

## Social co-operatives and the democratisation of higher education

*Higher education in the UK is in crisis. The idea of the public university is under assault, and both the future of the sector and its relationship to society are being gambled. Higher education is increasingly unaffordable, its historic institutions are becoming untenable, and their purpose is resolutely instrumental. Moreover, the intellectual leadership of HE is situated within a competitive, transnational political and economic context, and this reproduces academic practices through marketization and financialisation.*

*This paper develops a critical analysis of 'intellectual leadership' in the University, and identifies on-going efforts from around the world to create alternative models for organising HE and the production of knowledge. It offers the potential for developing an alternative conception of the role and purpose of HE that is rooted in the idea of 'mass intellectuality'. This takes experiences and views from inside and beyond the structures of mainstream HE, in order to reflect critically on efforts to create really existing alternatives.*

*In the process the authors ask if it is possible to re-imagine the University democratically and co-operatively? If so, what are the implications for leadership not just within the University but also in terms of higher education's relationship to society? The authors argue that an alternative role and purpose is required, based upon the real possibility of democracy in learning and the production of knowledge. Thus, the paper concludes with a critical-practical response grounded in the form of 'co-operative higher education'. This rests on the assertion that 'social co-operatives' offer an organizational form that values democratic participation and decision-making and would constitute the university as a social form of mass intellectuality re-appropriated by the producers of knowledge.*

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## Introduction

A series of global economic crises rooted in debt-saturation and the increasing deregulation of globalised financial markets, culminating in the Great Crash of 2008 and persistent stagnation, have formed a critical moment of contention that reframes the role of leadership within the management and governance of higher education (HE). These crises have emerged in tandem with the transnational mobility and flexibility of capital, which has subsequently dispersed neoliberal governance models across the globe (Clarke 2005). They have also tended to swamp socio-environmental and socio-cultural crises that have disproportionately affected the global South, and which have amplified the impacts of the on-going coloniality and patriarchy of power.

Collectively these form an on-going, transnational crisis of social reproduction that amplifies the tensions between leadership both as status (or metaphor) and function, alongside its relationship to vertical and horizontal forms of governance. These tensions have affected responses to the increasingly financialized and marketized idea of HE, which are conditioned by the restructuring of the university as space in which associations of transnational actors have a stake. These actors include: finance capital, such as private equity firms and hedge funds, which are leveraging both student and institutional debt, for instance through the issuing of public and private bonds; technology firms and publishers, which are seeking to extract surpluses through a rentier economy; policy makers who are attempting to re-shape the terrain of HE *for-profit*; think-tanks and consultancies seeking to widen the space for the market through evidence-based practice; philanthrocapitalists who use charitable foundations to promote the virtues of the market and entrepreneurial activity to stimulate outcomes-based practices; and finally, university senior managers, effectively acting as chief executive officers rather than as *primus inter pares*.

In spite of restructuring, transnational capital has been unable to reassert stable forms of accumulation (Bellamy Foster and Yates 2014; Cleaver 1993). The result has been persistent recession with low levels of growth, weak aggregate demand, and high levels of

underemployment or unemployment. Beyond the economy, this has amplified social divisions and tensions, including inside the HE sector. Here antagonistic forces have emerged in opposition to: increased student fees; rising levels of student and institutional debt; increased performance management within institutions and across institutions, through the imposition of teaching and research metrics; a lack of transparency and accountability from managers to the students and academics who labour inside universities; the corporatisation of the University and the diminution of its potential social agenda beyond the market; historic pedagogic practices that emerged from inside the public, liberal university and which are bound up with colonial power; and ideologies of students as purchasers of services (Hall 2015; Hall and Smyth 2016).

In this context, it is clear that higher education is in crisis. The idea of the public university is under assault (Bailey and Freedman 2011), and both the future of the sector and its relationship to society are being gambled (McGettigan 2013). Higher education is increasingly unaffordable, its historic institutions are becoming untenable, and their purpose is overwhelmingly instrumental. What and who have led us to this crisis? What are the alternatives? To whom do we look for leadership in revealing those alternatives?

