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Neoliberalism and the Public Good in Higher Education

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Foreword

I thank students and friends from the "Pay more get less" campaign in Guelph who inspired me to write my thesis on the neoliberal university. Many thanks also goes out to my supervisors who showed great patience and interest in the topic. They encouraged me to get the best out of this thesis, and gave me much freedom in the process.

Abstract

The student and teacher protests at the University of Amsterdam challenge the way the university currently works. They demand the stop of *rendementsdenken* – thinking in terms of profit – and more democracy in decisions that concern the academic community. This thesis aims to put the development of the university in the context of neoliberalism, which by many scholars has been identified as today's dominant hegemony. The focus of this thesis is to examine the ways in which neoliberalism has influenced higher education as a public good. For that I form a theoretical framework based on the contestation between the approach of the public good and neoliberalism. The case of the University of Amsterdam, and the protest groups that developed, are analyzed in the light of neoliberalism and its effects on higher education as a contributor to the public good. The analysis concludes that neoliberal practices, by name efficiency thinking, audit culture, and differentiation, implemented by the Dutch government and the Executive Board of the University of Amsterdam, have found their way into the university management. The hierarchy at the university has limited the input of the academic community in decision-making. Together with the output oriented governance, this has led to decisions based on profit and not academic value, manifesting in program cuts within the humanities. Regarding the social purposes people attribute to higher education, the profitability of services has come to shape

academic programming and research in the direction of market value, neglecting other fields without commercial value. This development does not contribute to the pursuit of knowledge and skills in a variety of fields that are needed for a balanced social and cultural development. It endangers the possibility of students and staff to be critical and conscience about the development at their university and society at large.

Introduction

Neoliberalism. A term so often mentioned in news and literature, I thought I need to understand when talking about the role of the government and the market in the 21st century. Neoliberalism represents, simply put, the belief in the free market, enabled by governments, that will eventually bring most benefit to society at large. Governments across the globe have implemented policies that favor the free market. Protective regulations of the national economies have for example been abolished to enhance global trade opportunities. Additionally, public goods are increasingly abolished or privatized, as the market is seen to be better able to allocate goods efficiently. Water, transport, health care and education are becoming privatized in different parts of the world (Buchheit, 2015).

By critical scholars the neoliberal ideology has been reported to have penetrated not just the economic, but also the social and cultural sphere of our lives (Saunders, 2010). Among other things, this means cost-benefit analysis and efficiency thinking have started to influence the way we think and organize our lives. According to Giroux (2002), the university is a public sphere that has witnessed this neoliberal trend. While the university has been adapting to meet the needs of capital and markets since the 19th century, the development that universities are undergoing have been greatly impacted by the spread of neoliberalism for the past 40 years (Saunders, 2010).

While researchers have increasingly written about the UK, Canada and the US, where neoliberalism has had concise effects since the 1980s, like unprecedented levels of tuition fees and student debt, scholars recognize that European universities have not escaped the trend. The institution is in a situation where the government steps back in providing higher education as a public good, while market principles find their way into the management. The benefits of higher education (HE) are seen to be individual and economic, but also social and for the public benefit (Singh, 2001). The former approach has been given much more emphasis in the debate by politicians and governments. HE is argued to be an important tool in order to be competitive in the global knowledge economy. Critical scholars argue that the focus on this approach neglects the social purposes of HE, such as critical thinking (Singh, 2001; Giroux, 2002). Giroux (2002) explains that ideally, the university should be a site of critical thinking where corporate power and recent politics can be challenged. With the pressures of neoliberalism that influence social spheres and shape our thinking, this role has become more difficult to play.

The topic of this thesis has the novel focus of looking at the neoliberal developments in HE at a Dutch University. "The New University"- Movement has only recently brought attention to the developments at the University of Amsterdam. The activist group demands the stop of *rendementsdenken* – thinking in terms of profit – and more democracy in decisions that concern the academic community. I want to know in which ways these developments reflect the neoliberal trend that has been identified in the English-speaking countries. Only few scholars have written about the development of HE in the Netherlands in relation to neoliberalism. The societal relevance of examining this case is hence to create awareness for the accelerating transformation of the Dutch universities and look at it in the context of our global economic and societal organization. The research hopes to spark thinking about the purposes of the university, and whether these can be achieved in compliance with the adoption of neoliberal market thinking. I further want to unpack the term neoliberalism that often resonates a feeling of vagueness in debates. I aim to give readers a concrete idea of the term and its relation to reality.

Problem Statement

The phrase neoliberalism has gained much negative connotation since its emergence in the 1970s, because it is seen to put the free market in the center of societal organization, while giving little importance to public goods, the welfare state and sustainability (Giroux, 2002). To make the analysis of HE development more meaningful, I will contrast the idea of neoliberalism with the one of the public good.

Public goods, in contrast to private goods, are provided for all members of a society mainly financed by governments via taxes (Pusser, 2002). They are expected to contribute to the public good/well-being in a non-economic way, by for example offering health care and education. In contrast to that, in neoliberalism most public goods are seen as inefficient, as their provision is not informed by the market. Additionally it is argued that the externalities some public goods, like higher education offer, are too small to justify public investment (Psacharpoulous 2008). Proponents believe that the well-being of all can best be achieved in the context of a free market, free trade and private property rights, which give freedom to individuals (Harvey, 2005). The tension between the public good and neoliberalism becomes obvious. With the progress of neoliberal principles, public institutions are transformed, often stepwise. To make the tension more feasible, one can imagine the provision of a good, like higher education, ranging from a pure public up to a complete neoliberal market model. To determine in which direction of such a fictive scale the university is moving, I will use the principles of both concepts as a guideline. As public institutions transform, so do their purposes and the ways in which they are expected to contribute to the public benefit. To find that out, I draw on Singh (2001) who defined the social purposes of higher education next to the economic benefits for the knowledge economy.

The aim of this thesis now is to find out in which way neoliberalism influences higher education as a public good. The University of Amsterdam will be used as a case study to concretize the broader developments. Drawing on the tension between neoliberalism and the public good, my central research question reads:

How does neoliberalism influence higher education as a public good?

To answer the central question, I have formulated three sub-questions. Firstly, a conceptualization of the public good and of neoliberalism, is needed. Both concepts are rather contested and have been discussed by different scholars for many years. Drawing on different approaches, I will form a theoretical framework that will be applied for sub-questions two and three. Given the touched upon contestation of the two concepts, sub-question one reads: *How can the relation of neoliberalism and the public good be theorized?* Having done so, it is of interest to get an idea of how neoliberalism plays in HE, an issue discussed by several scholars critical of the development, like Giroux, Chomsky and de Boer. The question is then, in which ways this has influenced HE as a public good: *How are neoliberal principles generally incorporated into higher education and does this compromise the notion of higher education (HE) as a public* *good, if so how?* So, while sub-question two will put the development of the university in a broader geographical context, sub-question three will focus on HE in the Netherlands, even more specifically on the University of Amsterdam. I want to find out how the neoliberal influence vs. the public good plays out in the country where I study, and where protests just recently kicked off. Sub-question three reads: *How does neoliberalism show at the University of Amsterdam? And how is this related to the "The New University"- Movement?*

Methods

This thesis is based on a broad literature study. For the first sub question articles from academic journals are used. The articles originate from different times and explain different theoretical approaches of the concepts of neoliberalism and the public good. The second sub-question is also mainly based on academic journals, but also on policy papers of international organizations that can give insights in the development of the higher education sector over the years. Literature on the neoliberal university in the US and Canada are used to give a better understanding of the global play of neoliberalism in the university. Sub question three is a bit different due to the currency and uprising of the case of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) which has not been addressed in academic journals yet. Online news articles and publications by The New University Movement and the teachers' organization ReThink serve as a basis. Current policy papers by the UvA provide insights into the management of the university. Additionally, to understand the national relation to the development of the University of Amsterdam, policy papers by the Dutch government will be used.

Regarding the structure of this thesis, I will discuss the three sub-question as in the order above. In the first chapter, the public good and neoliberalism will be theorized. The theoretical framework will then be applied in chapter two, which will illuminate how the tension between neoliberalism and the public good plays out in HE. To get an idea of the general processes and their scope, I will draw on a rather broad geographical area. So, while chapter two puts the neoliberal HE development beyond national borders, zooming in on the specific case of Amsterdam in the following chapter, will add a concrete layer to the understanding of neoliberal practices in HE, as the processes play on a smaller scale. Here, I will look at the vision of the Dutch government on HE and the expected contribution to the public benefit, compared to the one of the protest groups that show discontent with the recent development. Finally, the conclusion will provide the most important findings of my research and formulate recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1. The Public Good and Neoliberalism

There is a tension between higher education (HE) as a public good and the neoliberal developments of universities. The increased adoption of market mechanisms and privatization, threatens the notion of HE as a public good that benefits not just the individual, but society as a whole. In order to analyze this tension, and hence answer the main research question, I need to theorize both concepts.

In this chapter, I will show that there is a tension between the approach of the public good and neoliberalism. To understand this tension and how it works out in the case study, I will first discuss the concept of the public good, and then the one of neoliberalism. Finally, I will form a theoretical framework based on both conceptualizations, which will serve as a tool for analyzing the influences of neoliberalism on HE as a public good in chapter two and three.

The Public Good

The public good is a difficult concept; it is a contested social and cultural, but also economic concept that has started to be discussed as early as in the 18th century. It has been subject to change, as society develops. According to Mansbridge (1998), it is a Western tradition to contrast the public and the private good and benefits. Evidently, scholars refer to the conventional approach of the public good, when it is seen as opposing the private good (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003; Pusser, 2002). This is an economic approach in which public goods then have two characteristics: they are non-excludable and non-rival. This means no one can be excluded from consumption, and the consumption by one does not restrict the consumption by another (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003). Public goods are provided by governments and include for example, libraries, public parks, streets and national defense. They are provided for free, mainly financed via taxes, and for everyone. It is assumed that public goods are of equal demand and use for all members of a society (Cemmell, 2002). However, this is where economists often disagree. Use and demand for a good differ per individual, making the provision of a good for everyone inefficient. Scholars of market economics argue that public goods' prices and supply are externally determined instead of "naturally" determined by the market (Pusser, 2002). Market economics see a role for public provision of goods, when the nature of the good does not allow the exclusion from consumption and user fees hence cannot be charged (Psacharopoulos, 2008). An example here is a sidewalk or a lighthouse. Psacharpoulous (2008) furthermore notes, that public investment is desirable in the case of market or information failures. These can occur, when consumers are not aware of positive societal externalities, indirect effects, of a good. Their investment stops at a suboptimal level and the state can fill this gap. However, as he writes, higher education is one of the goods that offers too little externalities to publicly invest.

Unlike market economics, other scholars see a key role for public goods by also contributing to society in a non-economic way (Pusser, 2002), hence offering substantial externalities that are not captured by the market. Public goods are expected to contribute to the public good/well-being in some way, by for example offering health care and education (Pusser, 2002). Here the public good is more defined as the public interest, use or benefit. In order to determine the public good one needs to ask the questions "which public? And whose good?" (Calhoun, 1998, p.20). Calhoun (1998) importantly stresses that the public is too often assumed to be unitary. He wrote: "In considering the public good we need to think more clearly of the public as a realm or realms of discourse and contestation" (p.20). So, the notion of the public good is closely related to the public realms/spheres in which the public discourse is formed. This relates to Kaul and Mendoza's (2003) approach, who argue that goods are socially constructed. They most of the time do not exist in their pure form (public or private), but become public or private by deliberate policy choices and citizen engagement. Most of the time goods are not one or the other, but a hybrid form. If access to consumption is limited, goods are only partly public. Furthermore, many goods, like education, are seen to offer both public and private benefits (Pusser, 2002), also making them one of those hybrid forms.

