


Introduction

Democracy and Public Universities



Public universities have been significantly changed and undermined since the Thatcher–Reagan era, as have most of the public institutions of social democratic states. The link between the endangered state of public universities and the decline of social democratic institutions is direct. Both are victims of overwhelming neoliberal¹ policies that involve selling off key public goods and institutions built for the taxpayers and at taxpayer expense. Democratic societies are being undermined by processes and structures that remove key resources and issues from public control. Major social and economic decisions are increasingly controlled by global actors who benefit themselves and their supporters behind the scenes by privatizing and appropriating resources belonging to the public. These elites create decisions favorable to their own economic and political interests and work hard to maintain the charade that governments are enacting and protecting the public interest and thus to avoid social unrest.

We are not alone in linking public universities to democratic societies. Affirmations about democracy and economic development are invoked routinely to justify changes in public universities and other public goods on the presumed grounds of a need for reductions in expenditures. Given that even the neoliberals articulate a link between public universities and democracy, it is surprising how little systematic research and analytical discussion draws connections between economics, organizational dynamics, public universities, and democratic citizenship.² Instead, the literature is rife with right-wing and left-wing tracts about democracy and education. These do little to address the current decline in public universities in practical terms. In this book, we aim to get beyond these generalities and enter an arena of analysis and subsequent university reform.

Democracy has multiple meanings and so we must clarify our own positions for the reader. An in-depth discussion will be presented in detail in Chapter 2. The following presentation provides only a quick overview of our take on this important subject. For us, democracy, in its most general sense, is a mode of coming to agreements on shared

action agendas through a combined process of stakeholder deliberation and action. The aim is to harmonize divergent interests and wishes of the legitimate stakeholders through democratic learning processes (Mansbridge 1983). The primary emphasis is on allowing the direct participation of stakeholders in making decisions that affect their lives. This is because they have both the relevant information about their own situations and the moral and political right to participate in deciding their own futures.

Representative democracy plays a strong role in society, but it necessarily coexists with other participatory democratic processes that can be found in families, neighborhoods, communities, businesses, churches, etc. Participatory democracy involves discussion, debate, collective learning and sharing knowledge and goals among the legitimate immediate stakeholders. This participation produces analyses and actions that, well handled, can harmonize the diverse interests of most of the relevant stakeholders. Participatory democracy can be a contentious, complex, and even frustrating process. However, it is built on honoring the rights, wishes, and knowledge of those involved. Participatory democracy also results in decisions that work because the stakeholders participate in making them and thus are responsible for them.

More specifically we advocate social democratic ideals. Social democracy is the intentional use of social and economic interventions and institutions to promote the redistribution of wealth to the degree necessary to protect vulnerable members of society and promote improvements in the lives of the majority of society's members. These redistributions and protections enable members of society to play an effective role in the social and political system and they protect the poor or marginalized from exploitation by the rich. Social democracy should not be confused with some of the self-identified social democratic parties in Europe, many of which do not actually support the development of social democratic societies. In any case the Labour Party in Great Britain and the various Scandinavian social democratic parties all differ in their platforms and practical politics. When we use the term social democracy, we are not referring to these parties but to the underlying values, norms and attitudes of social democracy.

We argue that democracy should be a vital part of the organization and the teaching, research and service activities at public universities. The alternative, hierarchical and authoritarian management of the many by the few, is what prevails now. Nevertheless, we recognize that very few key actors in the world of public universities agree that participatory democracy based on social democratic values is an essential feature

of public universities. Rather policymakers and most higher education administrators articulate some kind of democratic and economic mission for public universities in their public relations campaigns and then rain down budget cuts and coercive assessment and ranking schemes on their institutions. Their actual behavior makes it clear that the democratic rhetoric is not tied to resource allocations or to the leaders' true goals.

The critical literature and policy statements about public universities are dominated by assertions about the evils of meritocracy, accountability, job preparation, the evils of corporatization and student debt (Lucas 1994; Soley 1995; Lucas 1996; Ehrenberg 1997; Shumar 1997; Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Strathern 2000; Kirp 2003; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004; Ehrenberg 2007; Greenberg 2007; Bousquet and Nelson 2008; Caanan and Shumar 2008; Ikenberry and MacLendon 2009; McMahan 2009; Schrecker 2010; Ginsberg 2011; Samuels 2013; Hyatt, Shear and Wright 2015). While these are all important topics and valuable analyses to read, it is remarkable how disconnected most of these arguments are from debates about the vital role of public goods like university education in democratic societies. It is a tribute to the power of neoliberal ideologies and authoritarian practices that debates about democracy in public universities have been marginalized in the current discussions of what was once seen as a key institution for social mobility and democratization. Thus, one of our agendas is to force the relationship between democracy and public universities back into the discussion arena.

