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**(Re)Occupying a cultural Commons: reclaiming the labour process in critical sports studies.**

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Scholars have been slow to recognise the impact of the developing 'information society' on the political economy of intellectual work. This paper draws on recent work exploring critical models of higher education practice in art education as well as in political economy and philosophy exploring copying, accumulation by dispossession and the threats of commodification of the Commons of culture, external and internal nature to explore the current circumstances of scholarship in sport. It draws on theories of the Commons to argue that sport social scientists must grapple with the antagonisms between scholarship and copyright and between membership of a 'secular vocation' and the relations of intellectual production and labour processes of the contemporary corporate university. Finally drawing on the principles of critical social science, the paper considers a range of desirable, viable and achievable objectives the teaching, writing and publishing to propose ways that scholars can respond to these emerging relations of intellectual labour and production.

*Keywords:* critical social science; public university; immaterial labour; open access; cooperatives

## **(Re)Occupying a cultural Commons: reclaiming the labour process in critical sports studies.**

Socio-cultural studies of sport face serious challenges to our ability to pose questions beyond those considered legitimate by the dominant forces in the sports industries, state sector policy makers and higher education managers and funders. The last few years have seen the closure or marginalisation of critical sports studies programmes in the UK and North America and the relocation of other programmes to areas based in biomedical sciences. Alongside these changes, for the most part the product of a research funding régime that disadvantages broader critical studies in the humanities and social sciences as well as, in the UK, being directed towards a smaller number of research intensive institutions, there is pressure for sports science and studies programmes to become more vocationalist. Increasing economic uncertainty and related student expectation is leading to the marginalisation of critical analysis of sport by a need to ensure that graduates get jobs in an overstaffed and increasingly under-funded economic sector. Adding to this tendency to marginalisation is the growing 'brand awareness' of higher education institutions resulting in a concern to present a coherent market image with a view to protecting income streams; this nascent strand which is only beginning to emerge in the UK is unevenly distributed across the sector and warrants further exploration in the context of debates about academic freedom. British higher education's growing corporatization has put academics and university managers, who are often permanent appointees to those jobs and may not have an academic background, at odds in recent years leading to more widespread work-place and industrial conflict and dissent. [1]

In a move related to this corporatization and uncertainty, UK higher education begun to emphasise 'teaching for employability'. This is part of the vocationalism that is strengthening across most of the higher education sector. As part of the retreat from critique, the discourse of employability is overwhelmingly supply side focussed. For the most part we know very little about the specific characteristics of the labour markets and labour process our graduates are destined for. As a result, an emphasis on 'employability' tends to produce technocratic programmes teaching either highly specific job-linked skills or generic claims to capacities such as job search skills, adaptability and flexibility. The instrumentalism underpinning our claims to enhanced employability leads to questions about the labour process in turn leading to further consideration of the increasing commodification of the labour process in academia which then point to the problem of how to respond to these

changes. These labour process issues open up theoretical and conceptual problems derived from the observation that in the 'knowledge economy' workers are both the material and the means of production. That is to say, in the context of immaterial labour, labour power is not sold to transform a substance into a thing for use and exchange. Instead, for many knowledge economy workers the immaterial character of transformation and production means that labour power is the means of production. As a result, the knowledge economy weakens the distinction between work and non-work as well as between the labour and material of production leading to a condition where life itself is put to work. [2] In an academic context this means confronting the problem of making scholarly and scholars' subjectivities within an increasingly standardised "catering régime" of higher education. [3]

It may therefore seem perverse to suggest that scholars of sport are in a privileged position while deep within contemporary capitalism's "accumulation by dispossession". [4] That is to say, scholars and other workers in academic and applied sports sectors both help bring about the enclosure of the Commons of the public sphere, bodies and culture, and are often torn between the need for theoretical and conceptual critiques of praxis and the need to generate and protect incomes. Our place in this transformation and tension gives sport scholars a powerful position from which to make sense of these changes and to develop an alternative politics of scholarship. While this paper has a polemical tendency, it is also empirically grounded, noting that my writing position draws on my circumstances as a university manager, an active researcher and teacher and active in my subject's scholarly societies. Just as accumulation by dispossession (a.k.a. primitive accumulation) is an unfashionable concept in our post-political-economy era, reference to the labour process carries with too many over-, or under-, tones of classical Marxism to be as widely recognised as it once was.

This analysis is therefore exploratory and intended as a contribution to a wider debate about the current state of higher education – it is an attempt to identify key aspects of the condition of and options for higher education. The analysis and proposed responses draws on a range of work with some of the more obvious influences being David Harvey, Slavoj Žižek, Erik Olin Wright, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello and Bruce Robbins, while others may be less familiar, including Marcus Boon on the ethics and politics of copying, Kathleen Fitzpatrick on new conditions for and forms of authorship, the cultural politics of the now (sadly) defunct fanzine *Punk Planet* and its editor Anne Elizabeth Moore and intellectual

property lawyers, especially James Boyle & Tim Wu. [5] I draw on these in the hope that the debate this case is designed to add to will produce other sources of inspiration, ideas and challenges, and to share an egalitarian, optimistic and activist space with other critics such as The SIGJ2 Writing Collective and Michael Bailey and Des Freedman. [6] It is a hope that we can develop a programme for enquiry and action that helps build a better future for and of sports science (at its most inclusive).

