans, 2012).

In the literature, there are two main themes when it comes to the role of job advertisements in mediating the hiring process. The first one focuses on how much information should be displayed in these texts. One group of scholars favor more detailed documents, with abundant information, so that applicants can have a full understanding of what is expected and be encouraged to apply for the job (Ganesan et al., 2020). It is argued that job advertisements that are detailed and include job specifications and job descriptions would attract a more qualified applicant pool. Also, job advertisements that include information about salary, benefits, and information on why the job provider is the right place for someone to work for would achieve better results in attracting the best candidates (Muduli & Trivedi, 2020).

Liu (2020), on the other hand, argues that conclusions about effects of length of job advertisements on applicants are not clear and are mediated by the type of the job seeker. Thus, there are situations in which shorter and more concise job advertisements can achieve better results. Roberson, Collins and Oreg (2005) found that although more detailed advertisements enabled jobseekers to directly process the information and led to favorable perceptions regarding employee treatment, a job candidate's contentment with the job-related information does not inevitably result in a heightened favorable impression of the job or the company, nor does it necessarily enhance their inclination to apply.

The other group of scholars is more interested in the way logos, type styles, nomenclature, architecture and interior design are used in job advertisements to convey the message of the university (Delmestri et al., 2015; Drori et al., 2013; Idris & Whitfield, 2014). For instance, Drori (2013) and Drori et al. (2016) argue that universities are increasingly infused with neo-liberal themes of the market, and that these come to be encapsulated in the iconographic artefacts of universities that include logos, websites, architecture and other visual material.

Academic Recruitment in Norwegian Higher Education

Academic recruitment in Norway, and also worldwide, has undergone an evolution in the past two decades. In traditional academic recruitment, the scholars select their new colleague by evaluating research contributions according to the specific disciplinary culture (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2011). Other qualifications, including those related to teaching and administration, are considered important, but were always overshadowed by the relative weight of research expectations (Reymert, 2022). However, in recent years, universities worldwide are acting more strategically when it comes to recruiting new academics. The idea is to attract the best and the brightest scholars who can help universities achieve their organizational goals and successfully compete with other HEIs for funding and students. To do so, so-called talent management practices are being implemented (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013). These are linked to New Public Management (NPM) reforms already underway in Norwegian academia but also globally (Bleiklie, 2023; Broucker & Wit, 2015), hoping to make public organizations more business-like (Paisey & Paisey, 2018; Van den Brink et al., 2013).

As part of these efforts, the process of recruiting academics in Norway has been elevated to a more sophisticated level. This involves the establishment of enhanced and more specialized university human resources (HR) departments, the implementation of candidate evaluation techniques that rely on performance (metrics), and an amplified involvement of managers in the recruitment of new faculty members. There is also a heightened focus on adhering to rules and

guidelines, a pattern that has been observed in professorial recruitment elsewhere (Van den Brink et al., 2013). Such formalization of organizational procedures is moreover related to how universities have evolved as stronger organizational actors, which is a prerequisite for strategic positioning in more competitive environments (Krücken & Meier, 2006; Ramirez, 2006; Ramirez & Christensen, 2013). As Lee and Ramirez (2023) noticed, "getting organized" indicators are spreading globally, and suggest that there is globalization of organizational actorhood among universities, with some regional and local peculiarities being preserved. Similar developments have been observed in Norway, where HEIs are being influenced both by common (now globalized) rules of the game and the local organizational roots (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013).

According to the new methods of hiring academic staff, competent applicants are not necessarily the most seasoned individuals, but rather those who can align most effectively with the organization's goals and enhance overall productivity. As universities face growing demands from their stakeholders, they also seek to employ academics who can successfully meet these diverse expectations (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013; Van den Brink et al., 2013). For instance, recent research has indicated that in order to be considered a desirable professorial candidate nowadays, one must have the capability to secure funding from external sources, fulfill the teaching requirements of their department, and seamlessly fit into the professional environment. Additionally, they must exhibit a level of research excellence that has always been a crucial aspect of academic recruitment (Paisey & Paisey, 2018; Ramirez, 2010; Ramirez & Tiplic, 2014). While teaching experience is also valuable, some scholars argue that this is true only in terms of covering specific organizational teaching needs and much less as an integral element of being an academic. Professors are thus primarily recruited as organizational assets (Levander et al., 2020; Levander & Riis, 2016; Reymert, 2022).

Recruitment processes at Norwegian universities are overseen by regulations set at both the national and the university levels. These include the Public Administration Act and Act relating to universities and university colleges as well as administrative law regulations such as Regulations concerning appointment and promotion to teaching and research posts and rules and guidelines at individual HEIs. Hiring procedures consist of lengthy sequences of actions, with decisions being made at various stages (Orupabo & Mangset, 2022; Reymert, 2021, 2022).

Initially, at the first stage, the *job vacancies are publicly announced* in compliance with national legislation (Orupabo & Mangset, 2022). The accepted practice in Norway when it comes to drafting job advertisements is that the university administration provides a template that is used with minor modifications for the hiring processes. In these templates, there are sections that are pre-defined and pre-written by administrators, as well as by the university marketing department, making sure legal and more technical requirements are in order, and the template is in line with university branding policy (appropriate images are used, logos, university colors, etc.). There are also blank sections relating to description of the position, roles and tasks, as well as expected previous experience and qualifications of candidates. These empty spaces are left for a specific department to fill in. Designing the text for the announcement is an important task that involves fulfilling the needs and strategies of the organization (Reymert, 2022). In addition, the preparation and design of job advertisements is considered by some scholars to be the most important phase because it provides the framework for decision-making in the following steps of recruitment. The responsibility of leading this process is normally given to the department heads, who often collaborate and negotiate with research group leaders and other academics. Some universities alternate between research groups when hiring new academics, while others do so by giving priority to the departmental needs as a whole (Orupabo & Mangset, 2022; Reymert, 2021).

