Collaborative school leadership in a global society: A critical perspective

Philip A Woods and Amanda Roberts

Abstract
In the context of evolving global challenges and opportunities, this article explores the kind of leadership that moves beyond the philosophy of dependence which pervades many of the everyday assumptions of educational leadership practice. The article argues for educational leadership that places relational freedom, self-determination, and critical reflexivity as the driving aim of distributed leadership by teachers, students and others in non-positional leadership roles. A project arising from the International Teacher Leadership initiative is examined in order to offer practical illustration.

Keywords
Global challenges, teacher leadership, distributed leadership, reframing leadership

Introduction
What kind of educational leadership is required to respond to the challenges and opportunities of an evolving global context? Challenges include the struggle, manifest in different ways according to national contexts, between very different visions of education. On the one hand, there are educational policies and trends that view education as a commodity in a knowledge industry and value market principles, competition and economistic educational aims (Gidley, 2016; Samier, 2016; Ward et al., 2016). Samier (2016: 9) suggests that market-based ideology is ‘part of a Western hegemonic spread globally’ and that, arguably, ‘globalised education presents a threat to the sovereignty of national systems through the impact of Western (mostly American, British and Australian) educational curricula and pedagogy’. On the other hand, there are educational traditions and changes infused by different visions – those that prioritise collaboration, democratic values and humanistic aims (Abdi and Carr, 2013; Woods and Woods, 2009; Kensler and Uline, 2017). Scandinavian countries, for example, are described as having a strong tradition of ‘viewing schools as an expression of democratic political ideals and as a mechanism for preparing children to play constructive roles in a democratic society and a strong commitment to comprehensive education and social justice’ (Møller and Schratz, 2008: 343).

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Another of the great global challenges, according to Gidley (2017), is leadership. The possibility of ‘hegemonic spread’, to which Samier (2016) refers, applies to the discourse about and the practice of leadership, and crucially to leadership preparation and development that disseminates a particular view of leadership. As its influence extends from Western countries across the globe, a danger is that leadership preparation and development promote cultural uniformity, through the ‘adoption of similar sets of competences’, ‘airbrushing out the influence of local cultures’ (Lumby and Foskett, 2008: 53). This may be interpreted more critically by some, as taking the form of cultural colonisation, infusing leadership with what might be argued to be Western assumptions of linear thinking, instrumental rationality and economism.

Yet there are contrasting current and counter trends in the discourse and practice of leadership within and beyond the Western world. Western (2013) for example argues that an expanding discourse of eco-leadership is apparent. In this view, leadership is dispersed across organisations, values ethics and the human spirit and treats organisational work as an interconnected part of ecological systems and human communities, not a controlling and mechanistic activity. In educational leadership there are diverse examples of leadership infused by ecological, democratic and social justice commitments (Angelle, 2017; Gross and Shapiro, 2015; Kensler and Uline, 2017; Lumby and Coleman, 2016). Leadership informed by democratic and participative values can find spaces, within systems driven by antagonistic values, to enact change with the aim of fostering holistic education (Woods, 2011).

Such alternative forms and visions of leadership face deep challenges, however. For example, there are concerns about their sustainability and systemic reach. Western (2013: 274) notes guardedly that eco-leadership is ‘growing but uncertainly’. The weight of influence and political backing for many contemporary educational policies create a constraining context for leadership committed to humanistic aims (Bates, 2016: 163, Ward et al., 2016).

In this article we explore the kind of leadership that moves beyond the philosophy of dependence which pervades many of the everyday assumptions of educational leadership practice. This leadership places relational freedom, self-determination and critical reflexivity as the driving aim of distributed leadership by teachers, students and others who are in non-positional roles without formal leadership authority.

