Neoliberalism and new public management in an Australian university

The invisibility of our take-over

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The higher education sector in Australia is operating in an ideological context in which the ideas of managerialism and neoliberalism combine to create a discourse shaping the lives of both workers and students. The practices that emerge inside higher education organisations as a result combine to form an organisational neoliberal managerial culture that shapes practices, operating in a vicious cycle. In this vicious cycle, managers set the organisational culture through the roles they take on in this figured world, leading to particular ways of behaving and engaging in the practice of management. These experiences are received and internalised by their recipients who come to believe their reality reflects the only way things operate. In this paper I take an autoethnographic approach to reflect on my experiences of the practices emerging from this culture as I have experienced them within one higher education organisation in Australia. I argue that we are seeing the operationalisation of a discourse of managerial privilege that, in the long term, is not only detrimental to the functioning of higher educational organisations but puts at risk the wellbeing of the nation through its impact on both staff and students.

Keywords: neoliberalism, managerialism, higher education, power, bullying

Introduction

The higher education sector in Australia is operating in an ideological context where the ideas of managerialism and neoliberalism combine to create a discourse shaping the lives of both workers and students. These interlocking systems 'work together to uphold and maintain cultures of domination' (hooks, 2013, p. 4).

Neoliberalism takes the position that:

… human society should be run in every respect as if it were a business, its social relations reimaged as commercial transactions; people redesignated as human capital. The aim and purpose of society is to maximise

profits … Inequality is recast as virtuous: a reward for usefulness and a generator of wealth, which trickles down to enrich everyone. Efforts to create a more equal society are both counterproductive and morally corrosive (Monbiot, 2017, p. 30).

Neoliberalism is positioned as both the new normal and invincible (Tronto, 2017).

Managerialism is the enactment of neoliberalism in organisations (Graham, 2016) where the focus is placed firmly on outcomes, performance assessment and results (G. Fraser, 2017). Management is perceived to be a specialist skill, a good thing (Shepherd, 2017) that cannot be performed by the professionals who are being managed, but rather must be performed by those who hold

'managerial expertise, theories and techniques' (Doran, 2016, p. 81). This expertise can be applied across any type of organisation (Shepherd, 2017) and is characterised by theories of how to best constrain, control and enforce compliance in workers (De Vita & Case, 2016).

This combination of ideas at the level of society impact on the way in which higher education organisations operate. Higher education has become 'predicated on a business model, people should be treated as consumers, and capital as the only subject…' (Giroux, 2015, p. 118). The practices that emerge inside higher education organisations as a result combine to form an organisational neoliberal managerial culture that shapes practices, operating in a vicious cycle as outlined in Figure 1. In this vicious cycle, managers set the organisational culture through their 'behaviour, attitude, treatment of others' (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2017, p. 4), and this culture becomes internalised by its recipients who come to believe their experiences reflect the only way things operate. In this paper I will discuss the practices emerging from this culture as they are experienced within higher education organisations in Australia, using my own experiences of these practices to illustrate. I argue that we are seeing the operationalisation of a discourse of managerial privilege that, in the long term, is not only detrimental to the functioning of higher educational organisations but puts at risk the wellbeing of the nation through its impact on both staff and students.

Methodology

Conceptual framing

This study is positioned in an interpretivist ontology; I claim reality is as it is perceived by those operating with a particular frame, in this situation, the frame of one higher education institution in Australia. Thus, individuals construct their own reality through their interactions in the world of this university, however, those who hold more power in the organisation contribute towards these constructions. Figure 1 demonstrates the way in which I see the interaction of factors contributing towards individuals' construction and experiences of their reality.