This paper introduces a forthcoming book<sup>1</sup>, in which there are a number of critical analyses of 'intellectual leadership' inside and outside the University. The authors document ongoing efforts from around the world to create alternative models for organising higher education and the production of knowledge (Hall and Winn 2017) The accounts are drawn from the authors' experience and views from inside and beyond the structures of mainstream higher education and reflect critically on efforts to create really existing alternatives. In response, we ask whether it is possible to reimagine the University democratically and co-operatively? If so, what are the implications for leadership not just within the University but also in terms of higher education's relationship to societies?

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<sup>1</sup> Hall, R. and Winn, J. (2017) *Mass Intellectuality and Democratic Leadership in Higher Education*, London: Bloomsbury.

The positions taken by the book's authors are plural, emerging from critical feminism and radical pedagogy, alongside the politics of subaltern resistance, as well as from critical theory that is informed by Marxism and anarchism. However, as a whole they take forward a programme that is deliberately counter-hegemonic in conception and theoretical framing. Whilst utilising a number of different theoretical positions, their analyses provide a collective voice that calls for a radically-different engagement with intellectual leadership. Thus, a number of the authors argue that mass higher education is at the point where it no longer reflects the needs, capacities and long term interests of global society. An alternative role and purpose is engaged with critically, based upon the concept of 'mass intellectuality': the real possibility of democracy in learning and the production of knowledge, including the ways in which we know ourselves and our relationships with others.

## Mass Intellectuality

The origins of the term 'mass intellectuality' can be found within the Autonomist Marxist tradition, building on Marx's notion of the 'general intellect' (Dyer-Witheford 1999; Manzerolle 2010; Marx 1993; Virno and Hardt 1996). Marx (1993: 694) argued that the dynamics of capitalism meant

the accumulation of knowledge and of skill, of the general productive forces of the social brain, is thus absorbed into capital, as opposed to labour, and hence appears as an attribute of capital, and more specifically of fixed capital [machinery].

Through innovation and competition, the technical and skilled work of the social individual, operating in factories, corporations or schools, is absorbed into the things she produces.

Therefore, the 'general intellect' of society, i.e. its general capacity for *science* in the broadest sense, is absorbed into capitalised technologies and techniques, in order to reduce labour costs

and increase productivity. As a result, 'the human being comes to relate more as a watchman and regulator to the production process itself' (Marx 1993: 705).

With the crisis of funding, regulation and governance of higher education, there is a need to understand: first, the mechanisms through which the general intellect is directed, absorbed or co-opted into the total social production process of value, to which universities contribute; and second, how leadership enables this as 'watchman and regulator', or resists such co-option. Addressing the crisis of higher education in this way calls attention to the proliferation of alternative educational practices, which are themselves re-imaginings of the idea of the University as a site for the production of knowledge. These alternatives are rooted in the desire and potential for reclaiming the knowledge, skills, practices and techniques that form the general intellect, in order to produce and circulate new forms of socially-useful knowledge or ways of knowing, being in and creating the world. From this reclaiming or liberation of the general intellect, away from the valorisation of capital, emerges 'mass intellectuality' as a direct, cognitive and social force of production that exists as an increasingly diffuse form of intellectuality. In this form, it circulates as a 'commons' that is pregnant with critical and practical potential but still remains marginal in the face of general commodity production (Smith 2013). As a result, it is constantly being recuperated by capital in the form of the 'knowledge economy' or 'cognitive capitalism'. Virno (2001) argues that

Mass intellectuality is the prominent form in which the general intellect is manifest today. The scientific erudition of the individual labourer is not under question here. Rather, all the more generic attitudes of the mind gain primary status as productive resources; these are the faculty of language, the disposition to learn, memory, the power of abstraction and relation and the tendency towards self-reflexivity.

