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## Being good and being nice. Identity Work in Social Work

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# Dilemmas of Identity, New Public Management and Governance

Editors

Elisabeth Berg

Jim Barry

Saila Piippola

John Chandler

Luleå University of Technology  
Department of Human Work Sciences  
Division of Social Work



**Dilemmas of Identity, New Public Management and Governance**

**Selected papers from the 11<sup>th</sup> International Research Conference,  
hosted by Luleå University of Technology, Department of Human  
Work Science**

**Friday 31<sup>th</sup> August – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007**

Edited by

Elisabeth Berg, Jim Barry, Saira Piippola and John Chandler

## ***Foreword***

This Conference is organized jointly with Staffordshire University and the University of East London, and provides a forum for policy, organizational and critical sociological analyses of the human services including health, social services, housing, education and the voluntary sector. Although the theme of this year's conference concerned governance and new public management and its relationship to identities in the public and voluntary sectors, many of the papers focus on identities from different perspectives rather than having their focus on governance or new public management. It might be argued that governance and new public management have become a part of everyday life in these sectors, but the processes of change engendered raise important questions around issues of identities within human services, not least the degree to which they reflect, or conversely impact on, the discourses at work. As in the past, the aim is to provide a forum for both new and established researchers to share ideas in a supportive and scholarly environment. A wide range of contributions are encouraged, including country-specific and cross-cultural research.

Previous conferences have produced a number of edited collections, including *Gender and the Public Sector* (Routledge 2003) and Special Editions of journals such as the *International Journal of Public Sector Management* (2003) and *Public Policy and Politics* (2005).

## ***Acknowledgements***

We like to thank all of our contributors for an interesting, intellectual stimulating and enjoyable conference at Luleå University of Technology August/September 2007. We also like to thank the keynote speakers, Professor David Jary, Professor Mike Dent and Associate Professor Christina Mörtberg who presented interesting papers on identities, gender, information technology, global accountability and global governance and professions. Finally, thanks to Allen King who kept everyone informed, answered a lot of questions and sorted out some of the administrative problems that always seem to appear.

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## **Challenging Professional Identity: NPM, Governance & Choice**

Mike Dent

Staffordshire University (UK)

ST18 0AD

mike.dent@staffs.ac.uk

### **Challenging Professional Identity**

Under the watchful gaze of the Welfare State we knew our role as supplicants for education, health and welfare and other services. With its eclipse and the rise of neo-liberalism the old certainties have gone, not only for the citizen and her family but also for the professionals who provided the expert workforce that delivered those services.

### Challenging Professional Identity

#### Organisation of Paper

This paper is a reflection on these changes and discussed under the following headings

1. Approaches to professional Identities
2. The Challenge of the User as Consumer?
3. NPM and Governance
4. Professional Scripts & Renegotiated Identities

### **1. Professional Identities**

Stuart Hall (1992: 275) identified three concepts of identity:

1. Enlightenment subject
2. Sociological subject
3. Post-modern subject

The first, *enlightenment subject*, viewed the person as essentially ‘a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action’ (ibid: 275).

The second, the *sociological concept*, enables us to integrate our personal and public worlds. It is socially constructed with reference to ‘significant others’. The concept was principally the product of the symbolic interactionists, particularly Mead and Cooley.

The third version, the *post-modern* one, is in some ways an extension of the second, where identity and identities are experienced as fragmented,



contradictory and/or unresolved. This questions the modernist assumptions of the Enlightenment model and proposes a different – discursive - mode of analysis.

There has been a blurring of the boundaries between professionalism and managerialism that has undermined the traditional view that professionals do not deal with the messy business of managing resources, or of being managed or managing others (Dent and Whitehead 2003: 1). A key notion here is ‘performativity’.

## **2. The Challenge of the User as Consumer?**

The doctor no longer necessarily knows what is best for you:

‘The [UK] NHS now has the capacity and the capability to move on from being an organisation which simply delivers services to people to being one which is totally patient led - responding to their needs and wishes’ (Department of Health, 2005; 5).

However, often users of services prefer to trust the judgements of professionals than managers:

‘[P]rofessions do not simply force themselves upon innocent and unknowing clients... such persons or families usually have long since learned to define what bothers them in terms of some available proto-professional vocabulary’ (De Swaan 1988).

But there is another, more managerialist version of user choice as illustrated by the ‘hugely successful London patient choice project’

‘The rhetoric is about choice and freedom, patient power and consumerism. In fact, the... project was seen to be an exercise in extreme planning and capacity management... [the] one goal... [was] to match patients to beds’ (Appleby, *Health Services Journal*, 16/09/04: 12).

A similar strategy is to be found in the Norwegian policy of free choice of hospitals (see Dent and Ostergren 2006). Indeed, it was the Scandinavian approach to patient choice that informed the UK policy.

The patient/ user is being ‘responsibilised’ to take rational decisions (e.g. as healthy citizens) and to play their part in the remodelling of health care provision. They are being re-educated according to a public health curriculum.

### **3. NPM and Governance**

The growth of evidence-based medicine, clinical guidelines (etc) reflects a move away from individual professional judgement to a collective version of clinical judgement in the form of evidence-based clinical guidelines and pathways. This is a key component of the new model of clinical governance. It impacts on the traditional concept of professional and clinical judgement.

Some within the profession now exercise a '*legislator*' role in establishing the evidence-base for the profession, of 'making authoritative statements, which arbitrate in controversies of opinions' (Bauman, 1987: 4-5). However, for most of the profession, their role is that of '*interpreter*' and translating evidence-based directions into clinical practice.

This 'soft bureaucracy' (Courpasson, 2000), as it has been called, takes three forms:

1. *instrumental* - being based on impersonal indicators e.g. performance indicators;
2. *liberal* – being external, credible but 'soft' coercion e.g. clinical governance;
3. *political* – resting with the 'trust board'; governors or other governing body.

Soft bureaucracy has also encroached extensively on the working lives of public sector professionals including teachers, academics, social workers (etc) and changed the emphasis of their professional practice from one of licensed 'autonomy' to one of 'governance' or enforced self-regulation (Hood et al 2000).

### **4. Professional Scripts & Renegotiated Identities**

This reconstruction of professional identity from the individualised expert to the responsibilised, well-educated team player, is rarely welcomed by the professions. Yet the changes have taken root across Europe as well as the Anglo-Saxon world. The institutionalisation of the new scripts can be seen as a continual cycle of 'encoding, enactment, revision, and objectification' (Barley and Tolbert 1997; Dent and Barry 2004).

Example: government inspection bodies in UK for Schools (OFSTED), Hospitals (e.g. MONITOR) (etc) are used as instruments to change practice as well as improve quality of practice.

The new governance systems – of enforced self-regulation - have played a significant role in enabling governments to renegotiate and re-order their compacts with the professions which has also impacted on the construction of professional identities.

Identities, however (professional or otherwise), are in the making, but never made. The professional, as the discursive subject, is confronted with contradictory pressures, contingencies and contested representations. The professional project has changed from seeking closure to a Sisyphean one of constantly reconstructing what it means to be professional.

The new reality equates in many ways to Hall's (1992) post-modern subject, fragmented, contradictory and/or unresolved – certainly in relation to the older certainties of the established Welfare Regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Esping-Andersen 1990).

But as sociologists many of us knew that anyway!

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# **PERFORMING GENDER, IDENTITIES AND (INFORMATION) TECHNOLOGY**

Christina Mörtberg,  
Department of Informatics  
University of Oslo, University of Umeå

## **INTRODUCTION**

Information technology (IT) has had impact on the society, organisations and people's everyday life. The transformations are characterised in a variety of ways however the picture is not uniform neither relevant everywhere but somewhere e.g. in Sweden. Concepts such as the information society, knowledge society or interaction society are some notions that are used (Heiskanen and Hearn 2004). No matter which of those concepts or terms that one uses it becomes obvious that people's everyday lives have changed and are continuously changing depending on the use and development of IT. Scholars in a range of disciplines and communities have explored the relationship between IT, society, and people (Heiskanen and Hearn 2004), focused on the relationship between gender and information technology (Vehviläinen 2005), the gendering of IT (Lie et 2003; Mörtberg et al 2003), the co-construction of gender and IT (Wajcman 2004), and the performance of gender and IT (Elovaara and Mörtberg 2007). They have thus contributed with and created critical approaches towards pluralistic understandings of the performance of gender, identity and IT (Wajcman 2004; see also Berg et al 2005).

In this paper, I will discuss performance of gender, identity and (information)technology with the use of examples from three research projects. The paper is structured as follows. I start with a brief description of the notions: information technology, gender performance, and identity. Then three examples are described in order to discuss how gender, identity and IT intersect in various enactments. The paper ends with concluding thoughts.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

I started my first job in the IT sector or in computing in 1972. At that time it was impossible to imagine the development that has taken place the last 15-20 years within the IT field. One innovation is the development and integration of computer technology, communication technology and multimedia. New technologies have changed our usage of IT as well as how we consider them IT is for example used to interact with other persons, to co-operate, to talk and to exchange ideas and feelings, to

interact with technology, and in building communities. Social software or new social media such as blogs, Wikis, Flickr, Facebook, Youtube, second life and so forth are existing phenomena that underline the difference compared to earlier technologies and services (Hine 2000, Hine 2005). These new phenomena have also methodological implications because it is not always obvious where to go to conduct the research if one is exploring on-line communities (Rutter and Smith 2005). Although one examines interactions in cyberspace the body is always located somewhere. All interactions are also intertwined with people's day-to-day activities and how they unfold.

Mobile phones or mobile telephony are another example of new performances. Almost all, young, old, women and men, possess and use the technology (Mörtberg 2003, Berg et al 2005). Mobiles are not only used in the North but also in the South. Although people do not have electricity to charge the mobiles batteries they use mobiles and find ways to charge them (personal communication with colleagues at University of Oslo). Research has also reported how the mobile is used to coordinate family's day-to-day life or how mobile phone has become a social prosthetics (Berg et al 2005). Other studies are e.g. Lin Prøitz (2007) who has carried out a longitudinal study of young people's performances of gender and sexuality in mobile practises in Norway. Explorations of mobile telephony and its use of coordination of day-to-day activities have mostly dealt with people's immediate surrounding. Heather Horst (2006) focuses however on transnational settings with long-term absence from parents and partners. In an ethnographic study Horts shows how Jamaican's are able to facilitate and maintain transnational contacts with parents, partners and relatives outside Jamaica with the use of mobile phones. This is enabled through the deployment of mobile communication compared to the limited access to landlines. The numbers of mobile subscribers in Jamaica exceeded 2 million out of a population of 2.6 million in 2004 compared to 7,2 % of the households access to landlines (ibid.). One example was a wife who could keep regularly contacts with her husband working in Canada. This possibility reduced her worries and anxiety because she knew it was easy to call him. The parents could also be more involved in their children's progress in schools and in their growth despite they were living outside Jamaica. Further, children with parents outside Jamaica could call their parents to be encouraged before exams. The border between the private and the public has also been contested through the use of mobile phones (Berg et al 2005). Consequently, the meaning of information technology or computers has transformed depending on new technologies and services that opens for new forms of configurations, design and use. That is,

reconfigurations of our day-to-day life have taken place in a variety of ways.

## **PERFORMATIVITY, GENDER PERFORMANCE AND IDENTITY**

Performativity is not a uniform concept but it is ubiquitous because it is used in many different ways and in a range of disciplines such as in speech acts, literature studies, theatre studies, (Barad 2003). Judith Butler builds on Jacques Derrida when she argues that performativity is ‘a kind of becoming or activity ... but rather as an incessant and repeated action of some sort’ (Butler 1990:112). That is, a becoming that takes place through repeated activities or iterative actions. Butler also underlines that ‘If gender is performative, then it follows that the reality of gender is itself produced as an effect of the performance’ (Butler 2004:218). The subject but also the materiality of the sexed body is produced in the performance.

Butler (2004) argues it seems that we humans are not able to deal without norms but. Simultaneously she underscores we do not have to assume they are pre-given or fixed. Butler writes:

As a consequence of being in the mode of becoming, and in always living with constitutive possibility of becoming otherwise, the body is that which can occupy the norm in myriad ways, exceed the norm, rework the norm, and expose realities to which we thought we were confined as open transformation. (Butler 2004: 217).

The reality that is produced in the performance of gender emerges through the enactment with a range of actors. A societies or practice existing norms and values govern the ‘result’ of a performance that is what will be sedimented out or not, or what will be understandable or not. That is, the performance is a citational practice where the norms are reiterated or they are questioned. Although existing norms are cited (reproduced) they are also exceeded or reworked. This moves us to the next notion in the title; identity or identities.

### **Identity – Unstable and Fragmented**

Whilst identity has been used as a stable and fixed I follow Butler that proposes we understand identity not as an essence but as doings or activities. That is, identities are constituted in doings and activities or in material-practices at specific historical points of time. Consequently identities are not uniform but are both fragmented and constantly changing. Identities are not only results of our experiences, but also



dependent on the meaning that various experiences have in the practices we are part of or are related to. A person participates in a range of social worlds or practices sometimes s/he is located in the centre other times in the margins however s/he is always related to these practices. Gender, race, class, ethnicity, age and so forth intersect in enactments one takes part of or are related to, thus, identities are constituted in and through our day-to-day activities and how they unfold. Multiple or fragmented identities become more obvious with Rosi Braidotti's (1994) figure nomadic subject. Braidotti claims a nomadic subject lives in-between languages, s/he is in transit, and her/his identity is not stable. The nomadic subject opens up possibilities for understandings of border crossings as well as accidental occurrences and changeableness. Nomadism or identity as not uniform and stable will be discussed in the following with some situations in my everyday doings.

I live in Luleå in the north of Sweden and work at the University of Oslo in the south of Norway. Due to my language I'm constituted as a Swede in Oslo; I speak Swedish not Norwegian. In Luleå on the other hand I'm a 'Tornedaling' depending on that I was born in the valley close to the border to Finland. Two different identities emerge out dependent on where I'm located and situated. Further, I'm commuting between my job in Oslo and my home in Luleå where Stockholm (Arlanda airport) is the first stop on my way from Oslo to Luleå. The Swedish Queen and the King are waving and welcoming me (photographs on the walls at the international airport in Stockholm) just after I have passed the customer. My embodied feelings are 'I'm home', a feeling that occurs despite I have to change plane in Stockholm thus it is still more than 1 hour before I'm in Luleå. Sweden and Norway are similar in many ways but also different thus also norms and values we deal with differ. Arriving to Stockholm implies it becomes easier to act and understand existing values and norms one is familiar with because one possesses knowledge that it is not always visible.

With an example from day-to-day experience my intention was to illustrate that identity is not stable, fixed or something inherent in a person but it is constituted in tensions between various subject positions, positions a person takes or are placed in (Holloway 1989; Lather 1991). Further, identities are not pre-given but are constituted in a range of enactments, thus, in a world of becoming (Butler 1993, 2004). But if we understand identity as constituted in a range of activities that results in multiple identities how is it then possible to deal with all various identities or where do the various identities meet. One interpretation is to consider the body as the place where various identities or where one's biography takes place.

## **PERFORMING GENDER, IDENTITY AND IT**

In the following I will discuss the entanglement of gender, identity, and information technology with the use of examples from three different research projects. The first is from an interview with a systems designer in the IT sector. The data was collected for my doctoral thesis where 23 systems designers were interviewed with an aim to explore how their day-to-day lives were unfolded in a male dominated business (Mörtberg 1997). The part of interview described here is interpreted with Butler's gender performance (Butler 1990, 1993, 2004).

When the systems designer was interviewed she had worked in the IT sector more than 10 years solely with men. At the time of the interview the woman was a project manager in charge of the company's largest IT development project. The project was organised in subprojects with subproject leaders in charge for the sub-teams. In the current project the appointed sub or team managers were women and it worked well. In the interview the project manager told she preferred to cooperate and work with men rather than with women. Irrespective of her present experiences of collaboration with women she emphasised that she preferred to collaborate with men. The interview was a site where gender, identity and technology were constituted. The woman positioned herself and talked from a subject position in which she separated herself from her female colleagues and from other women in which she identified herself with her male colleagues. A woman employed in the IT sector has crossed the border to a male dominated sector, she has mostly cooperated with men then it is not too unexpected she identifies herself with the majority. The interviewed systems designer related also to a female colleague in order to get support in her explanation why she preferred to work with male colleagues. At the same time she made clear it worked very well with the female team leaders in the current project. The designer's explanation why she preferred men was that they do not create intrigues compared with women. It exists norms and values in Swedish society of how women and men act in working life. Without experiences of cooperation with women the interviewee stressed women do not collaborate as smooth as men do. It is not unusual to define women as intriguers in work practices even if the practices show something else. That is, in the interview 'women are intriguers men are not' was cited and reproduced in the interview with the systems designer. Other understandings were also present but were more in the margins; that the cooperation with the female team leaders worked well. On one hand she separated herself from other women. On the other hand she identified herself with her female colleague and the team leaders. The systems designer positioned herself differently in the interview thereby her identity varied and was

destabilised. Gender also intersected in the materialisation of her identities.

The next is a re-reading of an example described and analysed in Mörtberg (2003). The paper was based on explorations of advertisements of mobile phones and services, and interviews with designers and marketing in a telecom company in Norway. The example is a picture in a Norwegian telecom operator's magazine *Dragon djuice dragons race report*<sup>1</sup>. The telecom operator sponsored a yacht in the Volvo Ocean. I wrote:

In the picture the shipmaster Knut Frostad is dressed in pink. In spite of the colour picture there is a text: "Knut Frostad legger ut på sin tredje Whitebread/Volvo Ocean Race—denne gangen stolt i rosa" ("Knut Frostad puts out for his third Whitebread/Volvo Ocean Race—this time proudly in pink"). It seems as if they wanted to emphasize the fact that the muscular shipmaster was dressed in pink. That a man in pink is provocative became obvious when the Swedish golfer Jesper Parnevik wore pink trousers at a golf tournament. The reason probably is that pink is associated with girls. Pink as girlish was also expressed in the interview with WB. She put pink and girlishness against toughness and masculinity. The image of the muscular shipmaster dressed in pink contradicts the images of the headline on another page of the report: "Møt mennene som havet vil snakke om i årevis ..." ("Meet the men that the sea will talk about for years") (Mörtberg 2003:166)

The text reinforced the message as though it was not obvious enough with the image of the male shipmaster dressed in pink. The performance of gender and technology - toughness, masculinity and pink clothes – a girlish colour – with the use of the pictures of the shipmaster Knut Frostad was entangled in the ad. Luch Suchman (2007:272) writes: 'Technologies like bodies, are both produced and destabilized in the course of reiterations'. In one iteration it was obvious how the sponsor, telecom operator, used the pink clothes in this tough environment to questioning gendered norms in terms of pink as associated with girls or a girlish colour. The body of the shipmaster was destabilised with the use of the pink colour. In another iteration it was stabilised through the expression of toughness, new technologies, and masculinity described in other parts of the magazine e.g. with the text 'Meet the men that the sea will talk about for years'. The latter was also enacted through the technologies employed in the yacht particularly the mobile services

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<sup>1</sup> djuice™, No 1 September 2001, 11.

provided by the Norwegian carrier. Gender, identities, and technology are not pre-given but emerge out of a range of actions, doings or practices.

The third and last example is from a research project with an aim to examine values, dreams, and expectations of new technologies. These were juxtaposed with expectations and visions expressed in Swedish IT-policies. The argument was that conditions in Swedish society or dominating IT discourse are intertwined both with people's use and the development of new technologies. The fieldwork was conducted at a property maintenance department, in a business that developed mobile services, at social services departments in the north of Sweden (care assistants and middle managers), and peoples use of mobile phones in their private lives. The methods used were participant observations, interviews and a web-based questionnaire<sup>2</sup>. The example used here is from the interviews with middle managers and care assistants.

The middle managers and the care assistant's narratives of their work were told in the discourse of care thereby the caretakers were in the centre. Although both the middle managers and the care assistants use a range of technologies (IT, mobile communication, household, and ergonomic aid technology) in their day-to-day work they did not define themselves as technologically skilled (Berg et al 2005, Jansson et al 2007, Jansson 2007). Hence they were integrated in a web of sociomaterial relations such as gender, technology, division of labour, women, men, caretakers, relatives and so on (ibid.). Their identities as non-technical emerged out of the entanglement of all these relationships. The definition of themselves as not technologically skilled was cited in the enactments whereby the images of who possess technological skills and who do not, risks to be reinforced. Despite gender researchers have showed how women and men's interest, use and knowledge are not uniform but diverse images of women as non-technical skilled seem to survive.

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

People's everyday lives have changed depending on the use and development of information technology. Mobile communications and new social media are technologies many use irrespectively of location, age and gender. In this paper I examined performing of gender, identity and information technology. Following Butler, I have argued that performances are not theatrical but rather citational practices where norms and values are reproduced or contested. Gender does not pre-exist but is becoming in people's doings and activities in material-discursive practices. The examples I have presented illustrated both how norms are reproduced and how they are contested in the enactments. Gendered

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<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Berg, Maria Jansson and Christina Mörberg conducted the research (see e.g. Berg et al 2005, Jansson et al 2007, and Jansson 2007).

norms in terms of pink as a colour associated with girls was questioned with a muscular male shipmaster in a tough setting dressed in pink. On the other hand other gendered norms were cited and reproduced; technology as toughness and masculine, women as intriguingers, images of women as non-technical skilled.

Identity or identities have in a similar way as gender been used as non-static but something that is enacted and constituted in practices at specific historical points of time, practices that are constantly changing. Identities are not only results of our experiences, but also dependent on the meaning that is ascribed to them in the social worlds that we are part of or have some kind of relationships to. Hence we are constituted through our activities in different practices or through our way of relating to these. In the presented examples it became also obvious how we position ourselves or are placed in a range of positions where identities are produced and destabilised e.g. the systems designer that both identified and separated herself with other women. The middle managers and care assistants working in a social department that constituted themselves as non-technical skilled despite they used a range of technologies and services.

Technology has been an actor intertwined in the stories and the enactments of gender and identity. The focus has been on use of technologies and services and collaboration in an IT design project. In the example with the shipmaster gendered understandings of technology was contested but also reproduced. Thus, in a similar way as the identities technologies are also destabilised due to the setting where it is used and how it is used. I end the paper with a return to Lucy Suchman (2007:272) and her book *Human-Machine Reconfigurations: plans and situated actions* where she writes: 'Technologies like bodies, are both produced and destabilized in the course of reiterations'.

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## **Discourses of Diversity: ‘Top down’ and grassroots approaches to recruitment and retention of Black and Minority Ethnic people in social work education.**

Mo McPhail, The Open University, Scotland and Dina Sidhva Multi-Cultural Family Base, Edinburgh, Scotland

### **Introduction and Background**

The central theme discussed here is of the contrasting discourse of ‘top down’ government initiatives in recruitment and retention of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) social work students and a grassroots, community based initiative. The discourse of the former tends to recognise and work with difference, putting aside personal prejudice and the provision of support to people who are ‘different’. Whereas, the discourse of the latter has a propensity to challenge institutional racism, foster partnership between education providers, community groups and networks within the local voluntary sector and draws from a strengths-based black community development model. A starting point for this paper is the understanding that the nature of language of inclusion of people from BME communities in social work education either reflects and reinforces, or challenges the power relationships embedded in these arenas. We contrast the language and approaches of top down government policies with a grassroots community project to identify opportunities and challenges in these differing approaches. To contextualise this conversation, we draw on the work of Harris (2003), who traces the unfolding discourse of social work education from the late 1970s to early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Institutional and government responses to racism and social work education**

The discourse of professional social work education regulatory bodies has waxed and waned over the past 40 years. Two significant themes can be identified over this period. One is the profession’s claims to status as a profession and another revolves around a central question of the role of social work and social workers relational to structural inequality and oppression. Harris (2003) suggests that at least part of the early thinking of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, (CCETSW) the UK-wide body set up to regulate social work education was an attempt to curtail the influence of the embryonic radical social work movement on social work training. On a more emancipatory note in 1989 the organisation approved a 2 year Diploma in Social Work as the qualifying award for social work, accompanied by a set of rules and requirements (CCETSW 1989), containing a more explicit reference to



combating discrimination and oppression in the social work context, and the role of social work in promoting equal opportunities and furthering anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice.

Over time the social work education discourse was reduced to notions of knowledge and understanding of diversity and individualistic approaches to managing difference, limited to role and context. Harris describes this as an example of creeping managerial-ism in social work education, designed to reflect and prepare social work students for the increasingly business led approaches to social work practice. New institutions such as the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) have been created to monitor and regulate social work education. According to Harris, these institutions tend to be characterised by centralised ‘top down’ approaches, promotion of uniform curricula across social work programmes, greater stakeholder involvement and erosion of professional self regulation. Phung (2007) reflects that there is reduced consideration of the impact of social division and oppression replaced by a blander view of diversity as differences social work students may encounter.

The current language in the standards and requirements for social work education in Scotland (SSSC, 2003), repeats the commitment to a strong ethical basis for social work education and calls for a balancing of the rights and responsibilities of people who use social work services with the interests of the wider community. It promotes a qualified, toned down and seemingly individualistic approach, that social work students must:

*‘work effectively and sensitively with people’s whose cultures, beliefs or life experiences are different from their own. In all of these situations they must recognise and put aside any personal prejudice and work within guiding ethical principles and according to professional codes of conduct’*(SSSC, 2003).

However, this statement does not require a student to critically challenge their own prejudice, nor develop an awareness of the use and abuse of power and the discrimination which flows from this. It is self evident that social work students will encounter a range of different people in the course of their practice. Surely all social work practice should be sensitive and effective? This apparently diluted approach to discrimination and oppression experienced by users of social work service is reflected in a major review of social work in Scotland: Changing Lives, the report of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Work Review (Scottish Executive, 2006). Within the document, there is little reference to the role of social work in challenging discrimination and oppression

experienced by BME people in Scotland. The strongest expression of the need for a social services workforce which meets the needs of diverse communities emerges from the User and Carer Panel, who acted as consultants to the review:

*‘The workforce should reflect the diversity of the population. Social workers should come from all sections of the community, e.g. the deaf community and minority ethnic communities, etc. (Scottish Executive 2006, p. 64).*

The report represents a missed opportunity to contribution to the debate about the role of social work in relation to structural discrimination and oppression, conducted over the last 30 years, in relation to the experience of racism. There is no acknowledgement of the factors that inhibit or promote involvement of BME people in social work or in social work as a positive career option. Indeed there is no acknowledgement of the impact of ‘institutional racism’ highlighted in the earlier CCETSW paper (1989) and reinforced by the McPherson Report. A lack of reference to the existence of and experience of institutional racism, we argue is a serious flaw in initiatives to address the social work needs and career potential of BME people.

There have been a number of initiatives in Scotland where the recruitment of BME social work students has been considered. For example, one such report (SSSC 2006) re-emphasises the responsibilities of social work education providers under race relations legislation, though there is very little reference to pro-active strategies to achieve this. Whilst welcoming such initiatives, the language utilized in these approaches to the development of a more diverse social services workforce reflects the “fresh talent” policy of encouraging people from other countries to come to Scotland to meet the anticipated decline in population and the services workforce. Scottish government discourse is one of demographics and economics pertaining to new immigrants and refugees. Little reference is made to existing BME communities or indeed to factors, such as cultural differences in social work and education and institutional racism which inhibit participation. We turn now to consider an alternative approach to recruitment and retention of BME social work students.

## **A grassroots, community-based approach to recruitment and retention of BME students to social work education**

Research undertaken by Singh (1999, 2005) to survey access and support provision for BME students in social work across Scotland, and to ascertain views from BME communities about social work as a career found that despite positive statements of commitment by providers, policy and practices were piecemeal, fragmented and uncoordinated (Singh, 1999). Informed by this action research, staff at the Multi-Cultural Family Base (MCFB) in Edinburgh and The Open University (OU) in Scotland along with other education providers undertook an innovative 2-year pilot programme for supported access to studying at Higher Education level. The programme provides integrated one to one, group work and language support from experienced BME learners for BME students, studying short OU Openings courses. Its approach is underpinned by explicit principles. Firstly, the recognition and acknowledgement of the challenges faced by BME learners in undertaking professional study programmes in predominately white organisations, and the recognition of the strengths of students who may have experienced and developed strategies to deal with issues of cultural differences and discrimination in its many forms. A further principle is the recognition that the challenges learners face are located in unique permutations of cultural, gender, age, disability, socio-economic factors, etc., in addition to the operation of racism at individual, institutional and societal levels. Moreover it draws on the principles of empowerment and capacity-building from the Black Community Development Model.

