

Theorizing the Entrepreneurial University: Open questions and possible answers

Panagiotis Sotiris

University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Lesvos

Abstract

This article attempts to address theoretical questions regarding the transition towards an entrepreneurial university and the changes associated with this process, namely the increased commodification, the competitive quest for private funding and the introduction of business management practices. The important theoretical advances made in the 1960s and 1970s regarding the role of Higher Education in ideological and social reproduction cannot fully account for the new relations between education, capitalist production and the market. Current attempts to theorize these changes as a process of transforming Universities into private enterprises, especially those using a ‘cognitive capitalism’ framework tend to underestimate the political, ideological and hegemonic aspects of Higher Education. What is needed is a theorization of Higher Education as an hegemonic apparatus and an attempt to view the transition to the entrepreneurial university not as a simple process of privatization, but as a complex and uneven process of internalization and pre-inscription of the realities of capitalist production and a subsumption of education to the imperatives of capitalist accumulation.

Keywords: higher education; cognitive capitalism; hegemony; entrepreneurial university

Introduction: The changing academic landscape

Since the 1980s, university reform has been mainly associated with the adjustment or opening up of universities towards markets and the interests of private business. Linking Universities to the developments in the economy, making them more responsive to the needs of industry and holding them accountable in relation to their ability to be productive and competitive have been the battle cries of this transformation. This, in its turn, was based upon a certain narrative of the ‘crisis of Higher Education’ and the need to realign Universities to the needs of the economy (OECD 1987; Tierney and Rhoades 1995).

We are now in a position to have a rather comprehensive image of the changes in Universities, all over the world, in the past decades. There have been changes in University funding and the terms of allocation of public subsidy leading to increased pressure to seek outside sources of revenue, in the form of tuition fees (or increases in tuition fees), of research and development contracts, of sponsoring and donations (Clark 1998; Clark 2004; Williams G. 2009; Thorp and Goldstein 2009; Shattock 2009). Start-ups and spin-offs lead to Universities and/or academics engaging in business practises, with research Universities being at the centre of the developments in high-technology sectors (Feldman 2003; Auerswald and Branscomb 2003). We have witnessed the internationalization of university studies (Martinez 2009), with a rapidly growing

international market for higher and post-secondary education, with fees and income from such services being increasingly important for the funding of internationally oriented Higher Education Institutions (Ross 2009), along with the emergence of a global supply of intellectual labour. There have been changes in University administration with a wider formal and informal introduction of management methods from the world of private enterprise, in line with the more general trend towards a much more authoritarian and business-like form of public management, exemplified in the literature on 'new public management' (Deem *et al.* 2007). Regarding the leading groups within Universities actual power has moved away from traditional academic hierarchy towards those Professors associated with research funding and linkages with private enterprise. Moreover, there is a growing tendency towards representatives of 'society' or the 'business world', having direct participation in governing bodies of Higher Education Institutions, exemplified in Higher Education reforms that include 'external stakeholders' participation in governing bodies (Eurydice 2008). There have been changes in the structure, form and relative value of University degrees with the gradual substitution of the traditional form of the university degree that led to some sort of well defined work prospect or specialty, by a much more flexible and individualized form of a 'qualifications portfolio' to be constantly enriched with various forms of graduate programs, specializations and 'life-long learning' practices (Katsikas and Sotiris 2003). This was accompanied by changes in the ideological and discursive practices associated with University Degrees, leading to an emphasis on individual effort and achievement with the degrees no longer viewed as some form of a guarantee of employment. This is in line with the more general neoliberal trend of assigning individuals and not social conditions and / or political strategies with the responsibility of their professional successes and failures (Williams J. 2009).

However, the problem facing us in the context of struggles and movements against the 'reform' of Higher Education is not simply to have a description of these developments but also developing a theoretical frame to analyze them. We need a theoretical frame, because this can help us organize better resistances, form potential alliances and target possible 'weak links' in the current aggressive endeavour of the dominant classes. This is of particular importance to Higher Education activists dealing with legislation aiming at the neoliberal restructuring of Higher Education.

