Received: 30 June 2018 | Revised: 14 October 2018 | Accepted: 5 November 2018

DOI: 10.1111/hequ.12199

WILEY Higher Education Quarterly

ARTICLE

Intellectual leadership and academic communities: Issues for discussion and research

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Funding information
Research Grants Council, University Grants Committee, Grant/Award Number: 17665816 General Research Fund (GRF)

Abstract

This paper re-examines intellectual leadership in Higher Education by asking the following questions: What is intellectual leadership? Does intellectual leadership imply a position of formal authority and power? What patterns can be observed in the career paths of intellectual leaders? Does cumulative advantage in science automatically pave the way for intellectual leadership? What hinders women and minority scholars from taking on intellectual leadership in their epistemic communities? Drawing on discussions in the literature of the previous decade, the inquiry aims to re-energise dialogue that is essential for resistance to anti-intellectualism and proletarianisation in academe.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding the recent publication of some seminal papers on intellectual leadership in academe (see Macfarlane, 2011b, 2012), there has been little discussion on this topic in the Higher Education literature over the past decade. Intellectual leadership, as a focus of inquiry, has been largely sidelined. Instead, the forces of marketisation have been prioritising discourse on leadership that befits a neoliberal university (Clark, 1995; Giroux, 2015a; Harris, 2005; Smyth & Hattam, 2000). The agenda of the market-oriented university leaves little space for critical inquiry, blue-sky research, disinterested open debates or organised scepticism (Harris, 2005; Macfarlane & Cheng, 2008; Merton, 1942). While science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) scholars seem to benefit from the global knowledge economy, albeit inequitably (Kwiek, 2015; Parker & Welch, 2013), humanities and social sciences are increasingly curtailed by the agendas of competitiveness, performativity and calculable impact (Oleksiyenko & Tierney, 2018). Opportunities for leadership by non-traditional powerbrokers, such as women or minority scholars, are viewed through the prism of command and control in the sales-driven hierarchies of prestige, credentials and power (Aiston, 2014; Blackmore, 2014). Inundated by utilitarian analysis of intelligences, ethics, emotions and even personality traits, the literature holds little space for intellectual leadership to be considered as a cardinal leverage for the transformation of university campuses. Instead, flawed corporate

designs proliferate (Giroux, 2006, 2009; Oleksiyenko & Tierney, 2018), nurturing leaderism and soldierism in academe (Oleksiyenko, 2018).

Yet, as anti-intellectualism and illiberalism gain a stronger foothold worldwide (Cobb, 2015; Cole, 2017; Giroux, 2015b; Lee & Schrank, 2010; Ogachi, 2011), there is greater urgency to raise questions about different forms of leadership and responsibilities of university professors to shape academic environments and communities (Macfarlane, 2011b). Thoughtful and critical voices become indispensable when academic communities struggle with anxieties related to loss of vision, organisational disorientation, mistrust and the fight for survival (Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005). In such circumstances, it is essential to examine the contextual challenges that serve to thwart academic freedom and critical inquiry, and to uncover the factors that nurture self-censorship and utilitarianism. Concerns about the powers of industrialism overriding intellectualism in academic work deserve more attention in Higher Education studies, which is why we argue that research and discussion of intellectual leadership should be amplified.

To reinforce studies on intellectual leadership in the field of Higher Education, it is important to delve deeper into key concepts and concerns underpinning the intellectual perspectives of academic communities. Over the last year, we have been pondering related issues within a small group of scholars in Hong Kong. In addition to reading literature on the subject, we have been asking questions, such as: What is intellectual leadership? Does intellectual leadership imply a position of formal authority and power? What patterns can be observed in the career paths of intellectual leaders? Does cumulative advantage in science automatically pave the way for intellectual leadership? What thwarts opportunities for disadvantaged powerbrokers, such as women and minority scholars, to gain intellectual leadership in academic communities?

In sharing insights derived from answering these questions, we put forward aspects that require more investigation and critical analysis. We expect that concerned readers will join us in re-examining the currency of definitions and environmental conditions that shape intellectual leadership in academic communities. We also endeavour to identify conditions that discourage women and minority scholars from seeking intellectual leadership, in the hopes that these conditions will be subject to greater scrutiny in the discourse of Higher Education. We conclude this paper with a range of suggestions for subsequent investigations on this subject.

