INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL ISSUE— 'BITING THE HAND THAT FEEDS': REFLECTIONS ON POWER, POLITICS, IDENTITY AND MANAGERIALISM AT WORK IN ACADEMIA

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This special issue is composed of a selection of articles at the "8th International Critical Management Studies Conference: Extending the Limits of neo-liberal capitalism" held at the University of Manchester, UK between the 10th–12th July 2013. Our stream was entitled 'Biting the Hand That Feeds': Reflections on Power, Politics, Identity and Managerialism at Work in Academia. The stream was designed to bring together researchers with an interest in critical perspectives on power, politics, inequality and identity and how they were of particular relevance to work in the academy. In particular, our concern was to provide a platform for advancing contemporary thinking in relation to the conditions and consequences of neo-liberalism and other changes affecting the lives of academics in universities.

Historically it was thought that academic work was off limits in relation to developments in contemporary neo-liberal capitalism. However, this assumption has been wholly contradicted by developments in new public management (NPM) or "managerialism" wherein private sector practices of accountability, audit, control and surveillance have proliferated in the public sector (Adler & Harzing, 2009; Harley, 2003; Thomas & Davies, 2002; Willmott, 1995), including academe. Academic institutions routinely incorporate audits, performance

measurement, league tables and targets, and high levels of monitoring and surveillance. A number of conferences and seminars have recently discussed and explored NPM in relation to universities and in particular, business schools. In 2012 two conferences—Doing and Undoing Academic Labour, University of Lincoln 7th June 2012 and What's wrong with the University? Cork University, 5-6 June 2012—focused directly on the problems of NPM in universities building on a tradition of critical work extending back almost 20 years (Acker, 2012; Acker, Webber & Smyth, 2012; Ford, Harding, & Learmonth, 2010; Parker & Jary, 1995; Prichard & Willmott, 1997; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Worthington & Hodgson, 2005). During that time academics have become increasingly subjected to managerial control and work intensification in administration, research and teaching and these pressures have served also to distract attention from a broader range of social inequalities around age, class, ethnicity, gender, impairment, and sexuality (Acker et al., 2012; Barry, Berg, & Chandler, 2006; Harding, Ford & Gough 2010; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Knights & Richards, 2003; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012).

Studies of academic work from this perspective have called upon a variety of methods, including analyses of secondary data, interviews with staff to identify their increasingly intensified conditions of work, ethnographic observations and auto-ethnographic reflections on personal experience (Clarke, Knights, & Jarvis, 2012; Humphreys, 2005; Knights & Clarke, 2014; Learmonth & Humphreys, 2011; Sparkes, 2007). Results of these studies reflect both the rise of managerialism and aspects of identity politics and the politics of organization. Overall, research is conducted against the context of the changes that academics have experienced since the emergence and development of the neo-liberal economic and political consensus that extends back to Reagan and Thatcher in the US and the UK respectively and has become a global phenomenon, despite a proliferation of crises that can be directly attributed to its excessive faith in free markets, deregulation and managerialism.

1. Biting the league table that feeds: Reflections on managerialism at work within U.K. university sustainability agendas. David R. Jones.
2. (Im)possible identities in the movement for education: Positions and antagonisms in academia. Marcela Mandiola Cotroneo, Alejandro Varas Alvarado, Nicolás Ríos González and Pablo Salinas Mejías.
3. Location independent working in academia: Enabling employees or supporting managerial control? Amanda Lee, MariaLaura Didomenico, and Mark N. K. Saunders.
4. Construction work: Evolving discourses of the 'worker' in management textbooks, 1920s to 2000s. Jason Foster and Albert Mills.
5. Changing academic roles and shifting gender inequalities: A case analysis of the influence of the teaching-research nexus on academic career perspectives of female academics in the Netherlands. Dr. Liudvika Leisyte and Dr. Bengü Hosch-Dayican.

6. Gender, managerialism and performativity in higher education in England and Sweden. Elisabeth Berg, Jim Barry and John Chandler.

The first article by Jones is a critical view of the institutional impact of ecological sustainability in the context of performance league tables. He shows that some universities appear to benefit from being on or near the top of the Green league tables on the one hand while, on the other, they are research intensive and undertaking research about environmental issues and thereby consuming considerable amounts of water and energy, something which is at odds with environmental concerns. With these Green tables followed a growth in middle managers to manage the environmental sustainability. He points out that across UK universities the average emissions per head has increased and argues that these league tables can "be acting as an institutional hegemonic mechanism for social legitimacy through the desire by universities to show that environmental issues are effectively under control". Yet Jones argues that these tables are deceptive and do not indicate sustainable development; rather, they are often mere "lip service" commitments so as to be included in the Green League Table. He also points out that neo-liberalism is focused on solving problems from an economic viewpoint rather than an environmentally proactive, reflexive perspective. Thus, courtesy of a vice-chancellor-inspired institutional drive to satisfy a neo-liberal agenda, such "environmentally friendly" universities are more likely to generate injustice with respect to ethical, social and political matters rather than to advance sustainability.