The first wave of critical thinking: the university as an apparatus of social and ideological reproduction

In the 1960s and 1970s there was a big wave of critical thinking about Higher Education, along with the broader movement of critical sociology of education and critical pedagogy (Young (ed.) 1971; Willis 1977; Apple 2004) and the long wave of student radicalism and rebellion. This provided important theoretical interventions that challenged traditional conceptions of the University. Specifically, the technocratic conception of the University as an institution fostering 'socially neutral' knowledge and research was challenged. This was of particular importance since both mainstream 'Western' thinkers and proponents of Soviet Marxism treated scientific knowledge and technological evolution as socially neutral and inherently progressive, a fact exemplified in the debates

around the character of the so-called ‘scientific-technical revolution’ (Rihta 1969; Coriat 1976). Moreover, there were breakthroughs in the theory of ideology, exemplified in Louis Althusser’s seminal essay on Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser 1971), advances in the theory of social classes, exemplified in Nicos Poulantzas’ writings and especially *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (Poulantzas 1975), and important contributions on the ways education reproduces class relations and hierarchies exemplified in the interventions by Bourdieu and Passeron (Bourdieu 1988; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). In light of these theoretical advances, the University was presented as an institution that reproduced and at the same time made more articulate the dominant ideology and helped the social reproduction of the agents that would occupy the positions opened up by the social division of labour.

This was also facilitated by critical analysis of the social, political and economic organization of scientific research (Lévy-Leblond et al. 1973) and an insistence on the social and not ‘technical’ character of the division of labour (Gorz (ed.) 1973; Braverman 1974). Whereas the traditional Left criticism limited the class role of Higher Education to the dominance of academics and students of bourgeois and more generally upper-class origin and to the class barriers limiting the access of working-class offspring, this radical criticism insisted on the more structural class character of the University. Even if all the problems of class barriers to university entrance and study were removed, universities would still reproduce the dominant ideology, social hierarchy and the division of labour, through the reproduction of the division between intellectual and manual labour (Poulantzas 1975). Moreover, a great part of this debate focused on state-owned or publicly funded universities, trying to depict their structural role in class reproduction. Of particular importance was the emphasis on the distributive role of education and how the turn towards the modern mass university reflected the changed nature of capitalist production and the growing need for technicians, middle managers, and scientists (Gorz (ed.) 1973).

This focus also had to do with the divisions within the Left. Traditional and / or reformist Left, both in its socialist and communist varieties tended to treat anything belonging to the public sector as inherently positive and underplayed the class character of State institutions or treated it as the result of the political control of the State by monopoly capitalists. Contrary to these positions, more radical left-wing thinkers insisted on the class character of public Higher Education. Also echoed in this debate was the critique of Soviet style construction of socialism by the Chinese Communists during the period of the Cultural Revolution, which in the West was perceived as a call for ruthless criticism of the seemingly ‘neutral’ division between intellectual and manual labour and the institutions that reproduced it (Bettelheim 1974; Coriat 1976).

An aspect of this critical rethinking of the role Universities play in social reproduction had to do with the new emphasis on the role of the State in securing the necessary conditions for the accumulation of capital and the activation of counter-tendencies to the falling rate of profit. This was a crucial question in the Marxist State Theory debates in the 1970s (Poulantzas 2000, Poulantzas (ed.) 1978, Holloway and Picciotto (ed.) 1978). However, at that time this new role of the State was more conceived in terms of state

planning or intervening in favour of capital and – concerning education – in terms of a state technocracy and planning, and not in terms of direct intervention of market forces or privatization. This was also over-determined, especially in writers of the Althusserian tradition, by aspects of a ‘structuralist functionalism’ that insisted on different apparatuses having different and well-specified functions in social reproduction and precluded in advance the possibility of social institutions having multiple and complex, both intended and unintended results in social reproduction. Although both Althusser and Poulantzas thought positively of Gramsci’s emphasis on the need to overcome the distinction between private and public ‘hegemonic apparatuses’ and Poulantzas made the crucial theoretical step of thinking not in terms of ‘functions’ but of condensed relations, they did not fully follow Gramsci’s much more complex theory of both the state and hegemony in his conception of the ‘integral state’ (Thomas 2009).

The exception came from writers experiencing Anglo-Saxon ‘Atlantic’ capitalism, in the US or in the UK. E.P. Thompson’s seminal and prophetic analysis of Warwick University’s open introduction of business practices and tactics and its confrontation with both students and staff is one example (Thompson (ed.) 1970). The same goes also to analyses echoing the radicalism of the US student movement against the corporate control of Higher Education, such as David Smith’s *Who Rules the Universities* (Smith 1974). This also reflected the fact that the tendency towards an entrepreneurial, business-oriented Higher Education emerged in the US much earlier than Continental Europe (Etzkowitz 2002).