Neoliberalism

As shown above, the concept of the public good is contested. It indicates a tension between the liberal economic market perspective on the provision of goods versus the public provision of goods. The former perspective has over the past 30 years taken the form of neoliberalism. In order to show how neoliberalism compromises the public good and redefines the contribution of goods to the public benefit, this section firstly introduces the concept. I will identify the major components of the neoliberal discourse and explain how it has started to influence the social and political world, next to the economic one. I will then show how neoliberal ideas have found their way into reality and affected states in the provision of public goods.

Theoretical Components

Neoliberalism is a theory, ideology and practice at the same time. Originally, neoliberalism is a broad concept of economic organization in which the self-regulating market is at the center (Steger and Roy, 2010). The theory states that the well-being of all can best be achieved in the context of a free market, free trade and private property rights which give freedom to individuals (Harvey, 2005). The beliefs originate from the classical liberal economic theory of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Classical Liberalism, reigning until the 1930s, saw the need to free individuals from state intervention; classical liberalists hence had a rather negative conception of the state (Olssen and Peters, 2005). Here lies a significant difference to neoliberalism which sees an important positive role of the state in supporting and promoting the free market. Based on Saunder's (2010) article, one can identify three beliefs within neoliberalism, also supported by Olssen and Peters (2005):

1. *The "benevolence of the free market"* (Saunders, 2010, p.45): The belief that the market is self-regulating and that free market competition will benefit all by bringing economic growth and prosperity. If growth and prosperity do not occur, neoliberalists believe, this is due to outside interferences in the market, like state interventions or unionism (Saunders, 2010).

2. Restriction of State interference in the economy: state interference in the market is seen as inefficient and undesirable. However, the state has an important role in neoliberalism, in fact to promote and facilitate the operation of the free market. This includes the creation of new markets by e.g. negotiating free trade agreements and restructuring regulations and tax systems in favor of corporations (Saunders, 2010). The establishing of public services and a welfare state are understood to be inefficient and harm the freedom of individuals and the market.

3. The individual as a rational economic actor: the belief that the individual is a *homo oeconomicus;* an actor whose economic and non-economic behaviors are determined by a cost-benefit analysis (Saunders, 2010). As the state regulates less, individuals have more freedom of choice in their lives. However, when they make a decision they bear the costs and responsibility. Hilgers (2011) notes: “The self is developed and conceived of as an enterprise in a competitive framework that leads individuals to manage themselves in accordance with the logic of the market” (p.358)

Along the theory of neoliberalism, we find more specific smaller economic practices in which the theoretical beliefs manifests. Those are important to theorize and explain, as they influence the organization of goods and services. Relevant especially in the case of higher education are the concepts of marketization, corporatization, commodification, and privatization. They are intertwined and sometimes overlapping processes.

Marketization is a restructuring process by which public institutions, previously governed by direct public control, are enabled to function as market-oriented corporations by means of changing the legal context in which they operate (Van der Hoeven and Sziráczk, 1997). It can include the liberalization of economic activity, and the reduction of regulations (Gingrich, 2015). The self-regulating market is at the center (Assumption 1+2). While marketization deals with the context in which goods are provided, *corporatization* is about the operations of providers. The term means to organize the provision of goods according to the principles of private businesses, like efficiency and competition (Steck, 2003). The process includes “processes, decisional criteria, expectations, organizational culture, and operating practices that are taken from, and have their origins in, the modern business corporation” (Steck, 2003, p.74). Along with the processes of marketization and corporatization, or as part of them, goes privatization. *Privatization* is the "transfer to the private sector of activities and functions which have traditionally rested with the public sector" and involves one or more of the following components: management responsibility, assets or the right to use assets, and personnel (Phua, 2001). Once an institution is completely privatized, all its funding comes from private actors. Privatization can be seen as a means to corporatize public institutions by letting businesses organize them. It is part of marketization, as it for example aims to change the legal context, when previous state assets are transferred to the private sector. By making public institutions private, and organizing them more like businesses, a process of commodification can occur. In its broadest sense *commodification* means to make something a commodity; to make it a product that can be sold for profit (Leys and Harris-White, 2012). This is characteristic of neoliberal market economics where providing goods for free is seen as inefficient. The chance to higher profits is seen to encourage providers to make their practices more efficient. Commodification thus often goes hand in hand with privatization. When privatization and commodification occur, the access to products is limited in most cases limit by attaching a price to the products.

The beliefs and practices of neoliberalism have crept into non-economic spheres and started to govern our public, political and social lives on an ideological basis (Saunders, 2010; Hilgers, 2011). According to Saunders (2010), the term neoliberalism nowadays hence includes social and political ideas and practices, and functions on both institutional and individual level. The neoliberal system has not just influences in terms of organization and management, but also on the thinking and the values of people. He sees neoliberalism as an extension of the *laissezfaire* market policies which dominated until the 1930s. He notes: "The most powerful of these extensions is the expansion of economic rationality past the economic sphere and into the social sphere (Lemke, 2001) "(p.45). Social domains start to become governed by economic principles of efficiency, profit maximization and rational economic choices. While in economic practices one thinks of profit maximization in terms of money, as an ideology on a social individual level rational thinking comes to determine relationships, leisure time and career related choices (Saunders, 2010); aiming to "maximize life".

A Reality

> "Whether neoliberalism is analysed as a depoliticised form of a capitalism that seeks to be scientific and does not fulfil its promises (Ferguson 2006), as an ideology that serves the dominant group (Bourdieu 1998; Harvey 2005), or as the most recent mode of governmentality (Foucault 2004; Ong 2006), neoliberalism appears as the common denominator in the production of inequalities in our contemporary societies" (Hilgers, 2011, p.360).

In the following I will relate to the different aspects touched upon in the quote above. While the concept of neoliberalism has strong theoretical components, its practices have found its way into governance and practices (Harvey, 2005), making it a tangible reality, rather than a far above floating ideology. A scholar that was engaged with analyzing neoliberalism was the French philosopher and social theorist Foucault (Hilgers, 2011). He analyzed neoliberalism as a form of governmentality or practice, instead of a theory or ideology. This requires one to look at the implementation of a form of rationalization by governments that exercises the rule of maximal economy to minimize costs and maximize profit (Hilgers, 2011). “Neoliberal governmentality shapes and is shaped by a multitude of ethical and moral codes that are applied and combined according to a principle of maximisation” (Hilgers, 2011, p.358). It results from the penetration of market principles into the political sphere. According to Hilgers (2011), neoliberal governmentality is never uniform, but plays out in different practices and degrees of market orientation.

Neoliberalism as policy practice has spread globally ever since the 1970s starting in the United States (Saunders, 2010). Starting inter alia with President Ronald Reagan in the US and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in England (Harvey, 2005), many countries have adopted neoliberal views and incorporated them into their governance and policy making. Several critical scholars point out that neoliberalism has become the dominant hegemony in this world (Giroux, 2002; Harvey, 2005; Saunders, 2010; McChesney, 1999). Health Care, schools and transport are being privatized in different parts of the world, as governments step back in providing public services (Buchheit, 2015). Government officials argue that the market can regulate these institutions better than the government by emphasizing competition. Competition between suppliers leads to efficiency, high quality and innovation in a sector (Jongloed, 2003). In order to be competitive, businesses have however engaged in a constant race of cost cutting, manifested especially in the form of flexible labor. Government regulations favor business operations by for example decreasing environmental standards or establishing tax benefits. Free trade agreements, like NAFTA and TTIP are ways in which governments support the idea of a free market.

While economic growth has been increasing in many countries like Germany, the Netherlands and the United States, as recently discussed in Piketty’s “Capital in the 21st Century”, global inequality of income has been on the rise since the industrial revolution (The Economist, 2014). Also Harvey (2005) points out that the reduction of public services has caused great inequality and decreases in human well-being in the majority of the advanced capitalist societies (Harvey, 2005). By promoting the opening of national markets, neoliberalism completely ignores the history of class, inequality and colonization. Different countries and people have different "starting points". Former colonies have been oppressed and exploited for centuries and are then asked by policy makers to put themselves on the same level with the former colonizers, as markets are opened up. Individuals from a different origin or social group can have limited access to good jobs or education, as they have a history of disadvantage. This is where many see the role for a welfare state. Neoliberalism has become a negatively connoted term referring to a system that has freed the market at the expense of social justice and equality. This is why no politician, policy maker or even economist calls him-/herself a neoliberalist (Harvey 2005). However, the beliefs of a free market and a state that supports a free global economy and privatization of former public services, are characteristic of neoliberalism, whether so called or not.

The Public Good versus Neoliberalism

The neoliberal discourse promotes the free market and deregulation by the government, which results in a reduction of public services, or a transformation of public services. Here lies the tension between the public good and neoliberalism. Public goods are provided by governments in a way that they are available for everyone. This shows a difference in financing and access, when compared to goods provided according to neoliberal market principles, which are exclusive and privatized. This then also influences the way the provision of the good is organized. While a public good is subject to state control to some extent, a neoliberal market good is subject to the legal conditions set by the state, but not directly answerable in terms of organization and effectiveness. The organization of a neoliberalized good is characterized by marketization, corporatization, privatization and commodification.

The financing, access and organization of a good give an answer to the question to what extent a good is public or neoliberalized. One can picture it on a fluid scale from a 'pure public' to 'completely neoliberalized' good. Contrasting a pure public with a pure private good is not satisfactory here because privatization alone does not capture all important developments at hand like corporatization, marketization, etc. The three aspects, finances, organization and access then influence the way in which the good can and is expected to contribute to the public benefit to a large extent. Opinions diverge regarding the ways in which public goods offer benefits for society as a whole. Within the neoliberal ideology, scholars see most public goods as inefficient and offering little societal benefits. In the economy, the value of goods in general, hence also of public goods, is measured in economic terms as benefits for the market and the economy. However, the benefits of public goods cannot be measured in simply economic terms (Pusser, 2002). Scholars critical of neoliberalism argue that public goods offer societal benefits that are not captured by the market. Benefits of public goods are for example their open access which can generate equality, and their positive externalities, of for example an informed citizenry by offering education (Singh, 2001). Striking to note here is that the definition and interpretation of what societal benefits are depends on the actor's position.

To conclude, there is a tension between public goods and neoliberalism. It can be captured by looking at financing, access, organization and the way in which different actors see the good to contribute to society at large. As neoliberalism progresses, public institutions are transformed, often stepwise by means of privatization and corporatization. The efforts to privatize and liberate former public services have also spread to the university. HE can also be located on a scale ranging from a pure public good up to a complete neoliberal market model of the university. The more neoliberal practices like privatization, corporatization, commodification and marketization are evident, the more HE moves away from being a public good, and the clearer becomes the tension in the ways it should contribute to the public benefit. The following chapter shows how neoliberal practices have found their way into higher education and what this means for HE as a public good.

Chapter 2. Neoliberalism in Higher Education

As set out in Chapter one, there is a tension between neoliberalism and public goods. In this chapter I will show that neoliberal ideas compromise higher education (HE) as a public good in a widespread context, in different pace, shapes and degrees. Looking at a broader context is relevant because neoliberalism is seen as a global phenomenon that in HE especially shows its effects in the English speaking world, though I will demonstrate that its effects are also very evident in other countries. This chapter will contribute to the main research question by showing the scope of the neoliberal idea in HE and putting its influence in the bigger picture.

I will first explain how different actors see HE to contribute to the public good, so that I can refer back to these visions in the analysis of finances, organization and access that follow. In three different sections I will then show how neoliberal practices have influenced each of these three aspects of HE, and what that means for the ways in which HE is expected to contribute to the public benefit. The focus will be on the non-economic benefits of HE that are often neglected in policy debates, as will be shown throughout this chapter.

