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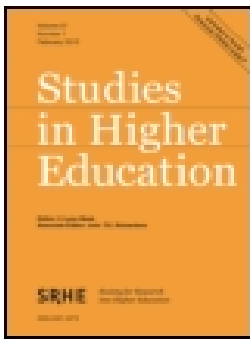
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## Managerialism: an ideal type

Sue Shepherd 

School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

### ABSTRACT

Managerialism pervades the higher education literature in much the same way it is said to have pervaded universities themselves. Yet, despite its ubiquity and importance, managerialism remains an under-theorized and elusive concept that has multiple definitions and blurred boundaries. This article addresses this lack of conceptual clarity by first 'locating' managerialism in relation to the cognate concepts of neoliberalism and New Public Management and then elucidating its core principles in an ideal-type theoretical model. This ideal type provides a focal point for theoretical debate and critique and, via the development of empirical indicators for each ideological tenet, permits comparison of theory with organizational practice. A worked example is provided of how the model was used to shed light on the nature of managerialism as ideology in a university setting. However, it is anticipated that the model should have explanatory power and utility in a range of organizational contexts.

### KEYWORDS

Managerialism;  
neoliberalism; New Public  
Management; ideal type;  
management theory

Managerialism is an increasingly prevalent modern-day phenomenon. Its influence is said to have extended far beyond the organizational setting into economic, social, cultural and political spheres and to have become so pervasive that it has 'infiltrated every eventuality of human existence' (Klikauer 2015, 1109). For Entemann (1993), it has become the predominant ideology of society. In higher education, with the emergence of a more overt top-down corporate management approach, managerialism is deemed to have 'seeped into every "nook and cranny" of university life' (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed 2007, 27).

However, despite its importance and ubiquity, managerialism remains a slippery and under-theorized concept (Klikauer 2015). There is no single agreed definition and, as Teelken (2012) illustrates, different authors assign it different meanings. Deem (1998), for example, emphasizes the adoption of private sector practices and concerns, notably efficiency, effectiveness and excellence, whilst Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) highlight management reform and changes to structures and processes. The difficulty of defining managerialism is compounded by blurred boundaries with cognate concepts, such as New Public Management (NPM) and neoliberalism. Gordon and Whitchurch (2010) conceive of managerialism in a higher education context as having six main characteristics:

- A greater separation of academic work and management activity
- Increased control and regulation of academic work by managers
- A perceived shift in authority from academics to managers and consequent weakening of the professional status of academics
- An ethos of enterprise and emphasis on income generation
- Government policy focused on universities meeting socio-economic needs

- More market orientation, with increased competition for resources.

Whilst the first three relate closely to the ideological tenets of managerialism, the remaining three arguably have their roots in neoliberalism (see [Table 1](#)). Deem, Hillyard, and Reed (2007, 9) combine the two terms as ‘neoliberal managerialism’ which they identify as a variant of the ‘New Managerialism’ they believe to have permeated universities.

Whilst the absence of a precise definition – and clear delineation between managerialism and other closely related terms – is understandable, it is nevertheless problematic both for theorists and those empirical researchers seeking to examine how managerialism is being played out in a university context. For how are researchers to judge if they are encountering an example of managerialism in practice if they lack a theoretical reference point that provides a standard of comparison? This dilemma was the impetus for the development of the ideal type, or abstract theoretical model, of managerialism presented in this article. In contrast to the ideal type developed by Barberis (2012), which characterizes managerialism’s practical manifestations, this one focuses on its fundamental principles.

The purpose of this ideal type is twofold. Firstly, to aid conceptual clarity by setting out the core tenets of managerialism in a systematic and accessible way. Secondly, in so doing, to provide a mechanism to help empirical researchers link theory to the reality of organizational management practice. In order to facilitate the latter, a worked example is provided that demonstrates how the model has been used to shed light on the extent and nature of managerialism as ideology in one specific aspect of university management: the appointment of executive team members. Before presenting this ideal type, the term managerialism is first ‘located’ in relation to the cognate concepts of NPM and neoliberalism and then ‘bounded’ by differentiation from them.

## Conceptual framework

Though closely related, managerialism and neoliberalism are in fact discrete phenomena. This section provides a brief overview of each that explains their different origins and their relationship to each other and that of NPM. In the conceptual framework proposed here, managerialism and neoliberalism form the twin ideological pillars that underpin NPM.