2 | WHAT IS INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP?

In general terms, intellectual leadership is defined as individual capacity to create powerful ideas that spur scientific, social, technological and institutional revolutions (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Burns, 1978; Kuhn, 1962; Macfarlane, 2012; Rooney & McKenna, 2008). While in theoretical fields of social sciences this capacity is often attributed to a professor capitalising on his/her autonomy to drive innovative investigations and publish influential papers (Boyer, 1990, Isserman, 2003; Rayner, Fuller, McEwen, & Roberts, 2010), in empirically driven fields intellectual leadership is formed by collaborative influence-makers, who synergise ideas and resources across institutions to solve problems or reshape societies (Baert, 2015; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Macfarlane, 2012). In the humanities, the literature has also looked at bohemian figures that nurture discourse on public intellectualism (Baert, 2016; Brass, 2013). Across the fields, intellectual leadership presupposes, on the one hand, a range of mental, emotional and relational capacities that a scholar employs to build trust as the basis for wider communication and engagement (Macfarlane, 2011b; Rooney & McKenna, 2008), and on the other hand, certain socio-historic circumstances and institutional conditions that enable the breaking of norms and boundaries for the purposes of advancing new knowledge (Baert, 2015; Oleksiyenko, 2014; Uslu & Welch, 2018). Ingenuity, inventiveness, courage and creativity all come together to create impact in epistemic and lay communities.

Leadership studies have primarily focused on the value of multiple intelligences applied to various institutional missions and functions (Goleman, 2017; Zhang, 2017). A leader's capacity for self-awareness is often regarded as a prerequisite for social awareness and fruitful problem-solving strategies (Evans, 2017; Evans, Homer,

& Rayner, 2013; Goleman, 2017). A diversity of leadership styles has been recognised as essential for managing the complexity of multicultural learning environments (Kezar, 2008). While emotional intelligence has been featured as central in fine-tuning leadership styles (Goleman, 2017), in the long run genuine universities have been long known to rely on reasoning, critical thinking and organised theory-building to shape scientific prowess and intellectual leadership (Merton, 1942; Weber, 1958).

Indeed, intellectual leadership is not necessarily an ability to please others and make them happy followers (if emotional intelligence is to be interpreted in trivial terms for comparative purposes). Intellectual impact entails building capacity, not only to produce new knowledge, but to provide innovative insights for social and institutional reforms (Smyth & Hattam, 2000). More often than not, intellectual impact emerges when a scholar defies societal/institutional harmony to pursue the truth, no matter how difficult or dangerous the consequent disagreements are with colleagues in epistemic communities and controllers in employing institutions (Giroux, 2009). Strong ideas often emerge in opposition to prevalent conventions and mainstream ideologies (Blackmore, 2006).

Neither is intellectual leadership something that befits managerially measured and rewarded norms, such as hierarchical compliance, performativity and productivity (Macfarlane, 2011a). Instead, intellectual leadership serves to guard the standards of global science, and urges academic communities to resist the intrusion of managerial and hierarchical norms. In the world of powerful ideas, it is not the volume and currency of scientific production, but paradigm shifts that matter (Kuhn, 1962; Macfarlane, 2011b; Macfarlane & Chan, 2014). Intellectual performance follows its own logic and script, apart from the prescriptive powers of institutional bureaucracy (Baert & Morgan, 2017). Intellectual performance, as well as leadership, does not necessarily imply a battle of ideas, and the victory of one type of knowledge over another. Instead, creating an open space for the pursuit of ideas, and engaging a wider audience in critical review, is essential for intellectual growth and sustainability (Merton, 1942, 1968).

One can argue that intellectual leadership rests on a belief in challenging the supremacy of power, and in constantly rethinking the existing social, economic and political frameworks. Intellectual leadership is thus a type of leadership running in parallel with, if not against, organisational/administrative leadership (Mercier, Higgins, & Da Costa, 2014). This notion echoes Grint's (2005, p. 15) simple, but profound interpretation of the differences between management and leadership: management dealing with 'déjà vu (seen this before)' and leadership tackling 'vu jàdé (never seen this before)'. There is a significant degree of mystique that characterises 'vu jàdé' leadership in intellectual pursuits, something which is often missing in the over-managerialised academe.

