Are Dutch Universities becoming Managed Institutions?
Seeking Evidence for Archetype Change from the Study of University Decision-Making Processes

Presented to ‘New perspectives on enduring research questions in university-society interaction?’
INTERACT-UNI EU-SPRI Conference, University of Twente, the Netherlands, 9th-11th May 2012.

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KEYWORDS: University Governance, Authority Distributions, Organizational Transformation of the University, Archetypes, Decision-Making

JEL CODES IF APPLICABLE:
Abstract

There is wide agreement in the higher education literature that New Public Management has aimed to render formal authority distributions in university decision-making more hierarchical and management-driven (see, e.g. Amaral et al. (2003), Brunsson & Sahlin Anderson (2000), de Boer et al. (2004); Leisyte (2007), Paradeise et al. (2009)). Changes in the formal decision-making structure must, however, not necessarily allow university managers to exercise better control of the university’s core technologies. In this paper, I will introduce the analytical concept of organizational archetypes to address this question for the transformation of Dutch and British universities. I will complement conceptual deliberations with empirical evidence gained from the study of allocating research and teaching tasks in the humanities and the life sciences at a Dutch research university. The evidence indicates that managerial decision-makers on the mid-management level assume an increasingly authoritative role when it comes to allocating teaching- and research tasks among staff members, but that their acting is triggered off by financial concerns and only to a lesser extent by purely functional deliberations. Viewed from a broader perspective, the study sheds light into the organizational consequences of the ‘autonomization’ of the university, being accompanied by a shift away from direct state-funding for teaching and research activities into the direction of competitive funding.

1. Introduction

Policy concerns about rising costs and mediocre performance brought up the issue that public sector organizations might be lacking adequate organizational structures to operate more effectively and efficiently. Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson (2000) argue that the origin of public sector reforms might be understood as attempts to construct ‘complete’ organizations (such as corporations) out of those in the public sector (such as hospitals and universities) that are/were incomplete due to the lack of attributes such as identity, hierarchy and rationality associated with the private sector. If being given these attributes, public sector institutions (and hence also universities) could be empowered to act as decision-making entities with the traits of corporate organizations.

Public higher education institutions are not exempted from the public sector’s strive for ‘organizational completeness’. Having come to the conclusion that European universities could work more effectively and efficiently (Olsen 2009), policy makers attempt to boost the performance of higher education institutions by modifying the authority relations that govern their core technologies. Over the last decades, European universities have received considerable process

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1 The PhD project on which this paper is based is integrated in the framework of the Transforming Universities in Europe Project (TRUE). This joint European project realised under the EUROHEC programme of the European Science Foundation endeavours to cast light into how steering and governance of HE affect essential organisational characteristics of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and in turn how this contributes to a diversified European HE landscape. The PhD project is located within the second research area of TRUE, which focuses on the impact of the governance reforms on the university as an organization.
autonomy for the management of their internal affairs, whilst accountability requirements put forward by the state have been driven up. Internally, the new face of the university expresses itself in new lines of authority and responsibility in university management (de Boer, Enders et al. 2007). There is increased policy attention for a more tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control of academic work.

A tremendous volume of research has looked at how new-public management2-inspired beliefs and practices have changed the formal authority regime in higher education institutions (see e.g. Braun & Merrien, 1999, Clark 1998, De Boer, Enders & Schimank 2007, Henkel, 2002, Musselin 2007, Paradeise et al. 2009). A governance model has been created in which organizational leadership receives much more attention as has been the case before. At the same time, serious doubts have been expressed about the ability of higher education managers to take over control over the strategic direction of teaching and research. With regard to research, Musselin and Whitley argue that the steering capacity of managers is hampered by the fact that they are ultimately dependent on the scientific judgment of scientific communities who do not only determine what shall be researched, but also what quality standards the research is expected to meet (Whitley 2008; Musselin 2007).

This paper contributes to the broader academic debate on organizational change in European higher education institutions. The purpose of this paper is to analyse to what extent the academic community still occupies a position of authority in the shift toward a decision-making regime that is being dominated by managerial imperatives. The organizational process to be studied more in detail is the allocation of research and teaching tasks among academic staff in the humanities and in the life sciences at a Dutch research university. If top-down steering has become the principle way of organizing universities, one would expect this process clearly to be dominated by managerial ideals and principles that seek for the most appropriate way of allocating teaching and research among academic staff members. If traditional patterns persist, there is no mid-management level driven approach to task allocation and the head of department remains the key authority in assigning teaching loads.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the second part starts with a quick overview on archetypes in organization studies. Against this backdrop, I will explain how the archetype concept was adapted in a way that better fitted the purposes of this study. The second part ends with a demonstration how archetypes will be used analyze the organizational transformation of the European university. The third part elaborates on the methodological framework of the study, shedding light in the different methods used to build empirical evidence. Part four presents empirical findings from the analysis of teaching- and research allocation processes in a Life Sciences- and Humanities Faculty at a Dutch research university. The paper concludes with an overview on the authority distributions discovered in this decision-making process.