It should be made clear that the concept of mass intellectuality refers to knowledge and forms of knowing that can be and are being valorised by capital, but also refers to that same knowledge's immanent and pre-figurative, critical and re-constructive, potential of new forms of sociality. In

this way, mass intellectuality implies a struggle over the proletarianisation of cognitive and affective forms of labour, and its emancipatory implications, as the embodiment of the cumulative history of science.

An engagement with the concept of mass intellectuality therefore implies a critique of subjectivity, in its relationship to the prevalent mode of (knowledge) production, the institutions where it is sited and the oversight, management and leadership that arises from these spaces. The process of liberating and reclaiming the knowledge, skills, practices and techniques that are produced inside higher educational contexts is central to moving beyond exploitation and valorisation in the market, and in creating democratic, co-operative alternatives. As a result, mass intellectuality is an important concept in the critique of existing approaches to intellectual leadership, because it suggests that critical-practical solutions to global, socio-environmental problems need not be framed around economic growth and business-as-usual. It enables a refocusing on the potential for the democratic or co-operative reproduction of the University, and a level of productive, scientific and social knowledge that exists as an immanent, transgressive potential across capitalist societies.

The case studies and models of analysis we are drawing from suggest that the democratisation of higher education as an emancipatory project must re-appropriate the means of knowledge production in the labour process (Postone 1993), and engage with leadership models that nurture the co-operation of academic and student scholarship and work. This includes questioning these relationships, alongside the forms of thought and being that they constitute and through which they are constituted. The book's authors ask: What kind of 'leadership' in the academy and beyond can support the liberation of the general intellect? They question whether the idea and institutions of the University can be freed from the market, in order to generate the kind of leadership which is self-challenging and capable of enabling the knowledge production process of others. To do the latter, it has to respect the knowledge of others and potential problem-solving through co-production, co-critique and evidential

exploration. We argue that society needs 'leaders' who do not seek 'followers', but who are themselves rooted in the philosophy and ethics of mass intellectuality. By uncovering widespread, objective conditions for the alienation of the products and processes of higher education from their social utility, the different accounts also identify the already-existing material conditions for new democratic models of knowledge production and education.

### **The literature on academic leadership**

The translation of the crisis of capitalism into the terrain of higher education has forced the sector to consider its structure and forms, alongside its regulation and governance models, with knock-on implications for leadership, in its dual nature as status and function. Reflecting the outcomes of a global literature review, Dopson et al. (2016: 7) argued that 'the current literature on leadership development approaches in UK [United Kingdom] higher education appears small scale, fragmented and often theoretically weak, with many different models, approaches and methods co-existing with little clear pattern of consensus formation.' A central issue is the effect of externalities like socio-economic crises and demands for impact, on the ability of institutional and sectoral leaders to develop leadership capacity and capability, for instance through leadership development programmes (Marshall 2012; Pepper and Giles 2015).

For Day et al. (2014) where leadership is instrumentalized as a process that can be measured, using status or position to analyse leadership is problematic, and this may hinder any engagement with uncertainty (Barnett, 2012; see also, Evans et al. (2013) for a discussion of leadership issues relating to the Professoriate). The response of policymakers and senior staff has been to refocus upon organisational development agendas and performance management, which foreclose on alternative possibilities. In the global North, this has highlighted a disconnect between leading and leadership, precisely because the ideal of the university as a self-critical community of academic and student scholars with high levels of autonomy (Neary and Saunders

2011) is being disciplined by a dominant corporate agenda that incentivises specific, impactful behaviours (Alvesson and Spicer 2012). There is also a separate question about whether these agendas should be globally generalised, and whether binaries about what the university was or might be are culturally relevant.