3 | DOES INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP IMPLY A POSITION OF FORMAL AUTHORITY AND POWER?

Intellectual leaders have a unique publication-based authority and power that is different from the functionalities and performativity set by formal university structures and job descriptions (Baert & Morgan, 2017). The authority and power of intellectual leaders primarily relate to the power of their printed ideas (in traditional or new media), as well as to a sustained recognition of their impact by scholarly communities and the public at large (Bender, 1997). Researchers can certainly have more opportunities for developing such authority and power by doing research on the cutting edge of global scholarship, and facilitating new organisational forms of stakeholder engagement (Uslu & Welch, 2018; Whitley, 2000). In global science, academic freedom encourages critical inquiry and feedback, while innovative approaches in conceptualisation, methodology and writing re-energise collegial engagement (Bilgrami & Cole, 2015). Given steadfast governmental support, as observed at some leading research universities, greater resources accumulate over time, offering scholars an opportunity for sustainable work and impact at the frontiers of global science (Altbach, 2007; Oleksiyenko & Sa, 2010). Intellectual leadership may thus emerge only in universities that have a suitable environment for nurturing global science.

Intellectual leaders certainly contribute to the framework of management and governance at home, as they do within intra- or inter-national scholarly alliances (Macfarlane, 2012). Their vigilance and critical inquiry remain

essential for performing good scholarship. Given that they are expected to lead others (at the very least, their graduate students), the roles of critically minded mentorship and academic citizenship are particularly important aspects of intellectual leadership (Bolden, Gosling, & O'Brien, 2014; Harris, 2005). These roles are integral to communal expectations associated with advancing both individual rights and equity at the leaders' institutions. Crucially, intellectual leaders have a powerful voice in advocating for inquiry and criticism that advance social justice (Su & Wood, 2017). While they pursue innovative solutions to improve the quality of learning and inquiry, true academic leaders display no fear of challenging conventions and bureaucracy, which may interfere with freedom of investigation and communication (Bolden et al., 2014).

Macfarlane's (2012) model of intellectual leadership offers a holistic mapping of a professor's intellectual leadership. It brings together the roles of a professor as knowledge producer, academic citizen, boundary transgressor, [and] public intellectual, with various degrees of emphasis on academic freedom and academic duty. It is believed that academic freedom and academic duty constitute two sides of academic life, demonstrating rights (to criticise and to advocate) and responsibilities (to be a role model, to mentor, to guard academic standards, to enable) (Macfarlane, 2012).

In today's environment, the intellectual leadership of professors largely transpires in acts of vigilance and resistance to the encroaching managerialism (Bengtsen & Barnett, 2017). In rigid institutions, such as modern-day competitive neoliberal universities, which overemphasise the importance of factory modes of labour and productivity, the sense of intellectual leadership can be easily lost (Giroux, 2015a; Torres, 2011). Leaderism thrives on the fear of vulnerable scholars, who turn into soldiers serving out their contracts in expectation of promotions and tenure (Oleksiyenko, 2018). Academic freedom, autonomous research and graduate teaching tend to wane when leaderism and soldierism collude.

To dissuade this from happening, innovation in organised research and co-authorship should be celebrated, but with a higher degree of vigilance regarding the possibility of slipping into dynamics that stifle academic freedom (Skolnik, 1989) or corrupt collaboration (Macfarlane, 2017a). Hierarchies lose value when scholars have to transcend the institutional boundaries and structures for cross-sectoral communication and problem-solving (Lingard & Rawolle, 2011; Turner, Benessaiah, Warren, & Iwaniec, 2015). Intellectual leaders often thrive more in networks and scholarly communities that serve a greater public good (McGee Banks, 1995; Nieminen, 2014). Even if they shape hierarchies over time, they are primarily structured to facilitate the complexity of project budgets, schedules, events that empower, rather than belittle participants (see, e.g., Epstein, 2016). The focus of intellectual leadership in such hierarchies is more often on new horizons of inquiry than on power dynamics.

4 | WHAT PATTERNS CAN BE OBSERVED IN THE CAREER PATHS OF INTELLECTUAL LEADERS?