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2 Henceforward, New Public Management will be abbreviated ‘NPM’
2. Conceptual Framework

Acknowledging that organizational transformation is an inherently vague and ambiguous concept, I first off all present an analytical approach to study organizational change in higher education institutions as transition in archetypes. To this end, I investigate whether new public management inspired higher education reforms have brought about another archetype of university organization which I termed the “Managed University”.

This paper defines an archetype as an organizational prototype which represents an idealised authority distribution in various decision-making areas that relate to the management of teaching and research. ‘Authority distribution’ is defined as the allocation of decision-making powers among a set of interconnected actors outside and within the organization that set organizational goals in the decision-making processes under consideration. Although the limited scope of this paper only allows for the analysis of one decision-making process, the ultimate goal of the PhD is to study a number of decision-making processes that relate to the management of teaching and research in higher education institutions (e.g. the re-organization of departments).

Archetypes are associated with a particular system of organizational design that is typically bound in time. It is for this particular reason that archetypes are deemed considerably useful for the study of organizational change, as the occurrence of certain environmental phenomena such as a major policy reform can have a lasting impact on the organization’s structure and interpretive scheme. Organizational change can eventually give rise to a new archetype. The trigger to organizational transformation does not only have to be sought in the organization’s external environment; it can also stem from within the organization (e.g. by an organizational leader that takes the lead in re-organizing the operational procedures of the university).

The herein suggested concept of archetypes brings into the authority relations perspective (Whitley et al.), which is one promising way to conduct an integrated assessment of changes in public science systems. Its basic assumptions are (a) that the changes that public science systems go through have implications for the relationships between actors and the way that they are able to realize their interests and (b) that authority relations as regards the selection of research goals are the main channel through which changes in the knowledge production system are effectuated (Whitley et al., 2010). By paying particular attention to the performance level of the science system, the authority relations perspective addresses an important aspect that has received insufficient attention by other approaches. As such, it seeks to discover what the epistemic properties of scientific fields are and how these field-specific properties impede or facilitate the attempts of policy makers to gain better control over scientific knowledge production.

In organization sciences, the archetype concept has gained prominence with the publications of Greenwood and Hinings, who claim that if organizations change over time, it must be possible to track these changes in modifications of their organizational design constellations (Greenwood and Hinings 1993). The archetype concept being developed from the purposes of the PhD deliberately deviates from Greenwood and Hining’s archetype scheme to ensure that particular attention is being paid to the management of the core technologies of the organization. Greenwood and Hinings focus their archetype analysis on the description of structural features of various types of organisations.
The authorities being part of the archetype template are based on a suggestion by Whitley (2010, pp. 8-9) who distinguishes between various types of actors that exert authority on the management of research (and vice-versa on teaching). The first actor to be mentioned here is the state that provides the legal basis for conducting teaching and research, but in return expects higher education institutions to deliver the highest quality possible. In many European countries, the state also continues to be the main funder of higher education, thereby guaranteeing itself an important channel of authority. Next to the state, scientific communities play an essential role in scientific knowledge production and dissemination. Laudel (2011) highlights three authoritative agencies through which scientific communities shape research priorities. The first type are funding agencies that steer research through the allocation of resources (e.g. project grants and programmes). The second group are national scientific elites that are crucial to recruitment processes of organizational elites; besides, they shape the social context in which career systems are established (Laudel, 2011). The third group - academic elites - constitutes an actor group that is difficult to deal with, given that academic elites reside both in the university itself (typically the professor) as well as in other types of research organizations. The current solution to the problem has been to follow the suggestion by Whitley and Gläser (2010) and split academic elites into (inter-) national- and organizational elites. According to this distinction, the professor is not only a member of the internal governance structure, but does also represent the organizational elite of the university.\footnote{Whitley et al. identify university management as another important actor of university governance, but given that this typology distinguishes between internal and external actors, university management would qualify as an internal actor.}

Given that the archetype partly focuses on the internal decision-making structure, the actor typology would have to zoom into the university to include those actors that operate within it ('internal actors'). The template draws a distinction between the top-management (Executive Board), the mid-level management (deans and heads of departments) and academics (organizational elite).