The pilot is committed to facilitate access to social work education for BME learners, based on a continuum of support, from the point of stimulating interest in social work as a possible career option; developing locally based partnerships with BME voluntary organisations; facilitating access and providing relevant support throughout social work training, through into employment. It has focused on support for existing BME social work students and latterly on facilitating access to education in the general area of care. Support is provided by mentors from BME backgrounds, who have relevant experience of study at university level. The work is funded and supported on a professional rate of pay and conditions. The language used to describe the work of the project reflects the above principles and is one of building relationships of trust between social work providers and local communities and joint working with universities and colleges. Crucially it aims to hear, support and give voice to potentially excluded learners, ensuring that their experiences are built into programmes of support which are modified on an on-going basis. At

its heart is a moral imperative and collective response to the race relations legislation to ensure that social work education and as a profession is truly accessible to all sections of Scottish communities.

### **The pilot has had positive outcomes for all**

Apart from successful completion of the course by learners who would not have considered undertaking a first level university course, there have been visible changes in confidence and self-esteem; in particular some learners have been able to continue with education despite varied barriers posed by family opposition and domestic violence. Additionally, there are a growing number of role models providing a positive example of the ability to progress via educational achievement.

The diversity of those that make up the OU and MCFB is quintessential to their partnership, and is marked by rich learning about barriers to education and the identification of structural and institutional practices which need to be dismantled and rebuilt. The provision of mentor and language support has helped to generate a deeper understanding of the experiences of potentially excluded learners. Additionally the programme contributes to wider governmental and professional aspirations to develop a social services workforce, which more comprehensively reflects the ethnic profile and needs of the wider community. An ongoing priority is to embed this learning and service provision for BME students in mainstream education services. It is expected that further learning derived from the evaluation of the programme will significantly enhance the development of cultural diversity in the social services workforce in Scotland, and reflect the grassroots approaches to recruitment and retention of BME people in social work education.

### **Discussion**

We draw on the Hunger Project's Service Delivery vs. Empowerment model (1989) to compare the language and implications of top down service delivery approaches, contrasted with a grassroots empowerment model; and to throw light on how use of language serves to reflect and reinforce or to challenge existing relationships of power. The language of a grassroots empowerment model is of de-centralisation, of empowerment of local communities, promoting rights, building capacity and involving people as actors and catalysts to exert more control over their lives. This contrasts with the language of 'top down' government and professional initiatives, of provision of services to carefully targeted 'vulnerable' people, suffering from 'immutable conditions' that need to be compensated for their situation, coupled with tight centralised management and control. The experience in Scotland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

to date is that top-down government initiatives do not appear to reflect the complexity and diversity of needs of BME people in the context of access to and support within the predominately white institutions of social work education. They do not fully embrace capacity building at individual and community level and are thereby unlikely to be sustained.

This community partnership project illuminates the viewpoint that we are active agents in the construction of our subjectivity (Ryan, 1999). Additionally, discourses are not passive bodies of knowledge; neither are they irreversible. Thus, a discursive formation may be confronted or resisted, although, those outside the dominant discourse often experience discrimination. Shi-Xu (2001) urges teachers, trainers and consultants to abandon the traditional role of imparting linguistic, cultural, and translation knowledge and try instead to develop a dialogue with students and practitioners through which we jointly initiate, (re)formulate, debate and execute such new discourses. Such a model is required with a focus on understanding and treating people as unique individuals whose multiple identities and abilities are respected and appreciated for their potential contributions (Ospina 2001). It is also a moral imperative, to respect differences in behaviour, values, cultures, lifestyles, competences and experiences of every member of a group, to improve social equity, to challenge discrimination and inequality, to stimulate creativity and innovation, unity and leadership to better reflect the diverse composition of society, and lead ultimately to the provision services which are genuinely relevant and accessible.

## **Conclusions**

The argument presented here is that central to the development of culturally appropriate social work education is an understanding of the politics of race and identity, dynamics of capacity building, and acknowledgement of the need to address challenges faced by BME social work students in predominately white learning institutions and hierarchies of power at the root of institutional racism. This encompasses the arenas of access, learner support and the curriculum. Language conveys the fundamental value base – with some very real consequences for learners. We conclude that both top down and grassroots approaches are necessary constituents of the package of measures to address issues of discrimination in the context of social work education. ‘Top down’ approaches that are not based on an understanding of the narratives of individual and community relationships, or the need to challenge the assumptive world of predominately white organisations, and the cultural and practical realities for excluded learners, are likely to be unsustainable. Similarly grassroots approaches, which are not established on a

sustainable basis, are also likely to founder. An over-riding concern is to avoid a colonial type approach: of imposing structures from above, with superficial collaborative approaches which do not connect with the complex needs of excluded learners. Similarly grassroots community based approaches are in danger of becoming marginalised and impotent if not embedded into mainstream services and systems at institutional and government levels.

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# **Learning Styles, Identities and Learning Environments of Local Government Sport Facility Managers in England**

Gary Lowe, Staffordshire University, England

## **Introduction**

In today's 'quality' public management environment the demand for effective and efficient learning is high. Training providers are supplying this training need with a wide range of learning environments ranging from in house mentor support to distance learning.

A considerable literature exists on the use of learning theory in enhancing learning and there is an obvious logic in matching learning methods with delivery methods in a teaching environment. However, according to Smith, Sekar and Townsend (cited in Valcke & Gombeir, 2001) in reality there is conflict in the research that attempts to prove this obvious logic. This paper aims to explore the relationship between learning style and reported ease of learning in a variety of learning environments.

## **Background**

The relationship of learning style to learning is not a simple one. Learning has many influential factors, other than style. Entwistle (1993) highlights a number of these, with motivation and intelligence being amongst the most prominent, although Kelly (cited in Southwell & Merbaum, 1978) reporting on earlier studies, casts doubt on motivation as a key factor in learning. With regard to intelligence, Kolb (1984) suggests a link between learning style and intelligence although more recent studies (Riding and Pearson, 1994; Riding and Agrell, 1998) report learning style to be independent of intelligence. Personality may also affect learning since Furnham (1992) suggests that personality can account for up to twenty percent of the variance in learning styles, while Klein and Lee (2006) show that there is a relationship between learning style and personality.

Although a wide range of learning style inventories exist (Coffield, Moseley, Hall and Ecclestone, 2004) the most commonly used instrument within a management context is the Honey and Mumford (1992) Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ).

The LSQ has four learning styles termed Activist, Pragmatist, Theorist and Reflector. While Activists learn through a high level of involvement where new experiences exist, Reflectors learn by observing and having



the opportunity to think before acting. Theorists learn from using information within systems or models in a logical methodical way and Pragmatists learn from testing theories and ideas to see if they work in practice (Honey and Mumford, 1992).

Although there are doubts over the predictive validity of the LSQ (Allinson and Hayes, 1988), similar instruments also report similar problems. One possible alternative is the Learning Style Inventory (Dunn and Dunn, 1987) which examined the influence of five basic stimuli, environmental, emotional, sociological, psychological and physical, upon an individual's ability to respond to learning environments. However, although the instrument has good reports of validity much of this is aimed at the school rather than management context. Alternative instruments are difficult to match with learning environments and lay few claims in this respect.

If the utility of the LSQ is valid, managers holding a preference for a specific learning style should feel varying levels of comfort and discomfort with compatible and incompatible learning environments.

## **Method**

The LSQ and Perceived Learning Difficulty Self Report Questionnaire (PLDQ) were administered to a sample composed of 400 local government sports facility managers randomly selected from throughout the UK. Questionnaires were posted to the sample of facility managers with pre-paid reply envelopes.

The LSQ measured the preferred learning style of each manager reported in a score ranging from zero to twenty for each of the four styles; Activist, Pragmatist, Theorist and Reflector. The PDLQ measured the perceived learning difficulty of each manager across four learning environments to which managers are commonly exposed these being lecture, seminar, activity workshop and distance learning. Managers were asked to relate their perceived degree of difficulty in learning within each of these environments together with their likes and dislikes of each. The perceived degree of difficulty was recorded by the use of a 1-5 Likert scale with 1 representing difficult and 5 easy. The likes and dislikes of managers in different learning environments were assessed by open ended questions in response to lecture, seminar, activity workshop and distance learning environments.

Managers with high and low LSQ scores for each of the four learning styles were compared to their PLDQ scores in each of the four learning environments in order to explore the relationship between learning style and perceived learning difficulty within each learning environment. Where patterns emerged in the relationship between learning styles and learning environments the key phrase statements were used to explain the emerging patterns.

## **Results and Discussion**

The four learning environment preference scores of Lecture, Action, Seminar and Distance Learning environments when tabulated against the mean learning style (Activist, Reflector, Theorist, and Pragmatist) scores of subjects show some degree of relationship. Out of the possible 16 sets of data 8 show a trend that supports the utility of Honey and Mumford's (1992) LSQ model.

With respect to the Activist / Lecture set, the data suggests that manager's low on the Activist scale perceive learning to be more difficult in a lecture environment than those scoring highly. This trend is difficult to explain through the Honey and Mumford (1992) model. However, within the Reflector / Lecture set the results show that higher scoring Reflectors perceive difficulty in the lecture environment. Since Reflectors like to explore alternative views, the 'closed' lecture environment would present them with a problematic learning environment.

Within the Action environment, managers high on the Theorist style find learning to be difficult. According to the learning style descriptors, Theorists learn best from structured environments, with a clear purpose, where they can read or listen to ideas or concepts. As such, the results here are easily explained since the Action environment is clearly not matching the Theorist style. Equally, the Reflector in the Action environment is uncomfortable since Reflectors dislike situations where they are forced to act and experiment without giving detailed thought. They like cut and dried instruction of how things should be done. Again the results show that high scoring Reflectors find the Action environment difficult, which supports the Honey and Mumford model.

The Seminar environment produces similar results, with two of the data sets demonstrating a trend. The Activist scores show a clear upward trend with increased ease of learning. That is, high scoring Activists perceive learning to be easy in the Seminar environment compared to low scoring Activists. Again, the Honey and Mumford model may be used to explain

this pattern since Activists enjoy ‘here and now’ experiences where they are allowed to exchange ideas within groups. Likewise, the high scoring Pragmatists also find the Seminar environment easy. Honey and Mumford’s model offer contrasting support for the results. While Pragmatists respond to problems as a challenge and enjoy trying out ideas, which would support the results, they also tend to be impatient with open ended discussion, which is likely to be a feature of the seminar and as such conflicts with the results.

Within the Distance Learning environment there is a clear trend in the Reflector and Theorist styles. High scores on both of these styles find the Distance Learning environment more comfortable than low scores. Given the solitary nature of the Distance Learning environment and the thoughtful, sedentary, withdrawn nature of the Reflective and Theorist style, the Honey and Mumford model accounts for this trend.

The results suggest that there is a relationship between learning style and perceived ease of learning across all four styles and all four environments included within this study. Although the strength of the relationship is variable, across the styles and environments this might be expected given that Entwistle, (1993) and Kelly (1964) suggest that factors other than learning style affect learning.

Specifically, the results show that local government sport facility managers perceive learning to be easier in the Activity environment. Given that Honey and Mumford (1992) explain that, with time, we develop our learning style to suit our environment and that most of our training is work based (The Sports Council, 1995) such findings should not be surprising.

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## **Closing the Gap - Innovation and Sustainability in Addressing Social Exclusion Through Sport**

Mr Andrew Heaward, Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
Dr Paul A Ryan, Staffordshire University  
Mr Steve Suckling, Staffordshire University

The Index of Deprivation (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004) shows that Stoke-on-Trent is one of the most deprived areas of England with high levels of obesity and poor health (Department of Health, 2006). Sport and physical activity provide many benefits to health including reducing obesity, heart disease diabetes, and improving mental health. Levels of participation in the City are amongst the lowest in the country (Sport England 2006). Closing the Gap (CtG) is a Lottery funded project aimed at ensuring young people at risk of social exclusion resident in Stoke-on-Trent experience the same opportunity to take part as other young people in the city. A baseline survey of levels of participation by young people at risk of social exclusion carried out by CtG showed worryingly low levels by young people looked after by Social Care. This paper focuses on a pilot project for CtG working with Social Care provision for looked after children and young people in Stoke-on-Trent. The aim of the research was to consider the management and policy frameworks within which sport takes place in the units, and in doing so increase the opportunities for the young people to participate by facilitating staff to use physical activity in their work. This research is based on the use of the CMO (Context, Mechanism & Outcome) evaluation methodology developed by Pawson & Tilley (1997). This involves setting out the context in which the pilot project took place, the methods used to effect change and then considering the outcomes achieved in light of these factors

Research performed by CtG identified many barriers to participation faced by young people resident in Social Care provision, including cost, transport, opportunity and most evidently motivation. Staff working in the units were encouraged to identify barriers to using sport and physical activity in their work. Research from staff, young people and management informed the development of a bespoke action plan for the introduction of physical activity into Social Care. The action plan involved building relationships with the young people, organising taster sessions, providing training and encouragement for staff and providing basic sports equipment for the units. After approximately 12 months of

intervention research was repeated to evaluate the success of the pilot project.

Through its work with Social Care, CtG has been able to facilitate a significant cultural change towards the way sport and physical activity is both viewed and utilised. This change led to increased motivation and participation in sport and physical activity by young people. Staff are now committed to its use as a powerful tool to build relationships with young people and are determined to continue with its use. Senior managers have recognised the value of sport and have implemented a number of changes to ensure that the positive developments experienced are sustained.

### **Research methods**

The methodology adopted by CtG was developed in association with a wide range of partners including Staffordshire University and the Stoke-on-Trent Primary Care Trust. The research design was developed from a range of established and bespoke methods. The research methods included use of the Context, Mechanism and Outcome (CMO) evaluation methodology developed by Pawson & Tilley (1997). The purpose of CMO is to establish whether there is an unequivocal causal relationship between a programme and its outcome. That is, where some change can be measured following the implementation of a particular programme, it seeks to establish to what extent it was the programme's activity which caused the identified change, and not some other, unidentified variable. CMO assumes that there is an underlying theory behind the workings of a particular programme or intervention. This theory explains how the particular programme caused any identifiable change. A CMO has three core parts: a context, a mechanism and an outcome. The most important aspect of CMO is the overall context in which the programme takes place. The 'context' signifies the precise circumstances into which a particular intervention is introduced at the various project levels. The mechanism is the precise way in which CtG seeks to facilitate change. Therefore, Context + Mechanism = Outcome. The Beliefs, Barriers and Control methodology (BBaC), developed specifically for this programme by Suckling (et al 2005), provides data regarding an individual's beliefs regarding sport and physical activity, any barriers to their participation and how much control they feel they have over this. The BBaC is used with two distinct groups of respondents in CtG young people and staff from partner agencies. With staff the method is expanded to consider the BBaC headings at a personal and professional level i.e. how staff feel about sport both personally and in relation to their work. In addition to

the BBaC and CMO Closing the Gap also uses an adapted version of the European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM). This is used to assess partner organisation's capacity to successfully engage with socially excluded young people through sport. Both the BBaC and EFQM are not only used to inform the development of an action plan for each partner organisation but also as a tool to help track changes and identify distance travelled on completion of each action plan.

## **Pilot**

To respond to the issues identified through the BBaC and EFQM processes a detailed action plan was developed and implemented by CtG in conjunction with the City Councils residential units for looked after children. This sought to diagnose some of the structural issues that prevent the effective use of sport within the residential unit setting and support a process of organisational change to address these. This process has successfully resulted in a wide range of positive changes which are described in the findings section. Whilst much has changed and improved, it should be noted that the process of change is far from complete and that it is now the responsibility of managers, unit staff and staff more widely within Social Care to continue to build upon the firm foundations that have been laid with the help of CtG.

## **Findings**

On examining the final research data significant change can be seen regarding how sport and physical activity is both viewed and utilised within the residential units. Senior management within Social Care noticed a change in attitude by both young people and staff towards sport and physical activity. Staff became increasingly amenable to using it and management, now convinced of its role, nominated a member of staff within each unit to lead on activities. Additionally a deputy manager has been identified to take a lead on the whole activity agenda, indicating the importance now placed upon participation and indicating sustainability for its future use within the service. Post intervention, looked after young people reported increased opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. In part this can be attributed to the twice weekly activity sessions now run by Social Care staff. These can be accessed by young people resident in any unit, reducing inequalities of opportunity between units identified prior to CtG's intervention. Sport is now more widely used by staff, in addition to the twice weekly organised sessions, occasional ad hoc sessions take place. Whilst young people identified fewer barriers to participating after the CtG intervention period, issues



such as sanctions at the unit, the cost of taking part, lack of transport and health related issues were still limiting participation for some young people. In contrast others having been introduced to a leisure centre and having experienced new sports that appealed to them were prepared to travel across the city independently to enjoy a game of squash at weekends. This suggests that the barriers are far from uniform and in part at least still have an effect on motivation levels.

It is clear that the views of young people towards sport and activity have changed dramatically since the initial research. Initially young people felt that the range of opportunities available to them were very limited, but in the final research they commented on enjoying getting out of the units to take part in a variety of activities. This indicates a significant positive change in the young people's opportunities available to them. The lack of motivation initially exhibited by young people towards taking part in physical activity was no longer evident, as young people talked about a desire for more opportunities, suggesting sessions should take place more than twice a week. This was amplified by their suggestion of hiring additional space at the leisure centres so that more activities could be offered including boxing, swimming and dance. This may indicate that the negative attitude of young people found prior to the intervention was due to a lack of positive experiences in relation to sport and physical activity. In the final research young people spoke of feeling healthier and less stressed since taking part in activities on a regular basis and one young person claimed that since taking part he had managed to keep out of trouble, something he had previously found quite difficult. This view was shared by staff in the units. Whilst not conclusive, this suggests that the impact of the new regime has been extremely positive in effecting a much wider range of issues than just young peoples participation in sport and physical activity.

Introducing regular opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity has had additional benefits beyond health. Many of the looked after young people resident in the units did not previously attend school regularly and therefore academic achievement was rare, however through regular attendance at sport sessions during the CtG intervention period, many of the young people earned Duke of Edinburgh access credits. This has led to some young people thinking about sport as a route after leaving mandatory education, indicating raised aspirations. Staff realised that having dedicated time for sport and physical activity was an important factor in ensuring young people get opportunities to take part. Prior to the CtG intervention, although activities may have been planned, they often did not take place. With the introduction of regular sessions, both staff

and young people were aware that on Monday and Tuesday evenings at 5pm sport and activity was available to all those who wanted it. This meant that staff rotas could be planned to take account of this and there was no excuse for sessions not to proceed.

Initially, staff believed there were benefits to using sport in their work, following CtG's intervention, additional benefits were identified. Staff stated that their job was stressful and that taking part in sport with the young people helped to reduce this. They also noticed increased confidence, better behaviour, and improved sleep patterns in some young people, all helping to further reduce stress. Staff also noticed increased motivation in the young people they worked with to take part in physical activity, reducing the barriers to staff using it in their work. Through taking part in activities with the young people, staff identified talents in some young people that had not previously been evident, helping staff to gain a better understanding of the young people they work with. This growing confidence and belief in the value of sport & physical activity as a tool, is one of the most significant outcomes gained, as it has built a strong belief within the residential units that sport and physical activity can deliver key work objectives and improve staff and young peoples day to day experiences. This, above all, else is the factor most likely to ensure the long term sustainability of the approach developed by CtG within the units.

Managers in Social Care have been so convinced by the power of sport that they have taken action to ensure its continued use. They have driven forward developments regarding risk assessment to address staff concerns expressed in the initial research, promoting a culture where this is now used to determine what can be done rather than used as a reason not to do something. New policies on sport and physical activity have been developed and are being finalised by the Social Care Management Team. A deputy manager has been identified to track and review the policy and they propose to build it into recruitment, induction and training for residential social workers. Managers now believe sport should be included in mandatory continuous professional development and are considering the use of an adapted version of the CtG "Introducing Sport Training course" as part of their normal staff induction and training schemes. Funding has been put in place to support physical activity, arrangements have been made to ring fence activity budgets and staff rotas have been reviewed to ensure additional staff availability at weekends and evenings when activities are more likely to take place, indicating the value now placed on sport and activity within the service. All of this is in stark contrast to the position initially, where the potential

value of sport was generally recognised, but no action had been taken to unlock this.

The coming together of staff and young people from all the units to take part in sport and activity twice a week has had a positive effect on relationships between all involved. Staff have been able to share experiences with their counterparts in other units and gain support from one another. Prior to the CtG intervention young people in the four units rarely mixed, on the occasions they did, they tended to be aggressive towards one another. Due to the sports sessions new friendships have developed and young people started to telephone in advance to check that their friends in other units would be attending sessions. Relationships between staff and young people also improved and this was identified by staff as a useful tool in addressing behaviour issues. Staff appear to be surprised by how much young people have enjoyed interacting with them through sport and sensed that young people actually appreciated the time and effort staff put into sessions. Both CtG staff & management from Social Care observed this change and feel that the quality of relationships between staff and young people within the units has increased significantly. Initially, staff identified barriers to using sport and physical activity in their work relating to poorly motivated young people, bad behaviour, lack of transport and concerns over risk assessment. Post intervention the barriers identified were quite different, staff spoke about the timing of sessions being a problem as 5pm did not give the young people time to get in from school. Other comments related to the type of activity on offer appealing to the boys but not girls, suggesting sport and physical activity may have become part of their working practice as their concerns were tending to be more operational in nature. However, initial findings from this research indicates that sport is becoming something that young people care about and as such implies a gap in provision and an aspect worthy of future research.

At the end of the intervention period the majority of staff were enthusiastic about using sport in their work. All staff attending the final review stated that their likelihood of continuing to use sport and physical activity in their work as 4 or 5 out of 5, indicating staff believed in its value and felt equipped to use it in their future work. Reasons stated for continuing with its use were that: it helps to build positive relationships; it builds self esteem; team building; it's healthy and fun; it's an invaluable tool in creating positive relationships between staff and young people; it's the way forward for all young people giving them confidence, self esteem and a healthy lifestyle; it benefits health and social skills in young people. The most popular reason quoted for continuing with its use was its power

as a tool in building relationships with the young people, what could be a better recommendation for using sport in tackling social exclusion?

### **Implications for Closing the Gap**

The pilot has shown that the CtG project has proved an effective way to ensure that this group of socially excluded young people benefit from enhanced opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity, furthermore it has been a means of bringing about sustainable organisational change. CtG will now seek to test this in a wide range of other settings and evaluate if this methodology is readily transferable. It is clear from the pilot that several areas of the programmes work are critically important especially; work with staff from partner organisations; ensuring management support and ‘buy in’ from partner organisations; providing training that met both the constraints of partner organisations and the needs of staff who may not have traditionally been involved in sport.

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## **Practising knowledge: academic- practitioners' narratives of career and identity**

Linda Bell, Middlesex University, UK

### **Introduction and background**

This paper discusses an on-going project which explores narrative accounts of male and female academic- practitioners about their careers and perceived identities. These individuals have qualified and practiced in at least one health or social care practitioner role (for example, social work or speech and language therapy). Most continue some form of practice, either directly or via professional supervision. They have also pursued academic recognition and qualification, undertaking a higher degree and working in academic settings, often within professional education.

The paper discusses methodological aspects of the project and initial findings from interviews. I draw on current discourses relating to power, managerialism and governance within overlapping higher education and health and social care sectors (Dent & Whitehead (eds), 2002; Morley, 2003). Academic-practitioners work with discourses about 'knowledge', 'practice' and related concepts (such as 'competence') on an everyday basis in their higher education careers and in constructing their identities. The project is informed by an overall anthropological understanding of 'identity' (Barth, 2000), further discussed by Jenkins (2004).

My previous work in this area (Bell & Birch, 2007; Bell and Nutt, 2002) suggests the complexity of power and ethical relations underpinning these kinds of academic- practitioner identities and careers; these issues are interwoven within academic and/or practitioner/service sectors (Ford and Harding, 2004). Morley's work on power in higher education (2003) had not specifically identified academic-practitioners within the sample of higher education academics she interviewed. Deem (2002, 2003) interviewed managers within higher education contexts, ('manager-academics') but she also did not specifically focus on academic-practitioners. This seemed to be a 'gap', significant because increasing numbers of academic staff have dealt with large influxes of practitioner students to UK universities since the mid-1990s (e.g. by 2001, 21% of full-time students in universities in England were studying nursing (HESA 2006).

In a previous study involving training managers in health and social care agencies in London and the south east of England, I drew upon Morley's and Deem's work to consider the construction of 'new' forms of identities by those involved in education and training *outside* the higher education sector (Bell, 2007; Bell, Jordan & Rounce, 2001). How

these identities may relate to the organisational settings in which individuals work was not straightforward; as I noted (Bell, 2007), those research participants' "activities take place across collaborative spaces that clearly relate to the managers' constructions of their own identities as training experts" (p.290). In Ford & Harding's study of health organizations (Ford & Harding, 2004) front line workers saw work 'place' as location based (but with little connection to an overarching view of 'the organisation') whereas managers appeared to focus their organisational activities in 'space not place'. Using Ford & Harding's ideas, I further suggested we are viewing a merging of organizations and managers' identities and that

*"these narratives thus present and construct organizational forms and embodied and performed identities, apparently simultaneously."* (Bell, 2007, p 301)

### **The current project: aims and methods**

I therefore decided to focus currently on academic-practitioners working *within* higher education, and to explore how they construct narratives which seek to explain how their career and personal identities have been shaped and directed. Barth's work (1975; 2000) had already provided me with a useful anthropological starting point on 'identities' but I was aware of Jenkin's criticism of Barth (Jenkins, 2004, p.104) in suggesting that there is a necessary sense of direction from the individual towards the collective; instead we should recognise the dialectical, processual construction of identities and identifications which is implied by Barth's work. My own anthropological background may also have influenced me in wanting to move ideas about 'identity' from individuals towards 'collectivities'. (Jenkins, 2004, p.16).

I was also aware of my own shifting identity/ies, having trained and worked as a professional librarian for 10 years prior to becoming an academic. Maybe I was not the "academic" others thought I was; my attitude towards academic writing turned out to differ from that of a co-author with whom I prepared a recent book chapter on power in higher education (Bell and Birch 2007). I tended to see writing as a key 'symbol' of being an academic, whilst my co-author did not, and we both found this surprising. We were able to acknowledge that academic-practitioners' identities, power and positioning in HE all seem to be on the rise but this raised uncomfortable issues for us both. At the end of the chapter we suggested academic-practitioners are perhaps:

‘reinventing themselves differently from other academics (who are used to relying solely on texts/academic writing) , and/or they are bringing back different aspects of their professionalism (with a focus on skills, competencies and professional values) into academia? ’  
(Bell & Birch, 2007)

The key research questions for my current project therefore emerged as:

- how do academic-practitioners speak about their work as teachers, lecturers, researchers, managers or clinicians /practitioners ?
- how are concepts such as ‘knowledge’, ‘practice’ or competence’ used within these narratives?
- what are academic-practitioners’ specific identifications within their work spheres as expressed in narratives and ways of working?
- how may managerialist discourses underpin and constitute these narratives, and what are the wider implications for HE ?

I have tried to take a ‘grounded theory’ approach to sampling so as to be able to build up theoretical insights into how notions such as ‘knowledge’ and ‘practice’ are defined and used by academic- practitioners. This has been used to identify (so far) participants from social work, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and complementary health. However, this approach raises issues about overall scope of the sample, including issues of gender and other characteristics. I intend to interview at least 30 individuals, though I will be guided by theoretical considerations and emerging themes. I am for example considering whether or not I should interview ‘other’ academics who are not academic-practitioners, so as to compare construction of different forms of identity, but this may prove too broad a strategy. Another issue to resolve is whether a ‘grounded theory’ approach is compatible with ‘narrative’ approaches to analysis (Elliott, 2005).

Interviewees have been asked to outline their career ‘milestones’ and then encouraged to speak about the epistemological bases of their work, rather than being directed at any fixed parameters in relation to their ‘profession’ (such as qualifications or specific professional tasks). This is because I see the concept of ‘profession’ itself as a contested term (Dent & Whitehead, 2002). Questioning was focused instead around interviewees’ deeper notions of knowledge, learning and practice as well as how these concepts are operationalised. This led into discussions about interviewees’ current work and future plans within higher education and revealed how they view aspects of teaching/learning with their professional students.



## Some initial results

Issues of power in relation to the transmission of knowledge are emerging as key to the present study. As Good (1994) has argued, a profession (such as medicine) ‘constructs its objects’ via the educational practice of its practitioners. This surely has a powerful conceptualising influence on the development of identities. Comparing my own study with Barth’s work on ritual and knowledge amongst the Baktaman people in Papua New Guinea (Barth, 1975), we could argue that, like them, the senior practitioners I have interviewed hold ‘professional’ knowledge within their minds and although they are not isolated geographically like the Baktaman, their identities are nevertheless delimited/bounded by the possession and practice of the (expert) knowledge itself. This expertise remains a challenge to competing claims of ‘managerialist’ perspectives in higher education settings (Morley, 2003; Clarke & Newman, 1997).