Awareness of processes undermining social democracy is not new. It is a recurrent theme and has been analyzed before by thinkers like Mills (1956), Galtung (1989), Behn (2001), Gibson-Graham (2006), Klein (2007), and many others. Decades ago, Mills laid out an analysis of the political, administrative, industrial complex and its control over industrial production and innovations. In the years since, Galtung has talked and written about the economic blackmail of the Global South by international corporations, whether these are multinationals or colonizing regimes like the U.S. as Kjelstadli (2010) argues. Recently, well-known intellectuals like Habermas (2012) have pointed to the devastating consequences of a European Community that is being governed, including its universities, without democratic participation and social control. A fair society must be shaped by democratic ideals and practices. Democracy is about citizens having control over their own lifeworlds and, as a collectivity, being able to participate in the design and development of participatory, fair, and sustainable social processes.

Gaining participatory democratic control of the financial and political empires of the global elites is a daunting task, one beyond our ambitions in this book. Our focus is on the possible role of re-created public universities in helping to re-create participatory social democracy. To do this, public universities would have to be open to students and faculty from all social classes and races/ethnicities/genders. Students would be encouraged to develop their capacities as individuals and members of the social institutions that are the backbone of civil society. Public universities would have to educate these students in a way that enables them to enhance and advocate democratic praxis across the institutions of society. Along with this, they would gain a substantive education in fields they choose to work in after graduation. Within the university they would experience organizational processes that nurture and highlight social democracy. For this to be possible, public universities would have to treat the faculty, students, and staff as full partners in this citizen formation process.

The neoliberal public university reifies the teaching process as a commodity transfer having only instrumental training dimensions. For neoliberals, the new generation of professionals is simply a more skilled (and more indebted) version of the proletarian labor of their high-school-educated predecessors in previous generations. This reduction of the role of public education to a vocational training activity is a political economic strategy to create a new generation of well-trained but passive social actors, willing to meet the demands of global elites and not to disturb the neoliberal processes of elite wealth concentration.

In neoliberal universities, the faculty are treated as disposable fee-for-service labor and removed from governance functions, and occasionally blamed for indoctrinating students with anti-neoliberal ideologies. Faculty are subject to neoliberal competitions for merit through coercive systems of evaluation and their freedom of speech has been drastically curtailed. Thus neoliberalism supports a deeply political and authoritarian view of public higher education while claiming to banish “liberal” political indoctrination from universities.

The reduction of higher education to vocational training is as common as it is problematic and destructive. The message to public universities is this: “Stay in your own schoolyard and leave key societal questions alone.” The leaders of public universities are required to offer training for the new “knowledge society” actors for their roles as a new proletariat. It is a new proletariat only because they now have a university degree rather than a secondary school diploma. In addition, they

often have large debts caused by financing their own education after the neoliberal reforms.

In an op-ed published in a Norwegian newspaper, Levin, writing about the public Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), argued for democracy at departmental level (that the chair of the department should be elected by the faculty and not merely appointed by the dean of the college). The former director of The Norwegian Arctic University responded arrogantly that it was senseless to focus on democracy in universities, as democracy is irrelevant in any public institution of higher education. Universities, he argued, should prepare candidates for work life and nothing else.³ It is particularly sobering that this acrimonious exchange took place in one of the few remaining European countries with a strong social democratic political tradition and free public higher education. Even in Norway, the prevalence of anti-democratic practices like the appointment of rectors or of department chairs at public universities is now expanding to a greater range of higher education institutions.

To counter this vocationalizing tide, we suggest that a renewed form of *Bildung* (education as human development) is essential to the future of public universities. This argument will be introduced in detail in Chapter 3. Here we simply point out that *Bildung* means that a university education is more than vocational training. It involves the development of an individual's sense of personal possibilities and potential purposes. This involves an understanding of the complex and multiple relationships among the many spheres of knowledge and an opportunity to learn about and critically rehearse the social, political and ethical values that help them become constructive and empathetic members of society, who behave with integrity in their families, communities and civil society at large.