NPM refers to a sustained set of reforms from the 1980s onwards that marked a shift away from the traditional form of public administration (Hood 1991). These reforms were designed to give public sector organizations a new orientation and, in so doing, change the way they operate. This has been characterized as a transition from public sector administration to management (Lawler and Hearn 1995). As such, NPM represents a new paradigm in the provision of public services (Clarke,

**Table 1.** Practical manifestations of NPM reform and their ideological roots.

Neoliberalism	Managerialism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of market-type mechanisms and competition</li> <li>• The commodification of services</li> <li>• A focus on value for money and doing more with less (i.e. efficiency)</li> <li>• Central regulation and/or control</li> <li>• The adoption of an entrepreneurial culture</li> <li>• A shift of priorities from universalism to individualism</li> <li>• An emphasis on service quality and consumer orientation and choice</li> <li>• Greater flexibility of pay and conditions</li> <li>• The growth of contractual relationships (e.g. purchaser-provider)</li> <li>• A blurring of public-private sector boundaries and increased scope for private sector provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adoption of a more business-like approach and private sector practices</li> <li>• The establishment of a management culture</li> <li>• A rational approach to management (e.g. strategic planning and objective setting)</li> <li>• A strengthening of the line management function (e.g. performance management)</li> <li>• Adoption of human resource management techniques to secure employee commitment</li> <li>• A shift from inputs and processes to outputs and outcomes</li> <li>• More measurement and quantification of outputs (e.g. performance indicators)</li> </ul>

Source: Diefenbach (2009), Ferlie et al. (1996), Hood (1991), Pollitt (2003) and Ranson and Stewart (1994).

Gerwitz, and McLaughlin 2000) that is radical in both its scope and intensity (Diefenbach 2009). That is not to say that NPM is – or was – a single phenomenon or that it has not evolved over time (Ferlie et al. 1996). Indeed, it has been argued that NPM has now given way to New Public Governance (Osborne 2006). Nevertheless, as Osborne observes, NPM represents a recognizable, if ultimately transitory, stage in the evolution of public administration and remains an established public administration model (Glor 2001).

This NPM reform agenda was driven from the top across a wide range of public services over a sustained period of time. However, there was no simple shift from public administration to NPM and various phases, or variants, of NPM can be discerned. Ferlie et al. (1996), for example, identify four distinct models: the efficiency drive, downsizing and decentralization, in search of excellence, and public service orientation. Nevertheless, a number of typical characteristics of NPM reform can be identified (Table 1).

Although NPM has been described as a ‘pot pourri of ideologies’ (Pollitt 1990, 46), Table 1 highlights how its practical manifestations are actually informed by two main ideological strands. The first of these is the ideology of the New Right or, as it has been variously termed, new institutional economics, marketization or neoliberalism. The second is managerialism. Together these represent ‘a marriage of two different streams of ideas’ that may or may not be fully compatible (Hood 1991, 5). These broadly correspond to the two dimensions of NPM articulated by De Vries and Nemeč (2013), that is, the minimization of the role of the state in relation to society and attempts to improve the performance of the public sector. These two ideas underpinning NPM reforms are explored and compared below.

## Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism, or marketization, is an expression of economic liberalism that conceives of the world as a marketplace and is concerned with opening up trade relations between countries on the basis of free market principles (Maringe 2010). Neoliberals view markets as the most effective mechanism for the distribution of money, goods and services. A free market economy is seen as facilitating economic prosperity, whilst offering choice to consumers. From this perspective, neoliberalism is a form of economic democracy that serves the public better than politics (Farnham and Horton 1996).

According to a neoliberal analysis, state intervention is an intrusion into the workings of the market, distorting it by such means as monopoly provision, labour market regulation and taxation (Clarke and Newman 1997). Markets rather than government plans were thus seen as the answer to a bloated, unresponsive and inefficient public sector. Confidence in centralized government planning had waned by the 1980s and optimism about the benefits of an interventionist style of government had largely disappeared. Margaret Thatcher was scornful of a ‘nanny-knows-best’ state (Pollitt 1990, 40) and chose to place her faith instead in freedom and free markets (Rhodes 1994).