Making sense of the state of the humanities and social sciences in and of sports studies requires exploration of several dialogues; first, to grasp the condition of various humanities and social science disciplines; second, to consider the place of those disciplines in dialogue with other aspects of the academic study of sport, especially the human sciences. Any attempts to consider the study of sport without these wider contexts risks the construction of a ghetto. Although this paper is intended to inform the work of sport scientists, developing a meaningful programme for progressive change rests on understanding the character of academic work and grasping the position of 'knowledge workers' as a group. The case therefore draws on analyses of work in the cultural industries, especially art & design, as well as the emerging condition where academics are increasingly precarious workers producing workers for increasingly precarious labour forces. [7] The critique is therefore grounded in two strands of analysis. The first is that education for the knowledge economy is less about the production of knowledge as it is about the production of workers for an economic sector with limited demand for personnel. [8] Across much of the OECD sports studies, science and kinesiology programmes produce many more graduates than the sport, movement and physical activity industries can employ. As scholars in the field we are therefore faced with the problem of an ethical obligation to our students while also ensuring and protecting our area of scholarship. The second is that critical studies of sport has responded to the positivist tendencies in sport scholarship by adopting its writing and analytical styles in order to gain credibility whereas critical approaches require more expressionistic writing and would benefit from shunning instrumentalism in favour of the assertion of the pleasures and joys of sport and movement. [9] In addition to these strands, sports studies, unlike many other social science and humanities fields, is almost always within the interdisciplinary context of sport science or kinesiology. This both exacerbates the tendency to cut critical sports studies and enhances our engagement with the contemporary politics of commodification. [10]

## Knowledge, audiences, marketization and regulation

A specific understanding of the current condition of the social sciences and humanities in sport science may be usefully informed through Michael Burawoy's schematisation of the functions of the university in his analysis of the development of commodification and regulation. [11] He proposes a four fold function:

	AUTONOMY Academic Audience	HETERONOMY Extra-academic Audience
Instrumental Knowledge	PROFESSIONAL	POLICY
Reflexive Knowledge	CRITICAL	PUBLIC

As a starting point for analysis, these four functions point to modes of work, modes of discourse and the purposes of scholarly work. Burawoy's case is that even as these types of knowledge are antagonistic, a public university must retain all four in dialogue and recognise their interdependence. He argues that framing the university in this way allows us to confront the commodification and regulation of higher education through the imposition of markets on the full range of higher education activities where ranking systems delineate excellence across the world, where everything is costed, where our working hours are calculated using detailed models of workload management, and schools or departments become cost centres leading to the closure of 'uneconomic' subject areas. The current UK funding model provides assured public funding only of science, technology, engineering and medicine and in all other subject areas the money follows the students: it is a voucher system in all aspects but the name. The result is that the UK has become a "model for how to destroy a system of public higher education". [12]

As Burawoy notes, the market's parallel disciplining force is the increasing regulation of higher education institutions where research outputs are measured in the UK through the Research Excellence Framework including indices for 'impact', where graduate employment rates are measured and where 'outputs' are negotiated each year during staff development reviews. Alongside this régime, each university 'business unit' has its own key performance indicators while the Quality Assurance Agency reviews higher education institutions on a regular cycle and assesses compliance with its UK Quality Code, which imposes a risk-based model of quality management meaning that auditing is continuous, pervasive and panoptic and academic decision-making based in the calculation of risks and costs that verge on the

actuarial. All the while, commodification and regulation is internationalised across Europe through the 'Bologna process', a neo-liberal drive to homogenise higher education across the 49 member European Higher Education Area from Portugal in the west to Kazakhstan in the east, including the Russian Federation, all in the aim of ensuring knowledge transfer and student mobility (where the latter comes up against increasingly restrictive immigration limits). [13] As a result of these developments the "monitoring of higher education is replete with parallel distortions that obstruct production (research), dissemination (publication) and transmission (teaching) of knowledge." [14] This is a system that prioritises instrumental heteronymous knowledge.

These dual streams of commodification and regulation affect the study of sport particularly because the applied character of large sections of that work leads to direct engagement with and participation in all four forms of knowledge while the driving forces in the practice of higher education accentuate the instrumental over the reflexive. Sports studies and to a lesser degree sports science are seen as soft subjects but financially important – not quite 'real' science, sociology or management, but important because they recruit well, because the sport industries are big business and academics in those fields can generate research, development and consultancy income. The degree factory's need for sport science and sport studies actively undermines autonomous and reflexive knowledge in favour of heteronymous instrumental knowledge; the downgrading and marginalisation of critical sport studies is not coincidental but an essential element of the neo-liberal education programme's need to protect corporate income.

### **Spaces of knowledge production**

While Burawoy's case explores macro-political questions, to understand higher education practice demands a closer look at meso- and micro politics of knowledge production. A fruitful approach to this issue may be found in Pascal Gielen's work on the four spaces of art production: domestic, communal, market and civil. His domestic space is one of "tranquillity, concentration and intimacy" allowing intellectual development in a contemplative setting. Communal space is a form of *gemeinschaft* populated by peers to make it one of exchange, disagreement and confrontation to "enlarge the scope of what is ... possible" [15] leading to conceptual and practical refinement. His market space is where "it is possible to become totally alienated from one's products" [16], where what matters is the finished product



while the process of its making has little or no value. Finally, civil space is one of “arguments with a *public*”, of confrontation and dissensus and as a result “theory becomes a public good” [17], noting that the market may contain or incorporate elements of the civil.