The literature attempts to interpret the practices of effective leaders. A tension emerges between critical theory and the idea of leadership (Western 2008; Zoller and Fairhurst 2007), especially in relation to ideas of power. One mechanism that has been critiqued in relation to power is the idea that leadership can be exerted in a distributed manner through network governance. For Davies (2011) the idea of the network society is complex and contested, and rests on claims about: the inability of effective command management given the fragmentary nature of capitalist modernity; the decentred opportunities that exist for intersectional interests to challenge hegemonic power and elites; and how ubiquitous communications technology provides an infrastructure for such global connections. These precepts underpin horizontalism, as the belief that we live in a world that can only be understood if we apply network-theoretical, cybernetic concepts (Miller Medina 2005).<sup>2</sup>

However, what emerges are fluidly-organised, technology-rich, hegemonic governance networks, rather than new forms of democratic, network governance. As a result, ethical virtues like trust and empowered reflexivity are co-opted by hierarchies for command management and the anti-ethical closure of horizons. Governance becomes based on consent through coercion, and the latter demands forms of performance management and governmentality, for instance in the relentless focus on curriculum performance data or in the production of knowledge transfer (Ball 2009; Davies 2011). The distributed forms of leadership that are claimed through network governance theory (Hoppe and Reinelt 2010; Jarvis et al. 2013; King and Nesbitt 2015) ignore

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<sup>2</sup> The theoretical lineages of horizontalism are multiple, and emerge from positions, places and times that are exterior to the traditional centres of global power (the periphery), as well as from immateriality and the centre.



that networks are prone to resolving into hierarchies and incremental closure, that they reproduce and crystallise inequalities, and that distrust is common.

The idea that leadership can be cultivated and distributed so that networks can be amplified connects to the entrepreneurial development of leadership as a form of human capital. This risks breeding the idea of the leader as superhero, with identifiable traits capable of generating the space and time for the accumulation of social capital by distributed others (Bolden et al. 2003). The development of coaching and mentoring practices, reflexivity, risk management, ethical leadership, and so on, then tend to crystallise the idea that leadership can be instrumentalized (Morrison et al. 2003), and internalised.

Such instrumentalization downplays the gendered and racialised nature of leadership (Avolio *et al* 2009), and instead emphasizes: control and transaction; accountability; individual persistence; personal performance management; self- (rather than collective) development; psychometric development; and so on (Fischer et al. 2015; Simmonds and Tsui 2010; Turnbull and Edwards 2005). In contrast, Deem et al. (2007) have argued for reflective leadership practices that are appropriate to both the management of knowledge workers, and the public purpose of the university. The pressures on subjects who are female, feminised and/or racialised, who are attempting to lead in workplaces that have traditionally functioned as white and male, is especially problematic (Gallant 2014; James 2013; Johnson 2015; Loke 2015; Mirza 2015), and signals one of the ways in which leadership may fail to provide solutions to on-going socio-economic or environmental crises (Bryman 2007).

These tensions reveal a further examination of the boundaries of academic leadership (Bolden et al. 2009; Noble and Pym 1970). One response is to address the scope of academic leadership in terms of citizenship (Bolden et al. 2014), as an attempt to analyse it as a bottom-up process that might become sustainable by starting from established values of collegiality and academic autonomy, rather than fetishizing missions, visions, shared goals, and followership. This is important in addressing 'leadership' through the possibilities opened-up by 'mass

intellectuality' as a reframing of social relationships and processes. The idea of citizenship enables leadership to be analysed as a social process 'in which it is considered to be relationally constructed and embedded within communities' (Bolden et al. 2014: 756).

Thus, it is possible to see leadership as an activity rather than a form of status, and as a deliberative, social service (Macfarlane 2007; 2011) grounded in self-governance, self-regulation and self-directedness. Here communal rights and responsibilities are immanent to one another, and the health of the organisation is strengthened through institutional connections to traditional communities grounded in academic values. As a result, the university might be a site for renewed, collective, civic engagement that is negotiated communally and that may take many forms. For Bolden et al. (2014: 765) this enables individuals 'to recognise their own part within power relationships and find ways of articulating their anxieties about academic life.'

