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*Università 2.0.: la Crisi e il Futuro.
Accademici, Studenti, Società e Sapere.*

*Il Incontro dei Futuristi Italiani.
Il Futuro del Lavoro
16 – 17 aprile 2018
CNR, Area della Ricerca (Bologna)*



Context and Concepts:

- Cultures in modern times traditionally perpetuate themselves through the construction of schools, knowledge production, spread and circulation (Papa, 2016).
- Higher Education, by definition, is a **right** (the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedom, 1953, the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – ICESCR, 1966).
- Contemporary HE is increasingly connected to/influenced by national and international political and economic dynamics (Haiven, 2013; King and Raghuram, 2013; Giroux, 2014), rather than international human law, ethical principles and ideological values.
- HE has always been international in its purpose (Byram & Dervin, 2008) BUT it is now influenced by national policies in unprecedented ways (Scott, 1998).

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- The duality of its purpose is producing some new dilemmas: HE is expected to be AT THE SAME TIME globally ambitious and nationally or regionally rooted.
 - HE, as a major institution, is part of the nation state but the relationship between HE and globalization is an extremely complicated, non-linear and dialectic process in which the global and the local do not exist just as cultural polarities, but as combined and mutually implicating principles (Beck, 2002; Scott, 1998).
 - HE and globalization = historical image?
 1. There is no comparison between national, individual and policy frontiers in medieval times and contemporary frontiers. Economic, social and geopolitical scenario has radically changed (Walby, 2003).
 2. On an international level, most existing universities have been founded since 1945 and undergone a rapid expansion since the early 1960s. (Giddens, 1993; Gürüz, 2013).
 3. Although HE has always been a key-player in the development of national and cultural identity, in the global context countries that have developed advanced HE systems are in a more advantaged position (World Bank, 2002; Gürüz, 2011).

HE is in crisis. Why?

- It is not a crisis in terms of NUMBERS: it can be considered a growing institution and for much of the XX century, especially after the 2WW, its workforce has enjoyed some relatively increasing good conditions for the creation and the development of spaces of action and knowledge in many societies (Henkel, 2009).
- The crisis of HE has much more to do with “**the way** in which we understand HE, the fundamental principles on which the idea of HE has traditionally stood, and the way in which these principles are undermined” (Barnett, 1990:3).
- The crisis of HE is part of a greater crisis due to the tensions between **time-based understanding** of a **globally shared future**, without adequate forms of institutionalized actions and a **past-based national memory** without a **globally shared collective future** (Beck, 2002; Giddens, 1993; Gürüz, 2011).

Last but not least....



Neoliberalism in Higher Education





What does it mean???

Neoliberalism in universities means that...the logic of competition is internalised deep into how universities work...this serves to ensure that they teach growing numbers of students and perform increasingly vital research as cheaply as possible (Callinicos, 2006).

Consequences:

- a combination of policies and directives which aims at/are creating a corporate higher education system that is divided, elitist and stratified (Hill, 2013).
- Increasing privatization, increasing academic fees and increasing flexible hours contracts for academic staff (UNISON, 2017).

i.e.: the UK

UK and EU students

For 2017 entry the provisional LSE tuition fee for new UK and European Union (EU) **undergraduates is £9,250* for the first year, but may rise in line with inflation in subsequent years.**

**The UK Government confirmed in October 2016 that the fee level listed for EU undergraduate new entrants in 2017/18 will be the same as Home UK for the subsequent years of their undergraduate degree programme.*

For 2017 entry**, students ordinarily resident in England and EU students do not have to pay any tuition fees up front. Instead, the cost of tuition is covered by a non-means tested **government loan which students only start to repay once they have left their programme and are earning over £21,000 per year.**

***The UK Government confirmed in October 2016 that the EU undergraduate new entrants in 2017/18 eligible for the tuition fee loan will continue to be eligible for this loan for the duration of their undergraduate degree programme.*

Students from Wales are also entitled to have their fees paid up front, and this takes the form of part loan and part grant. Fee loans are also available to students from Scotland and Northern Ireland but terms may differ. It is also possible for you or your family to pay some or all of the fee up front.