Consequently, a large part of the critical literature on Higher Education seemed mainly to be oriented towards criticizing the structural role of the Universities in the reproduction of dominant ideology and social stratification, regardless of nominal ownership or control. As a theoretical paradigm, it was successful in describing the ideological crisis of the University because of 1960s and 1970s radicalism, the measures taken to reinstate academic authority and the subsequent 1980s and 1990s ‘distributive instability’ exemplified in the non-correspondence between the flows of degree-holders and the realities of the workplace. However, the question remained: how to deal with the open turn towards a more entrepreneurial higher education in the long transition that begun in the 1980s?

Capitalist restructuring and the emergence of the entrepreneurial university

Therefore, it is no wonder that a great part of the current critical and radical literature on Higher Education reform centres upon privatization and commodification. According to this narrative, the main change is the transformation of Higher Education institutions into some form of private or quasi-private enterprises that work based on capitalist relations of valorisation and exploitation. This is based upon the importance of the following developments: Since Universities rely more and more on tuition fees charged for their finance, they function like private enterprises selling Higher Education. The importance of getting research funds either from State sources oriented towards subsidizing corporate research by offering it access to the research infrastructure of public higher education, or for research grants and contracts from private enterprises transform the Universities, or

sectors of them, into corporations in the business of producing research. The right of Universities to hold patents on their research findings and innovations, after the 1980 Bayh-Dole Act and similar reforms in other countries, and to engage in spin-off companies opens up the way for Universities to function as private corporations. The same goes for the increased links with the world of business, made evident by the various figures of ‘academic entrepreneurs’ or the success stories of researchers turned profitable capitalists in advanced technological sectors. The importance of scientific research and expertise in the immediate production process in sectors such as biotechnology make university research centres ideal for the incubation of such business projects. Competitiveness, productivity, cost-effectiveness and business-like accountability are becoming the norm in academic management.

It is worth noting that most of the mainstream theorists that have attempted to come to terms with these developments, especially those that have actually worked within the contours of academic administration, have insisted that these transformations do not necessarily imply a change in ownership and refer mainly to public or publicly funded Higher Education institutions. One could cite Burton Clark, one of the first mainstream proponents of the ‘Entrepreneurial University’, who from the beginning insisted that this did not mean a typical privatization but a wholly different approach to the funding, administration and internal management culture of mainly public universities (Clark 1998; Clark 2004). Even radical proponents of the ‘Academic Capitalism’ thesis have insisted that they are still referring also to mainly publicly-owned and funded institutions (Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Rhoades and Slaughter 2006).

Empirical data corroborate this. Even in the US, where links between Business and the Academy date back to the early 20th century, still University Research (the site *par excellence* of linkages between academic institutions and private business), despite the increased importance of private contracts, still gets its bigger share of funding by public, namely Federal and State sources (National Science Board 2010).

Entrepreneurial universities limits of cognitive capitalism theories

However, apart from neoliberal ideologues, the main thrust towards a new theory of the transformation of Universities towards something close to private business comes from Marxist theorists. Although, these developments can be explained also using more traditional ‘economistic’ Marxist analyses of capitalists looking for new spheres of accumulation or of a process of State assets being sold-off, we will deal in what follows mainly with theorists (and activists) choosing to interpret processes of commodification, privatization and entrepreneurialization of Higher Education through varieties of the cognitive and / or knowledge capitalism thesis (Dieuaide *at al.* 2003; Vercellone 2009; De Angelis and Harvie 2009; edu-factory collective 2009; Marrazi 2010).

My criticism of the cognitive capitalism thesis does not imply that I reject any notion of knowledge or education becoming a capitalist commodity. On the contrary, I believe that any aspect of social life, any practice, any service, and not only tangible material products can be turned into a commodity depending upon the social relations of its production

process or performance, following in this Marx's own analysis in "The Results of the Immediate Process of Production" (Marx 1864). I also would like to stress that I agree with the 'new enclosures' thesis (Harvie 2000). We are indeed witnessing an attempt by the forces of capital to impose forms of capitalist ownership in new terrains. The debates and struggles regarding patents and intellectual property offer an example of this tendency. Properly speaking there are no limits to the capitalist drive for new terrains of accumulation. But the fundamental functions of educational institutions and their importance for social reproduction are not completely altered, however over-determined they might be by processes of commodification. Turning education or knowledge into a commodity surely is a major change, affecting access and creating material conditions for conformity with capitalist imperatives, but one should not underestimate the political, ideological and distributive role of education.

