

General information

Date and place:	2017-02-27 Tilburg University, Department for Methodology & Statistics, meeting room
Interviewee:	Chris Hartgerink, PhD student, Tilburg University [CH]
Interviewer:	Elena Šimukovič [ES]

[start of recording]

CH:...two fully different questions [comment on something else discussed before]

ES: Okay, we can start with the first question, if you could...

CH: Yeah, do you wanna make sure that the recording is [working properly]?

ES: It is working now

CH: Yeah, the sensitivities always...

ES: I mean, this is not the best recorder that I had but it's okay...

CH: Perfect

ES: So your area of work or main research questions

CH: Yeah, so I work in the Methodology and Statistics department and I am a PhD candidate and my main area of focus is detecting data fabrication in empirical science, so as I started telling you, it's partly the result of the Diederik Stapel case here in Tilburg five years, six, six years ago already almost, so that's my primary area of research, but I am also very interested in how... So I'm in methods research group, so we do research on how researchers do research, and this is very much engaging me also with how the system is built up, and also the question of how is information and research results, how are they shared, but also how does the publication system work, so which is why I am also very interested in open access publishing, while I have been pretty vocal on the negotiations and so on

ES: Okay, I have noticed on your website as well that you are working on topics like open science

CH: Yeah

ES: Do you work in some initiatives or some projects specifically on open science?

CH: Yes, so we are actually now, just today, we are planning an informal open science meet-up here in Tilburg, because just a few weeks ago the – also signed by the VSNU, by the way – is the national plan of open science in the Netherlands, and it focuses on access and data, but the problems that open science tries to tackle are much wider than just access and data, so we wanna have some of the engaged researchers in open science come together, talk about what we think of the open science platform, what is missing and what we can and maybe should do to promote other aspects of open science, and not just access and data, which we also are very much in favour of, and besides that I'm also part of the OpenCon community, which is a yearly conference on open science, also open access, open educational resources, so I do a lot of smaller projects with people in that community and so it's, I don't have many major projects, I'm now working on one that is also with respect to open access to older literature, because these discussions about open access are frequently just about "okay, when we publish something now, is it open or closed", but it doesn't look back and see if what the libraries own, for example, can that be made publicly available, even though copyright was handed over a long time ago, so I am looking into that, I tend to call it "retrospective open access" or "retroactive open access"

ES: “Retroactive”

CH: And sometimes I get invited to talk about open science

ES: And were you involved maybe in this, in the development of this national open science plan?

CH: Only at the very late stage, when the 80% version was made publicly available, or at least you could write to the persons who were creating the plan to review it, I emailed them, I reviewed the plan, and I noticed that it was very limited on to just access and data, which I, so I provided some feedback on that as well, so yeah, I did, I was involved, but just tangentially and at a very late phase, and due to my own initiative, so yeah

ES: Okay, and are the goals in that open science plan more or less in line with what you would like to see to be achieved?

CH: In part, yes, but it, I mean, you can view it as a small circle within a much larger circle, it is in line, but it doesn't cover everything, so one of the things I am a bit, actually, a bit irritated by, you could even say, and that doesn't detract from the plan itself, but when I was at the presentation of the plan, and they said “we have to build the infrastructure”, and that's a narrative I keep hearing, and I mean, you also see with the open science cloud, that the European Union, once they start, and the fact of the matter is that the infrastructure is already there, this is just nonsense, I mean, I'm not just, I'm very much in favour of open science, I don't see how, when I've got introduced to the idea of open science, I thought “yeah, that makes so much sense, why would you wanna do it otherwise”, and since then, this was back in 2012 or 2013, since then I have been practising open science, and when people then say “we need to build the infrastructure”, it makes it seem as if nothing is there, and honestly, I do open science on a day to day basis, so it kind of annoys me, when people [say] “we need to build the infrastructure”, when all the infrastructure is already there, it can be developed further, of course, but saying “it needs to be build from the ground up”, then it kind of shows this disconnect between the actual practice and the policy makers, which is something I see frequently with open access as well, which is why also the open science meet-up is so important, so yes, the plan is in line with, but it doesn't cover everything, and I think it's too much a policy thing and it doesn't really go into, branch out into the actual scientific practice or scholarly practice, I should say, and, I mean, this is a cultural change, it's not necessarily a policy change, that needs to be made

ES: But maybe they mean something else by “infrastructure” than what you mean?