Having introduced the most important actors, the time is ripe for taking a look at the archetype template (see table 1). The rows of the left column indicate the two organizational processes that will be studied more in detail. Columns differentiate between the different types of internal- as well as external actors that exert authority on the management of the two core activities of universities. The template furthermore allows for classifying the level of authority being exercised by the different actors (high, medium or low).

\footnote{In the archetype template (see table 1), the organizational elite forms part of the category termed ‘academics’.}
The idea behind the use of archetypes as analytical tools is to capture both the formal and de-facto ability of university managers to steer and control teaching- and research activities in universities. This enables the empirical test of the hypothesis that NPM-inspired management reforms have equipped university decision-makers with distinctive organizational competences and that these competences allow for authoritative coordination and control of the core work being done at universities – namely teaching and research.

*Table 1: The Archetype template*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal actors</th>
<th>External actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-management</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level</td>
<td>(Inter-) national scientific elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academics</td>
<td>Funding agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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*Figure 1: Explaining organizational change as transition between archetypes.*

*Figure 1* demonstrates how the idea of archetype transition in higher education systems works. Point of departure is a hollow-type of university organization (the Bifurcated Hollow University⁶, called archetype “A”) located in country X that is characterized by a low ability of managerial decision-makers to control and direct the management of teaching and research. Archetype “B”, also called the “Managed University”, features a quite different authority distribution in the sense that managerial decision-makers have gained competences and capabilities to strategically shape teaching and research outcomes. The managed university marks a clear departure from the ‘traditional’ hollow type of university organization ( “A”) that is marked by high levels of state

⁶The term ‘Bifurcated Hollow University’ has been adapted from Whitley (2008).
influence on formulating organizational goals on the one hand and low levels of managerial discretion in defining research- and teaching activities on the other hand.

According to this model, complete archetype transition would take place if it can be shown that due to the introduction of New Public Management (NPM), the authority distribution has changed in such a way that “A” has moved to “B”. Intra-archetype transition would have taken place if the authority distribution in the sample of universities in country X does not significantly differ from “A”. This is illustrated by a move from archetype “A” to type C.  

An important presumption of the study is that internal organizational transition is interlinked with changes in the environmental conditions according to which universities operate. As such, the Bifurcated Hollow University is located in a country where at the time before archetype change, regional and national government ministries have considerable power in taking administrative and financial decisions. General employment and hiring conditions such as remuneration are determined by the state. Within this specified framework, universities may decide whom to employ for which type of position, but the formal appointment itself remains outside their scope of competences (Whitley 2008). By contrast, the Managed University’s relationship with the state can best be characterised by the terms ‘centralised decentralisation’ or ‘regulated autonomy’ (Hoggett 1991; Hoggett 1996). That is, even though more formal responsibility is delegated to the university in several decisive decision-making areas such as human resource management or funding, this “freedom of action” is coupled with a much more rigorous regime of external accountability and constant monitoring (Kirkpatrick and Lucie, 1995; Power, 1997; Morgan and Engwall, cited in Reed, 2002, p. 166).

7 In the PhD, figure 1 is rendered a bit more complex by adding another ‘pre- NPM archetype’ that is characterized by a higher degree of managerial ability in terms of shaping teaching and research decisions. The hollow university is associated with the Dutch higher education system, whereas the State-Chartered Employment University represents the English higher education system before the 1980s (Whitley, 2008).
3. Methodological Approach

Case-study research was considered to be the most promising way for gaining insights into the multi-facetted nature of decision-making in higher education institutions. As regards the selection of countries, the Netherlands was chosen due to its early adoption of new public management-inspired governance reforms in tertiary education. The timing of the reforms was an important selection criterion insofar as the transformation process had to be taken long enough so that a transition could at least in principle have taken place (a time span of approximately 25-30 years).

If the inherent features of research and teaching as the university's core technologies limit the redistribution of authority, the transformation of universities should proceed unevenly in the various research cultures. Although the formal decision-making structure within universities has been subject to change, the particular resource requirements of the experimental sciences call out for leaving the final judgment up to the traditional decision-making elite, namely the academics. This paper hence compares the organization of teaching and research in the life sciences with the management of these two activities in the humanities.