Such knowledge may be perceived as available to be transmitted to novice practitioners via practice ‘learning opportunities’, but these only partially reflect what is being transmitted; as demonstrated in interviews, some significant underpinning theoretical/academic knowledge may be absorbed and then used or sometimes withheld by academic-practitioners (especially those who identify mainly as ‘teachers’). As one interviewee pointed out

*‘I don’t teach people a Marxist perspective ... but my own way of talking about [aspects of social work practice] is informed by it’.*  
(Social work academic-practitioner)

Another interviewee said she was influenced by, and had trained “very much under the ‘medical model’”. Although she recognised its shortcomings, she was reluctant to lose this aspect of her existing ‘expertise’ and tried to incorporate it into her subsequent ideas and practice when working with students. Some interviewees spoke about research priorities, and how these connected with complex notions of being an ‘academic’, ‘researcher’ or ‘clinician’. These issues were expressed differently by interviewees as they struggled with creative ways of incorporating them into their own career narratives, controlling or being controlled by powerful forces.

Current discourses around interprofessionalism, multi-agency working and partnership are ubiquitous within health and social care sectors in the UK. Some interviewees were quick to point out precise contradictions between ‘interprofessionalism’ and their own continuing need for a sense of ‘professionalism’, even in its more ‘entrenched’ forms. However, interviewees tended to align what they identified as

the 'academic' or 'theoretical' with the 'abstract', except where they themselves could find a way to apply such theoretical knowledge to professional practice or education e.g. Marxist thought. Various connections and overlaps (or what one interviewee described as 'underlaps') were identified by interviewees, for example between theory/practice, or the abstract/pragmatic. One interviewee spoke of different layers of knowledge encompassing the underpinning theoretical or abstract, the applied, and the entirely practice-based, all of which she felt students would have to manage somehow simultaneously.

Of relevance here is Barth's (1975) comment that the knowledge corpus he has theorised

*' will only persist to the extent that its parts are frequently re-created as messages and thereby transmitted.'* (p. 255).

These recreations were tangible actions carried out by Baktaman people as rituals and this aspect of Barth's work was where I had originally made a connection with the activities of student-practitioners, 'doing practice'. The extent to which this form of (professional) practice might be seen as a ritual is an interesting but as yet untested proposition in my own study.

### **Tentative conclusions**

Some of this current group of interviewees have presented a clear identification as 'teacher' or 'educationalist' whilst others simply said they had moved from practice closer to academia or, in at least one case, predicted a return from academia to a more practice based career. All have to deal with a considerable level of complexity in their positions as academic-practitioners.

The extent to which their institutions encourage and support those constructing their identities within this 'dual allegiance' framework is a factor which I consider needs further exploration ( see Ford & Harding, 2004). I have a sense, when considering these narratives, that interviewees are 'playing one identity against another' rather than simply being overwhelmed by a multiplicity of responsibilities or concepts. Further work on this project will reveal how far this apparently positive view is upheld.

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## **Being good and being nice. Identity Work in Social Work.**

Kerstin Svensson, School of Social Work, Lund University, Sweden

### **Introduction**

Social workers' task is to assess, develop and change either the behaviour or the identity of their clients and therefore their professional expertise is about how to form identities. Social workers' work could be described as "creating subjectivity", making people free and able to choose (Rose 1999). On the other hand they are in a continuing identity process themselves in their role and their own creation of subjectivity. Since Human Service Organizations (HSO) work with moral projects of normalisation, there is seldom an obvious right or wrong. Every encounter can therefore turn into a negotiation. In this negotiation the clients' subjectivity is under development and possible actions and understanding are discussed. Meanwhile, the identity of both the client and the social worker are negotiated. How does this affect the social workers identity and self-respect? How do they describe themselves? Do the modes differ depending on how obvious the exercise of power is?

In this article I have returned to three empirical materials from three different projects in organizations that operate in Sweden: probation service, victim support and social services (Laanemets and Svensson 2005, Svensson 2001, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b, 2005a, 2005 b, 2006). In all three studies the role of the helper has been a part of the focus, and therefore, these materials can tell us something about the identity process in the role of the helper. Totally there are about 40 interviews with clients and about 70 interviews with social workers, where they have described not only their conception of social work own experiences, but also their picture of the social workers and clients they have met.

Charles Tilly (2002) argues that identities are social arrangements that are enhanced through socially constructed and continuously negotiated stories. Randall Collins (2004) has argued that identity is shaped in every situation. The individual identity comes from the chains of rituals a person has experienced. If we add the descriptions from Collins and Tilly, we can understand identity as a social arrangement created in specific situations, and when situations are reoccurring, the identity formation gets stronger. In organisations, actors are given roles connected to their position in the organisation. Individuals has different roles in different context and the experiences made in the specific combination of roles an individual experiences influences how his or her identity is constructed. Therefore the role given by a professional assignment, or

otherwise by an organization that one repeatedly acts for, has an important part in shaping a persons identity.

HSO have assignments to “help” people in society in order to make it better for them, as well as assignments to care for the well-being of the community and society (Hasenfeld 1983). In contemporary society this means mainly to help the clients being able to make the right choices, form the best position possible in their context and that way make society cohesive (cf. Rose 1999). The help given is therefore pointed in certain directions; it strives towards normality and is preceded by an assessment of the deviance that should be corrected. In this assessment, the social worker measures the individual and compares her with “the normal” (Hasenfeld 1983).

This normality is the aim for a process where the needy person’s identity is questioned and where a caring power is used. Caring power is a concept coined by two Dutch researchers, Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan (1999). It derives from Foucault’s concept of pastoral power, and has essentially the same meaning, but the term “caring” more clearly points at the actions. A caring power is exercised with kindness and in a spirit of doing what is said to be the best for the person helped. The helper defines what is best for the one who is to be helped and then promises him that he will have a better life if he follows the advice given by the helper. In this way, the helper dictates the conditions and the one who wants the help has to accept the conditions (Svensson 2002a).

In the three HSOs that are studied, help and control are combined in a caring power. In Victim Support caring dominates power, although the conversations in this organization also aim towards normality, in understanding of normal reactions and normal actions as a victim. In Social services the actors combines help and control in a flexible caring power and the social worker balances between help and control, organization and client, professional and personal. In probation service control is obvious and support is regarded as an offer.

### *Victim Support*

Victim Support has a non-profit association as a base. From there volunteers are engaged, and in half of the Swedish Victim Support organizations there are some persons employed for co-ordination the work. As a volunteer you start with a shorter course that gives you a ground for acting in this role.

The volunteers in Victim Support describe the joy of helping. By helping, they become someone, not just anybody, but a good person that can help. In helping victims they get response and this is what they describe as the meaning of helping. One of the volunteer said: "*I think it is a pleasure being able to be of help to someone*". Another one adds: "... *feedback, I think, that's what makes you continue, knowing that you can help*". In their stories they underline that a motive for volunteering is that you can create a positive identity, it makes it possible to both do good and be nice. Since the volunteer gets her identity by helping, the identity is hard to maintain in cases that need more help than can be given. But not being able to help in the actual situation does not mean that the efforts were in vain. It happens that victims come back afterwards and thank the volunteer. One of the volunteers told a story about such a situation and finished:

*You don't think you have done anything. You have just been sitting there, thinking 'How should I be able to help this poor person?' and then it shows that she has experienced it as a valuable help. That is very positive. Then you get very happy and you feel that somewhere, deep inside, despite my insufficiency, she felt that my listening was supportive.*

In voluntary work the helpers define themselves as "ordinary human beings" and get their identity as good, nice and helpful. This role leaves room for not being able to act in certain situations. Since they are just human beings that want to do something good, they are not supposed to be experts. In that way, their identity can only be formatted as good, or as insufficient, but never negative.

### *Social Services*

While volunteers in Victim Support are categorically regarded as nice people, social worker in the social services tries to combine being nice with doing right and doing good. Social workers in the social services are professionals that have a combination of help and control in every action and the caring power is evident. Social workers offers help, but only in a way that the social services are interested in arranging it.

When we talk with drug users that are familiar with the social services, they often make a clear distinction between the specific social worker and the social services. They could for example say: "*I know nothing about the social services, but my social worker is a very nice person, she does everything she can to help me*". In this dualistic view, the social worker

represents the supportive part of the system, while the organization as a whole is described in terms of obstacles, repression and power.

In stories told about their work with drug users, sequences about humanity and engagement reoccur. Also clients in the social services describe the social workers as humane and engaged. One client said:

*My social worker has done wonders. She has really been there for me. It is a woman I really respect. There are no barriers between us, there is mutual respect. She has always supported me and always been there. She is a fantastic woman.*

Here we get a story about the fantastic helper; a story that matches how volunteers argue, but here it is a civil servant, and not only a helpful civil servant. The social worker that is described in these words has actually put the client under coercive care because of his heavy drug use. A powerful, controlling act is carried out, and the object for this intervention talks very warmly about the social worker. How can we understand that? In the stories told about the social services it is shown that separating the social worker from the organization makes it possible to on the one hand carry out controlling interventions and coercive measures and on the other hand still be regarded as nice and good.

### *Probation service*

Probation service is a part of the Criminal Justice System. It is organized in the same organization as the prisons. In the probation service skilled social workers and others with similar education work. Since the clients in probation service serve a sentence, control is an expected part of the work. The offenders expect the social workers to control them and the support they can get is subordinated the control. Probation is first regarded as control.

The stories told from probation have the same character as the stories we have heard from the other organizations. Social workers as well as clients relate to kindness. Here kindness is understood as a way to deal with the control. When social workers help clients in navigating in to other organizations it is regarded as help, although it could be seen as control since it is a question of governing their way of making choice.

When a social worker in the probation service says: *“Sometimes you have to make ways for the client. You have to help him make contacts and maybe also make phone calls for him”* a client can say *“I think my social*

*worker is really good. She really tries to help me through this*". This way the caring power is exercised so that, at the same time, the client is "normalised" and controlled, while the social worker develops the identity of being nice and doing good.

The positive identity can also be combined with the identity of the educated professional; these are identities in different relationships. One probation officer argues:

"In order to make your voice heard in contact with authorities, or whatever, it is good to have knowledge and maybe also a certain language. Because sometimes, it is so that you have to act on behalf of the client. Sometimes you have to make phone calls for the client, and if you then have an academic education, I think you have a way of talking that makes the message come through".

Academic education is not required in relation to the client, but to other social workers. In order to relate to them she argues for a specific knowledge and language that defines her as professional, an identity used in relation to other professionals. This is described as a mean to get things done for the client, and doing things for clients is a part of being good and being nice.

## **Discussion**

In all the three organizations social workers define themselves primarily in the relationship to the client, where they strive to be regarded as nice and good persons. Caring power is exercised in a way that makes the actions taken possible to understand as kindness, no matter if it is supportive actions in a voluntary setting or controlling and coercive measures from authorities. There seems to be no bigger difference between volunteers and professional social workers in this identity work. Both categories get response from both the clients and their organization and both strive to get feed back as being primarily nice and good. These aspects are more evident than for example being correct, effective or any other word that could describe a civil servant.

Since the roles discussed combines power and care, the persons in the roles separate the understanding of helping and controlling. We can see that the interviewed tend to make the positive and supportive parts of their work personal, but when they cannot help or when have to use coercive measures, they understand this as a part of the assignment. This way they can regard them selves as good, although they are controlling



and governing. This is most obvious in the stories from the social services, where the social worker is understood as separated from the organization she acts for.

In the specific situation a combination of the structural setting and the situations the actors have experienced earlier in life coincide. Consequently, work in human service organization is a complicated task since the object for the interventions also reacts, interacts and interferes and thereby co-acts in shaping the possible positions for the organization's actors. At the same time the organization's actors are flexible and in every situation they can choose either a strict professional identity, or an identity that matches the personal needs. They are continuously working, not only with the question of 'who am I', but also with the question 'who would I like to be?', as well as the other individuals in the interaction are.

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**Neo-liberal influences in local authorities**  
**Entrepreneurship education and privatisation**  
Dr. Sara Cervantes, Luleå local authority, Sweden

**Introduction**

Entrepreneurship education is viewed as an important issue for increasing economic growth and new business (Cervantes, 2005; Mahieu, 2006). The discussion about developing entrepreneurship is an international, national, and regional question. In Europe, the focus is on how to stimulate positive attitudes about entrepreneurship throughout the education system to increase business and economical power (European Commission, November 2002). By letting youth throughout upper secondary school discover entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment the wish is to change attitudes and increase the number of small businesses (Cervantes, 2005).

In Sweden the political development is towards an increased neo-liberalism since the economic difficulty during the 1990s. These changes required changing opinions about the public sector. Blomgren (1997) noted that during 1980s concerns about monopolies have been raised. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) concluded that the public debate during 1980s meant that economics became the dominant concern in the Swedish government. In this respect “privatisation and marketisation enact the economic discourse of neo-liberalism” (Clarke, 2004:36). The movement is towards replacement of the public interests with the private interests that are co-ordinated by markets (Clarke, 2004). To dissolve the public sphere, neo-liberalism and globalisation are identified as two important cores (Clarke, 2004). During the last year, competition and privatisation of public services, conditions that increase efficiency, have become more prevalent (Trygged, 2000).

This article focuses on a local authority that has gone from a local authority without competition from independent<sup>3</sup> schools to a local authority with competition from independent schools. At the same time as independent schools start the demographical situation changes which means decreased amount of pupils in age 6-15. The local authority also starts a new education programme in entrepreneurship at the upper secondary school together with the local industry - an entrepreneurship programme that was in a public regime and hardly influenced by local industry and which become private in august 2007. The method that has

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<sup>3</sup> In the Swedish Education Act the concept Independent Schools are used for schools that have another owner than local authorities or country council. The independent schools are free from fees; instead it is the pupils home local authority that pays the independent school per pupil/year.

been used is qualitative, people in leading positions in the local authority has been interviewed. The main purpose with the article is to show how people in leading position in the local authority argue about the transformation of the entrepreneurship programme from belonging to the public sector to become an independent upper secondary school but also to show how they view competition from independent schools.

### **Increased neo-liberalisation**

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the public sector is dissolving as marketisation and privatisation increase (Clarke, 2004). The public sector is changing (Smart, 2003; Clarke, 2004) and the interest for entrepreneurship grows (Cervantes, 2005). Harvey (2005) notes that deregulation, privatisation, and the state withdrawn from several areas of social provision have become rare. In countries like New Zealand and Sweden has, versions of neo-liberal theory been used in some policies and practices. Harvey (2005) means that it in Sweden exist a circumscribed neo-liberalisation and that it during 1990s was a movement towards neo-liberalisation in Sweden.

The neo-liberalisation is not equal instead it is dependent on the context of national and local politics (Clarke, 2004). In the 1990s, the economic difficulties in Sweden have implications for the privileges of its welfare state, resulting in a movement from full-employment policies founded on expansion of the public sector (Hirst, 1998:9). The main resistance has been between the individual and the state, where individual alternative encouraged (Larsson, 1997). In this respect “*privatisation and marketisation enact the economic discourse of neo-liberalism*” (Clarke, 2004:36). However, the concept will be used as a way of accounting for recent processes of change in Swedish society. Use of the term neo-liberalism gives a reflective space when looking for the ‘grit’, for “*taking notice of the recalcitrance, resistance, obstruction and incomplete rule*” (ibid:44) that characterizes neo-liberalism’s limitations in affecting society.

In the process of dissolving the public sphere, neo-liberalism and globalisation are identified as two important cores (Clarke, 2004). Neo-liberalism, however, does not flowing in an empty space; it has to deal with resistance, blockages and refusals. Clarke – referring to resistance, refusal, and negotiation “*that mean the outcomes (so far) do not match the word imagined in neo-liberal fantasies*” (ibid: 27). Dependent on national politics and regional context, neo-liberalism performs differently (Thomas et al. 2004). In this article, resistance, blockages, and refusals

are understood as socially constructed in a specific context, but produced and performed in another context that is specific to events, actors, and practices (ibid.).

Harvey (2005) believes that neo-liberalism is a political and economical practice that suggests that human wellbeing is reached in the best way through liberal individual entrepreneurial freedom as well as through conditions inside the institutional framework that are characterised by strong rights, free market, and free trade. Neo-liberalism is under the banner of the market and is rehearsing an attack on the crumbling foundations of primary modernity such as the trade union and welfare state (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

Neo-liberalism is in conflict with everyday experience from local community, work, and families (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Neo-liberalism threatens the welfare state because of the self-sufficient individual ultimately implies the disappearance of shared obligation (ibid.). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argue that because neo-liberalism is about abstraction, it is a threat to the welfare state. Neo-liberalism means that social exclusion becomes the rule and where the success of the market decides who can exist or not, therefore they mean that neo-liberalism is not a part of the reality.

### **Increased neo-liberalisation in local authorities**

The increased neo-liberalism in the Swedish society is shown in different ways, one is through the increased focus on entrepreneurship in education in order to improve young people's attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Cervantes, 2005). Politicians on the international, national, and local level find it important to improve entrepreneurship education in upper secondary school in order to compete in the market (ibid.). People that represent the public sector argue that it is important to increase entrepreneurship because they believe the future is in the private sector. Another way is through the changes in the school system that focuses on the market and business (Lindkvist et al., 1997). The changes are the foundation to the debate about independent schools (Lindbom, 2007). These arguments show an increase in neo-liberalism where marketisation is important for the future of society (Clarke, 2004). The public interest where public sector is in focus is influenced by private interests that are coordinated by the market (ibid.). The public sector educates youth in entrepreneurship in order to increase the private sector. Although the politicians in this local authority are social democrats, neo-liberal thought has influenced them. It exists, as Harvey (2005) argues, a circumscribed

neo-liberalism. The increased neo-liberal thought among people in leading positions influences the education for young people.

In the local authority in this investigation, marketisation has become central for schools as the availability of independent schools increases. To compete with independent schools, the local authority has some strategies as for example marketisation of the school and cooperation with the local industry. In August 2006, a new entrepreneurship programme started in upper secondary school in the local authority. The programme was initiated by local industry and started as a project between the local industry, local authority, and University. The cooperation between the local authority and local industry are among people in leading position viewed as an important issue in order to compete with independent schools that also want to start entrepreneurship education.

The cooperation with the industry is a strategy for the leaders in the schools and is viewed as a way to be first on the market, and by that keep and attract pupils. The lack of possibility for the entrepreneurship education to take pupils from the whole of Sweden led in august 2007 to privatisation of the entrepreneurship education. In order to have national recruitment the education must be so special that it cannot be connected with the national education programme (Education Act). The easiest way to have national recruitment is to become an independent education.

What we can see is that local authority in order to recruit pupils from other part of Sweden has to make the entrepreneurship programme independent. The opinion is that privatisation is the easiest way to achieve national recruitment of pupils because of the rules that exist concerning national recruitment to public driven schools. In this respect it exist a blockage in the Education Act for municipalities that want to recruit pupils from other parts of Sweden to their education. But it also shows how local authority leaders find strategies to start the education that is needed. In this case it means that the municipality has to agree to and help the entrepreneurship programme to become an independent school. The local politicians negotiate (Clarke, 2004) with their main opinion that schools should be in the public regime and not privatises. This shows how circumscribed (Harvey, 2005) neo-liberalism influences local politicians and their decisions.

The circumscribed neo-liberalism shows that local politicians because of the circumstances must find alternative ways to handle the situation. The Swedish school system is faced with new competition and the local social democratic politicians negotiate (Clarke, 2004) with the values about

independent schools when they argue that the usual standpoint is against independent schools but in this case it is a good way of working with the local industry and the entrepreneurship education. Because of the laws concerning national recruitment to upper secondary school the local authority leaders had to negotiate in order to start and keep quality in the education. The negotiation means that the school in their cooperation with local industry has to transform the entrepreneurship programme to an independent school. As a consequence of neo-liberal influences where independent schools are a new reality for this local authority, new strategies are in focus.

The cooperation between the local authority and local industry is a strategy for the leaders in the schools to compete with independent schools that has their focus on entrepreneurship. The leaders' arguments and actions show resistance (Clarke, 2004) towards independent schools in general. It exist resistance towards independent schools and local authority leaders work in order to compete with a future independent school in the area of entrepreneurship. In order to compete with independent schools in entrepreneurship, a good co-operation with the local industry is considered important. In addition, the argument from the leaders shows that local authority leaders are forced to privatise the entrepreneurship programme in order to compete with a future independent school in entrepreneurship and guaranties that the entrepreneurship programme has enough students.

The people in leading position argue that they are used to having a monopoly on the education market and they now have to change their way of working - now it deals about competition. This means that the schools have to develop and the action is towards marketing and co-operation with the pupils' parents. The main opinion is that people in the public school system must believe in themselves and that they must show the pupils and parents what they are good at. The marketing of education is in this respect something new for teachers, principals, and people in other leading positions in the public sector.

As Harvey (2005) argues the increased neo-liberalism in political and economical practice means that deregulation and privatisation of public sector has become rare. This is as Harvey argues a kind of circumscribed neo-liberalism in the society that influence people. The result shows that the circumstances with the threats of independent schools makes local authority leaders find strategies to deal with the changed situation.



## Concluding thoughts

This paper focuses on one local authority that has started a new entrepreneurship programme at upper secondary school and how people in leading positions argue about the transformation of the education programme from public to independent. The paper also shows how local authority leaders argue about the increased amount of independent schools in the local authority. In the local authority a new situation has occur since 2004, which means an extension of independent schools. At the same time as independent school start the demographical situation changes. In this context the main purpose with this paper was to show how people in leading positions argue about the transformation of the new entrepreneurship programme from belonging to the education system in the public sector to becoming an independent upper secondary school. In addition, this study shows how they view the competition from independent schools.

The main founding shows that leaders in the local authority find alternative ways of dealing with the changing situation. On one hand they have to argue that they want to start an entrepreneurship education in public regime because they do not want an independent school in this area, on the other hand they have to support the application to transform the education to an independent school because of the laws concerning national recruitment of students. The main opinion among the local politician is that schools should be governed by the public sector. It exist both resistance and negotiations following Clark (2004) about the neo-liberalisation of education among people in leading position.

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**Challenged Professional Identities.**  
**New Public Management, the Rationalization of Social and Care**  
**Work and the Question of Inequality**

PD Dr. Brigitte Aulenbacher

PD Dr. Birgit Riegraf

**Introduction**

In the ambit of social and care work there is an ongoing debate between economy and ethics, market and morals (Wilken 2000). The debate can be interpreted as an indicator, that the current processes of rationalization are not taking place without contradictions. These processes and the contradictions are the subject of this paper. First, the concepts of New Public Management and of social and care work are confronted. Second, we discuss new demands of work for the employees. How social differences and inequalities are reorganized by the new modes of rationalization, is the question of the third and last part.

**Contradictory Concepts: New Public Management and Social and Care work**

The changes in societal frameworks, such as demographic alterations, growing social tensions, or financing limits within the public sector are leading to an increasing reorganisation of the core sectors of the welfare states in the OECD following the principles of the New Public Management (Nolan 2001; Pollitt/ Bouckaert 2004). Meanwhile the New Public Management is encroaching upon the social organisations of the so-called third sector. This concerns for example churches, which are taking over social and care work. This sector is stronger in Germany than in most other OECD-countries. The New Public Management is aiming in four directions (Naschold 2000; Riegraf 2005, 2005a, 2007): *First*, there is a cut-back of governmental guidelines in favour of an extension of freedom of choice for individual members of society and the private sector individual responsibility is stressed compared with the redistribution of the welfare state. *Second*, there is a reduction in the scope of state responsibilities. Governmental duties and services are either delivered completely to private enterprises or to the organisations of the so-called third sector or the services are increasingly generated under market conditions or the principles of private enterprise. *Third*, management instruments, where implemented in the public administration, are expected to perform services more cheaply, with greater output and with higher quality. *Fourth*, the decentralisation of governmental duties and responsibilities is intended to break up

undemocratic spin-offs, bureaucratic incrustations and the lack of transparency of the bureaucratic apparatus.

Aims and instruments in this context are: privatization programmes, construction of quasi markets, creation of competition between private, governmental and semi-governmental institutions, output-related payment, human resource management, contract-management, cost and performance accounting, etc.

The assumed positive connection between market-efficiency and the quality of services doesn't work out in the sector of social and care work. There are contradictions: This is becoming clear at the level of the concepts of individuals (or human beings). The concepts of New Public Management have their roots in Public Choice Theory. This is in opposition to the occupational concepts and the professional self-concepts of employees in social and care occupations.

In public choice theories, analyses and assumptions about individual behaviour in decision-making processes that are modelled on the economic sector are assigned to the public sector (Buchanan/ Tollison 1972; Self 1993). Public choice theories follow Rational Choice Theory in presuming the rational, advantage-seeking and egoistically-acting individual. The individual of Public Choice Theory is detached from any social context. In a situation where the individuals have to make decisions, they choose the alternative that seems to be most advantageous for themselves. In this concept, any orientation in the decision-making process, that is beyond immediate self-interest is rejected as naive. Citizens are conventionalised as consumers. They can co-determinate the public structure of supply if they get the choice of different services provider.

The implementation of the mechanisms of choice and the expansion of the mechanism of competition both aim to strengthen the egoistic and self-oriented-individual. In public choice theories, this approach leads to increasing common welfare. Continuative questions, such as those of social justice, will be answered by this logic - if they are even accepted as a social problem - with reference to the mechanisms of the market. The orientations of the professions of social and care work aim in the opposite direction. Since the 1970s, the concepts of social and care work have followed a holistic view and a holistic design in their work (Mühlum et al. 1997). Furthermore, this could be legitimating - despite and even because of the low pay (in any case in Germany) - a high social reputation. On the conceptual level of ethical images, the auxiliary and

selfless character of the work is stressed. For example, ideas and images such as: to "be there for people who need care", "be aware of people's social situations and contexts", "being able to waste time for people's requirements" or to "be supportive in all situations and needs of life" - to refer only to some of the concepts of the sector.

The leading methods and concepts refer to individuals in all their psychic, physical and social belongings and take the social context into consideration. There is an acceptance of the necessity to reform the public sector, but the discussion stresses the necessity of public care of the client.

### **New Modes of Rationalization and Contradictory Demands of Work**

From the perspective of the sociology of work and industrial relations, the reorganization of the public care of life, which up to here has been discussed within the framework of research on New Public Management, can be understood as the marketization of organizations (Sauer/ Döhl 1997). This means, that real or fictive markets are implemented in social relations or processes, which had been organised otherwise before – for example, personally or bureaucratically. Marketization applies to relations and processes between organisations, between organisations and persons and between persons. In this way, market-oriented efficiency becomes, more than in the past, a regulating effect on demands of organisations and work. And it becomes a direct or indirect point of reference in daily work and agency. This importance is mediated, for example, by budgeting, objectives, numbers of cases, calculations of work, time and costs. (Moldaschl/ Sauer 2000)

The marketization of organizational and work relations is accompanied by two further processes: The delimitation and the subjectivisation of work. The topos "delimitation" means – from an objective perspective – the deregulation of work. Previous demarcations between work and further parts of life – by fixed yearly, weekly or daily work time as well as work volumes and tasks – are declining. Collective bargaining tends to be replaced by individual negotiations and arrangements. More and more, employees are obliged to limit demands by their selves. (Kratzer/ Sauer 2003; Kratzer/ Sauer 2007; Sauer 2006) The topos "subjectivisation" of work describes how the delimited work – from a subjective perspective – is managed by a new access to the employees' potentials. Market-efficient forms of rationalization not only aim at the formal, professional and further extra functional qualifications, but also try to mobilize the whole person, the creative and innovative potentials as well as the ethical

and moral orientations to cope efficiently and in cost-saving ways with the flexible and therefore very complex adaptation to the markets. (Arbeitsgruppe SubArO 2005; Aulenbacher 2005; Lohr/ Nickel 2005; Moldaschl/ Voß 2002; Lohr )

Using these topos for research on social and care work, we can note: *First*, delimited work and personal commitment are nothing fundamentally new in these segments – they are part of the professional models and of the specific strain in this human oriented work (Wendt 1995). But now the employees, *second*, are challenged in a new way by the contradictions, that emerge from the market-efficient rationalization of social and care work. In this way, *third*, they have to react personally and professionally, when in the framework of market-oriented rationalization care instead of self-care, social justice and equal opportunity are aimed at, too.

### **Market oriented Efficiency and the Question of Social Differences and Inequalities**

Research shows, that the implementation of New Public Management Instruments is accompanied by social differences and inequalities in the distribution of benefits. Looking for explanations for this empirical finding one important point seems us to be, how the employees deal with contradictory demands.