Unfortunately, with few exceptions, university requirements for a *Bildung*-oriented educational experience have been debased into perfunctory "liberal arts" requirements or pre-university general education requirements. These liberal arts courses are usually taught in no particular relation to each other, without consultation among the faculty and departments teaching them, and without efforts at integration. Because this is what now passes for *Bildung* in most public institutions, we decided to call not for the restoration of *Bildung* but the creation of a *Neue-Bildung* suited to civic life in the twenty-first century. By *Neue-Bildung* we mean authentically integrated, system-based and interconnected courses put together in an educational process aimed at behavioral change and the promotion of civic values and practices.

We argue that the opposite of *Bildung* is neoliberalism. Neoliberalism feeds on socially repressive and regressive actions. Those neoliberals who are not merely cynical manipulators of ideas for their own benefit are free-market fundamentalists who believe that society is and should be a competitive free-for-all and that society is not a collectivity but an arena of competing individuals. They claim to believe that the world is a perfect “machine” that has been interfered with by foolish or even “sinful” people who have caused it to malfunction. For them, the ills of the world—governmental bureaucracy, waste, immorality, violence, drug abuse, pollution and global warming—are products of this improper interference. Their claimed goal is to stop people from interfering with the free market because free markets will automatically produce rational and fair allocations of all the goods and services on the planet. In their view, those who do well in the free market deserve their rewards and those who do poorly deserve their poverty and want.

The central contradiction in their behavior is that these supposedly free-market operators actually interfere constantly with the operations of the market through manipulations of the tax code, by changing laws, and trying to midwife their free market utopia into existence. They justify their actions by claiming to remove regulation, but their behaviors actually result in increased systems of control, assessment, surveillance, and managerialism. We have no sympathy for this ideology and the combination of concepts and cynical practices that this movement has spawned.

If we turn to the anthropological and historical evidence, unregulated markets do not now exist and never existed in the past. In addition to being subject to the law, contracts, the circulation of information, and the stability of currencies, all markets everywhere are inherently imperfect. No consumer has a completely ordered set of wants nor perfect information about available goods and services, nor perfect access to those goods and services, nor the interest or time to compare what is on offer. In addition, as Karl Polanyi pointed out (Polanyi 1944), neither land nor labor are commodities that can be moved around the globe at will. Trying to treat them as “fictitious commodities” has created a vast amount of human and natural wreckage. Thus, these free markets only exist as utopian ideologies: “stark utopias” as Polanyi called them.

This utopian belief in the perfection of the system and the imperfection of humans is a key part of neoliberal worldviews and it feeds elitist practices. Those who believe in the perfect free markets claim to be the enlightened ones, the rational actors, and are sure they should be in charge. Those who believe that markets must be regulated to protect

society and its members against the depredations of the few are demonized as “liberals,” communists, or fools who must be watched, corralled, and audited.

Trust is key. Neoliberals trust only themselves and their free-market ideology. Those who oppose them and believe in controlling the play of pseudo-free markets are treated as threats to the “good” and are subject to controls and constant assessment. They are systematically distrusted and treated as “enemies” of society. Thus the apparatus of neoliberalism is built on the distrust of the majority of human beings, of society, and of politicians who believe their job is to advocate on behalf of the less fortunate members of society. Neoliberalism is the repudiation of the notion of a civil society based on human solidarity, notions essential to the social democratic traditions and practices neoliberals detest. Consequently, neoliberalism is an implacable opponent to the role of public university education as a process of *Bildung* precisely because such an education promotes social democratic beliefs and behaviors.

We are now at a key juncture in history. The neoliberals have had their turn at remaking the world and the resulting path of destruction is clear. They have created a world more unequal and anti-democratic than it has been since the Industrial Revolution. This faces public universities with a choice. Public universities can either become an integral element in the recreation of social democracy or can continue to operate as an instrument of elite domination of the planet.

Public universities could provide both key social actors and research-based knowledge to make social democratic development possible. The character and education of these actors, the knowledge and skills they need to have, and the products and services they create would be vital ingredients in a transition to a social democratic future. But public universities as currently structured are also profoundly authoritarian and anti-democratic. Therefore, they must be remade if they are to play any role in reconstructing social democracy. In this book we chart a path toward their key role in recovering social democracy through the re-creation of public universities.

Accomplishing a social democratic re-creation of public universities is not a simple matter. It means that public universities would have to reshape their faculty and administrators as advocates and supporters of teaching, research, and community service to enhance social democracy. Policymakers would have to provide resources to promote democracy rather than to undermine it. This is the opposite of what is happening now.