The article:

- sets out a view of what leadership ought to be – a practice that fosters the ideals of a philosophy of co-development rather than dependence; and what leadership is – a phenomenon characterised by intentionality and emergence;
- illustrates the meaning of this view through discussion of one of the projects arising from the International Teacher Leadership (ITL) initiative;
- concludes that leadership for a global society needs to integrate explicitly both intentionality and emergence as well as articulated critical values; and
- highlights the features that appeared through our discussion of the ITL project:

  (a) the valuing of relational freedom, inclusion and an explicit social justice aim (in this instance voice for ethnic minorities);
  (b) the importance of:
      a clear and shared intentionality and intent for the project;
      intentionalities authored by teachers so the process promotes awareness and self-determination and teachers’ intentions drive teacher leadership; and
      active reframing of leadership by teachers;
The argument of the article is grounded in critical discussion of discourses within and outside education that view leadership as emergent and distributed (e.g. eco-leadership, complexity theory and leadership-as-practice), reviews and critiques of distributed leadership and research by the authors on democratic leadership and distributed leadership for equity and learning (e.g. Roberts and Woods, 2017; Woods, 2011, 2015, 2016a,b, 2017; Woods and Roberts, 2016, 2018; Woods et al., 2016; Woods and Woods, 2013). This includes the authors’ work in international projects investigating cases of successful practice in school leadership, most recently a European Union (EU)-funded project examining collaborative teacher learning and distributed leadership in school, local, regional and national contexts in contrasting European countries (Roberts and Woods, 2017; Woods, 2015; Woods et al., 2016).

**From dependence to co-development**

Organisations and their leadership practice need to respond to new conditions: generations of people who are used to exercising ‘self-determination, autonomy and technical savvy’ (Gratton, 2004: xiv) and the reality that knowledge is not only key to progress but resides in and is co-created across organisational stakeholders. Dependence and deference are disappearing, it would appear. Arguably, ‘each of us can choose to give or withhold our knowledge and it is virtually impossible to detect when we are doing so . . . [making] the role of the supervisor obsolete . . . [and requiring instead] an organisational culture . . . in which employees actively choose to share their knowledge’ (Gratton, 2004: 37). These conditions seem to be conducive to the kind of change necessitated by the great global challenges of climate crisis, technology, economic crisis, education and leadership that Gidley (2017) sets out. These demand, *inter alia*, the development of higher-order cognitive capacities that include creativity, imagination, critical thinking and complexity (Gidley, 2017: 131).

Yet, in the field of leadership there is evidence of the persistence of strongly hierarchical structures and reliance on the idea of ‘great’ leaders. For example, in England ‘most schools continue to retain a traditional structure of a single headteacher and a wider leadership team’ and aspects of ‘hero’ leadership continue in distributed forms of leadership (Earley et al., 2012: 111); across Europe, school leaders are much more likely than teachers to describe the leadership practice of their school as distributive (Duif et al., 2013: 34, 43). In addition, when it comes to alternatives to traditional hierarchy, such as distributed and shared leadership, critics argue that in practice they are a means of manipulating change in the direction of market-based education and fashioning teacher identity to suit performative policy aims (Hall et al., 2012; Jeffrey and Troman, 2014). Such critiques suggest we should be guarded in claiming that trends towards more dispersed forms of leadership necessarily foster critical thinking and genuine bottom-up agency.

A clear-eyed view of the purpose and values of leadership as a distributed or shared process is essential. This is what we have sought to articulate in our exploration of collaborative leadership in Woods and Roberts (2018). The required clarity is helped by considering leadership practice in the light of two contrasting and competing philosophies: one of dependence; the other of co-development. The philosophy of dependence views people as fundamentally dependent on being directed and provided with instructions and authoritative direction in order to know what to do. The dependence is on rules and authority in order to find the right way to act and to live: in relation to
education, professional educators, students and others are principally conceived as agents who serve values, aims and priorities determined by those who hold formal authority (Woods, 2016a,b). In this philosophy, teachers, for example, are constructed as uncreative technicians who deliver a curriculum designed at a higher level in the policy hierarchy (Frost, 2006). Tendencies to grant the assumptions of a philosophy of dependence a dominating influence are a drag on rising to global challenges that require the development of creativity, imagination and critical thinking and seeing ourselves as ‘the creative agents of our desired futures’ (Gidley, 2016: 116). Challenging ingrained habits of dependence necessitates local change and interpretation.

By contrast, the philosophy of co-development views people fundamentally as beings who actively work within themselves and with others to expand continually their understanding of what is and what ought to be (Woods, 2016a). Flourishing as human beings means nurturing freedom – their own and others, as interconnected beings – to discover and learn. That is, it involves advancing relational freedom (Woods, 2017). We learn best through collaborative activity which brings into contact the diverse experiences, expertise and ideas of different people. To do this effectively requires a commitment to social justice and a rich conception of democratic values, which we articulate as holistic democracy (Woods, 2011; Woods and Roberts, 2018). The values of the philosophy of co-development constitute the value-base that we argue is integral to the kind of leadership that addresses the global challenges referred to in the Introduction.