The evidence presented below is mainly qualitative with an emphasis on semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with mid-level managers, senior lecturers and assistant professors. The data became analyzed with the help of qualitative content analysis, a method being particularly suitable when mainly the content of the assembled information matters and the structuring and processing of data could significantly contribute towards reducing the complexity of the gathered information (Laudel and Gläser, 2011, p. 1).

4. Authority Distributions in Ideal Types

The purpose of this section is to describe authority distributions in the decision-making process under consideration as they existed in Dutch higher education institutions before the introduction of new public management.

4.1. Allocation of Research and Teaching in the Bifurcated Hollow University

The 1960s and 1970s in the Netherlands marked a time when regional and national government ministries had considerable power in administrative affairs; for instance, general employment and hiring conditions such as remuneration were determined by the state. Within this specified framework, universities were allowed to decide whom to employ for which type of position, although the formal appointment itself remained outside their scope of competences.

As will be shown later on, the allocation of teaching and research in task portfolios is inextricably linked with the financial situation of universities, as the funding conditions determine on which activity (teaching or research) the money may be spent. Since the 1960s, Dutch universities enjoyed considerable discretion in this respect due to a combined (lump) sum for teaching and research. However, from 1960 till 1978 they received a separate budget for personnel and a separate budget for other (material) costs, and for instance could only use the personnel budget for paying salaries, etc. Underlying the personnel budget was a calculation that took into account teaching- and research
tasks, so notionally there were two personnel budgets, but in using the funds universities were free to decide whether to spend it on teaching or research. The budget for personnel was based on the number of students. Universities having more students hence received more funds for teaching and more funds for research. Still, however, they could use the personnel budget for any mix of teaching and research (Jongbloed, 2012, email correspondence).

The scope of teaching responsibilities for different staff categories was largely regulated by the state, with staff ranking on lower hierarchical levels facing higher teaching loads than staff on the professorial level. The internal task allocation was considerably shaped by the head of department-deans or other types of mid-level managers had at utmost a facilitating role in assigning teaching- and research tasks to individual staff members. Academics could dispose freely on their research time once teaching demands had been met.

As the allocation system was highly dependent on the generosity of state funding, the state assumed key role in funding higher education, although it did not draw on its financial authority to shape the internal distribution of teaching and research tasks. Funding agencies were important financiers for research activities in science and technology, whereas research in the humanities was largely paid from direct government funds.

### Table 2: Authority Distributions in the Bifurcated Hollow University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal actors</th>
<th>External actors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-management</td>
<td>(Inter-.) national scientific elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level management</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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</table>

**4.2. Allocation of Teaching and Research in the Managed University**

The allocation of teaching and research follows the principle of efficiency and effectiveness: the Managed University faces a strict division of labor with the result that those teaching the most students and conducting the most research most efficiently gain the most money for their institution. There are teaching-only positions for academic staff with low research outputs, whereas research active staff with high research output can buy themselves off from teaching and focus on a research-only career. The allocation of teaching and research duties is conducted by mid-level managers who make their allocation choice dependent on the outcome of research output analyses, while the academics have no option but to accept this choice. The state has ceased its role as key financier of research and has handed this responsibility over to the funding agencies that distribute research funds on a competitive basis. It (i.e. state) remains indirectly involved in the allocation of teaching and research through the funding of teaching activities.
Table 3: Authority Distributions in the Managed University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Internal actors</th>
<th>External actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Top-management</td>
<td>Mid-level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed University</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When comparing authority distributions in the Bifurcated Hollow University to those of the Managed University, one can easily observe that with regard to the actors operating from within the university, the most significant change is expected on the level of middle managers. In the Managed University, mid-level managers take a much more active role in allocating teaching and research tasks among staff members, while making their choice dependent on efficiency- and effectiveness considerations. As regards external actors, funding bodies are the key authoritative agencies for the competitive funding of research, whereas the state’s role has been reduced to the funding of teaching. What remains to be seen is to what extent reality corresponds to the idealized authority distributions of the Managed University - this will be done in the subsequent section.

5. Presentation of the Case

In the Netherlands, the allocation of teaching and research tasks among academic staff is left to the universities themselves so that in principle, many different organizational solutions in terms of the teaching-research split can exist. Still, the allocation process is by no means an arbitrary exercise, as middle managers need to make sure that student demand for teaching is met by allocating sufficient teaching staff to courses and that the allocation model is financially viable.