CH: Could very well be, could very well be, that they mean something else, I think they are talking about how to store data, if I'm just focusing on the scope of the open science plan, and with that respect that infrastructure is already there, the platforms, I'm figuring they mean platforms and not the protocols within how to deal with this, and these have been publicly financed – Zenodo, DANS from the Royal Academy, and I mean, it might also just be a misguided statement by someone there, that was made hastily, so I am not saying that the plan isn't worth anything, because someone made a statement or one of the statements maybe, but it did surprise me that someone said that, I don't remember who was it any more

ES: And, I suppose, you are already aware of the Amsterdam call for action to open science?

CH: Yeah

ES: Which is also named open science programme, but actually talks more or less about open access to publications in that document. Did you attend the conference?

CH: I wanted to, I actually applied to attend, but I wasn't invited, and this was... So I am very happy with the political shift, that the last, say since 2014, since our state secretary Sander Dekker started this shift a bit and Moedas also did a lot to put this on the agenda, and, but when the Amsterdam conference happened, I started asking around and there were actually, to my idea, few researchers who were invited, well, it does pretend to researchers and this is a trend I see happening time and time again, with these plans and these initiatives that, I mean, of course, this is also my own bubble in a sense, that will not necessarily, just my

network, I only get to see people or ask people who are already in my network, whether they went there or not, and, of course, my, the average age of people in my network, because I'm 25 at the moment, and I know a lot of PhD candidates, on average their age will be lower, and they won't be in a position of managerial or board positions, but then again, all these shifts of open science, open access, open data, these retain mostly to the younger generation [that] will have to carry it forward into the future or actually need to change their practices, because most of the research being done is being done by the PhD candidates and supervised by the manager, people in managerial positions, and it's easy to make policy and tell your PhD candidates to do things, and then they have to figure out how to do things, which is why I, I find it so much disheartening that these younger researchers, early career researchers, aren't really involved as much by the policy makers or the people in power [who are] making these decisions, and, of course, it also makes sense, because young, early career researchers aren't also as vocal, but then the question becomes "why aren't they as vocal?", is that because they feel that they can't speak up because they are still in a relatively young position, or whether they don't care, whether they don't know what they should think yet, but I think that there is a valuable voice to be heard there, even if they think they can't speak out, it should be, no, so, yeah, I wanted to go to that conference, but I wasn't invited, which, yeah, I really would have liked to go, I don't know, what, whether there were young, early career researchers there, I hope, there were, because I think that's an important view to have at such conference, whether I was there or someone else, I don't mind, who was there, as long as someone with knowledge of the topic was there, who is also outspoken, because I think that's important, people tend to, people have this not, shy away from saying the difficult things, I think, not just for provocation, but because that's the thing to do

ES: I was also a bit surprised by that particular document, that this call for action publication it came out like just a few days after the conference and it said that it was the result of the conference, but somehow you think that it was prepared already before, otherwise it wouldn't be there in two days

CH: Large parts, yes, could very well be, or there were a lot of aids running around, typing, typing, I do know, I can very well imagine, that a lot of it had been agreed upon, like the broad strokes, but I do think that the conference itself was important to actually get some vital input, which is, I mean, with any kind, even with law making, lot of the important stuff happens in exact wording, in the details, and I think that the same happened here, that the broad strokes were agreed upon earlier, because stakeholders can agree upon broad strokes easily, and then they wanna to hash out those details during that conference, and I think that for example LIBER, the association for the European university libraries, I know that they attended the conference and I know that they represented, well, I can't speak for all researchers, but at least to my perception they did represent researchers' interest there properly, and I must say that the libraries have been, I think, most in line with the researchers' interests in the last several years, I have really grown fond of the university libraries, yeah

ES: Are you in touch with the library here?

CH: Yeah, yeah

ES: On these topics like open access?

CH: Yeah, so we are actually doing, so there is now call from the board here to, they call it "Speech2025", so they are doing new strategic plan, they are making it now, and they actually said to the people at the university, both students and staff alike, "we want your input for our strategic plan", so people could write and build teams and say "we wanna talk about this theme", and someone from the library had the good idea, I didn't know about this until I've got the email from him, and said "let's put together, we put together a team to do a short talk, to put open science on the agenda of this strategic plan", and so we are working together to do that now, so that's happening in the next week [or] weeks, next week actually, so yeah, I'm in touch with the library, but that wasn't the first time, because they know, I'm pretty vocal on access, data, open access, open data, and I have had some legal difficulties, which I had to also move, legal difficulties with the publisher, and so the university library came in between, because they provided me access, so

they've got the information from the publisher and they had to tell me, and then, so we had meetings there, so yeah, I've been in touch with the library

ES: But was it something with regard to, regarding your own publications in some form of open access as well?