Signs and signals of intellectual leadership can be detected at various stages of a scholar's progress. The first indications can emerge during admissions, when students are assessed in their aptitude for scientific work at leading universities (Atkinson, 2013; Zuckerman, 1967). Additional indicators come with impactful journal publications; and become more apparent as young scholars succeed in developing productive co-authorships with their mentors to amplify their voices in important networks of study and practice (Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012; Ismail & Rasdi, 2007). A promising scholar can thrive by obtaining research grants and playing the role of primary investigator in impactful studies (Print & Hattie, 1997). Buzz associated with his/her work will grow along with participation in symposia of national, regional or international research associations, and the renown can spill over to lay community networks, where practice-oriented knowledge transfers evolve (Macfarlane & Chan, 2014). Academics can grow into intellectual leaders when they engage ingenuity to challenge conventions and generate an influential flow of collegially tested questions and answers (Zuckerman, 1967, 1991). Ultimately, an individual scholar's work can be impressive enough to encourage others to participate, create and inspire.

The above-mentioned signals fluctuate in the career patterns of intellectual leaders. For example, an impactful thesis can be published as a well-received book, which can lead immediately to a range of subsequent book contracts, keynote invitations and media exposure. In other instances, the dissemination of ideas happens slowly, through multiple layers of academic and non-academic channels of communication (Baert, 2015). Individual scholars' roles and responsibilities in institutional frameworks can affect their strategies for local and global outreach. Some have to struggle with administrative burdens, unable to allocate sufficient time for powerful knowledge production (Bolman & Gallos, 2010; Kenny, 2018). Scholars can be befuddled by the institutional formulas calculating their contribution to the triple mission of the academic profession—research, teaching and service—while losing a sense of their public roles and responsibilities (Smyth, 2017). While trying to please the institutional authority, these scholars may succumb to political manoeuvres that stack the demands, rather than seek opportunities for boundary transgression or new forms of academic citizenship (Chatterjee & Maira, 2014; Macfarlane, 2012). Many set aside strategies, and act as opportunists, grasping any available chances to grow professionally and gain recognition in scholarship (Fritsch, 2016; Macfarlane, 2017b).

Scholars' navigation of epistemological imperatives, recognition practices and professional responsibilities differs, as various challenges and outcomes shape their attitudes and strategies (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 2000). For instance, communication patterns (e.g., publication types, frequency, citation patterns) significantly vary across academic communities. In the hard sciences, the journal article can be a mandatory mode of interchange, while it may appear to be 'a poor vehicle of communication, ill-suited to discuss extremely complex issues' for some disciplines in the social sciences (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 84). Moreover, academics in the softer fields tend to take comparatively longer time to write and publish articles, while allocating more effort to juxtaposing various theories and providing accurate citations. It appears that scholars in the soft sciences need more persistence to prove their competence and significance in their academic communities. Unlike those in the hard sciences, who appear to be increasingly at ease with boundary transgression for the purposes of collaborations with industry, or with managing the problems of intellectual property rights (Okamuro & Nishimura, 2013), many scholars in the soft sciences struggle with dilemmas related to profits and morals (Giroux, 2015b; Macfarlane, 2017a).

Likewise, research productivity comes into the formula of professional success with some complications. Its correlation with years of experience in soft disciplines is much stronger than that in hard disciplines. A peak age of research productivity appears much earlier in abstract disciplines (pure disciplines, such as mathematics and theoretical physics) than in applied disciplines that are based on experimental studies (Lehman, 1953). At the same time, the volume of production can be a deceptive underpinning of success. The famous sociologist, Robert K. Merton, whose work encouraged our research group to conduct this investigation, had published around 50 works over his 50 years of scholarship. The modern neoliberal university would not regard this as distinctive for a 45-year academic lifespan. However, almost all of Merton's works are highly influential in sociology, decades after their publication. By doing research on scientists, Merton shaped a distinct perspective on what makes a scientist great (Bucchi, 2015). His promotion of four key elements: communality, universality, disinterestedness and organised scepticism, defined his own research, in addition to shaping norms for academic communities in global science.

The ubiquitous performativity of neoliberal universities is, however, game-changing. In search of grants, contracts and other promotion-oriented awards, scholars are becoming more vulnerable to industrial norms (Giroux, 2015b; Okamuro & Nishimura, 2013). While some intellectuals succeed in navigating the collaborative domains with success, and contribute to the economic development of their cities and countries, their competitive positions may not be ground for stronger science or better cumulative advantage (Oleksiyenko, 2014). Meanwhile, pressured by enhanced labour regulation in highly structured teams, early career scholars may end up underdeveloping their capacities for leadership, undermining their ability to organise and manage successful projects (Antes, Mart, & DuBois, 2016).