Research universities in the Netherlands are financed via three funding flows, also called funding streams. The first stream - direct government funding - comes from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) as well as tuition fees by students. In total, direct government funding constitutes about 60% of the total revenue of universities. The second stream originates from the research council and makes out about 10%. The remaining 30% come from other types of funding sources such as industry. In recent years, direct government funding was transferred to the second stream (€50m less annually) to support excellent researchers via competitive funding (de Boer et al, 2010, p.421).

Direct government funding is transferred to the university as a lump sum, that is the universities face considerable steering scope when it comes to deciding on how the money is to be spent. On the other hand, lump sum funding can result internal resource struggles as to how the resources should best be distributed within the organisation. For the internal organization of higher education institutions, the changing financial climate implies that there is an increasing need to manage the

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8 In the forthcoming case study, management/administration tasks are included in the teaching component
organization of teaching and research so that there is always a steady influx of resources for both activities. In what follows, I will explore how environmental circumstances such as the funding environment, but also functional deliberations of managers of managerial decision-makers shape the allocation of teaching and research tasks of academic staff. The two cases to be looked at are a life sciences and a humanities faculty of a Dutch research university.

5.1 Faculty of Life Sciences

In the Faculty of Life Sciences, the Faculty Management regularly reviews the allocation of teaching and research tasks among staff and implements changes in the current distribution if deemed necessary. As a general principle, however, the Faculty Management agreed that all research-active staff should be teaching at least 25% of their time, so no one, not even the ‘stars’ among the faculty’s research active staff could ‘buy’ themselves out of teaching. In financially more stable times, it was possible for research active staff to obtain another 5% reduction in teaching time, but the Faculty Management has recently abolished this policy due to some budget cuts the university was confronted with and that resulted amongst other things in the introduction of a university-wide hiring freeze. To make teaching needs end, the Management saw no other option but to distribute the Faculty’s teaching load among existing staff members so that no exceptions could be granted in terms of granting a further reduction in teaching.

The Faculty Management had good reasons for making teaching obligatory for all staff members. The senior manager believed that having people active in research is the best way to keep teaching contents up-to-date which particularly in the life sciences he deemed quite essential due to the ongoing discovery of new scientific phenomena – a vision that was fully shared by the other members of the faculty team. The Faculty Management furthermore had agreed that the highest teaching load that one could get is 50: 50, unless it was peoples’ explicit choice to invest more time into teaching. Not spending more than 50% on teaching was considered essential by the management for making sure that all academic members have sufficient time to make progress in their scientific careers. There were some very few exceptions for teaching-only positions within the Faculty, but usually this had been the outcome of a mutual agreement between the Faculty Management on the one hand and the academic on the other.

The assignment of individual teaching-research tasks was carried out by the head of department. In specific circumstances, it was upon him to decide (or at least make a suggestion to the Faculty Board) whether someone should assume a higher teaching load or the other way around. The Faculty usually delegated the authorship of this decision to him, considering that he was residing closer to the technological core of the organization and could make a better informed choice as to how the specific needs of the organization should best be met. If for instance, the faculty had launched a new research project, some researchers being crucial to the project could temporarily be relieved from

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9 The Faculty Management is the main administrative body of the faculty. Faculty Management teams usually consist of at least three members: the dean or senior manager (who is also the chair) and two members responsible for research and education respectively. Students frequently act as advisors to Faculty Management Teams.
their teaching load. Likewise, the head of department asked research active staff to assume more teaching responsibilities in the master if there was a shortage of teaching personnel.

The analysis so far has shown that the Faculty Management assumes quite an important role in shaping the faculty’s allocation policies. The Management drew on a lot of functional arguments to justify the teaching-research balance, but it must be pointed out that latter was also in the financial position to keep the percentage in research time rather high. In an endeavor to diversify its funding base, the Faculty Management had started the relabeling of salaries already some time ago and made sure that PhD students were not hired on direct government funding (this was a very conscious choice by the Faculty Board that wanted to use this money for other purposes). Besides, the faculty was highly successful in attracting grants and project money which altogether contributed toward rendering the faculty less dependent on direct government funding.

Its overall financial stability did not mean, however, that the Faculty was not confronted with precarious situations that at least temporarily put at risk the research-teaching balance it had chosen for its employees. At the time of the interview, the Faculty Management was thinking about various measures to bridge a gap in teaching: to this end, one Board member prepared a plan which foresaw the hiring of temporary teaching staff on a teaching-only basis to teach in the bachelor. In particular, those people should be recruited who had a professional life in the area of relevance outside the university and would be willing to teach part-time. The Board member opined that recruiting external people would also mean that the faculty is highly responsive to students who had expressed their interest in being taught by professionals in their field of study. As another option, the Board Member had considered the temporary appointment of previous PhDs who decided to pursue a career outside research, but who were still willing to teach.