Thus, on the one hand, especially in the cities, the “difficult customers” of social work are an increasing challenge. The “aging” society and the growing refusal of domestic care caused by the changes in family structures challenge the public care of older people. On the other hand, the field is economized by divergent measures: Numbers of cases to deal with increase, time—tables become more restrictive, economic measurements of productivity are implemented (Krenn 2004, Otto/ Schnur 2000). Therefore the employees have to deal with their clients and to care for them in work forms and, concerning the organisations, in cost settings and modes of balancing, which are directly contradictory to a holistic and preventive approach.

Referring to the ethical aim to provide benefits without regard to the person on the one hand and the latent destruction of the holistic and preventive character of the work on the other hand, the employees establish, so our thesis, their priorities – in favour, or not, of especially needy or already failed people, of handicapped groups, of persons deserving aid. Such lists of priorities are practical solutions, because they

are conform to the principles of rationalization (Siegel 1993, Aulenbacher 2005), sanctioned by professional standards und open for personal engagement.

As both the sociology of work and industrial relations and gender and organization studies point out, gender differences, ethnic backgrounds and social positions can be evoked in such contradictory and however contingent work situations like the above mentioned to reduce the complexity (Heinz/ Nadai 1998; Wilz 2002; Aulenbacher 2007). In our context, such a contingent social validation of gender, race and class results in putting rationalization – at least for the moment – beyond criticism by reorganizing social differences and inequalities and instead making the already difficult daily work even more difficult.

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## **Critical success factors for women in management careers**

Paula Loureiro

Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave, Portugal

Carlos Cabral-Cardoso

NEGE – Management Research Unit, University of Minho, Braga,  
Portugal

### **Introduction**

The literature stresses that the growing participation rate of women in the labour force has not been followed by similar figures in management positions. Although the overall number of management positions has gone up steadily in the last decades, the proportion of women in top positions remains well below parity (O’Leary & Ickovics, 1992; Fagenson, 1993; Powell & Butterfield, 1994; Solomon, 1998; Brett & Stroh, 1999; Cotter et al, 2001; Monroe, 2002). That is true worldwide and Portugal is no exception (Cabral-Cardoso, 2004).

The “glass ceiling” is a metaphor often used to describe a variety of barriers that prevent qualified individuals and women as a group from advancing to top positions in their organizations. The “glass” is intended to represent barriers that are not easily visible at first sight, but that are nevertheless effective (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Fagenson, 1993; Powell & Butterfield, 1994; Daily, Certo & Dalton, 1999; Powell, 1999; Albrecht, Bjorklund & Vroman, 2003).

The glass ceiling is made up of various components. Sex stereotypes and the social roles attributed to each sex are strongly rooted in social relationships and reflect gender ideologies that prevail in working organizations. The culture and management model present in most organizations are still strongly masculine, making it difficult for women to integrate and succeed in those contexts (Northcraft & Gutek, 1993; Powell, 1999; Rosener, 2000). The sexual segregation, the reduced mobility, the difficulties in accessing mentors and informal networks, along with work-family conflict are other factors affecting the progress of women in management careers (O’Leary & Ickovics, 1992; Burke & Mackeen, 1994; Wallace, 1995; Hardy, 1998; Athey, Avery & Zemsky, 2000; Williams, 2001).

This paper re-examines the barriers faced by women and the conditions required to attain top executive positions in the service sector.

### **Concept and dimensions of management career success**

Career success may be defined as having objective and subjective dimensions (Wayne *et al*, 1999). Objective career success includes

observable career achievements that can be measured, such as pay and promotion rates. Subjective career success has been defined as individuals' feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with their career, which is partially based on objective indicators (Wayne *et al.*, 1999). Based on this definition, a subjective indicator of career success may be the individual's self-report of career satisfaction, with facets including career advancement, salary growth, and professional development. Research also suggests that significant others may make judgments about an individual's career success based on objective indicators. As supervisors typically make the final recommendations for pay raise and promotion decisions, the supervisors' judgment of the subordinates' career success illustrates the relevance of significant others.

In sum, career success is defined in terms of "the employee's objective salary progression, the employee's career satisfaction, and the supervisor's subjective assessment of the employee's promotability" (Wayne *et al.*, 1999, p. 580).

### **Other determinants of management careers success**

In general terms, factors such as education, skills, influence, organizational support, and corporate culture are pointed out as determinants for women's career advancement (Wallace, 1995; Corsun & Costen, 2001; Day, 2002). Other studies also found that education, credential building capabilities, and willingness to take risks also increase the chances of success. Organizational support and corporate culture also play a part in management career success.

#### *Organizational support and career mobility*

Career mobility is viewed as an important factor to management career success (Loureiro, 2002). Two different systems of career mobility were identified (Wayne *et al.*, 1999): one based on a contest-mobility norm and the other based on a sponsored-mobility norm. The former assumes that the employees' attainment is largely a function of how hard they work and their abilities, education, and training, and is based on motivation and human capital concepts. The motivation concept helps to explain the importance of employees' effort on the job, and the concept of human capital helps to explain the role of employees' education level, work experience and participation in training programs.

The sponsored-mobility norm assumes that selected individuals receive high levels of support and guidance from superiors (Wayne *et al.*, 1999). This framework acknowledges the salient role of immediate supervisors in career success. Anchored in these two norms, a comprehensive model of the determinants of career success was suggested by Wayne and colleagues. Based on data from 245 supervisor-subordinate dyads, Wayne

*et al.* (1999) found limited support for the contest-mobility norm and strong support for the sponsored-mobility norm. Their findings illustrate the importance of the sponsorship provided by the immediate superior on both the subjective and the objective dimensions of career success. However, further research exploring the specific aspects of the supervisor-subordinate relationship that are most salient to career success is needed. Further research is also needed to explore other dimensions of career success in flat organizational structures where fewer upward promotion opportunities are available.

A review of the literature also highlights the critical role played by leaders in the career success of their subordinates and the advantages individuals gain from a strong relationship with their immediate supervisors (Wayne *et al.*, 1999). The resource and emotional support that leaders provide appears to be instrumental to salary and career advancement of their subordinates. On the other hand, mentorship relations and the network involvement with peers affect mobility and consequently help women attaining top level positions.

#### *Organizational culture*

Organizational culture is based on the assumptions, values, and norms shared by organizational members, and is another key factor in women's career advancement. An organizational culture that values all employees including women, and that includes management practices that lead to positive work experiences for women will enable them to more easily access top positions (Wallace, 1994; Dickens, 1998; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Eyring & Stead, 1998; Athey, Avery & Zemsky, 2000; van Vianen & Fisher, 2002). Recent studies have examined the value and legitimacy of mentoring as a management development strategy, particularly when knowledge is produced that is directly relevant to managing a diverse work force.

Some authors have argued that the key issue here is not the women's adjustment to a male culture but how to change the prevailing organizational culture so that glass ceilings are shattered for all groups, including women. Female leadership roles are fostered in organic organizational cultures that promote talent and allow various leadership styles to emerge (Inman, 1998).

#### *Other key factors*

Other factors have been pointed out in the literature as associated with women who have successfully shattered the glass ceiling (Maddy, 1993; Finn, 1997, Odum, 2002). Time, energy, and passion were also identified as necessary for shattering the glass ceiling (Maddy, 1993). These studies

suggest that there is a regular pattern of family stories in which women have sustained a courage-building experience in her developmental years, gaining faith in her own power. They shared common capabilities and strengths for leading complex and diverse organizations. Some themes also emerge from the literature supporting common values, motivations and actions among successful women, despite their diverse academic training and work history. However, without the required credentials and competencies, the aspiring leaders cannot take advantage of the opportunities they come across along the way. A network of contacts helps them identifying those opportunities, and mentors assist them in gaining knowledge and skills required for upward mobility (Maddy, 1993; Finn, 1997; Burke & Nelson, 2002; Odum, 2002).

### **Final considerations**

Rather than focusing solely on individual characteristics such as education and experience, the role of supervisors has been recognized as critical to women's career advancement. In that sense, women should be proactive in developing strong relationships with their immediate supervisors. Similarly, organizations should realize the importance of fair and diversity values on the development of their human resources. Organizations may benefit from training leaders and mentors to support and guide mentees thriving in the organization.

Despite all the contributions made to the literature in the last decades, further research is required to fully understand the women's career advancement. To shed some more light onto this issue and look at the conditions required for women to attain top-level positions, a study is now being conducted at some private and public Portuguese financial organizations. The study is limited to women and men in middle and top level positions and data is gathered using observation, interviews and document analysis. The study aims to identify the critical factors of women's success in the service sector

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## **Making A Better Set Of Tales: Public Leadership and Community Relations**

Christine Goodall PhD, Staffordshire University, UK

### **Introduction**

This paper focuses on one particular aspect of the findings of doctoral research undertaken between 2004 and 2006 in Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, England. The main aim of the study was to propose a model of improved community relations between host communities and new arrivals, against the background of the UK government's asylum seeker dispersal policy. The thesis used a framework built from the trust literature to examine the experience of the host community, in order to understand tensions between them and new arrivals, and difficulties of dealing with difference more generally.

The City does not have any real history of inward migration, and has tended to develop an insular culture that finds change and difference difficult to accommodate. The community has experienced tensions, which have in part contributed to a sharp rise in voting for the British National Party, and a significant presence for this party within the City Council. It is against this background that the research was conducted.

The research found that issues of identity were central to creating an environment where trust of the kind likely to facilitate tolerance, openness to difference and good community relations can be built and fostered. This paper focuses on this particular aspect of the research, exploring the issues of identity which were raised and their significance. It will suggest that leadership has a crucial role to play in countering the effects of negative identities at a community level, and in promoting trust and tolerance.

### **Focus on Host Communities**

The research set out to examine the topic of community relations primarily from the viewpoint of host communities in an area chosen for the dispersal of asylum seekers, rather than from the viewpoint of the new arrivals themselves. The reason for this was that most research on the subject has been conducted around the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers, rather than that of the host community. The literature review conducted for the study identified that, even in the relatively small body of literature that does exist with a host community focus, particular gaps can be identified.

Robinson (1987) recognized that historical, economic, social and cultural factors made an important contribution to attitudes to difference. Robinson understood that the interplay between national and local structural conditions and prevailing norms and political climates was crucial in the presence or not of tolerance to minorities. The review of the research literature carried out for the thesis on which this paper is based, identified a gap in relation to studies that examine the deeper levels of causation of intolerance referred to by Robinson. Many projects look at the role of the media, the effects of various demographic characteristics, and the existence of discourses of unfairness and resentment in local communities. However, there is a need to look deeper into attitudes of intolerance and try to provide more complex explanations for intolerance, and answers to the question of how to build more welcoming communities.

Castles et al, (2002) and Fyvie et al, (2003) identified a need for research which focuses on receiving communities and their attitudes and experiences, and uses as the level of analysis a local community set in its own particular context; historical, social, political and economic. Calls for this type of research have also been made in other studies (for example Anie, 2005; O’Neil et al, 2003). The aim of the research on which this paper is based was to attempt to answer this call.

### **Using Trust Theory as a Framework**

Trust theory was selected as the primary conceptual framework through which to investigate how better community relationships in the context of immigration might be fostered. Dee (2004) sees trust as an important factor in the building of healthy relationships between communities. He talks of a “congealed distrust which indicates political failure” and “settled patterns of mutual disdain” (Dee, 2004p3). Bach et al (1993), examining relations between settled communities and new arrivals in the United States, also see trust as important in analysing how positive community relationships can develop. This theme is echoed in Dees (2004), who claims that:

*“if people cannot trust each other at all then they cannot form even the most distant relationship that mere tolerance demands”* (Dees, 2004 p32).

Indeed, the Independent Review Team set up to report on disturbances in the English Northern towns drew attention to the need for trust in the

production of improved community relations (Community Cohesion Unit, 2003).

Eric Uslaner (2004a; 2004b; 2003a; 2003b; 2002) has developed a concept he calls “moralistic trust”, which, he argues, promotes tolerance and openness to difference. His work does not particularly relate to settled communities and new arrivals, but relates to tolerance in general. However, this model was a useful framework for investigating specific relationships between settled communities and new arrivals, as unlike most conceptions of trust, it specifically sets out to explain trust as a mechanism for the promotion of openness to those most unlike ourselves, and for this reason was employed as the central framework on which the author built a model for investigating attitudes of the host community in Stoke on Trent.

### **Building Blocks for Trust**

There is no space in this brief summary of the paper to present a detailed treatment of Uslaner’s model of trust. It is sufficient to state that his research, supported by a number of other authors, found that autonomy and control, optimism and equality are vital components for building the kind of trust that enables us to be open to others unlike ourselves (see Cvetkovich and Earle, 1995). Therefore the field research for the study, consisting mainly of qualitative semi-structured interviews with members of the public in Stoke on Trent, public and voluntary sector employees, community workers and local politicians, focused on these building blocks in order to attempt to understand how the community experienced becoming a host community for new arrivals.

### **Findings**

The research found that the community experienced a negative sense of collective identity. They saw their City as a place that had been abandoned by national politicians, and viewed with derision by much of the rest of the country. Extremely low wages, poor educational attainment and serious health inequalities all reinforced these views. People generally felt disempowered, with little control over their own lives and futures, and were lacking in a personal or shared sense of hope and optimism. Additionally they experienced feelings of unfair treatment, particularly in relation to the City Council, in which trust was extremely low. The author concluded that, in order to improve relationships between the local community and new arrivals, trust in local government needed

to be repaired, and hope, optimism and empowerment nurtured and fostered both for individual citizens and in the collective identity.

### *Making a Better Set of Tales*

If people in communities such as that in Stoke on Trent, fearful of the change around them and experiencing high levels of social and economic disadvantage, are to be provided with the building blocks for generalised trust which were identified in this study (a sense of control over their own circumstances, hope and optimism, a sense of fairness, some real economic and social equality, practical and emotional resources, self-efficacy and a good standard of educational opportunities), they need to trust their local institutions, and have leaders of those institutions who can lead them into a more positive future by creating a new story for the City. How can leaders do this?

An examination of literature from different disciplines provides a clue to how this might be achieved. It is a common theme that organisations and communities form their identities and the scripts by which they routinise and institutionalise behaviour through the view they hold of their past, which many authors conceptualise as their “story” or “tale”. Harre (2001) argues “all that is holding us back is our stories, and we can make a better set of tales available” (Harre, 2001 p38). The role of the leader is to help the community construct new stories out of the old ones to enable them to see a new future without abandoning what was good from the past. Reich (1990) describes this process as the leader giving voice to both the fears and hopes of the community and embodying them in new and convincing stories. For Cvetkovich and Earle (1995 p156) the generation of trust requires that communities “unchain themselves from their past and move into uncertain futures” and the role of the leader is to encourage people to “think about their past as contingent and to consider beneficial uses of the new” and to “encourage the discussion of possible futures”. For Stephenson and Wray, if communities like that in Stoke on Trent are not to be “placid victims of the political and economic forces that reduced their community to marginality” it is clear that “remembering the past is crucial to the regeneration of confidence in themselves and hopefully the wider community”, (Stephenson and Wray, 2005 p16).

Some useful insights into the reconstruction of a new future from the past can be found by turning to the organisational literature. It used to be a given that identities were fixed and enduring (Albert and Whetten, 1985), but more recently many authors see identities as more fluid and capable of change (Gioia et al, 2000). Fox-Wolfgramm et al conceptualise it as a

temporal continuum, beginning with the past (who we used to be), the present (who we are now), and the envisioned (who we would like to be). Gioia et al (2000) think of identities as dynamic and capable of change through a change in the meaning of labels attached to identities. Through a revisionist history the past may be interpreted in the light of the present. The desired change is linked to the past and framed in this light. A desired future identity determines how the past is reinterpreted, and leaders are important in this process. The process is not without risk as certain assumptions need to be challenged in order to bring about the desired change, which is why skilful leadership is important. Gioia et al refer to this process as adaptive instability or injecting ambiguity by design, which is a similar idea to the classic model of change through a process of unfreezing, change and refreezing outlined by Lewin (1958).

So this paper argues that leadership which has the vision to assist the community in Stoke on Trent to retell their story and create a positive future for themselves, in order to facilitate trust building through optimism, self-efficacy and autonomy, and to promote the regeneration of the City to help eradicate social and economic inequalities and build trust.

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## **Changing Leadership in the Public sector: Higher Education and Social Work in Sweden and England**

Elisabeth Berg\*, John Chandler\*\* and Jim Barry\*\*

\*Luleå University of Technology, Sweden \*\* University of East London,  
England

### **Introduction**

In this paper we offer an exploratory examination of the position of professionals working as middle managers in higher education and social work in Sweden and England. We open by considering the rise and pervasiveness of what has been termed the new public management, drawing inspiration, as it does, from private sector managerial techniques and mind-sets. We then consider the changing character of leadership/management models from trait approaches to post-heroism, and suggest that the terms leader and manager have become almost synonymous in the literature. We contend that these models, which offer a siren call to politicians and senior public sector professionals who seek efficiencies in those public sector organisations within their purview, and provide descriptive and prescriptive guidance to those aspiring to middle level positions, offer little more than imagined realities, abstracted from the everyday lives of those involved, in order to contrive change. In drawing on secondary sources we offer some tentative thoughts on the implications of this for those working in middle level positions in higher education and social work in Sweden and England.

### **The Development of the New Public Management (NPM)**

The recent introduction of the New Public Management (NPM) into the public sphere has been noted as bringing far reaching, albeit variable, change in a number of public sectors around the world, with England and Sweden acknowledged as early adopters of the reforms, from the late 1970's and early-mid 1980's respectively (Hood et al 1997; von Otter, 1999). In keeping with the temper of a neo-liberal turn the NPM has been used as a delivery mechanism for entrepreneurial government policies (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Du Gay, 1993, Hood 1995, and Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000) that seek to contain public expenditure, encourage private sector management, and forms of marketisation, in order to enhance public services and outcomes (Ferlie and Fitzgerald, 2002).

A number of concerns have been voiced about the changes, which in Britain are thought to have hastened the move towards an 'Audit Society' (Power, 1997) and a 'Managerial State' (Clarke and Newman, 1997). These include a shift in social relationships, which have been marked by



a decline of 'trust' (Trow, 1994), and the use of techniques such as performance management, which have given rise to 'unintended consequences' (Smith, 1995). Hood et al (1999) have argued that the NPM is now increasingly being established to regulate or oversee public sector organisations, through mechanisms of surveillance, as well as to engender competition. Moreover, so pervasive has the NPM been that Ferlie and Fitzgerald (2002, p.352), from a neo-stititutionalist perspective, see the NPM 'archetype' as not only dominant but also sustainable – and thus capable of successfully reproducing itself. The gendered nature of the changes, as well as responses to them, has only recently begun to receive attention in the growing critical literature.

The repercussions have been felt in higher education and social work. There has even been talk of the decline of donnish dominion (Halsey 1995) and the development of the McUniversity (Parker and Jary 1995), accompanied by challenges to social work that have seen the growth of technique and performativity alongside the decline of professional values, suggesting for some the dawning of a post-welfarist future (Hugman 2001). There have been challenges to the icy grip of private sector managerialism, transplanted into an oftentimes-unwilling public sector host, but these have often been seen as occurring at the micro-level (Chandler et al 2004), raising uneasy questions for some about the problematic notion of 'resistance' to the incursion of the NPM. But what is this private sector management that is being adopted and applied? In order to help us move towards an answer to this question, we turn to a consideration of models of leadership and management found in the literature.

### **Fashions and Fads: (Re)modelling Leadership and Management**

The literature on leadership and management is awash with descriptions and prescriptions of how to lead or manage, with a tendency to lump the two terms together depending on purpose as we will argue. Texts range from scholarly articles and academic tomes on the one hand to pop management airport lounge best sellers on the other. A number of different models can be identified, from a variety of perspectives, in these texts and all we can do here is to outline what we take to be the main schools of thinking.

The '*great-man*' model, which sees individuals as born to lead and possessing certain characteristics or traits is perhaps foremost, even if implicit. It is an historically resilient approach that seems to exist in the popular imagination despite the overall failure of research to identify consistent evidence of characteristics or traits, beyond the much-disputed

notion of 'intelligence', at least at moderate levels; the dearth of Great 'Women' being a particular feature of this approach. The '*directive or authoritarian*' model is another popular approach, with subordinates told what to do, following the 'one best way' dictum of Frederick Winslow Taylor, the pioneer of work-study and founder of 'Scientific Management'. Taylor is known for his recommendation that conception (thinking) be separated from execution (doing), leading it has subsequently been contended, to deskilling and alienation. The '*democratic or participative*' model, which recommends the involvement of subordinates in aspects of decision-making albeit invariably limited to their immediate work environment in line with so-called 'Human Relations' thinking, is a perspective that derives principally from the work of Elton Mayo; an approach dubbed 'cow' sociology by Daniel Bell (1962:250) because of its emphasis on the creation of a happy workforce. As happy cows produce more milk so, it is assumed, will happy workers produce more work. The '*contingency*' model, which proposes that leadership styles depend on prevailing circumstances, contends that style 'all depends' - on factors, for example, such as organisational size and structure. One of the key figures here is Fred Fiedler, whose work was based on a number of different groups, 'from bomber crews to basketball teams' (Thompson and McHugh 1995: 290).

Subsequent efforts have included the '*corporate culture*' model. This is associated with the work of Peters and Waterman (1982) and seeks to orchestrate organizational harmony as individuals learn to sing from the same hymn sheet by focusing on managerial visions and mission statements, in the endeavour to capture 'hearts and minds' with almost religious fervour, reflected in language and rituals. The subsequent difficulties with this approach came not least from the reliance on the accounts of senior organisational post holders whose views were more likely to derive from feed-back reported to them 'second-hand' or represent what they believed or hoped was actually going on in the lower echelons of their organisational hierarchies (Silver 1987). This was followed by a '*performance management*' model, with a focus on targets and outcomes agreed through mechanisms such as the one-to-one appraisal system, in order to measure and monitor behaviour and evaluate results (Smith 1995; Barry, Berg and Elsmore 2003), with scant attention to hearts and minds in the tradition of behaviourism associated with the work of B F Skinner. Competing approaches have included a '*gender difference*' model, which argues that women are different to men, as caring and nurturant beings who focus on relationships rather than abstract missions or goals, thereby drawing on their experiences as

women. This model, which perpetuates stereotypical or essentialist views of gender, sees men as macho, aggressive and likely to objectify relationships in line with the research of Gilligan. Women are, as a consequence, seen as better suited than men to assume leadership or management positions (Rosener 1991). One of the most recent models, which implicitly questions all past approaches in its advocacy of a new participation, links terms such as distributed, servant or virtual under the rubric *post-heroic* leadership (Heifetz and Laurie 1997; and Huey 1994). Noticeable, however, is the cautionary flavour of such texts, evident in their concern about the risks involved in sharing control (Huey 1994: 2), to embrace its democratic potential, of particular importance in a public sector context.

### **Reflections on Managing Leadership: From modelling to regulating**

The approaches to leadership and management outlined in the previous section have lent themselves readily to modelling, and underscore the historically transient nature of fashion and fad, but it is perhaps their adaptability, and attraction to politicians and senior professionals a public sector context that has seen a growth in management training experts (Bell 2007: 300), and normalisation of the processes of directed change. But how has this been seen in the literature of higher education and social work?

In the case of higher education, there has been a tendency, especially perhaps among post-1992, or modern, universities, to see the development of a cadre of managers. Whilst academics have traditionally led, organised and otherwise managed themselves, these 'new' managers have been involved in the entrenchment and even enlargement of their orbit of influence, even if they have found themselves becoming glorified administrators in the bureaucratic brave new world of academe subject, as it is, to surveillance and audit. Yet the entanglement of the new academic managers in procedural regulation has led to a desire for a new legitimacy that appears wanting in these chastened times. It is this, perhaps, that has led to a revival of the notion of leadership in some quarters, as somehow distinct from management, in an attempt to recover an image of professionalism and the idea of a professional that once inspired and sustained professional direction. It may be this that lies behind the concern for the future of social work, and may inform Lawler's (2005) interest in a return to leadership for social work, counterposing as he does leadership as facilitating management on the one hand, whilst preserving professional autonomy on the other.

Our position, by contrast, is that a conjunction of events has led us to where we are today. For us, leadership and management have been used almost interchangeably, and deployed for affect depending on the perspective taken. This is not to ignore or seek to sideline contemporary debates, but to point to their political character. It is our contention that this becomes a little clearer if we acknowledge the elevation of post-heroism as little else than an attempt to draw more effectively than hitherto on collective organisational effort, accompanied by a reliance on performance management to monitor activity. Seen in this way, the underlying assumption that those involved cannot be trusted to hold themselves accountable becomes clear. Support for such a conclusion comes from advocates of post-heroism who, despite espousing a concern for participation of a seemingly neutral, non-partisan, 'democratic' kind, sense a 'risk' in its adoption (Huey 1994:5). We accordingly contend that the most recent fashion in management circles can be seen in the attempt to regulate leadership. There is thus an acknowledged need to maintain control. As a consequence, we argue, there is a shift in contemporary public sectors to reconfigure managers as leaders in order to provide a new legitimacy and to regulate their operations. These *regulated leaders*, as we will call them, not only subject their junior staff to monitoring mechanisms but are themselves subjected in turn to its intrusive gaze by those above them.

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## **Social Work – a Profession in Change**

Eva Johnsson, Ph. Dr.

School of Health Sciences and Social Work, Växjö university

### **Introduction**

There has been an increased debate the last decades on the concept of profession and professionalism. The classical work of Durkheim (1984) and Parsons (1939) characterised professionalism from its functional role in the division of labour in society and its normative values. From this point of view there's been a development of the concept in order to understand processes of professionalism in relation to the context of a changing society. Still, there are basic characteristics associated with profession such as scientific authority, professional expertise, legitimacy, autonomy, jurisdiction, occupational organisations and professional ethic codes (Castro 1992) all associated with the classical professions such as law and medicine is not applicable of those occupational groups who are labelled as semi- professions (Etzione 1969). By the entrance of new groups, especially different kind of vocational groups, the classical way of defining a profession is no longer applicable. To be able to use the concept profession and professionalism a new and wider definition is needed. Julia Evetts (2006) defines profession in this aspect as; *professions are essentially the knowledge-based category of occupations that usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience* (Evetts 2006). In this way professions can be analysed as a generic group of occupations based on knowledge and expertise, both technical and tacit. Valerie Fournier (1999) describes the “appeal and attraction” of professionalism which is reflected in the society in different ways, which is reflected in the ambitions to make several occupations, previously labelled semi-professions, more academic (Agevall et.al. 2007). The concept of professionalism is also used as a discourse to promote and facilitate occupational changes in service organisations, which includes the analyses of how discourse operates at both occupational/organisational (macro) and individual worker (micro) levels (Evetts, Mieg and Felt 2006:111). At a macro level there is implementation strategies governed by the state, which will be transformed and reflected into organisations and in occupational groups, in order to bring occupational change and rationalisation, as well as to self-discipline workers in the conduct of their work (Evetts, Mieg & Felt 2006). At a micro level the discourse of professionalism refers to how (social) workers themselves are accepting, incorporating and

accommodating the concept in their work. This will influence how they perceive their work and how their professional character and professional identity is constructed (Agevall et al 2007, Fournier 2000). With a standpoint from the concepts of profession and professionalism, the *aim* of this article is to discuss a Swedish example of how a state governed implementation in social work might effect the profession.

### **Professional Social work**

Social work as a discipline has an evident position in the university system in Sweden (Högskoleverket 2002) and the general educational level within the professional social field has risen concurrently with society's ambition to increase the level of knowledge. A general picture of professionalism in social work can be distinguished at an individual and at a collective level (Dellgran & Höjer 2000). At the collective level the occupational group or the profession, handles and arranges its relation to the state, to other professions and to the public, what can be called as "boundary work" (Fournier 2000). Professionalism at an individual level is the processes that an individual passes through during his or her development, and the preservation of specific capacities and competences, to be able to accomplish the exercise of the profession (Dellgran & Höjer 1999, Svensson, Johnsson & Laanemets 2008). It is both theoretical and abstract knowledge including the ability and skill to transform this knowledge in to concrete daily work with the clients or service-users. Most social work in Sweden is carried out in political managed organisations such as the Swedish welfare institutions, which make them sensitive for political changes. Within these organisations social workers has different kind of occupational roles such as managers for old people, assessment work, protection for children and family or counselling work (Svensson, Johnsson & Laanemets 2008). Professional competence can be defined as the ability to successfully accomplish the work, including the ability do identify, use, and if possible widening the space of interpretation, valuation and discretion which the working context offer (Ellström 1992:21). It is in a sense one of the most important elements of a professional identity, and is also a way of separating one profession from another.