At present, public universities have become important bulwarks in the consolidation of the hold of wealthy elites over the rest of the world, a role many public universities have willingly played since at least the 1980s. Elite private universities have played this role since their founding, since elitism is their promise and core function. Public universities once were a pro-democratic alternative to these elite institutions. They no longer are.

Thus we are as critical of current public universities as we are of neo-liberal higher education policy and administrators. We are not alone in taking these positions (Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Chomsky et al. 1997; Bok 2004; Newfield 2004, 2011; Giroux and Giroux 2004; Washburn 2005; McMahan 2009; Saltmarsh and Zlotowski 2011; Whelan, Walker, and Moore eds. 2013; Guinier 2015; Hyatt, Shear and Wright 2015, to name only a few). The difference is that we aim to move beyond general perspectives on these questions toward the development of specific views on the relationship between democracy and higher education as *Bildung* and as a set of organizational systems. Without these organizational specifics, the discussion of democracy in public universities leaves the subject on an abstract and polemical plane without concrete guidance and support useful to anyone who wants to engage in a democratizing change process.

The relationship between democracy and education in general and between democracy and public universities in particular is mainly rendered through tired statements about the way representative political democracy and a dynamic economy depend on an educated and socially responsible citizenry. Administrative and political “white papers” and nostrums abound. They are as prolific as they are disconnected from practice. Such pronouncements do not explain why profoundly undermined representative political systems and a vastly unequal world economy require educated citizens. What global elites want and what public universities mostly produce are obedient workers, fee-for-service researchers to serve business interests, and passive political subjects. Despite the inflated rhetoric to the contrary, this is their current function (Kirn 2009; Dereciwizc 2014; Guinier 2015).

The contradictions between the behavior and rhetoric of the increasingly authoritarian and managerialist leaders of public universities, who advocate democracy in public statements while behaving in quite authoritarian ways, are clear. The democracy/economic dynamism argument is also empirically wrong, since dynamic economies can exist in non-democratic societies (e.g., China, see Brown, Lauder and Ashton 2011). In fact, the last thing many workplaces and stockholders want in

most places is an activist democratic workforce trained in universities in the values and practices of democracy and willing to advocate for the social democratic rights of citizens.

One vexing issue in working through the literature on the crises in public universities is created by undisciplined use of the terms “marketization,” “corporate,” and “corporatization.” Like other ideological terms, e.g., “traditional” or “modern,” these terms evoke many different ideas in the minds of the readers. For example, when an academic colleague complains about a university administrative decision and calls it an example of “corporatization,” there is no way to know what she means without further questioning. For many faculty, corporatization simply means a negative institutional decision forced on them by anti-academic administrators. By contrast, in many policy environments and among university administrators, corporatizing higher education is viewed as the road to its salvation. Together, politically and economically ignorant faculty and administrators have often made public universities into the costly and poorly functioning institutions they now have become. Later in the book (Chapter 5), we present some of the multiple meanings of marketization and corporatization. It is important to contrast the ideological use of these terms with their substantive organizational meanings so that a more responsible and realistic analysis of these processes becomes possible.

What is called neo-Taylorism in this book is also an important part of this story. Neo-Taylorism is a process of organizational mimicry, the implementation of an administrative fantasy that public universities are actually early twentieth-century nonunionized industrial mass production plants. Neo-Taylorism, like Taylorism before it, is built on strong hierarchies and hermetic structural units that are internally hierarchical and that report only upward toward the apex. These organizations purposely weaken cross-functional links to enable bosses in this fragmented system to exert control from above. The leaders at the pinnacle of the organizational structure are remote from the actual value-creation processes in the organization and yet reserve to themselves all decisional and disciplinary power. Importantly, without having any idea what their products are and how well these products work in society at large, these administrative leaders, remote from the actual value-production activities in the university, substitute phantasmagorical statements—about education for the knowledge society of the twenty-first century, community engagement, respect for diversity, or a decreasing environmental footprint—for meaningful organizational leadership.

Henry Ford would have loved this model, except for one crucial thing. Few of these bosses have a clue about what the public university's products are, what they are worth, how well they work, or how to get more good results and reduce poor results. Thus current public universities are modeled on a nineteenth-century manufacturing ideology of assembly lines but without cars or washing machines rolling off the line and onto trucks or trains and out for sale.