In this paper I present one construction of reality through my own experiences. I have explored my experiences using critical autoethnography (using an understanding of critical autoethnography as presented by Holman Jones, 2016) because this framing supports the linking of personal experiences with both theory and practice, in particular practice as it is positioned in
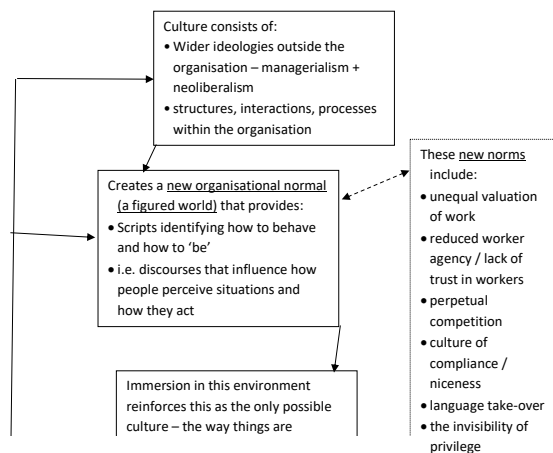

Figure 1: The vicious cycle of neoliberal managerialism

the political arena. In taking this approach I contend that ideologies external to the organisation (managerialism and neoliberalism) combine to create a context, a figured world (Pennington & Prater, 2016 used the term 'figured world' to mean socio-culturally constructed worlds where roles are assigned to various actors who are required to play out those roles in order to be deemed 'successful') that, by the nature of the roles assigned to various players, results in particular experiences of reality. Through exploring these experiences of reality, I aim to deepen my understanding of the various influences at play in the hope that more effective resistance can grow from this deeper understanding.

Ethical considerations

Auto-ethnography is not subject to traditional ethic committee approvals (Stahlke Wall, 2016), however it is important to me that I behave ethically. My identity, and therefore the identity of the organisation for which I work are both publicly available, therefore in presenting my experiences it is essential that others involved are not identifiable. My organisation has undergone numerous restructures in recent years, and I have experienced at least five changes of supervisor in the past two years, five different heads of school in the past 12 months, and in recent years, three different deans. As an active union delegate, not all my interactions in the organisation are confined to my own faculty/school. Thus, where I mention senior staff, the person could potentially be located at any level of management, in any part of the university, and be located at any time over the past five years. This creates a level of anonymity that, I believe, sufficiently protects individuals.

Research rigour

Research rigour in autoethnography is best established by reader reaction to the work. Loh (2013) suggests that the best criteria is the extent to which the work both rings true to the reader and can be used as the foundation from which strategies to address the issues raised can be developed.

Analysis

In reflecting on my experiences, I have firstly written reflective narratives about my experiences. Narratives are increasingly popular in qualitative research (Spector-Mersel, 2010; Wells, 2011). Used in autoethnography they are particularly useful as the story (auto) can be located in culture (ethno) and method (graphy) (Benoot & Bilsen, 2016). Having been created, the story can then be situated into theory which provides a guide for further thinking about the experiences (Holman Jones, 2016). Having created my narratives, I then used a process of constant comparison (B. Glaser, 1965) which involved creating themes and comparing data within and across themes in order to appropriately define each theme, then linking themes to theory (via the conceptual framework and associated literature).

Results and discussion

I am inferior

Outside the higher education sector, inequality is on the rise (Toczydlowska & Bruckauf, 2017): for example in Australia in the decade 2004-14 the income of the wealthiest grew 40 per cent but those on the lowest incomes only experienced a 25 per cent increase (Grant, 2018). By 2017, top Australian managers increased their take-home pay by nearly 12 per cent in a year, whereas pay increases for workers did not keep up with inflation (Rhodes & Fleming, 2018). In the United States the richest one per cent hold more wealth than 90 per cent of the entire population combined (Giroux, 2015). Inequity is a fundamental principle of neoliberalism and it is played out in managerialism through the privileging of management where: 'As a class its primary aim is to reward its members with obscene salaries and benefits by cannibalising the very services their companies should be providing' (Patience, 2018, p. 2).