Higher Education as a Contributor to the Public Benefit

So, in what ways do scholars, policy makers and government officials see HE as contributing to the public benefit?

Restructuring debates around the university are often about the role the university should play in the 21st century (Singh, 2001). Recently, policy makers see the value of HE primarily in "enhancing national economic competitiveness within a global knowledge-driven economy" (Singh, 2001, p.8). This is also the idea presented in a World Bank paper on the relevance of HE in the 21st century (Gibbons, 1998). Gibbons (1998) highlights the importance of collaboration with the industry in order to enhance innovation and stay competitive. By producing new knowledge and an educated work force, HE is seen to enhance a country's position in the global economy (McArthur, 2011). The economic role of HE is promoted by many governments (McArthur, 2011). In the UK HE now belongs to a new government department called "Department of Business, Innovation and Skill" (McArthur, 2011). This vision on the contribution of HE to the public benefit is focused on the economy, influenced by the neoliberal discourse that has the market at the center.

Many scholars critical of the neoliberal discourse in HE call for a recognition of traditional values of the university, like enhancing critical thinking, democratic leadership and public engagement (Giroux, 2002). While in the 19th century, these goals served only an elite (Singh, 2001) and as Saunders (2010) argues were never truly achieved or pursued, they should be given more attention in the policy debate (Singh, 2001). The economic approach to the purposes of HE is too narrow and neglects the social purposes of HE (Singh, 2001; Mc Arthur, 2011). Mc Arthur (2011), a scholar concerned with higher and community education, disagrees with the solely economic approach, as it is uncritical of the promoted economic interests, which often advantage certain groups of society, rather than the whole of society. He believes that universities should contribute to economic and social welfare of all members of society. They further should be "sites of human creativity", instead of being defined as only producing a work force (Mc Arthur, 2011). Singh (2001) identifies four social purposes of HE that are in the interest of society as a whole. They will be explained as follows.

The first purpose she states is to enhance social justice by providing equal access to HE. Enhancing access for people from disadvantaged backgrounds is important in order to equalize life chances (Singh, 2001). By limiting access to HE and making it only affordable for the elite and middle class, knowledge, education and higher level jobs will benefit only the elite and middle class, perpetuating inequality relationships. Singh (2001) recognizes that enhancing access will not eliminate social stratification, but it can be an enabler to more social justice. Privatization and Commodification are processes that limit access to higher education by introducing tuition fees. When HE is commodified, commercial interests come to the foreground that can endanger the purpose of HE, as identified by Singh (2001), to pursue knowledge in various fields via applied and basic research. Pursuing various fields of knowledge is important for a "balanced social and cultural development" (p.11). Focusing on applied fields with commercial value will endanger especially the arts and humanities, and by that undermine a diverse range of insights and understandings that are needed to develop a balanced social and cultural development. Singh (2001) adds: It should be possible in higher education to pursue knowledge in ways that could extend the horizon of human understanding and the limits of human imagination "without always being constrained by considerations of immediate relevance or adequate returns on investment costs" (p.11f). In the same way the development of capacities and skills in various fields is also crucial for human development to value all ranges of skills; artistic, intellectual and economic. Furthermore, Singh (2001) adds: "It is in the common interest for societies to be able to draw on a comprehensive spread of capacities" (p.12) for economic and social well-being. These three purposes all contribute to the last purpose identified by Singh (2001) for HE to function as "critic and conscience of society" (p.12). Giving value to various fields and skills will contribute to an informed public debate. This can feed the formation of a vivid public sphere as the basis of democracy (Singh, 2001). Additionally, the spread and accessibility of knowledge is important here. Making diverse and critical knowledge accessible will make it possible for citizens, experts and non-experts alike, to reflect more balanced on policies and other societal developments, and to also engage more actively with politics.

In the following three sections, I will refer back to the described expectations of HE as a contributor to the public good. Special attention will be given to the social purposes, as identified by Singh (2001) that have been neglected in policy debates around HE.

Finances

The financing of universities serves as an indicator to research the extent to which universities are still a publicly provided good. The sources and types of funding also have different implications for the governance of universities. These changes will also shortly be discussed and related to the previous theoretical chapter. This section will mainly be based on two reports; one by Jongbloed (2010) for the European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities, and another one by Estermann and Nokkala (2009) for the European University Association. Both papers base their findings on relevant statistical evidence and are written for official institutions which justifies the reliance on them as the main sources.

Funding

The overall funding of tertiary education, public and private, as a percentage of GDP, has increased across the globe in the past decades (Kärkkäinen, 2006; OECD, 2015). However, money has become a major issue in public higher education, as enrolment increases while public funding stagnates (Orr, 1997). Since the 1990s, public funding per student is declining (Kärkkäinen, 2006). The gap is filled by private funding.

In the US, the UK, Japan and Australia private funding makes up more than 50 per cent of the total, while in the majority of the OECD countries public funding remains above 60 per cent (OECD, 2015). However, from 1995 to 2004 the proportion of private funding has increased in 16 of the OECD countries (Santiago et al, 2008). Private funding comes from households and other private entities, mostly corporations (Kärkkäinen, 2006). Also in Europe the funding by private firms is increasing, especially in the form of research grants. Policy makers and university officials stress the need of the university to form stronger alliances with corporations for funding and collaboration (OECD, 2003). Behind this lies the idea to be more competitive in the global knowledge economy by working together with leading firms. The funding by households comes in the form of tuition fees. In ¾ of Europe, there are still either no or low (below 500€) tuition fees (Jongbloed, 2010), compared to the US, Canada and the UK where tuition levels lie at several thousand and ten thousand dollars per year.

Financial Autonomy

Budgeting is almost necessarily related to governance, as funding is a means to an end. The funder expects certain outcomes and monitors whether the institution is achieving those (Jongbloed, 2010). Government regulations and funding shape the degree of freedom and the autonomy of universities.

A matter characterized by direct government regulation is the level of tuition fees. There are three ways in which the matter is handled: tuition is set by the institution, in cooperation with the government, or determined by the government (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009). In more than half of Europe, the government determines the level of tuition (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009). In the UK, and the US, it is up to the institutions themselves. The government sets the framework of institutions, and in most countries remains strong in limiting the autonomy of universities in this matter.

However, when looking at the two other forms of funding apart from tuition, namely by governments and by private corporations, it becomes clear that the government takes a different role here. Even though, governments are still the main funder of HE in the majority of the OECD-countries, there is a trend towards public services run as businesses (Jongbloed, 2015). This approach has been labelled New Public Management (NPM), a model that sees a smaller role for government regulations (De Boer et al, 2007). This resonates the neoliberal ideals of the benevolence of the free market and least possible state interference in the economy (Chapter 1, p.3). The NPM approach is characterized by "instruments, rationales and changes that stress 'value for money', the introduction of (quasi) market conditions and, most importantly, the implementation of 'management by objectives'" (Jongbloed, 2010, p.13). Funding is one of these instruments that are used to stress efficient and goal oriented management.

Scholars differentiate between block-grant and line-item budget. The former refers to a lump-sum that the universities can allocate themselves, the latter to a pre-allocated sum to certain departments, tasks or other purposes (Jongbloed, 2010). There is a tendency towards public funding via block grants. So, the government exercises little influence on where the money is spent. However, it has become common to attach performance criteria to the allocation of funds. The university has the autonomy on where to spend the money, so that the performance goals can be achieved. While public funding partly depends on input-related parameters (like new enrolments), performance-based criteria (like the number of degrees or credits awarded) are increasingly used by governments to ensure the efficient use of resources (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009).

> "One of the more pronounced trends in tertiary education around the world over the past decade or more: the shift to allocation mechanisms that are more performance-based. This shift can take several forms including setting aside a portion of funds to be paid on a performance basis; establishing performance contracts between government and institutions; creating competitive funds to stimulate greater innovation, higher quality, and improved management of institutions; and implementing processes in which institutions are paid on the basis of results, not inputs." (Santiago et al, 2008, p.197)

Checking whether universities are fulfilling their tasks properly is important in order to improve operations and be accountable to the public and the government. However, the performance indicators are increasingly quantitative and relate to economic efficiency. Theses parameters neglect the social purposes of education almost entirely. I will go into detail about this method of measurement in the next section.

The funding of research is harder to grasp, as it occurs in many different forms; corporate funding, public funding, funding by research institutes. Public funding of research is increasingly allocated via intermediary state bodies that base funding on competitive research proposals (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009). As explained in the quote above, the aim is to enhance innovation and quality of research by competition. By actively triggering competition in research, another idea of neoliberalism has found its way into reality, namely that competition between suppliers leads to efficiency, high quality and innovation in a sector (Jongbloed, 2003; Chapter 1). These competitive grant schemes are increasing rapidly, compared to direct research funding (Jongbloed, 2010). How this has changed the role of the state is illustrated well in the following quote:

> "The presence and scope of various intermediary bodies in the funding structure of a national higher education system reflects how the role of the state has evolved and to what extent it has delegated responsibilities to such bodies in a model that privileges indirect steering rather than direct intervention." (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009, p.20)

The government is providing the context for competitive research by delegating research funding to external actors. Especially in research, funds come increasingly from corporations who look for a commercial potential in research and innovation. This leaves non-commercial research lagging behind. In the section "Access" (p.27) this topic will be elaborated in relation to commodification and discussed with regard to the social purposes of HE.

Apart from funding, financial autonomy is also related to the universities ability to borrow money on the financial markets, to invest in financial products, to issue shares and bonds and to own the land and buildings they occupy (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009). However, the relevance of these aspects to this thesis, and the scope of it, do not allow me to go into detail here.

Concluding Remarks

Funding from private sources is growing across the globe. At the same time funds are less restricted by the state, hence giving the university administration the autonomy to decide its distribution. Institutions are given more financial autonomy and the state's role is increasingly the one of creating favorable market conditions, characteristic for neoliberalism. This is more specifically a form of marketization, as the government changes the legal context for institutions to enable them to be more market-orientated. Public funds are increasingly output-based, highlighting economic efficiency. Here corporatization occurs as business and market strategies are incorporated into management. In terms of the social purposes of HE this means that the focus is put on achieving efficiency and outputs that can be measured. This can cause a loss of focus regarding the social purposes of HE that are harder to measure. I will go into depth in the following section. While in Europe tuition fees are still low, the HE in Anglo-Saxon countries has shifted big financial burdens to students. In that case, the social purposes of HE to enhance access to knowledge and equalize life chances, is not recognized.

Organization

As the result of decreased funding and the encouragement by governments to adopt entrepreneurial strategies in order to stay competitive in the knowledge economy, the management of universities has started to become shaped by the ideas of the market. In the following I will show which neoliberal practices have found their way into universities' management and how this highlights the economic, but neglects the social contribution of HE to the public good.

Governance Structures

In an OECD paper on the "Changing Patterns of Governance in Higher Education" from 2003, the authors acknowledge a change of institutional governance. The traditional form of governance was "collegial and consultative in nature, with large and broadly representative bodies and forums open to all academic members of the university" (OECD, 2003, p.71). What roughly started at the end of the 1990s, was 1) the strengthening of power of the executive bodies within the university, and 2) an increased participation of representatives and individuals from outside the university on governing or supervisory bodies (OECD, 2003).

> "Key common elements have been a transfer of power to the Rector, Vice-Chancellor and other leading administrative figures, and a loss of authority and decision-making power on the part of traditional participatory and collegial bodies. […] Reinforcing the general loss of faculty power, the increased weighting of "external constituencies" and outside interests has contributed to the strength of executive authorities "(OECD, 2003, p.71f).