### **The implementation**

The knowledge base for social work has been questioned and evidence based practice has been demanded from researchers, decision-makers, social workers and others (Everitt 2002, Gambrill 1999, Marthinsen 2004, Sheldon & Macdonald 1999). Despite the development and contributions to a more systematic development in knowledge within the social services

in Sweden, there's been a critique that reveal practitioners' shortcoming in social services. In the light of this, there was, and is, a demand from the state to increase the knowledge base in social work practice (Socialstyrelsen 2000). This demand has been evident in the discussion about an EBP, Evidence-Based Practice. When the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare initiated the National Programme for Development of Knowledge in Social Services in the beginning of 2000, a process started in which concepts as knowledge and professionalism was highlighted as well for those in social work education, in research and for practitioners (Socialstyrelsen 2000). The influence of New Public Management (NPM) is evident and the demand for evaluations and more cost effective interventions are a reality to day in social service organisations. When the National Programme for Development of Knowledge in Social Services started in 2001, with a full-sized project, which aimed to "create a structure for systematic knowledge development and effective communication of information so that the social services interventions to a higher degree was built on science" (Socialstyrelsen 2000).

### **Forces from without and from within the profession**

To understand the changing of professions its is necessary to capture processes driven by forces external to the profession, for example by the governance or international organisations, or by forceful discourses as "transparency". Processes from within the profession can be studied as "boundary" work, and a changing of professional identity. The Swedish National Programme for Development of Knowledge in Social Service will be discussed as an example of how processes both external and from within change the profession, and the complexity and also the dilemmas that come to it.

One of the features of profession is autonomy, which includes the power and ability to making personal evaluations and judgements in the every-day work, so-called peer job autonomy, and autonomy for the profession as a whole to control their own work through issuing of professional codes and standards. This traditional professional autonomy has been challenged by the concept of "transparency", which is related to the New Public Management and is also an important argument for evidence based practice. One of the arguments from the Swedish programme was that the social workers must have scientifically based knowledge about different interventions and that transparency makes the service user able to compare the quality of different products – or for social work – interventions – and by this assure a certain level of quality through visible work- processes. Another aspect is that transparency



includes the way the public gain knowledge and influence over the public administration, which is necessary in some times concealed working processes.

The discussion about professionalism has increased and how EBP might change the professional discretion. The argument against EBP highlight aspects that social work is too complex arena that cannot captures in manuals, while arguments for EBP emphasizes the importance of scientific knowledge and transparency (Sommerfeld 2005). What is evident is that the discourse of professional social work has changed and that different documentation systems and interventions, which can be evaluated, have been implemented into the social services. At the same time this also means that the status for the social worker rises within the organisation, which affect the professional identity. By this you can say that scientific and empirical experiences have been implemented in the professional field. This kind of governmental intervention can be interpreted as a way of using “the concept of professionalism” to promote and facilitate occupational change and as a disciplinary mechanism to ensure appropriate conduct. And at the same time, the professionals’ self esteem and sense of being professional grows. In the long run this may involve a re-professionalisation and it might have affects on the professional identity, discretion and autonomy. The concept of transparency is partly converse to the professional autonomy because the entrance of the discourse of transparency has effects on the governing of professions in order to allow for public influence over and knowledge of professionals working processes. The claim for transparency has led to the implementation of new management control devices such as standardised guides for intervention, individual treatment plans, catalogues and contracts defining different services.

The relationship between autonomy and transparency may be viewed as a dilemma. On the one side, the claim for transparency including the need for effective management and use of scarce resources, as well as the right for public insight in protected working processes and on the other side, the feature of exclusive knowledge basis that most professions are built on. Effects of changing conditions in the practise can lead to new forms of control to concrete effects in working processes such as knowledge- and norm systems. By the implementation of the National Programme for Development of Knowledge in Social Services, social work in Sweden is in a process of change. The programme has been a strong external force for change, which has started processes within the organisation influencing the professional identity.

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# **Culture and the Development of Nurse Prescribing in the Acute Sector**

Helen Green  
Skills for Health

## **Introduction**

The extension to nurse prescribing was first formally identified in the NHS Plan (2000) where there was a target that more than half of nurses would be prescribing by 2004. In the UK there are approximately 650 000 nurses on the NMC Register and so that would be over 300 000 nurses would be prescribing by 2004. This has not happened.

Another cornerstone of government policy has been to put the patient at the centre of everything the NHS does. Creating a Patient Led NHS (2005) recognised the hierarchical traditions, professional divides and inflexible approaches that are apparent in some parts of the NHS as unhelpful to the patient. The implication being that patients will benefit from groups such as nurses undertaking tasks previously carried out by doctors.

Abbott (1988) looked at professional jurisdictions and the movement of work from the jurisdiction of one profession to another. He identified that sometimes this movement was not voluntary and that the profession owning a task may fight to retain it. In the case of prescribing, although actually only the monopoly of doctors and dentists since the Medicines Act of 1968, doctors have suggested that this is fundamentally part of their jurisdiction. On hearing that the British National Formulary was to be opened up to allow nurses to independently prescribe any drug except those which were controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act the BMA Consultant's Committee (2005) suggested patients would receive second class care.

The purpose of this paper is to share some of the issues arising out of a PhD research project carried out to look at the development of nurse prescribing from the perspective of nurses and doctors in relation to their professional jurisdictions.

## **The Research**

The research undertaken was a qualitative explanatory case study (Yin 2000). Case study has been criticised as a research approach particularly in relation to its lack of generalisability. However, recently there have

been suggestions that this criticism has been unfair (Rowley 2002; Bryar 1999; Gilgun 1994) and that case studies should not be seen as single data outputs but as multiple sources of data. The information they yield can be compared to the outcomes of other studies or further tested using other cases.

This project utilises two case study sites both of which are large acute hospital NHS Trusts. The sites were identified as equivalent by the benchmarking organisation CKHS, an organisation widely utilised by the NHS to compare indicators such as mortality and morbidity between organisations of comparable size.

Data collected at each site included semi-structured interviews with three groups:

- specialist nurses who were the most likely to be expected to prescribe
- senior doctors such as staff grade doctors or consultants who might be expected to work with nurse prescribers
- ward managers who would be expected to be experienced nurses and to be up to date with changes within the profession and their organisation

Also interviewed were other stakeholders such as pharmacists, regional nurse prescribing advisors, Trust prescribing leads and educationalists involved in the local nurse prescribing course. In addition to the interviews, documents in relation to nurse prescribing were analysed, observation of specialist nurses working in clinic environments with patients was undertaken and a field work diary was kept.

### **Case Study Site One**

This was an acute NHS Trust in the West Midlands of over 1000 beds. It offers regional specialities and employed, at the time of the study, over 7000 staff.

At this site 10 specialist nurses were interviewed, as were 7 ward managers, 6 senior doctors and 3 other stakeholders. A lot of documentary evidence was available including draft policies, e mails and prescriber lists. The documents were available as the researcher was also

the nurse prescribing lead at this Trust. Observations of three of the specialist nurses clinics was taken for one clinical session each.

At this site the prescribing policy was still to be approved by the Clinical Governance Board as it was awaiting pharmacy approval. Interestingly the Director of Nursing insisted the policy went this route rather than first being approved by the Drugs and Therapeutics Committee. Although the policy had not been ratified the 67 nurses who had completed the course were free to prescribe once the notification that their prescribing status had been recorded by the Nursing and Midwifery Council was received.

At the time the research was undertaken at this site the nurses were able to prescribe independently from a narrow list at the back of the BNF and more widely from the BNF as a supplementary prescriber where a clinical management plan had to be drawn up and signed by a consultant or specialist registrar who worked with the nurses. Towards the end of the research period, 2003 – 2005, an announcement had been made that the BNF would be opened up but this had not yet happened.

### **Case Study Site Two**

The second case study was a large acute NHS Trust in the East of England which has almost 1000 beds. The Trust employs approximately 5500 staff and identifies patient choice as a fundamental feature of its service provision.

At this site 8 specialist nurses were interviewed along with 6 ward managers, 7 senior doctors and 3 other stakeholders. The documentary evidence collected was more limited but prescribing policies and prescriber lists were accessed.

The prescribing policy was a draft policy at the beginning of the research period (2005 – 2007) but was ratified in late 2006. Apart for one nurse prescriber, nurse prescribing was not allowed at this Trust until the policy had been approved. This meant that some practitioners had waited a period of two years following the completion of their nurse prescribing course before they were able to prescribe.

At the time the research started at this site the opening up of the BNF to nurses so that they could prescribe all drugs independently, apart from Controlled Drugs, had been announced. Implementation of this policy nationally took place from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006 but at this site did not happen

until the end of 2006 because of the delay in approving the policy on nurse prescribing.

## **Selected Results**

The results below represent only a small part of the rich data gathered during the research. Quotes illustrated are from doctors because but reflect the views of all the professionals involved in the study. The exception to this is one from nurses confirming the approach put forward by doctors.

All professionals recognised the expertise which specialist nurses had and were very complimentary about their level of skill which was often compared favourably to that of doctors:

They are much better than the SHOs and the House Officer. In fact they're more experienced than many of the Consultants, non-respiratory Consultants (Consultant)

They also all thought that nurses tended to be more cautious than doctors and would follow rules laid down either nationally or through protocols:

I suspect most nurses will regulate it themselves which is why I say I don't think it is the end of the world. I don't think there's anybody in the nursing profession who's stupid enough to pick up the BNF and say, 'Well I don't know what lithium is but oh it says in the index that you can use it for depression so we'll give a bit'. I don't...you'd see that in medicine. I have to say even now there are still doctors who are that stupid but nursing practice has been that better educated, controlled, monitored over a long period of time that it's not the mind set of nurses to do that (Consultant)

The issue of junior doctors' prescribing is often questioned in terms of its quality with junior doctors being felt to 'have a go' without necessarily understanding what they were doing:

I can't imagine any nurses I know would be prepared to prescribe something unless they'd got the education so that in itself is a sort of safety mechanism. Unlike some doctors who are, you know coming out the blocks, who think they can do everything. (Consultant)

Bearing in mind the recognition of the nurses' expertise, their recognised caution and the fact that the more blasé prescribers, junior doctors, can prescribe anything from the BNF from the first day of their qualification you might think that the senior doctors interviewed would be happy for specialist nurses to prescribe according to their own professional judgement utilising national or local protocols. However, this is not the case. These doctors were still worried:

I would still be a little bit cautious about some of the drugs in there and some of the interactions because the sort of person who ought to be prescribing them is a pharmacist not a nurse. Mm, I don't think doctors prescribe well out the BNF and we have a lot more pharmacology background and what worries me about the whole thing is that you need a wider picture of the patient and nurses' training isn't the same as doctors' training and they tend to do their bit if you like. (Consultant)

It might be expected that nurses themselves would be in favour of an open BNF, and it's true that a minority of them were. However, even some of the prescribing nurses felt that they shouldn't have open access to the BNF. This was in spite of them also recognising their own expertise:

Mm. If I was brave enough I would suggest opening up the whole BNF. I think in one way it's concerning because you know a nurse could prescribe anything (Specialist Nurse)

There were other themes within the research but it is not possible to include them all within this paper.

## **Discussion**

Although the nurse prescribers were recognised as having specialist expertise doctors were reluctant to allow nurses to have open access to prescribing any drug without restrictions being placed upon them. There has been much in the literature about decision making between doctors and nurses (Stein 1967, Stein et al 1991; Svensson 1996; Allen 1997) which suggests that although nurses have become more involved in decision making this tends to be in informal arenas and that doctors retain control. Where this study differs from others is that they have not noted that nurses are happy to have somebody to make ultimate decisions about what they do.



The British government has, through changes in legislation allowed nurses the opportunity to share the jurisdiction of prescribing with doctors (Abbott 1988). However, both doctors and nurses have preferred that even those nurses with recognised expertise have boundaries laid down by doctors as to what they can prescribe, leaving the intellectual jurisdiction of prescribing with the doctors. The professional socialisation of doctors appears to be such that they expect to retain control whilst the professional socialisation of nurses appears to make them reluctant to completely take control even where they have the expertise to do so.

The advent of expanded roles has meant that more and more tasks previously undertaken by doctors are now undertaken by nurses. Intellectually, however, doctors retain control of how and when those tasks are relinquished.

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# **Managerial Identifications Under New Public Management: Voices of Criticism and Assent**

Dr John Chandler, University of East London, United Kingdom

## **Introduction**

There is now a substantial literature on the New Public Management (NPM) suggesting that it is strongly entrenched in many countries around the world, including England which is the site of the research reported here (e.g. see Ferlie et al 1996, Hood et al 1999, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000). NPM can be seen as the application of managerialism in a public sector context, with writers such as Clarke and Newman (1997) arguing that it represents a decisive change in orientation – from what they see as a more traditional ‘bureau-professional’ regime, resting on the joint principles of bureaucracy and professionalism, towards a ‘managerialist’ set of discursive practices.

In this paper I intend to contribute to the discussion of the NPM through an analysis of the transcripts of interviews with just two social services managers in England – both working in a large urban setting. In doing so I apply Fairclough’s (2003) approach to textual analysis. This approach was chosen as it seemed to provide a powerful way of analysing text and discourse. In particular the paper focuses on patterns of identification found in these texts (Jenkins 2004).

## **Some Methodological Issues**

The texts are extracts of the transcripts of interviews I conducted with two women social care managers in an urban local authority in England, part of a wider interview programme conducted with my colleagues Elisabeth Berg and Jim Barry (e.g. see Berg et al 2006). Each interview lasted over an hour – one about 1.5 hours the other only slightly shorter. There were a number of similarities between the interviewees. Both were very experienced managers, with one claiming 10 years managerial experience, the other about 30. Both were within five years of retirement, in their late 50s/early 60s and both were in sections dealing with adult social care. Both managed teams of around 15 people, consisting mainly of professional social workers and care workers. Both worked for the same local authority dealing with social care for adults and in a recent audit of the local authority social service provision by the national Commission for Social Care Inspection (2007) the authority had been given a ‘three star’ (excellent) quality rating. Nevertheless from the accounts of these managers, confirmed by other sources, the authority was not without its problems. For example both managers mentioned that

they were finding it difficult to recruit permanent social workers, and were heavily reliant on 'locum' staff provided by an agency (although many of these stayed some time – one had been in post over a year). Also they were in a period of budgetary cuts, causing some loss of posts (cuts being met by leaving vacancies unfilled).

In drawing on these two interview transcripts the purpose of the paper is not so much to compare and contrast the responses of these people as two different individuals so much as to identify general themes emerging from the texts which are relevant to the themes of managerialism in social care. In this way the intention is to try to do what Fairclough (2003: 15) encourages: to link the 'micro' analysis of texts to the 'macro' analysis of how power relations work across networks of practices and structures. A further form of selectivity lies in my selecting only certain extracts from the interviews for analysis here. The need for selection lies partly in the need to present a concise conference paper. Given the limitations of space and time the method of selection was purposive – I focused on those passages that seemed to be most relevant to the themes of 'identification' and managerialism with which I was concerned. However I am conscious that the interviews provide a rich seam of further data that might also be explored, and no doubt other insights are there to be uncovered. Finally, while space does not permit a full discussion of the issue, it is worth noting that the findings might be affected by being the outcome of an interview between a man and two women – albeit a man somewhat younger than the respondents and who presented himself as interested in their views and knowledge.

### **Analysis of the interview transcripts as texts: forms of identification**

#### ***Semantic relations***

In examining extracts from the first interview we might start with what Fairclough (2003: 89) calls an analysis of 'semantic relations' such as the causal, contrastive and temporal relations in the text. In terms of 'causal' relations there are a number of significant ideas in the interview: she said that she "enjoyed" her position now, just as she enjoyed her position at the beginning of her career as a social worker "because the client contact which as a field social worker I had, now I am able to erm get the satisfaction through the work that my team does." Thus to some extent she seems to be getting satisfaction vicariously, but also through there being some continuity with her previous role. There are 'causal' relations also in the fact that she is working in an organisation she judges to be successful: "So from that point of view I think I feel this is the right place for me because X [name of her local authority] is a council who is continuously developing..."

It is notable here that in representing her work, there is very little mention of her ‘managing’ as such. Rather the satisfaction seems to come from her being able to observe other’s work and from her position within a ‘successful’ organisation that has been awarded “three stars”.

### ***Legitimation***

Another feature of Fairclough’s textual analysis is a focus on legitimation, one of which might be seen as resting on moral evaluations - “legitimation by reference to value systems” (Fairclough 2003, 98):

Interviewer: What do you see as the advantages of the job?

Second Respondent: Erm Job satisfaction in terms of making things better for people. Erm by enabling. [...]

Interviewer: And when you say people in that context...

Second Respondent: Service users and their carers, we obviously work with carers a lot don’t we, so, yeah.

Interviewer So your satisfaction comes from helping provide a good service to the users?

Second Respondent: And also in terms of seeing your social workers and reviewing officers develop.

### ***Evaluation***

Another key dimension in Fairclough’s form of textual analysis is evaluation. Here there does seem to be some difference between the two respondents with one more willing to offer negative evaluations:

Consider this extract:

Interviewer: What about the way [the organisation] is managed; has that changed?

Second Respondent: Yes because we’ve changed chief officer.[...]

She’s very hard working, very intelligent, but [pause] style disabled on occasions. We now have erm a chief officer who does enable...although sometimes I guess we might want him to be a little bit erm stronger, tougher. The previous chief officer was quite erm, was very strong and a little bit disabling on occasions, though.

Interviewer: Right

Second Respondent: You know if you sit at meetings and you’re almost shouted at it’s not helpful because things aren’t right and it’s not producing the right results or whatever. We’re a bit PI – driven, aren’t we?

There are a number of negative evaluations here – of the style of a former Chief Officer (not her immediate manager but a management tier above that), as well as the performance indicator culture. It is notable, however, that the criticisms are often qualified: - “style disabled *on occasions...*”, “*I guess we might want him to be a little bit erm stronger*” [emphasis added]. This suggests that the assessment of people has to be moderated, perhaps because she does not want to be too critical of “her” local authority or of “her managers” when she is a manager herself.

### ***Representation of events and people***

A further important aspect of Fairclough’s approach to textual analysis is in the analysis of the representation of events and social actors. There is, in the texts some apparent recognition of the dialectic of autonomy and control – on the one hand there is a need for staff to be given autonomy to get on with things, on the other hand they need monitoring and guidance, particularly if things go wrong. This potential conflict is resolved by reference to ‘support’ when needed and ‘development’ opportunities. This is most apparent in how the respondents talk of their work of managing their team members – and both suggest that the one-to-one ‘supervision’ meetings are an important aspect of this. These ‘supervisions’ are described by one of the respondents as follows:

Second Respondent: Most weeks I’ll have 3,4 supervisions?

Interviewer: Could you describe what that involves?

Second Respondent: Supervision? Well it’s the workers’ supervision so that’s a meeting of about an hour and a half erm we’ll talk about how person is generally and then I’ll ask them what their agenda is. Quite often it’s case load and there might be some stuff around development, some personal requests, erm but by and large we’ll always go through the case load and review the cases.

Here there is a positioning of the worker as the other, but there is also a sense of working together: “*we’ll go through the case load [emphasis added]*”. It is quite clear that this supervision process has a monitoring and control function, but also represented as partly developmental and supportive. In representing themselves as managers of a team, there are frequent slippages between representing themselves as part of the team “we” and as apart “the team”. The expression “my team” might be seen as ambiguous in this respect. It might be taken to position the manager as a part of the team, a form of categorical identification, or it might indicate

control or possession. While it is clear that the ‘I’ of the manager is one that is subject to constraints: “I can’t always give people a bit of breathing space” they present themselves as acting to support and develop their team members when they can.

## **Conclusion**

In looking at the way managers represent their work under the impact of managerialism it is perhaps no surprise that it is characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand they can say “I enjoy my position” and take pride in contributing to what is perceived to be the production of high quality social services. On the other hand they are sometimes subject to the stresses and strains imposed by budgetary cuts, or from witnessing managers whose style is harsh or ‘disabling’. In so far as they present their work in a positive light they do so by suggesting that they can facilitate the development and care of their subordinates for whom they are responsible, and provide social care that meets needs. When things go well there are no conflicts between the needs of managers and subordinates, care providers and users, regulatory regimes and employees. The benign face of NPM represented in these texts is of audits that confirm ‘good performance’ and provide positive feedback and constructive suggestions for improvement, managerial styles that are ‘enabling’ and supportive. This is a managerialism that is not at odds with the professional experience the managers had previously been engaged with and with the norms and values of social care practitioners. It is a managerialism that grants considerable discretion and autonomy to the individual – whether social worker or manager. But there is a less benign face of managerialism presented, too, with harsh forms of managerialism that threaten individual well being, create stress for managers and subordinates and conflict between service users and providers.

In holding themselves up to the scrutiny of others it is perhaps not surprising that individual managers emphasize the positive and in so far as they recognize the negative, attribute it largely as emanating from others either higher in the hierarchy or outside the organization. However these positionings do suggest ways of evaluating NPM as an archetype – and it suggests that at best the evaluation must be an ambivalent one.

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## **Leadership Across Boundaries**

Ulrika Westrup, Lund University, Sweden

Jan E Persson, Lund University, Sweden

### **Leadership roles in boundary-spanning work**

This paper focuses on leadership across boundaries. Leadership across boundaries is not about traditional headship such as hierarchical leaders or leader positions. Neither is it about leadership that can only be exercised by one person – “the leader”. This type of leadership can instead be seen as a function, or role, which is necessarily shared by several people. During collaboration across formal organisational boundaries, the collaborating parties do not have any right of command over each other. These people (co-workers) are not seeking a leader role, and very often they do not even think about the fact that they are exercising leadership. Leadership across boundaries is a role one assumes based on the insight that someone has to assume responsibility and push work forwards in order that forms of collaboration may evolve.

Our empirical data is based on a project which has been going on since the spring of 2005, to the spring of 2007. The purpose of the project is to develop knowledge about managing work across boundaries. The project contains four development endeavours in four different municipalities situated in two different counties. Endeavour 1 deals with developing methods of identifying children in the fifth grade who are in the risk zone, Endeavour 2 focuses on the target group of children aged 10-16 with multiproblems; mental ill-health, problematic home and family situations, and serious schooling problems, Endeavour 3 is about starting up a family centre for parents-to-be and children aged 0-6 with their parents, and Endeavour 4 deals with establishing a support structure (“umbrella organization”) which will facilitate and stimulate preventative and boundary-spanning work concerning children and adolescents within this municipality. All four development endeavours include representatives of various professions from municipalities and county councils who are actively working with the target group of children and adolescents, as well as representatives of administrative and financial functions.

The people who have jointly exercised leadership during the development work have not attached such great importance to which appointments a person holds; instead, the interesting thing has been what operational knowledge, skills and ideas the person has. There have been several challenges to overcome during the work process on the personal, cultural, and structural levels. However, the four development endeavours have moved forward and achieved success. One conclusion that can be



drawn from this is that leadership of the four development endeavours has worked. Our intention with this paper is to discuss three fundamental roles of boundary-spanning leadership.

### **Initiating and establishing**

It is clear that the project's four development endeavours would never have come about, and even less so been implemented, if the participants had not believed, and still believe, in what they do. It is about strong driving forces and motives that stem from the ambition to want to continue to do what they do, but in an even better way (cf. Ashkenas 1997). There is a perception that there is some inefficiency in their operations and that it is fully possible to do things in other ways ("entrapreneurs") that would boost efficiency (cf. Johannisson 2005). It is the group's will, capability, and drive which, given the prerequisites, will determine whether or not anything will result from this work. We can discern here a fundamental role in boundary-spanning leadership – ensuring that something gets done; initiating and establishing the collaboration.

An important task of leadership is to put into words the aspiration that unites people – creating, formulating, and exposing a vision. Creating a vision means painting a future state, a state or an "abstract reality" which shows considerable improvement on the present situation. The vision must be perceived as achievable, and be sufficiently concrete (so that it will exert an influence on everyday actions); it must also be easy to understand and communicate. A vision must highlight aspects requiring challenges, something which does not arise by itself but which requires exertion; exertion which is out of the ordinary (cf. Jacobsen 2005, p. 293). Those participating, who come from different professions and organisations, must be able to see their own role in, and significance for, the results of the endeavour in order for the vision to be meaningful and work as a driving force.

The four development groups established their visions at an early stage. In order to be able to create and formulate the visions, descriptions were made of how work with children and adolescents functioned in various respects at the outset. This became a kind of problem image that the group's members shared; an image of the existing "reality" that they wanted to change. The vision thus became a strongly uniting factor within the four groups. It was a sufficiently clear image of what was jointly being worked towards. This, however, is not the same as saying that the visions were static. On the contrary, the visions have been changing the whole time as work has progressed, but only a little bit and not in the

main. They have been regarded to be flexible the whole time and have thus been alive, while simultaneously specifying the focus.

Another important task of boundary-spanning leadership lies in formulating goals that reach across operational boundaries. This is crucial for jointly working towards the vision. The goals must also be important for the collaborating actors' success. This is essential in order for the goals to function as shared goals and thus unite the actors and become something that is worth rallying around. The discussion about, and the formulation of, shared goals has to keep in mind what is to be jointly achieved, and not the interests of the individual actors.

However, it will not be enough to persistently push the point that children and adolescents must be seen as a single target group. Drawing up holistic descriptions of all operations focusing on children and adolescents is also important. Not least because the dependency between the various parts of the operation must receive increased attention in the work of formulating boundary-spanning visions and goals. Attempting to understand and see the state of dependence between different organisations, parts of organisations, skills etc — how things connect in a larger and wider perspective — takes its point of departure in a strong desire for the existing resources to be used and interact in the best possible way.

### **Conducting and developing**

Once boundary-spanning work has found its feet, once visions and shared goals have been formulated and are guiding the work and plans of action, and once operational plans have been drawn up, the leadership will then change in nature and be more and more about conducting and developing this work further. An important task of leadership thus lies in arousing enthusiasm in one's co-workers, enthusiasm for setting up and formalising relationships on the human level, as well as for seeing and creating such opportunities. If different professions are to gain an insight into each other's concrete knowledge, it will be necessary for them to obtain the opportunity to meet and set up a dialogue. Solutions to problems tried in one unit can provide other units with important knowledge that contributes towards the possibility of achieving the desired effects in the long-term. Allowing the dialogue across organisational and professional boundaries to constitute an important part of work is necessary in order to achieve the necessary organisational learning (see Eriksen 1998; cf. Roberts 1996). Abstract models do not assist in developing such concrete knowledge. Within social services, for instance, the bulk of knowledge development takes place on the individual level (individual co-workers) and often as implicit

(unarticulated) knowledge. Making individual-based, implicit knowledge explicit and available to others is thus necessary for more systematic knowledge development (cf. Carnall 2003; Kalling and Styhre 2003). This pre-requires that the leadership enables and provides the stimulus for concrete knowledge to be articulated, documented, and disseminated.

An important task of leadership, if there is a desire to ensure that boundary-spanning relationships last, is to make sure that work is documented, routines established, and means of control adapted. This is a prerequisite for collaboration obtaining stable forms and becoming an established method of working. Otherwise, the relationship will become all too person-dependent and risk being interrupted if someone changes job or quits.

What is important in order to arouse interest in the boundary-spanning work being conducted, and give strength to continued development, is to show what is being achieved – quite simply to show the gains made from coordination. Which improvements are taking place for the target group? Thus, the results for the target group must always be made measurable in some way. The results have to be expressed in comprehensible terms and, if possible, in figures too.

### **Supporting and facilitating**

In order to be able to conduct and develop boundary-spanning work, the staff are dependent on all control systems supporting and facilitating their work. What has been made clearly visible by the project is the fact that the principles dominating the control systems in schools, social services, and healthcare are more likely to hinder than enable effective resource utilization (Persson and Westrup 2006). These control systems are guided by principles that create images of the operation, which do not emphasize their distinctive features; if anything, making invisible those aspects of the work which provide the prerequisites for the staff to conduct their work successfully. In all four development endeavours, the participants have realized that staff from various professions and organisations have to work together with staff from administrative and financial functions in order for system changes to become realizable.

Important and key issues of development work have included how governance and management control systems can support and facilitate boundary-spanning work: What is being done already and what else can be done within one's own organisation to facilitate a boundary-spanning method of working? In the project, there are several examples of changes that have been made to governance in order to support and facilitate boundary-spanning work. As a consequence of the four development endeavours, arenas have been established that will enable economists to meet and then discuss and develop the control systems so that these will

better support the operations' distinctive features. Different types of "economist networks" have been set up which include economists from the municipalities and the county councils and which meet regularly.