In the neoliberal managerial university, the privilege associated with management is reflected in the growing disparity between pay awarded to management and other workers. In the UK, there has been significant debate about the remuneration awarded to Vice Chancellors (VCs) prompted by the revelation of the salary paid to the VC of the University of Bath (Adams, 2017). British VCs earn, on average, between six and 12 times more than average university staff, and 35 times more than average workers in the local area (Hymas, 2018; Rudgard, 2018).

In Australia, Lyons and Hill (2018) report that in many cases, VCs here take more money home each week than is earned by many casuals in a year, with the highest paid taking home 1.5 times more than the VC of the University of Bath. There is a school of thought suggesting these salaries are justified because great leaders are supposed to single-handedly ensure their organisations' success (Rhodes & Fleming, 2018). However, other evidence indicates these salaries do not appear to be based on performance but rather on a comparison with others and a 'keeping up with the Jones" philosophy (Hymas, 2018). Fitza (2017) argues that organisational outcomes are more often linked to luck or pure chance rather than leadership performance. McCulloch (2018, p. 2) supports this: 'their inflated salaries reflect neither the contribution nor, in many instances, the capability of this new bureaucratic management cadre.'

Along with the inequitable manner in which senior management are rewarded for their work, is the proliferation of 'bullshit' management jobs (E. Glaser, 2014). In the university sector, characterised by growing austerity, we see a 'weirdly profligate and pointless proliferation' (p.86) of senior management positions. In my context this is exemplified by a restructure, re-introducing faculties which needed the new positions of deans, deputy deans and various associate deans. As a consequence, for those providing the core business of the university, teaching and research work, the layers of management through which work has to proceed for approval have more than quadrupled; not an outcome that I claim justifies the significant additional cost (over $3 million per year). At the same time as we experience this proliferation of management positions, we are experiencing cuts in academic and professional staff; the ones delivering the core work of the university and to compensate, the remaining workers are required to do more work, to work harder. This means that my teaching workload has increased, and the 'discount' I have received in the past in my teaching workload to recognise my research productivity is decreasing. At the same time the expectations for my research output are not decreasing, so I am expected to increase my overall work productivity in a context where the average academic in Australia works 50.7 hours per week (National Tertiary Education Union, 2017).

I cannot be trusted

Along with these growing inequities is the associated under-valuing of workers whose worth is judged by the pay they receive. As N. Fraser (1995) suggests, workers are subject to a form of symbolic injustice where they are 'routinely maligned or disparaged in …everyday life interactions' (p. 71); a practice that is experienced as oppression. Jameson (2017) identifies this as a form of de-professionalisation which is achieved through 'questionable managerial behaviour involving controlling, bullying, performance monitoring, thinly justified by economic rationalism' (p. 2).

Along with this comes the removal of staff from all forms of governance (Giroux, 2015), something I have experienced personally in the attempt to remove me, as the academic staff representative, from the university council (the governing body) because of a perceived conflict of interest with my role as president of the local union (for public reports see https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/nteu-branch-chief-margaret-sims-take-une-to-court-over-council/news-story/2224f18d3a15b00f581551fb309af0ca and https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/une-backs-down-on-sims-case/news-story/985241635150f013bb18663ff82ab2f7).

This de-professionalisation is associated with increasingly onerous regimes of compliance control policed through policies, regulations, guidelines and performance management metrics. G. Fraser (2017) argues such strategies arise from Public Choice Theory which posits that workers cannot be trusted unless they are subject to surveillance and quality control mechanisms. In my own experience over the past decade I have moved from line-management/supervision where I was one of over 60 academics supervised by the one manager, to a situation where I am now part of a group of fewer than 20. Such arrangements are organised on the assumption that appropriate supervision is only possible when managers have a small span of control, identified in recent times by Neilson and Wulf (2012) as around ten workers.

