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Does sector make a difference? A comparative study of 'managerialism' in secondary and higher education

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Abstract

The public sector has undergone considerable change over the last two decades with massive privatisation and marketisation programmes; governments have focused on economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Pollitt 1993), with the clear intention of forcing public sector management to 'manage' (Colling and Ferner 1995). Emphasis has been placed on the necessity for the control of financial budgets, quality of service and performance. The implementation of such changes has resulted in 'new managerialism' (Pollitt, 1993).

By drawing on data from two independent pieces of research, this paper compares and contrasts the introduction of initiatives associated with new managerialism in two related, but diverse public sector settings: institutes of higher education and secondary schools.

Does sector make a difference? A comparative study of ‘managerialism’ in secondary and higher education

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Introduction

The idea for this paper developed through an apparent synergy of two pieces of empirical research within the education sector. Both authors were independently involved in research which considered management work, one in higher education (Shelley, 1999) and one in secondary schools (Calveley and Healy, 1999). This led to an interest in exploring, through the research findings, the manifestations of ‘new managerialism’ (Pollitt, 1993) in education and the extent to which it is generic or sector specific.

The comparison is of interest because, despite the specific nature of the provision differing between secondary and tertiary education, the two sectors are related. They are linked, not only by the student population who permeate from secondary schools into higher education but also through commonalities such as coming under the auspices of the same government department (the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)), adhering to nationally set learning targets structures and, of considerable importance to both, adapting to changes instigated following the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA).

The paper firstly provides a brief overview of the characteristics of new managerialism. It then sets out a theoretical framework for undertaking a comparison of managerial work across the two sectors, drawing particularly on the work of Hyman (1987), Reed (1995) and Hoggett (1996). Two issues deriving from the work of Hyman are key to the comparison of the sectors. The first is a consideration of the extent to which management work is constrained by structural determinism, and the extent to which managers have strategic choice in action. The second considers the unevenness, mediation and contestation of management work that fits within this structure-agency framework.

The paper presents a number of illustrative findings in order to draw out the ways in which structural constraint, manager agency and notions of centralised-decentralisation (Hoggett, 1996) operate in similar ways across the sectors. Finally, conclusions are drawn both about the nature of management work for those in the sectors, and also for theory and knowledge in this subject.

Public Sector Managerialism

Over the past two decades, the UK public sector has seen massive privatisation and marketisation programmes; governments have focused on economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the three E's (Pollitt 1993)), with the clear intention of forcing public sector management to 'manage' (Colling and Ferner 1995). Emphasis has been placed on the necessity for the control of financial budgets, quality of service and performance of staff – an emphasis which has clearly continued since the election of New Labour in 1997. The implementation of such changes has resulted in a new form of 'public management' (Farnham and Horton, 1993; Winchester and Bach, 1995) commonly referred to as 'new managerialism' (Pollitt, 1993).

Walsh (1995) describes the aim of the New Public Management as being to gain more effective control of work practices which he sees happening through two strands of activity. The first, based on the work of Pollitt (1990), is described as directly interventionist and in some respects Taylorist in approach. This includes: continuous increases in efficiency; the use of 'ever-more-sophisticated' technologies; a labour force disciplined to productivity; clear implementation of the professional management role; and managers being given the right to manage. The second strand, however, is through indirect control rather than direct authority, and works by providing incentives to elicit work commitment of employees, viz.: continuous improvements in quality; emphasis upon devolution and delegation; appropriate information systems; measuring performance; and increased emphasis on audit and inspection. This entails a "...change in emphasis from control of behaviour and measurement of outputs, to control of employees' attitudes and commitments, the latter being crucial for employee service-mindedness which in turn determines the level of customer satisfaction" (Alvesson, 1993, p.253; in Walsh, 1995).

Indeed, it has been argued that the culture of the customer has emerged as an all pervading ideology allowing this second strand to emerge, realising a 'paradigm shift' in social values and managerial forms and associated organisational change (Reed, 1995). DuGay and Salaman (1992) see this as partly attributable to external market relations and the 'sovereign customer'. However, they also see an equal if not stronger pressure through the internal management of work and managements' use of the discourse of enterprise, "defining internal organisational relations 'as' if they were customer/supplier relations (and) replacing bureaucratic regulation and stability with the constant uncertainties of the market, and thus requiring enterprise from employees" (DuGay and Salaman, 1992, p.615).

Perhaps the meta analysis which best illustrates the changes in the public sector from the 1980s onwards has been that which describes the role of the state itself. Thus, there has been, as Scott (1995) describes it, a move from a fiduciary state (where the state is the trustee of national interest), to the contractual state (where the state is the market-maker and regulator), a much more mixed economy approach, with plurality of interest, opening up privatisation (particularly through contracting out of services), much of which is facilitated in some way by quasi-public utilities. This move towards a contractual state has also been described as: the hollow state; the skeleton state; the surveillance state (Clarke and Newman, 1997), and as the evaluative state (Henkel, 1991, in Walsh, 1996). Walsh characterises the latter by a separation of politics and management and "an establishment of processes of audit and inspection to provide a check on the freedom of management", thus arguing that the "statement of clear standards and performance measures makes it possible to exercise control at a distance" (Walsh, 1996, pps. 101-102).