5 | DOES CUMULATIVE ADVANTAGE IN SCIENCE AUTOMATICALLY PAVE THE WAY TO INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP?

It is argued that scientists gain advantages if they start their careers at renowned universities, work with leading scholars in their fields and, over time, progressively develop their capacity for scientific contributions and breakthroughs (Merton, 1968, 1988). The collegially shaped sense of academic excellence nurtures the young researchers' aspirations for meritocracy and recognition in scientific communities. Merton (1968, 1988), Mulkay (1976), Zuckerman (1967, 1991) and others demonstrated that such starting positions evolve into a cumulative advantage primarily for scientists who remain committed to their research and push boundaries in their fields of knowledge. Recognition and rewards in their chosen area of study tend to reinforce the potency of their choice, granting opportunities for scientific leadership (Allison & Stewart, 1974).

Nevertheless, cumulative advantage in science can be interpreted as a biased social construct, given that scientific advantages for some emerge at the expense of disadvantages for important others. Merton provided a range of cases, discussing intellectual battles, as well as misplaced recognition in scientific discoveries (Oleksiyenko, 2014). A scholar's reputation can be affected, for example, by cultural norms. In some countries, academic communities do not treat individual ideas or individual roles as valuable, especially when these communities are governed in a hierarchical fashion and are headed up by mediocre scholars. Notwithstanding communalism and disinterestedness in a Mertonian sense, modern knowledge factories are full of jealousy and competitiveness that drive the impulses to steal, copy, plagiarise, appropriate, and manipulate the originality and ownership of ideas (Oleksiyenko, 2018). Metrics-oriented co-authorships tend to instigate collaborations characterised by performativity, cronyism and parasitism, rather than intellectual generosity, mentoring or scholarly communication (Macfarlane, 2017a, 2017b).

Intellectual leadership is a moral enterprise (Burns, 1978), and in that way it is different from scientific leadership. The former succeeds when it disavows the conventional systems and paradigms promoting performativity (Kenny, 2018; Macfarlane, 2017b). It is mindful of such duties as citizenship and public good when encouraging scholars to engage in boundary-breaking and institutional disruption (Macfarlane, 2012). The scientific leadership is more concerned about compliance with epistemic norms, research performativity frameworks and competition (Kwiek, 2015; Macfarlane, 2017b). Intellectual leadership, however, moves beyond scientific leadership in understanding that competition in research systems is often relativistic, as global giants of science turn into dwarfs at some points in history, while the paradigms of knowledge constantly shift or are refuted (Oleksiyenko, 2014). In comparison with scientific leadership, which increasingly seeks how to corroborate government and/or industry participation in problem-solving projects, and expresses concern about the loss of intellectual property ownership, intellectual leadership has been known to merge scientific and public purposes, while constantly stimulating the boundary-spanning of the two.

Not all scientists welcome becoming the focus of public attention. Frequently introverted, many scientists struggle with publicity (Macfarlane, 2012). Even those with more extroverted personality traits may have little success in crossing the boundary between science and public policy. Scientists' capacities for boundary-crossing, critical inquiry and controversial publicity are as idiosyncratic as the individuals that pursue academic careers.

Just as advantages do, disadvantages can also accumulate. As Zuckerman (1967) noted several decades ago, the build-up of scientific recognition usually comes with extra burdens, which can hinder a scientist's opportunities for knowledge production. The luminaries can end up with less time to do research and lead intellectually—receiving more recognition and funding for their projects, but having less capacity to make effective use of the acquired resources amid growing public and institutional responsibilities. Scholars also tend to lose the motivation to advance their research, once they reach the top tier of scientific recognition and become more concerned with status and competition for resources (Becher & Trowler, 2001). The typical effects of epistemic and physical exhaustion, as well as the trappings of fame, come into play to undermine their progress. Overloaded, senior scientists may lose their reputation due to an inability to handle the stress and the high demands endemic to today's

academic environments. Resistance to the dehumanisation of scientific processes requires active academic citizenship, which in its own way comprises the essence of intellectual leadership (Bolden et al., 2014; Macfarlane, 2012).