This value-base is complemented by a view of what leadership is. We argue that leadership is the outcome both of people’s intentions (intentionality) and the complex flow of interactions in the daily life of schools (emergence). Understanding leadership in this dual way does three things. First, the concept of intentionality recognises the vitality and human spark that is integral to the drive of leadership practice. Intentionality is the will or intent to make a difference, with and through others, which leads to action. It encompasses the deliberations, choices, motivations and activity within the person that produce the impetus to individual action and response. In Woods and Roberts (2018), we suggest that change-orientated intentionalities can be distinguished from tradition-orientated intentionalities. The former, involve critical reflexivity and orientate teachers and others to becoming pro-active agents of change, free of – or at least more distanced from – a restricting philosophy of dependence.

Second, the concept of emergence recognises that leadership is also a phenomenon that arises from complex processes of ongoing interactions, between people, social contexts and the human-made and natural environment. Leadership is not reducible just to the intentions and actions of individuals. It is the product of patterns and combinations of actions, and the co-produced energies, ideas, influences and relationships that are created by people through their interactions. This understanding of emergence is founded in theories of complexity and distributed leadership (Woods et al., 2004; Bates, 2016; Boulton et al., 2015; Gronn, 2002; Stacey, 2010).

Third, intentionality and emergence are presented as strands of leadership that are intertwined in practice. Leadership is a phenomenon formed by complex, interacting processes, and it is at the same time characterised by individual and collective choice and intentions. Intentionality and emergence are put forward as dual lenses to ensure that, in the study and practice of leadership, human intention – its frailties, imagination, sparks of creativity, goodness and so on – are not submerged and lost within the complex, continuous flows of emergence.

The concepts of intentionality and emergence and the value-base of the philosophy of co-development provide an understanding of leadership that is both analytically robust and ethically explicit. We believe that conceiving leadership through the ideas of intentionality, emergence
and the philosophy of co-development provides a helpful perspective for those who want to develop distributed leadership practice (through teacher leadership, for example) that is more collaborative, innovative, critically reflexive and capable of advancing social justice. This perspective offers a fertile theoretical basis for the development and practice of non-positional teacher leadership, in which teachers exercise leadership ‘as a dimension of their professionality rather than by virtue of a designated formal role’ (Frost, 2017: 1).

In the next section, we discuss one of the projects of the International Teacher Leadership initiative. Our purpose is to illustrate how seeing leadership as both intentionality and emergence, and through the frame of dependence and co-development, helps in noticing significant features that feed into the complex and messy process of non-positional leadership development.

Teacher leadership initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background information is given on the ITL initiative, before turning to the teacher leadership project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Further information and discussion can be found in Čelebičić and Vranješević (2014) and Woods et al. (2016).

ITL initiative

The ITL initiative was launched in 2008 by the HertsCam Network, responding to interest in HertsCam’s work on teacher leadership expressed by researchers and practitioners in a number of European countries.² (The HertsCam Network is a network of teachers and schools, based in Hertfordshire, UK, which supports teachers in leading innovation in their own schools and in building knowledge about teaching and learning across schools.) The ITL countries face a variety of particular challenges that relate to their traditions and economic conditions. These include relatively poor economies and high unemployment with disruptive consequences for families (Frost, 2011a: 5), a tradition of centralised decision-making that ‘has had a stultifying effect and has created a lack of room to innovate at the local level’, and a tradition of professional training that uses the ‘delivery model of teacher development’ that is unpopular with teachers and ineffective (Frost, 2011a: 6).

The ITL initiative was not initiated by ministries of education or other officials, but was the creation of ‘enthusiastic individuals who have previously worked collaboratively on other projects and who have established networks within the country’ (Frost, 2011a: 19). The ITL initiative is therefore the product of numerous intentionalities – individual decisions to act and group formulation of intentions of how to respond. Significantly, too, it is not the product of formal, hierarchical authority but the exercising of professional and experiential authorities on the part of researchers and practitioners in the European countries involved and members of the HertsCam Network who formed ITL. (For a discussion of different forms of authority and distributed leadership, see Woods and Roberts, 2018; Woods, 2016b).