Therefore, as Hyman (1987) recognises, the issue of management accountability is difficult to theorise, particularly in terms of the limitations to managements' strategic choice and discretion in their activities compared to the limitations that larger and environmental constraints place upon their choices of alternative action. For example, there is evidence of devolved management responsibility, 'empowerment', both to formally titled management roles and through a gradual managerialisation of work (particularly professional work) (Davies and Kirkpatrick, 1995). However, this is often within a tighter framework of

financial and bureaucratic control, what Hoggett (1991) terms 'regulated autonomy', and Rainnie (1994) 'tight-loose control', alongside control through sector and organisational level market mechanisms and through direct 'customers'. Ultimately, therefore, despite a rhetoric of decentralisation of responsibilities (Kirkpatrick and Martinez-Lucio, 1995), both directly and through market mechanisms, centralised control remains tight resulting in 'centralised-decentralisation' (Reed, 1995; Hoggett, 1996).

Nevertheless, as management itself is a collective labour process, Hyman (1987) argues that internal coherence cannot be assumed. A key to this, he asserts, is to examine the opportunities for strategic choice that arise from the contradictions that are themselves inherent in a Marxist analysis of structural determinism. That is to say, to recognise the conflict between the functions of capital and labour but where "capital is faced with contradictory requirements, to both limit the discretion which workers may apply against it's interests; and to harness the willing application to profitable production of that discretion which cannot be eliminated. Hence 'coercion must be supplemented by the organisation of consent'" (Hyman, 1987, p.40; including part of a quote from Burawoy, 1979, p.27).

That such contradictions and tensions exist in management work is supported by Armstrong (1989) and by Clarke and Newman (1997), the latter asserting that "managerialism is a continually contested regime" (op cit, pps 31-33). Further, Clark et al (1998) reveal a "less than established pattern of managerialism", and follow Armstrong's (1991) position that managers' trust, loyalty and behaviours are influenced by work socialisation processes and show divided loyalties. This mediation and resistance can be at an individual but also collective level, as Smith (1993) states that managers undertake managerial and professional 'gamesmanship' as they attempt to satisfy the demands of those around them, and themselves; and they resist and mediate pressures for managerial change (Prichard and Willmott, 1997).

The main themes emerging are, therefore, that despite an emphasis on devolved manager responsibility, public sector management work is constrained by centralised structures, both directly and through market mechanisms. Although this may afford managers only limited

strategic choice, there is evidence of managers contesting and mediating these structural pressures on their work. The next section will set out the way in which the empirical data was collected before drawing upon this to illustrate these themes in action.

The research

Although the two research projects were completely independent, both authors used a case study approach as detailed below.

In order to embrace the broad context of the higher education sector, a multiple case study research strategy was used. Selection of the case studies was on the basis of Thorne and Cuthbert's (1996) typology of one from each of their A1, A2, B1 and B2 universities. The typology was selected because of the emphasis it places on the extent of institutional exposure to, or insulation from, the forces of marketisation. It thus embraces the diversity of universities across the higher education sector, from pre-1992 universities of both the 'Russell group' and more recent technology-based universities, to post-1992 universities with greater or lesser research orientation.

The case studies involved spending about a week in each university; in-depth interviews were undertaken with a cross-section of staff, documents analysed, meetings observed, and in effect a form of non-participant observation was used, simply from being around the place. Respondents were, in the first instance, key people, such as the Head of Personnel, and some managers of academic and non-academic departments. Subsequent respondents were selected from a variety of departments and levels, following a stratified sample approach. For the interviews, a broad semi-structure was used, consisting largely of open question-like prompts to enter into discussion about the respondent's work, how it happens, where the work comes from, how it is judged, and who the respondent interacts with.

The research in the school sector draws upon case studies undertaken in two secondary comprehensive schools in vastly different settings, both geographically and in the school 'league tables'. The first, 'Norville'¹ is a 'mid-table', 'improving' school on the outskirts of a

¹ Both names are pseudonyms.

small provincial city. It is relatively well maintained and has a fairly consistent school population, drawing pupils from the primary schools in the surrounding area. The vast majority of students enter the school at age eleven and until they complete their studies at age sixteen, when some progress to the local sixth form college.

In contrast, the second school, 'Parkville', is an inner-city 'failing' school situated firmly at the lower end of the school league tables. The school buildings are very poorly maintained. The vast majority of students come from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, more than half from families where English is not the home language and there are a high proportion of transient pupils who often attend on a temporary basis; only a small minority of pupils who enter the school at age eleven complete their studies there at age sixteen. Parkville was ultimately closed and a new school Parkville Specialist School (PSS) was opened in its place.