Associated with onerous supervision comes the perception of workers that they are being micro-managed (Connell, 2016; G. Fraser, 2017; Smyth, 2017) which often leads to perceptions of systemic bullying (Sims, in review; also see http://www.nteu.org.au/article/Achieve-The-Impossible%3A-True-Tales-From-A-Modern-University-20883). Young (2017, p. 14) suggests that bullying is 'hardwired into the organisational structure' and, given that Australian universities are claimed to be subject to the strictest form of managerialism in the western world (Smyth, 2017), experiences of symbolic injustice (as conceptualised by N. Fraser, 1995) abound.

My lack of agency (and presumably professional ethics) is evident in the processes I am now required to follow to perform my regular duties as an academic. These days a professional staff member (appointed at a level not recognised as senior) is the gatekeeper between me and the university's Ethics Committee. I cannot be trusted to submit my application to the committee myself. In order to gain approval to take leave I have to submit a request that goes through four layers of management. Each layer requires assurance that I am not abandoning my students nor any of my responsibilities (presumably I might do so if I was not required to identify who was covering me for every element of my work).

Lack of agency is accompanied by a de-valuing of the work of university staff. Identity Theory proposes that one's professional identity is developed partly through the ways in which one's work is recognised and valued by others (Baumeister, 1986; Davis, 2014; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Work that is de-valued and accompanied by an increase in routine bureaucratic requirements leads to feelings of powerlessness and de-professionalisation which can have a significant impact on the well-being of workers: stress-related illnesses, depression and high levels of anxiety commonly result (Qureshi, Rasli, & Zaman, 2014; Verkuil, Atasayi, & Molendijk, 2015). In my experience the core work of teaching is increasingly being de-valued. I recently attended a meeting where a senior professional staff member (without an education qualification) argued that online teaching could only be recognised if it consisted of lectures or tutorials; that no other form of teaching was appropriate. As a consequence, it was considered appropriate by senior management to no longer pay casual academics a teaching rate to teach in off-campus units: rather it was appropriate to pay a lower rate designed for student consultations. I hear similar stories from other academics at other universities where the work of online teaching is positioned as best performed by the creation of computer-based learning sites using a range of web resources to take the place of human teachers interacting with students.

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I must always improve in comparison with others and myself

In the neoliberal managerial university freedom has become recast as an 'an exercise in self-development' (Giroux, 2015, p. 11). Performance is measured against organisational goals and these goals are 'continually moved by management, so that faculty are never allowed to arrive at a definitive end to their work' (Smyth, 2017, p. 9). The discourse of continuous improvement positions staff as though they never perform their jobs correctly, always needing to improve something about their performance, and thus creating an image of imperfection.

Performance metrics encourage a culture of individuality, cutting to the heart of the collegial relationships traditionally associated with scholarship (Smyth, 2017). For example, when I am supervising postgraduate students, there is an annual workload allocation assigned to each student. There is an expectation that students will be supervised by more than one person to ensure an appropriate range of expertise and support. All the supervisors perform the same work: we all spend time with the student discussing the research and providing advice; we all read all of the student's written work and provide feedback. However, the workload allocation is shared between the supervisors as if we were all doing a proportion of the work. The more supervisors on the panel the less each gets allocated in their official workload, something not reflected in the actual work they each perform and not a position conducive to the best support for students.

Competition is created not just between me and my colleagues, it is created between my performance last year and my yet to be measured performance this year. My productivity is measured by the number (and amount) of external research grants I obtain, and the number of publications I have. Recently, management circulated a set of academic profiles that identified their expectations in relation to the outputs expected from each level of academic staff. If I am going to meet these expectations I have to focus my efforts on a narrow range of activities and cease doing other work such as refereeing journal articles, reading colleagues' work and offering feedback before they submit for publication, supporting colleagues who are struggling with ever increasing workloads and stress, or offering pastoral care to students whose stress levels increase with the ever-contracting length of trimesters.