The initiative is founded in a belief in non-positional leadership, which assumes ‘that all members of learning communities have capacity for leadership regardless of status or designated positions of authority’.³ ITL projects work to a set of principles that guide action (Frost, 2011a: 11) (Appendix). These principles and the ITL approach benefited from the established work of the HertsCam Network. So, the ITL initiative in part is an emergent phenomenon resulting from the interplay of this pre-established work and the founding intentions of those beginning the initiative.
Consequently, the participants in the Bosnia and Herzegovina project were building on and adapting a substantial body of experience, ideas, practice and materials. The principles (Appendix) are an important part of the cultural ‘bank’ of ideas that supports leadership practice. They have emerged from previous practice and are intentionally adopted, and in turn are a significant factor from which leadership emerges.

The ITL initiative promotes teacher leadership as a process of enquiry-based development led by teachers with the purpose of generating shared knowledge about pedagogic innovation. This approach strives to enhance human agency, and hence conscious intentionality that involves critical reflexivity; it seeks to develop a culture of shared responsibility for reform and successful learning outcomes for all students, which emerges from practice and, amongst other things, attendance to the principles. In these ways, intentionality and the products of emergence interplay over time with each other.

The valuing of collaboration and human agency and the inclusion of all in leadership activity and initiative-taking indicate a value-base that resonates with the philosophy of co-development. A fundamental aim is to enable practical change that gets away from assumptions of dependence.

Deliberate and sophisticated scaffolding and support are seen as requirements to enable teachers to develop as teacher leaders. This takes the form of guidance materials, programmes of workshops, tools for planning and reflection, and partnerships between experienced teachers and external agents such as university-based academics or activists within non-governmental organisations. These support teachers taking initiatives to improve practice and acting strategically with colleagues to embed change (Frost, 2011b: 5–6). For the ITL initiative, professional development does not best occur through application of a training model, but from teachers’ ‘pursuit of a developmental goal which they have identified and initiated’. The conscious, questioning intentionality of teachers drives teacher leadership, through both individual and collectively determined intentions that arise from their development work. Teachers work through teacher-led development work (TLDW) groups. The TLDW method of working and its expression as a particular kind of group are emergent products of practice and reflection and ITL scaffolding. Equally, the TLDW groups constitute fora in which intentionalities are shared and discussed and feed into collaboratively generated group intentions. They are designed also as outward looking so that they contribute to learning (thus influencing consequent intentionalities) in ‘the school as an organisation and members of the teaching profession more widely’ (Hill, 2014: 75).

Bosnia and Herzegovina: ‘Teachers as leaders of change’ project

One of the ITL projects was the ‘Teachers as leaders of change’ project implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, beginning in the academic year 2009–2010. The account of the project on which the discussion in this section is based was prepared for the EU-funded European Methodological Framework for Facilitating Teachers’ Collaborative Learning (EFFeCT) project...[rest of sentence deleted to preserve author anonymity]. It is one of five cases prepared for EFFeCT. The cases are reported in Woods et al. (2016) where further details about them and the method of enquiry in preparing the accounts can be found.

The data examined for the purpose of the case of the ‘Teachers as leaders of change’ project were primarily secondary sources. We recognise consequent limitations to the data used for the case. It was not possible to generate original data, nor to access evidence in teachers’ portfolios produced in local languages (Frost, 2011a). However, the data we did use provided illuminating...
insights into the project as evaluation is integral to the ITL initiative. The support programmes for developing teacher leadership ‘are monitored and evaluated using data collection tools provided by the Cambridge team’ (Frost, 2011b: 8). Local participants in the initiative used the methods of data collection best suited to local circumstances, but were asked to report the data using a common format (Frost, 2011a: 14). We were therefore able to draw on reporting of the ITL initiative’s evaluation in Frost (2011a: 32–40 – an account of the ‘Evidence of Impact’) which makes reference to Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as other ITL countries, and other sources, such as a film of the ‘Teachers as leaders of change’ project6 and accounts by Čelebičić (2013), Čelebičić and Vranješević (2014) and Vranješević and Čelebičić (2013). We were also aided by meetings organised for the purpose of exploring this project, as well as the other cases in Woods et al. (2016), with co-ordinators of the HertsCam Network which had launched the ITL Initiative.