As shown in the previous section, institutional autonomy has increased, while the government raised its accountability measures. Institutions need to demonstrate their efficiency and effectiveness (OECD, 2003). This is a pressure that has resulted in the strengthening of executive boards which can help to strategically and effectively run the institution. Managerial expertise is a steadily more recognized characteristic of university leaders, meaning executive board members. Important to mention here is also the trend to appoint executive leaders, instead of electing them by the university (OECD, 2003). Including external representatives with commercial experience in the governances of HE has among other things the aim to strengthen the links to the economy and improve internal management according to efficiency principles (OECD, 2003).

The pressures to maximize universities' operations are a manifestation of the neoliberal ideology. An effect has been that the power of executive board's increases and collective decision-making decreases, not guaranteeing students' and faculties' interests. This and the trend of appointing authorities has caused a formation of hierarchies within institutions. Though the governments determine the context, it is unclear whether the institutions run in the interest of the public because the autonomy of executive boards and the involvement of external actors grows.

Corporatization

Efficiency-thinking, and rationalization are market principles of neoliberalism that have been introduced in the global HE sector. They make up a major part of the organizational structure of universities, as will become clear below. Competition among universities is increasing. They compete for national and international students, academic staff and funding (Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009). In the neoliberal context, market competition is desirable by driving businesses to their best practices. While it is not clear, whether universities adopt to the competitive market because they see it as a chance to advance their operations or because they are forced to in order to keep up their operations, it is clear that universities strive to be more competitive and have implemented measures to ensure that. Firstly, we see a drive towards more efficient practices, which goes almost naturally together with rationalization. Secondly, we see increased efforts of branding and reputation management.

Efficiency-thinking

In the private sector, increasing efficiency is a continuous topic, springing from the need to stay competitive in the market (Universities UK, 2011). It is a practice of neoliberalism needed for the working of the market. As HE is faced by reduced funding by governments and competes for enrolment and funding, universities have felt the pressure to economically optimize their operations for some time. Efficiency refers to the process in which inputs in production are converted to outputs (Horta et al, 2013). Hence, as described earlier, the measuring of weighting inputs against outputs and performance is crucial in order to increase efficiency. Efficiency is very much related to finances, but plays out on many different levels. Important to note, efficiency is often measured in numeric terms, meaning their indicators are expressed in amounts or monetary value. The limits of this approach will be examined in the following section.

Efficiency thinking is favorable for institutions in order to be able to offer more services with less money. In the UK for example universities saved over 1.4 billion pounds between 2005 and 2011 by changing their operations, including e.g. sharing heat and power plants and working together on procurement (Brink and Jackson, 2013). This money saved on costs can then be used to offer more services for students. However, costs are not only tried to be saved in these technical areas like electricity and real estate. In the US, Canada and the UK, the drive towards efficiency has resulted in the implementation of flexible employment conditions. Part-timer workers, contract faculty and less permanent teaching positions are growing (Mills, 2012). Costs here are saved, as part-time and contract faculty often receive less benefits, e.g. of pension and health care. The university is not bound to the teachers of those positions and can hence hire them on a for-need basis and even for-course basis. Countries and universities differ greatly in how they implement practices to enhance efficiency. It would also be interesting to look at the student-faculty ratio over the years and whether class sizes have increased. This would be a clear sign of efficiency-thinking which has implications for teachers and students. Unfortunately I could not find data on the matter.

Distance learning and e-learning display another manifestation of efficiency thinking. They are a flexible and cost-effective alternative towards traditional teaching. In the OECD report "Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Economy" Santiago et al (2008) report that the modes of teaching have been diversified. Through e-learning there are less contact hours, hence less time teachers need to spend on the course. So, more students are taught in a smaller time frame. Santiago et al (2008) argue that this has increased access to education for a wider range of students. This argument is not specified, but probably refers to populations that can now study from home and/or part-time. This extends the access of HE and can be seen to contribute to a socially just society. However, the quality of e-learning is not guaranteed, as there is no physical human interaction.

Audit culture and rationalization

Audit culture can be described as the increased appliance of measurement and evaluation techniques to assess the performance of public institutions and employees (Apple, 2015). It goes hand in hand with the process of rationalization, which means to introduce efficiency, predictability, and quantification and control into operations, actions and outcomes. It also includes the idea of calculability; the belief that the quality of these operations can be captured by using quantitative indicators (Ritzer, 1998).

Universities increasingly have to develop indicators of output and performance. As Spooner (2015) writes, this has led to "reducing research to publications, and publications to refereed journals, and refereed journals to their impact factors". So, the value of research is here measured in its ability to score the highest refereed journals. Socially engaged activities, like teaching, are harder to measure. In the Netherlands quantified indicators like "number of students, enrolments and drop-outs, employment rates of graduates, staff numbers, sick leave, number of publications, dissertations, research capacity, and financial balance sheets" serve as means of evaluation (De Boer et al, 2007, p.41). Complex processes are reduced to simple economic indicators. Whether teaching and research contribute to human and/or cultural development, which according to Singh (2001) is one of HE's social purposes, cannot be captured or expressed in numbers. When teachers have to do both, teaching and research, research is often valued higher, in audit terms, which creates a tension that can outweigh teaching activities.

> "[…] with audit culture's narrow benchmarks and retrograde understandings of what counts as real research, there is little breathing room in the academy for public engagement, community-based research, and Indigenous forms of knowing, since these methodologies can't be easily captured in the audit forms. Indeed, academics are driven away from socially engaged scholarly activities in part because they are more difficult to measure, assess, and judge." (Spooner, 2015)

This rationality is characteristic of neoliberalism. Social domains start to become governed by economic principles of efficiency, profit maximization and rational economic choices (Chapter 1, p.4). The neoliberal belief in rationality has become a governmentality, a practice, in universities' administration, as measurements are being implemented. One manifestation of rationalization are processes like the “Program Prioritization Process” at the University of Guelph in Canada that aim at prioritizing certain services or courses over others. The process assessed programs in an economic manner with the aim of cutting less profitable programs and courses. Parking generates revenue for the university and was considered more important than the keeping of a course. In Guelph, smaller programs like for example Feminist Theory or Organic Agriculture, were highly disadvantaged and cut in 2009 (Macleans, 2009), as they generated less enrolment than other courses.

Referring back to the social purposes of higher education, prioritizing higher income generating courses or services, can threaten the existence and value of certain learning and research fields. Disciplines like social sciences and humanities are often more under attack (Wijnberg, 2014), also because their outcomes are more difficult to measure. It is mainly in these disciplines that programs and courses can challenge corporate culture and politics. By doing that, these courses can contribute to the development of a conscious and critical society. When their value cannot be recognized by numeric indicators and they start to vanish, the ability of HE to contribute to a vivid public sphere is threatened. When success in these measurements is however awarded, they can be expected to increasingly shape the priorities of university management, students and teachers. The value of HE is measured through these quantitative indicators and this shapes the thinking and actions of everyone evolved.

Branding and reputation

Universities increasingly engage in branding, strategic communication and reputation management .This includes the formulation of visions and values, as well as the design of logos (Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009). Slogans like “For quality of life” (Wageningen University), “changing lives, improving lives” (University of Guelph) are formulated, to make institutions more attractive to future students. In the English-speaking countries a mascot is part of a university’s identity. Logos are displayed on campuses. A distinct identity for each university is created which can differentiate them from others and can give them an advantage in the global market of HE. The following quote, taken from the official website of the University of Washington – “Be boundless” - illustrates the way in which universities try to market themselves:

> "So what defines us — the students, faculty and community members at the University of Washington? Above all, it's our belief in possibility and our unshakable optimism. It's a connection to others, both near and far. It's a hunger that pushes us to tackle challenges and pursue progress. It's the conviction that together we can create a world of good. Join us on the journey." (University of Washington, 2015)

By this quote the University of Washington creates a specific identity for itself that is aimed at appealing to future students and staff. The university becomes a brand that is actively chosen by consumers. The efforts to brand and market products is a characteristic of private enterprises that has been adopted by universities across the globe. Corporatization is at play here, as the university is adopting business practices. The aim of this corporatization is to be competitive in the HE market. This resonates the neoliberal thought to free the market and increase competition in order to achieve best practices of the suppliers of goods. Furthermore, institutions try to establish a good international reputation by taking part in rankings. Rankings are also one of the manifestations of audit culture aiming to express a university's performance in numbers (see "Audit culture and rationalization", p.9f). A quote by Hazelkorn (2015) reveals how important rankings of universities have become:

> "Rankings are a manifestation of what has become known as the world-wide 'battle for excellence', and are perceived and used to determine the status of individual institutions, assess the quality and performance of the higher education system and gauge global competitiveness. Internationalization has become a priority for both government and higher education, the talent-catching and knowledge-producing capacity of higher education has become a vital sign of a country's capacity to participate in world science and the global economy (p.1f)."

Internationally, universities strive for excellence, for becoming better than other universities, for creating the newest technology the fastest. Having a degree from this university is better than from that one. As the economist quoted Phil Baty: "[students] want to be sure that they have got a big global brand on their certificate that's going to be a passport to their future" (The Economist, 2015b).

Concluding Remarks

The underfunding of public services is characteristic of the neoliberal market organization. In the context of decreased government funding for universities, institutions have turned to corporatization, a process within neoliberalism. Being competitive in the higher education market has become a major goal of universities, and to be competitive, practices from the private sector have been adopted, namely efficiency thinking, audit culture and branding. Applying cost-benefit analysis and quantification measurements in HE is difficult, as it includes complex behavioral and social tasks that cannot be captured in numbers. This devalues certain skills and fields of study. This is accelerated by the specialization of institutions. Branding and rankings are ever more important and lead universities towards a specific identity, and towards specialization. The danger in this is that, referring back to Singh's (2001) social purposes of HE, other disciplines might be neglected on that path, and HE thus does not pursue the insights to a variety of academic fields.

Access

Access plays an important role in the consideration of HE as a public good. Public goods are characterized by open access and can by that contribute to an equal society. The neoliberal influences on universities however, show a drive towards privatization and commodification of knowledge on the one hand, and education on the other, as I will show in the following.

Knowledge

Universities are producers of knowledge via research. As Orr already reported in 1997, this newly produced knowledge is also used for commercial purposes (Orr, 1997). This is a manifestation of commodification, a neoliberal process through which something is made a product that can be sold for profit (Leys and Harris-White, 2012; Chapter 1, p.10f). It resonates the neoliberal theory which sees goods that are provided for free and not via the market as inefficient. As a public good, knowledge would be freely available. At universities, the commodification of knowledge knows several manifestations. It means that universities are paid to do research for a corporation. It is seen as advantageous by many policy-makers, generating applied research with direct impact. Fundamental research in contrast is often rather abstract and done with the goal of producing knowledge. Combining industry, governments and universities' professional is praised by policy-makers and scholars who are in favor of the business-like university (Jongbloed, 2003). They argue that it is a necessary step in order to be competitive in the global knowledge economy. Gibbons (1998) warns: “If universities don't take on this new role, they are going to be marginalized because other knowledge producers will emerge to meet the demand for what is required” (p.58). Collaboration between universities and businesses is expected to enhance fast innovation which will benefit society as a whole. A market of knowledge has developed, that needs to be freed from state regulation and opened up for businesses, as neoliberalism intends (Chapter 1, p.9).

However, with the merging of corporations and the university, threats to research agendas and the dissemination of knowledge and innovation are posed (Orr, 1997). As government funding stagnates, corporate research has an advantage towards fundamental research. This implies that corporations evermore shape the research agendas of universities in the direction of commercial value. Research areas that are not attractive for corporate funding compete severely for public resources. As a result, there is less possibility for fundamental research and there is more knowledge produced in the interest of businesses. Regarding the social purposes of HE, this limits the insight to various fields of study, and disadvantages non-commercial fields. A balanced cultural and human development is not aspired, when research and knowledge are driven towards certain economic interests.

