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Engaging scientists : organising valorisation in the Netherlands

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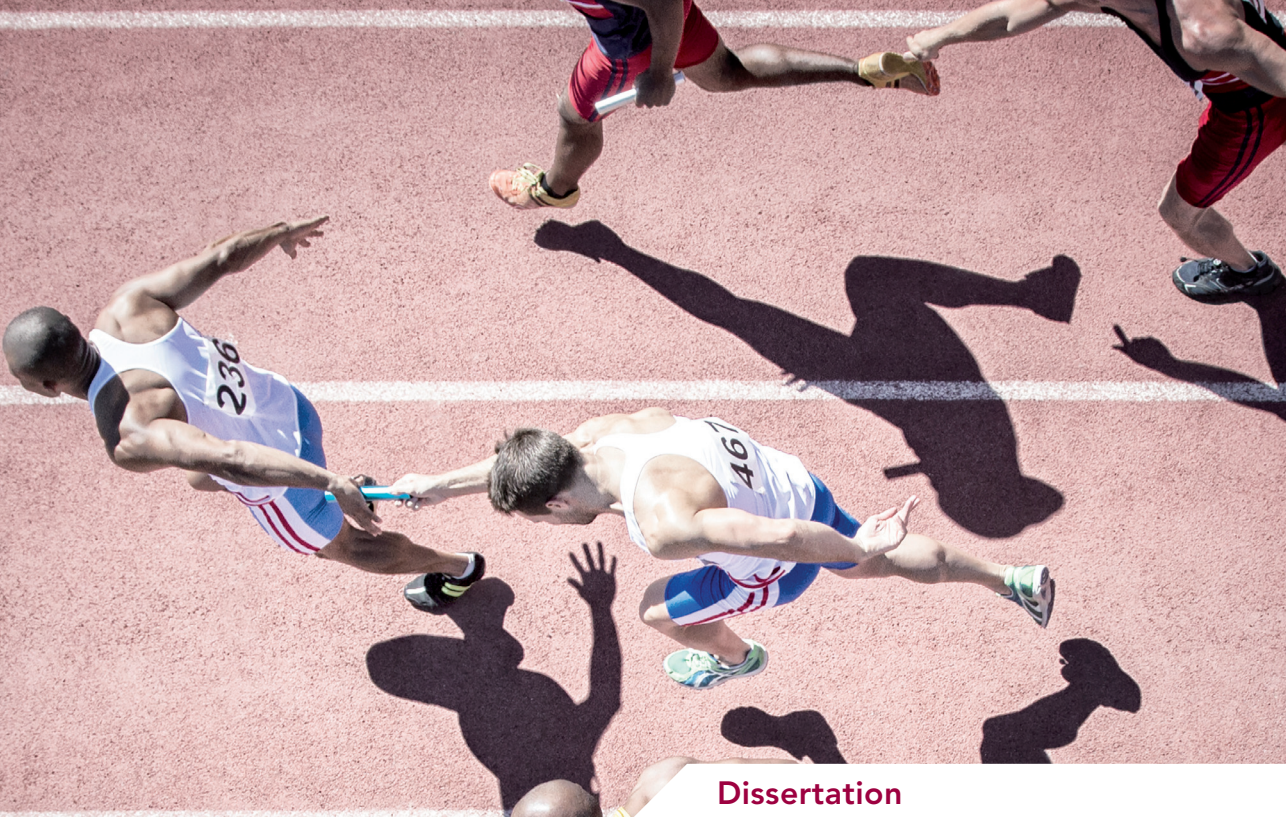
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Dissertation

Engaging Scientists Organising Valorisation in the Netherlands

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Globally, the call for impact of science on society is louder than ever. The Netherlands is no exception. In 2004, valorisation was introduced as a core element of Dutch science policy, aiming to increase the societal benefits of academic research. In scientific practice, the introduction of valorisation meant scientists got a new task, in addition to teaching and education.

This thesis studies the valorisation policy from a principal-agent perspective. It aims to answer two questions. 1) How has the valorisation policy of Dutch government been translated to academic practice in the Netherlands between 2004 and 2014? And 2) How can societal benefits of academic research be evaluated? Scientists from a multitude of disciplines, as well as societal actors, have been interviewed and surveyed and policy documents have been studied.

The first key result of the study is that the Dutch science system is in a transition. Scientists are motivated to engage with society and do so in many different ways. However, they have a limited understanding of valorisation policies and feel poorly equipped for the task. The second key result is that valorisation should be evaluated as a process. This facilitates learning among scientists and as such allows for improving valorisation practices.

The study ends with policy recommendations, addressing government, intermediaries, such as research council NWO and universities, and the academic community.

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