In all four development endeavours, on a good many occasions, there has been a return to the fact that transverse dialogues between individual boards, e.g. the board of children and education (or equivalent) and, for instance, the social welfare board, have to be able to constitute a formal element of budgetary work. What is being aimed at is the setting up of arenas for dialogue regarding issues that involve the target group. This is necessary in order to be able to make the right decisions and take reasonable standpoints on budgetary work, during both planning and monitoring.

An important task of leadership will be ensuring that work across organisational boundaries is rewarded and that incentive systems provide important support for this. Leaders on different organisational levels must stimulate and reward the ability of the staff to communicate and work across internal as well as external organisational boundaries. Incentive systems must encourage staff to see their own operations in a wider context. For example, the budget system could be formulated in such a way that individual units are not allowed to keep any financial surpluses if no descriptions have been made of how they have been working or how their work impacts upon the work of other units.

Once boundary-spanning work has been stabilised through supportive forms of governance and once the management control systems have been adapted, the level of person-dependence can decrease and the personal relationships can partly be replaced by more formalised routines and processes.

## **Conclusion**

The exercising of boundary-spanning leadership does not replace or set aside existing management structures. Boundary-spanning leadership broadens the range of leadership skills needed, simultaneous to an overall increase occurring in the level of leadership skills. Three leadership roles jointly provide the prerequisites for boundary-spanning work to be able to evolve and become a lasting element of operations. None of the roles is more important, or of any less significance than the others; instead, they all nourish each other, which can be illustrated using the following figure:



Figure 1: Three leadership roles in boundary-spanning work

The demand for boundary-spanning leadership, however, is still in its infancy. Being able to meet increasingly higher demands for boundary-spanning leadership in years to come will largely be about skill; how the skills of the staff are used and organised; how their skills are developed; whom we recruit and how. Our definite conviction is that such skill must take its point of departure in the distinctive features characterizing the operations of social services; otherwise, there will be a risk of this skill not benefiting the target group of children and adolescents.

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## **Social Work Management - Dilemmas in a “new” profession**

Maria Wolmesjö, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Director of Studies  
School of Health Sciences and Social Work, Växjö University

### **Introduction**

Social work managers, a profession in transition, are facing new dilemmas according to the many organisational changes that have been carried out during the 1990s and the beginning of 2000 century. In the care of elder and people with disabilities, New Public Management (NPM) has sat focus on demands to increase effectiveness and efficiency and has effected the profession to move from leadership towards management. At the same time services and support organised by the voluntary sector has become a developing welcome complement to what local authorities can offer. These changes and new actors on the welfare arena bring new kind of dilemmas into the role of managers to handle which demands new competence and innovative solutions.

From a perspective on management dilemmas, the aim of this paper is to shed light on how politicians, managers and voluntary organisations view experience and describe the cooperation between local authorities and the voluntary sector or NGOs. Focus is on new dilemmas in managing social work, specific in care of elder and people with disabilities. Main questions are; what new dilemmas do managers in social work have to confront and how does these dilemmas affects the profession identity of front line managers in social work? While the first question takes account of the many organisational changes that have been carried out during the latest period, close related to NPM, the second question is concerned with the demands on and educational needs of “being” or “becoming” a manager in social work.

In this paper, after a short description of method used, you are first given a brief description of how the role of the manager has developed with focus on competence to lead a good qualitative social care. Then this paper is focus on current dilemmas managers are confronting in their daily work, how this affects their professional identity and what competence is required.

### **Method**

In this paper I takeoff in recently published research about leadership in transformation and how politicians and managers views experience and describe management and leadership in different types of organisations in

social work – more precisely the care of elder and persons with disabilities (Wolmesjö, 2005). Empirical material will also be used from an international study “Changing Patterns of Local Government and Civil Society: Towards a Common Model of Welfare Society in Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden?”

The method used is qualitative interviews with politicians, managers and voluntary organisations at different levels. Similar studies have been made in Norway, Latvia and Lithuania and comparison will be made later. In this paper preliminary result from the Swedish study is presented (Wolmesjö & Zanderin ongoing work).

## **Social Work Management**

### *Population served*

Approximately 1,5 millions Swedes are 65 years old or elderly (17% of the population). 482 000 are 80 years old or elderly (5% of the population), which means that Sweden has the oldest population of all countries in the world if you compare the amount of people over 80 (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2006). The amount of elderly, 80 years old and elder has increased with 17% between 1990 and 1998 (Szebehely, 2000). The average life expectancy is 78 years for men and 82 years for women (Sweden.se, 2006).

Since 1980 the financial situation has changed in Sweden, today only the neediest receive municipal social care in special housing for elderly or by qualitative social care and health care at home. Twenty-five years ago 62% of the population over 80 years of age received municipal home help or had a place in elder housing. In 2000, 44% received the same type of home help. There are more elder women than men in home care since women live longer, more often live alone and have more medical problems than men. Yet, it has been clarified that men receive more home help care and services and have received a place in elderly housing more quickly than women regardless of, if there need is the same (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2006).

In 2003 there were 235 400 persons working in the local authority care of the elder and people with disabilities in Sweden. 90% of these persons were women. 9 111 of those persons worked in a position as managers (Sv. Kommunförbundet 2004; SCB, 2005). The municipal organisation is one of Sweden’s biggest labour markets and even more people will meet this organisation as a user or a relative.

### *The Organisation*

During the 1990s many of the local authorities in Sweden have been forced to reduce expenditure on the care of the elder and people with disabilities. Some major changes have taken place which has effected the organisation of care, leadership and the direct social and health care (Blomberg, Edebalk & Petersson, 1999; Olsson & Ingvad, 2000). Many of these organisational changes have been carried out and explained in close relationship with NPM. In a former study (Wolmesjö, 2005), three different trends were studied. The first trend was a market orientation to increase effectiveness and efficiency by utilising a purchaser/provider model or needs assessment model. The second trend was the response to a pressed situation and the heavy workload that staff members and managers expressed. The answer was self managed work groups and a greater responsibility. The third trend focused was the decentralisation of social services. According to Bäckman (2001:190) the welfare state in Sweden, at the millennium was recognized by decentralisations, reorganisations and financial cut downs. New problems were raised and both problems and their solutions were often ascribed to leadership and management, which also have been showed in other studies (Holmberg & Henning, 2003; Hendersen & Seden, 2004; Coulshed & Mullender, 2006).

### *Different traditions*

The municipal support and service of social care is offered to a heterogenic group of persons; for example of different age, gender, ethnicity, disabilities and needs. Above this, different groups of profession identities and professional cultures have to cooperate. Traditions and cultures from different eras and different educational backgrounds affect the social care public sector. Above this different political ideologies are governing at different periods. The care of the elder and persons with disabilities is, according to this, described as a complex organisation where different traditions meet. It is this complex organisation of social care public sector which managers are to lead, but even among managers there are several different traditions of leadership and educational cultures.

### *The Profession*

The position of managers of social care can be described as a transformation process of changes. Their position is an intermediate position in the hierarchic organisation, "squeezed" between on one hand, politicians and higher-level management; on the other hand staff members and care receivers. Different groups with different demands on the manager. The position gives the manager an important role in the



interplay between the different groups and their different domains. It has been established that the demands on managers in social care of the elder and people with disabilities has increased during the latest years (Wolmesjö, 2005). This picture is relevant also for managers in other areas in social work and the public sector in general. The picture that appeared in Wolmesjö's study (2005) shows that this demands can be described in terms of balancing demands of effectiveness and efficiency, mostly from politicians and managers in higher position according to demands of communication from employees and costumers/clients/users. The solution is ascribed as development of (new) competence. The questions are; what kind of competence is needed and what direction should care management education and care organisations in social work have? - Towards effectiveness and efficiency and with the emphasis on management (strategically leadership) or towards communication with the emphasis on leadership (operative leadership)?

### **Preliminary results and Discussion**

The municipal care of the elder and persons with disabilities is a public and politician controlled and managed organisation, i.e. elected politicians have the outermost responsibility of formulating goals and overall decisions. Each politician is chosen for a period of four years which means that the political majority and by this, goals and overall decisions can be changed rather often at local level. The dilemma is related to the fact that managers ask for more specified directions of political goals and at the same time they want a great freedom of ability to act according to their on belief of what will develop their organisation. Political decisions, like demands to lower the costs i.e. reach the budget sometimes can come in conflict with obligations according to the legalisation as The Social Service Act. This situation (political management), is described as one of the facts or part of the complexity of leadership in local authority social care that effect the leadership.

An important task for managers is to be negotiators between different organisational levels and discourses according to their intermediate position. To succeed a good interaction between managers, employers and politicians is needed and to reach the aim within the organisation. The question can be raised; who are managers, supposed to show their loyalty to? Another issue to handle is that these professions or different groups are at different educational levels. The heaviest and most difficult decisions often have to be taken by those who are working "far out" in the chain of care, i.e. nursing- or care assistants working close to the user/client, those with the lowest formal education. An important task

of managers therefore is to support, prepare and make it possible for nursing- or care assistants to make these decisions.

Men and women and persons with different ethnical background receive and work in the municipal home help, this will bring new challenges into the organisation, challenges to be handled by social work managers. When adding new groups as representatives from NGO:s or the voluntary sector this creates new dilemmas. Should you, as a managers take away some of the “easier” duties (like walks, reading the newspaper etc) from the employers and give to someone else? Will it create more physical illness among staff members if they only do the “heavy” work? Another dilemma described by managers is responsibility of voluntary workers. Who is responsible if the volunteer gets hurt, or hurt someone of the elder or persons with disabilities? Lack of money and time is often discussed as a daily dilemma to handle. Need of supervision has become visible from new perspectives. It has been shown not only social policy reforms affect the leadership, organisational reforms and personnel reforms etc also change the conditions for social work managers (Wolmesjö, 2005).

What special knowledge and formal education do municipal managers have in general? The research about professional knowledge, competence and education of management in social care sector is relatively rare in Sweden. It is important to understand leadership in social work since the profession it self has changed (Rank & Hutchinson, 2000:487). During the last century the most common education of directors/managers in Sweden has changed from a practical education of six months towards an academic education of three and a half year at university level, i.e. a social work bachelor degree. The assignment for the former home help manager has gone from caring and nursing through carrying out investigations towards an administrative profession as divisional director with responsibility for the services provided, the budget and the employees.

New challenges are an increased responsibility of budget, new demands on responsibility of human resources/employees and new routines of administration as new computer program, statistics etc. Surprisingly has these new demands not yet been seen in job advertisements. What is asked for is more related to the personal abilities and qualities. According to the interviewees a manager should have the ability to create a good working climate of cooperation and development, act as intermediary of political goals, guidelines and frames, and be legible/clear with information. Further on she or he should have the ability to get recourse and be supporting to employees.

Preliminary results points out that a dilemma is related to the amount of employers. Group of employers can vary between 15 to 150 persons. Managers often have to work through someone else to reach their goals and have to rely on their employees they do what expected to. Quality issues are discussed and the managers are dealing with different methods to assure the client that they receive what is decided. Expressed by our respondents, as the most important tool in their management, is the dialogue (and to listen). Through out the dialogue they can start the processes that will further the organisation forward.

The managers themselves express that the way the act is very important according to what norms and values are accepted in the organization. Leadership and qualification as manager is described as someone who is “changing the thinking”. When they describe what is necessary to handle the work as a manager in care of the elder and people with disabilities they talk about strength, clearness, be able to “turn tight on a curvy road, gear a little”, loyalty, push forward, not be frightened – dare to walk in the opposite direction. Important is that they, unlike the politicians think it’s important to have education in social work to manage the job. What was common is that regardless of organizational form politicians and managers thought that the managers had an important role as the carrier of values and visions. Competences that are expected to be asked for to be a manager in a transformed, proceeding and developing organization in municipal social care is; knowledge of political goals, society and the development, delegation and how to balance freedom and responsibility. Further they need knowledge of communicational processes, how to handle conflicts, know of every day living of persons in socially exposed situations and have ability to supervise (Wolmesjö, 2005). High demands of different skills and a variety of knowledge required from the same persons might make the profession of manager in social care land in “a mission impossible”.

## **Conclusions**

This paper shows that the organisational changes according to New Public Management have brought about unexpected consequences for management. New dilemmas of managing social care can be related to difficulties finding a new professional identity and to balance the governance with voluntary work. Politicians and higher-level management expect the managers focus on manage the organisation to reach goals of effectiveness and efficiency, but managers and the employees expect them to lead. Participation of NGOs effect the role of managers but the employee responsibility is unclear. The solution of this dilemma seems to be a high level of competence, but in two different

directions. One ideal of management in social care is associated with focus on effectiveness and efficiency and apply to politicians and higher-level managers, the other ideal is associated with focus on communication and apply to employees and users. Management is being pushed further down in the organisation; the dilemma of management in social work will not disappear. Somewhere in the organisation the perspective of effectiveness and efficiency and the perspective of communication have to meet. It might be seen as a dilemma that will not go away – only be placed in different levels in the organisation.

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## **“Clash of Identities”**

Mr John Mendy

University of Lincoln Business School

### **Management Approaches to Organisational Cultural Change Introduction**

A first step in the design of the paper has been to explore what may be learnt from previous studies that focus on the same employee experiences, behaviours and reactions or similar events. It is hoped that the results of the present exploration will help narrow the focus of the study, and facilitate the analysis of collected data (the design of the necessary analysis is discussed later). It appears useful in organising the present paper and to maintain the sharp research focus on employees' reactions to change to distinguish between management approaches to organisational change and non-management approaches. I will continue to discuss these to see what they can contribute to the study's focus in particular and organisational cultural change studies within a wider frame of discussion.

#### **1. Schein's (1985) Approach**

Schein (1985) regards organisational culture as the result of “espoused values and underlying basic assumptions”. He argues for a functional approach through which individual experiences are collectively “shared” in order to tackle internal organisational difficulties such as enforcing new ways of working practices, adapting to technological changes (e.g. the introduction of new ICT modes of operation and so on) and solve problems from the environment such as customer/client needs, changing market forces and European Union legislation on working time directives. The coordination that is required for all of these activities, amongst others, can be invented, discovered or developed by a group of individuals, and may be remembered by way of an organisation's culture. The latter sometimes is seen as determining further development (the “instrumental” view of culture, according to which organisations are assumed to ‘have’ their culture; Magala, 2005), and sometimes as consisting of nothing but their coordination system (the “non-instrumental” view, where organisations are assumed to ‘be’ their culture, in which case, organisational members determine the culture). In both cases, organisations will require a monitoring and control framework through which employees' norms and values are strategically aligned with those of management, shareholders and proprietors. This may lead to situations in which what managers require from employees in terms of

their contributions starts to dominate (and hence to ‘colonise’), or vice versa, in which employees’ personal reactions to and experiences of change dominate. For an organisation to survive, neither is allowed. Where they occur, one should expect tendencies to limit both forms of dominance, personal power – and personal resistance to be easily understandable in terms of desired contributions to overall organisational interventions which could be targeted at raising, among other things, performance and profit levels.

Such an instrumental approach in which organisational culture is regarded as a tool or a determinant for further development is expected by its proponents such as Handy (1993), Hammer and Champy (1995), amongst others, to provide managers with a sense of guidance to all their employees on how to perceive and resolve problems both from within and outside of the organisation during various stages of change. This functional perspective assumes that individual employees cooperate unquestioningly with managers (for example, by willingly acquiescing to the demands on their time and labour by managers) who might even dominate and therefore ‘colonise’ the personal identity, group and collective values when they seek to introduce new working practices. The data presented here suggest not as evidenced in the following respondent’s observation of cultural change:

*“The management are just not bothered about the community we work in. Perhaps, there might be the one-off [charitable gesture]. There are big turnover figures in our workforce from the Newark area [of Lincolnshire]. People don’t want to be here. We get a lot of employees from outside. What does that say?”*

Thus bringing about a clash when managers attempt to shift the boundary between the personal and the organisational by imposing other working practices and attitudes on employees. Employees choose either to cooperate with managers that introduce such changes in an effort to maintain their survival and to guarantee a sense of belonging to a group or an organisation or to resist such imposition by various means (such as illness, absenteeism, cynicism, “culture jamming” (Dery, 1993) through “guerrilla” communication and the choice of a language that might prove threatening to managers’ ‘colonising’ power and therefore inappropriate (in management’s view) to be appropriate to the organisational culture. This paper therefore goes beyond this instrumental and functional approach to cultural ‘redesign’ to also feature the non-management or non-instrumental in which case organisations consist of nothing but their coordination system (where organisations are assumed to ‘be’ their culture). Where ‘colonising’ behaviours occur either from employees or

managers wishing to increase their presence in the boundary between the two, one should expect tendencies to limit both forms of dominance, personal power – and personal resistance to be easily understandable in terms of desired contributions to overall organisational interventions. Through the evidence from respondents' observation statements and stories and using the descriptive framework of "symbolic interactionism" I explore the dynamics of employee voices within sets of interactions and see what these explorations can offer in reformulating management literature that has dominated organisational culture change discourse for the past three to four decades.

## **2. Morgan's (1986) Approach**

Morgan (1986), like Schein (1985) also adopts a "shared" perspective to comprehending and studying organisational culture. He contends that culture needs to be comprehended as "an active, living phenomenon through which people create and recreate their worlds". Culture is an emerging phenomenon within a more enveloping coordination of different belief systems, therefore, not by any means a concrete and static given waiting to be discovered. Tendencies to 'colonise' as well as to resist are part of a conversation or negotiated exchange that allows for proper functioning in daily life, but also for the possibility of more fundamental changes, e.g. in case of market or other possible external drivers to change. Negative effects, such as subversion, "culture jamming", imposition and the clash of individual and collective identities that these issues may bring about have to be seen as part of an emerging discourse, therefore: they signal (through employees' stories and reactions) that something (such as the status quo) needs to be changed and contested. Participants in this process may include management, trade union involvement and employee negotiation and bargaining.

Therefore, organisational culture as managerial theory seeks to blur the boundary between what people contribute by way of their presence and what organisations demand of their contributions. This theory negates possible clashes of identity. In management literature this blurring signifies that employee and organisational presence could bring about an enhanced organisational performance by contributing to tasks. It is being proposed in this perspective, that employee contributions (their presence) is guaranteed. Such theory seems to deny that the boundary between the individual and organisational can be out of balance for any considerable period of time. No special form of transcending dominance of either the personal or the organisational is deemed necessary, therefore. The theory explains such dominance as temporary only.

Within another perspective organisational culture could be regarded as one of the component parts of an organisation, a facet that can be



measured, manipulated and changed by managers and other organisational members as can organisational variables such as employees' skills, strategy, structure, management style and composition of staff (Peters and Waterman, 1982). The collected data in this paper point to the contrary. They usually discuss organisational culture mainly from the one-sided perspective of managers, rather than incorporating the views of other employees. In this perspective, organisational culture is sometimes used interchangeably with "corporate culture" which Linstead and Grafton-Small (1992) describe as

*"the term used for a culture devised by management and transmitted, marketed, sold or imposed on the rest of the organisation... with both internal and external images ... yet also including action and belief - the rites, rituals, stories, and values which are offered to organisational members as part of the seductive process of achieving membership and gaining commitment"* (Linstead and Grafton-Small, 1992).

I have not bought into the "seductiveness" of the corporate culture position that concentrates on managements' sole prerogative in designing (redesigning, thus autonomously recreating) and implementing organisational culture and change interventions. Although some writers such as Schein (1985) and Morgan (1986) argue that organisational cultures are unitary and integrated, Derrida (1978) and Schutz and Luckmann (1973) argue for pluralism or differentiated sub-cultural realities, symbols, artefacts, myths and language in the same organisation, especially when employees wish to reassert their personal dignity and self identities. Frost (1991), on the other hand, adopts a fragmented view which recognises and celebrates other types of employee actions such as particular conflict, chaos anti and counter-cultures as my initial data point out. As with the previously explored perspectives, there is no one right viewpoint.

## **Non-Management Approaches to Organisational Cultural Change**

### **1. Hofstede's (1980) Approach**

In his seminal work on culture studies, Hofstede (1980) highlights the importance of the mind and cognition. The human cognitive process suggests that all beings are capable of rationalising. These living entities (with their sets of identities) can therefore be deemed to be subject to mental "software programming". Reactions of individuals to organisational change and to the instructions of managers are due to enshrined social patterns, and to the norms, values and deep-seated

beliefs that result from their enshrinement. This suggests that the differences between managers and staff and the potential clashes that these could create during organisational change can be explained through various forms of language, stories and symbols. Such differences and likely clashes have to be interpreted on a higher level of abstraction than the behaviour of role induced groups such as managers, therefore. They are not part, or the direct result of, any 'colonising' – but derive their shape and expression from higher level, ingrained principles and human traits. Thus employees make a choice as to whether they would like to be 'colonised' by their individual managers or not through the language and sets of symbols they use to talk about their interactions with colleagues and other organisational members. It is this choice of linguistic formulations and their patterns that I gleaned out of the dominant aspects and issues that betray the varied forms of interactions in the dynamic relationships between managers, employees and organisations during cultural change. However, they may also wish to safeguard the boundary between the personal and the organisational thereby jealously guarding the higher level of ingrained qualities of self-identity, for example, personal esteem, respect, individual freedom and personal identity. Employees constitute biological organisations that show resistance to change, both in terms of what threatens (their survival) and in terms of what supports it (Deal and Kennedy, 1982).

I wish to examine some of the characteristics of Hofstede's model within the framework of notions of personal and organisational boundary and the focus for this study: employee reactions to organisational culture change. One of Hofstede's five classifications (of which I explore those that contribute to the paper's focus, in particular the notion of employee presence): 'power distance' is reflected in the inequities between those in management roles and those who are not. The extent to which this imbalance is manifested is recognised in managers who use their personal power to the detriment of employees such that the boundary between the personal and organisational is no longer distinctive. For example, one of the respondents had this to say during the interviews:

*“Over the years, staff have always been made to feel valued and their views have always been listened to. They matter to the core of the business objectives and aspirations that we want to promote. It has not been uncommon to say “Thank you” to members of staff who have done brilliant work. Such a praise culture has become deeply rooted in whatever we do here.”*

Ironically, such blurring of the demarcation between the two could trigger conflict, tension and resistance when these managers threaten the

individuality and self respect of employees. Hofstede's second culture classification is 'uncertainty avoidance' which is reflected in the extent to which employees are prepared to accept fuzzy change procedures and processes. This is shown in cases where communication between the different roles involved in the change process has not been as effective as it ought to be. This implies that some people get left out on the side of the road at the mercy of other change drivers and market forces. This lack of communication and the ambiguity that may emanate from it reinforces managers' personal power over others facilitated through information control, thus the 'colonisation' of the workforce. This paper contributes to clarifying the distinction between the personal and organisational where it exists in the implementation of culture change. Organisational cultures that thrive on achieving their change initiatives through 'colonising' personal boundaries and self respect cherish Hofstede's 'masculine orientation', for example, of profit maximisation through longer working and unsociable hours. Adopting 'masculine' tendencies to achieve cultural change may entail leaving out employees considered by managers to possess more feminine-like characteristics further making clashes and the possible alienation that may result more endemic within the interacting parties.

The statements and language(s) used by employees account for the cultural differences and clashes between members of an organisation (especially managers and employees in bureaucratic structures). In this case change is studied within a contextual basis. For example, one of the employees had this to say:

*“You don't call anyone Mr or Mrs. It is on first name terms. That is quite nice. It's true some things are confidential but where they can tell you things they do. Everybody is friendly. People always talk and listen to one another despite schedules.”*

whereas a totally opposing view was voiced out by another employee within the same organisation in the following language:

*“All of us used to be in it together. Yet because of some changes there tends to be a “them and us” feeling now. Because of the geographical spread of the various companies that make up LG there is a “them-and-us”... There has been an evident split during the change process”.*

The importance of this visioning and imaging of the world to facilitate how employees communicate their reactions and assert their personal as well as (sub)-group cultural identities and dignity makes some forms of

communication possible while rendering others more complex, fragmentary at times and differentiated at others. Such varieties of language can be used to understand the idiographic personal reactions and behaviours as well as the organisational sets of values when managers try to implement change interventions.

The concept of employee presence on forums of interactions implies that organisational members are in a constant process of contributing to the organising and reorganising of collective tasks with one another (thus changing or maintaining) through interpreting and reinterpreting (via language) organisational values and norms so as to review their personal and (sub) cultural expectations and actions in their organisations over time. This element of change (but also the maintenance of certain value sets such as group cohesion, self and group identity and respect) denotes that the expected roles being performed by employees within the organisations studied could evolve depending on what has been mutually and implicitly agreed within and between groups and statuses as the appropriate ways of “doing things”. This is a higher level of abstraction than what has been depicted in management literature as managers’ sole prerogative to shape organisational cultural values and the individual personal identities that this implies. It seems to me that this personal and (sub) cultural element (among others raised in this paper) of how employees react and thereby contribute to organisational culture change—thereby demonstrating presence—entails much richer prospects in terms of how academics and practitioners could begin to understand the complexities, sometimes differentiated and sometimes fragmentary nature when ‘colonising’ managers attempt cultural ‘redesigns’. In this instance, organisations are not regarded as concretely stable, homogeneously “maintained” and coherent entities and therefore could not be theorised as such.

## **2. Mead’s (1964) Symbolic Interactionist Approach**

Another account of the dynamic and varied nature of organisational change processes is provided by symbolic interactionism which recognises the numerous sets of interactions that go on within organisational and daily life discourses. It is intended to account the ever-changing nature of existing organisational structures, personal circumstances and realities.

Mead (1964) was one of the main proponents of symbolic interactionism. It is based on the recognition of the important role that the mind (cognition) has to play in determining what to do and how to articulate behaviours through levels of language in certain circumstances. Language plays a key role in determining what people regard as organisational cultural change and, by implication, what does not. The

boundary between the personal and the organisational during times of fundamental change may be a product of the language chosen and the employee panel (be it cooperative, friendly or otherwise) through which such a communication is evidenced. What appears acceptable in one language for a certain group of individuals and one panel of interaction is not acceptable in another for other organisational role-induced groups.

At the centre of Mead's (1964) argument was that the human mind is experienced and that activities of employees faced with a range of work practices are initiated from such cognitive experiences. To my mind, this view recognises and even appears to celebrate the distinct role that the personal plays in shaping the raft of employee reactions when managers in organisations 'redesign' working practices, an issue that has not been given full recognition in management literature. The personal and organisational mind provide the key in understanding dynamic human interactions and the cultures and (sub) cultures that this could create and recreate through employee choices of language. In order to deepen understanding of the multitude of employee reactions from the different role-induced groups when organisations undergo change Mead proposes crucial characteristics such as the awareness of self (identity), how we relate with other individuals and reflect on these interactions. Therefore, individuals could choose the organisational culture and change processes that are acceptable to their values and resist (clash with) those that do not. These are depicted through their choice of language.

The findings presented in this paper suggest organisations are not integrated structures and the notion of presence and how this can be maintained within the personal-organisational boundary tries to address this theoretical limitation. The choice of the study's theoretical frameworks from management as well as non-management perspectives and the notion of employee presence on different worlds of interactions that categorises the same employee reactions have permitted me to explore the reactions of a cross-section of employees and managers to see what the consequences of the actions of any one of the two would be when the boundary between the two is shifted.

## **Conclusion**

The literature reviewed and the presented data in this paper appear to indicate that the focus on the relation between managers and employees (i.e. people in different roles in organisations) during times of fundamental, institutional change manifest the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of these interactions. During such times, the relation changes as shown in the evolving networks of interactions and choice of language to depict such dynamism. Expressions of differences among people in different roles may be negative (as complaints about being

‘colonised’) or positive (as suggested opportunities to contribute in new ways). The summary of the results indicate that changes may be interpreted as due to:

- a) the nature of an organisation (based on the need for resistance to change, as emphasised in the work of Lewin (1975); or on
- b) processes of interaction that need to be adapted through choice of linguistic structure(s) rather than changed, as in the work of Mead and others).

This paper recognises both personal and organisational boundaries and how shifting the dividing line between them through the actions of ‘colonising’ managers and the reactions that this could bring about from and for employees helps in deciphering and mapping the nature and extent of organisational culture change. Most theories concerning such cultural changes appear to imply some form of preferred interaction between managers and other role-induced groups. Fundamental change will be effective if all mentioned groups are allowed to contribute such that they contribute what is necessary for their organisation to function effectively. Such contributions satisfy the criterion of closure. If closure is achieved, individuals achieve presence, a demonstration that their performance to effective organisational functioning has been recognised and incorporated: they are no longer treated as models of their roles or objects of manipulation, but as the source of necessary contributions, the nature of which may adapt to institutional cultural change.