As will be discussed in detail below, differences in location and league table position are important comparatives when studying the effect of centralised government initiatives implemented at the local level.

In both schools, the research involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with management (i.e. headteachers, deputy headteachers and governors) and teaching staff; participant observation and documentary evidence. The headteacher of Parkville Specialist School was also interviewed. The interviews took the form of open-ended questions aimed at exploring management practices and employment relations in the schools.

Managerialism in higher education

Both the nature of the sector and of management work within it need to be examined in the so-called 'learning society'; "a society which systematically increases the skills and knowledge of all its members to exploit technological innovation and so gain a competitive edge for their services in fast changing global markets" (Ainley, 1994). The UK government has used the rhetoric of the learning society since its 1988 education reforms, reinforcing this with the 'Learning Age' Green Paper in 1998 (DfEE, 1998) and with the Kennedy and

Dearing reports following this theme in relation to post-16 education. The 1987 White Paper 'Higher education: meeting the challenge' was enacted in the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA), depicting a vision of a 'learning society', with enlarged student participation, by the year 2000.

Such was the expansion of higher education in the late 1980s and early 1990s, that student numbers rose from 900,000 to 1,600,000 between 1985/86 and 1995/96; an increase from 15 per cent to 33 per cent 18 year old participation (Trowler, 1998). Subsequently, the government has now set a target of 50 per cent of 18 to 30 year olds to participate by 2010 (THES, 23/11/01).

Despite this growth, universities seem able to continue providing a quality service, whilst still attaining growth and efficiency savings (Bett, 1999), with a 40 per cent reduction in public expenditure per student achieved between 1977 and 1997 (Dearing, 1997). Productivity gains have been made in this context, with student-staff ratios (SSRs) rising from 9:1 to 12:1 in the pre-1992 universities and from 8:1 to 16:1 in the polytechnics between 1982 and 1992 (Trowler, 1998). Whilst publicity about poor management, worker unrest and recruitment and retention problems are not unknown, the sector also has a record of longevity.

The work of Prichard and Willmott (1997) and Prichard (2000) provides a useful explanation here. Both identify a central theme, which links with the earlier work of Miller (1991), through the location of higher education in capitalist society, where the state applies pressure to either reduce the cost of labour in higher education or to "maintain or enhance its contribution to processes of accumulation and legitimation (e.g. intensifying the state education's contribution to the production of a skilled workforce, the costs of which capitalist enterprises are unwilling to bear for themselves). Thus, as higher education becomes increasingly commodified through its intensified engagement with quasi or managed market processes (and thus treats itself as if it were a capitalist enterprise), the Head of Department / service or the Dean or director of university services becomes increasingly enrolled as a representative of capitalist production and consumption relations" (Prichard, 2000, p.21).

In order for this to happen, from the 1990s, Parker and Jary (1995) describe the setting up of an expansion-oriented quasi-market bidding process, with a separation of teaching and research funding, which also allows greater centralised control of university operations. The funding system has been changing in nature too, as Prichard and Willmott (1997) describe, from a position where teaching money followed growth in student numbers and research funding followed staff expansion, to a position where both sources of income, but particularly research income, are increasingly conditional upon measured performance.

The influence of the government is largely through the various higher education funding councils which undertake planning for higher education, with a government overview which is "crude, short-term and more heavily influenced by external considerations" (Scott, 1995) and which is driven by quantitative measures of output prompted by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) (Shore and Selwyn, 1998). Indirectly, government influence is through the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education), much criticised recently for having a confusion of multiple purposes (THES 22/6/01), including: a means of providing information to students; a way of making universities accountable to the tax-payer; as a means of improving teaching in higher education; as a means of standardising degrees; and as a system for kite-marking institutions that are selling their services to the international market.

Such a competitive, marketised context, Parker and Jary (1995) argue, forces small units (i.e. universities and units within universities) to compete with each other, whilst "the engineered hidden hand (of the state) reduces direct costs" (p.333). This, they say, endangers free enquiry; instead pressures for economic relevance no longer recognise the uniqueness of an academic, a discipline or a university, "but one which forces competition for consumers between psychology and sociology, between old university and new university" (Parker and Jary, 1995, p.333).

Within such a context, Prichard (2000) dates the rise of 'accountable managers' in pre-1992 universities to the Jarrett Report of 1985; a response to efficiency savings following the 1981

cuts in funding grants. The report introduced a strengthening of internal management control in universities; enhancing the role of university councils (but not senates), including increased involvement for key business representatives; creation or strengthening of planning and resources committees; and the introduction of systems of performance indicators and new financial controls (CVCP, 1985). It has also been noted that the use of 'mission statements' and other managerial language began with the Jarrett Report (Griffith, 1994). For the former polytechnics, the report 'Management for a Purpose', produced by the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education in 1987 has been seen by Middlehurst and Elton (1992) as including similar indicators of a spread of managerial language.