CH: So I have also had contact with the library about that, because, I mean, these deals, they were made and then, with certain publishers, and then the process, sometimes it's easy, sometimes it's just, you check a box when you are submitting, the other time you actually have to email and say "but wasn't in the contract, that this was the price for the journals, that weren't included in the deal" and then they say "no, that was in euro, this one is in dollars" and then you have to kind of really, so the, I think, I'm an exception in this case, because I know the people at the library, so I immediately email them when I have a question and so I have also at other libraries, I have so in Utrecht, for example, so whenever I have questions or run into problems with respect to, for example, these open access deals, I immediately start emailing them, but this was, specifically, one of the times was, when I was at the other end, not at the publication, but at the information consumption point, where for my research I'm going through research articles to extract information from them, statistical information, and I was doing that at such a large scale, I mean, we buy access to Elsevier and we buy access to Springer, we buy access to Wiley, and all of these research articles have information in them, and I wanted to get those articles and then get that information from them, but I needed to download them first, so I was doing that and I was doing that on such a large scale, that some of the publishers started saying "you are stealing our content" and they said "if you don't stop, we gonna cut off your university access, you have to do this in our terms", which were severely limiting, this has also been publicly documented, so I can send you some information, if you want, but that is the other side, so that's, open access isn't, in my opinion, just important to be able to have others read the articles and increase, as a researcher, your reach, but also at the other end, if people want to consume that information freely and do with that information as they please, reuse it in whatever way they want, that's also why open access is important, in my opinion, because I've noticed in my own research, I had to stop part of my research because of copyright issues and that felt to me like an artificial barrier, so we had contact with the library on it, yeah

ES: Okay, but when it comes not to the consumption end, but your own publishing

CH: Yeah

ES: You said that you do not consider publishing in non-open access forms, if I understood that right

CH: Yeah, I made that decision very explicitly at the start of 2016, which was when everything started to rolling, so I have provided, so all of my publications, except for one, are either green or gold open access, and the one is because it doesn't have a clear DOI, so it's rather difficult to create a good green open access version, which I should actually look into upon once again, because it was in a book, so, but I decided at the start of 2016 to only publish gold open access, because green open access still has copyright problems, because it's unclear what you can do with it, you can read it, but can you actually reuse it, if they sign over the copyright at the point of publication, which is a legal, legal mine field willing to happen, so I decided to only publish in gold at the start, and I have, I must say, that I might be the exception here, but it really, I have one publication that is only green open access, but it's probably the most impactful, which, I mean, it was with 269 other authors and I only came into the project after they decided, where to publish, and at that point, this was like mid-2015 or something, and then, at that point I wasn't as well articulated in this respect than, well, also than for my opinion wasn't that much based on my principles and I haven't made that decision yet, but afterwards, that decision kind of started gnawing at me, why is this closed, because it's a massive, massive, it's a landmark paper, and I'm not saying that because my name is on it, but, for reference, it's the reproducibility project in psychology

ES: Ah okay

CH: So that was published in Science, I don't care about where it's published, I don't care about the impact

factor, and I, honestly, at a later stage, so this started gnawing at me, that it was published on a closed manner, I can't access that paper now, except the green open access version, because we don't have the subscription here, which I find horrendous, because it's not just, there are at least four other colleagues, who are here at Tilburg, more even, maybe even eight, who are co-authors on that paper, and they all can't read it either, except the green open access version, so when there was, that was published in August 2015, and then at some point comments to that paper started flowing in, and then we wrote responses, and one of those was on its route to be published, and I, at that point, that was the point, when I decided, okay, I don't wanna publish closed access any more, because at some point I've got the license agreement from Science, I was reading it, I did the same as with the informed consent [for this interview], I actually read it, and then, at that point it was like I can't do this, I can't do this any more, so I did, I told the person who was doing all the communication, you can still use whatever I wrote and don't worry about that, because I helped draft it, but I don't want to be named on that paper, I don't want to hand over my copyright, I don't feel okay with this, so we did that and then, apparently, so that was January 2016, and then, this is anecdotal, just to add to, my supervisor was talking to a professor from Amsterdam who was also part of that project, and he told him that I retracted my authorship because I wasn't willing to hand over my copyright, and that professor said, he was somewhat outraged, and he said something along the lines of "what, if he was my PhD student, I wouldn't have let him forego a publication in Science" and so it's, yeah, that was kind of a point, where I was clear that, okay, from here on, so

ES: But does it happen then more often that you would see some sort of resistance against this decision or where some structures collide, if you want to really be serious about your decision?