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## **Problems of Social Protection and Population in Sweden**

Bruno Magnusson Luleå University of Technology

### **Introduction**

Welfare entails several problems found in every society. How are we going to be able to take care of children before they can look after themselves? How are we going to be able to take care of people who are sick and/or disabled, who cannot work? And how are we going to manage to enable elderly people to live independent lives of good quality as long as possible? And in the end how to support elderly people then they get old and more often need extensive care and social services?

In Sweden about one-fifth of the population are under the age of 17 and one-fifth over 65 years of age. Three-fifths of the Swedish population are of “working” age. But only just over two-fifths, almost the same number of men as women, a striking feature of the Swedish social structure, are employed. The remaining one-fifth are those on parental or study leave, unemployed, chronically ill, on early retirement pensions, disabled and so on. Welfare responsibility in Sweden encompasses basic financial life support for three-fifths of the population. In addition, there is temporary assistance in the event of illness and other emergencies (Zetterberg, 1992).

This situation is in focus because long-term sickness absence has increased in recent years in Sweden and its reduction is seen to be a major problem.

My focus on the issue of social protection and population in Sweden will mainly, because of my background, be connected to elderly care. I was educated in an older form of the Swedish Social Care programme, which I am working with today, and I have been in charge of elderly care in communities, both for old people’s homes as well as for home help for elderly living in their own homes.

In short, the present challenge for elderly care in Sweden is that the number of elderly people in Sweden is set to rise sharply in the decades ahead.



**Table 1. Population by year and age group in %, statistics and projections**

Year	0-19	20-64	65+	80+	Total (x1000)
1950	29.4	60.4	10.2	-	7.041
1980	26.4	57.3	16.4	3.2	8.316
1990	24.6	57.7	17.8	4.3	8.590
2000	24.1	58.7	17.2	5.1	8.833
2010	24.3	57.3	18.4	5.2	9.234
2020	23.1	56.2	20.7	5.1	9.466
2030	22.4	53.9	23.7	7.9	9.478

(Statistics Sweden, 2001)

Swedish society, seen as a front runner in welfare and social care provision for many years, is at something of a cross-roads. With a recently elected center-right alliance government led by the chairman of the moderate party, questions have been raised about the future direction of policy, with perceptible shifts in favour of market solutions. This paper considers the background context of the present dilemmas facing politicians, social policy makers in Swedish people in general, and offers some tentative concluding thoughts on the pressures shaping opinion.

Of Sweden's nine million inhabitants 2006, 17,3 percent have passed the retirement age of 65. According to Council of Europe statistics from 2003, Sweden is among the countries with the largest proportion of citizens over 65 years of age. Sweden also has the largest proportion of people aged 80 or over among the EU members, totalling 5.3 percent of the population (The Swedish Institute, 2007).

As the generation born in the 1940s passes retirement age there will, initially, be a rapid increase in the number of "young-old" people (aged 65-75). A decade and a half later – in the 2020s- a large increase in number of "old-old" (aged 80 and over) will ensue. The fall in mortality has also led to a very sharp rise in the number of the very oldest in the population. In 1900 there were 12 persons in Sweden aged 100 or more. In 2001 the number of "centarians" had increased to 1.041, and it is estimated that there will be some 2.800 persons older than 100 years in Sweden by 2025.

The population age has increased in Sweden in the twentieth century and it can largely be attributed to a reduction in mortality at all ages and raised average life expectancy. In 2005, life expectancy for women was 82.8 and for men 78.4 this can be compared with the figures of 57 and 55 respectively in 1900 (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2006). With 17 % of the

population aged 65 or over, Sweden in 2001 had one of the highest proportions of elderly people in the world and one of the oldest population calculated in median age (Ministry of Health and Social affairs, 2001).

**Table 2. Median age in some countries 1995**

Nordic countries			Europe			The rest of the World		
Sweden	38.9	Italy	38.8	Japan	39.7			
Denmark	37.9	Great Britain	36.9	USA	34.2			
Finland	37.8	Holland	35.9	Kina	27.6			
Norway	36.3	Romania	33.8	Brasil	24.2			
Iceland	31.4	Albania	25.2	Uganda	15.3			

(United Nations, 1998)

Freer and Wells (1988) stated in 1988 that:

*available evidence give grounds for optimism about the “graying” of the population . At the very least, it argues for a more balanced interpretation of the current and likely future situation. A wide range of contemporary issues has been examined from a number of different perspectives, and two broad themes have emerged. First a larger proportion of the elderly population is healthier and happier than many people imagine. Second, substantial progress has undoubtedly been achieved in many of the services provided for the elderly, although much, of course, still remains to be done (p. 261).*

In the same research survey the authors even suggested that:

*The morbidity and disability profiles of older people would appear to suggest a more appropriate cut-off point at about the age of 75 years. (p. 261)*

### **National objectives for the elderly**

In Sweden, policy for the elderly aims at enabling older persons to live independently with a high quality of life. Older persons in need of social care and social services are accordingly entitled to help of high quality. Elderly care is provided in accordance with democratic principles and is

mainly financed out of taxation revenue. The Swedish parliament has defined the following objectives for national policy for the elderly. Older persons shall:

- be able to live an active life and have influence over their everyday lives
- be able to grow old in security and retain their independence
- be treated with respect and
- have access to good healthcare and social services

One of the most important principles of Swedish policy for the elderly is that society's initiatives are to be framed in such a way, that older persons can continue living in their own homes for as long as possible, even when they need extensive care and social services. An accessible society, good housing, transport services and home help services are examples of important measures to realise that principle (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 2001).

### **Care for the elderly**

In October 2001 almost 122.000 people aged 65 or more received home help and home medical care and almost 119.000 received assistance in the form of special accommodation.

These measures embraced about 16 percent of Sweden's elderly. The majority of the measures were for people aged 80 or more (almost 178.000) (Socialstyrelsen, 2003).

Many municipalities are struggling to maintain the level and quality of the home help services. The majority of resources for old people's care is spent on special accommodation. There exist an imbalance between what is on offer and what is needed and hoped for, and there are shortcomings regarding available places and social quality and medical care. More restrained public commitment has compelled relatives during the past few years to take greater responsibility for old people's care and nursing needs. At the same time the municipalities and county councils are obliged to meet old people's care and nursing needs. It may thus be a moot point whether relatives should take further responsibility for the care and nursing of old people (Socialstyrelsen, 2003).

The most acute problem affecting the social services' work for old people concerns the provision of staff and competence. The municipalities are experiencing great difficulty in recruiting social workers, nurses and para-medical staff. The recruiting problems are compounded by increased sickness absence, and this has repercussions on care quality. At the same time the social services are compelled to meet needs and demands fore care of a more complex kind than previously. To

manage this, well-functioning liaison with county councils is required over participation by doctors in municipal care, rehabilitation and medical measures. Guaranteeing welfare for the elderly in the short and long term is a growing challenge for the whole community. Even though the state and the authorities have allocated more resources to the area, shortcomings remain. It is necessary to further develop knowledge, quality and effectiveness in care of the elderly to succeed (Socialstyrelsen, 2003).

### **Housing and accessibility**

About 94% of the elderly in Sweden live in ordinary homes. The housing conditions of older persons do not differ significantly from those of the population generally. The great majority of older persons live by themselves or with their spouses. Only about 2 % live with their children. Grants for housing adaptation make it possible for persons with functional impairment to undertake individual adaptations to their homes and immediate vicinity to enable them to stay on in their own homes. Common adaptations are removing thresholds and rebuilding bathrooms (The Swedish Institute, 2007).

### **Concluding remarks**

The main features of the “Swedish welfare state” with its publicly guaranteed and financed safety net for everyone in the country, so far remain intact. But a more restrained public commitment has during the past years compelled relatives to take a greater responsibility for old people’s care and nursing needs. It may thus be a moot point whether relatives should take further responsibility (The Swedish Institute, 2002).

The “market sector” in elderly care in Sweden is still small but growing, about 10 percent of elderly care (home help and special accommodation) was delivered by private entrepreneurs 2003 (Socialstyrelsen, 2004).

After the 2006 election Sweden have a new Alliance government, formed by the Moderates (formerly Conservatives), Liberals, Centre (formerly Agrarians), and Christian Democrats. In this new government market measures, (even in elderly care) and tax reductions, in line with neo – liberalism has stronger support than in the earlier Social Democratic government. The marketisation process of elderly care that has been a reality even before the new Alliance come to govern will now accelerate.

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## **Creating inequality by spoiling their sons? – Women’s views of mothers bringing up children in Tornedalen (Northernmost Sweden)**

**Ann-Kristin Juntti-Henriksson, Luleå University of Technology,  
Sweden**

### **Introduction**

This article examines gender related questions in the area of Tornedalen. Tornedalen is a bilingual (Swedish/Finnish) area located in the county of Norrbotten in the northernmost part of Sweden on the borderland to Finland. In this area, the population is dominated by men: being a result of the fact that emigration (mainly to the southern regions in Sweden) is much more common among young women than among young men (Länsstyrelsen, Norrbotten, 2005).

The study builds upon interviews of 103 women of varying ages (19-81 years old). The interviews include an enormous amount of information about different aspects related to gender. The interviews became women-narratives as told from their lives including lots of information and knowledge related to gender and equality. The resulting narratives includes both current (at the time of the interview, 1995-1996) and historic (from about middle to late twentieth century) reflections. Altogether the interviews stand for narratives as spoken from the memories of the respondents. The narrative therefore represents a part of a life history as it is explained by the respondent at the time of the interview.

The aim of this study was to shed light on gender differences associated with parenting as expressed by the women themselves. The focus of the analysis was set to women’s views of how mothers have brought up their children since this was commonly mentioned in the narratives.

The material was analyzed in a feminist poststructuralist way in line with Butler (1995; 1999). It is my belief that feminist poststructural theory and practice aids when addressing questions about gender relations and is an important viewpoint to take when analyzing local culture and gender functions. Feminist poststructuralism sees the need to address the social meanings produced within institutions in society and throughout history and not just in language, and sees individual subjectivity as existing not just within language but being shaped by these institutions and at the

same time, holding the potential of being agents of change (Weedon, 1997).

### **Women's narratives**

The many narratives contained lots of information regarding parenting in Tornedalen. A few quotes from the more than 100 interviews were extracted for presentation in this paper. The choice of quotes was made with a centre of attention on gender relations, parenting and how women experience their own situations. Naturally, the chosen quotes represent only a minor fraction of the material and cannot be taken to represent all views of parenting encountered in the material. However, the quotes represent an overall picture of the views expressed by Tornedalen women.

It seems from many of the interviews that boys have been raised quite different than girls. This is something that is mentioned in many of the interviews, but of course not in all. Tornedalen women most often explain men as being spoiled by their mothers. Mothers are often seen as the ones who have created an unequal situation between men and women in Tornedalen:

The Tornedalen man, in my eyes is a hunter and a fisherman. When I am talking about him, I see a picture in front of me of a man who has a cap and moist snuff under his lip, and he has a beard. That is my picture of the Tornedalen man. Then I think, I do not know if all, but many are quite spoiled by their mothers from home. I think he has had a mother who has arranged everything for him. Well, of course, he can do lots of things himself, but he has so many things from his mother who has looked after him and seen to that he has everything.

(Woman living in a relationship, 23 years old).

Some women saw men as something almost evil; and many had a clear negative view of men. Mothers were often blamed for raising unequal men:

The Tornedalen man is a big egoist. A human without feet and without spine, ugh! Maybe it is because he has been raised by the mother; mothers have taught them not to do any household tasks.

(Married woman, 40 years old)

Boys seem (or are claimed) to have been raised in a way that gave them a view of superiority compared to girls. Many women also claim that boys/men have been raised by their mothers and only by their mothers:

I often get quite disturbed by the fact that Tornedalen men have been raised by their mothers; so that they believe that they are of another race that have privileges compared to women, privileges such as; do not have to clean, they get more money, and so on.  
(Single woman, 19 years old)

The mothers are often blamed for having produced inequality in Tornedalen. This woman claims that mothers have destroyed men's view of equality. Still, she believes that things are getting better and that coming generations will live a more equal life:

I am married to a man from Tornedalen and they are not easy to get to do household tasks; they are raised a way that women do everything. I have never started with the impossible work of trying to train him. I think it easier to do things myself and that the way I always have done. I do everything I have time to, if I don't have time, then nothing gets done. Unfortunately, the mothers have destroyed so much, but I believe that the next generation, I have seen my daughter, for example, she does not accept that she has to do everything by herself, although it is said that even fathers are trying to get their sons to have their view that some things are only women's responsibilities. But women now are strong and they make demands and I think this is very right. One does not eat alone, so why should women do everything at home? Girls nowadays have more spine and courage than my generation had, or in any case, I admire my daughter; she anyhow gets him to do things.  
(Married woman, 49 years old).

## **Discussion and conclusions**

The data from the interviews are related to women's lives, their real experiences as well as their thoughts about gender and equality. By analyzing the experiences and perceptions of the respondents, the various narratives of women is taken to represent real and true gender relations in the local culture of Tornedalen as experienced by women. Most women had great knowledge of equality questions including the equality situation



in Tornedalen, very often claiming Tornedalen to be less equal than the rest of Sweden. In many narratives a strong masculine culture is explained, where men are the ones who have had or have most of the power in relationships (Juntti-Henriksson, in press).

The narratives also include a historical perspective which spans the middle to the late twentieth century. Today women, in general at least in the Nordic countries, have multiple functions in the family, in the social life, and at work (e.g. Björnberg, 2006). In many of the respondents' lifetimes' attitudes towards the nuclear family, working wives and mothers, and sex have changed considerably. However, expressions in narratives of older women are quite similar to those expressed in narratives of young women. This might seem surprising considering the fact that so much has happened in society over the more than fifty years covered in this study, including transitions from an almost exclusively rural to a more urbanized life (in the countryside); and from a time when almost all women were full-time housewives to a time when this has become a rarity.

For this study woman-narratives related to parenting were analysed and I attempted to understand this in relation to the local society of Tornedalen. The interviewed women seem to have a view that it is the women who bring up children and have a much stronger responsibility than men in doing so. The reason for this view is unclear, but Tornedalen women often have a quite negative view of men (Juntti-Henriksson, in press). From the narratives it is obvious that sons often have been raised quite different than daughters in Tornedalen. Many women described their (two) parents as almost "mother single-parent" and neglected mentioning their father. In many cases the interviewed women had strong opinions on their mothers' ways of bringing up children. However, the interviewed women do not mention (in any of the interviews) how they, themselves have tried to bring up their own sons. Instead the narratives include lots of blame on other mothers in creating spoiled sons. The blame on mothers sometimes goes further too even hold mothers responsible for creating inequality in Tornedalen. Several women claim upbringing of sons to be an important factor in creating an unequal society in Tornedalen.

Tornedalen women often seem to be preoccupied by imagery of what the local society expects and/or demands of them. They also identify themselves geographically, - as women living in Tornedalen and thus being specific Tornedalen women. Being constituted and constituting oneself as a Tornedalen woman involves what Britzman (2000) has talked

about in terms of: “making sense of ourselves through the construction of the other”. The interviews also often reveal the subordinate position of women in relation to men (Juntti-Henriksson, 2003). Women often expressed what was expected from them by others, thus trying to explain how the local culture puts pressure on preserving traditional gender functions.

Why then do so many women criticize/blame other women (mothers) as causing inequality, while not mentioning men (fathers at all)? To put forward an answer it may be fruitful to look into the different role experiences of mothers and fathers in Tornedalen explained in the narratives. It seems that differences in parental strain could be linked more strongly to the gender function than to the parental function, in that women are traditionally socialized (much more than men) into taking responsibilities for the household and the relationships and therefore more likely to experience greater responsibility (and stress) associated with upbringing of children. So, instead of working towards equality, the women themselves may, at least in some cases have acted to preserve traditional inequality due to the way they brought up their children. In these cases women seem to have preserved traditional gender functions by spoiling their sons.

The local norm system seems to strongly influence men and women in Tornedalen. The local culture may have strong expectations/demands of what it means to be a man/father and a woman/mother, respectively. It is clear that women identify themselves as Tornedalen women, (and it most often seems that they feel more in common with female youth than with men of the same age) and mothers. By bringing gender differences in the parental function into the next generation women it is definitely possible that women see themselves (and their gender function in Tornedalen) as almost completely responsible for upbringing of children. Being a parent thus puts women into great(er) pressure in a local traditional culture such as that of Tornedalen.

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# **New perspectives – visions or reality<sup>4</sup>**

Lena Widerlund, Luleå University of Technology

## **Introduction**

There have been various opinions about and treatment of people with developmental disabilities during different periods. At one time, they were segregated and kept in large institutions without any possibilities to participate in society and exhibit self-determination. They were even seen as a homogenous group and were treated as objects that others had the right to make decisions for them. This approach assumed that impairment is a property, a condition that made them less than an individual. Today, however, it is more likely that people with developmental disabilities are treated the same as other citizens.

Today the political goals for Swedish handicaps have been explained in the legislation: disabled and even people with developmental disabilities shall live as equal as possible, have self-determination, be involved in and have influence over their own life and their integrity shall be respected (SFS 1993:387 §§ 5 and 6). These conceptions are closely associated with the individual identity and demand and the state and the municipalities have the responsibility to realize these goals. Some municipalities have started projects to improve the possibilities to participation and self-determination for people with developmental disabilities and it is such project that is the starting point for this article. The study will illustrate how the municipality works to reach these goals.

## **Aim of the study**

Using the SFU project as a starting point, this study explores the conditions for increased participation and self-determination for people with developmental disabilities who live in group homes. The study was carried out in one municipality in a sparsely populated area in northern Sweden.

## **The SFU project**

The project was a three-year project and the goal was to increase self-determination for people with developmental disabilities who are living

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<sup>4</sup> This is a summary of a licentiate thesis with the same title.

in group homes. The participants in the project were the staff, decision-makers, relatives and the users. The realization of the project was education for the staff, seminars for the staff and other persons who were invited, and even an evaluation of the project.

The leader of the project did an inventory about what knowledge the staff needed in order to accomplish the goals of the project. With starting-point of this inventory the education for the staff, the following themes were identified: self-determination, participation, mental health, communication, the meaning of network and roles. Furthermore, the staff had also possibilities to change experiences between different units.

## **Background**

In the beginning of 1950s, it were noticed several cases of incongruity at institutions for people with developmental disabilities and it led to an opinion about how people with developmental disabilities were treated by society. At that time, parents to children with developmental disabilities started The Swedish Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability. They pressured decision makers and different authorities to work for raising the living standard for people with developmental disabilities (Nirje, 2003). At that time, people believed that impairment was an individual problem that demanded medical knowledge for their treatment. Barnes and Mercer (2003) writes: "This includes repeated and often painful medical and surgical procedures to make the individual 'more normal' or less likely to attract a critical public gaze" (p. 7). According to the authors, the segregated institutions attracted growing criticism from the late 1950s, both from disabled people and their organizations and from mainstream providers, academics and politicians. So the perspective changed step by step to focus on the problem that the design of the society caused people with different impairment.

In the Swedish program for handicap politic from 1981 (Socialdepartementet, 1981), it is emphasized that disabled people should have collective influence especially through organisations that advocate for disabled people. By the end of the 1980s, the government appointed a commission that investigated the support people with impairments received. The commission discovered that there was a large shortage of support to people with impairments. The shortage consists of both the extent and the content of the efforts and the individual possibilities to plan and control their own lives. They even established the fact that there existed a large shortage of individual influence of the support and service

and even large differences between disabled and others and between different groups of disabled and between different places in the country (Dehlin, 1997). The commission emphasized the importance for the respect to the individual right of self-determination and influence (SOU 1991:46). Even the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain functional Impairments (SFS 1993:387) focuses on the conceptions participation and self-determination. It is a contrast to the ideology that was existing during the beginning of the 2000 when the segregation sometimes aimed to protect the disabled from the society and sometimes the contrary, protecting the society from people with impairments (Söder, 1992). The commission focused on the right to participate for people with impairments and to be respected for their self-determination. They emphasized that people with impairments shall receive support and service from an individual perspective. This concerned even people with developmental disabilities and now large institutions started phasing out. People with disabilities often had lived without these possibilities (Barron, Michailakis & Söder, 2000).

The Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (SFS 1993:387) notes that people with impairments have right to self-determination and influence. These conceptions are often used in different documents and cohesions, but they have not been clearly defined; they are treated as a matter of fact (Wikström, 2005). One step to reach the goal for the handicap policy is to increase the knowledge about how these conceptions are interpreted and how different actors work to realize these goals.

## **The methods**

In this study, two qualitative methods were combined; eight of the staff and three relatives were interviewed and fieldworks were performed in a group home for people with developmental disabilities. These data collections were carried out both in the beginning and in the end of the SFU project. The fieldwork provided a view of everyday meetings and the social interaction in the given context and it even provided knowledge of the possibilities for the service users to participate and increase their self-determination. The interviews were intended to uncover deeper answers to the following research questions:

- What does participation and self-determination mean for the staff and the relatives to the service user?

- How does the municipality work to realize these goals and how do they succeed?
- Are there any oppositions to work towards realizing these goals and if there are, which are the most important?

### **The meaning and importance of participation and self-determination**

The possibilities to live an independent life as possible are an important factor for developing an individual identity and a feeling of freedom (Ellingsen, 2005). Wehmeyer (1999) believes that individual self-determination is one of the most important bases for a democratic society and a good life quality for each person and one prerequisite for self-determination is that the person has the possibility to participate in different decisions about their lives.

A first step for the collection of data was to find out how the informants defined the conceptions participation and self-determination and the predominant impression was that the staff were very insecure about the content of the concepts and the importance for the disabled to have this possibilities. When they were requested to describe what they mean, they often give concrete examples. One of the informants says that participation is “When you inform about what there are and what they can choose, perhaps they don’t know everything.” To be informed is important, but real participation demands more than information. Even if there are some hesitations, most of the informants are positive to participation and self-determination for the service users, and one of the informants says “I have always thought that they shall participate in everything”. The informants even mean that participation and self-determination are a right that they have, but at the same time there are some of the informants who say that there are some restrictions about the extent.

### **How does the municipality work to realize these goals and how do they succeed?**

The municipality started the SFU project with the goal to increase participation and self-determination for people with developmental disabilities living in group homes. After the project was finished, some participants started a “user council” in one of the group homes. Other changes are the “climate” at the group home had become more “open” and they discussed more with each other after the education (which was one intervention), which was the main intervention in the project. However, it is a paradox that the informants emphasize the importance of

participation and self-determination for all of the users that they had began to respect the users more but at the same time there is some of the staff who mostly takes the decisions. Another contradiction is that the staff are afraid that the users shall begin to take control if they are allowed to decide about some questions and at the same time they mean that the disabled do not participate and decide because they have bad self-confidence.

### **Obstruction to work towards realizing participation and self-determination**

The most important obstructions for the users' possibility to have self-determination were the character of the organization, social situations and lack of communication. For example, the obstructions of the organization were lack of management and support and disruption about the needs of plan and structure of the work. Furthermore, there was incoherence between the roles as staff and relative. One of the relatives says that she has had discussions with the staff about their functions; however, when she visits her relatives, it is always something the staff want her to do, which is the staff's responsibility. There were even informal leaders in the organisation and they had a lot of influence over the work at the group home and the informants want more clear management and support. Another difficulty was that the service users had so different needs because of their age and the extent of the impairment.

The social oppositions were, for example, a strong collective praxis in the organisation that, for example, means that the work is steering of routines and the routines are difficult to change because they look like safety for the staff. The lack of flexibility and possibilities to improvise can be one of the reasons why the education, which was the main intervention of the project, was not as influential as expected.

During the interviews, it came to light that it was not always the service users were asked what they wanted to do and one of the informants expressed it as follow: "It doesn't work if all have the possibility to rule". One way to create power is to ask the service users and the consequences can be that the staff makes all decisions, a situation that can lead to overprotection and assault. Another of the interviewed participants noted that overprotection was detrimental: "Yes it will be a sort of overprotection . . . when you take different decisions for the service users . . . I think you don't really ask everybody". Ellingsen (2005) writes that if you have influence over others you have "model power" and it is especially active in the interaction between people at different levels.



Because of that, it is very important that social workers are aware about these circumstances and in the meeting between people with the highest status and power they should define what is the most important. In all work with people, there is always a perspective of power present (Mallander, 1999) and to practice power is not only to decide on others lives it is even a question about democratic issues (Brusén & Printz, 2006). Several of the informants say that many of the users do not have the possibility to decide because the staffs are afraid the users will “take over” the power. At the same time, this situation causes frustration and one of the informants notes that it is very important to show the service users respect. This situation shows ambivalence when the staff inhibits participation and self-determination and at the same time they say that they will have the possibility to decide.

Communication between the different actors and even between the service users and the staff is another important component to create the possibilities for the users to have self-determination. One example of lack of communication is when the staff interprets the user different when they don't get their wishes satisfied. It is even important that the communication between the staff and the relatives are good if the relatives are to have the possibility to take part in the care.

## **Summary**

The aim of the study was, using the SFU project as a starting point, to explore the conditions for increased participation and self-determination for people with developmental disabilities who live in group homes. The goal with the project was to give disabled larger possibilities to participate and have self-determination. The main intervention to reach these goals was education for all the staff, which comprised twelve days and one seminar each year for the staff, relatives and service users. Despite this, there were several larger challenges (other than education) that needed to be addressed to reach the goals for the project. Ellingsen (2006) found similar issues in his study about improving care and reducing constraint for people with developmental disabilities in Norway. He found that the collective practice and the routines that have been designed in the working team are difficult to change because care providers see the their intervention as a safety issue. Education that consolidates the individual competence can be experienced as a threat against the collective form of working. It can be one of the reasons why the education in the SFU-project did not succeed as expected. This corresponds with what I found in this study and what Lysggard (1961)

and I call “the working collective”. My impression during the fieldwork was that the work was steered by habits and routines and there existed few spontaneous initiatives.

Many attempts have been made to change perspective on the care of people with developmental disabilities, but despite a lot of changes of the organisation and education of the staff, the old practice is still valid. Why have so few changes been made when the organisation has been adapted to new goals? Sandvin (1993), referring to Ogburn (1922), concludes that staff have had difficulties rejecting earlier models of care and treatment and the culture of institutions is integrated in both the general understanding of developmental disability as phenomena and the professional socialisation of the staff. One of the informants wanted to realize the goals for the care of people with developmental disabilities more than the others, but she had worked the shortest time so she had difficulties gaining the respect of the others in the group. According to Hirschman (1970), she can choose the strategy of voice by expressing what she wants and propose new ways to work. Other ways are what Hirschman calls exit: either quite working or be loyal by following what her colleagues do and say. Knoll and Racino (1994) note that the new priorities in the care for people with developmental disabilities are to identify and give priority to individual strength. Another way to reach the goals can be to develop cooperation with the relatives and support and raise the enthusiasm for several of the staff to develop the ways of working so they take care of and respect the choices made by the their charges. At that time, the possibilities for the disabled probably should increase for self-determination, an attitude that will increase the chances that the disabled people will be more independent.

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# **Women Managers in Female Work Areas – Dilemmas of Identity and Loyalty**

Anne Kristine Solberg, University of Stavanger, Norway

## **Introduction**

I will reflect on the work of women managers in middle rank positions in the public sector, especially in the health and social sector where most employees are women. Organisational changes are frequent in this field and it seems like important strategic decisions first and foremost have to do with efficiency and reduction of expenses. Quite a few of the middle managers are women, and very often they have the same professional background as their subordinates. My primary concern is to illuminate how the manager's role and behaviour are influenced and shaped by two different rationalities: the rationality of caring, and a technical-economical rationality. These represent different value systems and may inflict problems of identity and loyalty. Whilst management positions first and foremost are based on technical-economical rationality, the rationality of caring is fundamental for carrying out professional or core work in the health and social sector. Different coping strategies may be used in handling such conflicts and dilemmas. Before going more thoroughly into this problem, some characteristics of the different rationalities referred to will be presented after a brief clarification of the concepts of role and identity.

## **Role and identity**

As social persons we have many statuses. When one of these is activated, it becomes a social role with rights and duties defined by the status (cf. Goffman 1959), which means that there are certain expectations, norms and rules to live up to. It is possible to design or shape a role (cf. Wenger 1998), but the actual conduct or role behaviour is beyond such moulding. Thus, to a certain degree, when playing a role or holding a position, conductors have the opportunity to leave their individual mark on the performance or execution.

Identities are developed and constructed in social relationships and constituted and expressed through roles (Wenger 1998). Unlike roles, identities cannot be designed. Once established, identities are not static, but changeable and negotiable. Naturally, meanings and identities do change over time and with new experience. To understand the process of identification it is important to acknowledge both the individual and the

collective part of it. Being a member of a social group means some sort of communality with other group members, but it does not mean a collective identity. The content and meaning of identity for the individual person is unique, constructed and negotiated in relationships and togetherness in different kinds of group and community (cf. Wenger 1998).