There are three ethnic ‘constituent peoples’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Bosniaks (the largest group, mostly Muslim); Serbs (the second largest group, mostly Orthodox Christian); and Croats (mostly Catholic). Differences and conflicts were exacerbated during the war which took place between 1992 and 1994 (Čelebičić, 2013). The country has ambitions to create an education system ‘that is inclusive, de-centralised, efficient and transparent; that promotes a culture of evaluation and self-evaluation, justice, tolerance and constructive communication’ (Vranješević and Čelebičić, 2013: 3). It faces a variety of problems which include the centralised nature of the educational system and teachers being reduced to implementers of educational policies created by other experts in education. These problems foster dependence and inhibit the critical, change-orientated intentionality we highlighted above. There is a recognised need in Bosnia and Herzegovina for teachers to develop the capabilities required for taking a more proactive role in the process of education – that is, we would say, for more conscious and critically reflexive intentionality. A further challenge is that ‘teachers frequently share dominant prejudices and convictions with other members of society’ (Vranješević and Čelebičić, 2013: 2).

The ‘Teachers as leaders of change’ project aimed to empower teachers to take a more proactive role in the process of educational change, with the goal of supporting teachers’ capacities for leading change and enabling them to gain insight by reflecting on this engagement. It also had the aim of advancing the participation and representation of minority ethnic groups. Ideals of the philosophy of co-development are apparent in these aims – particularly, freedom to enact change, collaborative activity and learning and the advancement of social justice through positive change to enable minorities to participate and exercise voice.

The six schools in the project either had large populations of Roma children or were located in multicultural settings, and were committed to improving education by enhancing participation, partnerships and co-operation with families. The work began with initial meetings in schools, aimed at informing school management and teachers about the project and establishing groups of teachers committed to working on development projects concerning parents’ participation. The next step was to ask teachers to identify issues that they considered were important in relation to establishing partnerships with parents from different minority and marginalised groups. Teachers themselves identifying issues is a key step in teacher leadership in HertsCam and ITL initiatives. Teachers are invited to deliberate and formulate their own intentionality. This is seen as essential to ensuring that the leadership comes from and is owned by the teachers.
Identifying and defining a problem to tackle was challenging for teachers. They were not used to engaging in the kind of reflexive intentionality that gives rise to pro-active agency. As one teacher explained:

At the first session, when we were faced with a challenge to define one specific problem in the schools we work in, I was confused. I am a language teacher and usually I find it easy to articulate my thoughts, but still, I didn’t know how to define the problem. That was the moment in which I realised that we, teachers, didn’t have the strength to deal with the problems we face on daily basis.

(Nermina Husic, teacher, female, in Tuzla)

The teachers had mentors who were important in supporting teachers. The mentors’ goal was explicitly to help teachers become pro-active and not dependent on the mentors for direction. Mentors had to make sure that the teachers developed their autonomy rather than look to the mentors to be the change agent. This led to teachers valuing small changes, instead of being burdened by feeling the need to change the whole system. Heightening awareness of and developing the means for conscious and critical intentionality was central to supporting teacher leadership in the project. Ideas for change were the teachers’ and the implementation and evaluation were undertaken by teachers themselves through their teacher-led development projects. The project was about creating opportunities to nurture relational freedom, each teacher deliberating upon changes in their own thinking and feelings to determine what to do and working with and in support of others.

The leadership practice did not come from conscious intentionality alone. It was supported and hence in part emerged from the ITL initiative guidelines and tools (Frost, 2011b) adapted for the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Čelebić, 2013). For example, tools were developed to help teachers recognise the characteristics of leaders of change (Frost, 2011a: 24). A support group was established led by members of the international team and their partners or associates (Frost, 2011a: 22–23). Leadership was the product both of intentionalities (the teachers’ own and others’, such as mentors) and emergence (the complex interactions of these intentionalities and consequent actions, the relationships formed, the cultural contexts of the school, locality and nation, and the tools and support frameworks).7

At first, teachers found leadership challenging but gradually they became more proactive. They learned about leadership by doing it; by taking small steps such as defining the problem and planning actions to create change, evaluating the results and planning next steps. With each step they became more confident. The project made progress by fostering teachers’ autonomy and freedom to change and improve their practice through their development projects and experimentation. The project did not provide the content or prescribe what needed to be improved or changed. Instead it provided tools that could be adapted and used to help bring about change.