Two major themes are discussed when job advertisements are crafted, and these connect directly to academic roles and tasks. One relates to defining the job seeker profile. Is it someone who is an excellent researcher and can publish a lot? Or someone who has a proven record of attracting research funding? Or is it perhaps someone who can help share departmental teaching loads? The second discussion is the thematic orientation, or how broad should the applicant's academic profile be. For example, is a historian wanted, or perhaps a medieval historian? A political scientist or maybe an international relations scholar? Thematic orientation is not

random and often is linked to the strategic considerations of topics and expertise the departments have adopted as focus areas through their job plans. There are normally democratic processes in which academic staff are involved in defining what kind of competence and topics the department should focus on. Therefore, when deciding on thematic orientation in the job advertisements there may be battles between sub-disciplines, between the different disciplines in a multidisciplinary field, or between practice orientation and research orientation (Orupabo & Mangset, 2022; Van den Brink et al., 2010).

The subsequent recruitment stages comprise of an *expert committee* and *interview committee*. However, some universities often add another stage before moving to the expert committee – a *selection committee*. This stage is, in some universities, formalized while in others it is done informally and on a necessary basis, depending largely on the number of candidates. The selection committee comprises of internal academics and often a department head whose job is to make sure that applicants meet the formal requirements outlined in the job announcement, but also to identify the most prominent candidates based on an evaluation of applicants' CVs and to make the first selection of those with best metrics (e.g. number of publications) and future potential to be forwarded to the expert committee (Reymert, 2022).

After the completion of the work done by the selection committee, universities establish an *expert committee*, composed of both internal and external professors. The expert committee is considered in the Norwegian setting as the most influential entity in the recruitment process. These committees enjoy high levels of legitimacy, and their candidate rankings are hard to change (Orupabo & Mangset, 2022; Reymert, 2022). The guidelines set by the regulations require this expert committee to assess the candidates based on their academic, pedagogic, personal, management, and administrative qualifications, as well as their publication records. Among these qualifications, academic qualifications hold the utmost significance. However, regulations only provide a general definition of academic qualifications and fail to offer specific guidelines. As a result, the committee members have the authority to define research quality and decide whether to utilize metrics in their evaluations (Reymert, 2021). Thus, the expert committee normally pays greatest attention to the quality of the candidates' research contributions. The perception of what quality research is strongly depends on academic disciplines. Each has its own notion of what comprises research quality. For example, some disciplines emphasize candidates' publications in high-impact journals, while others do not. Moreover, the situation is gradually evolving, partly due to the influence of Declaration on Research Assessment – DORA (Orduña-Malea & Bautista-Puig, 2024) as more weight is given to one's contribution to the academic field rather than solely to publication levels. In addition, teaching and supervision are given stronger consideration than in the past (Reymert, 2022).

The highest ranked candidates by the expert committee are then called for a trial lecture and subsequently an interview. The *interview committee* consists of an internal professor(s), department leaders, administration staff and, in some cases, a union member and student representative. This committee conducts a more holistic and strategic evaluation of candidates considering who would be best suited for the department. Thus, they evaluate the candidates' teaching abilities, ability to attract external funding, social skills, and administrative skills. These qualifications have become more important, and the interview committees have more frequently changed the expert committee candidate rankings in recent years (Reymert, 2022).

Finally, the decision on the eventual job offer is made by the department council, usually led by the department head. The original ranking of candidates is reassessed and, if required, the order is changed with the first candidate being offered the position. In some instances, the decision may be made to not offer the job to the second ranked candidate in case the first candidate declines. In those situations, a new job advertisement is required, and the process starts all over again. The final ruling made by the department council is later approved by the faculty council. It is quite rare that a faculty council overrules a department council decision (Orupabo & Mangset, 2022).

Existing scholarly literature shows some changes in the recruiting process in Norway in recent decades. For example, Orupabo and Mangset (2022) noticed that in the past twenty years the announcement texts are increasingly published not just in Norwegian, but also in the English language. In addition, the HEIs share information not only with individuals who are already

connected to these institutions locally, but also reach out to external networks and institutions. Lastly, the announcements are promoted not only nationally but also in international forums. Such channels of communication ensure widespread dissemination of information. The same authors also explored how the criteria for assessing quality are applied in practice in the recruitment process, including during the job announcement stage (N=48 job advertisements), with a special focus on the gender dimension. They found that in the Norwegian context, the job announcement stage is increasingly inclusive, since job advertisements include a section where women are encouraged to apply, while the remaining stages remain excluding in practice.

Other scholars focused more on the use of metrics and different institutional logics at play during the recruitment process. Reymert (2021) employed a sample of 57 job advertisements to explore the use of metrics in academic recruitment at the University of Oslo. Results showed that job advertisements emphasized scientific output and number of publications more profoundly in some disciplines (economics and informatics) with a sharp increase in recent decades, while in others (sociology and physics), job advertisements tend to refer to research quality in general terms. The same author (Reymert, 2022) also looked at different institutional logics at play at different stages of academic recruitment - organizational and academic logics. Organizational logic was at play during the job advertisements stage since these documents were primarily concerned with meeting organizational needs and strategies. The same applies to the selection- and interview- committee. Academic logic was found to be more dominant only at the expert committee stage. Finally, Mantai and Marrone (2023) examined an impressive sample of 40,819 job advertisements from 60 countries (Norway included) and covering 40 disciplines in examining the requirements for progression from early career researcher to full professor. They found that teaching expectations have gained importance in recent years, and that senior academics need to be equipped with skills and/or experience in fundraising, curriculum development, and outreach.

