

Plan for completion

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Introduction

Open access is a means of making scholarly work openly available online at no cost to the end user and with minimal barriers to reuse. It is a phenomenon that is being pursued for multiple reasons, ranging from pragmatic concerns such as speeding up the accumulation of scholarly knowledge by making the process of sharing information more frictionless, to ideological drivers such as making access to the scholarly record – and participation in its creation – more equitable. This thesis, *Open access policy in the UK: from neoliberalism to the commons?*, examines the political context around the UK's open access policy. It addresses issues arising from the tension between divergent agendas behind support for open access and the different routes towards achieving it.

Timetable for completion: To be written in the final six months, by September 2018.

Chapter 1. Access to Knowledge

The first two chapters place open access within a broader context. Chapter 1 takes a historical perspective, revealing that access to knowledge has undergone a long, slow process of change, related to social, technical, and political developments in printing, mass literacy, universities, and libraries. In this chapter, these developments are described and interrogated with respect to their effect on access to the outputs of scholarship. Tracing how the scholarly works generated within academia and distributed through publishers make their way into the hands of the general public, the focus is on the role of universities, academic publishing, and public libraries.

Timetable for completion: Over 50% completed, to be finished during summer 2017.

Chapter 2. 'Openness' and Contemporary Open Movements

Outlining a history of the concept of openness, this chapter begins by describing the quintessential contemporary open movement – open source software – and analysing what *open* means in this context. This concept of openness is shown to be found in other open movements, especially open access. By drawing parallels between open source and open access some of the political questions arising within the open access movement are revealed to be well established areas of concern.

Timetable for completion: Over one third completed, to be finished by end of second year (September 2017).

Chapter 3. Neoliberalism, Liberty, and Openness

Discussing the history of neoliberalism, defined here as the expansion of markets and market-derived forms of measurement and evaluation into all areas of social life, with a particular focus on understanding how *liberty* and *openness* are conceived within neoliberalism. An

analysis of the writings of Friedrich Hayek and Karl Popper focuses on their conception of liberty, in particular how Hayek placed free markets at the centre of liberal strategies for achieving democratic freedom, prioritising economic freedom over political freedom. Outlining the ideas of the Chicago School and their gradual adoption by policymakers shows how neoliberal ideology reached hegemonic status. Despite how neoliberal theories connect open societies and free markets, contemporary neoliberalism no longer upholds liberal ideals of freedom and could in fact threaten the very existence of democracy. If Wendy Brown is correct that neoliberalism's economisation of all spheres of life results in a *closure* of political and social freedom, so all that remains is freedom restricted to the economic realm, then Hayek and Popper's belief that free markets will inevitably lead to a free democratic society is proven false. The uncoupling of neoliberalism and openness also has strong implications for the open access movement and the policies it pursues, as discussed in later chapters.

Timetable for completion: Completed and submitted for upgrade. To be revised in final year.

Chapter 4. Neoliberal Higher Education

Building on the previous chapter, this analysis of the current state of higher education policy under neoliberalism demonstrates how ideas are translated into policy. The increasing encroachment of neoliberal governance in the realm of higher education and research is changing how society relates to the work of universities. Processes of marketisation, financialisation, and an intense focus on rankings has brought many elements of market logic to bear on the higher education sector.

Timetable for completion: Around 10% completed, to be worked on throughout the next year.

Chapter 5. Open Access Policy in the UK

This chapter begins with a historical description of open access policy – placed within a wider higher education policy context – focusing primarily on the UK but with reference to developments elsewhere. Analysis of the political decision-making processes and ideologies which have led to the current policy environment brings in elements from the earlier discussions on openness and neoliberalism. By combining a critique of neoliberalism with the political questions found within the open access movement, we start to get a more complete picture of the political implications of current open access policy. A case study of open access funding – article processing charges (APCs) paid by UK higher education institutions – complements the theoretical argument by analysing the real effect of one aspect of open access policy.

Timetable for completion: One third completed, to be worked on throughout the next year (the policy context is continually developing so cannot be finalised until near completion of thesis).

Chapter 6. The Commons as an Alternative Policy Framework

The final chapter will examine possibilities for an alternative, non-neoliberal direction for open access policy. It will look at work on the commons, especially commons-based conceptions of scholarly knowledge, and assess whether these ideas provide a vision of

knowledge production and dissemination which is more aligned with the social justice aims of some open access advocates. Since the previous chapter found that actually-existing open access policy leads away from these aims, alternative policies will be proposed – albeit recognising that any drastic changes may need to be accompanied by corresponding shifts in the broader higher education environment.

Timetable for completion: To be written during third year, completing by September 2018.

Conclusion

Summary of the overall arguments of the preceding chapters and ideas for alternative open access policy priorities.

Timetable for completion: To be written in the final six months, by September 2018.