However, empirical reports of manager's work in higher education show an unclear picture of managerialism, and some contestation of such change (Prichard and Willmott, 1997; Prichard, 2000; Barry et al, 2001), with Prichard and Willmott being explicit about the problems facing university managers, namely to "enrol the support of 'the managed' by contriving to reconcile embedded, largely localised and tacit discourses with the imperialising discourses associated with the new performance measures" (Prichard and Willmott, 1997, pps 300-301).

Managerialism in secondary education

In schools, the Education Reform Act 1988 (ERA) had a profound effect on the delivery of education (Healy 1997), giving 'the DES (Department of Education and Science) and the Secretary of State extensive new powers' over the work of Local Education Authorities (LEA) and schools (Bowe *et al.* 1992:7). The ERA not only introduced a centrally imposed National Curriculum, it also introduced new managerialism in schools through the Local Management of Schools (LMS) initiative. Budget responsibility was devolved from the LEA to the school level in order to enhance the 'managerial role of head teachers' (Bach and Winchester 1994:267), a role which also includes the recruitment and selection of teachers and formal disciplinary matters, issues previously dealt with at LEA level.

Public accountability and marketisation of schools was introduced in the form of school 'league tables'; based on the numbers of children achieving A* to C GCSE grades the tables

are produced to differentiate school achievement levels. The rationale behind such marketisation was that parents would 'choose' to send their children to schools which 'performed well'; as school funding is commensurate with pupil numbers this would consequently improve school performance as the 'popular' schools attracted more pupils and hence more funding.

The polemic effect created by these initiatives has resulted in the identification of 'good' and 'failing' schools. The rhetoric is that the former 'would be rewarded with more enrolments and more resources' whilst the latter 'would be punished' (McVicar 1993:194). The reality is that 'quasi-markets' (Le Grand 1991:1257) have been established - schools at the 'top' of the league have both pupils and staff competing to enter them whilst those at the 'bottom' face the dire consequences of under subscription and possible closure. Such accountability was further intensified by the controversial introduction of New Labour's 'Naming and Shaming' policy (since rescinded).

Marketisation in education has gone further with the introduction of Education Action Zones (EAZs) by the New Labour government in 1998, allowing for private businesses to become involved in the provision of education (Muschamp *et al.* 1999:108). Schools within these zones are not required to fully follow the prescribed national curriculum which they can modify to allow for the introduction of 'specialisms' such as languages, arts and media or technology.

Monitoring of schools was vastly intensified with the introduction of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Both league tables and Ofsted inspections are a form of centralised performance monitoring of teachers. Another form of monitoring, and closely linked to both, is that of performance appraisal of teachers which, following the Education Act (No 2) 1986 is a statutory requirement. This is a clear example of centralised-decentralisation as school managers and teachers have to conform to a centralised government dicta; in practice, and in line with Ferner's argument that government strategies 'do not automatically lead to . . . new working practices by smooth mechanistic processes' (1987:181), many schools have been slow to implement appraisal (Bartlett 2000). Nevertheless, New Labour have followed in the

footsteps of their predecessors and are now intent on strengthening appraisal as a control mechanism by linking it to PRP (DfEE 1998b).

Although Pollitt argues that there has been ‘extensive centralization’ in teaching (1993:79), the evidence pointing to a ‘simultaneous centralization and decentralization of managerial powers heralded by LMS’ (Sinclair *et al.* 1995:253) is stronger. Combined with performance monitoring, intensification of work and changing contractual agreements, it would appear that ‘changes to the teacher labour process are deeply embedded in the package of measures that creates the reformed education system’ (Sinclair *et al.* 1996:658).

The preceding sections have considered the development of managerialism in higher education and schools. Clearly, there are similarities in government initiatives introducing marketisation and accountability into the education sector. By drawing upon the empirical research, the next section will consider these initiatives in practice. It will contemplate the extent to which managers are able to use their own autonomy in managing their institutions and the extent to which structural constraints and centralised-decentralisation do indeed result in regulated autonomy (Hoggett, 1991).

Managerialism in action

At the broad macro scale level, there are the structural constraints of state demands to perform, with restricted funding which is heavily influenced by quality assurance structures and performance targets. At the institutional level, senior managers hold devolved responsibility to perform within these constraints. It is possible to draw parallels at this level between universities and LEAs, where managers act with their own strategies in the face of external constraint. At this level managers appear largely complicit and in turn pass on these structural pressures, applying income-generating and competitive structures within LEAs and universities and identifying closely with established measures of performance such as QA and qualification targets.

At the lower levels, (in universities Deans and Heads of Departments (HOD); in schools headteachers, deputy headteachers and, to some extent governors) management are in the

position of having to implement these initiatives, using whatever resources and strategies they have available to them. It is these decisions which impact both on the delivery of education and the working lives of those who deliver education, at the teaching level.