Materials and Methods

Data collection

The data sample in this study consists of 1,744 academic job advertisements, published between 2000 and 2020 and collected every three years (2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, etc.). The sample includes data from all public research universities in Norway (N=10). The data was extracted from electronic/paper databases and provided by archive/registry/HR departments at Norwegian universities upon request. It is noteworthy that the archival methods underwent a transformation from paper collections during the early 2000s to full electronic databases in later years. The number of universities changed over the years too. In 2000, there were only four comprehensive universities. However, owing to mergers and the granting of university status to several university colleges, the total number of universities increased to 10 by 2020. Consequently, there was an exponential increase (close to twelvefold) in the number of job advertisements in the sample from 46 in 2000 to 545 in 2020. In addition, the numbers differ somewhat simply because in some years there were more hirings than in others, but also due to archival units not being able to provide all job advertisements, especially for earlier years when electronic databases were not in use.

Finally, the sample includes only job advertisements for full professors and associate professors, as these are senior (permanent) academic positions in Norway and thus the ones that can be best understood in a broader, international context. Other academic ranks were not considered due to the complexity related to the meaning of these positions, as well as differences in tasks, responsibilities, and legal foundations, and also because the study's primary aim is to obtain more detailed insight regarding those positions that, at least in the Humboldtian sense, represent the core of the academic profession. Between one third and half of all job advertisements were so-called combined calls, open for hiring an associate professor and/or professor. The rest of the sample was focused on just one of these two academic ranks. Due to the dominance of combined job advertisements in the sample, differentiation according to academic rank was not possible in the later analysis section.

Coding and analysis

Data coding and data analysis consisted of two stages each, following Lavigne (2019), Lavigne and Sá (2021) and Pit and Mewburn (2016) methodologies. The first two stages consisted of an open coding and content analysis of the portion of the data set (N=100 job advertisements). According to Harper's (2012) review of the usage of job advertisements in scholarly articles, most of the studies employed a sample size ranging between 1 and 199 documents. Even though there are examples of much smaller and much larger data sets, Harper (2012) argues that a sample size of 100 and more is the most common in the existing research and can be considered valid. Also, the data set in the initial coding included only three time points: years 2000, 2011 and 2020. After the open coding, the content analysis was done on this limited data set so that major trends, changes, and trajectories could be captured in the job advertisements' development, content and language.

In the third stage, initial coding was refined by using the existing typologies of academic roles in Norwegian and European HEIs developed by, Gehrke and Kezar (2015), Kyvik (2013), Hyde et al. (2013), Pilcher (2021), and Pitt and Mewburn (2016) to code academic expected roles and tasks. The traditional division between teaching, research, administration and third mission was used as the starting point. As the result of two coding steps, the author compiled a collection of terms/phrases associated with each role. In the final step, this compilation of phrases was used for conducting frequency analysis on the entire data set (1,744 job advertisements) and all the time points. Nvivo software queries were used for this purpose and the final data compiling was done in Microsoft Excel.

Findings

An analysis of job advertisements between 2000 and 2020 reveals two significant trends regarding the nature of these documents as recruitment tools and the evolution of external role expectations for Norwegian academics. The first trend acknowledges the shift in job advertisements' structure and content over time, progressing from simple and concise documents in the early years to more elaborate, engaging, and professional looking documents towards the end of the observed period. The second trend emphasizes the change and stability in external expectations of role requirements during the job announcement stage of the academic hiring process. This paper will delve into these two trends in greater detail in the following section.

Evolution of the structure and content of a job advertisement

The changes in the structure, publishing channels and visual feel of job advertisements over the years are very similar among the ten public universities in Norway included in this study. While some Norwegian HEIs already at the initial time point started to communicate their vacant positions in English and utilize academic contacts and networks to reach maximum number of potential candidates, most of the job advertisements in the sample originating from the early years were in the Norwegian language and published in printed form in the Norwegian newspapers. In addition, applicants needed to submit their application in printed form, by post. Only on rare occasions was there a possibility of sending required documents by email. Visually, these job advertisements did not have any notable identifiers that would separate them from other job calls. In some cases, not even the university logo was displayed.

In terms of the job advertisements' content, twenty years ago, these documents were rather short and consisted of a single text where individual paragraphs were dedicated to role expectations, necessary qualifications for applying, benefits, documents to be submitted as part of the application, and contact information of the faculty/department. References to external role expectations were rather short and vague, without much detail. There are clear indications that job advertisements have also alternated between searching for specialists in academic subfield(s) and more generalist scholars. Finally, a statement was included in almost all documents encouraging women to apply. Notable examples of such sections describing external role expectations from academics are given below:

> The person to be appointed to the position must have scientific expertise in one or more of the areas of media studies. Particularly worthy of merit is documented scientific competence in popular culture/media aesthetics or media use. If no applicants are found qualified in one of these two areas, appointments will be assessed based on scientific competence in the area of media studies in general (job advertisement, associate professor in media studies, 2000, translated from Norwegian version of the text)

> The professor will lead and initiate research, conduct doctoral and master's courses supervision and participate in teaching students and exam work at all levels within the subject area. The person concerned must carry out administrative tasks in accordance with the current provisions issued by the department or faculty at all times. (job advertisement, professor in mobile systems, 2000, translated from Norwegian version of the text)

Job advertisements also state that professors/associate professors must have a doctoral degree, document their research and pedagogical skills by providing published or unpublished scholarly work as well as documented pedagogical material and have fluency in one of the Scandinavian languages. Having formal pedagogical competence (completed university course in pedagogy) is also a requirement but can be obtained after hiring. Job advertisements normally state that during the evaluation process, special attention will be paid to research quality and breadth of scientific work as well as to pedagogical skills. Administrative, outreach and other activities will be taken into consideration as well. Finally, research management and participation in research projects will also be taken into account, but only if the activities are sufficiently documented. Out of all these requirements, and in accordance with the rules, emphasis during the evaluation was placed on the quality of submitted scientific works.