Neoliberalism’s claim to legitimacy rests on the championing of the rights of the individual and the promotion of freedom of choice (Ranson and Stewart 1994). Its core values are individualism and personal freedom rather than collectivism (Farnham and Horton 1996). Neoliberalism builds on public choice theory with Niskanen’s *Bureaucracy and Representative Government* (1971) particularly influential. He argued that the large size of public bureaucracies coupled with their monopoly status free from the pressures of competition and performance indicators served to make them both inefficient and ineffective. The remedy for these ills was to break them up into smaller units, open them up to competition and introduce publicly available performance data (Boyne et al. 2003). Formal reporting mechanisms were necessary to ensure accountability for public funds given that informal relations based on trust alone were no longer deemed adequate (Power 1994).

Public choice theory is underpinned by a belief that people always act rationally, that is, according to their own preferences, and in their own best interests (Flynn 2002). Whether or not this is always true is open to dispute. Furthermore, the universalistic claim of public choice theory – that it is valid in all organizations and situations – has also been rejected as implausible (Boyne et al. 2003). The notion

of service user as consumer is not appropriate for some public services, such as health and education, and a consumer focus may come at the expense of the interests of the wider community (Ranson and Stewart 1994). Equally, the concept of a market may not be applicable within the public sector (or in higher education) and many so-called markets are only provider-markets or quasi-markets. Despite these criticisms, neoliberalism is said to have become hegemonic, masquerading as ‘the only acceptable reality’ (Vincent 2011, 333).

Although, as illustrated in Table 1, both neoliberalism and managerialism inform NPM reform, they have very different characteristics and histories. Whereas the former is individualistic, the latter has the organization as its basic social unit (Entemann 1993). Neoliberalism is primarily concerned with economics and has a definite political program, whereas managerial techniques underpin managerialism, which holds that all problems have managerial solutions (Klikauer 2015). This fundamental difference between the two emphasizes their different backgrounds: neoliberalism emanates from economics and managerialism from management theory. Accordingly, the guiding principle of neoliberalism is the free market, while that of managerialism is management itself.

## Managerialism

In essence, managerialism can be conceived of as the pursuit of a set of management ideas (Flynn 2002). As such it represents a certain worldview or ideology, where the latter is taken to mean a ‘consistent integrated pattern of thoughts and beliefs explaining man’s attitude towards life and his existence in society, and advocating a conduct and action pattern responsive to and commensurate with such thoughts and beliefs’ (Lowenstein 1953, 52). Thus conceived, an ideology is action-oriented, intended both to influence opinion and to justify and legitimate a course of action (Gerring 1997). Managerialism is the belief system of arguably the dominant group in an organization: managers. It is enacted by managers, or management, systematically embedding themselves in an organization and is propagated and legitimated by the teaching of business schools (Barberis 2012).

Managerialism focuses on the interests of management – and the role of individual managers – in how organizations are managed (Lawler and Hearn 1995). It is self-evidently in the interests of managers to promote managerialism, which has at its core management’s special contribution, rights and powers (Klikauer 2015). Managers are the main supporters – and beneficiaries – of managerialism since it increases their social status and strengthens their organizational position. Given that managerialism serves their particular interests, managers may use the mantra of good management practice to justify their own autonomy in much the same way academics cite academic freedom (Pollitt 1990).

As an ideology, managerialism can be compared to professionalism in that both are normative systems concerning what counts as valuable knowledge, who knows it and who is empowered to act in what way as a consequence (Clarke, Gerwitz, and McLaughlin 2000). Clarke et al. describe the process of putting managerial ideas into practice as managerialization. This is achieved via the application of specific techniques or ‘control technologies’ in the form of practical measures (such as target setting or performance management), new organizational structures or propaganda and persuasion designed to effect cultural change (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed 2007, 14).