If, among the positive meanings of corporatization we mean being organized as current creative private sector companies are, then public universities are not corporate. They are increasingly hierarchical, inflating the numbers of administrators and the sizes of their salaries in relation to the number of faculty and students. The number of senior administrators and professional staff has skyrocketed, and with them the costs of running universities.⁴ At some institutions, middle and senior administrative personnel outnumber permanent faculty and often are paid better than faculty are.

These are not successful contemporary corporate practices. In currently competitive manufacturing and service organizations, hierarchies are minimized, administrative structures are lightened and made flexible and adaptive, teamwork across functions (often around particular products or markets) is promoted, and leadership is a matter of helping coordinate and facilitate the work of the teams and supporting the organization in adapting to its larger environment.⁵

This kind of agile, flattened organizational structure, with room for diverse stakeholders to meet and cooperate around systems problems, bears no resemblance to public universities or private elite universities. To be sure, there are some multidisciplinary units, but these are often funded from outside the university with the money protecting the cross-structural space they occupy and fending off the structural anomalies they create. The core university organizational structures are authoritarian and hierarchical, with hierarchical professorial, staff, administrative and student statuses and roles, and departmental units competing with each other for the resources of deans, who compete against other deans for resources, all looking upward to a central administrative pinnacle. In this competition a vital strategic resource is the ability to shape networks supporting the interests of individual actors or small coalitions. These networks aggregate power to win decisions on resource allocation.

External systems of assessment and ranking of institutions strongly reinforce these neo-Taylorist behaviors. They rank universities, students, and faculties by using crude and often meaningless productivity

measures. For faculty and students, they promote meritocratic competitions that discourage innovation and encourage short-term, quick-to-print academic work. They rank departments and colleges in ways that even beginning sociology students could see are methodologically flawed (Shin, Toutlkoushian, and Teichler 2011). Student outcomes also are ranked according to tests that show nothing about the ability of the students to do well in their jobs or to live meaningful lives.

Though nearly everyone understands that these systems of ranking and evaluation are methodologically invalid, neo-Taylorist senior administrators and their governing boards make or ruin their careers by moving their institutions up or down in the rankings. In the United States, faculty make or break their careers by accumulating ranked chits on their CVs, and students get jobs on the basis of the rank of their institution, even if the rankings are meaningless in any educational sense. This is what we mean by neo-Taylorism. It is Fordism without Ford cars, a vast neoliberal simulacrum. Perhaps the one business parallel is to be found in “casino capitalist” investment banks and hedge funds where huge hierarchies exist and where performance, salary and bonuses are diffusely and even inversely related to performance (Cohan 2010; Brown and Hodgson 2012). The current organizational structures and dynamics of public universities are inimical to *Bildung* in any form and promotion of *Bildung* would be opposed by many of the inhabitants of these institutions, now including most administrators and many faculty and students. *Neue-Bildung* requires the kind of coordination and organizational integration that can only be achieved through participatory democracy in the universities themselves.

Public universities graduate people and train researchers, some of whom, even under current dismal conditions, manage to become the future leaders of society in both the private and public sector. Let’s be clear, though, that these are the winners. Many graduates, however, do not end up being high-level leaders. The majority end up as salaried workers in low- or middle-level management positions (Abel, Deitz, and Su 2014). After the latest world economic crisis, such graduates are lucky now if they have a career that includes stable employment. A generation or two ago, a vital role for public universities was to make it possible for students from the working and lower middle class with adequate talent to obtain the academic degrees needed for social mobility. This is no longer the case. Under current conditions in the U.S., without a university degree young people have few meaningful economic options other than in the military or in wage labor under increasingly precarious conditions. Even now, economic security depends greatly on

access to higher education. Public universities remain important gatekeepers in the process of social mobility and increasingly function as life preservers for the declining middle class.

Our position is that university education must be much more than technical training. It should be understood to include knowledge and skill acquisition, civic socialization and the potential for social mobility after graduation. In all universities, students and neophyte researchers are taught how to operate within structured organizational systems. This is an important life skill. Importantly, this means that the structure of public universities and how they teach students matters in their subsequent working and civic lives. If they are treated as neoliberal market customers, universities act to augment the corrosion of social democracy. If, however, these same students and young researchers are treated organizationally and educationally as future citizens of social democratic systems, then public universities can exercise pressure toward the redevelopment of democracy in civil society at large.