A labour process approach exposes links between Burawoy’s and Gielen’s frameworks in the fields of both commodification and regulation. This is most obvious where regulation has a direct impact on pedagogic and other scholarly activities. Programmes of study and well as the individual elements of those programmes, both as ‘modules’ and teaching sessions, become subject to specific ‘learning objectives’ that are often linked to assessment activities through complex mapping exercises. The less obvious changes come as the result of increasing commodification. Here detailed calculations of workloads can have a direct and at times insidious impact on pedagogic activities. For instance, work load allocation models that include a component for assessment activities per student in each class may result in assessment formats and tasks being determined on the basis of how long they take to mark, not whether they are the most appropriate form for that class or activity. Less obviously, there are both cultural and structural changes where “social relations between teacher and student are given the status of exchange and service relationships which can be written down in a contract” [18] thereby relocating the communal pedagogic relationship to the market, and resulting in a parallel marketization of critical scholarly thought, giving it most value when it plays out in the (income generating) policy sphere.

These labour process centred convergences suggest that we should conflate Burawoy’s and Gielen’s four fold classification to produce a multi-layered model of co-located forms (in upper case) and spaces (in lower case) of academic activity.

	AUTONOMY Academic Audience	HETERONOMY Extra-academic Audience
Instrumental Knowledge	PROFESSIONAL Domestic	POLICY Market
Reflexive Knowledge	CRITICAL Communal	PUBLIC Civil

To explore the potential of this typology I want to consider three things. The first is explore how and why the contemporary condition of capitalism creates space for radical praxis in the autonomous and reflexive elements of the typology, at precisely the time that many feel under assault from the policy choices that accentuate instrumental heteronomous – policy and market – knowledge. The second is to unpack some questions about writing and

publishing, authorship and the character of working in the knowledge economy. The third is to outline some options for ways that scholars can look to rework work and how we do what we do. The ferocity of the assault on higher education means that some may argue for a defensive strategy, however responding to this ‘war of movement’ with a tactical ‘war of position’ (to use Gramscian terms) may be a strategy for defeat. [19] The following draws on strategic gaps and develops the ‘dark matter’ of scholarly work, the “informal, unofficial, autonomous, activist, non-institutional, self-organised” collegial, collective and collaborative labour that lies beyond the view of managerialists, regulators and their corporate allies to (re)build autonomous, self-organised scholarship in the social sciences of sport. [20] These are the aspects of life itself that both create scholarly work as cultural labour and intellectuals’ secular vocations as well as elude the rationalised control of dominant forms of managerialism, as exemplified by the widespread use of metrics. [21]

### **Enclosing the Commons of scholarship**

To raise the contemporary condition of capitalism is to raise a vision of crisis characterised by austerity, recession and national financial ‘rescue packages’. It raises the spectre of a fragmented and under-employed working class with local variations leading concurrently to high levels of unemployed young workers in Spain and older workers in Slovakia, workers making a living from multiple jobs and trying to manage their precariousness. [22] The problem with this narrative of crisis, which given the levels of capitalist over-accumulation is correct, is that it obscures contemporary capital’s accumulation by dispossession. This accumulation by dispossession – privatising the ownership of communally, collectively or publicly owned resources – is usually associated with changes in the land ownership during the emergence in Europe of capitalism, especially the enclosure of land, and with the periods of colonisation associated with the growth of European global empires during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. More recently, David Harvey has pointed to “wholly new mechanisms of dispossession” using practices associated with intellectual property. [23] Accumulation by dispossession takes on a new hue when we go beyond Harvey’s focus on patenting and licensing to look at intellectual property as a whole, especially recent changes in copyright. Holistic attention to intellectual property changes the debate in a way that leads some intellectual property lawyers to identify the emergence of property rights that enclose the Commons of the mind. [24]

This debate about copyright as intellectual property has been shaped for the most part by legal, humanities and media scholars focusing on digital media; a central component of this field of study is issues of creativity, thought and cultural texts. Two key elements drive these debates: first, concern about the textual and legal impacts of malleable digital artefacts; second, the increasing significance of immaterial labour. These debates have emphasised the Commons. Comprehension of these questions of intellectual property requires consideration of the Commons in the context of sports studies and science. To do that, it is helpful to draw on work by Slavoj Žižek that explores the role of the Commons in contemporary politics.

Žižek suggests that current world order is facing four principal antagonisms – the threat of ecological catastrophe, the exclusion of the mass of people from ‘society’, power and wealth, the inappropriateness of the idea of private intellectual property and the socio-ethical implications of technological and scientific developments, especially in the area of biogenetics. [25] It is these latter two – the privatisation of intellectual property and biogenetic developments – that directly involve scholars of human movement and bodies. These contradictions may be more clearly seen in Žižek’s emphasis on the enclosures of the Commons. The first of Žižek’s enclosures is associated with our work as scholars – the dispossession of the means of communication and education. The second is associated with our work in the world of human bodies – the enclosure of the biogenetic character and inheritance of humanity. The third enclosure, of the external environment, is most apparent in the development of debates about mega-events, urban spaces and issues such as sustainability: this enclosure is becoming more important to social scientists. [26] It would be evidentially irresponsible to claim a unique place for sports studies in these antagonisms and enclosures, although the current state of reflexive analysis of disciplinary praxis, key areas of scholarship in sports studies and science and the global significance of the sport industries make the claim of a distinctive place more sustainable. As an area of cultural work and scholarship, our field is as typical of any other in the enclosure of culture, while the enclosures of the internal and external worlds come together in distinctive and significant ways when we consider, especially, performance sport and as noted earlier have an impact at least by contiguity with sport science/kinesiology. The analysis here is, therefore, envisaged as part of a wider analysis and discussion in sports studies and science of all three enclosures.