By the midpoint of the observed period, job advertisements had developed a more intricate visual identity and structure. The published texts also increased in length. On average, a job advertisement was about 500 words long in the year 2000, nearly doubling in size by 2010 (900 words), and then increasing by an additional 65% (1,400 words) by 2020. The appearance and ambience of advertised positions also evolved. Visually, both the logo and, in some cases, additional marketing material were included (such as an image of the university campus). More space was dedicated to describing the workplace (such as the faculty or even the department), outlining the number of employees, scientific areas of interest, types of courses offered to students, and so on. Finally, links were provided that led to the specific department webpage, where more information could be found.

The structure of the job advertisements also evolved. Each section in the advertised vacancies became clearly separated, addressing the responsibilities of the future employee, the required qualifications, and the qualifications that would be of special interest during the evaluation process. A small portion of documents also included a list of personality traits that a new employee should possess. Job announcements would then enumerate the documents to be submitted as part of the application. Additionally, more emphasis was placed on outlining the salary and benefits package that the university offers. Lastly, job advertisements included a section inviting underrepresented groups to apply. In addition to women, minorities and people with disabilities were also encouraged. While a few universities persisted in requesting application documents via post, universities now often offer the option to apply online, either through the application portal or by submitting the application via email to the HR department. Furthermore, an increasing number of universities advertised available positions in both English and Norwegian. Vacant positions could be searched not only on the university websites, but also in specialized job search portals globally.

Over the last ten years (2010–2020), the process of announcing vacant positions has become fully professionalized, closely resembling those announced by private sector organizations. It has become the norm to publish job advertisements in both Norwegian and English, and to utilize domestic and international venues for advertising vacant positions. Job seekers can now expect to use the job application portal to submit the necessary documents online. Job advertisements have also become visually more attractive, incorporating various branding elements in addition to logos and campus images. The section introducing the faculty/department has been expanded to include the university's ranking and general reputation, with a particular emphasis on the university's strengths. Moreover, most texts now highlight the benefits of living and working where the job is located.

All other sections have been expanded as well, providing more information about the position, roles and responsibilities, essential and required qualifications, and a greater emphasis on personal characteristics. The inclusion of a link to a more detailed job description has become more frequent, although its content rarely differed from the information provided in the job announcements. The number of documents to be submitted has also increased and now includes a cover letter, CV, a limited number of the most relevant publications, a full publication list, examples of pedagogical material, relevant certificates and references, as well as documentation of other relevant activities related to the position. In addition to the university's contact information, the evaluation process is described in detail, including the level of importance placed on research, teaching, and other qualifications. Finally, in addition to fully describing the salary range and other monetary benefits, most job advertisements also include a section where other benefits are outlined, such as exciting and stimulating tasks, open and inclusive work environment, pool/gym access and free parking space for employees.

Towards the end of the observed period, the description of academic role expectations has also changed dramatically. The job advertisements would start as they did in the early years:

> As a professor, you will primarily teach and supervise students at bachelor, master and PhD levels within the subject area, conduct and disseminate research within relevant areas at the department, and contribute to the development of partnerships with the business community. You will also lead the development and use of varied and digital learning methods, innovation and value creation based on research and academic work (job advertisement, professor in leadership, year 2020, original wording in English).

However, more detailed expectations would follow for each of the academic roles. In terms of *research*, professors/associate professors should have:

> High level of scientific expertise in accordance with established professorship standards within the subject area, and document research competence within relevant areas;

> Ability to inspire colleagues with regard to research development;

> Ability to initiate, obtain external funding for, lead and carry out major research and development projects;

> Carry out interdisciplinary research;

> Research results published in recognized Norwegian and international publications, and references indicating progression in research and publications;

> Experience with relevant international research networks and the ability to build and nurture networks—regionally, nationally and internationally; (job advertisement, professor in leadership, 2020, original wording in English).

In terms of the *teaching* role, expectations are similarly extensive, and professors/associate professors should have:

> Teaching competence within relevant areas and relevant teaching methodology;

> Documented pedagogical and didactic skills relating to higher education, and basic skills in planning, evaluation and development of teaching and supervision;

> Documented quality development in teaching and supervision, broad supervisory experience (preferably at master's and doctoral level) and participation in the development of educational quality in the academic community;

> A reflective and conscientious attitude towards your own teaching and supervision;

> Ability to involve and engage students in teaching where the course's objectives, content and assessment situations are closely interlinked;

> Experience and/or interest in the development of varied learning methods and digital tools in teaching; (job advertisement, associate professor in European studies, 2020, original wording in English).

Then, *third mission* activities are also emphasized, and Norwegian academics should:

> Have experience of partnerships with businesses;

> Have experience with innovation and the commercialization of research;

Have the ability to manage a heavy workload, inquisitiveness, and motivation to develop new knowledge in collaboration with others;

Disseminate research results in Norwegian and international publication arenas;

Disseminate research to professional communities and general public;

Contribute to national high-status and international world-class conferences;

Participate in academic and societal debate;

Contribute to development of partnerships with societal, cultural and working life;

Build and nurture a broad network with the private and public sectors, nationally and internationally. (job advertisement, associate professor in applied ecology, 2020, original wording in English)

Finally, in terms of the *administrative* role, professors/associate professor should:

Participate in and chair expert committees and internal assessment committees;

Hold posts on national and international committees, and in boards and committees;

Participate in academically strategic work and development of new teaching subjects/disciplines.

Facilitate examinations, participate in student assessment and evaluation of PhD projects (job advertisement, professor in early childhood education, 2017).

In addition to being described in greater detail in comparison to earlier years, role expectations are also enhanced by using the language of quality and excellence. Thus, there are expectations for "quality development" in teaching and research, the leadership of "major research and development projects" and attendance at "international world-class conferences".