Both sectors have been pressurised by government to both reduce public spending and be accountable for this spending. They have also been involved in the marketisation of education and the introduction of quasi-markets. As can be seen from the following quotes, universities and LEAs seem to accept this as a matter of fact and appear content to pass these demands on to the lower, operational level:

“We have to hold up our performance in the latest league table” (PVC)

“We aspire, realistically I think, to have two or three grade 5s in the next RAE, and if you’re not in a 3A department after the 2001 RAE you won’t get any research funding. Some would say that’s a bit draconian, but I would think necessarily so” (VC)

“. . . at the end of the day . . . the middle class parents who the school *needs* to get a proportion of if they want to get a balance of intake . . . they’ve certainly got options in places like [school], which is a nice comprehensive school up the road, but more importantly they can buy their way into private education if they don’t like what they’ve got. And lots of them do, so if you’ve got an interest in being in that market place, you have got to be *good*” (LEA Official, Parkville)

In an effort to reduce costs and increase quality, management are forced to compete for scarce resources as is evident in the following comment from the university sector:

“I have more confidence about our ability to compete with other Art and Design establishments than I have to compete internally, and in some ways why the University wants us to compete with, say, the Department of Human Resource Management internally puzzles me, because they’re not our competitors. Alright, they’re our

competitors for resource allocation internally, but in terms of the big picture our competitors are colleagues in London colleges” (HOD)

Whilst in the schools, teachers also feel the competition for resources:

“the budget’s been cut. . . in SEN [Special Educational Needs] we need a bit more support and now that’s been drastically reduced so I’m trying to think of other ways [to resource the department]” (Teacher, Norville)

In schools, it is the subjects which are not core to the National Curriculum (such as music, drama, sociology), which tend to suffer:

“One or two redundancies about a year ago . . . a sociology teacher who had a lot of responsibility points . . . then we’ve had debates about music teachers we can’t afford but we buy in and it’s the most obvious thing to cut first of all because it’s hardly essential . . . you know, we need maths teachers and we need English teachers, so, you know, those things are essential and of course you just hone down to the basics when you are in a crisis situation” (Governor, Parkville)

Such cutting and utilising of resources does of course, have implications for staff. On being asked about Performance Related Pay (PRP), this senior lecturer explained how reward decisions were ultimately driven by competition and the effect of this on the budget:

“Once a year we’re asked to apply for it [PRP] if we feel we deserve it. Write a little letter saying how brilliant you are, what you’ve done, then you wait and see if you’re really that good. The Head of Department makes the decisions, but I don’t know how, but it probably relates to how much money you’ve brought in” (SL)

Likewise, in schools, teachers are susceptible to the ‘balancing of the books’ at the end of the year:

“As somebody who is teaching sixth form, I am very conscious now that students represent money . . . class sizes are affected . . . you have to look critically at whether you’re going to employ somebody, replace a full-timer with a part-timer . . . the uncertainty is, will we have enough money the following year to keep this part-timer employed?” (Teacher, Norville)

Ultimately, being a teacher of a non-core and therefore non cost-effective subject can have serious personal consequences:

“Being a PE teacher, . . . it’s hard to get a job in a school because headteachers . . . they’d rather employ somebody younger on half the money, as I say, particularly in PE” (Teacher, Parkville)

Pressure is also placed on managers to generate income from outside the institution, whilst also diversifying income streams through innovative strategies. This professor describes the way in which he feels the university operates:

“[it is] . . . an income-driven resource model, with the dual aims of generation of income and control of expenditure” (Prof)

whilst a vice chancellor comments thus:

“our strategic initiative is about identifying our specific strengths and supporting them financially and in marketing terms” (VC)

Financial pressures are, as commented above, passed down to the local management level, in this case, a senior lecturer who is in the position of setting workloads:

“I’m just putting in place a workload model, based on the university’s financial model. It looks at income basically, it converts everything you do in terms of pounds. So if you teach ‘x’ hours of the programme and the programme brings in ‘x’ pounds, then

you get that proportion. Similarly if you bring in research contract money... Here we take on 150 students and with the set up we've got if you do a reasonable amount of teaching everybody gets a full university contribution without doing anything else. But that's one of the problems. If you look at the engineering departments, they're very under-studented, you cannot get a decent income from teaching, so you get a lot of staff who cannot reach the university's target threshold of sixteen thousand pounds a year....." (SL)

One of the aims set for Parkville Specialist School, and one of the measures of its success, set by the government and LEA, was that it would generate non-public income. This again is passed down to local management to achieve:

“... if you just use the funding which is available through the government, you will not be able to do all the kinds of things you would want to do. So I need to find other ways. But I also need to find ways of locking other people into trying to get funding for me, and one way is by persuading them to give something towards the school, whether it's time, which is money, to give money directly or whatever it might be” (Headteacher, Parkville Specialist School)

“... one of the people on the governing body ... is absolutely *lynch pin* for the whole drive towards setting up charities and getting sponsorship and *networking* connections. They've got a quite senior working journalist on the governing body who handles *all* the school's publicity and PR ... these people are making a serious professional contribution to what's going on ... they are good for the extra added value they can bring to the school” (LEA Official, Parkville)