For the remainder of this discussion the focus will be on the first of these enclosures, that of communication and education. Narrowing the focus in this way enhances recognition of two dynamics in contemporary scholarly practice – the antagonisms between scholarship and copyright and that between membership of a ‘secular vocation’ and the relations of intellectual production and the labour processes of the contemporary corporate university. This ‘narrowing’ also makes the case more general to scholarly work and less sport-studies/science specific. There is further work to be done on the relations between sports scholarship and the enclosure of the internal and external environments. As noted earlier, the shifting balance in higher education is leading to a system that is less public, emphasising the heteronymous instrumental (policy) aspects of Burawoy’s model at the expense of autonomous or heteronymous reflexive (public) orientation, with daily practice becoming, in Gielen’s terms more market oriented than directed to reflective or civil society settings. The consequence of these shifts is growing tension between and separation of research and teaching; in the UK public research funds being directed to a narrow group of research intensive institutions and approaches or applications related to government policy. More broadly, work in higher education is becoming subject to systems of performance management with emerging pressure for performance related pay. More widespread is the increasing casualization of the workforce with more of the work of teaching being carried out by poorly paid junior staff with little or no job security or workplace benefits. The result is a growing schism in the higher education labour market between those who operate globally and those precarious workers operating in localised labour markets. [27]

The enclosures presented by Žižek, in the context of this political economy of commodification and regulation, undermine one of the basic premises of higher education in that the cultural materiel of the ‘knowledge economy’ must circulate freely to develop because, unlike many other goods, knowledge grows by being consumed. It is here that academia’s powerful taboo against copying faces one of its most profound challenges where the copied and mimetically reproduced idea is transformed and so no longer the same. (For instance, my case here relies on the copying and juxtaposition of Burawoy’s and Gielen’s models, transforming both and proposing a new model.) In contemporary commercialised academic practice two forces are deployed as part of employers’ demands that scholars commodify their work – the undermining of ‘fair use’ (fair dealing in the UK, or free use or fair practice, depending on the jurisdiction) leading to a weakening of critical commentary and the desacralized copying taboo through its redesignation as copyright [28]. For some

this means chasing patents, for others it produces a situation where ‘researchers’ have shifted to ‘knowledge transfer’ with scholarship having been transformed into advice to corporate ‘clients’ who in this context may be corporate funders, sports governing bodies, government agencies or civil society groups and charities working in sport settings. A growing number of research degrees are funded as part of corporate evaluation projects; whereas this prepares students for ‘real world’ research in an environment where a smaller proportion of doctoral candidates can expect to work in higher education settings, there are also difficult to manage challenges to the independence of scholarship and academic freedom in this model. These pressures towards heteronomous instrumentalization are not restricted to the social sciences and humanities; there are also indications that researchers in bio-medicine and bio-genetics are being ‘directed’ away from exploration of ‘new’ causes of conditions to ways to treat ‘known’ causes. [29] The effect of these and related changes is that, from a higher education employers’ point of view, the most important knowledge-function is heteronomous-instrumental, especially if it is revenue generating.

### **Desirability, viability and achievability of alternatives**

To confront these forces requires a critical grasp of academic labour process. To achieve this, analyses need to consider how scholarly labour relates to and may be read alongside other forms of immaterial labour. For researchers this means a focus on the means, mode and sites of publication, as well as attention to new models of authorship. It also demands consideration of business models that might better suit the collegial conventions of scholarly work and consideration of new practises and approaches to make scholarship, publishing and authorship more economically viable. To begin this, I want to bring the conventions of critical social science to bear on how we might do things differently. That is, I want to consider options that may be desirable, those that may be viable, and those that may be achievable. Even raising the idea of the desirable, if it is not in step with the predominant commodification and regulation of higher education, is to risk denigration as utopian, as a dreamer and as impractical. As Erik Olin Wright notes, envisioning the desirable requires consideration of both “dreams and practice” and is based in “the belief that what is pragmatically possible is not fixed independently of our imaginations, but is itself shaped by our visions”. [30] Envisioning the desirable helps ensure that the viable and the achievable are an improvement on the contemporary condition.

This case presumes that a desirable place for the social sciences and humanities in sport studies is one that is in active and open dialogue with cognate discipline areas in a spirit of radical democratic egalitarianism. This radical democratic egalitarianism is a professional discourse that “appeals to (and helps refashion) public values in its effort to justify (and refashion) professional practice”. [31] The site of public engagement of a radical democratic egalitarian approach is (non-market) civil society both as institutions and a public sphere [32]; it is that reflexive heteronymous world that challenges the power of the vocation as a sect and disputes the power of neo-liberal bolstering managerialism. It must be noted that civil society may also be a place of intense political confrontation for radical democratic egalitarianism – being open to contention means academia must surrender some of its authority and assumed power: this means abandoning the romanticisation of civil society as necessarily civil. This reflexive heteronymous (civil society) focus is essential in the context of analyses of sport, noting sport’s increasingly commodified form, produced by commodified labour and governed by forces alien to the pleasures and joys of movement, where amateur and recreational forms tend to adopt many of the characteristics stimulated by this commodification. [33] Emphasising this reflexive heteronymous orientation means that a radical democratic egalitarian approach is, most explicitly, not oriented towards a primary engagement with the state or the market, and is in opposition to the orthodoxies of both these spheres. The problem of the desirable is that it tends to remain devoid of detail. Turning to the viable and achievable in the more specific world of the professional and critical knowledge of academia allows the development of more flesh on the bones.