CH: I think, it is very clear that we have a problem at the moment, the policy says 2024, every [publication] has to be published in closed, gold open access, not closed, and that's not a Freudian slip, but the problem is incentive structures, they don't reward open access, if you wanna publish open access, either you have to go through the hassle of letting them know, maybe even pay, if it's not in one of these deals, and subsequently, what do you get back for it – nothing tangible, because you are not going to be padded on the back by your department head, whoever is evaluating you, probably, there are probably also people, who do it, and saying at your yearly assessment "so we see that you published 90% open access this year, well done, extra points for you", no, it's gonna be [based on] where did you publish, even though they not even allow to evaluate on that any more, which is because the VSNU, they signed the DORA, the Leiden manifesto, but still, that doesn't necessarily, that doesn't preclude that the culture states the same, which is the exact problem, we, our incentive system, even though policy says this isn't allowed any more, it should be different, then when you branch out into the actual research practices, mostly, except if there is someone at the top, who is saying "okay, we are not going do this any more" and they use that policy as a form of support to push it through, but that's putting yourself out on a line again, so I think there is a clear clash and, honestly, a few weeks ago someone was here to give a talk, and he said "well, you are not going achieve A, if you are rewarding B", and when B is the exact opposite of A, so what we need to do, is, actually, if we want to achieve A, we should incentivise that and, honestly, if we keep incentivising the contrary, then we shouldn't be surprised that we are not getting there, so yeah, clear clash, yes, even though there has been letter to parliament in 2014, stating that even though the European Commission has said 2020 everything has to be freely available, which, so it's even more progressive than the Dutch agenda, although that is green open access and not gold, so then you get into those debates again, but there is a clear clash and I think that that is the main problem at the moment, even if the incentive systems would be okay, the thing is, now the path of least resistance is being closed in all facets, whether it be data, whether it be the publication, whether it be the materials, whether it be how you document your work, you name it, and the fact of the matter is that we could flip it around and we could incentivise, make the path of least resistance to be open, and if you want to be closed, that's okay, but you have to provide some reasoning for it, so you need to take the extra step to explain why, if you are not willing to explain, why you wanna be closed, then one, that already starts, it scratches my mind, and I go like, why wouldn't you want to even explain, and it will show that, I mean, why wouldn't you want explain why you can't show your data, I mean, and then you could even say, well, if

you really don't want to, now we have APCs that cost money to publish open access, why not that if you wanna be closed, okay, but pay, let's put it like this, so it's two stage, you can be closed, if you provide a good reason, say, for data, if you wanna put your data on an embargo for four weeks, you can provide a reason to do that, then you can say "well, I wanna do some extra additional analysis and I wanna do it for another paper", sounds like a good reason, but then if somebody says "well, I wanna put it on an embargo for four years", that has to be a better reason, then again or if they say 20 years, has to be a better reason, again, 50 years, even better reason, because if you start shifting that question, okay, when can that data then be available, if you start saying for, I'm very privacy-minded, but I also think that a lot of researchers say that data is privacy-sensitive just to be able to not share the data, and, honestly, if you would then say, after a 100 years, can we make that data available, and they say, no, it's privacy-sensitive, you are pretty much skipping an entire generation, so then, if that is the reason for a 100-year-embargo, it doesn't make sense any more, so then you could say, okay, let's make it available after 100 years, and then, it's the same, but I just don't want to share the data, then you can be, then pay, and then the paper will say, so you read the paper, methods, okay, blablabla, data, then a footnote that says "authors did not share, did not want to share the data and paid 500 euros, say, something", as a researcher that would immediately make my spicy sense tingle, you know, they didn't want to share the data and they are willing to pay for that, they couldn't provide a reason, why then they didn't want to share or they didn't want it, then you are creating the path of least resistance [that] isn't closed any more, and I think, that, that is the only way you are going to be able to change the culture, to actually change that system, to promote all these scientifically very logical ideals of sharing, sharing your results, sharing your data, but that no one is talking about it

ES: But it sounds a bit like you would have to push certain limits in order to get some change going on

CH: Yeah, yeah, that's true

ES: And you said that you decided to publish in gold only open access, so do you publish then only under the deals that are covered by VSNU or do you also consider paying APCs for gold open access?