The second article by Mandiola, Alvarado, González and Mejías describes one of the most important social movements in the history of education in Chile, showing how academics are working in a political and social context within which they passively or actively take part, with implications for their work situations. Higher education in Chile has adopted neo-liberal ideas with the academy increasingly described as "Chilean Academic Capitalism." The article shows how academics responded to this and how they explicitly or implicitly participated in the student protests that followed. Social movement activity developed at universities in 2011-2012 when students mobilized to demand free education and criticized the profit-making that was leading students increasingly into debt. The article highlights how the professionals ended up in a problematic and sometimes antagonistic situation where they felt supportive of students on the one hand, whilst on the other, feeling reluctant to openly support them because that would contradict their loyalty to the subsidiary state. There were two types of antagonism: one between the social movement for education and the state; the second between students and teachers who understood the situation in different ways. Even so, some teachers took part in this movement despite risking their jobs; and with this action they created an identity that directly contradicted the policies of their universities. As the authors point out, this involved staff unambiguously "biting the hand that feeds."

The third article by Lee, Didomenico and Saunders highlights an interesting issue about working conditions for academics, entitled "Location independent

working in academia: enabling employees or supporting managerial control?" In this case one university had decided to enable academic employees to work outside their university. An LiW (Location independent Working) pilot scheme was introduced in 2008 for academics within the university. The academics that chose to work with LiW were provided with a laptop and a smartphone. According to the managers, this would give the academics agency with respect to having the opportunity to make choices relating to their work-life balance. The pilot study at the university involved 25 academics, approximately 10% of the academic staff. The authors point to tensions between three different groups: LiW academics, non-LIW academics, and managers (also academics) in order to ascertain the relation between LiW academics and management. The authors sought to analyse the outcome by drawing on three analytical frameworks – labour process theory, new managerialism and new public management. Far from enabling greater autonomy, their findings demonstrated increased surveillance and accountability, as well as cost savings for the university due to a reduction in demand for office space. All LiW academics had to record appointments in an electronic diary and make clear when they were on campus whilst the academics that did not participate in the pilot scheme had access only to a hot-desk office, resulting in competition between the two groups for office space. One positive finding was that LiW academics welcomed the opportunity to choose where to work, and the flexibility of working from home. Ironically and perhaps in conflict with personal work-life balance objectives, this freedom helped them to be more productive, with one academic pointing out that his publication rate had increased after opting for LiW. This finding would explain why some top ranked universities informally encourage their academic staff to spend less time in the university as this can affect research and publication output negatively.

Foster and Mills, in the fourth article, explore and critically evaluate "Construction Work: Evolving Discourses of the 'Worker' in Management Textbooks, 1920s to 2000s". They point out that the education offered by Business Schools has not been free from or without a discourse, quite the opposite. Textbooks that are used by lecturers in Business Schools have followed certain conventions, focusing in particular on the concept of "worker" where the workers are absent, as well as the relationship to employment. They analyze the discourses present in textbooks over time and relate this to the political, economic and social contexts at the time they were published. Textbooks they contend have been created within a specific paradigm and that in each period textbooks reflect then-prevalent political, social and economic agendas. Since the textbooks are used by academics for educational purposes, uncritical adaptation to a discourse contained within them can lead management students to an understanding of management that favors highly specific understandings rather than a diverse range of managerial approaches relating to differing political, economic and social contexts. The authors argue that textbooks produce and reproduce limited management

discourses rather than provide managers and workers with an understanding of their position and their rights within a wider organizational context.

In the fifth article Leisyte and Hosch-Dayican show how women academics in the Netherlands experience problems in pursuing their careers in traditional Humboldtian fashion, and in particular, being involved in both teaching and research as mutually complementary activities. This is because women are undertaking more administration and teaching and becoming less involved in research, although research is still regarded as the most important academic activity to be engaged in when it comes to enhancing career prospects. The authors discuss how new public management has had a considerable impact on higher education in what are described as "tightly coupled" organizations. They also point out that an increasing division of labor tends to strengthen rather than undermine gender inequality. Their findings highlight a new development for academic careers that value both teaching and research independently, with either of these seen as providing competitive career advantage; in contrast to these activities being seen as generally complementing one another. Yet in practice, more teaching often leads to less time for research and can hinder careers for women in the academy. Teaching activities are thus still regarded as something of a burden rather than an alternative career track. Women who are doing more research than teaching can look forward to earlier promotion than those who work with administration and teaching.

In the sixth and final article Berg, Barry and Chandler examine the consequences of the turn to managerialism in higher education in England and Sweden, in light of the new public management reforms. The authors consider some of the gender implications, which are explored through the accounts of eight, long-serving, female academics in the two countries. The first interviews presented in the article were conducted in 2001 with two female academics in Sweden and two in England, and followed up some ten years later during 2011-2012 with new interviewees, four of whom are represented here. The same interview questions were used on both occasions although the same academics were not re-interviewed as they had left their university having moved on. In the circumstances they selected new women interviewees who occupied the same positions and who were also long-serving academics. While differences were present between the two countries, there were also many similarities. In 2001 respondents presented a generally negative picture of the reforms and highlighted the difficulties they experienced in adjusting to them. Ten years later there appeared to have been more accommodation to the managerial reforms. The interviewees liked the idea of being chosen as middle managers and believed they were going to be able to undertake research at the same time. Even so, the gendered implications of this were significant and complementary to the article written by Leisyte and Hosch-Dayican, for women academics are clearly finding it difficult to pursue their research aspirations while simultaneously assuming many teaching and administrative responsibilities.

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