The competitive environment is not conducive to the development of good ideas or originality of thought (Brett, 1997). Brett argues that creativity is usually not a solo occupation, and Smyth (2017, p. 114) agrees: the 'aggregation of minds working in a cut and thrust way, must of necessity produce better outcomes'. In my own work, the referees' comments on the articles I submit for publication, in the main, help improve my work immeasurably. Referees doing this work are not paid; rather this is their contribution to the community of scholarship. However, such work is rarely recognised by management and the time taken to perform the work is time that is not available for work that is measured by management-imposed performance indicators.

It is not nice to be noncompliant

Furedi (2017, p. 2) argues that Australian universities, in particular, 'appear to be moving backwards to the era of medieval institutions, where conformity to dominant values was upheld as a principal virtue.' Conformity to neoliberal managerial requirements is not only expected, it is enforced to the extent that those who do not comply are positioned as trouble-makers. Such positioning, Giroux (2015, pp. 9–10) argues, is a feature of neoliberalism where all citizens are potential suspects who therefore need to be managed by the increasing insertion of 'armed police, security guards, drug-sniffing dogs, and an array of surveillance apparatuses that chart their every move'. This process of dis-crediting, dis-respecting and de-professionalising those who speak out makes it possible to simultaneously 'dismiss the substance of their criticisms' (Giroux, 2015, p. 16).

As a consequence of this 'dissent has become a dangerous activity' (Giroux, 2015, p. 111). Many academics 'have experienced the oppressive nature of top-down management at their institutions, management which brooks no criticism, opposition or dissent' (McNally, 2018, p. 37). For many, the solution is to align one's performance with organisational objectives where conforming behaviour is rewarded (Smyth, 2017). This alignment, and anxiousness not to be perceived as a trouble-maker, means that many self-regulate. A number of my colleagues have spoken to me in quiet conversations, where they cannot be over-heard, apologising for not taking protected industrial action because they are afraid they will become targets of management. I have colleagues who have taken on additional teaching load and not claimed this in their workload spreadsheet because they do not want to be targeted. (Very recently, a recent review of my school argued that it would be a good idea to develop a voluntary separation package for those staff who did not wish to fully engage with management plans to redevelop the culture of the school.)

Self-regulation often means that workers no longer operate critically, rather they begin to censor their thinking, focus on the positive, and align their thinking to the management-speak. 'By avoiding careful thinking, people are able to get on with their job. Asking too many questions is likely to upset others – and to distract yourself. Not thinking frees you up to fit in and get along' (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016, p. xi). This creates a condition Alvesson and Spicer call functional stupidity. There is a cost to functionally stupid behaviour, as evidenced by the behaviour leading up to the global financial crisis. In universities, such behaviours led to the perversion of education where 'Formulaic teaching is encouraged by intrusive online templates, forums for serious debate and dissent shrink, or are closed; staff and students alike are overworked and preoccupied with ticking boxes, doing tests, and filling in audit statements' (Connell, 2016, p. 70). Accompanying this is the requirement to protect students so that 'when the principle of free speech is portrayed as contradicting the principle of safety, it has to give way to the demands of the censor' (Furedi, 2017, p. 10); infantilising students and extending the notion of adolescence well into ages traditionally identified as adult (Furedi, 2017). The outcome of this is the production of graduates who have been educated to feed the employment needs of corporations; who have been socialised into 'a regime of security and commodification in which their identities, values and desires are inextricably tied to a culture of commodified addictions, self-help, therapy and social indifference' (Giroux, 2015, p. 8) creating what Chomsky (2016) calls one of the greatest threats to democracy the world has ever faced.