Its description as an ideology does not necessarily imply a close connection between the ideas of managerialism and that of any specific political party. The implementation of managerialism was not just the work of determined New Right advocates. Rather, a number of diverse interests may have been involved, including those who felt they had no choice or who believed they may benefit. Moreover, although managerialism has been seen as a by-product of New Right ideas, its founding principles precede those of the New Right. Just as neoliberalism has its roots in public choice theory, so managerialism emanates from FW Taylor’s scientific school of management (1911). Early examples of managerialism are therefore often described as neo-Taylorist. However, over the years, its ideas have evolved in line with developments in management thinking, including excellence, change management and cultural approaches (Peters and Waterman 1982; Burnes 1992;

Handy 1993). These management ideas are said to have ‘mutated’ into managerialism under the following formula:

Management + Ideology + Expansion = Managerialism. (Klikauer 2015, 1105)

Its influence has become widespread and has permeated the thinking of many, if not most, organizations. In fact, managerialism has extended beyond the organizational realm. For Klikauer, it has become such an all-encompassing force that he finds it near impossible to think of an area of society that is not governed by it or to envisage anything that might cause it to disappear. Indeed, he describes managerialism’s effects as akin to ‘ideological enslavement and asphyxiation’ (2015, 1114). Klikauer is not alone in viewing managerialism as a powerful and pervasive force. Entemann, for example, considers it to have become ‘the basic principle’ of advanced industrial societies and symptomatic of ‘deep social change’ (1993, 156).

Unlike in the private sector where managerialism was market driven, in the public sector it has been politically driven (Clarke and Newman 1997). This places the onus on public sector managers to carry out public policy as agents of change (Farnham and Horton 1996). For example, in the UK’s National Health Service (NHS), a new cadre of general managers were used to introduce management levers such as value for money reviews (Ferlie et al. 1996). From this perspective, managerialism can be seen as the means by which a fundamentally political project like NPM has been implemented (Newman 2000). It may therefore be conceived as the ‘organisational arm of neoliberalism’ (Lynch 2014, 968), creating a new management orthodoxy for the running of the public sector by applying the management model of the business world (Ward 2011). In so doing, it has provided an apparently managerial solution to what were previously conceived of as political problems (Pollitt 1990).

## An ideal-type model of managerialism

The ideal-type, first developed and used by Max Weber in relation to capitalism and bureaucracy, can serve as a useful means of synthesizing and organizing abstract ideas in a coherent and accessible way. This process inevitably necessitates a degree of selection and simplification that fails to convey the entirety or complexity of a phenomenon. However, an ideal type is purely an intellectual tool or heuristic device which cannot, and should not, claim to depict reality. It is rather an abstraction of reality, expressed in ‘purest imaginable form, almost as a caricature’ (Barberis 2012, 331) that allows it to capture the essential elements of a phenomenon. Although reductionist in nature and representing a fixed state or point in time, this very fixity means that it can serve as an unchanging marker against which to compare the changing empirical world (Friedson 2001). When used as a standard of comparison, an ideal type enables us to see the world in a clearer and more systematic way.

With this aim in mind, this section presents an ideal-type theoretical model of managerialism derived from the literature (Pollitt 1990; Hood 1991; Farnham and Horton 1996; Clarke and Newman 1997; Clarke, Gerwitz, and McLaughlin 2000; Pollitt 2003; Klikauer 2015). It comprises five core ideological tenets, or claims, outlined in turn below. In addition, there is a sixth claim that applies specifically to managerialism in a public sector context, that is, a belief in the superiority of private sector methods. It is important to note that these tenets are normative rather than descriptive and reflect the way things *should be* from a managerial perspective rather than the way they necessarily *are*. This ideal type is therefore not intended as an ideological defence of managerialism. Instead, it is anticipated that it may serve as a focal point for critique – which is beyond the scope and purpose of this article – and as ‘a clear target for criticism and revision’ as a theoretical model (Friedson 2001, 5).

(1) *Management is important and a good thing*: The fundamental premise of managerialism is that management is both the optimal form of organizational governance (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed 2007) and the main vehicle for organizational success. The argument goes that, if only things were better managed, improved performance would inevitably follow. By this token, effective management should lead to the elimination of red tape and inefficiency, the establishment of clear objectives, a

highly motivated workforce and demonstrable results. To proponents of managerialism, management is thus 'an optimistic, almost a romantic creed' (Pollitt 1990, 1).

Managerialism holds that management is not only important, but also a good thing: a progressive social force with the capacity to solve a range of economic and social ills. More and better management should provide the means by which individual organizations can thrive and the UK economy become more globally competitive and successful (Clarke and Newman 1997). It is therefore indispensable to the achievement of economic, technological and social progress (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed 2007). Underpinning this aspect of managerialism is the belief that economic growth is the main route to social prosperity (Pollitt 1990).