The idea that teacher leadership is not something to be limited to the few is integral to the project. Every teacher can be a leader, as this comment by a teacher from Sarajevo, Serbia, illustrates (Čelebić and Vranješević, 2014: 103)

I learned that we should appreciate ourselves and our work more, because every change, no matter how small, is very important.

This resonates with the ideal of inclusion and participation in the philosophy of co-development. The positive reframing of leadership that took place during the project is illustrated by the words of these teachers.9
I realised I am capable of making changes, I realised I am allowed to step out of the strict boundaries set
by the government. Instead of waiting to be told to do something, waiting for specific policies that will
let me do something, I found out I can work and implement ideas on my own.

(Nermina Husic, teacher, female, in Tuzla)

I believe teachers can accomplish a lot by applying their creativity, and being dedicated to their
work. Using only paper, or plastic bottles we were about to create new things in some of our work-
shops. We can recycle existing useless materials into new and useful objects, sell this and gain some
money we can invest in our school.

(Vanessa Malkic, social worker, female, in Tuzla)

I don’t think lots of money or huge changes in the system itself are necessary to accomplish
something on the ground level. We can start making changes, but first we have to work on our attitudes,
we must realise how much potential we have. Only then, instead of setting our goals too high, on the
level of the whole education system, we can reflect on our immediate surroundings and start making
changes and solving problems we face on a daily basis. That is how we started here in our school,
realising what a big impact we can have only relying on our creativity and strength.

(Bekir Saletovic, teacher, male, in Tuzla)

This teacher explained what the participation meant:

I caught myself participating in discussions with all my heart, getting excited about the most ordinary
talk between colleagues from our school and the colleagues from Hrasno. Exchanging ideas, listening
to each other with respect, giving support to each other, one gets tremendous self-esteem, and that is all
I need. So, I managed to go beyond the limits of my previous work, I set my goals on a higher level.
Having seen the results of what I initiated with my idea in cooperation with my colleagues, I am
encouraged to make new ways to continue something that improves the quality of work with children,
which encourages me personally, thereby making me happier.

(Teacher quoted in Bosnia and Herzegovina Final Report – source: Frost, 2011a: 24)

Reflections on the teacher leadership initiative in Bosnia and
Herzegovina

The ITL initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina built on and adapted the experience, ideas, practice
and materials of the HertsCam work on collaborative teacher leadership. Evidence from the project
suggests that the initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina effectively facilitated and supported develop-
ment of participant teachers as active, participative professionals engaging in collaborative
change to improve learning. There is not sufficient evidence available to come to clear conclusions
about the sustainability of the change sought in leadership culture of schools and social justice
aims.

Using the ideas of intentionality and emergence, and the value-base of the philosophy of co-
development, as sensitising concepts, we draw attention to the following features of the project.

Value-base: relational freedom, inclusion and voice for ethnic minorities

The fundamental aims of the project resonate with the ideals of the philosophy of co-development.
The focus on fostering human agency that infused the project places relational freedom at its heart.
Aligned with this is the active challenging of assumptions of dependence. Inclusion in leadership –
that is, the belief that all have leadership capacity – grounded a commitment to participation and a more democratic practice of leadership. There was in this project an explicit focus on social justice through the aim of involving and giving voice to ethnic minorities.

**Intentionality: clarity, collectivity, self-determination and active reframing**

Intentionalities were brought together to co-construct a clear and explicit intent from the beginning. A shared intentionality was co-developed and became the collective expression of those who approached the HertsCam network to internationalise its teacher leadership approach and of those who established the ITL initiative. The work strove to enhance the conscious intentionality of teachers who participated, raising self-awareness, so they determined what the objective of change was to be. The work involved teachers themselves, supported and facilitated by mentors, working on their perceptions and feelings concerning what kind of activity leadership is and their role in it: teachers reframed their ideas and feelings in relation to leadership and teaching as an active profession.