Undermining the drive to commodification and regulation is central to any response to the instrumentalisation of sports studies in academia and the associated marginalisation of critical social sciences and humanities perspectives. This means that reflexive knowledge – “concerned with dialogue about values themselves” [34] – is at the heart of this approach, while at the same time, as Gielen notes, remembering that elements of regulation shift the communal space of knowledge production to the market. This drive to marketization and policy, rather than civil society and public engagement, contains a threat that is at least two-fold. The first, drawing again on Gielen, is that driving students and their teachers to the market (including through detailed quantification of teachers-as-worker’s job content) at the expense of the communal “threatens the space to ask questions, to reflect, or to deal with difficult questions at great length”. [35] The second is that alongside a threat to the communal space of production and with it critical knowledge functions are the changes to

and measurement of higher education's scholarly labour processes in a regulated and commercialised setting that threaten the essential role of idleness that is at the heart of labour and work in the domestic space of professional knowledge production. [36] As a result, to resist commodification and regulation requires a refusal to separate the critical and the public aspects of scholarly work and therefore a challenge to the anti-collegial labour process of competitive individualism and élite performance being built into and solidified in academic activity. With this goal in mind, the next sections sketch some tentative ideas that could provide pathways beyond commodified, regulated education, noting that viability and achievability are the product of local conditions and the balance of contingent forces in movement. These suggestions are initial, tentative and designed for collegial discussion; some or all may turn out to be neither viable nor achievable.

As noted earlier, the place of scholarship in contemporary capitalism creates space for radical praxis, including in writing and publishing as well as in learning and teaching as the daily manifestation of our labour. The principles of the International Cooperative Alliance are a useful tool to assess desirability as consistent with ideals of collegiality and with Robbins' notion of scholarly life as a secular vocation while also allowing resistance to commodification and regulation without reverting to nostalgic or reactionary responses. According to the ICA, cooperatives are based in the values of "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity" and share seven principles: (1) voluntary and open membership; (2) democratic member control; (3) member economic participation; (4) autonomy and independence; (5) education, training and information; (6) co-operation among co-operatives; and (7) concern for community. [37] Crucially, principle 6 is fundamentally at odds with the marketization of higher education at both institutional and individual levels. Of the remainder, principles 4, 5 and 7 are consistent with conventional, often élitist, models of scholarly work (principle 2 is excluded because these models are seldom democratic, even when participatory), whilst 1 and 3 may be much more difficult to reconcile with academia, especially in its closed vocational sense. Despite these limitations, these values and principles provide a framework against which to assess efforts to reoccupy the Commons of higher education.

### **Learning and teaching**

Beginning with teaching, the area of scholarly activity where significant change requires structural change, we might consider a viable option drawn from existing practice. The last three years have seen 'free universities' emerge from student struggles and the Occupy movement. [38] These free universities and parallel phenomena such as the St Petersburg Street University in 2008 are more likely to be resistive and event specific than permanent or even medium term, but their principles of openness and inclusion are a direct challenge to regulation and commodification based enclosures. They meet most, if not all, of the ICA's principles. The voucher-like funding régime for higher education in the UK includes a limit on the number of students each institution may enrol. In the context of this radical constrained marketization there are reasonable grounds to consider options for a cooperative university within the public system; such an institution may be viable, may achieve through the collegial activity of its 'owners' and staff – the same people (the position of students is more ambiguous) – the effective integration of Burawoy's four knowledge functions, although the celebrity scholarship of the UK's private and élitist New College for the Humanities points to the risks that may be attached to such a proposal. The Basque country's Mondragon experience shows that such an institution may be viable. [39] Whereas Mondragon may provide a model of a viable cooperative university, it is part of a much larger cooperative of cooperatives where the considerable capital investment required has been developed since the initial cooperative Polytechnic High School's formation in 1943 and the risk is spread through the mutuality that is a principle of the Mondragon Corporation's collective operation. Mondragon University is itself a cooperative of cooperatives, with each faculty being a legally instituted, self-governing cooperative. It was 37 years between the formation of the Polytechnic High School and the incorporation of the Mondragon University, with a Faculty of Business created in 1960, of Humanities and Education in 1976 and the University drawing together these three cooperatives in 1997; another faculty and several research centres have been added since 1997. The challenges in building a cooperative public university are enormous where there is not an established extensive public network of cooperatives, but there is clear evidence across Europe and elsewhere, such as post-crisis Argentina, that cooperative solutions are gaining a foothold. That a venture as large scale and capital intensive as a cooperative university would be more difficult than a cooperative small business is not a reason for rejecting it as part of a solution to the enclosure of the cultural Commons.