Commodification then also goes a step further. The knowledge produced for corporations can and has been privatized by means of proprietary rights (Orr, 1997). In that case, the new knowledge or innovation is owned by the corporation in whose hands it is to decide to what purpose it will be put. Corporations can decide to keep the information private or to offer the innovation for a fee, instead of making it freely available. This way of knowledge production shows the tension between the public good and neoliberalism. As a public good, the commercial production of knowledge causes inequality in access. This means that the social purpose of HE to contribute to a just society is not acknowledged, as businesses own newly produced knowledge and decide to what purposes to put it. The neoliberal argument for privatizing and commodifying goods is that it will enhance competition in the market and increase economic growth. Furthermore, in the neoliberal theory, consumers are seen to be rational economic actors (Chapter 1, p.10) that shape demand in the market, which then shapes supply by businesses, and hence leads to an efficient supply. However, if one connects this to the market of knowledge, the argument loses its logic. Demand for cultural, social, ethnical knowledge will not be reflected in the market for knowledge, as it does not produce goods or innovations of monetary value. Market demand is however measured in economic terms. So, the interests that will be reflected in the global market of knowledge will increasingly be the ones of rich research institutes and corporations, while non-commercial knowledge is missing.

The social purpose of education, by name the pursuit of knowledge in various fields, basic and applied, without the necessity to produce immediate relevant or monetary value (Singh, 2001), is threatened by the developments described above. When all knowledge was to be produced for impact or on behalf of corporations, we would be researching in pre-determined directions, missing a ton of knowledge in other directions and missing knowledge that has no commercial value. Exactly that becomes a danger by attaching more value to commercial and applied research. What I have sketched above constitutes a problematic development for academics and society as a whole. When money comes to shape research, in whose interest will knowledge be produced and who will it benefit?

Education

It is not only access to newly produced knowledge, but also access to the university that is of relevance when looking at HE as a public good. When the neoliberal model of HE started to develop in the US in the 19th century, the main goal was to educate a high-knowledgeable work force. HE was spreading from the elite to the masses, with a peak in enrolment in 1944. Europe followed the trend in the 1960s (The Economist, 2015a). Many more people are going to university than 50 years ago. In 2004, 132 million students were enrolled globally, compared to 68 million in 1991 (Santiago et al, 2008). So, access has been enhanced greatly, which is in line with the idea of a public good being non-excludable (Chapter 1, p.7f) and the social purpose of HE to equalize life chances.

However, in many countries HE has, over the past 30 years, become very costly for students causing a limitation of access. As Saunders (2010) explains, there was always some kind of share students had to pay for their education. However, with study costs of an average of 20 000 dollars per year in 2014/2015 in the US (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013), students are seen to have become consumers of HE. While tuition fees are high in countries like the UK, Canada, the US and Japan, studying is also costly in countries where there is no tuition. Students need to pay their living costs, books and administration fees. For that matter all countries have a student loan system by the government in place. This also makes student debt a global phenomenon. The conditions of the loans are most of the time relatively good compared to the ones at private banks. The loan systems show that HE is seen to offer private benefits, among public benefits, the individual needs to bear the costs for. It is ever more promoted as a personal investment in the future and as job training in order to get a good job, so that their debt can eventually be paid off (Saunders, 2010). In our age, obtaining HE is often seen as a necessary step to succeed in the job market later (The Economist, 2015a). Referring to the social purposes of HE, this changes the way we perceive and look at education. Individual learning and the achievement of credentials become a major goal of students, which in cases threatens the intrinsic idea of simply learning to *learn*. There is less room for exploring knowledge, being creative and doing things out of pure interest. "This new focus leads to an increased attention on personal achievement at the expense of care and attention towards the learning and development of fellow students and general campus environment" (Saunders, 2010, p.63). This endangers the social purposes of HE as identified by Singh (2001). When HE, also by students, comes to be viewed in monetary terms, as it will give them a well-paid job later, the social purposes of exploring knowledge without expecting any returns, fade into the background. Cultural, human and community development are threatened by individualism, credential and job competition.

High tuition fees can be expected to generate less enrolment from people of disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, even though there are not many studies about this. In many countries there are financial programs and scholarships to trigger their enrolment. However, generally enhancing access and striving for equal accessibility is not very high on the agenda of governments and universities. In neoliberalism, humans are seen as homo-oeconomici, who will rationally make the decision to study or not to study by cost-benefit analysis. This is often promoted as a freedom of choice for individuals. However, as described in Chapter one, this idea distracts from the fact that there is structural inequality in the majority of the Western countries. People and students have different starting points, different possibilities to receive an education, to take on loans. When this is not recognized by politics, also public institutions like the university, become exclusive.

So, while many more people go to university than 50 years ago, the access in the English speaking world is increasingly limited by high tuition fees. In other countries, most European countries, access is still quite open, with moderate tuition fees. However generally, the costs of studying that individuals need to bear, promote HE as a personal investment and benefit. This moves HE further away from being a public good that is seen to also offer societal benefits. The neoliberal ideology has come to influence the thinking of students who start to view HE as individual job preparation, in monetary terms of future income.

Conclusion

This chapter's aim was to find out in which ways neoliberalism influences HE as a public good on a broader scale. Neoliberal practices have found their way into university management in different contexts. Thought it takes very different degrees and shapes of neoliberalization in each context and one cannot generalize the findings to every context, I demonstrated that there is a trend of neoliberalism in HE which moves HE away from being a public good. Firstly, this is due to the increased financing of third parties and decreased funding by governments. Practicing marketization, governments exercise less influence on the institutions giving them more freedom in their operations in order to compete in the global knowledge economy. Secondly, the organization of universities marks a focus on efficiency-thinking and competition, with practices taken from the business sector to achieve these goals. Thirdly, the access to knowledge, as well as to higher education institutions has been limited by attaching commercial value to HE and the knowledge produced through research. These developments clash with the idea of a public good that is accessible for everyone, provided for free and organized by the government. The recent policy discourse approaches HE as a tool to enhance a country's position in the economy. The business like development of the university can fulfill this role. However, as mentioned in chapter one and the first section of this chapter, public goods are also expected to contribute to society in a non-economic way. The social purposes of HE, as identified by Singh (2001), are however not fulfilled in the context of neoliberalism. The processes of corporatization and commodification highlight the commercial aspect of HE and shape the academic agenda. Valuing profitable fields of study more than others puts certain economic interests first. This can cause, and in several cases has already caused, a limited insight to education and research fields.

Without the insights to a variety of fields, and without making knowledge freely accessible, a vivid public sphere cannot develop.

Chapter 3. Case: The University of Amsterdam

As shown in chapter two, in different places across the globe neoliberal practices have found their way into higher education's (HE) finances, organization, access and the expected contribution to the public good. As a student in the Netherlands for more than three years, I have directly experienced changes in policy and management of my university, the largest one probably being the introduction of the "leenstelsel" and the cease of the "studiefinancering". Before the "leenstelsel" all students got monthly monetary support from the Dutch government. Now, all grants were made into loans. At the same time, in all three years, my tuition has increased with around 100 Euros each year. Students now pay 2000 Euros a year. My own experiences caused me to be specifically interested in the way Dutch HE is developing. While chapter two put the neoliberal HE development beyond national borders, analyzing the case of Amsterdam, will now show concretely how profit-based thinking and other neoliberal principles work on a smaller scale, closer to the daily lives of students and teachers, and how these influences compromise HE as a public good at one particular institution.

The structure of this chapter differs to the previous one in that it does not discuss the developments in the sub-sections of finances, organization and access. It is first necessary to look at the contextual development of HE in the Netherlands because neoliberalism plays on a national level. Complementing to that, the vision of the Dutch government will be analyzed in order to show its role in the development of universities via national policies. Lastly, taking up on the issues The New University Movement has raised, this chapter will pick out the topics democracy, transparency and *rendementsdenken* – thinking in terms of profit – as part of the organization of HE, and show how neoliberalism endangers HE as a public good.

Higher Education Development in the Netherlands

For 20 years, the student population in the Netherlands has been growing, while universities' budgets have not increased along with that growth (ReThink UvA, 2015b). At universities, only in two years, from 2010 to 2012, public funding per student decreased from 39.8 to 33.5 per cent of GDP per capita (The World Bank, 2015). This means that especially the financial management of universities has become increasingly important to keep up the institutions' operations. A way of bringing in more funding is to go to external actors. This is also a development characteristic of the past 20 years. The government has supported this way of financing by abandoning the limitation of funding from third parties and granting universities independent borrowing powers (De Boer et al, 2007). From 1992-2003 total revenues from activities with third parties increased from 548 to 1257 million Euros (De Boer et al, 2007). As universities increasingly turn to external funding and raise tuition fees, HE’s financing becomes less public, while still most funding comes from the government. The development of Dutch universities has to be seen in a context of financial hardship, which has been going on for some years.

However, there is much more to the neoliberal processes than numbers. De Boer et al (2007) identified three broader neoliberal processes that are have influenced the organization of Dutch universities, namely the construction of hierarchy, identity and rationality.

The governance structures of universities are characterized by more autonomy of the institutions and especially of executive boards, as shown in chapter two (Chapter 2, p.21). In the Netherlands, until the mid-1980s “state bureaucrats and disciplinary-based chairs together ran the system” (De Boer and Goedegebuure, 2007, p.46), and the executive board of universities had little influence. Now, the government has taken a “steering from a distance” approach (De Boer and Goedegebuure, 2007), not directly controlling the operations of the university. The government sets goals and monitors the achievement. However the question of *how* the institutions achieve these goals, is up to them. Universities, and especially executive boards, have hence been granted much more autonomy than in the past (De Boer and Goedegebuure, 2007). According to De Boer and Goedegebuure (2007) this has caused a “democratic deficit” (p.50): “’institutions that are granted more autonomy and capabilities lack the representative channels to ensure electoral input and accountability’ (Pierre & Peters, 2000, p.116)” (p.50). Additionally, within universities there has been a shift from “horizontal to vertical decision-making” (De Boer et al, 2007, p.39), manifested inter alia in the appointment of all members of important governing bodies by a supervisory body. “[…] A new hierarchical management system based on appointments replaced the old, democratic arrangements” (De Boer 2003, p.256).

Regarding audit culture and rationality, monitoring and measurements have become important also in the Netherlands in order to increase the accountability of the more autonomous institutions. Teaching and research performances are measured in quantified indicators, like number of publications and employment rates of graduates, and used for making evaluations and eventually decisions about courses and staff (De Boer et al, 2007). Under identity construction de Boer et al (2007) grasp the construction of the institutions own boundaries, which asks autonomy in operations. In the Dutch case the authors see the institutions' ability to construct their own boundaries as mixed, as tuition fees and admission procedures are for example still the government's matter, while financial discretion, specialization, and excellence programs have become universities' matters (De Boer et al, 2007).

The path Dutch universities are on, as sketched above, has not proceeded without notice. Scholars have formed networks and organizations that challenge the development of Dutch universities. One initiative is for example *Science in Transistion*. It's an organization of mainly Dutch scholars, teachers and researchers that call for a change of the academic system (Science in Transition, 2013). They argue that researchers have become economically dependent on their publications. Academic success is recently triggered by the number of publications, not by societal relevance of a research. The group calls for transformation of this kind of university and a greater say of community members in the development of science agendas (Science in Transition, 2013).

Another initiative, formed in 2013, is the *Platform for the Reform of Dutch Universities* (H.NU). The platform was launched by academics from all Dutch universities and aims to connect everyone that feels discontent with the way the university works (HNU, 2015). In their manifest, one sees the developments identified by De Boer et al (2007) return as perceived dissatisfactions: quantitative measurement, commodification, hierarchy and bureaucratization (HNU, 2015). The platform calls for more participation of students and all staff, and an end to output funding and more space for fundamental and applied research, but in society's interest rather than in the economic interest (HNU, 2015).