**Emergence: strength and adaptability of support structures and professional learning as an emergent process**

Emergence is characterised by a complex array of interactive processes and countless factors (personal, social, natural, historical, cultural, as well as human-made materials and artefacts). We highlight here two aspects of the products of emergence in this project. One concerns the application and adaptation of prior emergent resources, such as the set of principles, scaffolding and tools developed in previous work and the experience and expertise of the ITL support group in that work. These were introduced as factors available for participants. They became part of the perpetual interactions that make up practice. Their effects did not come about through a linear process of cause and effect, but were forged in multiple and ongoing processes where people’s presumptions and other factors such as cultural and professional history all impinge on outcomes. These resources therefore have to be strong enough to carry the essential and critical aims of the project and flexible enough to be adapted to local cultures and histories without losing the integrity of the value-base. A second aspect is learning as an emergent process. Change involved teachers deliberating, dealing with doubts and formulating action, and working with mentors, tools and other supports over time which generated new behaviours, ideas and frames of understanding about teacher identity and leadership.

**Concluding remarks**

We believe that it is vital both to recognise the critiques of distributed leadership and to retain the insights of the distributed perspective on leadership. Leadership is a distributed, complex and emergent process. It is also a process that is characterised by individual and collective intentionalities. It is therefore important to recognise that leadership is characterised by both intentionality and emergence. Further than this, leadership practice, to be worthwhile, needs be framed within an explicit value-base in which leadership is exercised collaboratively through a commitment to values of holistic democracy and social justice (Woods and Roberts, 2018).

The notion of collaborative leadership as we conceptualise it is, we argue, highly relevant to the practice of leadership for a global society. Such leadership is characterised by an awareness that
leadership involves both intentionality and emergence and by the explicit integration of critical values encompassed by the philosophy of co-development. The latter value-base places the fostering of human agency and relational freedom and the ideals of social justice and participation at its heart. It prioritises the development of capabilities such as creativity, imagination, critical thinking and complexity, vital in meeting global challenges (Gidley, 2017: 131) and the aim of becoming ‘the creative agents of our desired futures’ (Gidley, 2016: 116). It makes central the task of challenging the assumptions of the philosophy of dependence.

In examining the teacher leadership development project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we highlighted how expressions of collaborative leadership could be seen in its leadership development and practice. The project’s value-base prioritised relational freedom, inclusion and an explicit social justice aim (in this instance the representation and voice of ethnic minorities). We noted the importance of a clear and shared intentionality and intent for the project; intentionalities that were authored by teachers so the process promoted awareness and self-determination and teachers’ intentions drove teacher leadership. We also drew attention to features likely to advance collaborative leadership in the complexity and messiness of practical change – that is, prior emergent resources that are both strong and adaptable and professional learning that is supported as an emergent process. One of the implications of embracing complexity and emergence is recognising the need to ‘learn and adapt as you do things: unintended consequences and unexpected changes in the wider world are normal ...[you need to build in] iterative processes for dialogue, review and adaptation’ (Boulton et al., 2015: 234). In this way intentionality and emergence intertwine.

The danger of cultural colonisation was raised in the Introduction. Our argument is that explicit critical values are insufficiently embedded in discourses of distributed and teacher leadership and that this omission encourages the acceptance of unexamined assumptions. Collaborative teacher leadership as discussed in this article, developed through processes of co-development, is an important way of helping to avoid cultural colonisation. It does not provide a simple answer. However, integral to its character is making conscious, questioning intentionality, local pro-active agency and adaptability essential parts of realising the larger purpose of the value-base. These central aims work against unquestioning acceptance of and dependence on imposed leadership discourses. At the heart of collaborative leadership are the growth and practice of relational freedom and self-determination through the engagement, energy and critical reflexivity of teachers.

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Notes
1. See Jarvis and Graham (2016) on ‘noticing’.
2. http://www.teacherleadership.org.uk/the-itl-initiative.html (accessed 30 March 2016).
3. http://www.teacherleadership.org.uk/the-itl-initiative.html (accessed 30 March 2016).
4. It was also carried out in Serbia, but here we concentrate on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5. The project is the European Methodological Framework for Facilitating Teachers’ Collaborative Learning (EFFeCT) project (http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/en/effect-project). The project has been funded with support from the European Commission. Views in this article are those of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

6. The quote is from a film on the project, entitled ‘Teachers as Agents of Change for Education Without Prejudice’ Project, carried out by proMENTE (http://promente.net/?). The film was produced in 2016. The quotes in English are taken from the subtitles of the film.