A more achievable option may be to consider approaches to learning and teaching that have shaped other approaches to education. The Danish Tvind model merits further study. Whereas the operation and organisation of the Tvind schools have, in recent years, been subject to legal challenge and the activities of their leadership have undermined their credibility, the pedagogic approach is worth closer consideration. This approach is based around five key principles – its education has an explicitly political character with a focus on the problems of society and of the students, second is the idea of learning through productive work, third is learning through concrete experience, fourth is learning and problem solving through collective activity, and finally knowledge does not exist for its own sake. [40] Watered down versions of some of these principles may be seen in claims to ‘active learning’ in UK higher education in the last ten years or so. The Tvind School has been the subject of legal action by the Danish state charging corruption, embezzlement and that the school network had become a cult. The character and structure of the organisation means that it is difficult to be sure about the legitimacy of these charges although they are linked to its growth in size, a shift beyond its educational focus to other activities and excessively complex internal financial arrangements; at the time of writing, some of these cases remain unresolved. More generally, the Danish Folk Schools provide a model for further development of critical pedagogy in physical culture and sport. [41] Elsewhere, models of teaching and learning grounded in the reflexive heteronomous sector such as The Public School, since 2007 in Los Angeles spreading to Philadelphia, San Juan, Brussels, Paris and elsewhere; in this model, members of the public propose classes and once enough people sign up an instructor is hired and the class run with participants paying modest fees to join. [42] In other settings scholars may find organisational inspiration and modes of practice in indigenous praxis. [43]

The point is not to suggest that either a cooperative university or higher education based in the Tvind, Danish Folk Schools or the Public School models are a solution, but their foundations show that they are viable, and there is evidence in Denmark’s Folk Schools of an approach that is far from the performance model that shapes sports studies and science in higher education. These institutions’ continued existence shows that there are viable models, although whether they are achievable in the short term is more questionable. The Public School shows that short term developments are achievable, but this is not within the public education system and closer to the ‘free university’ model than many in contemporary public higher education may see as desirable. There are practices in sport and

exercise science programmes at present that are achievable and may be easily extended. The demands in British higher education to develop 'employability', which involves the development of skills associated with resilience as well as an aptitude for risk-taking and creativity [44], have seen a number of responses in sports studies programmes that are built around community development focussed social enterprise approaches. The well organised versions see an amalgam of community and business development. An increasingly common structure is the one in the School I work in: a student run enterprise where mid-level undergraduates organise events while the business is run by a board of upper level undergraduates and post graduate students. The best of these programmes are genuinely social enterprises developing a range of competencies and abilities, the worst little more than self-exploitation through internship, where the student as unpaid labour "negotiates the collapse of the boundaries between Education, Work and Life" [45], exacerbating the situation where life itself is put to work and learning becomes unpaid, value producing labour on behalf of corporatized higher education. The better organised enterprises lead to an amalgam of community development and business management skills. The balance between these skills varies across the range of programmes and the extent to which either or both sets of skills are demonstratively developed is often obscured by claims that they are 'embedded'. Most focus on community development and community coaching activities, while students in sport science programmes are left working in laboratories with people like them – university age athletes. We should consider how physiology, biomechanics and performance psychology students might fare in these kinds of non-élite, community focussed settings, and how it may be possible to build a greater sense of reflexive knowledge about the place of these discipline areas in wider contexts. Their inclusion might also lead to some rapprochement between sports studies and sport science that may be a means to transcend the sports studies/sport science division, develop more fully rounded students and graduates and step beyond the sense that 'sport' uses 'science' to give it some intellectual respectability at the expense of more holistic approach while 'science' uses 'sport and exercise' to attract participants to its higher education programmes and keep itself alive.

### **Authorship, writing and publication**

In the short term it is likely that there are achievable goals in the area of authorship, writing and publishing. Developments in the humanities exploring the impacts of and potential for

digital technologies on writing suggest that there are opportunities for innovation and radically democratic egalitarian change, such as the Media Commons network. One of its key actors has argued for writing and publishing forms that produce a

peer-to-peer mode of open, post-publication review of texts; ... new understandings of authorship as dialogic, diffuse and mobile; ... new publishing structures that reflect a turn from focussing on texts as discrete products to texts as the locus of conversation; [and] ... new social modes of distribution and preservation for the texts produced in these new structures. [46]

Such an approach would be a significant challenge to individualism and the vocational bases of the humanities and social sciences, while it would also undermine the piecemeal and disjointed aspects of academic multi-authorship where co-authors may contribute to a small portion of a paper, such as data analysis, but often have only minimal overall engagement with 'their' publication.

As part of a project to pursue these goals, Media Commons launched Comment Press as a set of WordPress plug-ins allowing for interactive and dialogic review and commentaries on texts in development. The development has been difficult to maintain primarily because WordPress is open source software so needs to be continually monitored to ensure that plug-ins remain compatible. It could be that if more subject and discipline areas used the system that the costs associated with such a platform could be lessened by being spread. As noted above, more rigorous disciplinary linkages beyond the sport and exercise subject area could lead to new and more intellectually productive scholarship and a wider range of writing styles and forms including those that resemble blogging and mash-ups (of previously existing texts) alongside a more open and dialogic notion of authorship, and may allow those in the humanities and social sciences to slough off the limitations of positivist writing styles in favour of richer expressions of the joys and pleasures of movement.

Media Commons operates in a collegial manner. Its WordPress plug-ins, despite the constraints, allow a distinctive level and form of interaction, and anyone may join and post their work for comment as part of the dialogic, diffuse and mobile model of authorship being developed. Moreover, the more a community member participates in the life of the group the more entitlements they have and the more other members are able to respond to their posted work. It is, in a sense, a scholarly mash-up in a form of gift economy; it may also be seen as applied collegiality. [47] It seems to meet most of the International Cooperative Alliance's principles, depending how 'economic' is defined in principle 3. The one area where

it may not demonstrably do so at present is cooperation with other cooperatives, which may be more a question of the existence of other cooperatives, not of will. The small size of the Comment Press infrastructure team means that the considerable cost of maintaining this plug-in seems to be unsustainable: the plug-in requires considerable technological input, maintenance and upgrading to remain operational. [48] Without close collaboration across a range of subject areas, this cost question is a significant impediment to the development and maintenance of similar platforms in other discipline and subject areas.