(2) *Management is a discrete function*: In the late nineteenth century, a new group interposed itself between owners and workers: the supervisors responsible for the efficient running of the organization and the maximization of profit for the shareholder owners. From this group emerged a new cadre of trained professional managers (Ward 2011). Scientific management, from which managerialism derives, was predicated on the assumption that increased surveillance by these managers would improve worker productivity. This would be achieved by reducing tasks to their component parts, measuring work processes and controlling and rewarding effort. It is an elitist view of management in that it is based on a philosophy of separating the conception and execution of tasks, or thinking from doing (Broadbent, Dietrich, and Roberts 1997), with workers defined as unthinking and following orders. By implication, managers are the management, that is, a group separate from those doing the work (Flynn 2002) and often remote from the day-to-day functioning of the organization. This very remoteness supports the notion of a professional management in possession of a generic body of knowledge sufficiently removed from the technical specifics that it is transferable from organization to organization (Entemann 1993).

The main purpose of management is seen as undertaking the strategic decision-making that enables an organization to achieve its stated purpose (Ranson and Stewart 1994). The discretion to plan and make strategic decisions gives management its distinctive role in organizations, whilst the requisite processes of analysis and strategic choice have intellectualized and professionalized it (Entemann 1993). Managers are able to justify themselves on the grounds of their superior know-how, and their skills and competencies are viewed as critical to organizational survival and success (Farnham and Horton 1996). This reflects the prioritization of management as a discrete function and the creation of a management class with real organizational power (Lynch 2014).

(3) *Management is rational and value neutral*: Due to its origins in scientific management theory, managerialism places great faith in the management activities of planning and objective setting as a means of improving performance (Farnham and Horton 1996). The decision-making process that underpins these core management functions is perceived as entirely logical and rational: managers define the problem, gather relevant data, develop possible solutions, evaluate them and decide on the best course of action. The process is also rational in the sense that the application of what is regarded as superior intelligence via scientific method is inevitably deemed to lead to optimal decisions (Taylor 1911). By these means, managers are able to constantly refine and improve organizational performance.

From this perspective, management practice is essentially technical and value neutral, offering a non-partisan framework within which decisions can be made away from the partisan claims of particular interest groups (Clarke and Newman 1997). Accordingly, managers are neutral professionals who can be trusted to manage in an impersonal way and in the organization's best interests. Managerialism therefore holds that organizations can only function effectively if decision-making is centralized in the hands of professional and objective managers (Ward 2011). More broadly, the whole notion of managerialism is presented as value neutral and its management principles as unquestioned, common-sense truths (Klikauer 2015).

(4) *Management is generic and universally applicable*: Managerialism also echoes scientific management in its espousal of the systematic nature and universal applicability of management. Taylor (1911) holds that anything can and should be managed and that management practice in one



arena is transferable to another. This approach to management theory could be characterized as management is management regardless of where it is practised (Kottler 1981). It views management as a generic set of activities common to all organizations, with managers performing fundamentally the same tasks whatever sector they are in (Ranson and Stewart 1994). For advocates of managerialism, there is little difference between the skills required to run an oil rig or a university (Klikauer 2015).

Underpinning managerialism, then, are the twin beliefs that organizations are more similar than different, and that the performance of any type of organization can be enhanced by the application of generic management skills (Klikauer 2015). This belief in a generic model of management practice that minimizes the differences between the public and private sector (Dixon, Kouzmin, and Korac-Kakabadse 1998) has been one of the key drivers of public sector reform (Pollitt 1990). Accordingly, there has been considerable convergence between the management of the two sectors since the early 1980s, with the language and techniques of business now commonplace throughout the public sector (Farnham and Horton 1996). The 1983 Griffiths Report which introduced general management into the NHS was one manifestation of the government's faith in generic management skills applicable across a range of public and private sector organizations (Exworthy and Halford 1999).

(5) *Managers must have the right to manage*: A key ideological demand of managerialism is that managers should be granted the right to manage, that is, the discretion to undertake the management functions of planning and decision-making, coordination and monitoring (Entemann 1993). This necessitates that managers assume some formal authority and undertake specific management activities to direct the work of others. Although they may lack the particular knowledge, skills and experience to perform that work themselves, they claim 'competence to command' based on a form of general knowledge that is superior to specialization (Friedson 2001, 115). Thus, experience and skills pertinent to the organization's core business are considered secondary to those of managers whose advanced knowledge and know-how is deemed essential to the effective functioning of an organization (Klikauer 2015).