Belonging to different groups means developing several identities, based on different categories; for instance, gender, profession, work and work organisation. The identity as manager is expressed in the actual role behaviour. However, this behaviour may be susceptible to the meaning of other identities, grounded for instance on gender and vocational training.

### **Different rationalities – conflicting identities and loyalties**

In feminist research, the concept of caring has been a core concept and subject of attention for many years. Kari Waerness (1992) has been a significant contributor to this theory building and I will draw on her work in this presentation. As Waerness (1992:210) puts it, caring *has to do with feeling concern for and taking charge of the well-being of others*. And it is about *relations between people*. However, in her theorizing she makes some important distinctions between caring for dependents, caring for superiors and caring in symmetrical relations. Caring for dependents she defines as *caregiving work*. As my concern is female work areas, especially the health and social sector, where the clients or patients are dependent and often in vulnerable situations, I find this distinction useful. Caregiving work is a core activity in this field. Waerness argues that this kind of work has its own rationality, called *the rationality of caring*. Feelings as well as thoughts should be involved in caregiving work. Thus, this meaning of rationality is not in accordance with mainstream western theory and its clear-cut distinction between emotion and rationality.

However, the influence of a technical-economical rationality seems to be overwhelming in many organisations in the health and social sector, despite the fact that caregiving work is a core activity. In the name of New Public Management, economic values and traditional rational thinking about organisations are adopted and have a great impact on the daily life and work in the organisation. If a technical-economical perspective is the more influential and dominates ways of thinking, organising and carrying out work, the character of the work may change and the quality of the work may deteriorate. On the other hand, organisational changes should be welcome if working conditions and activities are improved by this approach.

## **Identities, roles and relationships in female work areas**

Vocational training and practice imply development of a professional identity in accordance with values and standards in nursing or social work. Moving into a management position does not necessarily mean changing this identity. Former vocational training as caretaker may be influential in many ways. As managers in this sector, women belong to different social and cultural settings. They may be attached to colleagues they have learned to know and have cooperated with, and they may also feel a part of a social communality of women, having made friends or developed private relations with some of them (cf. Solberg 2000). To have such relationships with colleagues may not be experienced as a problem when people are on the same level in the organisation, but there could be alliances and conflicts among the workers, due to different friendship constellations. However, friendship among colleagues often contributes to good working relations and a cooperative climate. A difficult situation may occur if managers are close friends with some of their subordinates because there are essential differences between friendship and working relations. Work organisations are based on a rationality and logic different from that expected in private relationships. Although it is possible, theoretically, to distinguish between work-relations and friendships, this may be difficult or impossible in real life where roles and relationships can be intertwined. The fact that women's professional work often has a strong resemblance to their traditional work could contribute to such behaviour.

Because the position of manager implies a distance to others and women usually are less acquainted with such a role, it may be more difficult for them to adapt to the associated rules, conventions and expectations. However, as expectations are often different for men and women, they have to consider what this means to them in their situation. Thus they contribute to shaping and framing the role. I will now go further into some possible accommodation strategies.

### **Accommodation strategies**

Reflecting on coping behaviour, I find the following concepts developed by Hirschman (1970), *exit*, *voice* and *loyalty*, very useful. In short, exit means leaving the organisation, whilst the voice strategy is an expression of dissatisfaction, addressed to the authority or to anyone who care to listen. Moreover, the latter represents more than a silent, private protest. Seemingly, the meaning of loyalty is pretty obvious. However, loyalty may take different directions. Trying to combine different loyalties may

result in conflicts and problems; for instance, if values and goals in the organisation are contradictory, or if strategic decisions seem to imply changes to the detriment of values and work in caring. As pointed out by Billing (1991), choosing approaches like exit and voice may tell something about difficulties with combining different loyalties. Furthermore, loyalty may activate voice as a strategy, thus preventing the use of exit (Hirschman 1970, Billing 1991). Different and conflicting loyalties in the organisation can be reflections of rationalities and identities in conflict.

A technical-economical rationality dominates in organisational thinking and management theory. Consequently this rationality can be forceful in forming the identity of manager. However, if the manager has a vocational training and background from the working area in the health and social sector, a caring rationality may be strongly felt and contribute to forming the identity as manager and the role behaviour in the actual position. But quite often these rationalities are competitive and seemingly impossible to compromise. Furthermore, this is not regarded as a competition on equal terms because of the dominant position of a technical-economical rationality in the organisation.

If the manager does not succeed in compromising and combining the different perspectives in acceptable ways, it may be impossible to continue in the leadership position and the only alternative is to leave ('exit'). Before this strategy is chosen, arguing in favour of a caring perspective has probably been tried ('voice'), without being successful. When such arguments are neglected or turned down, the reaction may be disillusion and pessimism, seeing no point in going on. On the other hand, holding a management position gives more power and better opportunity to articulate and fight for important values and needs than being on lower levels, making it more worthwhile to stay and continue the struggle for better conditions for clients and subordinates. However, whatever the values and priorities are, there are strong expectations to behave in accordance with what is decided ('loyalty'). Very often this means being loyal to decisions taken on higher hierarchical levels, without having had much opportunity to influence those decisions.

Conclusively, although managers in middle rank positions have some freedom in framing their role and in carrying out their work, there are strong demands on loyalty and to implement strategic decisions, first and foremost grounded on a technical-economical rationality, which implies compromising with other identities and a caring rationality. Individuals

probably have to compromise or live with such dilemmas and conflicts; otherwise they would not stay in the job.

*'The tender executioner' – an (un)acceptable model?*

According to a Swedish study (Holmquist 1997) female managers in the public sector try to accommodate to changes in the organisation by choosing loyalty as a strategy, working hard to live up to expectations. In other words, they internalise problems, taking on a personal responsibility to fulfil obviously conflicting goals. They are successful in motivating their subordinates to give their utmost, although economising and cost reduction seem to be the main focus and concern. Closeness to their subordinates may explain why they succeed in this respect. Moreover, subordinates may also identify with their manager, who is supposed to handle a difficult situation as best she can. However, by naming the manager 'the tender executioner', Holmquist (1997) indicates that there are some ethical questions to pose to a situation like this.

Being a great motivator is regarded as very important in middle management. But possessing such power opens up for various uses and misuses. If economising and cost reduction are the main focus and concern and managers are motivating their subordinates to give their utmost and even more than that, managers might succeed in fulfilling important goals. Nevertheless, they might loose in other respects; for instance, if the consequences are worn out workers or if the effects are harmful to clients. Another serious consequence is that economical and organisational problems in the sector, which first and foremost constitute a political matter and responsibility, are concealed as individual problems (cf. Gullikstad & Rasmussen 2004). Thus, managers may contribute to this individualisation, putting heavy loads on the subordinates' shoulders. The latter's responsibilities as caretakers and devotion to their clients will probably make it difficult to leave clients without doing their utmost, even if this means overloading themselves. Moreover, relations to colleagues and feelings of communality and solidarity work in the same direction. However, this could be called a defensive communality, characterised by good internal relations and feelings of solidarity, but powerless when it comes to external influence. A combination of loyalty and voice approaches could probably have given a more robust communality, being more powerful outwards.

The question is if women generally, more readily than men, are susceptible to accepting and adjusting to existing work conditions or



changes in the organisation, because of different or traditional expectations of role behaviour. Holmquist's findings may therefore also reflect more traditional female virtues, being 'obedient, conscientious and clever'. Appropriate behaviour includes expressing loyalty more often than being in opposition. Moreover, in their traditional role, women are often expected to adapt readily to other people, situations and settings, which in turn may make it easier to accept changes in work organisation.

However, female work areas may consist of different relationships and constellations, with differing kinds of relationships to the leader. Although cooperation may predominate in the working environment, competition and rivalry among individuals and groups are not unusual. With different identities and loyalties in play, approaches to changes may vary in the organisation. Therefore, different relationships in the work environment should be taken into account when analysing managers' and subordinates' accommodation strategies.

## **Conclusions**

If the main focus and concern are economising and cost reduction, I suppose employers are happy with managers who accommodate to changes by choosing loyalty as a strategy. Whether deliberate or not, having women in middle management positions to implement such changes in the organisation could be a successful strategy from the employers' point of view (Holmquist 1997). However, if the consequences are worn out workers and an unacceptable worsening of the conditions for clients, this way of accommodating does not serve the interests of the latter. Nor do concealing economical and organisational problems, which in reality constitute a political responsibility, as individual problems (cf. Gullikstad & Rasmussen 2004). Having good relations to subordinates and the best will and intentions to be a good manager, cannot make up for such effects. Therefore, a voice strategy is also needed, speaking up for subordinates/clients. This could be a kind of solution to conflicting loyalties and hopefully contribute to empowering actors and communalities in the field.

In carrying out their work managers certainly have to take into account, consciously or not, whom they are and whom they are representing. That means considering questions related to identity and loyalty, which in turn may give important and valuable contribution to the managers' own shaping of their roles.

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## **Regulatory Control, Bureaucratic Identity and Enterprise Formation in South East Asia**

David Seth Jones, University of Brunei

Introduction: Procedural regulations of business start-ups

When a business is started, it is necessary for it to be vetted and registered by a public authority. Different types of registration may be required, with the process involving a number of bureaucratic procedures (what may be termed procedural regulations). Certain procedures may be formalities and constitute red tape; other procedures may be more than this and involve discretionary decisions by government officials. In addition, a new business may be subject to financial regulations in the form of a paid-up capital requirement.

The problem is that if such regulations are numerous, difficult to follow or to comply with, and entail transactional costs (fees and charges), they may act as bindweed on business start ups, discouraging enterprise formation and market entry. The challenge facing many developing countries, including those in Southeast Asia is to reform the vetting and registration procedures so as to remove unnecessary obstacles to market entry.

The paper examines both the procedural regulations (relating to the registration process) and financial regulations (relating to a paid-up capital requirement) governing business start-ups in Southeast Asia. It compares the burden of procedural and financial regulations amongst the various states in the region Asia, distinguishing those where the burden is light, from those where it is heavy and where reforms have not been instituted. It then identifies the reforms which are necessary to reduce the burden on business start-ups arising from both procedural regulations and financial requirements. Lastly, the paper considers how a traditional bureaucratic identity, expressed through bureaucratic self-interest and a traditional bureaucratic culture or mind-set, has prevented reforms in countries where procedural and financial regulations continue to be burdensome.

*The problem of procedural & financial regulations of business start-ups*  
Procedural and financial regulations of business start-ups may themselves create obstacles and inconveniences in starting businesses. These include the need to ensure all procedures are properly followed, the time taken in completing forms and in dealing with bureaucrats usually in different agencies, and delays in the processing of documents and granting of approvals by the registration authorities. A

further obstacle are transactional costs in the form of fees and charges (plus unofficial payments demanded), which are levied on start-up firms by registration and other authorities, as well as overly burdensome financial conditions in the form of a paid-up capital requirement.

### **Measuring procedural and financial regulation of business start-ups**

The extent and impact of procedural regulations for starting a business may be measured in the following three ways:

- The number of procedures to be followed including documents and forms to be processed and approvals to be obtained;
- The number of days taken for the required procedures to be completed;
- The costs which arise as a result of the legal fees and administrative charges levied in following these procedures (measured as a percentage of average income per head).

In addition to procedural regulations, financial regulations, as already mentioned, also apply to business start-ups in certain countries. These take the form of paid-up capital deposited in a bank account (indicated in the table below as a percentage of average income per head).

These measures of the procedural and financial regulations will be used to determine how heavily or lightly regulated are business start-ups in various states of Southeast Asia.

#### *Procedures in starting a business*

Certain important bureaucratic requirements must be met when forming a business. They include, amongst others, obtaining approval of the company's name (to avoid replicating that of another company), deed of foundation, and, if they are a separate document, its articles of association. This is followed by official registration of the business on the register of companies and then registration with the tax, social security and manpower agencies. These and other requirements can involve few or alternatively many bureaucratic procedures in order to complete the process. Not included in the above are additional industry-specific licences and permits such as special licences for food establishments, and certificates that attest to building safety and soundness in the construction industry (WB, 2007a).

### *Comparing the burden of procedural and financial regulations of business start-ups in Southeast Asia*

The table 1 below shows how much the countries in Southeast Asia vary in the amount of procedural and financial regulations governing market entry. In some countries procedures are complex, cumbersome, and protracted and involve significant financial costs to business (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines and Vietnam). In other countries, they are streamlined and straightforward, take little time and involve little cost (Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore). In addition, in two countries, Cambodia and Indonesia, new businesses can only be registered providing they have a paid-up capital reserve.

	No of procedures	Time taken (days)	Costs (% of income per head)
Cambodia	10	86	236
Indonesia	12	151	87
Laos	9	97	17
Malaysia	9	30	21
Philippines	11	48	19
Singapore	6	6	1
Thailand	8	33	6
Vietnam	11	77	45

Source: WB, 2006; 2007a.

The World Bank has provided global and regional rankings of states according to the procedural and financial burdens imposed on new businesses. The variation of these burdens amongst Southeast Asian states according to these rankings is shown in table 2 below.

The burden of procedures in starting a business correlates with the overall regulatory burden which businesses are subject to (measured by the amount of red tape and by the level of regulatory quality as applied to all business activities). This is shown in table 3. Countries in which procedural burdens on business start ups are the heaviest also suffer from the heaviest regulatory burden for a wide range of business activities.

### *Challenges in reforming procedural and financial regulations of business start-ups*

A key challenge facing several states of the region in reforming regulations of business start-ups is to discard unnecessary procedures and financial requirements, which serve no useful purpose, such as making and approval of

	Rank out of all countries in the world (out of 175)	Rank out of countries in Asia-Pacific region (out of 23)		Rank out of all countries in the world (out of 175)	Rank out of countries in Asia-Pacific region (out of 23)
Indonesia	143	23	Laos	73	14
Cambodia	135	21	Malaysia	71	12
Philippines	126	19	Thailand	28	5
Vietnam	104	18	Singapore	11	2

	Red tape	Regulatory quality		Absence of red tape	Regulatory quality
Brunei	N/A	80.0	Myanmar	N/A	1.0
Cambodia	11	26.8	Philippines	34	52.2
Indonesia	4	43.4	Singapore	95	99.5
Laos	1	14.1	Thailand	65	62.4
Malaysia	71	69.8	Vietnam	31	31.2

Source: WB, 2007b; 2007c; Forbes Media, 2006.

a company seal, local government certification, publishing the articles of association in the government gazette, and the necessity for paid-up capital.

Another reform is to merge related procedures drawing upon identical or overlapping information. This can make possible the creation of a so-called 'one stop shop' and single access point. One agency is responsible for issuing the different registrations and approvals related to business start-ups, or granting one umbrella approval, or disseminating information to other responsible agencies. This, in addition, reduces the multiplicity of agencies businesses have to deal with (de Sa, 2005; Djankov et al, 2002; Fonesca et al, 2001).

A more efficient and convenient process of registration, which fulfills the one stop shop and single access point concept, is created by an on-line system of registration and approvals. However, this depends on creating technical capacity, and instilling IT know-how and receptive attitudes for the adoption of on-line systems. In addition, adopting

simultaneous procedures for business registration much time can be saved by switching from a sequential to a simultaneous ordering of procedures wherever possible, especially when they are not inter-dependent. Establishing regulatory watchdog and appeals body which has the power to vet each new regulation and procedure by assessing extra burdens imposed on business balanced against benefits to the community and economy to review complaints from individual businesses on the way that specific regulations have been applied (de Sa, 2005).

*Reasons for resistance to reform of procedural and financial regulations of market entry*

One of the key factors impeding reform is a strong bureaucratic identity in several countries of Southeast Asia leading to: the exercise of bureaucratic self-interest and the assertion of a traditional bureaucratic culture. The bureaucratic self-interest argument is based on rational choice theory applied to bureaucratic behaviour with self-interest measured in terms of power, private remuneration, agency budgets and jobs or career opportunities (Djankov et al, 2002; Fonesca et al, 2001).

Complex, cumbersome and ill-defined procedures entailing multiple approvals, and allowing scope for arbitrary decisions, help bureaucratic elites to retain some of their power and status, and increase agency revenue if procedures involve fees and charges. They provide opportunity too for rent seeking (bribes paid to obtain registrations and approvals, and to expedite processes etc) and embezzlement if fees and charges are levied. It is no surprise that countries in the region with the heaviest regulatory burdens for business start-ups are the most corrupt according to measures provided by the World Bank and Transparency International. In addition, a plethora of procedures necessitating a good deal of time-consuming work (e.g. in processing documents, verifying records), safeguards employment and careers in registration and regulatory authorities (Djankov et al, 2002; Fonesca et al, 2001).

A second reason explaining resistance to reform is the continuance of a traditional bureaucratic culture in several countries of Southeast Asia, which emphasises rules, procedures and paperwork, hierarchical control, & rigid divisions of responsibility. Officials in regulatory and registration authorities continue to be molded by such values. Reducing or streamlining procedural and financial regulations, as with other forms of regulatory reform, does not naturally accord with such values. For example, merging of procedures and creation of a 'one stop shop' may be impeded by rigid divisions of responsibility and hierarchical controls as happened in Vietnam.



### *Conclusion – changing from state ownership to state regulation*

The emergence of a market economy, even in the communist states of Vietnam and Laos has eroded the role of the state bureaucracy, as the exclusive or major provider of commercial goods and services. To redress the erosion of its role as producer/provider, the government bureaucracy has sought to impose a wide range of regulatory controls over the free market including procedural and financial requirements for market entry. In other words the state as producer and provider has been replaced by the state as the regulator. This enables the state bureaucracy to retain or recapture some of the control it would otherwise have relinquished as a consequence of market reform. As regulator it may continue to uphold the traditional bureaucratic culture, and also to exercise its self-interest by preserving its power and status, retaining financial resources, jobs and career opportunities, and preserving its capacity to facilitate illicit private gain through rent seeking and embezzlement. The traditional bureaucratic identity based on the old style bureaucratic culture and agency self-interest has thus been reasserted, facilitated by the independence of regulatory and other authorities from close control by the political executive.

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## **Social Support, Friend or Foe?**

Allen King, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden

Within the extensive research documenting the implementation of New Public Management (NPM) reforms it is clear that a large number of organisations have restructured the division of labour and authority within their dominion. Restructuring frequently involves the casualisation or sub-contracting of auxiliary workers and the specialisation of work duties. Additionally, through enhancing competitiveness NPM reforms are credited with the creation of non-cooperative working environments that engender suspicions of skulduggery and paranoia among co-workers (Berg et al. 2004). Generally experienced by workers as intrusive and a violation of personal autonomy (ibid) current wisdom presumes that NPM reforms have reduced decision latitude and increased psychological demand, consequently intensifying negative psychological stress.

Stress and psychosocial work environment related research is dominated by the conclusions reached by Robert Karasek and Töres Theorell (1990). Their work utilised self-report questionnaires to measure worker's subjective experiences of decision latitude, psychological demand and social support. They found that the majority of occupational groups were characterised by a low level of control and excessive psychological demand (Karasek, 1990; page 280-281). A vast majority of subsequent stress related research makes use of similar data collection and analytical methods and produce similar results (see for example; Statistiska Centralbyrån [SCB], 2001 & 2004; King, 2006). It is however difficult to determine with any confidence when, indeed if, any increase or decrease in the experience of these variables in the organisations studied has occurred since the time of Karasek & Theorell's original study. Even so, research in this area is inclined to focus on occupational workloads and personal autonomy whilst social relationships are approached more simplistically (for example; Furåker [red], 1991; SCB 2001 & 2004; Berg et al. 2004; Marklund [red], 2005; King, 2006). Negative psychological stress and its consequences are accordingly viewed as the product of a heavy workload and inadequate control over it; social relationships are regarded as the saving grace of working men and women.

To a great extent research on sickness absence supports these assumptions and asserts structural change in organisations following NPM reforms as the reason for increased absenteeism (see for example; SCB, 2004; Marklund [red], 2005). Accordingly, it might be expected that the extent of absenteeism amongst workers in reformed organisations would be high. In Sweden however, during the first quarter of 2007 the proportion of absent employees due to sickness in relation to all

employees was 4.1 percent (SCB, 2007). Sickness absenteeism is evidently confined to a minority of the working population, revealing a discrepancy between expectation that derives from the work of Karasek and Theorell and empirical evidence.

In essence, whilst recognising the importance of the established understanding, the ambition of this discussion is to move beyond the current paradigmatic fixation with the workload/personal autonomy association. The central issues here are human beings and their relationships with organisations as well as with other human beings within organisations. Through applying available published literature to empirical evidence the discussion considers organisations, human beings, and the implications of their alliance as well as the contribution of NPM reforms to the sickness absence phenomenon.

### **The Collection of Evidence**

The author collected the empirical data presented in this discussion during two independent projects conducted in the county of Norrbotten in northern Sweden. Both projects examine structural change in organisations subsequent to efficiency driven NPM reforms. Although limited, this collection of empirical data offers potential insight into both the process of “becoming”, as well as “being” an established member of a working social unit.

The first project was a study of a psychosocial work environment conducted in 2005. At the time of data collection the organisation had begun to unify three previously detached work-groups into one working social unit. The evidence presented in the discussion is provided by 19 female cleaners that completed a self-report questionnaire and from information selected from one of six interviews<sup>5</sup>. The evidence from the first project is primarily considered under the heading “Bringing Social Units Together”.

The second project was a study that examined the integration of people from one organisation into another. The data was collected one year after the sub-contracting of cleaning duties to another organisation. The evidence presented in this discussion was selected from the information obtained during group and individual interviews with 65 workers. This project is of particular interest as a number of these people had previously been excluded from the conventional labour market<sup>6</sup>. The evidence from the second project is primarily considered under the heading “Organisations & Human Beings”.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information about this project see King, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> For more information about this project see King and Berg, 2007.

## **Organisations & Human Beings**

Organisations are dependent on reaching selected objectives and typically consist of deliberately structured detached social units containing interactive positions (Abrahamsson and Andersen, 2005; Ahrne and Hedström, 1999). To reach their objectives as efficiently and effectively as possible, people with the competence to perform specific tasks are recruited (Ahrne and Hedström 1999). The efficiency and effectiveness of its workers is vital in securing an organisation's continued existence, thus each worker's motivation, regular attendance and ongoing dependence on the organisation must be maximised (Abrahamsson and Andersen, 2005). Varying styles of management, or managerial regimes, can be used, with the Human Relations school of thought focusing on social aspects of work. Using this approach, that adopts an employee centred style of leadership (providing appreciation, acknowledgement and encouragement), it has been contended that through careful coordination and control of workers' activities managerially desirable actions are promoted and deviations discouraged (ibid). Moreover, a team spirit and stable homogeneous environment are developed; providing a positive reception in which a person receives recognition of the identity they have formed (Ahrne and Hedström, 1999). Whilst their commitment and attachment to other organisations is reduced, workers within a social unit become mutually dependent upon one-another for their identities (Abrahamsson and Andersen, 2005). This vested interest in the continued existence of the social unit intensifies their dependence on the organisation and the reaching of organisational objectives (Ahrne, 1994). To ensure that "their" objective(s) are reached, workers regulate one-another's activity, control one-another's contribution and proficiency, provide assistance, guidance and chastisement (ibid). Becoming a part of a social unit presents newcomers with a challenge.

In addition to their congruence with the prevailing culture, a newcomer must also demonstrate that they have the ability to perform the tasks at hand (Beck and Beck-Gremsheim, 2002). During this probationary period infringements of the idiosyncratic routines and conventions of the established informal "cultural" praxis frequently occur (Bauman, 1991). To install awareness of cultural practices exaggerated demands are made of a newcomer's proficiency and unsubstantiated charges of incompetence are often made against them (Ahrne and Hedström, 1999). The intensity of the scrutiny a newcomer faces when positioning themselves in a working group is extreme.

”[O]nce a complaint (against newcomers) about stains on the floor was made. It turned out that these stains are under the

varnish! They have been there for years!” (Formal authority figure in project 2).

To evade scrutiny, castigation and banishment the newcomer embroiders their worthiness through being more proficient and effective than others (Ahrne and Hedström, 1999; Bauman, 1991; Fromm, 1941). The strategy adopted by newcomers in their efforts to be accepted includes a willingness to do more work than required.

”It is like we (newcomers) are in the same gang as them, if we work a little more than we should” (A newcomer participating in project 2).

Adopting behaviour congruent with that of a Type A personality (discussed by Karasek & Theorell, 1990) newcomers humbly admire the competence of those they emulate. Dutifully responding to encouragement they work harder than others and accept all that is asked of them. This behaviour receives encouragement from proficient authority figures (both formal and informal) concerned with the reaching of objectives. As a reward the newcomer is gradually accepted and begins to find a position within the group.

”I believe that they (newcomers) feel that they are one among the personnel almost, because they belong to the group” (Formal authority figure in project 2).

The use of the word “belong” indicates that newcomers receive positive recognition for the identities they are constructing and encourages repetition of acceptable behaviour. However, the word “almost” clearly indicates that the newcomers are not yet fully accepted. Indeed, it is doubtful if they ever will be (Bauman, 2002). Newcomers are condemned to an indefinite struggle towards an unobtainable objective; they exhaust themselves, and risk experiencing dangerous levels of psychological stress and ill-health.

### **Bringing Social Units Together**

Once the routines and conventions of a cultural praxis have been assimilated, its rejection and subsequent replacement with an alternative “right way” is not probable (Laing, 1965). The forced unification of social units is therefore anything but straightforward.

“[T]his kind of thing is very difficult, to break a group and then suddenly instead of 10 we are 28. We have now a common cafeteria and that alone can cause... ya.. not... maybe not a problem is wrong to say but there is in any case grouping in

this cafeteria because there is so much territorial thinking”.  
 (Formal authority figure in project 1).

Reluctant to relinquish their pre-existing identities and “culture”, factions of once detached social units will protect their “right way” (Laing, 1965) and a period of turbulence and confrontation is a likely occurrence (Abrahamsson and Andersen, 2005). Any person who has difficulty in positioning themselves within the new social unit is a threat and will be banished and/or leave (Ahrne, 1994). In much of the available NPM research it is evident that the restructuring that accompanies these reforms engenders frustration and indignation amongst workers; attitudes that are predominantly correlated with the workload-control assumption.

In agreement with the expectations of current wisdom the majority of the people taking part in project 1 (14 of 19) do experience excessive psychological demand. Unfortunately, the degree of social support experienced by these 14 workers is inconclusive in respect to the degree of sickness absenteeism (seven people receive extensive and seven little social support). Consequently,

Table 1: Degree of decision latitude experienced by those exposed to high psychological demand in sickness absence groups.

		Frequency	
		Excessive absenteeism	Reasonable absenteeism
Degree of decision Latitude experienced	High	<b>3</b>	1
	Low	1	<b>9</b>
Total		4	10

abundant social support cannot be convincingly associated with either reducing/increasing the production nor impact of psychological stress or sickness absenteeism. However, from table 1 it is clear that the majority of those taking what could be considered excessive sickness absence (3 of 4) enjoy a high level of decision latitude. Excessive sickness absenteeism is therefore almost exclusively dependent on a high degree of control. These are interesting findings, although there is a need for caution in interpretation due to the low absolute numbers involved.

Nevertheless, within NPM research it has been observed that whilst some workers are actively re-evaluating the compatibility of their new situation with their personal interests and values, others seek to be re-positioned, some contemplate leaving the organisation and others actually depart (Berg, et al. 2004). This denotes that well-established social unit members with stable identities are inclined to resist becoming newcomers

in restructured social units. Diminishing the attachment, commitment and dependency of workers through restructuring appears to engender greater control over their own actions. Sickness absence undoubtedly legitimises workplace absence and reduces reprisals otherwise associated with non-attendance.

### **Sickness Absence: Expanding Current Wisdom**

Emphasising the implications of workers' vested interest in the continued existence of "their" social unit, this discussion provides insight into social relationships in organisations. It proposes that encouragement and support from authority figures (formal and informal) combine with a newcomer's desire to "belong" and engender behaviour detrimental to health and well-being; is social support a "buffer" against or a source of negative stress? Additionally, the association between excessive absenteeism and high decision latitude indicates that disturbing established social relationships facilitates the prioritising of self-interests over the vested interest of the group; how and in what way(s) do social relationships reduce or increase absenteeism?

Although the empirical evidence on which this discussion is based is inadequate and unrepresentative, popular assumptions concerned with the nature of social support are called into question. As a consequence, whether social support is friend or foe remains an empirical problem yet to be resolved.

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