For Alvesson and Spicer (2012), dissolving the boundaries between academic leadership as a process and civil society, in order that crises can more appropriately be addressed, demands new forms of critical performativity. This moves beyond functionalist and interpretive analyses of scientific or socially-constructed leadership activities, in order to reposition them reflexively. The concept of critical performativity questions dominant positions through: circumspect care for the views of those who are leading; progressive pragmatism in working with accepted academic discourses for emancipatory ends; and uncovering present potentialities, or a sense of what could be (Alvesson and Spicer 2012: 376-7).

As a result, academic leadership is related to specific local contexts, and mindful of the structural limitations of power. This enables critical performative leadership to mitigate the risk that outright resistance to, or rejection of, leadership leads to the further imposition of authority alongside the refusal to countenance democratic organisational engagement. Critical performativity recognises leadership as a terrain of struggle that reveals and questions established and emergent social relations and forces of production inside the university. It thereby offers the space for alternatives that are co-operative and democratic.

We might then question how academic leadership restructures the everyday educational and pedagogical realities of academics and students. This demands a return to the idea of intellectual leadership as a form of mass intellectuality, in order to reveal the politicised and elitist (rather than normative or interpretive) nature of academic practices (Kautsky 1903). A further question is whether leadership reflects or reproduces the abstract nature of social relations (Eacott 2013), and how it might be analysed in relation to its concrete contexts, in order that crises of social reproduction might be overcome or addressed at the level of society, rather than in relation to the market.

### Reframing and reconceiving intellectual leadership

Our alternative framing of intellectual leadership emerges through three sections in the book that situate higher education against the ongoing crisis of capitalism, with responses to it from inside and outside the University. This articulates the limits of formal HE, including the binaries of public and private, in a range of national contexts. Here there is a connection to traditions of critical pedagogy in which critical knowing has always been existential, collective and transformative, in order to challenge the hegemonic framing of learning as separate from society and everyday life.

The opening section of the book focuses on *Power, History and Authority* inside formal higher education. It asks what and who has led us to this crisis of higher education? What forms of resistance are taking place inside the University and how are these being led? This section seeks to situate certain functions of the University against distributed leadership at the level of society, rather than it being rooted in a professional cadre. Stephen Shukaitis begins this work with an analysis of struggles inside the classroom over the labour of students and academics, and the potential responses that are enabled through critical pedagogy. Shukaitis situates this against networked or free labour, and enables an exploration of the idea that academic labour becomes a form of self-exploiting entrepreneurship. This in-turn needs critique if the university is to be

repurposed for wider, communal benefits. Tom Woodin then situates these emergent realities historically, through the lessons to be taken from the development of co-operative higher education. This enables an alternative analysis that emerges from the specific historical context of public versus private educational provision in the UK.

This historical and material focus has implications for academic leadership on a transnational scale, and this is addressed through Mike Neary's analysis of the voices of those who both work inside the University and who have opposed the subsumption of academic labour to financialisation and the market. Neary's interviews with those who have demonstrated leadership in resisting the neoliberal restructuring of higher education in the global North begins to articulate a theoretical understanding of public intellectualism, as a form of mass intellectuality. In order to extend this cultural, public intellectual analysis, and in similar transnational contexts, Martin Eve then explores the ways in which positive rhetorics and projects that extend the open and public reach of HE research have been recuperated by neoliberal governance systems. By addressing the co-option of open access, the section ends by questioning the societal value of business-as-usual models for public, higher education, and what forms of leadership practice might enable alternatives to emerge.

The second section of the book examines *Potentialities* for change and radical experiment in various transnational contexts, alongside their ramifications for re-imagining leadership as a distributed, democratic activity. This section asks whether it is possible to re-imagine the University democratically and co-operatively? If so, what are the implications for leadership not just within the University but also in terms of higher education's relationship to society? Joyce Canaan outlines her engagement with Brazilian resistance to extreme neoliberalism in the pedagogic practices of the Landless Movement. She uses this to discuss the impossibility of being an intellectual worker in the neoliberal university, and questions whether the concept of mass intellectuality enables a meaningful analysis of democratic leadership outside the global North. The argument then moves to examine social movements rooted in pedagogy, through

forms of resistance inside the University. Eurig Scandrett questions the specific, enhancement-driven space of Scottish higher education with reference to case studies of environmental justice, resistance to gender-based violence and trades union activity. Scandrett situates the experience of the knowledge worker against that emerging from within social movements, in order to address the possibilities for alternative forms of leadership.