To conclude, the developments of HE in a broader context, as shown in chapter two, are reflected in the HE development in the Netherlands. Namely, the organization of Dutch universities is characterized by more autonomy, hierarchy and rationality. The two initiatives *H.NU* and

Sciences in Transition are two examples of how the changes of the Dutch higher education system have been perceived. It shows that there is and has been discontent with the development for a few years. Before I go into detail of the situation in Amsterdam, I will take a look at the government's view and policy on higher education to find out what their role in the recent developments of universities is. It will then be possible to see in which way the government's vision has come into practice at the UvA, and in which way these practices and visions contradict the ones of The New University Amsterdam.

The Role of the Government

In a law proposal formulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the year 2015/2016, the vision of Dutch government regarding HE becomes clear. The strategic plan sketched out in the report, was accepted by the cabinet in 2013 (Eerste Kamer, 2013). The following in based on this report called "Kwaliteit in Verscheidenheid" – Quality in Diversity- from 2011.

Competition is the driver for the restructuring plan. The Netherlands, according to the strategic plan, generally have to enhance their position in the international market. Education and research are seen as important means to achieve that goal. They praise the golden triangle (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2011, p.7), consisting of the government, the university and businesses. Words like *excellence*, *world-class*, *top-talent* are voiced continuously throughout the paper. It's not surprising, the title of the paper reads "Together to the top". Excellence is needed to enhance the international position of Dutch universities, and thus the overall economic position of the Netherlands. As recognized by De Boer et al (2007) universities are encouraged by the government to establish distinct profiles and excellence.

> "The Netherlands wants to rank among the top knowledge economies. This requires a broad base of high-quality higher education and research and strong research focus areas. The government wants to bring about a strong connection between economic policy for the top

sectors and policy for higher education and research" (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2011, p.7)[1].

Concretely, the plan presents a number of changes the ministry sees as necessary to make the Dutch HE system "toekomstbestendig", future-proof. The definition of 'future-proof' refers to the improving of the position of the Netherlands in the knowledge economy. Economic, social or environmental dimensions of sustainability, which are generally considered to be important for the future, are not included. The ministry identifies four broad changes that are needed, as found on page 13:

1. A stricter study climate: raise the bar for students, more intensive education, more selection and a larger financial contribution by students; quality of education above quantity of students

2. A restructuring of the study program offers, more profiling and more differentiation: gearing education to the differences in the talent and abilities of students and the needs of the labor market; reduction of the fragmented range of programs

3. Cooperation in the knowledge chains of fundamental research, practice-orientated research, applied research, and innovation; network organizations with collective, public-private knowledge accumulation instead of individual fragmented expertise; in that way achieve a better use of research

4. Profiling and specialization of institutions; strengthening the focus of research; rewarding quality and profile in the funding of universities and colleges. This includes so called "prestatieafspraken", performance agreements.

According to the strategic plan, to increase quality, profiling and value, the amount of study programs needs to be reduced, the relevance of program offers for the labor market needs to be increased, and the focus formation in research and the impact of research need to be increased.
These four steps above show some of the neoliberal characteristics, as described in the two previous chapters. Increasing selection among students and shifting more of the financial burden to them, shows a process of limiting accessibility, hence in that matter moving HE further away

[1] Taken from the English version of the government document "Kwaliteit in Verscheidenheid" called "Quality in Diversity".

from being a public good. Specialization and profiling relate to the forming of an identity. Universities try to create a unique identity to have an advantage in the competitive HE market. The steps of the strategic plan show that the government is encouraging these steps. Calling for more relevance of HE for the labor market shifts the focus of a university education towards the market. Research is also called upon to become more impact focused and useful for the market. The market is in the center here, as it is in neoliberalism. Learning for the sake of learning and cultural and social development, recognized by Singh (2001) as important tasks of higher education, are not a priority here.

It is stated by the government that these steps are needed to increase performance and quality of HE. The aim is to make Dutch Universities excellent in order to enhance their position in the global knowledge economy. However, no one is talking about how quality and performance are defined or measured. As mentioned in the previous chapter, quantitative economic indicators cannot capture social, cultural and democratic value (Chapter two, p.11). So quality is defined in an incomplete manner. Differentiation and specialization achievements generate more public funding for universities. Though, from a social point of view these processes limit educational insights and can hence not contribute to a critical public sphere, as certain disciplines are not taught anymore. In neoliberalism the state is an important entity in providing the right context, the competitive environment, for the market. The process in which governments provide this favorable legal context is called marketization. The Dutch government has partly taken on this role. It still has lots of influence on the HE sector, while these influences are often modelled according to neoliberal market principles.

In Amsterdam the changes the government foresees have found its way into practice, but not unnoticed by students and staff.

The University of Amsterdam: Organization

As was shown in the previous section, the Dutch government sets the goals for the individual universities, which especially include performance agreements for funding and practices of profiling. *Sciences in Transition* and the *H.NU platform* both highlight the problems with this profit-like thinking that comes to determine research and education, as shown in the first section of this chapter. However, neither of the two initiatives were able to gain the momentum and size of this year's students and staff protests at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). The Maagdenhuis occupation in Amsterdam showed that the developments identified by De Boer et al (2007) are real.

In the beginning of this year, the large protests and occupation of first the *Bungehuis* and then the administrative building – the Maagdenhuis- by students and staff, was all over the news. The Maagdenhuis, where the executive board sits, was taken over and transformed into a creative space for discussion, debate, alternative programming and living (Alinejad, 2015). Students formed the organization “The New University” which stands for a critical university and society (New Uni, 2015). They demand democracy in decision-making, transparency, especially regarding finances, and an end to “rendementsdenken” - thinking in terms of profit (Anderson, 2015). The staff organized under “ReThink UvA”, supporting and complementing the New University's demands. What can be seen as a trigger of the movement, was the restructuring plan of the faculty of the humanities, through which individual studies disappear and merge into a liberal arts college (Visser, 2015). The plan was rejected by students and staff alike, while the executive board continued its enforcement. After the large mobilizations many other “The New University” groups have been found throughout the Netherlands; in Nijmegen, Delft, Groningen, Leiden and other cities (New Uni, 2015). This again shows that the concerns in Amsterdam are a national concern.

In the following I will illuminate the developments at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) using the theoretical components of neoliberalism and the public good as discussed in Chapter one. The categories finances, organization and access from chapter two partly return. The New University specifically highlighted the topics democracy, transparency and *rendementsdenken*. These topics relate to the organization of HE; the former as part of corporatization and the latter as part of the governance structures, as discussed in chapter two. I will focus on these issues, and then discuss “The New University’s” perception, while relating it to the expectations of HE as a contributor to the public benefit. During the analysis, I will also refer to national policies that affect the individual institution.

Democracy

The New University and ReThink have raised concerns about the decision-making structures at the UvA. As a public good, higher education would be shaped by the active debate of the public, triggered within the university. In the following I will give two examples of how the say of students and staff was compromised at the UvA. I will then explain the general governance structure at the institution to better understand the concerns about the general decision-making structures and increase the relevance of the two examples.

In December 2013 the central student council and work council (Ondernemingsraad) of the UvA were able to stop the fusion between the beta-faculties of the UvA and the Vrije University of Amsterdam (VU) (Visser, 2015). The plan was to jointly accommodate the two faculties and to together coordinate thematic, operational and financial management (Het Parool, 2014). A few months later, faculty and staff of the UvA received an email by the chair of the executive board, Louise Gunning, stating that the board found another way to go through with the fusion (Visser, 2015).

The fusion of the beta-faculties was not the only time that the executive board of the UvA made use of its autonomy. The happenings that are seen to have led to the formation of the New University Amsterdam, the groups associated with it and eventually the large occupation of the main administrative building of the Uva, the Maagdenhuis, are the restructuring plan of the faculty of humanities. Students and staff did not agree with the plan and were not considered in the decision making (Visser, 2015). The question of who decides these kind of plans emerges. The university policy paper "Governance Model" published by the UvA in December 2014, gives insights to this question. The following information is taken from the policy paper.

The UvA is directed by the Executive Board, which consists of four members: the president, the rector magnificus, rector of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and a vice-president. This board organizes the governance of the university as a whole and holds final responsibility in achieving the goals and complying with the regulations by the government. They also arrange participation in decision-making. The Executive Board is under the supervision of the Supervisory Board, which is appointed by the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences. The Supervisory Board appoints and dismisses the members of the Executive Board. The Executive board then appoints the deans of the faculties. Regarding research the Executive

Board also holds the power to appoint professors and establish chairs, and to allocate funding to the different faculties. While the University Committee on Research operates as an advisory body to the Executive Board in relation to research policy and allocation of resources, the members of the former are again appointed by the latter.

As explained by the UvA in the policy paper (Governance Model, 2014), when making decisions, the Executive Board, usually consults staff and student representative advisory bodies. “These bodies not only have advisory rights on various topics, but in some instances also the right of approval” (p.3). The matters for which other bodies than the Executive Board have approval right are rather broadly than concretely described. In a footnote the matters to which it applies are “the Management and Administration Regulations and the Faculty Regulations, as well as the regulations for various matters referred to in the Teaching and Examination Regulations. It also applies to the design of the quality assurance system” (p.3).

The above analysis of the governance structure at the UvA shows 1) that an appointing culture is present which trickles down from the government appointing the Supervisory Board to the Executive Board appointing deans and professors 2) that student and staff bodies are mainly viewed as advisory bodies whose approval right is not concretely specified and was not used in the restructuring plan of the humanities or the fusion of the beta-faculties, 3) involving the entire student and staff body instead of representative bodies is not intended. The Executive Board has become rather autonomous inside the university. This results in the autonomy of a rather small, appointed group of managers that increasingly determine the course of the institution. They have to comply with the government's vision and goals on higher education, but are granted autonomy in the ways they enforce this vision and achieve these goals. As explained by the faculty board on the UvA website, the governance model of 2014 was different than before:

> “[…]the [governance] model – which nobody in the Faculty, not even us, had any experience of – switched from *bottom up* to *top down*, with the result that the degree programmes and departments lost their sense of autonomy and the intermediate levels – particularly those at programme director level – began to feel being put in a strangle hold” (Van Vree, 2015).

Relating this development to neoliberalism, we see a formation of hierarchy within the Uva that de Boer et al (2007) identified as a national development. Efficiency, as a principle of neoliberalism, is at the roots of the formation of hierarchies. A democracy or even direct democracy with referendi is not efficient, as decision-making processes are lengthy and yield diverse outcomes. It hence costs a lot of effort, while the yields might not be clear. Giving the Executive Board more autonomy and organizing the management top-down, makes it possible to go through with changes faster. With the apparent appointment-structure, it is also ensured that the government vision on HE is enforced, as the main decision body is appointed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences. This way of governance can however come at the expense of broad participation, which has been highlighted by The New University in Amsterdam. A democratic structure is not present in the way the university management works. The board members cannot be elected by the academic community, nor are students and teachers able to approve or disapprove major restructuring plans. Though the parliament has democratic legitimacy via the electorate, as the university becomes more autonomous in the way the government's goals are achieved and the way the Executive Board operates, a democratic deficit emerges, as described by De Boer and Goedegebuure (2007). Evidence for this is the discontent and mobilization of students, staff and citizens about the way the Uva is run. The faculty board wrote: "[…] as a faculty, we have little or no influence whatsoever on some of the events and developments, even though they have had major consequences in recent years" (Van Vree, 2015).

Transparency

Transparency in HE means to make operations and decisions of the university openly accessible for students and teachers. In order to function as "critic and conscience of society" (Singh, 2001, p.12), or in this case be critical and conscience of the development of the Uva, decision-making and information need to be openly accessible. It is a rather difficult issue to research. When looking at the UvA and government website there are many policy documents available. However, whether this reflects the complete picture of the actions of the UvA is not clear.