CH: I have already paid APCs actually, my preference is to publish with only full open access publishers, which is why I, that's one of the points for these negotiations is that, that isn't even part of those negotiations, which I find somewhat confusing, because if you wanna promote the ideals of open access, which is what this strategy or at least this line of policy seems to want to do, then why not enter negotiations with the, say, the new publishers such as PeerJ, for example, for medical centres, because they could probably provide a cost-effective way of publishing open access in a fully reliable manner, in a modern way, because typically these are more than newer publishers as well, so in my own personal opinion is that when I get to, when I'm the lead on a project, which kind of makes the decision where to publish, the not unilateral, of course, but at least it puts a lot of weight on, like you get the most input on that, then I prefer to choose a fully open access one, if I am a co-author on a paper of one of my colleagues, then, what I have noticed is that those are typically published under the deals, and I try to push them to select a journal which allows that, for example, yeah

ES: And was it one of the points that you reported to VSNU, so why there are no fully open access [journals] included or was it not your concern?

CH: I have had multiple concerns, not sure which one I reported to VSNU any more, because that's been a year, I think, I'm not 100% sure what I have reported, it could very well be, I know that the one thing I have been really vocal about, well, I have requested with Robert about the licensing and he was very pleased to get back that it was Creative Commons BY license, and that the non-commercial clause was like that's off-limit, very happy with that, because the non-commercial clause, it's only a legal tool to be able to threaten people who reuse it, to not share that work or reuse that work because non-commercial, what is non-commercial, do you run a blog, have income from an ad, but you don't, it's kind of just, say, a euro a year, is that commercial [or] non-commercial, you can debate about that, but so it creates legal uncertainties, so I was very happy to hear that that was the choice, but I have been more vocal about just the results of the

negotiations and especially with respect to Elsevier, so I won't be, won't say that I'm neutral in this, because one of my, I have had clashes with Elsevier repeatedly, I think their business strategy is a true, truly a business strategy, and from business point of view it's, they are doing really good work, but from the point of view that in the end it's a science, scholarly communications tool for researchers, so to speak, they are doing a horrible job in disseminating knowledge, which makes sense from business point of view, because that's not their prerogative, that's not their goal to share knowledge, it's to make money, so I have been, I mean, these are also probably the most tedious negotiations between Elsevier and VSNU, and I have been vocal about the results of that, which we will get to, I guess, because that's what the interview is all about in the end

ES: Yeah, so did you publish under some of VSNU deals in Elsevier journals?

CH: I have, I am happy to say, I have never published in an Elsevier journal

ES: At all?

CH: At all, and I won't, I won't peer review for them, I won't do editorial work, I haven't published in Elsevier, and I'm, with respect to the deal, I remember that I was very thrilled to read about the VSNU statement that they were planning to boycott Elsevier if they didn't shift, and I was very disappointed to hear the results of the negotiations, when they came to an agreement, so I mean, of course, we can talk about the fully open access journals being excluded from these negotiations, because Elsevier does have fully open access journals as well, but then that's another point, but then we get to the results of just those hybrid journals and the negotiations, they, the VSNU, also said, well, this result, we wanted a package, that was, I don't know the exact words, but at least that had a broad, not a mandate, but that a lot of people could make use of at the different universities, so I started looking through the list and it was all medical, life sciences, so, for example, for Tilburg, massive problem, Tilburg is primarily a humanities, law and social sciences [university], I am saying economics is social sciences as well, even though they disagree, so what do we have, pretty much nothing, so they are excluding at least one university in those deals, and then you start looking at the numbers and you see that the humanities journals, that are actually included in the deal, it's just a tiny proportion of the full set and then with, I mean, first with the goals that have been set, you are not gonna get there in this way, incremental change is not gonna get you to 100% in eight years or nine years, I don't know what time this exactly, it goes at the end of 2015, so say that was another nine years, and next of all is, there was a lot of like "and if we don't come to a reasonable agreement, we are gonna boycott Elsevier", with such a result, I think, it was around a few percent maximum of these journals that were included, prepaid hybrid journals, we shouldn't forget that those people are paying for this, in the end, it's not just authors, then that seems like quite a statement, to get such a small result, and at that point I started realising, and I can send you a copy of this, I have published an opinion piece in a university journal, and I said "so was it just a bluff, was it just a strategic move to get, to put some pressure on Elsevier during the negotiations", and which the universities actually didn't want to follow through, because that is how it seems in a hindsight, it seems as if there wasn't enough support for an actual boycott, I would have, I boycott and I started boycotting Elsevier way before "The cost of knowledge" petition, I don't know when I signed it, maybe somewhere early 2015, end of 2014, and in the recent months I have become additionally disappointed with that decision to give up that position to boycott, because what we see in Germany, and I keep saying, this is not a disappointment from the aspect like, universities, you should have had just boycotted for the principle, that's part of it, but it's also part that the Netherlands has been pushing this agenda and they are proud of that, at least the politicians are, and I think that if there would have been a boycott at that point, it would have really set the scene for other countries that have started negotiations just like the Netherlands, because they were being done here, it would have set the scene for more resistance, for actual change, and because they, that's because the bluff was called and there was no result, they pretty much seeded it, in that respect, I think they gave up a massive opportunity to shift the landscape, and we've seen this with a year delay in a different country, Germany, the deal, they said, well, no deal, so Elsevier, they didn't cut off access, but many German universities didn't have access any more, and now what

