

## **New Managerialism: The Impact on Education**

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With the rise of the neo-liberalism as a system of values<sup>i</sup>, there is an increasing attempt to off-load the cost of education, health care and public services generally, on to the individual. Allied to this, there is a growing movement to privatise those areas of public services that could be run for profit, including higher education.

New managerialism represents the organisational arm of neoliberalism. It is the mode of governance designed to realize the neoliberal project through the institutionalising of market principles in the governance of organizations. While Taylorism and ‘scientific management have been employed extensively to for-profit businesses for many decades, what makes new managerialism ‘new’ is the deployment of managerialist principles in both public sector bodies (Lynch, Grummell and Devine, 2012), and, increasingly, in non-governmental organisations (McCrea, 2014).

In the public sector, it involves the prioritization of private (for-profit) sector values of efficiency and productivity in the regulation of public bodies, on the assumption that the former is superior to the latter. It gives primacy to product and output over process and input, and it endorses strong market-type accountability in public sector spending. The attainment of financial and other targets is a priority, and success in meeting targets is measured through public audits of the quality of service delivery. The development of quasi-markets for services is also a key goal; this operates as a further form of control through competition and public surveillance (Clarke, Gewirtz and McLaughlin, 2000).

While it would be a mistake to view new managerialism as a unitary whole, implemented consistently across differing cultural and economic contexts, nevertheless in the redesign of public service provision, key features of managerialism include: a change of nomenclature from that of citizens, rights, welfare and solidarity to that of customers, service users and competition; a focus on outputs which is

achieved through a measured monitoring of employee performance, and the encouragement of self-monitoring through the widespread use of performance indicators, league tables, target-setting and benchmarking. The decentralization of budgetary and personal authority to line managers combined with the retention of power and control at central level, and the introduction of new and more casualized contractual employment arrangements, as a means to reducing costs and exercising control, are also defining practices. Within new managerialism, there is an elision of the differences between public and private interests. New configurations of public-private relationships are designated as ‘partnerships; these include outsourcing services like catering and private finance initiatives for new public buildings (Ball 2009).

Theorists of managerialism regard management as a political and not merely a technical activity. They hold that it is best understood as an ideological configuration of ideas and practices brought to bear on public service organization, management and delivery with a view to aligning organizational practices with those in the market system. It is about creating new management orthodoxy as to how public services are run. They regard it first and foremost as an ideologically-motivated approach to managing public services (Ball, 2009; Blackmore, 2010).

Most theorists who use the concept ‘new public management’ to analyze recent changes in public service management, however, see the process of management reform as the implementation of an apolitical form of regulatory governance of public services by state agencies. Their main reason for rejecting the link between new forms of public management and ideology is that they hold it is not simply ideologically-driven as governments of very different political persuasions in Western States have adopted new public management (or managerial) reforms (Pollitt 2003).

### **Historical Antecedents**

Within traditional capitalist enterprises, ownership and control of operations were integrated functions. As capitalism became corporatized, managing workers and ensuring their productivity, became a separate professional task in large companies.

The division between ownership and control facilitated the emergence of managerialism as management became a professional task. The work of managers was to ensure the efficient output of goods and service: maximum output for minimum cost. Max Weber characterized this form of thinking as an extreme form of instrumental reasoning where, in the interests of efficiency, value is not imputed to the activity itself but what the activity produces. He also foresaw the potential conflict between the formal-procedural rationality, to which instrumental reasoning leads, and more substantive value rationality, noting the dangers of the ‘iron cage’ of extreme instrumentalism where there would be “Specialists without spirit, sensualities without heart...” (Weber, 1930/1972: 182).

In prioritizing efficiency and productivity over other values in work organizations, managerialism is closely aligned also with Taylorism or scientific management as developed by Frederick Taylor in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Taylor, 1911). Taylor held that improving worker productivity involved increased surveillance and direction of their work by managers, thereby creating a management class with increased power within work organizations. The prioritization of management as a field of practice, in aligning efficiencies with increased outputs, remains a core principle of management today.

### ***Governmentality and the Internalization of Managerialism***

Foucault’s analysis of how power is exercised has greatly enhanced understanding of the way control and regulation is exercised, particularly how regulatory values are internalized and operationalized at the individual level. His concept of governmentality helps explain the success of managerialism as a political project. It provides a conceptual framework for understanding how individuals implicate themselves in their own governance within managerial organizations (Foucault, 1982-83).