Transparency is closely related to the governance structure of the UvA, as part of the organization of the institution. The analysis above shows that the decision-making structure is top-down. The executive board has much autonomy and is not accountable to students and teachers in all their decisions. Information sharing during decision making processes might not be seen as useful, when the input of students and teachers has little effect. As formulate by the Humanities Rally "transparency and accountability are only asked from the lower levels" (De Volkskrant, 2015). Transparency the other way around, mainly from departments towards management, is an objective by the executive board. As Teurlings (2015) stresses, this is a kind of neoliberal transparency, as it is based on input and output indicators. The root problem according to him is *rendementsdenken* – thinking in terms of profit (see following section).

The impression that the academic community has in regard to transparency serves as the most important indicator to find out how whether transparency is fulfilled. They are part of the institution and best know whether the executive board communicated their steps openly. Transparency and accountability are one of the major concerns of the activist groups. They argue that there is no transparency in incomes, expenses and the allocation of resources. This makes it hard to have a debate about budget cuts and financial speculation (De Volkskrant, 2015). Public goods are socially constructed by public debate, but their provision cannot be informed by the public, when they cannot access all relevant information. The activist groups demand "openness of financial management, possibility of recall of executive functions, and binding referendums" (Teurlings, 2015). While it is hard to grasp, at least also due to the scope of this thesis, in which exact ways and matters the UvA management lacks transparency, from the experiences of students and staff it can be concluded that it is a serious concern.

Rendementsdenken

The organization of the UvA is characterized by *Rendementsdenken*. The term is used in the Dutch context and can be translated as profit-based thinking (Van Vree, 2015). It refers to the idea that services and goods need to yield/produce something or as put by Anderson (2015): "a rationality characterized by over-zealous concern with profit maximization and efficiency". This coincides with the neoliberal ideal of the internal rule of maximal economy, minimizing costs and maximizing profits (Chapter 1, p.9f). As explained in chapter two, this efficiency thinking often goes hand in hand with audit culture; measuring efficiency, which is often done using quantitative indicators. Corporatization occurs, as these practices, taken from the private sector, come to determine the organization of the university. In the following, I will show how profit-based/efficiency thinking is practiced at the UvA.

Study programs

Visser (2015) explained that in HE a study is expected to produce something, namely as many graduates as possible. Based on this output the ministry of Education funds universities, per graduated student (Visser, 2015). Recently even only for students that finish in a certain time frame. So, a study gets more funding, when it generates more enrolment and graduates. The value or success of a study is hence measured in quantitative terms, a manifestation of audit culture. This is a means of trying to make HE more measurable and eventually more efficient. If students from a certain study need more time to finish, there will be less funding, and improvements are expected to be made in that study. This causes changes in the structure, content and level of the study, which needs to somehow increase its amount of graduates in time. Sometimes these "inefficient studies", that do not produce enough graduates, maybe also for reason of lower enrolment, are eliminated.

This brings us back to the restructuring plan of the humanities, or the so called "Profile 2016". At the University of Amsterdam the faculty of humanities generated a decrease of 25% in enrolment (Visser, 2015). Due to low enrolment, and a smaller amount of graduates, the individual studies cannot generate as much funding from the government as other studies. The University Administration set up a plan, the Profile 2016, to merge all studies within the humanities into a liberal arts college, eliminating the existence of individual studies for a "broad bachelor" (Visser, 2015). As the direct motive the "eligibility of the current education" is stated on the UvA website (UvA Nieuws, 2014). The phenomenon of disappearing studies has also been witnessed even before Amsterdam at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, where the philosophy faculty was eliminated. Many students chose philosophy as a second study. The government does not fund second studies (Wijnberg, 2014), hence there was not enough funding to keep the study.

The organization of education at the UvA has been rationalized by trying to express its value in monetary and numeric terms. The problematic with valuing studies by the amount of graduates and enrolments they generate is that smaller studies do not stand a chance. The importance or societal gain of a study is not reflected in the amount of graduates or enrolments. It becomes clear that the changes described above are a result of a difficult financial situation for HE, in which profit-based thinking, a business practice, comes to determine the offer of studies at the university. A cost-benefit analysis is applied, whereby benefit is defined as the amount of graduates/enrolment a study yields. The organization has been corporatized, characterized by practices from the private sector. This resonates the neoliberal theory of goods that should be efficiently provided via the competitive market. This constitutes a danger for the social purposes of HE, as identified by Singh (2001). In Amsterdam, the humanities were attacked, which are often seen as one of the important areas in which recent politics and the status quo can be questioned.

Teachers

With the emergence of The New University Amsterdam, the faculty also organized themselves. They call themselves "ReThink UvA" and work closely together with The New University. The issues students and teachers face are different, but also similar; they are surely closely related to each other. Redenmentsdenken has also influenced teachers and researchers directly. With efficiency and competition on the agenda, teachers have seen increases in workloads and difficulties in obtaining funding for their research. On the ReThink website, many teachers have shared their experiences and worries in articles. Those show that the teachers in Amsterdam have been affected by the efforts to increase efficiency in teaching. ReThink UvA has identified four main problems among the developments in teaching and research: the inefficiency of output-rationality (rendementsdenken), bureaucratization or the one-size fits all regulations, work (over) load and the arbitrary calculation of hours, and the distortion of the teaching-research balance (ReThink UvA, 2015b). Some of them originate from UvA policy, others from national policy (ReThink UvA, 2015b).

Among these problematic developments a few stick out. ReThink UvA (2015) reports that output-rationality has caused administrative tasks to have become increasingly important and time consuming. Performance benchmarks, study success rules, and a forced dropout system (binding study advice) need to be taken into account and serve as a guideline to restructure courses. Departments get funded on the amount of graduated students, mixing up the grading of student paper with budget concerns (ReThink UvA, 2015b). ReThink argues that this standardization of teaching "refocuses the discussions inside departments away from content, to managing ways of dealing with new administrative requirements". The following quote demonstrates the frustration of teachers:

> " […] preparing course descriptions up to a full year before one actually teaches the course; preparing, organizing and reacting to standardized evaluations; putting grades and other data in

> several computer systems; filing exams; and adjusting teaching and assignments to ever-changing formal requirements" (ReThink UvA, 2015b).

RetThink argues that this output-rationality or efficiency, which inter alia manifests in student evaluations and performance benchmarks reduces education to quantifiable data. As mentioned above efficiency-thinking and audit culture often go hand in hand, so they do here. Also in research the efficiency culture is present at the UvA. High quality research is defined by the number of publications and citations. In the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 for the University of Amsterdam, two important goals are to increase the number of high impact publications and to belong to the top 10% most frequently cited (The University of Amsterdam, 2015).

Another problematic development can be identified as the increasing workload for teachers**.** Nationally, since 2000 to 2013, the amount of students increased from 160 000 to 245 000, the number of PhDs from 2400 to 4000 and the amount of publications per year from 54 000 to 70 000 (Bregman, 2013). The amount of staff stayed at 40 000 (Bregman, 2013). Moreover, the Dutch government has increased the number of obligatory contact hours, and the length of the general teaching period has been extended by the UvA with the introduction of the 8-8-4 semester structure (ReThink UvA, 2015b). Van Bronswijk (2015), a teacher at the UvA, described the way she felt efficiency thinking in her job in comparison to the old semester division compared to the 8-8-4 period system. She reports that she used to teach 10 seminars/lectures, making up six courses over the year, while the number has risen to 13 seminars/lectures, now constituting nine different courses (Van Bronswijk, 2015). These numbers show the amount of lectures that she has to teach increased, which means a bigger workload, especially as the courses increased from six to nine. The amount of MA theses Van Bronswijk supervised increased two in 2010/2011 to six in 2015. She also reports that some hours needed to grade papers and exams have been eliminated from the working schedule, while this work still needs to be done, only that there is no time calculated in the job to do it. Her experiences have also find their way into the position paper of ReThink UvA (2015). They report that the hours that were previously scheduled for one task, for example the supervision of a master thesis, were reduced at many departments, without a change in the related obligations. Teachers are expected to do more in a shorter time span, a manifestation of efficiency-thinking. With the workload increasing for teaching tasks, Rethink UvA (2015) argues that the time that staff can spend on research is decreasing, creating an imbalance of the two activities. However, research activities are often very rewarding for one’s career. The ones that can obtain external funding for their research, can “buy themselves out of teaching” (Rethink Uva, 2015b). They can spend more time on research and hence increase their publications, which then increases their chances for new research funding again.

The New University – Contributing to the Public Benefit

The New University Amsterdam (DNU) was established around the end of 2014. It emerged out of the *Humanities Rally,* a movement that mobilized students and staff against the major restructuring plan of the faculty of humanities, and called for a stop to only judge market value of programs (Humanities Rally, 2014). The DNU raised this and further issues at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). The DNU grew fast with the beginning of 2015. More citizens, students and staff came to sympathize with the DNU's ideas of what the university should be like, and what it should not be like. Protests of students and staff peaked with the occupation of the *Maagdenhuis,* as mentioned before, and ended, after several weeks of negotiations/raising of demands, with the eviction of the group and the resignation of the chair of the Executive Board, Louise Gunning (Newmark, 2015).

The New University raised and still raises issues at the university that by scholars have been identified as neoliberal practices: hierarchy, *rendementsdenken*, bureaucracy. I have described in which way those issues manifest at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) in the previous section. In this section, I aim to elaborate on how the practices at the UvA relate to higher education’s task to contribute to the public good. According to Singh (2001) policy makers neglect the social contributions of higher education by limiting its value to the enhancement of the economy. She argues that enhancing social justice via equal access to higher education, the pursuit of knowledge in various fields, basic and applied, the development of capacities and skills in a variety of fields and the possibility of HE to function as critic and conscience of society, are mandatory to consider in the purpose of HE.

It is now interesting to look at what DNU’s sees as the dangers of the recent developments and whether and how this connects to the contribution of HE to the public good. It will especially be useful to look at the Manifest of the DNU.

In their manifest, the DNU argues that the participation of students and staff in decision making is so limited that large policy plans in whatever way go forward. The academic community barely had a say in the introduction of the bachelor-master structure, bachelor-before-master regulation, the 8-8-4 period system or the introduction of the binding study advice (De nieuwe universiteit, 2015). Decisions and policies that stem from the participation structures of the university, e.g. the executive board, lack democratic principle, as the structures have not been established in a democratic manner, but via appointees (De nieuwe universiteit, 2015). The conclusion the group draws from this governance structure is that decisions are not necessarily in the interest of the academic community. In an open letter to the Executive Board ReThink UvA wrote:

> "At present, ever more decisions are taken at the UvA by managers who are removed from the concerns and needs of students and staff, and do not answer to them for those decisions. Without assuming there is one template that fits each and every program, department, institute, or faculty, we call for the democratization and decentralization of the UvA's governance structure, in order to allow the academic community to govern itself honestly and responsibly."

The concerns about the undemocratic governance structure have been supported in the analysis above. When relating this to the social purposes of higher education (HE), as theorized by Singh (2001), limiting the input of the academic community in decision making, can lead to decisions based on the profitability of services. This neglects other social purposes of programs that might not be recognized by managers.

The DNU further argues that political streams come to determine the university, which threatens the position of the institution as a critical independent actor (De nieuwe universiteit, 2015). The idea that the government increasingly shapes the university is partly also supported in the previous analysis, as the vision described in the government policy paper needs to be incorporated at the institutions by executive boards. At the UvA, this vision is clearly reflected in practices. In the government policy paper, quality of teaching and research are evaluated in quantitative terms, what the DNU calls "efficiency-indicators" like the amount of publications, graduates, etc.) (De nieuwe universiteit, 2015). Universities need to do well in these evaluations to obtain funding. These efficiency-indicators define quality in education in a certain way. It defines that the quality of research and education can be measured in amounts and points, and draws conclusions from that. This is also what *Science in Transition* criticizes (see p.34). More publications equal a better quality of research at the University of Amsterdam.