Evolution of academic role expectations in job advertisements

We now turn to the second part of the analysis. As outlined in the previous section, academic roles expectations, as presented in job advertisements, have experienced some noticeable developments over the last two decades. To explore these developments in detail, this study employed frequency analysis of academic activities representing different academic roles in the entire data set (N=1744 job advertisements). To conduct frequency analysis, a taxonomy was formulated following the initial two phases of coding and content analysis, as presented in Table 1. While some of the phrases were selected based on previous research (Ćulum, 2015; Höhle & Teichler, 2013; Kyvik, 2013; Schnurbus & Edvardsson, 2022), others were chosen because results of the content analysis indicated that these are often used to define academic roles in job advertisements.

Table 1: Taxonomy of academic roles and search terms/indicators

Role category	Indicators
Research	Research - publishing - managing research - doing research - research collaboration - networking - funding - financing - grant - external funding - generating funding - attracting funding - research development
Teaching	Teaching – instruction – lecturing – courses – supervision - advising students – guiding – counseling – exam - student assessment – grading – curriculum – teaching development
Administration	Administration – administrative duties – teaching administration – research administration – committee work
Third mission	Dissemination - science communication - popular science - science popularization - science communication - scientific dissemination - social debate - outreach - corporate training - company courses - short courses - professional courses - industry courses - public debate - advocacy - industry collaboration - technology transfer – interaction – collaboration - co-creation - engagement - patent – license - spin-off – company – commercial – consultancy

Table 2 displays mean frequency of occurrence of academic activities divided into academic roles of research, teaching, administration and third mission, i.e. on average, how many references to academic roles each job advertisement contains per observed year. Table 3, on the other hand, presents mean frequency of occurrence of documents containing references to main academic roles, i.e. on average, how many job advertisements contain references to descriptors belonging to academic roles for each year in question. Figures 1 and 2, presented later in the text, are graphic representations of frequencies in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Mean frequency of occurrence of academic activities representing main academic roles, per job advertisement per year. Source: author.

	2000	**2003**	**2005**	**2008**	**2011**	**2014**	**2017**	**2020**
Research	3.59	5.42	5.91	10.03	13.73	16.45	12.36	13.65
Teaching	3.67	4.60	5.33	7.42	9.91	10.16	10.74	13.19
Administration	0.19	0.61	0.60	0.71	1.01	0.90	0.46	0.41
Third mission	1.00	2.10	1.45	2.10	3.03	3.45	3.52	3.64

Table 3: Mean frequency of occurrence for documents containing academic activities that represent main academic roles, per year. Source: author

	2000	**2003**	**2005**	**2008**	**2011**	**2014**	**2017**	**2020**
Research	0.84	0.86	0.87	0.97	0.99	1.00	0.98	0.99
Teaching	1.00	0.91	0.96	0.96	1.00	1.00	0.98	0.99
Administration	0.19	0.38	0.43	0.46	0.60	0.57	0.30	0.27
Third mission	0.48	0.68	0.55	0.74	0.84	0.88	0.83	0.87

The results reveal a significant rise in indicators related to research and teaching roles throughout the years. There is also a noticeable, though less pronounced, increase in the third mission role indicators. On the other hand, descriptors associated with the administrative role have remained nearly unchanged during the observed period. The same pattern emerges when examining documents that encompass main academic roles. Teaching and research indicators are found in approximately 80-100% of the documents. Initially, third mission role indicators were less prevalent, appearing in only about every other document. However, over time, this figure has risen to almost 90%. In contrast, references to the administrative role exhibited the most fluctuation. They started at a 20% presence in job advertisements at the beginning of the observed period, rose to nearly 60% at the midpoint, and then sharply declined to 30% by the end.

Figure 1: Mean frequency of occurrence of academic role indicators, per job advertisement per year. Source: author
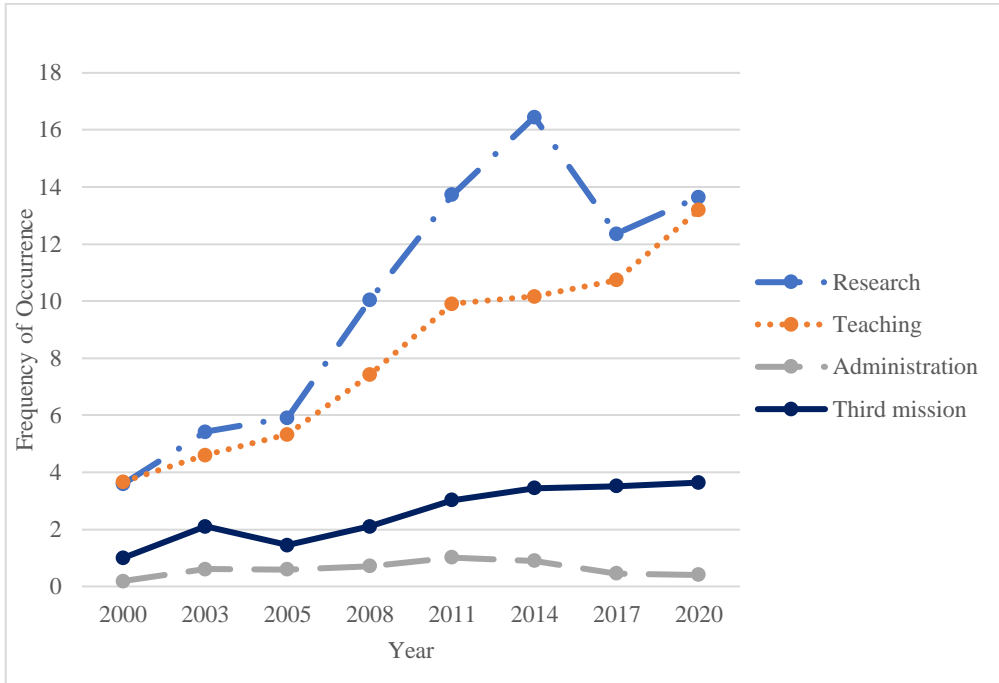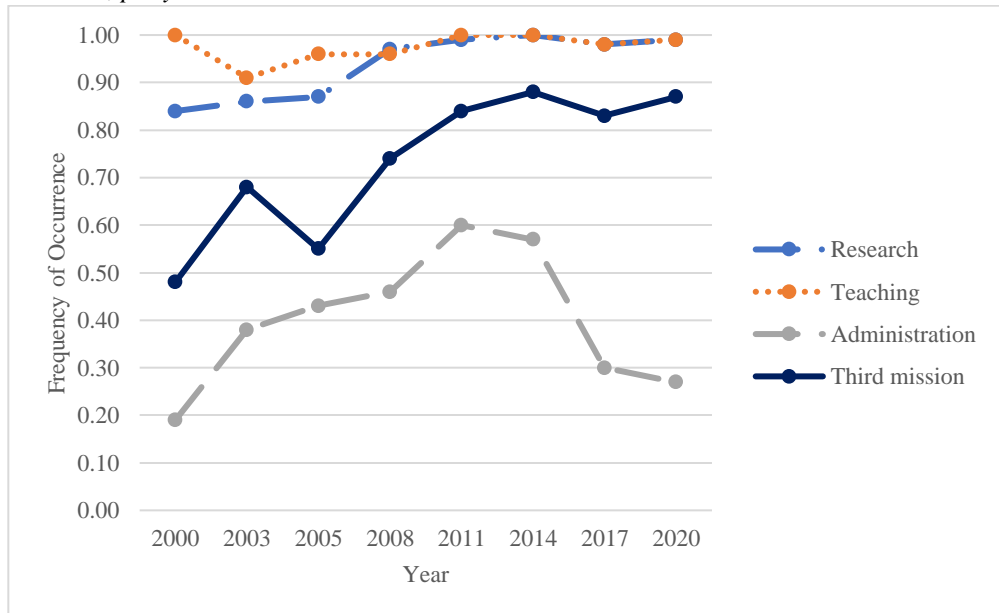