Most cognitive capitalism theories base themselves on a certain theorization of capitalist accumulation. Most of them belong to the post-workerist tradition (Funagali and Mezzandra (eds.) 2010), and are influenced by the workerist emphasis on 'real subsumption of labour' as the characteristic of modern capitalism (Negri 2005) that leads to a process where the collective social intellectual productive ability is being exploited, including the collective cognitive capability – what Marx referred to as the "General Intellect" in the *Grundrisse* fragment on machines (Marx 1973: 690-712). This leads them to suggest that since current capitalism is based upon the use of scientific knowledge and scientifically constructed artefacts, it can be considered mainly a cognitive process. They do not deny the importance of the production of tangible material goods, nor of trivial unskilled labour, but they stress that more and more people are employed in positions where their individual and collective knowledge and expertise is the target of exploitative practices.

I think that these positions despite being able, on a practical – descriptive level, to locate some of the changes in contemporary capitalist societies, are nevertheless ridden with contradictions and shortcomings. They are reductionist, tending to treat capitalism in terms of a prioritization of knowledge and cognition as ontological bases of capitalist societies. They attempt a periodization of capitalism in terms of the dominant products or sectors not in terms of the evolution of relations of production and reproduction. In a way they offer an inverse version of the technological determinism of traditional Marxism. They underestimate the importance of other forms of productive labour (Caffentzis and Federici 2009). They are motivated by a mixture of ontology and ethics where cognition is presented as some form of substance for potential emancipation. This is particularly evident in the varieties of social ontology presented by representatives of post-workerism that attempt to think of cognition (and emotional affectivity) as being the substance of the 'potentia' of the modern Multitude (Hardt and Negri 2005). In my opinion, they underestimate the conscious, 'mental' element in all production processes.

What matters is that these theories have been used as a way to justify a conception of the University as becoming an integral part of the production process of capital. In some of these readings of the current academic conjuncture, the university is presented as the production site *par excellence* of modern cognitive capitalism. Even when the differences

between the University and the factory are stressed, the emphasis is still on the immediately productive role of the University (Edu-factory collective 2009).

Such a conception necessarily leads to treat all social relations and practices within the Universities as aspects of a process of valorisation and exploitation. This is not limited to professors and instructors being capitalistically exploited during the production process of ‘higher education’ as a service, an aspect that is valid in certain forms of for-profit institutions. It also attempts to treat aspects of the relation between educators and students as a relation of exploitation. In its more eloquent and complex versions it uses the collective, inter-individual, and based on multiple formal and informal interactions character of the production of knowledge within academia as a case of a ‘common’ facing new forms of ‘enclosure’ and alienation (Harvie 2000; Harvie 2004). Even though speaking of relations of capitalist exploitation within the Academy can be a relatively valid statement regarding the labour of graduate students in research facilities oriented towards marketable results (Mavroudeas 2005), I think that it underestimates other social, political and ideological aspects of Higher Education teaching and learning. However radical the proposition that capitalist social relations of exploitation are being directly reproduced within academia may be, I think that it leads to forms of reductionism and economism. One such example is Robert Ovetz’s powerful theorization of the *entrepreneurialization* of the university (Ovetz 1996a). According to Ovetz “*entrepreneurialization of the university no longer only serves to discipline labor power but also to use that labor power in the production of new commodities and the direct accumulation of capital*” and he goes on to treat the university as a social factory and students as unwaged workers. However, it underestimates the importance of the hegemonic, political and ideological signification of Higher Education. He is right to point that the university classroom is a terrain of struggle but not in the exploited vs. exploiters sense, but in the more complex sense of the ways it incorporates conflicting material tendencies having to do with ideological practices and conceptions, social hierarchies, social alliances, employment prospects.

The Entrepreneurial University as a hegemonic strategy for the internalization and pre-inscription of capitalist imperatives

Education is not a factory – with the exception of for-profit ‘Digital Diploma Mills’ (Noble 2001) – or it is not only a factory. Nor has the University replaced the factory as the paradigmatic site of capitalist production. The University remains a hegemonic apparatus, a condensation of practices and rituals that has to do with social reproduction, even if aspects of this social ‘function’ can be turned into a commodity and consequently into a capitalistically organized production process. When I refer to ‘reproduction’ I do not suggest a functionalist conception of certain aspects of social organization being predestined to ‘function’ in this way. Reproduction has to do with the ability of social relations to last, to achieve duration (Althusser 1995), and the emergence of apparatuses that make this duration possible. It is the contingent outcome of class practices and strategies and their material embedment in institutions and social forms. Contrary to the ‘High Structuralist’ tendency to think of the instances of the social whole in terms of

respective ‘specialization’, that would lead us to ignore the ideological element active in the production process or the economic aspect of Higher Education, I think that we must have a more dialectical conception that would insist on the articulation of economic, ideological and political relations and practises within Universities.