Developing this approach, the section then looks at the germination of two specific strands of academic leadership as forms of struggle to reclaim higher education. In the first, Jenny Pearce engages with strands of mass intellectuality as they emerged historically in Bradford University's Peace Studies curriculum and the CommUNiTy project, as they were infused with a material and cultural analysis of sociability in Latin America. In this work, Pearce questions the relationships between academics and social movements, revealed through the curriculum, and the possibilities that emerge. Clark and Jackson then develop a theoretical/practical case study grounded in performing arts, which questions the place of higher education in the production of artistic and cultural leadership. This analysis develops the meaning and purpose of arts education in its relationship to societal leadership as it emerges in the global North.

The final section of the book is rooted in *Praxis*, and looks at practical, alternative initiatives that are rooted in critical pedagogy and physical places beyond the University. It asks whether a focus on mass intellectuality as a form of distributed, democratic leadership enables alternative re-imaginings of higher education. The section begins with the Birmingham Autonomous University's (BAU) six theses on the collective failings of the hegemonic University, and the possibility that exists for creating a co-operative form of societal engagement. The Birmingham, UK, collective shapes its response as a means of striking against the methodological University. Joel Lazarus then develops an auto-ethnography of an alternative education project in Oxford, UK, which looks at leadership and managerialism, framed by the idea of the organic intellectual in society. Lazarus uses the experience of the People's Political Economy (PPE) as a case study of what might be achieved.

The wider global and transnational context of resistance to marketization and financialization in higher education is then situated against a critique of the Lincoln Social Science Centre, UK, by Gary Saunders. This is an established alternative that offers a means of analysing the governing principles and leadership modes of other, transnational alternatives, in order to frame questions about their co-operative and democratic, practical and theoretical viability. Tom Henfrey then develops the idea of alternative responses to leadership in the face of global, socio-environmental crises, through an eco-critical, thematic approach to mass intellectuality, rooted in the ethics of environmentalism. This enables the alternatives discussed in this book to connect to a wider environmental and transition/resilience agenda and its relationship to formal higher education. The section then concludes with Sara Motta's comparative analysis of indigenous communities and women of colour in the Escuela Política de Mujeres Pazífica (Political School of Pacifist Women) in Cali, Colombia, and the Family Inclusion Strategy Hunger (FISH) collective based in the Hunter Valley, Australia. This analysis specifically relates co-operative, inclusive educational practices of creating ourselves, our relationships and communities differently. It challenges the coloniality of being as it is reproduced in the geopolitics of knowledge production inside contemporary capitalism. The potential for mass intellectuality to be decolonised by feminised and racialised subjects on the margins enables a unique analysis of educational leadership that is embedded within political-pedagogical, emancipatory horizons.

Finally, the book is rounded off with an evaluation and systematic critique of the collaborative approach adopted in its production. Gordon Asher analyses the ways in which co-operative writing and publishing inside the University might enable voices to be heard that are against and beyond the valorisation of academic labour. Uncovering the production processes of this book and the methods through which its ways of knowing the world are articulated, then becomes a mechanism for analysing the possibility for distributed leadership. Here co-

production, deliberation and negotiation in and through writing are potentially a form of mass intellectuality that affects our perceptions of democratic leadership.

In our reading of the different accounts collected in the book, we have identified six themes:

1. *The relationship between hegemonic leadership and academic labour:* Several of the accounts focus either explicitly or implicitly on concerns that can be framed in terms of the labour processes of higher education and analysed through labour theory. Issues such as academic freedom, open access to research, and the methodological disciplining of knowledge can all be approached as issues of labour.