Interestingly, such financial pressures are a form of control on teaching staff as this senior lecturer explains:

“when I arrived it was a 4-rated department, then very soon it went down, and that has been an enormous spur to me to work as hard as I can because I don't want to be in 3-

rated department. There's nobody cracking a whip behind us, we just know if we want to, you know, get promoted, or we want to do well for the department, then we must work hard . . . you know, if I do my job, if I get in the money, then I'm going to be supported" (SL)

As discussed earlier, control and accountability have been key aspects of government initiatives in the education sector. However, control is often manifested through the marketisation mechanisms which have been put in place and the pressures which these create. For example, in the university sector, students are very much viewed as the 'customer' and their demands have to be catered for:

"to ensure that we keep our customers happy, with the customers being students, staff and external visitors. This is more relevant now than it has ever been with the advent of competition, abolition of the binary line and that sort of thing, students now paying fees, universities have to market, they have to provide the right sort of service, they've got to attract students" (Head of Service)

and this has led to the intensification of work:

"I produce all the programme documentation, things like handbooks. There's been a huge increase in bureaucracy, huge assessment, planning, quality paperwork which is not being recognised at all in terms of staffing support. It's running at the moment on people's goodwill to a great extent. . . I'm available to see students at any time. Any student on the programme who has a problem can come and see me" (SL)

"in the aftermath of the 1996 (RAE) in which our scores as an institution went up much more than the average and yet our amount of money from the funding council went down, which produced quite a crisis, and this was partly because of the relatively low percentage of staff submitted . . . everybody needs to be making a considerable contribution to output and if you're not personally going to contribute to the research-

led university then you need to do so indirectly, by taking on burdens from other people” (HOD)

Closely linked to marketisation mechanisms and a severe form of control is accountability to the end user of the product, the student. In the higher education sector this takes the form of student feedback. The following quote is a clear indication of how managers use strategies to ‘play the game’ when it comes to public accountability:

“We now have students who mark you, and give you assessments on the way in which you give your lectures, and these are put up for public display... . . . Because we know that TQA is going to come in and look at lectures, we don’t want to have our duds giving important courses. There is a question of what you do with these people, we don’t have too many, but you have to hide them now, and they get less lecturing and less marking, you put them on courses that do least damage” (HOD)

One of the effects of accountability is the personal cost to teaching staff who are vulnerable to victimisation by students. When it was announced that Parkville was ‘failing’ the staff had to endure many, often derisory, comments, as the headteacher explains:

“they’ve [pupils] said to all their teachers ‘will you be there, will you be joining the new school?’ or ‘you’re crap, I bet you won’t be in the new school’ and teachers have had to live with that” (Headteacher, Parkville)

Marketisation has also created internal markets as managers utilise resources in a way which will maximise results. In some cases this is by using the ‘best staff’ as a strategy to satisfy the ‘important’ customers. The following quote demonstrates the importance placed on keeping first year entrants:

“We tend to use our good teachers more than our bad teachers, obviously if you’ve got a vital class such as first year it’s important, after that we’ve got our hands on them. So in the first year or two we would like to put our showcase people on and get good

feedback. A large proportion of the income comes from teaching, and teaching here is very competitive, because if we don't teach first year correctly and don't deal with the students correctly; simple things like a friendly face for a first year student, then they won't do (this subject) in the second year and the income for the department goes down and we're all out of a job" (SL)

This is an interesting strategy as, the manager is happy to 'exploit' the 'good' staff without dealing with the issues surrounding the performance of the 'poor' staff. An example of dealing with 'problem' staff is also questionable. A teacher in Parkville school was put into competency procedures², however, this was perceived to be a management action with ulterior motives:

"the decision to [enter into competency procedures] I think was probably based on the view that this was what he [headteacher] was expected to do as a way of showing that he was an effective manager, and it was completely disastrous!" (Teacher, Parkville)

Clearly, management may well utilise strategies they feel will provide the quickest solution to the problem. Taking this further, it was commonly believed in the school and by some of the governors, that Parkville was an embarrassment to the LEA who were being closely scrutinised by the government, therefore the decision to close the school was instrumental on the management's part. The intention was that by removing a 'failing' school from their area they would improve their position in the LEA league tables:

"Also, Parkville LEA ends up bottom of the league tables of authorities . . . so the LEA says 'how can we get ourselves up in the league tables?' - well, it's obvious what you do, you get rid of the schools that are keeping you at the bottom . . . So the most simple thing is to close the school down" (Teacher, Parkville)

² Competency procedures are formal procedures instigated by the head teacher to monitor the performance of teachers who are considered to be 'unable to meet the requirements of the post' (Ironsides and Seifert 1995:203); failure to reach the desired standards may ultimately lead to dismissal.