7. Intentionalities are themselves emergent products – of processes internal to the individual and the individual’s interactions with others and their institutional, social and cultural context. In presenting intentionality and emergence as analytically distinct, our point is to ensure attention to the creativity of individual human action.

8. Ćelebić is the director of proMENTE (http://promente.net/?). Vranješević is a Serbian colleague, researching the teacher-led development work in Bosnia.

9. The quotes are from a film on the Bosnia and Herzegovina project, entitled ‘Teachers as Agents of Change for Education Without Prejudice’ Project, carried out by proMENTE (http://promente.net/?). The film was produced in 2016. The quotes in English are taken from the subtitles of the film.

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**Author biographies**

**Philip A Woods** is Director of the Centre for Educational Leadership and Professor of Educational Policy, Democracy and Leadership at the University of Hertfordshire, UK, as well as Immediate Past Chair of the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society. His work focuses principally on leadership as a distributed and democratic process and on issues of governance, equity and change towards more democratic and holistic learning environments. He is author of over 130 publications and has wide-ranging experience and expertise in leading, managing, and participating in major funded projects for organisations including the British Academy, UK government, and European Union. His latest book, *Collaborative school leadership: A critical guide*, co-authored with Amanda Roberts, will be published by SAGE in 2018.

**Amanda Roberts** is a Senior Lecturer in Learning and Teaching at the University of Hertfordshire, UK. Amanda’s subject, pedagogic and professional knowledge has been developed through experience in a variety of educational roles, including leadership positions in four secondary schools culminating in headship. She subsequently formed a successful educational consultancy company, providing support for leadership and learning in a variety of contexts. Her work now focuses principally on leadership (including student leadership), coaching and curriculum development. In her current research she uses creative methodologies for exploring leadership experience and identity development. Her latest book, *Collaborative school leadership: A critical guide*, co-authored with Philip Woods, will be published by SAGE in 2018.
Appendix

Principles for supporting teacher leadership (Frost, 2011b: 12–13)

| Principle 1: A partnership between schools and external agencies |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Such agencies might include university departments of education, government agencies and non-governmental organisations. |

**Principle 2: Mutual support through membership of a group and a network**
Support groups can be established within single schools or within clusters of schools and these can be linked through networks.

**Principle 3: Collaboration with school principals**
Dialogue with school principals can help to build support for teacher leadership.

**Principle 4: Opportunities for open discussion**
Teachers need to be enabled to think critically about values, practice and innovation.

**Principle 5: A project-based methodology**
Teacher leadership is enacted through the initiation and leadership of development projects.

**Principle 6: Enabling teachers to identify personal development priorities**
This releases passion, concern and moral purpose.

**Principle 7: Tools to scaffold personal reflection, planning and action**
Well-designed tools scaffold, exemplify and illustrate teacher leadership.

**Principle 8: Facilitating access to relevant literature**
This enhances the knowledge arising from teachers’ development work.

**Principle 9: The provision of guidance on leadership strategies**
Expert guidance and mutual exploration strengthens leadership capacity.

**Principle 10: The provision of guidance on the collection and use of evidence**
Systematic enquiry is a democratic and collegial leadership strategy.

**Principle 11: Mobilisation of organisational support and orchestration**
School principals can support teachers’ development work and ensure coherence in the school.

**Principle 12: The provision of a framework to help teachers document their work**
A structured portfolio enables teachers to plan, record and reflect upon their development work and can be used as evidence for certification and the like.

**Principle 13: The provision of opportunities for networking beyond the school**
Teachers derive mutual support and inspiration when they network with other teachers. Moral purpose is cultivated throughout the system.

**Principle 14: Recognition through certification**
Teachers’ leadership of innovation can be recognised through certification provided by universities or partners of other respected organisations.

**Principle 15: Professional knowledge arises from accounts of teacher leadership**
Teachers can build professional knowledge through collaborative and critical discussion and exchange of ideas.