One way would be to go back to Gramsci and the concepts of hegemony and hegemonic apparatuses, as an important theory of political power as class power. Following recent important readings of Gramsci, such as the one suggested by Peter Thomas (2009), I think that both the notion of the ‘integral state’ and the notion of the ‘hegemonic apparatus’ offer the possibility to rethink of the University not in an ‘either educational factory or Ideological State Apparatus’ manner, but as hegemonic apparatus, as a complex site of struggles for hegemony, in all its aspects (the combination of leadership, representation, domination and consent). Hegemony, in the last instance, has to do with the successful imposition of a class strategy and all its economic, political, and ideological, prerequisites. A hegemonic apparatus in this sense is not necessarily part of the State, nor is it only public. Not only can it be private, but it can also have an economic function. Moreover, its ‘hegemonic’ aspect can also be a product of its economic function. A research project, financed by a private corporation is not only a step further towards the commodification of university research; it can also lead to the reproduction of a competitive, market-oriented conception of science, to the ideological justification of capitalist imperatives, to the establishment of more precarious labour relations within Universities. The opening up of the public universities’ research infrastructure to private corporations, as a way to lower the costs of research and development, has also been a way to facilitate the adjustment of courses and degrees to business interests and to the introduction of an entrepreneurial culture. Even the introduction or increase of tuition fees and related problems such as increased student debt have also had ideological and political repercussions, in an attempt to turn insecurity into increased discipline and compliance to competitive individualistic norms (Williams J. 2009).

Therefore, I would like to suggest that the best way to describe the current ‘hegemonic’ function of Higher Education would be to suggest a complex process of ‘internalization’ of the changes in the labour market and the capitalist labour process and accumulation within Higher Education as an hegemonic apparatus. This internalization and pre-inscription of the realities of capitalist production, this subsumption of education to the imperatives of capitalist accumulation, is not limited to changes in university funding, the growing importance of linkages to industry, and the importance of business-associated research as the guiding force of all academic culture. It takes the form of changes not only in the relative value of university degrees but to the very notion of the degree and its replacement by individualized ‘qualification portfolios’, leading to new fragmentations, educational hierarchies, processes of individualization that respond to the new realities of the workplace. It can also account for the emphasis on training instead of education, for the changes in curricula, for the emergence of an entrepreneurial culture in Higher Education, for the ideological projection of individualistic ‘investment’ in one’s qualifications. The turn towards business – style management is an aspect of a more general trend to treat market as the optimal form of regulation and the despotism of the

workplace in the figure of the capitalist manager accountable only to stakeholders as the ideal form of governance. Its introduction to Universities has not only to do with cost-effectiveness, nor does it lead necessarily to open privatization. It is also viewed as the best way to resist pressures from ‘interest groups’ and to fulfil projects of restructuring aiming at the above described ‘internalization’ of capitalist imperatives. That is why the increased precariousness of academic labour goes hand-in-hand with new forms of ideological surveillance and even blacklisting of radical theoretical positions (Nelson and Watt 2004; Johnson *et al.* (eds.) 2003). It has to do not only with lowering labour costs but also of guaranteeing effective compliance with the new corporate entrepreneurial agenda and academic culture. That we are not witnessing a simple opening to market forces is exemplified by the fact the whole turn towards the entrepreneurial university has been accompanied by an extreme increase in all forms of control and supervision and the undermining of academic autonomy through evaluation and quality assessment procedures, internal and external review processes, and academic audits (Tierney and Rhodes 1995; De Angelis and Harvie 2009).