happens in this is, all very recent, Elsevier reinstated access to the German universities, even though there is no contract, so that is, one, the boycott, in hindsight, and this is clearly, in hindsight, wouldn't even have precluded access, two, it would have clearly showed that universities take open access seriously, and, three, it would have also needed one of the leaders in this movement, I must say, that my respect for the German universities has grown tremendously since they have made this move, and this is, this came at the same time when Taiwanese universities also started saying "we are not gonna do this", when in, I think, it was Colombia, that the government also made the decision to not do that any more, and, of course, it's also a bit of the tight guys, but I just, I found it very disappointing, that the university didn't see or the VSNU or the universities or the negotiators didn't realise the potential of that, how important that very moment could be in shifting the landscape, because the negotiations with the largest of all of the publishers are also the most important, because that is, Elsevier is one of the most resisting ones, so shift that one and then you shift many more, so I'm, yeah, I was disappointed that the potential wasn't realised

ES: But why do you think they didn't go for the boycott?

CH: I mean, why don't certain unions at some point decide to go on a strike, because they feel that there isn't enough support for it or they feel that the pushback is, the cost-benefit analysis is not in favour of choosing for that, and I think that the negotiators, this is speculative, I don't know the answer, I don't have any insight information on this, I think that the negotiators tended to be board members or people in high positions and they have a reputation to uphold, and if there isn't clear support across the board, it's gonna result in pushback, and there are always many things going on at the same moment, so might have been a strategic decision to not push back on that, to be able to have some levy on another topic, I don't know, and they might have been over their heads, I mean, multi billion company, they can hire some really tough negotiators, and then you get a public institution, pretty much of these are conglomerate of public institutions that tries to negotiate, that's also, it's playing primarily against champions league maybe, I don't know how that process would be, if that would make for, I am very intrigued by your study because I hope to also, at some point, when the results are in, to learn about that, because it's an asymmetric battle, and there are many variables, many parameters, so I don't wanna say that it's other failure, because there also might be things that played [a role], I really don't know, at the moment I just think that, well, let's put it differently, I know that researchers tend to be feudalistic, they tend to think, which makes no sense because they, it's so much part of science to be critical, but we have been discussing about impact factors, so it's, almost nothing has changed, and we discussed things but coming to actual, actually doing things, that's something totally different within universities or academia, and I think that if the VSNU would have decided to boycott, even though people at the very first stage said, well, I don't know, we don't want it, they would have probably went with it, they would, might have then started thinking, okay, so they decide to do a boycott, now it affects my daily practice, then they might start thinking about this because then they [are] faced with it, or maybe they do just go like "that's okay, if that's how the system goes", and then they just continue to work, they might send a few more emails to get the PDFs and, honestly, there are many ways to get the PDFs, and so, yeah, I think that it's a missed opportunity and there might be various explanations for it, but I think that in the end, if the VSNU would have stepped forward, the support would probably have been bigger than they would have expected at the first place, because there was, were a few people who were vocal about that, they didn't support it, like in some survey or what they did, but I think, but that there are also lots of people, really, who are repulsed by the idea of how the system works at the moment, me being one of them, but I'm already vocal about that

ES: And like in your own personal decision, you already have decided to publish in Open Access only

CH: Yeah

ES: But then if the 100% is to be reached in 2024 or now in 2020 probably, since the national open science plan, it states 2020 now

CH: Yeah, it's for also with green, so that's 2024 is the Dutch goal for gold

ES: Okay, so 2020 would allow counting green into that

CH: Yeah

ES: But then, if, let's say, in some next years, 100% should be reached, how would it affect other researchers, I mean, in your field or your department or maybe other institutions that you work with, that they would have to publish in open access only?

CH: Gold or green?