The take-over of language

Language is a powerful contributor to culture, and the neoliberal managerial culture is supported by a proliferation of meaningless corporate speak; a form of language Spicer (2018) calls bullshit. Bullshit he argues is 'words that have no relationship to the truth' but can 'take over organisations, crowd out their core purpose, and muddy the waters … Bullshit makes people despair' (Preface, p. 2). Luks (2017) identifies a range of bullshit words including: adaptability, flexibility, quality, benchmark, innovation, best practice, consultation, transparency and resilience. I have often thought it would be useful to create a dictionary reporting the new meaning of these words as they are now used. For example, flexibility in my experience now means remove enforceable protections and trust management. Consultation now means telling everyone what management wants and offering workers the chance to provide electronic feedback which management can proceed to totally ignore. In my recent experience, transparency means appointing senior managers to new jobs, the creation of which involved no consultation, without ever advertising these jobs or offering anyone an opportunity to apply. Best practice and quality mean whatever a manager (usually unqualified in the specific area of expertise) says is desirable, despite much research-based evidence provided to the contrary.

The invisibility of privilege

Neoliberal managerialism has created a culture of privilege where management claim, use (and I believe, abuse) power in systemic discrimination against workers. Normalisation of this privilege makes it invisible. N. Fraser (1995) makes this point clearly when he argues that one form of symbolic injustice is that of non-recognition: 'being rendered invisible via the authoritative, representational, communicative, and interpersonal practices of one's culture' (p.71). I claim that systemic de-professionalisation in neoliberal managerial universities has made management privilege invisible.

In this environment university employees are positioned as human capital: 'tools to be used to attain goals, a system of dehumanisation that equates humans with a 'piece of metal – you can use it if you want, you throw it away if you don't" (Jurkiewicz & Grossman, 2012, p. 6). Because staff are tools they are expendable (Giroux, 2015) and thus universities are awash with 'stories of disposability' (Giroux, 2015, p. 105). Staff are expected to comply and if they do not they are determined unworthy. In a recent example, management decided that online teaching was not actually teaching but rather involved answering student questions. Therefore, when casual academics were employed to teach online it was appropriate to pay them a third of the teaching rate. When a number of long-terms casuals (many of whom had taught the same unit over a period of years) complained, one received the following response: 'In the circumstances, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your service to the School, which I know you have provided over many

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years. It is unfortunate that you are not able to accept the contract, which effectively means your end of working for us.'

Where privilege is made invisible, management actions become defined 'in universal and common-sense terms as if it is beyond critique and dissent' (Giroux, 2015, p. 114). Of course, if you chose not to accept a contract that pays two thirds less for the work than you were paid last year, it is perfectly reasonable to say thanks and goodbye. It is your choice. If you have a problem with that then you should think about your own character flaws, and how your lack of willingness to be flexible has led you to the position of losing employment. Under neoliberal managerialism 'all social problems and their effects are coded as individual character flaws, a lack of individual responsibility, and are often a form of pathology' (Giroux, 2015, p. 195).

Managers who enforce these decisions '... progressively acquire the ability to become detached from the consequences of their behaviour' (Jurkiewicz & Grossman, 2012, p. 7). The invisibility of their privilege makes their behaviour appear rational and sensible and the problems lie with maladjusted individuals who need to learn to function more appropriately (G. Fraser, 2017). At the broader societal level, Deleuze (1992) sees this as evidence we have moved into an era characterised by control.

I am a skilled, intelligent, trustworthy academic

Giroux (2015, p. 32) argues 'the time for widespread resistance and radical demographic change has never been so urgent' and I propose the same sentiment for the university sector. Education is a powerful tool used in shaping our society and thus is a key element in crafting a new democracy not tainted by the workings of our post-truth world and our neoliberal managerial universities. Giroux (2015, p. 189) further argues 'resistance demands a combination of hope, vision, courage, and a willingness to make power accountable' and that we need to 'challenge the normalising discourses and representations of common sense and the power inequalities they legitimise.' Failure to take action, to identify the issues, ipso facto supports the very culture and behaviours I claim need to change (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2017).