What is interesting to note here is that even though the Board member’s suggestion was born out of necessity, is was still shaped by functional deliberations: on the one hand, the current unstable financial climate made it impossible for the faculty to offer direct government money to new people; on the other hand, the Board member wanted to make sure that the faculty’s research active staff could be assigned to master programs, where the teaching-research nexus was deemed much more vital than in bachelor programs.

The senior manager was first of all reluctant to consider the idea of temporary teaching-only appointments in light of her deep conviction that an overemphasis on teaching would be detrimental for the faculty’s thriving research climate. He believed that the two activities are inseparable and that there should always be a minimum amount of research time.

In the end, however, the Board Member could win the senior manager for the idea when emphasizing that the temporary teaching shortage would be met by people who had a professional life outside academia and were not interested in pursuing a research career within the faculty. She also stressed that the appointment of part-time professionals would furthermore contribute to preserving the research time of the faculty’s own staff who would not be facing additional teaching duties.
5.2 Faculty of Humanities

In the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty Management had made the precise allocation of teaching-research tasks largely dependent on the career position of academic staff members. Once people achieved the status of assistant professor, they were given a 40:60 contract (40% standing for research time and 60% for teaching, respectively management activities). Docent 3 people usually had 20:80 contracts (80% standing for teaching), but could receive a higher research percentage, if they had a proven track record in research. In that case, the Faculty Management reserved itself the right to assign higher research loads to the applicant on the condition that the research activities would be paid from third party money.

Shortly before the time of the interview, the Top Management had asked for an additional cut in the faculty budget in response to dwindling income from government sources. To this end, the Top Management suggested that one option to be considered by the Faculty was to increase the general teaching load and to make sure that academic staff members ‘earn’ more of their research time by bringing in grants. As a consequence, the Faculty Management developed a ‘doom scenario’ for the extreme case that the funding situation of the faculty would not improve significantly over the next few years. In that doom scenario, people who wanted to do research would only be covered for 20% of their research time by direct government funding. If someone wanted to do research, he or she had to earn research time by bringing in his or her own project money. The Faculty Management did not consider this to be a pleasant measure, but rather a necessity in times of rapidly decreasing income levels from the government. It also pointed out to the difficulty of dealing with people who have been working in higher education for 20-30 years and who were not as productive anymore as they used to be. A shift towards more teaching obligations could create a win-win situation by taking the publication pressure off some peoples’ shoulders and spending faculty resources more efficiently.

Whether the ‘doom scenario’ will have the desired effect of rendering the Faculty less dependent on direct government funding while boosting the publication output will depend to certain extent on a combination of factors that are difficult to be overseen by the Faculty Management:

- Especially younger generations of academics could be reluctant to accept an employment contract that offers little prospects for a research career
- Allocating 80% of teaching time to most types of staff categories bears the risk of increasing the generational divide and to make the faculty-, respectively the research departments an unattractive place for young researchers who consider pursuing a career in research

It does not come as a surprise that academic staff members were highly sceptical of the doom scenario in light of the vicious cycle that such a policy could easily trigger off. According to them, academics that spend 80% of their time on their teaching virtually have no time to seriously engage in any research, while the current lack of a career path in teaching was interpreted by them as a sign that research was valued over teaching.
Academics felt the risk of ending up in a teaching-only position to be quite real in light of the shortage of alternative funding sources in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Both the Faculty Management as well as individual researchers pointed out to the fact that the success rate for obtaining research funding from the Dutch Research Council NWO (Netherlands Organization for Scientific research) was rather low and stood hence stand in flagrant contradiction to the time effort it took to prepare a funding proposal. Even if a submitted research project had been successful in getting funded, researchers were not always happy about the positive response in light of the manifold reporting- and output obligations NWO funding brought with it. Although the prestige of NWO supported projects was considered to be quite high, the tough competition for project funding turned out to be a strong barrier for researchers to apply. Research-active academics hence looked out to other funding sources or financed their research solely on the basis of direct government funding.