Figure 2: Mean frequency of occurrence for job advertisements containing academic roles indicators, per year. Source: author

If the frequency of occurrence of academic role indicators and the number of documents containing them is used as a proxy for the relative importance of these roles for Norwegian academics, and the weight given to each role in the evaluation phase of the hiring process, then research and teaching seem to be the most important roles for academics at the time of hiring. However, the relative importance of these two roles has changed over the years. While at the start of the observed timeframe, references to both were almost equal with approximately 4 references per document, as time progressed, research indicators were rising much faster compared to teaching ones, especially between 2005 and 2014. Then, the growth of references

related to research somewhat slowed down, only to again become almost identical to teaching references – with about 14 per job advertisement (with research still only marginally more prominent). On the other hand, references related to teaching experienced a constant rise during this time frame. When it comes to the third mission descriptors, they also rose from 1 to almost 4 references per document by 2020, indicating the growing importance of third mission tasks for academics. Finally, administration proves to be the least important academic role, with no observable major changes during the 20-year period.

Discussion

The present paper's data analysis has uncovered two principal sets of findings. First, it can be contended that the academic profession's expectations in regard to roles and tasks, as explicated in the job advertisements, have undergone a surge in number and complexity over the years, indicating greater expectations from the academic profession in Norway. Second, it has been observed that the job advertisements for professors and associate professors have also undergone transformation over the last two decades, evolving from simple documents to complex branding and recruiting artifacts, thus also leading to more numerous and detailed role expectations.

The first finding suggests that academic roles are in fact becoming increasingly complex and demanding for Norwegian academics to perform. The frequency analysis indicates that universities have increased their role expectations of academics along with the evolution of academic roles, while job advertisements merely reflect this trend and present the "reality" as it is. The logic of this argument is somewhat supported by academic research that suggests a shift in the academic profession globally (Aarrevaara et al., 2021; Arimoto, 2014) towards more numerous and increasingly diverse tasks, higher workloads, as well as general pressures for higher quality and excellence in all aspects of scholarly work (Carton & Ungureanu, 2018; Hermanowicz, 2018; Rosewell & Ashwin, 2018). Thus, it appears that the Norwegian academic profession is evolving in the same direction.

Observing from the vantage point of role theory (Anglin et al., 2022), it can be concluded from this study that academic roles in Norway are not static and that some changes have occurred over the years observed. Findings show that role expectations have increased for three out of four role categories. Even though job advertisements only show expected roles in their desired or "ideal" state (Harper, 2012; Pilcher et al., 2021), based on role theory (Bess & Dee, 2008; Katz & Khan, 1966), as role expectations increase and shift, one can deduce that "real" academic roles (and not simply the expected ones) will be changing as well (Kyvik, 2013). However, it would be fallacious to perceive this transformation as "tectonic shifts", and rather should be regarded as subtler modifications of the existing role categories.

As previously outlined, role theory argues that occupational roles can change in terms of quantity as well as quality (R. Turner, 1990). Quantitatively, a new role can be created, or an established role can be dissolved - a total number of roles that can be attributed to any given office can either increase or decrease. Roles can also change either by the addition or subtraction of tasks and the rights attached to them (Biddle, 1979; Carton & Ungureanu, 2018; Defazio et al., 2020). Role theory also suggests that a role can also change qualitatively by means of shifts in the relative salience of the role's composing elements, by the substitution of those elements, by a gain or loss of power or prestige, and/or by the reinterpretation of its meaning (Bess & Dee, 2008; R. Turner, 2002).