Although the small scale of Media Commons is a significant limitation, the network provides a model for developing knowledge forms within academic settings, that is, for autonomous knowledge. The bigger challenge in developing Commons-based reflexive knowledge is with extra-academic audiences, that is, with heteronymous knowledge. This highlights the question of publishing. Open access has become fashionable in recent years, and there is a risk that it is becoming seen as a near universal panacea. Open access may present us with ways to begin to address public access to research but it has a poor name, covers too many models and is not free. The key problem lies not with whether a publication is open access or not, but with the business models that underpin that access. This issue is rapidly emerging in UK higher education with the publication of the Finch Report in June 2012 and the consequent debate between 'green' and 'gold' models, where 'green' models prioritise the use of publicly accessible repositories and 'gold' centre on a researcher pays approach. [49] The Finch Report's advocacy of a 'gold' model has raised significant debates about funding research, about the possible risks to academic freedom, about potential emphases on heteronymous instrumental knowledge (linked to 'impact') and the power of publishing conglomerates in various discipline and subject areas, such as Elsevier in the sciences and Taylor and Francis in sport and exercise scholarship. [50] A specific concern is funding the publication of research that is not supported by external research grants – a common feature of the social sciences and humanities in sport and of critical social research. This advocacy and the subsequent debate highlights the contradiction that information remains free to academics while universities are willing to pay the inflated subscription prices commercial publishers impose. The London Olympics, for instance, saw widespread scholarly analysis and a large number of special issues of academic journals, not only in the sport and exercise fields. The irony is that almost all of the critical social science and humanities publications in this area of extensive public interest and local and national political activism remains hidden from view behind pay-walls that prevent widespread public access. [51] At

the same time, the kind of critique associated with London's Free Word Centre was marginal even during the lead-up to the event itself, and subsequent publications point to the value and importance of accessible critique. [52] We need a wider debate about ways to develop business models that do not impose academic publishers' access-limiting rentals on knowledge – rentals because they do not produce knowledge, they provide the means of its circulation. [53] The challenge is to find ways to limit their ability to charge those rents.

There are three achievable options to consider. The first is much wider use of Creative Commons licenses; an alternative to copyright that allows flexible publication rights around attribution, commercial use and derivative texts. It is becoming more widespread and some commercial publishers use Creative Commons terms rather than copyright and for a number of smaller academic publishers – such as Valiz and Common Ground – they are the norm. These are terms of publication that undermine the imposition of private property on cultural works while addressing the concerns of those who see copyright as vital to innovation. The various forms of Creative Commons licenses mean that academics should look carefully at which option to use and consider risks and benefits as well as the suitability of various forms for the specific type of research or creative output. This is a relatively new form of licensing so scholars need to consider the full implications of which model is adopted; for instance care must be taken to consider the implications of particular Creative Commons licenses for research participants. [54] If nothing else, scholarly societies that publish academic journals should be considering the use of Creative Commons licenses as part of the wider debate and challenges posed to control of publication in the increasingly digital environment. [55]

The second option is alternative forms of publication; an informative model is seen in the *Scandinavian Sports Studies Forum*. [56] This is a multi-disciplinary, refereed, on-line, open access journal, but with a business model where the work is subsidised by Malmö University. It has a companion, the non-refereed *idrottsforum* with an extra-academic audience. Despite the quality of material published in these sites, they remain marginal, open access and free to use, so by the logic of the current order inferior. They are not listed in journal rankings and therefore for those in higher education institutions where publication impact is a significant issue they remain undesirable to publish in. In the current climate the key question then is why academics would publish there, especially new scholars looking to establish a reputation in the field and, in a world of increasingly precarious employment, secure their future.

A third option is to wrest control over these alternative forms of publication; it is not likely that there will be many universities prepared to invest in supporting an on-line open access journal, and if they did there could be serious challenges to the maintenance of quality. Kathleen Fitzpatrick has argued for a redefinition of the role of the University Press to become a publisher of that institution's staff [57]; in some settings that might work but for many in the sport studies and sport science fields there is no in-house university press. Furthermore, in the UK it is unlikely that the current funding régime would encourage higher education institutions to bear that financial risk, although the near universal development of institutional repositories and widespread on-line access arrangements suggest the potential of enhanced access beyond the pay-wall. There is a small, but growing, debate about the possibility of cooperative academic publishing including mutual ownership of journals, books and grey literature (such as policy and consultancy reports) by scholars and libraries as a development beyond the commercialised forms of open access proposed by the Finch Report. [58] Alternatively, Jay Coakley has suggested (at the workshop that was the basis of this collection) that we could fund such a venture by pooling our existing journal subscriptions. Such a move towards a co-operative scholarly sports publication, if consistent with the ICA's seven principles, could be a significant advance in reclaiming the Commons and in the development of our field.