Drawing on Foucault, understanding of the operation of governmentality at the individual level has been enhanced by Nikolas Rose (1989). He shows how control is increasingly less exercised through sovereign or hierarchical power but rather through

internalized self-regulation particularly in the neoliberal era. The internalization of managerial values is not a simple process. It involves the management of identity as a modality of control that includes 'managing the insides' of workers, in terms of their hopes, fear and expectations of success in the work organization. Flexibility, adaptability, self-empowerment and self-actualization are incorporated into the new worker (and manager) identities: commitment to corporate goals for excellence and achievement becomes a necessary characteristic of the person (a matter of their character) rather than a requirement of the organization. In this sense, Rose speaks of the 'ethic of autonomous selfhood' that pervades the enterprise culture - a governing of the soul that deploys new technologies of the self, governing from the inside out. Managerialism is thus a form of governmental rationality, a type of disciplinary knowledge that generates its own compliance; people internalize the values of efficiency, productivity and outputs, through the twin practices of habitual practice and ideological infusion.

### **New Managerialism and Neoliberalism**

Managerialism cannot simply be reduced to a series of management practices and activities. It is embedded in a complex series of social, political and economic organizational changes that are tied to neoliberalism as a political project (Clarke and Newman, 1997). It rests on the neoliberal assumption that the market is the primary producer of cultural logic and value and that solutions to societal ills and the management of social change can be best understood through the deployment of market logic and market mechanisms. Economic, educational and social problems are thus construed as management issues that new and more efficient managerial regimes can resolve. The ethical, political and social dimensions of such problems are treated as secondary considerations.

Managerialism is not regarded by most, therefore, as a neutral management strategy; it is a political project heralding a new mode of governance that provides a unique type of moral purpose for businesses, and organizations modeled on businesses, including schools and colleges. Market-led models of control and regulation become the prototype for work organizations both inside and outside the market. One of the

major concerns expressed regarding new managerialism's prioritization of efficiency and effectiveness is that it occurs at the expense of more broadly-based moral and social values related to care, autonomy, tolerance, respect, trust and equality. This has the ultimate impact of defining human relationships in work organization in transactional terms, as the means to an end – the end being that of high performance and productivity.

Managerialism, therefore, is quite a controversial mode of governance as many claim it reduces first order social and moral values to second-order principles; trust, integrity and solidarity with others are subordinated to regulation, control and competition. When managerialist practices achieve hegemonic control within organizations, they parasitize and weaken those very values on which the organization depends. While few would question the value of efficiency, in terms of maximizing the use of available resources, the difficulty with managerialism is that it does not just prioritize efficiency, it suppresses other organizational values so that they become incidental to the running of the organization. The net effect of the devaluation of moral purposes in and of themselves is that public services, such as education, are increasingly defined as commodities to be delivered by the market to customers who can afford to buy them. They are no longer defined as capacity-building public goods that are governed by rights protected by law at national and international levels.

### **Managerialism and Education**

Managerialism in education poses specific challenges for teachers and students (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003). Managing a school requires many skills, some of which are purely technical and apply in any organization (planning, budget and time management, personnel relations etc.) while others are unique to education, including the developmental and nurturing skills required to enable students to grow and develop, and to support teachers in this task. There is an emotional investment in people that is not required in many organizations as the 'product' is the development and care of others. Because managerial principles originated in a commercial context where process is subordinated to output and profit, managerialist values manifest themselves in education through the promotion of forms of governance

(measurement, surveillance, control, regulation) that are often antithetical to the caring that is at the heart of good education. While the nurturing of learners has an outcome dimension, gains are generally not measurable in a narrowly specifiable time frame. The gains and losses from having or not having care and nurture in education are only seen over time (Feeley, 2009). Moreover, the caring dimensions of education are not open to measurement in terms of quality, substance and form within a metric measurement system. Even if caring could be monitored and measured through matrices, the very doing of this would force people into the calculation of other-centeredness that would undermine the very principle of relatedness and mutuality that is at the heart of teaching and learning (Lynch, Grummell and Devine, 2012).

As managerialism is the organizational form aligned with neoliberalism, is implicitly endorses a concept of the educated person that is market-led. Education is defined in terms of human capital acquisition, making oneself skilled for the economy. The purpose of education is increasingly limited to developing the neo-liberal citizen: one is educated to be a self-sufficient, rational and competitive, economic actor, a cosmopolitan worker built around a calculating, entrepreneurial and detached self.

### **Impact on Education Professionals**

Managerialism has also altered the relationships between professionals and the State, especially in the public sector. The traditionally powerful position of professionals in public sector organizations has been strongly challenged through systems of surveillance, regulation and accountability that have been established under managerialism. The forms of accountability that have been institutionalized for the professions, including the promotion and enhancement of user groups (parents and students) and other education stakeholders, including business and corporate interests, has meant that educational ‘consumers’ exercise control and influence over professionals in a way that was not true hitherto. Consequently, there has been a restructuring of professional identities in line with technician job requirements.