Therefore, the turn towards the entrepreneurial University should not be seen ‘one-dimensionally’ as the result of Universities being turned into private businesses, but as the condensation of class strategies related to the imperatives of hegemony in a period of capitalist restructuring and deterioration of the balance of forces between capital and labour. It does not mark a simple process of privatization but a more complex transformation of a hegemonic apparatus in line with the changes in bourgeois strategy, exemplified in the hegemony of neoliberalism (Duménil and Lévy 2004; Kouvélakis 2007). That is why the move towards entrepreneurial Higher Education has been the result of State initiatives and strategies, especially if we take into consideration the new forms and priorities of public subsidy allocation (Rhodes and Slaughter 2006), and the increased importance of state-organized processes of evaluation, quality assurance and accreditation. Whether intended or not and regardless of their original rationale, a series of strategies referring to changes in funding, in management, in accountability, in the structure of degrees all lead to an increased pre-inscription and internalization of the imperatives of accumulation within academia, both in their specific ‘economic’ aspects and their more general political and ideological conditions. It is not just a production of knowledge or degrees but also an attempt towards a neoliberal production of subjectivity, in the sense that the neoliberal restructuring of the university is ‘*as much a matter of practices, modes of living and subjectivity, as it is of policy*’ (Read 2009: 152). In this sense, what we are witnessing is a much more pervasive introduction of the logic of capital within universities, than a simple change of ownership might suggest.

Therefore, the question is not whether or not to stress University entrepreneurial practises, forms of commodification, and business practices but how to incorporate them dialectically into a more coherent theoretical approach. If thinking only in terms of ideological reproduction and reproduction of the division of labour underestimates or misses the importance of economic practises and relations within the university, at the same time simply over-stating the changing economic role of universities might lead to an underestimation of the importance of ideology, hegemony and social reproduction.

As it is with any class strategy and hegemonic project, these changes also induce resistances, struggles, and counter-hegemonic aspirations. This internalization of capitalist imperatives can explain why youths in the educational apparatus have a stronger than before perception of the realities and difficulties of the workplace. As it was also observed during the French student movement against the Contract of First Employment), during the 2006-07 student movement and the December 2008 youth explosion in Greece and in the current struggles, students tend more easily to associate with the labour movement, to think in terms of common demands, to create forms of solidarity. Student movements are not just a reaction to the devaluation of degrees but are a part of greater social mobilization against the neoliberal restructuring of the totality of capital – labour relations (Kouvélakis 2007). What they fight against has to do not just with their status as students and future degree holders but with employment, workplace relations and the neoliberal attack on social rights.

Moreover, these changes bring forward a deeper contradiction facing modern capitalism. The effort from the part of the forces of capital is to have a labour force more skilled but having fewer rights, more productive but also more insecure, over-qualified and at the same time underpaid. The gulf between aspiration and reality and the fact that these segments of the workforce, (both as active and as future workers), not only are in a position to grasp this contradiction, but also have the communicative skills to transform their discontent into social demand, have given a new quality to the wave of student and more generally youth unrest since the second half of the 2000s. From the 2006 youth movement in France, to the Greek December youth movement, to the California movement of University occupations the Italian ‘anomalous wave’ and British movement against high tuition fees, there are many signs of this deeper radicalization and politicization of student and youth movements (Solomon and Palmieri (eds.) 2011). This has been even more intense since the eruption of the current economic crisis and the wave of harsh austerity packages that have led to a sharp deterioration of employment prospects and a deterioration of living conditions. This has been made even more evident in the 2011 global cycle of protest and struggle, from the Arab Spring and the Indignados in Spain to the “Occupy!” movement in the US and the ‘movement of the Squares’ in Greece. The youth disenchantment with dominant policies and subsequent radicalization has played a major role in the development of these movements. Therefore, it is possible to think of students as being part of a potential anti-capitalist social alliance, without having to discursively transform them into workers.

In conclusion: I think that we can use the notion of the entrepreneurial university, provided that we treat it as a reference to a complex process of adjustment to capitalist imperatives and not as simply the transformation of Universities into actual corporations. Consequently, in our defence of education as a public good, we must focus our criticism on all aspects of these strategies, not only economic, but also political, ideological and distributive. Finally, I think that alliances can be formed with the labour movement, broad alliances in support of public Higher Education, without having to treat students or graduate students as some sort of cognitive proletarians. The multiple forms of pre-emptive adjustments to the needs of capital that they are experiencing provide ample potential for their radicalization and make them part of a broader movement against the

offensive of capital. The impressive new wave of student protests and youth participation in popular uprisings, we have been recently witnessing makes this even more possible.

Author Details

Panagiotis Sotiris teaches in the Department of Sociology, University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Lesvos. **Email:** psot@soc.aegean.gr

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