2. *The realities of hegemonic leadership:* A number of the authors detail the lived effects and subjective affects of the normative discourse of leadership in higher education. They show how individual subjectivity is shaped by institutional structures to produce objectionable forms of being and knowing.

3. *Alternative models of leadership as forms of counter-hegemony:* To differing degrees, each author offers alternative ways of modelling, framing and enacting intellectual leadership in higher education, drawing from their own experience or from the direct experience of other participants. The examples extend from a community university project in the North of England to the Brazilian landless movement.

4. *The attributes of counter-hegemonic leadership:* When viewed more abstractly, these alternatives present us with a number of concepts that alternative, democratic leadership can be conceived with, e.g. public intellectualism, co-production, dialogue, consent, horizontal vs. higher education, mutual recognition, and deep listening.

5. *Articulating the problems with alternative forms of leadership:* Alternative approaches to intellectual leadership and not without their own problems to resolve. For example, tensions between participants from different backgrounds, and the difficulties of sustaining alternatives

that are impeded by the very foundational constituents of capitalist reality – space, money, personal energy, and particularly time.

6. *Contradictions in developing mass intellectuality as form of resistance:* The contradictory constituents of capitalism are reproduced by forms of resistance to them. Effective alternatives cannot simply deny or ignore these contradictions but instead make them part of their project of critique and resistance-as-praxis i.e. an ongoing lived critique.

A crucial question for academics and students who labour inside the University is, what is to be done? One argument is for a new form of higher learning that emerges out of the negative dysfunctionality of the capitalist university. Another is to see emerge the conditions for participants' re-occupation of their colonised selves, as the space from which decolonising emancipatory practices of mass-intellectuality might flourish. Another response to this question is that of shared and co-operative 'public' spaces and forms of provision. Several authors argue for the generation of a social, co-operative university. This is a space that serves a democratic, emancipatory agenda, rooted in collective ownership and co-operative participatory governance and is founded on a radical reconceptualization of labour.

### **Institutionalising democratic leadership**

We conclude this paper by addressing the 'crucial question': what is to be done? One critical response discussed by some of the book's authors and already found in both the global North and South, focuses on the Co-operative. This is a constitutionally-democratic organisational form with a long history in progressive international politics and that holds education as one of its core principles. Since the mid-nineteenth century, 'Co-operators' have built a worldwide social movement of member-led organisations based on the common ownership of property and its democratic governance (Yeo 1988). Education has always been a core principle, alongside open membership, autonomy and independence, solidarity with other co-operatives and concern for



community. The internationally agreed co-operative values are self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity (MacPherson 2007).

Since 2010, a growing body of research into co-operative higher education (Winn 2015) has emerged that points to three routes to a ‘co-operative university’: the formal *conversion* of existing universities into co-operatives through legal and constitutional means; the *dissolution* of our institutions into de facto co-operatives by constituting research centres as co-operatives, embedding co-operative values and principles into institutional strategies and leadership roles, establishing taught programmes of study along co-operative values and principles, etc.; and third, the *creation* of new co-operative forms of higher education alongside the existing system of universities. Whichever route that might be opted for – and we should pursue them all – there are no quick fixes. Co-operatives are not a panacea for the forces of neoliberalism or the personal ambitions of some academics, managers and administrators. However, there are deep historical and social resources to draw upon within the co-operative movement that can help us rethink the way our universities are run, the institutional form that they take, and the nature and role of leadership within a democratic organisation.

Critics of the ‘co-operative university’ might question our commitment to the idea of the ‘public university’. Indeed, co-operatives are anti-statist, but they also exceed the idea of ‘public ownership’ with that of ‘common ownership’, a social form of property that is the antithesis of the right of free alienability which distinguishes capitalist private property. In short, co-operative higher education is entirely compatible with the idea of the ‘public’ if we reconceive it as a ‘commons’: an academic commons, democratically controlled by academic and support staff, students and others.