At the time of the interview, the Faculty Management was also reconsidering its approach towards the funding of research activities: in the framework of recent appointments, it had for instance given extra acquisition targets to the selected candidate. The example shows that the formal decision-making competences in allocating research- and teaching tasks equipped the Faculty Management with the authority to shape human resource management procedures in this particular field considerably. The rationale behind this appointment strategy was rather straightforward: the Faculty was rather good in teaching, but less successful in getting grants, so by rendering the allocation of teaching and research duties a bit more flexible, the Management could make a more conscious choice of selecting research active staff that would not be dependent on direct government money. The assignment of recruitment targets must be considered as another important step towards diversifying the faculty’s funding base.
5.3 Comparing the Two Cases

The analysis reveals that thanks to its fortunate financial position, the Faculty of Life Sciences could allocate more research time to academic staff as was the case in the Faculty of Humanities. The relabeling of salaries was one strategy among others by the Faculty Management to create the financial leeway needed for making more discrete choices about the allocation of teaching and research time. Still, the organizational outcome of this process cannot be explained by the Faculty’s financial position only. The senior manager was a strong believer in the teaching-research nexus and was eager to integrate this principle into the Faculty’s allocation policy. The authoritative role of the Faculty Management in shaping allocation procedures is demonstrated by the fact that as a general rule of thumb, no academic staff member could buy him- or herself off from teaching unless this occurred on a very temporary basis. The policy was also clearly driven by functional deliberations, e.g. by assigning the more research-active staff to teaching modules in the faculty’s master programs.

In the Humanities, there had not been much of a policy to secure funding from other sources as particularly the senior researchers were paid by direct government funding for their research time. In times of constant and unconditional supply of direct government funding, there was no need for a policy to buying research time and hence no real incentive for academics to secure their own funding. However, the Faculty Management’s raising consciousness for the importance of alternative funding sources as is demonstrated by the assignment of recruitment targets must be seen as the deliberate attempt to secure key earnings for the faculty. Academic staff members were aware of the importance of bringing in external research funds, but at the same time, they feared the adverse effects in terms of time effort and marginal chances of success. Often, the high teaching load they were already facing prevented them from engaging more seriously in competing for third-party funding.

The distinctiveness in allocation approaches is also highlighted in the way the two faculties address contingency situations such as monetary- or teaching shortages: In contrast to the Faculty of Humanities, the Life Sciences Faculty Board was eager to make an explicit distinction between own staff (whose teaching-research balance should stay at doing at least 50% of research) and temporarily hired staff from outside the university to address the teaching gap. This scenario was also motivated by the Faculty Board’s conviction that the faculty must do everything possible to protect their own staff, because if researchers teach too much, they might be incentivized to leave the faculty and seek for employment somewhere else.

The doom scenario considered by the Faculty of Humanities would have much greater impact if ever being into practice than the one being developed in the Faculty of Life Sciences, because it would imply changing the hiring policy of its own staff. A faculty member who had been sitting on various
appointment committees confirmed that most recent appointments had already been made on a 80:20 basis, implying that staff was left with one day only to carry out research.\textsuperscript{10}

6. Conclusion
The decision process “allocation of teaching and research tasks” is a powerful demonstration of how managerial decision-makers shape the working conditions of academics by deciding to a considerable extent about their teaching- and research time. By doing so, however, managers were by no means acting free from environmental constraints. The analysis revealed that much of managerial action was triggered off by financial shortages and only to a much lesser extent by strategic deliberations such as distinguishing between active- and inactive research staff. There is ample room to believe that if the government had not successively cut public expenditure on higher education, research time would still largely be financed through direct government funding. Nevertheless, the example of assigning financial targets to research active staff in the Faculty of Humanities shows that mid-level managers are eager to create themselves the financial leeway needed to make more discrete policy choices. By the same token, the example demonstrates that the traditional cultural properties of the university as an organization (here: the firm belief in the interconnectedness of teaching and research) prove a certain organizational inertia regarding a turbulent political landscape.

To conclude, I recapitulate the above described decision-making process in terms of authority distributions. To facilitate the discussion, the analysis has been separated into various sub-sections (top management, middle managers, individual academics, academic elite, funding agencies and the state).

The Top Management usually left the allocation of teaching- and research duties to the faculties, but the case of the Faculty of Humanities shows that environmental circumstances (in this particular case budget cuts) can bring it to touch upon this faculty business. It presented the increase of teaching load as one option available to realize the savings and although this recommendation has not resulted in any concrete action yet, the doom scenario developed by the Faculty Management indicates that mid-level managers are left with little option but to accept the Top Management’s suggestion if financial scarcity prevails. This confirms another observation made during the study of decision-making processes: if the Top-Management directly or indirectly intervenes into faculty business, this is mainly driven by financial reasons to ensure that the faculty does not incur a financial loss.