Since management can only be undertaken by managers, this gives them control over those who do the work. Managerialism is therefore accompanied by the belief that managers must be in control and exercise their authority over the managed. Accordingly, the workforce are accountable to managers, rather than the other way around (Smith and Hussey 2010). The assumption is that individual managers can and do make a real difference to organizations and impose their personalities upon them (Entemann 1993). With the development of culture and excellence management approaches, the image of managers has been transformed from that of 'dull organizational time servers' to 'entrepreneurial and inspirational change agents' (Clarke and Newman 1997, 35).

(6) *Private sector methods are superior*: Managerialism in the public sector is based on the belief that management practices in the private sector are inherently superior and need to be adopted if the efficiency and performance of public services – and universities – are to be improved (Dixon, Kouzmin, and Korac-Kakabadse 1998). Indeed, managerialism is said to have 'announced the conditions of its own necessity' through an articulation of all that was wrong with previous public sector management in comparison to that of the private sector (Clarke and Newman 1997). The importation of private sector practice and business methods is therefore an essential characteristic of managerialism in a public sector context – so much so that its use in support of NPM has been described as a 'covert form of privatization' (Farnham and Horton 1996, 263).

## The ideal type in practice

This section demonstrates how this ideal type might be utilized by empirical researchers wishing to investigate how the realities of management practice in organizations relate to and reflect managerialism as an ideology. It does so by means of a worked example of its use in doctoral research into the appointment of deputy and pro vice-chancellors (PVCs) in pre-1992 English universities (Shepherd 2015). This mixed methods research utilized three distinct data collection sources and methods.

These comprised a census of all PVCs within these institutions, based on publicly available data (primarily from university websites) designed to provide a snapshot in time of the demographic and professional profile of the entire cohort. An online survey was also conducted of both academic and professional services third-tier managers, that is, at the level immediately below PVC, to investigate their aspirations and agency with regard to becoming a PVC. Finally, over 70 semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

- Vice-chancellors
- Registrars
- PVCs appointed via external open competition
- Academic and professional services third-tier managers
- Executive search agents.

One of the aims of this research was to subject the prevailing academic narrative, which asserts that managerialism has pervaded universities, to critical examination. More specifically, it sought to understand the extent to which the introduction of an open external competition model of PVC appointments might be considered symptomatic of managerialism.

The first step in the process was to devise the ideal-type theoretical model. Secondly, empirical indicators were developed for the model's six ideological tenets designed to show what form each might take in relation to changing PVC appointment practice. Even though some of these indicators could apply to more than one tenet, in order to avoid repetition, the decision was made to associate them with only one (Table 2). Thirdly, the research findings (predominantly data from semi-structured interviews) were analysed in order to evaluate the extent of the evidence in support of each of these empirical indicators. A detailed presentation of the research data is beyond the remit of this article, but the headline findings are given in column 3 and summarized below.

As Table 2 illustrates, there is significant evidence to support two of the ideological tenets of managerialism: that management is important and a good thing (1) and managers must have the right to manage (5). Whereas, until relatively recently the legitimacy of management in higher education was questioned not only by the managed, but also by those who occupied management positions (McCaffery 2004), these findings show that vice-chancellors and PVCs now appear to have fully accepted the idea that university management is both necessary and beneficial. This is reflected in the perceived importance of the PVC role and of making the right appointment. Widespread

**Table 2.** Empirical indicators of managerialism for PVC appointments.

Ideological tenet of managerialism	Empirical indicators	Evidenced by data?
1. Management is important and a good thing	(a) Recognition of the importance of PVC posts	• Yes
	(b) Priority given to the appointment process in order to attract the best candidates	• Yes • (Yes) <sup>a</sup>
	(c) A more managerial interpretation of the role	
2. Management is a discrete function	(a) PVCs acting in a full-time management capacity	• (Yes)
	(b) Management skills and experience as the main criteria for the role	• (No)
	(c) Value placed on management training and development	• (Yes)
3. Management is rational and value neutral	(a) Appointment based on merit rather than seniority	• (No)
	(b) Rational and value neutral appointment decisions	• No
4. Management is generic and universally applicable	(a) Recognition of management skills and experience gained in any sector	• No
	(b) Appointments open to suitably qualified candidates from other occupational groups	• No
5. Managers must have the right to manage	(a) PVC roles given appropriate authority and scope for managerial action	• (Yes)
	(b) Emphasis on positional, rather than expert, power	• (Yes)
6. Private sector methods are superior	(a) Adoption of private sector appointment practice	• (Yes)
	(b) Valuing of candidates from the private sector or with private sector experience	• No

Source: Shepherd (2015).