Measuring one’s professional performance against key indicators established by stakeholder interests has become a task in itself (Deem, 2004). However, not all of

those within the professions are equally affected by the changes. The strategic importance of reconstructing professionals as managers for the successful implementation of managerial reforms has allowed those who endorse managerialism to make professional gains. Thus, even within professionals, divergences of power, status and influence have emerged between those aligned with and exercising managerial control and those concerned with the systematic maintenance and administration of school routines.

### **Impact of Managerialism on Educational Practice**

Managerialism has had a profound influence on the management and orientation of education over the last two decades of the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first. The impact of managerialism has not been even however, either geographically or across educational sectors. Its impact is greatest in higher education where there has been a global movement to make higher education into a marketable commodity that can be traded internationally (Marginson, 2006). The introduction of league tables and rankings for universities (most rankings are commercially-led by powerful publishing interests in the media including the Times Higher Ranking and that of Quacquarelli Symonds) has been an especially powerful tool for generating control over universities (Marginson, 2006). The impact of the managerialist culture is not confined to higher education however, especially within the English-speaking world of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom. Within these countries, managerial practices have also been invoked at primary and secondary levels through the introduction of local site-based school management and the devolution of budgetary control to individual schools. It has also involved the introduction of performance management pay and appraisal systems and national standardized testing of children. Published ranking of schools is also common, resulting in the polarization of schools (primarily on the basis of social class) as middle class schools become over-subscribed and 'sink' schools struggle to maintain their numbers. The impact of these reforms on school personnel, both teaching staff and senior management, has been substantial, leading to changing subjectivities among both teachers and principals, as they seek to position themselves within the new

managerialist order (Blackmore, 2007, 2010; Lynch, Grummell and Lyons, 2012). There is a privileging of entrepreneurial activity as school leaders attempt to market their schools in line with 'consumer' demands and interests.

### **Gender and Managerialism**

Senior management posts are gendered within (and without) education, especially in higher education. Male power is embedded within organizational structures through hidden constructs of the 'ideal' type manager, through methods of recruitment and selection, through processes of job grading and career progression, through the organization of hours of work and via the seemingly neutral informal networks and sponsorship that operate outside of work hours in clubs, gyms, sport and other leisure activities (Blackmore, 2007; Halford and Leonard, 2001).

The gender impact of managerialism in education has taken a number of hybridised forms depending on the sector in which it is implemented. However, in all contexts, its successful implementation involves a shift in organizational culture to one which is firmly embedded in the principles of market dynamics, accountability and enhanced productivity. When analysed in terms of gender dynamics, managerialism presents both challenges and opportunities for men and women to (re)negotiate their positions in the highly competitive market-oriented culture. With the breakdown of traditional patriarchal power positions there is an emphasis on what you can do rather than necessarily who you are; in theory, women have the same chance of being promoted to senior posts as do their male counterparts in new managerial regimes. The de-layering of management structures can and does undermine traditional patterns of male dominance (Collinson and Hearn 2003 and Deem 2004). However, under managerialism there is also an expectation that senior managers are competitive, tough, individualistic and wedded to the organization. There are assumptions that senior education managers can be workers 24/7, a life-style that is highly gendered in a way that advantages care-free men and women (Lynch, Grummell and Lyons, 2012).



Under new managerialism there is also a new code of values underlying decisions about what constitutes valuable knowledge—decisions that impact the organization of power. Market knowledge matters most; disciplines and fields of study that are not marketable have lower status and power. As STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects are prioritised in the neo-liberal era of market-relevant research and education, those who teach and research in these fields are at the pinnacle of the knowledge hierarchy, especially if their work has market relevance.

Their research is given priority for funding and is most likely to attract private investment in public-private partnerships given its potential for patents and profit. Given the traditional male dominance of STEM subjects, it is not surprising that the gender hierarchies of knowledge translate into gender hierarchies of governance especially in higher education. While women in the STEM fields do benefit from this process, they remain a minority. Subjects remain gendered and stratified, not just in status terms but in funding terms; research and teaching in the humanities and social sciences, all of which are strongly feminised fields, and are centred upon the relatively poorly funded voluntary and public service sectors where no patents apply, are positioned as dependents in the market-led world of managerialism.

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- <sup>i</sup> *Neo-liberalism is... a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the State is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate for such practices....State intervention in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum....'* (Harvey, D. *A Short History of Neoliberalism*: 2005: 2)