Middle managers were shown to have considerable policy authority when it comes to the allocation of teaching and research duties. They were, however, not acting free from constraints as they are

\textsuperscript{10} Against this backdrop, it is important to take into account a particular feature of the Dutch academic calendar which adds up to the difficulty of academics to balance their teaching- and research activities. In the Netherlands, the academic calendar\textsuperscript{10} runs from the 1\textsuperscript{st} of September through to July 30\textsuperscript{th} with no significant teaching breaks in between. By contrast, the academic term system as it exists at some English universities allows academic staff members also to conduct research in the term breaks. Dutch academics have hence in overall terms less research time available than those people operating under a term system.
always ‘squeezed’ between the Top Management and the shop-floor level. The Top Management requires the Faculty Management to operate their faculty in the black, so that a steady supply of various sources of funding is essential to the faculty’s wellbeing. The considerable reliance on direct government funding made the faculties vulnerable to changes in this particular funding source. Besides, mid-level managers were also highly dependent on academics because the research- and teaching performances of latter account in their entirety for the success and the scientific reputation of their faculty. The establishment of organizational success constitutes, however, a process which is hard to control. Besides, the lack of organizational identity among academics (Henkel, 2005) contributes to the fact that they do not feel bound to an institution if the teaching- and research conditions offered there do not match their expectations.

The **Head of Department** was considered an important cog in the wheel in allocating teaching- and research duties to individual staff members- formally, this needed to be agreed upon by the Faculty Management, which in most cases, however, turned out to be a confirmation of the Head of Department’s judgments. In the cases revisited, the head of department led his allocation be guided by functional deliberations (e.g. relieving someone from his/ her teaching duties if the research skills of that particular person were needed for a particular project).

As regards the **individual academic**, the impact of allocation policies varied with position and seniority: at the Faculty of Humanities, the most affected were those already being hired on a 80-20% basis; the least impact was felt by those whose track record in attracting research grants could significantly reduce their teaching load unless they had made the conscious choice to teach more. Still, it is worth emphasizing that at neither faculty, one could buy oneself completely off from teaching.

The **academic elite** only matters in this process insofar as it holds up high the unshakeable belief that academic careers mainly flourish via research. This becomes a problem in those areas where ‘unconditional’ research funding dries up and needs to be replaced by competitive resources. As long as the state of the higher education institutions cannot develop organization-specific career trajectories, however, the academic elite will have an important stake in the shaping of academic careers.

The role of **funding parties** such as NWO increases, both in terms of facilitating and impeding research strands. If research funds cannot cover the main expenses, the money needs to be taken from somewhere else. For a long time, this has been true for science and technology, but also in the humanities, it is becoming increasingly important to generate research funds on a competitive base. With the notable exception of NWO, however, the state provides little resources for research; state subsidy programs are almost exclusively targeted at science and technology whereas foundations are almost non-existent in the Dutch funding landscape. The monopolistic position by NWO is increasingly becoming more problematic in the face of competitive pressure.

And what about the **national government**? The State’s changing funding regime must be considered as the major cause for re-defining the teaching- research balance. However, one could claim that it was not an explicitly intended change, but rather a side effect of a funding policy that explicitly aims at shifting resources from the so-called first stream (direct government funding) to the second
stream (indirect government funding) where the money is being distributed on a highly competitive basis by the research councils. It must be considered as ironic that the faculties’ (short-term) response to these policies is to even increase the teaching loads of their staff members and hence make themselves even more dependent on direct government funding.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>De-facto authority distributions</th>
<th>Internal actors</th>
<th>External actors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-management</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level management</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>(Inter-) national scientific elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Medium-low</td>
<td>Funding agencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High</td>
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Considering that only one decision-making process has been studied, it is not yet possible to draw any reliable conclusions about organizational change. For developing the archetype argument, the empirical scope of this paper must be widened to include a broader base of decision-making processes in the field of teaching and research.

Second, it will be of further interest to extend the empirical basis to another country that has been under considerable influence of New Public Management-inspired reform ideas, namely the case of English universities. The PhD hence sets out to compare the findings presented for the Netherlands with English universities with a view to determine whether the English case reveals similar patterns of authority in this and other decision-making processes under consideration.
References