6 | WHAT THWARTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED ACADEMIC POWERBROKERS, SUCH AS WOMEN AND MINORITY SCHOLARS, TO BECOME INTELLECTUAL LEADERS?

The literature has been dealing with the policy and organisational barriers faced by women and minority scholars for almost four decades, if not longer (Menges & Exum, 1983). Glass ceilings, glass cliffs, sticky floors and labyrinths have persisted in academe, and in some institutions they have become even more difficult to eradicate in the last decade (Aiston, 2014; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Morley, 2013). As stated earlier, however, the prevailing focus on neoliberal agendas has largely overridden and marginalised the discussion of intellectual leadership in the global Higher Education discourse. The literature has centred on the leadership paradigms associated with power struggles for professional status and institutional entitlements. Such research on women and minority leaders in academe reinforces the power of selective cumulative effects: that is, advantages for some and disadvantages for others (Zuckerman, 1991).

Historically, women, as well as minority students and scholars, had limited access to influential academic institutions (Karabel, 2006); more recently, these disadvantaged groups have been gradually gaining the right to study and work at such institutions. Nonetheless, they still tend to cluster in the lower ranks of the knowledge hierarchy, and in the lower ranks of institutions, known as 'the basement of the ivory tower' (Philipsen & Bostic, 2008). In traditional academic tribes, 'intellectual leadership' is more likely to be dominated by a 'few ancestral spirits' (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 84). For anyone not in the dominant group, merely surviving in academia is full of challenges, and developing ground-breaking ideas may seem out of reach (Kennelly, Misra, & Karides, 1999). Often drawn into menial administrative support jobs, the disadvantaged members of academe lack the time and opportunities to make their mark, and may not be perceived as valuable communicators or idea-makers (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017).

In some cases, this may relate to low self-esteem among the disadvantaged, which is reinforced by a destructive cycle of self-censorship, strain and/or reluctance to voice their views and ideas to the powerbrokers (Brooks, 1985). Based on conclusions that they may have reached at the pre-college level (especially in environments where constructivist learning was missing), they may perceive themselves as inferior contributors when they move to the upper levels of higher learning and academic scholarship. In the absence of self-respect, courage and the confidence to be heard, they continue to remain on the margins of participation and communication in academic communities.

The position of disadvantage can be solidified by institutional and cultural roadblocks, such as discouragement and misdirection coming from peers, supervisors, community leaders or external stakeholders. In some cultures, academics are obliged to spend so much time 'schmoozing with those in power' (Qiu, 2014, p. 162; also Shi & Rao, 2010) that they have no time for serious research, despite knowing that they have to perform at the top of expectations to attain a chance at leadership in global science. Many early career scientists labour to satisfy the local hierarchy in order to survive and obtain a secure employment contract (Oleksiyenko, 2018). The survivalist mentality can be especially problematic within cultures that promote authoritarian notions of leadership. The bureaucracy tends to regulate the distribution of institutional resources on the basis of political considerations, and to mark recognition using repressive measures, that is, punishment, rather than positive incentives. In such regimes, leadership turns into leaderism (Morley, 2013). Junior scholars or students end up suffering not just from disproportionate administrative burden, but from excessive and prejudiced oversight related to their research topics, concepts and sources (Mählck, 2018). Some of these externalities can undermine the young scholars'

belief in good scholarship and discourage them from engaging in further intellectual pursuits. Lacking sufficient cultural and social support for their freedom of expression, women and minority scholars can be predisposed to follow, rather than to lead in academic debates (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Menges & Exum, 1983). While some ambitious individuals do try to take the initiative, they often find themselves doing so against overwhelming odds. Their extra efforts to achieve excellence are under stricter scrutiny by their powerful peers (Baker, 2012). Brought down by the vicious cycle of self-depreciation and institutional denigration, many stop taking part in intellectual competition.

Some of the vulnerable scholars also prefer to stay on the fringes of political feuds and clan battles, which emerge during the competition of ideas (Jackson, 2018). Worried about their survival, women and minority scholars may spend more time and energy on various placating manoeuvres in the corridors of power, rather than on developing strategic coalitions and strengthening their voice to confront dogmas or to communicate controversial issues. The starting positions for intellectual leadership can be nil, if the disadvantaged scholars spend all their energy on contemplating which clan to join or what politics to support instead of redefining the frontiers of knowledge in their fields.