In both sectors of education, performance monitoring is increasingly a factor operating at a local level. Although performance appraisal is becoming more performance-oriented in wording, it is inconsistently used and often not meaningful in relation to day-to-day work. The reality for many managers themselves is that they are judged on financial performance (outside of appraisal):

“The nature of (my) appraisal has not been particularly developmental, certainly nowhere near as developmental as I would be with my colleagues, it’s about your objectives . . . Maybe there’s an assumption that when you get to this level you don’t need any help, I don’t know” (Head of Service)

“my boss, the Secretary Registrar, has said, you know, I don’t do appraisals, you should know what I think of you and, you know, if you’re doing a lousy job then I’ll bloody well let you know” (Head of Service)

Likewise, one of the headteachers commented thus:

“I’m paid according to success . . . I think they will be looking at outcomes, looking at attitudes, looking at incidents throughout the school, on-site, off-site . . . looking at actually raising funds for the school, it’s all of those. Basically, the things that you would expect from a manager, so the balance must be positive and you must achieve a financial stability for as long as possible raise more funds, and try to have a happy and satisfied workforce and a happy and satisfied client body.” (Headteacher, Parkville Specialist School)

The teaching staff in general were in favour of appraisal, this was a typical comment:

“I’m in favour of appraising people, I don’t think it’s done nearly enough. I don’t think it works in this school because it’s a paper based exercise . . . it’s administration rather than management . . . I’m not sure it achieves a lot for me at the moment” (Teacher, Norville)

thus demonstrating how appraisal may well be adhered to, but not undertaken in the way in which the government had anticipated. However, unlike Norville, in Parkville school there was no formal appraisal system (despite the statutory requirement), mainly due to the fact that the teachers refused to co-operate on the grounds that it was going to be linked to pay. However, despite this, one deputy headteacher suggested that appraisal was undertaken, if in a more informal manner:

“I think there is some appraisal goes on in a back-handed way, we have line management meetings with the heads of faculty, heads of year where, certainly, I talk about what they do and what they try to do and what they are achieving sort of thing, but it’s not formal and it’s not called appraisal and I think, you know if you’d said now to most people we’ve got to do appraisal I think they’d say ‘OK we know you have to do it’, but they’d still fight it, you know, they’d say ‘well if you have to do it, you have to do it, but we’re not going to really take part in it’” (Deputy Headteacher, Parkville)

Throughout there has been evidence of centralised-decentralisation as universities and LEAs react to government initiatives with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In the case of universities, departments and units are required, by internal management strategies, to work as if they are completely decentralised profit centres competing with each other and external competitors. Although managers are judged on their ability to control costs, they are hindered by centralised university infrastructure:

“At the moment we work on a cash-limited allocation on a 12 month basis, we are not allowed to carry forward surpluses. That is very bad for managing resources, causing people to spend furiously over the period. I have to argue the case year-on-year for my payroll and I’m not able to make commitments to my colleagues for example simply because at this time of the year I don’t know what my budget will be ten months down the line. We are under continuous pressure to increase income, but . . . if we generate more surplus, it’s just transferred to black holes elsewhere in the university, and even if we exceed targets in the course of the year, it sets a higher threshold for a target in the following year.” (Dean)

“This department doesn’t have any control over it’s finances . . . It’s just told each year that you have so many thousands of pounds to spend and that sum has been going down in big jumps. We run to deficit [and] we’ve struggled, and we’ve had to be subsidised by other Faculties. We’ve had to shed staff through early retirement schemes; even so, the amount we’ve then got left is very small, we struggle to do any sort of planning” (HOD)

Likewise in schools pressure is on from LEAs to control finances. This example is similar to the previous quote in that it draws attention to the personal cost to teaching staff of budget cuts:

“We had a budget crisis which I inherited . . . and one of the first things I had to do was to reduce expenditure . . . So we went through a programme of voluntary redundancies . . . and we reduced the staff count by nearly four. The school is clearly in increasingly rapid decay and that’s a consequence of the budget’s imbalance . . . Now I’ve redressed that imbalance somewhat but still have far too little money to spend on surroundings” (Headteacher, Parkville)

Some centrally-imposed efficiency gains come in the form of reducing staffing either through redundancies (as mentioned above) or early retirement schemes. Once again, it is a strategy delegated to the local level:

“Where savings have to be made, the university looks at the staffing budget and says right we’ll take a 3 per cent cut right across . . . because otherwise we’ll have a shortfall. I say, look I can make you savings elsewhere other than staff, I’ll make you savings on energy, savings on the way we acquire and dispose of property, but unfortunately that’s fallen on deaf ears, even though in terms of the maintenance area I’ve demonstrated that I can make savings if I develop a larger, stronger in-house maintenance team. But the trouble is the management team look and say he’s

increasing staffing in property services, we can't allow that, you know, others are reducing, how can we condone that" (Head of Service)