ES: Depends

CH: Because those are totally different consequences, honestly, there are already many universities that mandate green open access by now in the Netherlands, so at the end of 2017 we should see full open 100% green, actually for the second half of 2016 we should see full open green at this university, which is not the case, again, disconnect between policy and practice, for green open access, I think the problems are minimum, there are institutional repositories in place, deposit your PDF, done, deal, it only requires the researchers to do that, say, you have, say, you are prolific author, you have 50 publications per year, spend a day on it, that's all, all that would take a day of uploading files, or put your research assistant on it, if you have 50 publications a year, you probably have a research assistant, so green open access – minimal costs, mental effort – totally different, because some people feel they are too good to be uploading the files, they don't see the benefit of it, like what tangible thing do I get from that, nothing, because it's also not evaluated, there is a mandate, everyone should at least make their publications green open access, nobody checks it, nobody is evaluated based on it, nobody says "hey, your publications aren't in green open access, if you don't do it, say, by the next six months, you gonna...", well, I don't know, what managers or department heads or people evaluating could do, but then you get a lower evaluation on your work ethic, that doesn't happen, for gold open access, on the other hand, it's totally different, because then you get a problem of APCs, where are those coming from, so funders, what not, second of all, so the APCs, say, you don't have special funding for them, how are you gonna get them, how are gonna decide which journal, because are you gonna go hybrid or full open access, the fact of the matter remains that full, say, I'm not a fan of the impact factor except for indicating things at the journal level, which is what it's intended for anyway, you can't say anything about articles with something that operates at the journal [level], and then you see a clear correlation between the impact factor and the APC, and because the incentive system is still working on high impact factor, even though policy says it's not allowed to, they wanna publish in high impact factor journals which come with, say, 6,000 euros APCs instead of 500, 600 at many journals, so what do you do, again, the decision, that could directly affect your career just because of practice, so gold open access becomes, is the way to go in my opinion, but is also the one, the path with most resistance, so there it is again, so it's clear that that would raise a lot of problems, which is why these negotiations are so important, and even if these negotiations are in place and, say, there are deals, and then you can publish for free open access in these hybrid journals, people have to be aware of it, I know of one story, where someone published in a journal and the publisher didn't notify them, so it was closed, even though the agreement was already in place, and then some colleague notified them like "hey, you can make this open access", and what happened then is that that person pretty much [said] "okay, thanks" and that was it, no email, they actually had to push to get that email sent, to get it open access, so some of the researchers actually literally don't seem to care, which I find weird, because, well, in my head it's weird, because I think you not gonna give a presentation and then have everyone sit with sound muffling, the ones you use, headphones on, the ones you use when you are at a shooting range, so to speak, I've never been at a shooting range, so I don't know much about that, but you wouldn't give a talk then, it seems the same when you lock up your research and, but then at the other hand there are also researchers who, I see a publication and it's fit for one of those deals and then I email them to lock up things, we gonna do that and they do it, so it goes both ways, so, yeah, I think that the amount of work needed to publish gold open access makes it less attractive and actually more of a hassle for researchers, so it would create larger problems, which is exactly why I think these deals should have focused also on fully open access [journals], because then that's a totally different game we are playing, then you are

just saying “hey, you can just do it there, no problem, all open access” and then, by the way, there is one massive problem or there is problem with hybrid journals, because people have paid APCs and then the publication is still paywalled and then they say “well, it’s an error”, well, that is a massive, massive breach of trust, you pay and, remember, these deals are still prepaid, it’s not free, it’s prepaid, that is a breach of trust, and then it would require people to start checking that again, which would pretty much amount to any effort being put in, to be, well, it could be, all be for nothing, except that would have to be even more effort to make it open access, anyway, so I mean that’s one of those problems with hybrid open access that aren’t discussed as much and, I mean, well, add that on top of choosing the journal, whether you can actually pay the APCs, how much the APCs was, you know, all these things, I think that you can’t expect people, you can not expect researchers to jump through all these hoops, at least not unless there will be people, I jump through the hoops, because I care, but you can’t expect everyone to care that much, which is too bad in a way, but that is the case

ES: And looking to the future, would you expect than more and more would start be being published as full open access journals?