Findings in this study do not conclusively support the claim that academic roles in the Norwegian setting changed quantitatively, even though such a trend has been observed elsewhere (Krause, 2009). Norwegian academics have always been engaged in research and teaching with all the tasks encompassed in them, with administration positioned at the intersection of the two, thus maintaining the Humboldtian ideal (Vabø, 2011). The same argument can be made for the third mission, albeit to a lesser degree during the initial years. Thus, the increase in descriptors and the frequency of occurrence of expectations pertaining to existing academic roles is more likely to be a result of the evolution of the job advertisements themselves than the role unbundling or the increase in the number of roles and their tasks.

On the other hand, qualitative changes may   be partly observed in some of the academic roles. This applies to generating external research funding and managing research projects as

part of the researcher role. While this task was evident in some academic disciplines in the Norwegian academia already at the beginning of the research period, the increasing rationalization of universities (Krücken & Meier, 2006; Lee & Ramirez, 2023; Ramirez, 2006, 2010) and the steady influx of neoliberal ideas in the form of NPM (Bleiklie, 2023; Broucker & Wit, 2015) all lead to increasing expectations towards this particular research task over the years. With the influx of an excellence narrative and drive towards quality and prestige (Ramirez & Tiplic, 2014), but also the need for additional funding in a resource strained environment, Norwegian academics are under increased pressure to apply for research projects at local (Municipal structures), national (Norwegian Research Council), regional (Nordic Councils), European (European Research Council), and other levels as well (Brokjøb et al., 2022).

The rise in references pertaining to the third mission role point to the same logic (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020; Schnurbus & Edvardsson, 2022), as literature indicate that Norwegian academics are increasingly expected to engage with both commercialization activities (primarily within STEM) and dissemination/collaboration/outreach activities (Bentley & Kyvik, 2012; Pinheiro et al., 2015). Finally, when it comes to teaching, one can argue that this academic role has undergone a change of meaning in the Norwegian context. While literature suggests that this role is also increasingly valued (Levander et al., 2020; Mantai & Marrone, 2023; Orduña-Malea & Bautista-Puig, 2024), as can be observed from the increase in frequency of teaching role references, some scholars claim that this is true only in terms of covering specific organizational teaching needs and much less so in terms of an integral element of being an academic (Reymert, 2022; Reymert & Thune, 2022).

Finally, role theory also stipulates that academics must also engage in the hierarchization of role expectations, in which case, the activities that are subject to stronger pressures (either externally from leadership and peers or internally from intrinsic motivation, prestige, and the desire to be successful), have higher saliency (prestige and incentives), urgency (deadlines for paper submissions or times of a more intensive teaching), and legitimacy (research and teaching have stronger foundations than service), or have stronger sanctions for non-compliance and will thus gain priority (Brew et al., 2018; Kraimer et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be concluded that the current dominance of research, followed by teaching and third mission roles, is unlikely to change in the Norwegian setting. Administrative role elements will continue to be under-advertised, as these tasks are not very attractive for academics.

The alternative and for the most part more compelling explanation for the increase of indicators pertaining to academic role expectations relates directly to the nature of job advertisements (Harper, 2012). As these documents are constantly evolving, they are becoming increasingly sophisticated and elaborate in their delineation of academic duties. Consequently, one possible interpretation is that universities, in Norway and elsewhere, have recognized the necessity to explicate academic role expectations in a more comprehensive manner, leading to the creation of more intricate, systematic, and informative documents (Lavigne & Sá, 2021). This finding is in line with the literature concerning general trends in the evolution of job advertisements, indicating that organizations in general tend to favor more detailed job descriptions, hoping this strategy would attract a higher number of high-quality candidates (Ganesan et al., 2020; Muduli & Trivedi, 2020).

As competition between HEIs and industry, as well as among HEIs themselves, intensifies, job advertisements are also increasingly perceived as a branding and marketing tool (Kheovichai, 2014; Pitt & Mewburn, 2016). This was clearly visible from the increasing portion of job advertisements dedicated to describing the benefits of working in a particular university or department, living in the city where the university is located, or accessing a generous benefits package. In addition, job advertisements increasingly incorporated images, icons, logos and other visual elements, generally used in other industries to promote a brand (Drori et al., 2013). Universities are therefore attempting to differentiate themselves by relying on job advertisements as branding artefacts as well (Thellefsen et al., 2006).

However, the fact that job advertisements follow a similar logic, have the same elements, and use identical visual effects across the university sector, shows that HEIs in Norway are also trying to increase their legitimacy across the organizational field, domestically and globally. This drive for conformity prevents, to some extent, universities from expressing their unique

features, thus stepping away from differentiation efforts (Kuoppakangas et al., 2020; Wille et al., 2020). From this, it could be concluded that the increased complexity and rich detail of job advertisements provides valuable insight into universities' ambitions in an increasingly marketized sector, as well as reflects their strategic desire to recruit the best academic talents while simultaneously discouraging those candidates with less potential (Cooman & Pepermans, 2012). Therefore, job advertisements can be interpreted as suggesting a "desired" or "ideal" state of academic work as perceived by HEIs themselves (Pilcher et al., 2021), but not necessarily depicting what is in fact happening with "real" academic life on the ground.

The evolution of job advertisements in Norway towards more detailed and complex documents can also be seen as part of universities' efforts to become complete organizational actors (Krücken & Meier, 2006). Therefore, as part of the rationalization process of university activities (Ramirez, 2006, 2010), both globally as indicated by Lee & Ramirez (2023) and in Norway as indicated by Ramirez and Christensen (2013), hiring procedures are also becoming more professional and rule-based. This is especially prominent when the evolution of the announcement stage in the hiring process is observed. As Orupabo and Mangset (2022) noticed, the preparation and design of job advertisements is perhaps the most important phase in the recruitment process, as it provides the framework for decision-making in the following steps. In other words, academics can only be expected to do something or to be evaluated based on requirements and criteria outlined in job advertisements. Thus, the increase in academic expectations can also be explained by the desire to be as inclusive as possible and to encompass all possible expectations, laying the foundation for further recruitment steps. The rationalization process is also visible from within expanded and more professional university HR departments, new screening methods for candidates based on performance indicators (metrics), and expanded roles of managers in recruiting new academics (Reymert, 2021). Finally, rationalization efforts can also be observed from the fact that Norwegian universities increasingly advertise vacant positions in both English and Norwegian languages, locally but also internationally, and increasingly relying on professional and social networks alike alongside hiring tools such as job portals. Thus, it can be concluded from the existing literature that all the above mentioned NPM led rationalization developments are not only specific to Norway but have global roots, combined with some local Norwegian peculiarities as shown (Lee & Ramirez, 2023; Ramirez & Christensen, 2013)