"People have been declared redundant but it's been done through – we've started with early retirement negotiations and then sometimes the financial package for redundancy has been more attractive. I've not actually had to tell somebody that you are going and they have not wanted it, what we've had is people willing to go. It may be that if we'd asked them six months earlier they wouldn't have wanted to go, but they've decided that either for their own personal reasons or because they can see the way the land led that it was right to go, so we haven't actually had a formal redundancy situation. We got close to it last year, we had to lose seven staff last year, despite the fact that we've got sixty more children" (Headteacher, Norville)

Alternatively, there may be a freezing of promotions and new posts or an insistence on fixed-term contracts by the 'centre':

"you still have to make the case to the university, and the university is the employer and will take a view as to whether the source of funding is going to be there in the long term. So although the school is highly profitable, a lot of that funding is taken away and put elsewhere in the institution, so it's the old old problem of trying to argue for income that you actually have that is being side-tracked into areas like languages who are losing money hand over fist. And I think the real problem is that the university budget has been cut progressively..." (SL)

Similarly in schools, staffing shortages are frequently filled by supply staff:

"we have two supply teachers on long-term supply, we have a teacher on a one-year contract for French and we have a vacancy in music which is covered by bits and pieces of supply" (Deputy headteacher, Parkville)

What is also interesting is that the changes in the way the education sector is managed, and therefore new managerialism, has, arguably, led to a different management ethos and culture. For example, there appears to be a move towards a different perception of what a manager's job involves. In the university sector, there is evidence of staff who are not titled 'managers', such as Principal and Senior Lecturers, Readers and clerical officers, assuming a managerial identity, behaving in a competitive and marketised way and adopting the language and ideology of internal competition, income-generation and budget responsibility. Also in universities there is some evidence of more managers coming in from outside - even from outside academia, albeit more so in non-academic departments. There appears to be a move towards generic managers with MBAs who, in line with the environment in which universities operate, are more versed in marketised and commercial work. One external appointee commented as follows:

“What I saw here was the structures were not actually designed to fulfil the management objectives. You need the right people empowered in the right jobs. So, we've moved away from departments. We're now structured in teaching teams and in researching areas, and we have directors of teaching programmes and of research programmes who are all individually selected and appointed. So, now I have the right people in the right jobs.” (Dean)

Similarly, the headteacher of Parkville Specialist school felt that his role as an education provider had changed:

“I wouldn't regard myself as a teacher, no. I'm a manager running a business which is probably a turnover of two and a half, three million pounds a year. The business is education. The business is motivation, erm, the business is creating a working environment for my employees, teachers, which gets the best out of them because the best out of them means an improvement in the service to the clients, to the people who use the service, students, parents etc.” (Headteacher, Parkville Specialist School)

again stressing the importance of entrepreneurship and management skills.

The above section has described the implementation of centralised management initiatives at the local level. It has considered the ways in which managers have responded to such initiatives and the strategies they use in order to comply. The research provides evidence of similarities between the sectors, both in the extent of change and in the effects that new initiatives have had both on the managers who have to implement them and the workers affected by them.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at new managerialism in two sectors of education, universities and schools. In particular the centralised drive for marketisation and financial accountability has been examined. It is apparent that in both sectors, management and teaching staff have been exposed to market forces, particularly with the creation of quasi and internal markets. This has led to competition between (and within) institutions in the strive to meet and maintain centrally imposed quality initiatives.

It can be seen that as financial resources become scarce, university managers and headteachers devise strategies to cope with the situation. In some cases this involves allocating the resources between competing departments or schools and in others it involves staff reduction through redundancies, early retirement and the use of part-time or short-term contract labour.

On the face of it, therefore, the structural constraints of markets and performance measures appear to be quite conclusively shaping the nature of management work in the two sectors, albeit that managers have some limited discretion for action within this framework. Further, however, the reality of structural constraint is even more apparent from the examples of centralised-decentralisation included in this paper. Managerial work within these two sectors clearly fits within the theoretical framework outlined at the outset of this paper, as derived from Hyman (1987), Reed (1995) and Hoggett (1996).

However, it is also clear that management work across the sectors is subject to mediation and contestation. This is manifested, for example, in the way in which a university manager behaves instrumentally in conforming to the pressures of a teaching quality-based internal market, but does not tackle poor performing staff; and in the unwillingness of both schools and universities to embrace the philosophy of performance appraisal.

Nevertheless, as managers' identities evolve, appointment processes separate out generic management roles from other work, and managers' discretion is reduced to the point where conformity to the administration of externally-imposed quality assurance and performance measures is the main requirement of management work, we could be forgiven for concluding this paper with just that scenario.

What is also apparent, however, is that the common pressures experienced by these sectors, to increase quantity and quality of education with increasingly restricted funding, are requiring ever greater levels of ingenuity and higher levels of trust and motivation by and between workers with staff and management roles. Such qualities require much more than the ability to impose externally-derived constraint, and can only be fostered by a degree of true autonomy. But the danger in the current climate is all too clear – that trust and goodwill between the managers and the managed will be destroyed before such autonomy is realised, causing long term damage to both sectors.

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