For all these reasons, we argue that public university organizational structures and dynamics matter in preparing students and faculty for organizational and civic life. At the core of this is treating students and faculty in such a way that their social roles involve more than individualistic, competitive economic actions (Guinier 2015). When they participate in organizational processes or take on leadership positions beyond the university, it matters to the welfare of society at large if they have democratic values and know how to enact them in their behavior toward others and toward society generally. If their mentors and university administrators do not behave in a democratic and pedagogically respectful way toward them, any talk about civic socialization becomes a fraud. It is not enough to write position papers and give speeches about these issues, which is what most university administrators do.

The focus of this book is public universities both in Europe and in the United States. Their expansion in the national higher education systems after the Second World War was exceptional, greatly increasing the number of students getting a university degree and broadening the social origins of the students to include the lower middle class and the working class. By contrast, except for token policies of inclusion based on systems of scholarships, elite universities (the Ivy League, Oxbridge, etc.) have remained relatively and purposely immune to the massification of higher education. They lived and still live by their privileged position and vast wealth. Despite the occasional working- or middle-class student who makes it in and is used to manage the public image of these institutions as something more than finishing schools for elites,

they do not play an important role in national social mobility. This is why public universities matter.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, increased access to higher education had the obvious effect of enhancing class mobility by creating access to middle-class status and beyond. In this process of social democratization, the upwardly mobile entrants brought diverse values and interests with them, shaped by their social and material backgrounds (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979). This in turn caused new voices to be heard in the public domain, and issues emanating from university campuses pressing for democratic revitalization in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They created a great deal of productive social turmoil including a significant expansion of civil rights, environmental justice, gender equality, etc. During this period, the goals to create a fairer and more sustainable world were real, shared and acted on.

Elites recognized this threat and mounted the counter-offensive that gave us Thatcher and Reagan's neoliberalism in the form of an all-out attack on public higher education, among other public goods. That neoliberal counter-revolution has engulfed our societies up to the present. Their reforms have produced major increases in inequality and the global financial crises that quickly pushed the working and middle classes back down into precarious work and poverty. We argue that without educationally based social mobility, there can be no social democracy. The public universities both in Europe and the U.S. hold the key to mobility based on talent and effort rather than on inherited wealth and nepotism. This grounds our arguments for the importance of public universities.

There is a potential downside to increasing the social availability of higher education. University education poorly done, and without fundamental changes in the curriculum, teaching methods, and institutional organizational structures and processes, can pull new generations away from their social origins in a personally and socially unproductive way (Guinier 2015). Inclusion and homiletic statements about diversity not accompanied by a critique of the debased liberal arts curriculum and of authoritarian university organizational structures and practices are a sham. Without fundamental changes in the structure and management of public universities, inclusion means only the assimilation of more students into the structures controlled by and for existing elites.

Our own commitment to diversity is not based on political correctness. For us, democracy, politically and socially, is not about inclusion only for its own sake. We do believe that respect for diversity is vital to the health of democratic institutions for moral reasons. Democracy

is premised on granting equal rights to all members of society to have a say in decisions affecting them. However, we also argue that democracy is practically important. Power sharing is pragmatically essential because it permits the inclusion of knowledge, experiences, and unique capacities of all kinds of people in the deliberative process and the development of new social actions. This inclusion permits us to come up with better (fairer, more sustainable) courses of future action (Guinier 2015). Such inclusion requires having a meaningful say in all the institutions people operate in, including public universities, a say not based on a vote only but centered on translating personal experiences and insights into collective, socially beneficial actions.

Our views grow directly out of our long experience in universities in the United States and Europe and in the private and public sectors on both sides of the Atlantic. They also emanate from our efforts over the past twenty years, during which we both have engaged critically with the transformations taking place in higher education. We have analyzed, taught about, and published on the ongoing degradation of public universities in the United States and Europe and on the search for remedies.⁶ In this book, we intend to tie all our efforts together in a single overall analysis accompanied by an action research strategy for change.

Much of our collaborative research and writing to date has been in the doomsday mode. At this point in our trajectories, we want to go beyond engaging in analytical laments and to trace a path toward the better future we hope for. We are aware of the collapse of social democracy but we are persuaded that critical reflection, truly public universities, and social democracy can and must be re-created and expanded. A key element in this process is the creation of a public university system to replace the one that has been wrecked.