The data further suggests that, as organizations, universities are also acting more strategically when it comes to recruiting new academics. By employing talent management practices (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013), universities in Norway are hoping to attract the best and the brightest scholars who can help universities achieve their organizational goals and successfully compete with other HEIs for funding, students and prestige. These efforts are also linked to the NPM (policy/managerial) drive which is evident in Norwegian academia but globally as well (Bleiklie, 2023; Broucker & Wit, 2015), seeking to make public organizations more business-like (Paisey & Paisey, 2018; van den Brink et al., 2013). As universities are experiencing increased demands and expectations from multiple stakeholders, they expect newly hired professors to help fulfill them (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013; van den Brink et al., 2013). Recent studies have shown that today's "desirable professors" must possess the ability to obtain external funding, cover departmental teaching needs, and be easily integrated into the local working environment, in addition to mastering research excellence that has traditionally been at the heart of academic recruitment (Paisey & Paisey, 2018). As professors/associate professors in Norway are increasingly recruited as organizational assets, job advertisements have, as result, become more formalized in outlining academic expectations in greater detail. Thus, as Reymert (2022) indicated, the managerial logic is the dominant one in the first stage of the hiring process as these documents are primarily concerned with meeting organizational needs and strategies.

Conclusion

The main results in this study are twofold. First, the findings indicate not only great, but indeed greater expectations from some of the academic roles and tasks over the years, as outlined in the job advertisements. By relying on role theory, this study shows both stability and change in the

evolution of academic role expectations in Norwegian academia. Therefore, third mission work, external funding generation, and managing research projects as part of the research role have in fact become more salient. The contention that the teaching role is more strongly emphasized than before in job advertisements is true more in terms of covering specific organizational teaching needs (Levander et al., 2020; Levander & Riis, 2016; Reymert, 2022) and much less so as an integral element of being/becoming an academic (even tough teaching qualifications recently gained importance in the evaluation process). On the other hand, the remaining tasks, insofar as the research and administrative roles are concerned, were found to keep stable positions throughout the 20-year period. Thus, it could be claimed that the Humboldtian model continues to dominate in Norwegian HE (Vabø, 2011), with research and teaching taking the lead (and administration seen as a necessity), and with the third mission gaining importance, particularly in the last decade. The results also indicate that Norwegian academics face similar evolution in role expectations as their colleagues in other (European and Anglo Saxon) countries. Furthermore, the relative importance of different role qualifications during the hiring process appears to be similarly valued as well (Aarrevaara et al., 2021; Teichler et al., 2013).

The second and more compelling explanation for the increase of indicators associated to academic role expectations relates directly to the nature of job advertisements. As these documents are constantly evolving (Harper, 2012), they are becoming increasingly sophisticated and elaborate in their delineation of academic duties. Consequently, one possible interpretation of the study's findings is that Norwegian universities have recognized the necessity to explicate academic role expectations in a more comprehensive manner, thus leading to the creation of more intricate, systematic, and informative documents. This finding is in line with the literature on general trends in evolution of job advertisements (Muduli & Trivedi, 2020), but also in regard to the increasing role of branding (Drori, 2013) and rationalization (Ramirez, 2006) efforts at universities. The latter are underpinned by the influence of a neo-liberal (NPM/managerial) agenda (Lee & Ramirez, 2023) in Norwegian HE (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013) and universities needing to respond to the expectations of multiple stakeholders. Thus, more detailed job descriptions are favored in the hopes that this strategy will attract a higher number of high-quality candidates who will, in turn, be engaged in fulfilling organizational goals.

The utilization of role theory (Anglin et al., 2022) in this particular study, when combined with the analysis of job advertisements, reveals the potential strengths associated with this analytical lens and helps to identify research areas to be explored in the future. The concepts of role expectations and role hierarchization (Bess & Dee, 2008; R. Turner, 2002) within role theory proved to be highly beneficial in analyzing and interpreting the findings of the study. However, the concept of *role change* (R. Turner, 1990) requires further refinement, as also indicated by Anglin et al. (2022). While the conducted study, which was analytically based on role theory and empirically grounded in job advertisements, indicates a shift towards greater role expectations, additional literature was necessary to understand the driving forces behind this development. By incorporating literature on university branding and academic recruitment, this study was able to demonstrate with more clarity and certainty that the increase in academic expectations in job advertisements is to a great extent a result of rationalization and marketization efforts that have been implemented in Norwegian HE. Consequently, even though Norwegian HE may be considered a latecomer, it seems to be increasingly aligning itself with the global developments in the evolution of academic work.

Finally, there are several avenues for further research. This study could be replicated in other contexts, including within the Nordics, and expanded by using additional sources of data (e.g., interviews and observation) to gain a better understanding of what academic work looks like "on the ground." As suggested, as a construct, role change needs to be further examined, both empirically and conceptually by clearly specifying the mechanisms associated with change processes as well as the boundaries related to the complex interplay between qualitative and quantitative change patterns on the one hand, and the complex interplay between change and stability patterns on the other. As a final point, scholars may examine the relationship between changes in governance and the shifts in academic roles and qualifications since various policy changes (in Norway and elsewhere) have been established to guide universities in the search for and shaping of an "ideal" academic.

Conflict of Interest

The author has no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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