More information about tuition fee loans can be found on the following websites:

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Overseas fees

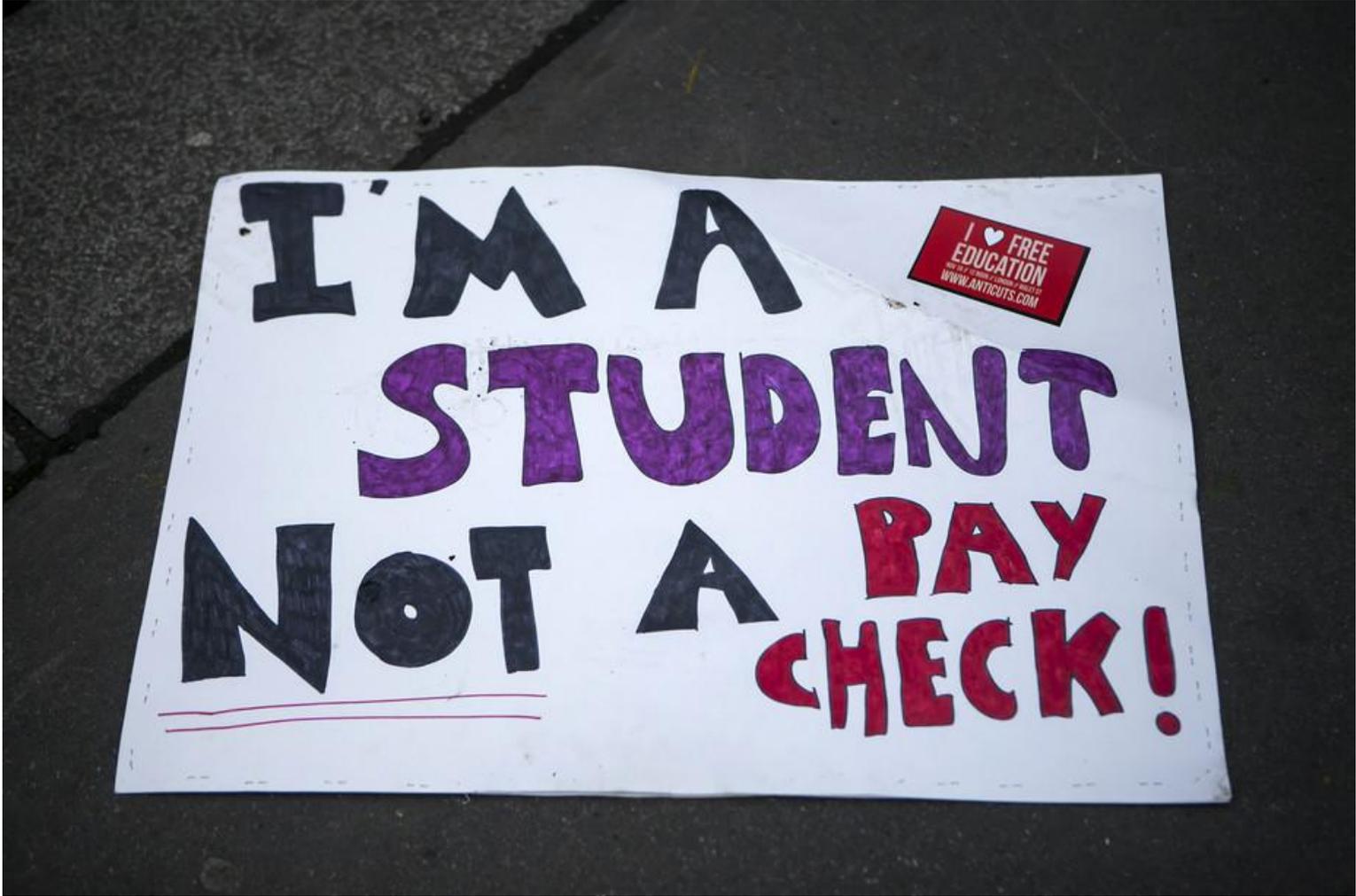
For 2017 entry, the LSE tuition fee for new overseas (non-EU) undergraduates in 2017 is **£18,408 for the first year.**

Overseas students are required to pay this fee in instalments or in full at the start of each year. The overseas fee usually rises by between 2.5 per cent and 4 per cent each year.