## **Conclusion**

The corporatisation and regulation of the contemporary university is changing the labour process of higher education and presents scholars with profound challenges to both work processes and commitments to co-workers, including students and various publics. The pressure to narrow scholarly work to prioritise heteronymous instrumental knowledge with its focus on market-based policy-focussed activity is at odds with the basic premises of autonomous knowledge development in critical social science and heteronymous reflexive knowledge development through the application of knowledge to and in the service of the public good in the civil sphere. This pressure places academics at the heart of the enclosure of the cultural Commons. The work of social science and humanities scholars of sport sits alongside co-workers in bio-medical and bio-genetic studies who are deep within the parallel enclosure of the Commons of the internal nature of humanity, although the relations of sport and exercise to the enclosures of education and culture, internal and external

environments requires further analysis. These relations to culture and bio-genetics mean that the problem of the place of the social sciences and humanities in the study of sport and exercise is of significance well beyond the academy. This paper, therefore, sketches the topography of those questions as they relate to the social science of sport in higher education and suggests some viable and achievable forms of scholarly action in this fluid setting; these are tentative and proposed with a view to collegial discussion. Resolving these questions may require different ways of scholarly work that are more dialogic than monologic and that envision real utopias to develop achievable and viable goals that will change and develop as the debate continues and circumstances change. With that, I hope to have helped extend the potential for disobedience, for creating alternative subjectivities in cognitive capitalism where life itself is put to work. The significance of sport as an economic and cultural sector and the essential financial role that sport science and studies programmes play in many higher education settings means that we cannot afford to remain on the bench.

## Notes

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[1] see Silk and Francombe in this issue; Gopal, 'How Universities Die'; Ruin 'On the Role of the University in the Age of Management Politics'.

[2] Scotini, 'The Disobedient Class'.

[3] Gielen, 'Artistic Praxis and the Neo-liberalization of the Educational Space'.

[4] Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*, p xvii.

[5] Harvey, *ibid* and *The Enigma of Capital*, Žižek, *First as Tragedy*, Wright *Envisioning Real Utopias*, Boltanski & Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Robbins, *Secular Vocations*, Boon, *In Praise of Copying*, Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence*, Moore, *Unmarketable*, Boyle, *The Public Domain*, Goldsmith & Wu, *Who Controls the Internet*.

[6] The SIGJ2 Writing Collective, 'What can We Do?'; Bailey and Freedman, *The Assault on Universities*.

[7] Boltanski & Chiapello, *ibid*; Gielen, *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude*; Ross, *Nice Work if You Can get It*.

[8] Allen & Ainley, *The Great Reversal*.

[9] Blake, *Body Language*.

[10] I am grateful to Maureen Smith for this insight.

[11] Burawoy, 'Redefining the Public University'.

[12] Hardt, 'A Note from the Editor'.

- [13] Calella, 'The Factory of Precarious Workers'.
- [14] Burawoy, *ibid*, 30.
- [15] Gielen, 'Artistic Praxis', 19.
- [16] *ibid*, 20.
- [17] *ibid*, 21.
- [18] *ibid*, 27.
- [19] Hardt, *ibid*.
- [20] Scholette, *Dark Matter*.
- [21] Robbins, *ibid*; Holmwood, 'Death by Metrics'.
- [22] Standing, *The Precariat*; Boltanski & Chiapello *ibid*.
- [23] Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*.
- [24] Boyle, *ibid*, Goldsmith & Wu, *ibid*.
- [25] Žižek. *ibid*.
- [26] *ibid*, 91.
- [27] see Ross *ibid*, 189-205.
- [28] Boon, *ibid*.
- [29] Russell Field, personal correspondence.
- [30] Wright, *ibid*, p 6.
- [31] Robbins, *ibid*, p 25.
- [32] Edwards, *Civil Society*.
- [33] Eichberg, *Bodily Democracy*; Perelman, *Barbaric Sport*.
- [34] Burawoy, *ibid*, p 32.
- [35] Gielen, *ibid*, 28.
- [36] Russell, *In Praise of Idleness*.
- [37] International Cooperative Alliance, 'Co-operative identity, values and principles'.
- [38] Shaw, 'London's Free University'.
- [39] Mondragon University; Matthews, 'Inside a cooperative'.
- [40] Castles and Wüstenburg, *The Education of the Future*, 175-82.
- [41] Agergaard, 'Sport as social formation and specialist education'.
- [42] Public School.
- [43] Russell Field personal correspondence; Fixico, *American Indian Mind*; Patterson, *Exploring Maori Values*.
- [44] Masucci, 'Precarious Life within the Creative Crisis of Finance Capital'.
- [45] Carrot Workers Collective, 'On Free Labour'.
- [46] Fitzpatrick, *ibid*, 155.
- [47] Frow, *Time and Commodity Culture*.
- [48] At the time of writing, its future remains in doubt.
- [49] Finch, 'Accessibility, sustainability, excellence'.
- [50] I am acutely aware of the irony of that statement in this publication.
- [51] I am grateful to Russell Field for this observation.
- [52] Cohen, *On the Wrong Side*; Perryman, *Why the Olympics are bad*; Perryman, *London 2012*; London's Free Word Centre regularly addresses Olympic related issues, and during the summer of 2012 had an extensive critical cultural programme.
- [53] Harvey, *Limits*, 349-58.
- [54] Morrison, 'Creative Commons and open access to scholarly works'.
- [55] Weedon, 'The writing's on the firewall'.
- [56] see Scandinavian Sports Studies Forum (<http://www.sportstudies.org/>) and idrottsforum (<http://idrottsforum.org/>).
- [57] Fitzpatrick, *ibid*, 178-87.
- [58] Haynes, 'Scholarly publishing'.



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