CH: I think that in the end, into the future that is the only way to go, to create a sustainable way of sharing information that is inclusive and not privileged, because that is what is happening now, I mean, the fact that the matter is that if you are at this university or at Göttingen university or what not, that very much changes the information that is available to you and even if you are at the most wealthy university in the world, you still don’t have access to the, to all of it, would, of course, require, well, good indexing but at least not to all the journals that are being published, so if that is already the case at the most wealthy and how is it gonna be for an average university or a college university or, you know, why I don’t think that that’s a sustainable model, I think that what we are gonna see is, we gonna see a shift from commodifying knowledge and trying to get money out of that, is that you gonna see a shift to the process of how knowledge is consumed, which is, will also bring some problems with it, because then you gonna get data on how people, what knowledge people consume, and how to commodify the data of people, that’s gonna bring along new problem, but it’s gonna require all that knowledge to be freely available to build new things on, so yes, I think in the future full open access is the only way to go

ES: And would it then work with the same APC model that we have now?

CH: No, no, I think in the end, first of all, I think the APC model, the principles behind it, saying that you need a revenue stream, of course, you need a revenue stream to be sustainable as a company, but I think that it’s very short-sighted, I mean, when PLOS started, that was a major, that was a landslide, that was totally different, and that was a great initiative and it still is a great journal, and it was good that they started out with APC, and then in 2012 or 2013 you saw PeerJ, and they took a totally different business, they said “we are gonna do memberships”, and I’m very happy to have published there, because they provide a great experience, and that’s it, I can not imagine that those are the only two business models that are possible, and I know, those two aren’t the only business models that are possible, because I have a few ideas of my own, but I fully understand that you need revenue to be sustainable, the thing is, is, you need more revenue if you make more cost, if you decrease the cost, you also need less revenue, and I think there is much to gain in how that research, the publication chain, because honestly speaking, okay, I’ve got the proofs from fully open access journal, the proofs recently, you pay the journal the APC and then you get proofs and then you spend half a day in correcting the proofs, and I provided them with the LaTeX document, so not a Word document, which is type-set, you can convert LaTeX to XML easily, you might need make some adjustments, of course, but then I think how, how can this process, that can be automated for the large part, be messed up like this, then yes, the APCs are gonna be needed because then you are paying for say soggy, soggy potato chips, that doesn’t make any sense, so I think we can move away from the APCs at some point, because once that chain, you can fine tune that chain, that is at the minimum cost, I mean, remember that arXiv operates at such a low cost, of course, they only do PDFs, but those PDFs still are very readable, and you can still do a lot with them, honestly, I don’t understand why we are still thinking in the paper format for scholarly

articles nowadays, but that publication chain, it can be changed and it can be at such a low cost, that it doesn't affect sustainability as much any more, and then, the thing becomes, how can we sustain pretty much an information commons, the scholarly commons, and that is by getting the, getting organisations or businesses invested in using that commons, and there are many ways to build things upon the commons, which can then be also commodified, which I have nothing against commodification in principle, as long as there is added value, and by locking up information that detracts value, in my opinion, locking up articles, so that, I don't understand, the publication process is very much detracting value, negative value, creating negative value, so then, when these companies start making money out of adding value to information, they will start seeing that they need the information to actually be sustainable themselves, they have to feed back part of their revenue and that is how you can get a sustainable model

ES: Some sort of mutual dependence

CH: Exactly, which is, that's a good way of putting it, mutual dependence

ES: Okay

CH: That's a very good way of putting it, because that's what we have now as well pretty much, but it's highly asymmetric, it shifted all the way to one end and we also don't want to shift all the way to the other end, we want it to be, well, co-dependence, healthy co-dependence, not the, so, yeah

ES: So we are actually at the last question of the questionnaire, if you think there is some other important [point] that I would have to carefully think of

CH: Well, I was like just thinking of problems that we are facing now, as sort of an innovation dilemma, there is a lot of potential and a lot of people are thinking in the status quo and justifying the status quo, and I'm still waiting for that moment, that the current open access model fits very much into the traditional business model of publishing, and I think that once we break out of that, there are a lot of possibilities and, well, I'm just rambling now again, I don't really have any specific aspect that you would be leaving out with these questions, I think, we really talked about a lot of things, but I very much look forward to building on top of the innovations of PLOS, of PeerJ, of Hindawi, of MDPI, of all these open access publishers that have already changed the game partially, but there is more that we can gain, and I'm very much looking forward to that, so, well, of course, you can ask people, of course, you probably have a vision on that as well, what is the future of open access publishing, that's something I'm always intrigued, so but that doesn't really answer that question

ES: No, but it's a nice point to, for closing. One last thing, I wanted to ask you, if it had any impact on your answers, knowing that it might be shared?

CH: No, at most that sometimes I didn't cuss, otherwise I might have cussed, but...

ES: Okay

CH: But that's a good thing, to not cuss, I guess, at least in a way, so, no

ES: Then we are done, thank you

CH: Okay, you're welcome

[end of recording]