HE paradoxes and transformations

1. Access to HE: Massification and Inclusion / Selection and Exclusion.
2. Boundaries of HE: HE as a key-player for local and national economies / HE as a global competitor.
3. The idea of HE: its aims, values and the ways in which it is organized and understood are constantly questioned and not universally shared.
4. The notion of 'knowledge': the historical idea (or ideal) of liberal education / contemporary idea of education increasingly connected to: a set of skills useful in employment, technically useful knowledge, competence and enterprise (Barnett, 1990).





“When fees were capped at £9,000, the most disadvantaged students were looking at graduating with as much as **£57,000 in debt**. While it is tempting to think that debt is a problem for the future, it seems to have an immediate and egregious impact on student mental health.

In 2015, an NUS survey found that 78% of students had experienced mental health issues in the preceding year. The outgoing welfare officer at my institution’s Students’ Union, Anna Mullaney, explained that students of her generation:

Live and breathe in the context of a complex and constant mental health crisis.

While fees are not the only factor to consider – the graduate job market, the cost of housing, and the evolving use of social media also loom large – students’ current and future financial situations are central to their concerns. And with some institutions set to raise their 2017 to 2018 fees to **£9,250** and interest rates on **student loans rising to 6.1%**, we can only expect this trend to deepen.”

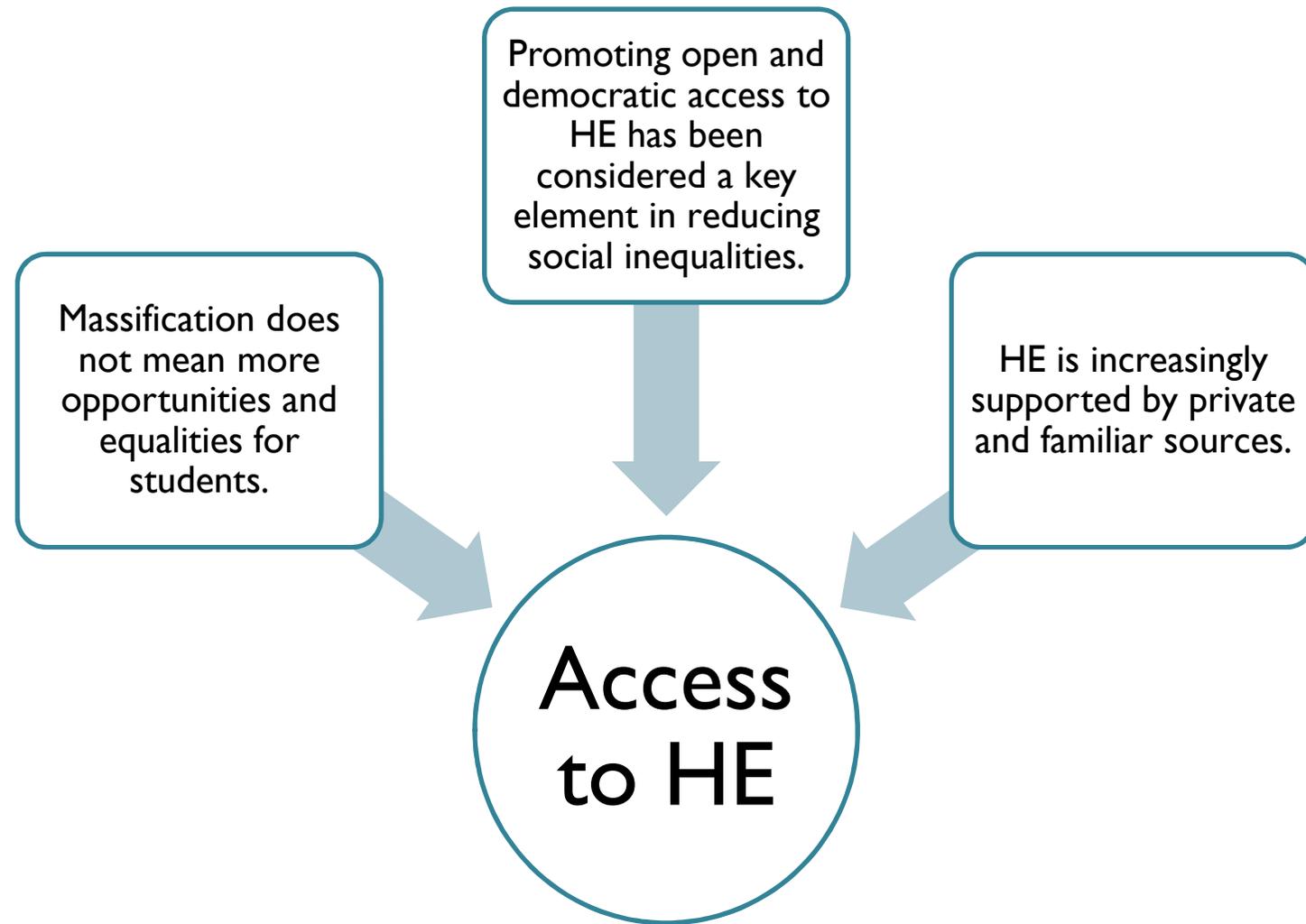
(Joshua Forstenzer, Vice-Chancellor's Fellow for the Public Benefit of Higher Education, University of Sheffield, September 1 2017).