<sup>a</sup>Parentheses reflect that the indicator is evidenced in part.

acceptance of the need for effective university management, coupled with a hierarchical management approach more dependent on positional power have led to an increasing expectation that PVCs should have the right to manage. Furthermore, the trend towards a full-time managerial conception of the PVC role, and the legitimation of academic management as a career have all increased the likelihood that PVCs will be willing to assume that right.

There is also growing evidence that management is becoming a discrete function (2) within universities especially with respect to the criteria for, and construction of, the PVC role. Academic management experience is seen as increasingly important and many PVCs appointed via external open competition are not only engaged full time in management, but have also embarked upon an academic management career track with little or no intention of going back to an academic role (Shepherd 2014). They are largely divorced from day-to-day academic work, leading to an increased separation of management and frontline academic activity. Moreover, as they have increasingly assumed responsibility for strategic thinking and planning, the gap between them and the staff carrying out the work has widened. The result has been that management has emerged as a 'distinctive social group' with its own interests (Deem and Brehony 2005, 231).

Support for the notion of the superiority of private sector methods (6) is mixed. Private sector methods, such as the use of executive search agencies, are increasingly being adopted for PVC appointments – and more widely for other senior university management posts. In addition, specialist managers are being recruited from other sectors to run professional services functions. However, when it comes to PVC appointments, private sector experience is deemed neither relevant nor valid.

Overall, the analysis reveals that ideal-type managerialism is not as pervasive as the academic narrative might suggest with respect to PVC appointment practice. Furthermore, the findings raised questions about the viability of managerialism's ideological claim that management is generic and universally applicable (4). Rather, what the study found was a context-specific variant of managerialism rather than the generic ideal type. In relation to PVC appointments, there was a strong sense of the uniqueness of universities as organizations and virtually no recognition of the transferability of management skills and experience from other sectors or occupational groups. Professional services managers within higher education are not regarded as credible candidates and PVCs remain almost exclusively career academics. The evidence thus reflects a higher education-specific form of managerial ideology that might be described as 'academic-managerialism'.

Moreover, in terms of PVC appointments, managerialism's assertion that management is rational and value neutral (3) was not supported. In reality, the appointment process was characterized by social closure in relation to other occupational groups and micro-politics in the form of the maintenance of self-interest, power and status. Given that the recruitment and selection process in other organizations – and indeed any example of management decision-making – is likely to be subject to similar influences, this casts doubt on the validity of managerialism's wider ideological claim for the rationality and neutrality of management and managers.

This example illustrates how the ideal type fulfils two complementary functions. On the one hand, it serves as a benchmark against which to compare organizational realities and, on the other hand, it acts as a focal point for critique of managerialism's core tenets in the light of the empirical findings. It is thus anticipated that this ideal type should have explanatory power in relation to other aspects of organizational practice, for example the introduction of performance management, in universities – and elsewhere.

## Summary

This article has contributed to the literature in three ways. Firstly, it 'locates' managerialism in relation to NPM and neoliberalism and, in an attempt to delineate its boundaries, differentiates it from them. Secondly, it synthesizes ideas from the public administration literature in the form of an ideal-type theoretical model of managerialism comprising an accessible and systematic framework of its core principles, or tenets. Thirdly, it provides a worked example of how, via the development of empirical

indicators for each of these tenets, the ideal-type model can be used to aid researchers seeking to understand how managerialism is being enacted in an organizational context.

By these means, it is anticipated that this ideal type will aid researchers seeking to understand how managerialism is being enacted in universities and other organizational contexts and thus have practical utility for future empirical research as well as explanatory power at a theoretical level. At minimum, it should contribute to the debate by serving as a target for criticism as a model of managerialism's fundamental principles.

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## ORCID

Sue Shepherd  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1616-4352>

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