The key is how to harness our own agency as skilled, intelligent and trustworthy workers to do this. One necessary element is not only the recognition and identification of oppression but the active challenging of these behaviours when they occur. That means fighting for all the different kinds of work that are needed in a university setting to be equally valued. In my context, online teaching must be recognised as equally important as face-to-face teaching and not just a less expensive way to deliver content to a large number of students. It also means fighting the way neoliberal managerialism has taken over our language: Luks (2017) suggests regular playing of 'bullshit bingo' not only raises awareness but challenges people to think about the meaning of the words they hear and speak/write.

Neoliberal individualism must be challenged by collaborative work. In part this requires us to reflect on what is important: do I withdraw and work on a publication or do I connect with people, take time to share a chat over morning tea and be available to read a new colleague's work, advise on how to respond to a hairy student question or empathise over an unfair student evaluation? Jameson (2017) writes about the importance of this kind of informal support: he claims corridor talk in particular can be particularly effective in helping people manage the stress associated with increasing workloads and compliance demands and decreasing professional agency. This leads to the consideration of the role of informal leaders in developing resistance. Informal leaders are often 'subjected to negative criticism, control and scrutiny by managers' (Jameson, 2017, p. 4) but it is their support of 'mutually wounded' (p.5) colleagues that enables staff to continue to work and achieve organisational targets.

Grove (2018) argues for a new form of management, one through which people work together in a more equal relationship and cites the way partners in a law firm organise themselves using a consensual model. Smyth (2017) and Stromquist (2017) point out that whilst universities were traditionally managed by academics this has shifted with the rise of neoliberal managerialism and the creation of a management class, most of whom have never been academics. This divide between workers and management (Stromquist, 2017) contributes to a sense of mistrust where 'employees presume that all behaviour has a hidden purpose and they'll spend time seeking it out rather than focusing on work' (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2017, p. 6). Universities need new management that works with employees, enforcing real transparency, and focusing on communication and real consultation.

Given the role of the leader is crucial in shaping organisational culture (De Vita & Case, 2016), and it is organisational culture I believe, that sets up the vicious cycle of neoliberal managerialism which is so disadvantageous to an organisation De Vita and Case

(2016) claim quite bluntly that this does not work] it is essential to develop new models of leadership in universities. New management can focus on a model of ethical leadership. Dibben, Wood, Macklin, and Riggo (2017) position this as a holistic form of leadership where 'leaders and organisations need to broaden their conceptualisation of outcomes – moving beyond just a focus on profit and shareholder value, and considering the impact on employees, the environment, customers, and the community' (p.188). Ethical leadership is complex, and leaders need to be flexible (in the real meaning of the word, not the managerial meaning) and have good interpersonal skills to be able to include all organisational members in the leadership process. Ethical leadership takes the position that leaders 'should not focus, in a static, modern way, on the needs of the organisation as primary but rather on the needs of the individual employee … the emphasis is now not on destroying the experience of individuals but enhancing it' so that '… as far as possible, the individual's needs are met without fundamentally compromising the organisation as a whole' (p186).

Chomsky (2013, p. 5) claims that in our modern form of democracy 'the public must be kept in the dark about what is happening to them. The 'herd' must remain 'bewildered.'' For those with privilege to maintain this power, alternate views must remain hidden, suppressed, and the official mandate must continue to be spread to 'regiment the minds of men, much as an army regiments its soldiers' (p6). In the higher education sector Rea (2018, p. 31) argues so 'much of what is done in our universities is now hidden from scrutiny, even from within the university community.' I have argued that neoliberal managerialism performs this function in the higher education sector, and through its manipulation of education, contributes to the shaping of neoliberal citizens. If we simply accept this as the way the world is we are acquiescing to its focus, the way it shapes us and shapes our children. We are accepting a world where inequality is valued, and where critical thought and debate are silenced. I argue, along with Connell (2016, p. 73): 'Quality doesn't come from privilege or from an elite; quality concerns a whole workforce and the working of a whole institution. Working conditions and workplace relations matter for the intellectual project. We need to think about sustainability in a much longer frame than the policymakers and managers generally do.' We need to do this work together and we need to do it now.

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