Circumstances certainly differ for women and minority scholars in academic communities that make efforts to reduce hostilities and encourage critical inquiry and open debates (Evans & Cokley, 2008; Lin et al., 2004). Such environments allow for countervailing forces to emerge in the face of cumulative disadvantages (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Intellectual leadership can establish roots when women and minority scholars utilise opportunities for dissent and public engagement. Senior members of such communities can serve as great sources of encouragement for their disadvantaged peers (Evans & Cokley, 2008). However, when role models primarily encourage executive positioning in the institutional hierarchy, rather than intellectual leadership in academic communities, the disadvantaged scholars may not benefit from cascade effects in scholarship (i.e., leadership moving from one generation to advance the frontiers of science and public engagement).

We would like to believe that the situation has been changing for the better over the last decade, with a greater number of women and minority scholars in executive positions taking deliberate steps to promote affirmative policies and actions. Nonetheless, increasing numbers of mainstream scholars (males and ethnic majority groups) continue to exploit their privilege in the community, while comparatively few of them have been more open to supporting women and minority academics in their intellectual endeavours, rather than burdening them with administrative assignments (Benokraitis, 1998; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012). It is possible that the scale effect of a departure from the old model of academe will increase over the next 10–20 years, when a larger number of women and minority scholars succeed in amplifying their voices to communicate progressive ideas in support of academic freedom, overcoming the fears embedded into the corporate structure of disadvantage.

7 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

Discussion of intellectual leadership is increasingly important, given tensions within Higher Education in which industrialisation of learning, research and service compromises academic freedom, integrity and openness. The growing disparity between industrialisation and intellectualisation necessitates more intensive investigation of problems related to the ethics of governance and the challenges of sustaining an intellectual space. We propose that more attention be given to the following questions: To what extent should the concept of intellectual leadership focus only on advanced positions and top achievements in global science? Would a less hierarchical framework be more appropriate for studies on the evolution of intellectual leadership in Higher Education? Is intellectual leadership an applicable term in relation to university–industry collaborations, or within industrialised learning environments on campuses? What happens to intellectual leadership when it seeks reconciliation with hierarchies or markets? What types of mentorship are effective for nurturing academic citizenship among the new generation of scholars, especially among the vulnerable members of the academic community? Does intellectual

leadership play a greater role within smaller research communities, as opposed to the greater networks of global science, when threats to academic freedom increase? To what extent does the conceptualisation of intellectual leadership as a big narrative contribute to elitism or anti-intellectualism in Higher Education? Does the focus on intellectual leadership as an elitist perspective within the context of mass Higher Education compromise the imperatives of equity, social justice, citizenship and good governance? Is there a risk of promoting arrogance and authoritarianism in academic communities by misusing the term intellectual leadership? How does racism, ethnocentric exclusivity, sexism, ageism or other prejudices affect capacity-building for intellectual leadership? Do opportunities increase for young scholars from disadvantaged groups when they become more resistant to dogmas and biases?

The search for answers to these questions would acquire a new dimension if it focused on disadvantaged areas and regions of the world, where authoritarian cultures are dominant and women and/or ethnic minorities are viewed as subservient and subject to manipulation. Qualitative research is certainly needed to develop insights into the intricacies of the cultures and communities that produce disadvantages and erect barriers to intellectual leadership. Listening to individual stories will inform the theory of relations within academic communities, which often act as invisible colleges (Crane, 1972) but are increasingly marginalised by aggressive corporate structures (Giroux, 2006). It would be interesting to see how different stages of academic development and different levels of intellectual leadership emerge under the circumstances of self-created or imposed disadvantage. Moreover, once the growth stages of intellectual leadership are identified, one may want to ask what the indicators of progress are at each stage. Moving in that direction can certainly be hazardous, as intellectual leadership may become viewed as measurable and controllable—a source of excitement for positivists, but a means of self-annihilation for intellectual academic communities.

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How to cite this article: Oleksiyenko A, Ruan N. Intellectual leadership and academic communities: Issues for discussion and research. *Higher Educ Q*. 2019;73:406–418. https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12199