Furthermore, the measuring the output of programs in the amount of diplomas is a manifestation of neoliberalism to economize social spheres. The value of education is expressed in numbers and needs to be made more efficient according to the rule of maximal economy. This approach disadvantages smaller programs with less enrolment. The proposal to drop all individual programs within the humanities, because they do not generate enough government funding, neglects the social purposes of education. Loosing philosophy and other programs causes a narrowly formed, modest amount of insights during one’s study. This output orientated governance limits the fields of studies into a certain direction. It advantages profitable programs and fields. Humanities were devalued and openly presented as less worth than other fields by the executive board of the UvA. Humanities are seen to be one of the academic fields that ask critical questions about society and its recent development, to challenge the status quo. So, there might be reason why the DNU emerge out of the humanities rally. Students and teachers took initiative and transformed the university, or rather a part of the university, the Maagdenhuis, to a place where one can challenge the status quo and openly discuss the university’s development. They created their own space which can be seen to constitute an attempt to bring critical thinking, community development and democracy back into the university. When do we reflect critically and academically at the universities about the policy plans and restructuring towards the entrepreneurial university? Students and teachers did it in their free time. The university, according to many authors critical of the neoliberal developments of universities, should be a place where this kind of critical thinking takes place and is triggered. Critical thinking can, taking Singh’s (2001) idea of the social purposes of higher education, contribute to a vivid public sphere and hence democracy overall.

Measuring quality of education in numbers (of publications, graduates, enrolment, etc.) constitutes a threat towards universities and the government fulfilling other social and cultural duties, that are either not able to be expressed in numbers or have been devalued by trying to do so. This is a global neoliberal development that directly affects students and teachers at the University of Amsterdam. This audit culture goes along with efficiency-thinking. Together they force the economic rational thought into areas that are human and social. The same happens in science/research which is increasingly characterized by third party influences, competition over research funds and limited time to exercise the research (Tedx, 2015). These constraints limit what we can find out, as the directions are pre-determined by money and time availability. Much knowledge that is valuable for human kind, which might not be seen when only looking at monetary value, is missed.

In the manifest of The New University, the national dimension of the perceived problems is of great importance. They stress that recently many major policies that affect the academic community, like the cease of the “stufi” – student grants -, tuition fee differentiation and the fine for “overtime” students, have been discussed and enacted by the government (De nieuwe universiteit, 2015). The academic community had no direct input though. The government pursues a vision of HE and its purposes, without considering the academic community. As argued in chapter two, many governments see the purpose of HE in “enhancing national economic competitiveness within a global knowledge-driven economy” (Singh, 2001, p.8). This is the approach the Dutch government has taken, and which consequences have started to become visible at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). The approach requires a focus on competition which in the Dutch context came to include the praising and enforcement of increased selectivity in student access, higher tuition fees and excellence policies. These goals and practices come at the expense of the social purposes of HE, as identified by Singh (2001; see chapter two). Namely, when access to HE is limited by wanting the top of the top and/or by raising tuition fees, equality is neglected. It is openly stated in the strategic plan by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences that excellence comes above equality in access.

To conclude, The New University has raised issues in education at the UvA that threaten the social purposes of HE, as defined by Singh (2001).The Dutch government is directing higher education in a neoliberal direction that praises and rewards efficiency. While the appointed Executive Board of the UvA has much autonomy within the university, the academic community increasingly feels bypassed in decision making, when they are the group that is most affected by policy changes and probably most knowledgeable about what the university needs academically, not financially. The New University calls for a change in governance structure, so that the needs of students and staff can be heard.

Conclusion

The case of the University of Amsterdam shows that the organization of the university is defined by business and market principles. *Rendementsdenken* and hierarchrchical structures characterize the management of the UvA. By policy makers, HE in the Netherlands is mainly expected to contribute to the knowledge economy. Education and research are increasingly directed towards the knowledge market to be competitive in the sector. This development is characteristic of the provision of goods in the neoliberal market, striving for efficiency and high competition. The government on the one hand, and the appointed executive board on the other hand, have implemented output-rationality, audit mechanisms and specialization. Those practices threaten the existence of fields with small profitable value, and value that cannot be expressed in numeric terms. This manifested in the plan to restructure the humanities, which generated not enough revenue to keep all programs. The developments at the UvA speak for a wider context, as they reflect some major developments identified on a broader level in chapter two.

The New University and its associates have shown great discontent with this development. As democratic structures are missing, students and teachers had no say in major decisions. A public good is supposed to serve the public interest, but how can it when the debate is limited to only a few. As mentioned in chapter one, public goods are social constructs that are informed by public debate. The UvA however is organized top-down, making it impossible to include, let alone base, its management on the input of students and teachers. This has led to a transformation of education and research that, as we have seen, does not serve the interests of students and teachers. The developments neglect the non-economic purposes of higher education, namely to trigger a critical debate and to value all sorts of skills and research fields independent of commercial potential.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to find out how the neoliberal thought has found its way into the University, and in which ways this affects higher education (HE) as a public good. I formulated three sub-questions in order to answer the main question. I found that neoliberalism trickles down from an abstract theoretical level over policy practices to the actions and thinking of individuals. This is exactly what happens in the HE sector, as this thesis showed. In the following I will elaborate on that, presenting the most important findings and their relevance. Finally, I will formulate some recommendations for further research.

Regarding the theoretical framework, I conclude that neoliberalism is an ideology, theory and practice alike that puts the self-regulating free market in the center, and sees a strong role for the state to enable the free market. The welfare state and public goods are seen as inefficient, as they do not operate according to the rule of maximal economy. In comparison to the public good, the first chapter found that other scholars, not associated with market economics, see a key role for public goods in offering non-economic benefits to the public. The public benefit of goods is according to the neoliberal thought only defined in terms of the economy. This endangers the recognition of other non-economic valuable contributions of public goods. As neoliberal practices advance, public institutions are transformed. I identified finances, organization, accessibility and the expected contribution to the public benefit of a good as relevant to show how the tension between the two approaches plays out.

This led me to sub-question two, asking how the tension between neoliberalism and the public good manifests in HE, a good that in many countries is considered a public good. I here demonstrated that the scope of neoliberalism in HE is unprecedented, and found its way into practices beyond geographical borders. This shows again that neoliberalism is not just an abstract concept, but a common practice. Privatization, efficiency thinking, audit culture and competition are neoliberal principles that have found their way into the higher education sector at different places across the globe, enabled by the supportive role of the state. This shows as follows: Governments have provided a context for the workings of the university like a business, hence marketized the institution. Across different contexts, they have reduced public funding, and reduced their direct influence on the organization of universities along with that. Within the institutions, a bureaucracy and hierarchy have developed that limit the management of universities to a very few who hold major decision making powers. In the competitive climate of HE for students and funding, practices from the corporate sector, like efficiency thinking, cost-benefit analysis and auditing, have been adopted. There is a focus and need to measure outputs, like the amount of graduates and publications, in order to increase efficiency and account for quality. However, this quantification of the value of HE, neglects that quality of education or research cannot be measured solely in numeric terms. Fields of study and research that offer nonquantifiable cultural or social value receive less funding. Thus, money and the ability to obtain funding increasingly come to shape the education and research agenda. Knowledge and education are commodified to various extents, by doing research together with corporations that own the produced knowledge, and by increasing tuition fees for students. This results in a limited and unequal access to education and to the knowledge produced by research. HE pursued like this, does not contribute to social justice in our society. As a public good this access would be open to all members of society. Furthermore, education and research are driven towards commercial interests. Other skills and fields of study, important for social and cultural development, are neglected. The possibility of HE to function as a critic and conscience of society is endangered by increasingly pursuing certain economic interests, limiting participation in decision-making and limiting access to knowledge and education.

Sub-question three took it from this larger scale to a smaller scale, asking how the tension between neoliberalism and the public good plays out at the University of Amsterdam. Looking at this case as an example showed the concreteness of neoliberal practices and how they affect the daily lives of students and teachers. I found that the development of the UvA speaks to the large context discussed in chapter two. By identifying the strong role of the Dutch government in this development via national policies, it furthermore became clear that the issues in Amsterdam can be expected to also be found at other Dutch universities. The Dutch government's vision on higher education is strongly characterized by neoliberal principles. The principles have found their way into the University of Amsterdam, which is to a large extent due to the hierarchy in the sector. The university's executive board members are appointed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, and deans then again by the executive board, etc. This lack of democracy is what the movement The New University criticized. Their second major concern is *rendementsdenken* – thinking in terms of profit, a manifestation of neoliberalism. In Amsterdam this shows in the increased work-loads and output demand of teachers and the evaluation of research and programs in quantitative and economic terms. The Dutch Governments sees the purpose of HE in contributing to the national economy by enhancing the country's position in the global knowledge economy. To compete with other knowledge producers and score high on rankings, *rendementsdenken* – thinking in terms of profit - has become increasingly important in the organization of HE. This *Rendementsdenken* has led decisions, by the UvA management, to be based on economic efficiency instead of academic value. The non-economic benefits of HE are not acknowledged enough in this process. The output oriented governance shapes the academic programming towards efficiency and commercial value. It does not contribute to the pursuit of knowledge in a variety of fields. This, and the democratic deficit in decision-making endanger the possibility of students and staff to be critical and conscience about the development at their university and society at large. As the government takes a 'steering at a distance approach' and business practices progress, HE moves away from being a public good that lives up not just to the economic, but also to the social purposes of HE. The New University transformed the main administrative building into a space for critical thinking and discussion, aiming to re-insert these social purposes.

All in all, neoliberalism is not a far above floating ideology, but has become a tangible reality, as governments shape their policies accordingly. It shows on a small scale as obvious as on a larger more abstract level. There is much interrelation of these levels, which circles around the relation of governments, the market and businesses. It influences practices, policies and thinking. By looking at the University of Amsterdam the practice of neoliberalism became tangible, as by identifying the government as an important enabler and discussing the levels on which the ideas exercise influence. HE as a public good is compromised by the adoption of neoliberal practices. Knowledge and education are shaped according to the needs of the market. In research commercial fields are given more importance. This means that social and cultural knowledge important for human development are missed. In education programming is shaped according to efficiency and quantifiable value. This limits the possibilities for students and teachers to develop socially and creatively, as they are bound to live up to the quantitative demands by management and governments. These developments create a one-dimensional neoliberal approach to knowledge and education. It then becomes difficult for students and teachers to reflect critically on society. We need these other fields of study to question recent developments. Instead of shaping our future according to today's needs of the market, we need to envision the future we want to see and base our policies and actions on that.

What I could not show directly, as this thesis is limited to literature research, is that the neoliberal ideology affects individuals on a personal level. It determines our thinking, values and the way we do things. It would be very interesting to do further research on the matter, using ethnographic field work. For even further research, I recommend to add case studies of other

Dutch universities and explore how the government's policy has affected them. This will be interesting in order to depict in which way higher education in the Netherlands is moving. Field work and literature study should be combined here. The shaping of research agendas was not a focus in Amsterdam, but I expect it to be very relevant in the Dutch context, as funding comes more and more from third parties. The University of Wageningen could be an interesting case for such a research. Campina has a research institute on campus and several professors are paid by different corporations of the dairy industry. The moving in of corporations can have implications for research agendas, ethics, results and the publishing of results. A research on this matter could be ground breaking by uncovering the power structures that lie behind the way sciences is done, and how our education and research system is shaped. Unfortunately, obtaining funding for such a research might prove to be quite difficult, I expect.

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