Although the co-operative form of member-owned and democratically-controlled organisation has historically been adopted primarily for the benefits of an exclusive single member type (e.g. workers or consumers), a more recent form of co-operative that is becoming widely adopted around the world is that of ‘social co-operatives’ (also called ‘solidarity’ or ‘multi-

stakeholder' co-ops). This historically recent form of association emerged in the 1970s and has been gradually obtaining legal status in different nation states. In 2011, the 'World Standards of Social Co-operatives' was ratified after a two-year global consultation process. We emphasise that this is a new form of association, one that was not available to the founders of most 20th century universities. To-date, the best example is Mondragon University in the Basque region of Spain, where its membership is comprised of workers (academics and non-academic employee-owners), students, and 'collaborators' (members of the community, local business, etc.). In its current form, Mondragon University, which is in fact a 'co-operative of co-operatives', itself only dates back to 1997. Each of its four Faculties is an autonomous co-operative with elected positions of leadership that represent the democratically determined interests of their organisation's members (Wright et al. 2011; Neary, Valenzuela Fuentes and Winn, forthcoming).

According to the World Standards of Social Co-operatives, there are five defining characteristics of social co-operatives, at the heart of which is the multi-stakeholder membership structure. Each of the stakeholder groups is formally represented in the governing structures of the organisation on the basis of one-person one-vote. The multiple forms of membership reflect the combined interests of the organisation within its social context and not surprisingly, such co-operatives typically pursue social objectives through the provision of social services, such as healthcare and education. For example, since 2011, over 850 schools in the UK have become multi-stakeholder co-operatives, following other countries where co-operative schools already exist (Woodin 2015). This particular model of democratic ownership and governance is an increasingly popular form of co-operative organisation with successful examples of different sizes and services being provided, demonstrating its flexibility as a modern organisational form (Ridley-Duff and Bull 2014).

The literature on university governance in the UK shows clearly that a number of incremental policy changes have led to a more widespread corporate form of university governance: first, the Jarratt report (1985), which established the Vice Chancellor as Chief

Executive; second, the Dearing report (1997), which reduced the number of members on the governing body; and third, the Lambert report (2003), which stated that participatory governance by a community of scholars was not 'fit for modern times', and recommended a voluntary code of governance for the HE sector (Shattock 2006; Shattock 2008). Each of these government sponsored reviews and subsequent policy and regulatory changes has been conducted in response to the changing historical development of the corporate form in general, most notably the Cadbury report (1992), the Hampel report (1998), the Higgs report (2003), and the development of the current UK Corporate Governance Code (Shattock 2006). Thus, a history of the development of university governance and management has to be seen in the broader context of changing corporate forms and the underlying dynamic of political, economic and social contradictions. The intellectual and academic leadership that arises from and is supported by the particular corporate form of the university is similarly affected by the changing nature of the body corporate. Hence, it is no surprise that with the changing corporate form of the university, academic leadership itself becomes morphed into more managerial and entrepreneurial forms. The University as a social and institutional form demands it.

A critique of intellectual leadership in higher education also implies a critique of its corporate (i.e. organisational) form. As a historically new form of institutional governance, the 'social co-operative' appears to be compatible with traditional collegial structures (Cook 2013) and speaks to many of the concerns raised over increased corporate governance structures and hierarchical management of universities (Bacon 2014) by providing an alternative for existing governors, academics and students to consider. It also has much to commend for more radical, popular and community-based forms of education. As all the authors in the book argue, we need to encourage a different way of thinking about the role, value and form of higher education institutions in society. Such thinking is not as 'public' or 'private' forms of higher education, but as 'social' organisations sustained through solidarity and co-operation among their members. To address this, one task is to compare forms of governance and leadership in both higher

education and social co-operatives and use this learning as a stimulus for critical reflection on the practical and contemporary issue of democracy in higher education. Such a task does not address the wide range of critical issues highlighted in this paper, but a better understanding of practices that create and sustain co-operative organisations could support the critical, intellectual forms of association that are discussed throughout.

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