The Plan of the Book

This book contains four interdependent lines of argument that together lead to a different way of thinking about re-creating public universities. In Part I, we discuss the substance and the connectedness between public goods, *Bildung*, public universities, and democracy. Chapter 1 presents neoclassical economics in order to engage in a critique of the pseudo-economics of neoliberalism and pseudo-corporatization. We begin with a review of the logic and premises of neoclassical economic analysis. We do this because neoclassical economic analysis, while not being our preferred economic approach, reveals the falsity

of the pseudo-economic arguments used to justify neoliberalism and neo-Taylorism in structuring and managing universities. We simultaneously issue a challenge to those who decry “marketization” and “corporatization” to demonstrate that they know what they are talking about, that is, that they actually know how successful corporations currently work.

Chapter 2 presents the multiplicity of models and ideologies of higher education and situates our specific focus on public universities in the context of debates about higher education generally. Chapter 3 takes up the multiple meanings of democracy and links public higher education to social democracy. Revitalizing concepts like *Bildung* and the related ideas and practices of academic freedom, academic integrity, and shared governance requires a significant effort. These have long been treated as separate concepts, rendered as abstract principles, and often given quite restricted or common sense meanings.

Part II analyzes universities as work organizations, reviews the positions of all the relevant stakeholders in universities, and analyzes some of the most common organizational structures. In addition, we portray some of what passes for leadership in public universities and show how unfavorably this kind of leadership compares with leadership in well-run corporate organizations.

In Chapter 4 we place *Bildung*, and neoliberal anti-*Bildung* in an organizational context. Chapter 5 details our ideas about universities as work organizations. We show that much of what has been written about universities as organizations fails to capture the organizational complexity and power dynamics that characterize them. In Chapter 6, we lay out the kinds of work and value-creation processes typical of public universities. These chapters argue that without sound organizational structures and practices, democratic change initiatives in public universities are impossible. In Chapter 7, we devote attention to the use of ideas like “steering” used by neoliberal policymakers and university administrators unilateral control while they appear to be freeing local actors to act in accord with the principles of the free market.

Part III lays out the road forward. In Chapter 8, we provide a primer on action research and its major characteristics, because participatory institutions cannot be built by authoritarian imposition. We also present socio-technical systems design as a proven alternative to neoliberal authoritarianism. Chapter 9 links the practice of action research to public university re-creation by showing how it is possible to reorganize public universities to produce a *Neue-Bildung* that would bring public universities back to the center of social democratic development.

In this final section, we intend to be practical. It is one thing to advocate participation and democracy. It is quite another to trace a path and lay out a set of practices that could actually bring this about. Separating research from practice already has created socially disconnected social science and humanities disciplines in higher education. We do not intend to reproduce that split here. We believe that the only way forward is through participatory organizational development and fundamental changes in teaching, research, organizational dynamics, and community engagement. In other words, the democratization of higher education is the only path we can see toward a redevelopment of social democracy itself.

Why Does This Matter?

We do not have to look far to see the devastating effects of the decline of social democracy in most parts of the West. We can point to the overwhelming problems created by the current economic crisis. Millions are out of work. There is massive youth unemployment, including university-age and even university-educated youth, while the global elites continue to monopolize wealth and power, suppressing voices and institutions that would challenge them. The earth itself is being devastated by predatory capitalism and its systematic destruction of the universal commons. Given this, striking out in a new, pro-social democratic direction is amply justified.

Notes

1. By neoliberal we mean an emphasis on privatization of public resources and function, fiscal austerity, deregulation of industry, removal of trade barriers, and shrinking the role of government in the economy. We will define it in more detail later in the book.
2. Walter McMahon is a rather lonely exception (McMahon 2009).
3. See <http://www.adressa.no/meninger/article7160667.ece> (accessed 30 September 2016), and <http://www.adressa.no/meninger/annenside/article7210631.ece> (accessed 30 September 2016).
4. The increase in academic administration can be seen in many reports. An example is http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/06/higher-ed-administrators-growth_n_4738584.html (accessed 30 September 2016).
5. Key texts in this field supporting our views are Thorsrud and Emery (1964, 1970), Davis and Taylor (1972), Herbst (1976), Trist (1981), Lawler (1986), van Eijnatten (1993), and Levin et al. (2012).

6. Our major works in this field include the following publications: Greenwood (2007, 2008, 2009, 2012), Greenwood and Levin (1998b, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2005, 2008), Levin and Greenwood (2001a, 2001b, 2007, 2011), Levin and Martin (2007).