Students and Higher Education

- There should be some minimal educational conditions to give sense to the notion of higher education and one of them is the **active role of students**, that is: a deep understanding of knowledge claims, the ability to criticize those claims, self-reflection and analysis, academic cooperation and **students' involvement in determining the shape and direction of knowledge production and distribution** (Barnett, 1990:203).
- Students represent a relatively neglected field in the study of HE and globalization (King & Raghuram, 2013). They are facing many controversies and dilemmas.

Students' paradoxes:



Student's population is increasing: from 6 millions (1945) to 144 millions (2010).

The growth of international students is considered one of the main contemporary migration flows.

HE as liberal and source of cognitive self-empowerment / perception of students as customers.

The idea of HE and the role of students



Key-issues:

- Tensions between HE and labour market: current European policies have overestimated the capacity of HE to generate returns in the labour market (Antonucci, 2016).
- Gaps between HE and wider society: the idea of universities as independent institutions that benefit the society is in contrast with the idea of HE as a private investment.
- The idea that HE is a public good and knowledge producer is in contrast with the reality, characterized by increasing individualization and responsibilities for students: “public good is likely to be found in the individual take-up of particular pre-determined values by students” (Williams, 2016:629).



Future agenda:

The crisis of HE is both internal and external. So challenges for students should operate on two dimensions:

1. Relationship between students and HE.
2. Relationship between students, HE and wider society.



Relationship between students and HE

- HE should be understood as EMANCIPATION. Call for: developing the students' critical abilities and incorporating disciplinary experiences into the curriculum; stressing the importance of philosophical and sociological insights (NOT because they are the only disciplines that can suggest critical perspectives, but) because they make possible self-analysis, self-understanding and self-empowerment (Barnett, 1990, 1994).
- Conditions for student learning should be improved. Importance of involving students in research and inquiry-oriented processes (Nerland, 2012).
- HE should be understood not just as development for the mind, but as an 'individual's cognitive achievement' based on the value of truth-seeking.



Ecological University

- A responsibility of the university is that of **WORKING OUT AN IMAGINATIVE CONCEPTION OF ITS FUTURE POSSIBILITIES.**
- Enabling individuals to develop themselves as to be self-sustaining; **MINDSET.**
- Sense of **CARE**
- Importance of **EMPATHY** (Barnett, 2011)



Relationship between students, HE and wider society

- European and global tendencies/ problems cannot have just individual and national answers.
- Future policy should include:
 1. The integration of welfare services and wellbeing counselling for students offered by HE institutions.
 2. Providing universal form of support for students, whatever their country of origin, background and field of study.
 3. Increasing the stability and security of wages to improve the capacity of labour market sources to sustain young people's semi-dependence (Antonucci, 2016).