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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publication date</strong></td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publication information</strong></td>
<td>Buttmer, N., Rynne, C., Guerin, H. (eds.). The Heritage of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publisher</strong></td>
<td>Collins Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Item record/more information</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10197/5824">http://hdl.handle.net/10197/5824</a></td>
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Management’s Heritage and Heritage Management


Introduction

To understand what heritage management means we should, at the very least, ask, “What is management?” This is the question that this chapter addresses. It seems to me that a most appropriate way to deal with this question, especially in a book about heritage, is to focus on management’s own history and genesis. Through examining this history we can (a) develop a deeper understanding of the techniques and concepts that constitute ‘management’; (b) assess whether it is appropriate to import the ideology into the domain of heritage; (c) provide a basis for selecting particular techniques and models of organising; (d) anticipate management’s negative aspects and the problems it is likely to generate; and (e) sensitise us to alternative models of organisation. Such an exercise is clearly likely to overly simplify the issues or exclude major dissenting positions, although such problems are, in my view, more than offset by the value that an historical approach, albeit abbreviated, provides.

I begin this chapter by synopsising the main attributes of what I term ‘classical managerialism’. This paradigm or ideology has its genesis in disparate philosophical developments of the 17th century which took root and spread at pace during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I sketch out this development and describe how a coherent paradigm was synthesised in the early decades of the twentieth century. Internal and external critique, prompted particularly by the great depression of the 1930s, exposed serious problems in this classical (or naive?) managerialism. I describe these critiques and I also allude to how managerialism has successfully reinvented itself during this century, accommodating many, but not all, of the criticisms. Finally, I discuss the implications that this historical sketch has for our understanding of ‘management’ in the context of heritage.

Managerialism: Genesis

Cork Airport’s new foyer displays two large bronze statues commemorating two of Ireland’s sporting legends: Christy Ring and Jack Charlton. Ring is depicted as a graceful yet powerful athlete in the heat of a hurling match, while the former Irish
soccer manager is shown calmly enjoying a spot of fishing. Symbolically, the statues are important because they indicate the extent to which the cult of the manager has taken root in the Irish sporting psyche and popular culture. Who, for example, could name the manager of any Cork team that Ring played in during the 1950s, or any Irish soccer team prior to the 1970s? We can notionally set the mid-1970s, when managers like Kevin Heffernan in Dublin and Mick O’Dwyer in Kerry rose to public prominence, as the approximate birth-date of managerialism, at least in Irish sport. More broadly, managerialism has swept through a range of other domains outside of business, including the arts, religion, government, the public sector, education, the voluntary sector, and heritage. This is the context in which the concept of ‘heritage management’ must be understood.

At the outset it is worth remembering that ‘management’ has always occurred in every domain of human endeavour. The relevant questions, however, are about how the managing is done, the kind of management that should be employed, and the basis for preferring different ways of managing. Notwithstanding the undoubted heterogeneity in the practice of management, we can still identify a type of management, which I term classical managerialism, which dominates contemporary discourse to the point where it can be considered an ideologyii. It has seven main dimensions or traits that transcend particular techniques and models: androcentrism, hierarchism, egocentrism, rationalism, reductionism, representationalism, standardisation, and in this section we will discuss the nature and genesis of each of these. To facilitate the discussion, the following timeline provides a useful summary and roadmap of some key contributions, even at the risk of reducing the paradigm to individual writers or events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Writer/Event</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1637</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
<td>Egocentrism/Reductionism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1687</td>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>Rationalism/Scientific method</td>
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<td>1700-1800</td>
<td>The Enlightenment</td>
<td>Science/Reason/Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Reductionism/Laissez-faire/voluntarism</td>
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<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>French Revolution</td>
<td>Liberty/Equality/Fraternity</td>
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<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>Evolution/determinism</td>
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<td>1867</td>
<td>Marx</td>
<td>Critique of capitalism</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>First Model T produced</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Weber</td>
<td>Theory of Bureaucracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Stock Market Crash</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>Humanist critique of Fordism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Keynes</td>
<td>Policy critique of laissez-faire</td>
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</table>
Androcentrism: Classical managerialism centres the world on the male, and females, where considered at all, are invariably allocated a peripheral role. This is undoubtedly due to the development of management thought in the three spheres of the military, public sector bureaucracies and engineering practice, each of which was dominated by men and by a ‘masculine’ world-view. This world-view in turn, is founded on deeper concepts such as the Aristotelian division of the world into the private and public spheres, that go right back to the origins of Western civilisation. Feminist scholars, and others like the economic philosopher J.S. Mill have argued that this dichotomy has been used to confine women to passive (‘being’) states in the private sphere and men to active (‘doing’) states in the public sphere. Surprisingly, the management literature is devoid of (and due) a broad and thorough feminist analysis and critique of the gendering of management theory and practice.

Hierarchism. Within classical managerialism, it is axiomatic that organisations have a hierarchical ranking of offices that provide clear lines of command. The basic principle is that an employee should receive orders from only one superior - known as unity of command - thus creating a line of authority from superior to subordinate as well as giving a sense that organisations have a ‘top’ and a ‘bottom’. Some feminist scholars have linked this hierarchical view with management’s innate androcentrism on the basis that hierarchy is but a variant of patriarchy. Other scholars would say that the received faith in hierarchies is deeply embedded in social custom and religious doctrine as well as being based on the demonstrated success of hierarchies throughout history.

Egocentrism. Egocentrism, or the centring of the world on the individual, is a third important attribute of managerialism. We can trace this philosophy at least as far back as 1637 when Descartes asserted that the thinking, doubting self was the primary and primordial entity, rather than, for example, God. The impact of this was profound in so far as it provided a philosophical justification for human agency or ‘voluntarism’, in contrast to the alternative, ‘determinist’ view that individuals are but pawns acting out pre-defined roles within prior structures or grand narratives. The cult of the manager, or the belief that a single individual can enact a radical organisational change, is an obvious manifestation of this voluntarist philosophy. This heroic culture is especially dominant in the United States, where it is well articulated by business magazines like Fortune. In Europe, it is often tempered by a more acute appreciation that individual actions always take place within and are
enabled by social and material structures. Nonetheless, it is probably fair to say that the cult of the manager now dominates both sides of the Atlantic. The payment of £17m in bonuses over three years to the Chief Executive of Ryanair - which, with only 700 employees, is a relatively small company in international terms - is but one European example of this ideology in practice.

This egocentric philosophy also impacted the popular understanding of the degree to which the state should intervene in the commercial world. Here, the most important contribution was by Adam Smith, who, in 1776, provided a compelling argument against state intervention in the market. Smith’s thesis was that if buying was left to individual agents then their (egocentric and rational) desire to get the best value for their money would ensure, through the ‘invisible hand’ of the market, that producers would be as efficient as possible. The policy implication of this thesis was called laissez-faire, which is the principle that governments should not intervene in the market, even when, as happened during the Irish famine, it seems obvious that it should.

Rationalism. If the egocentric character of managerialism is rooted in the mid 17th century, then so too is its commitment to rationalism. Here the key figure is Isaac Newton whose scientific method provided a major catalyst to Enlightenment thought during the 18th century. Central to the scientific method is a commitment to impartiality, objectivity, analysis, and measurement, as well as a belief in progress through scientific endeavour. Likewise, managerialism has adopted many of these attributes and through doing so has justified and supported its position as a social practice. So, for example, MBA students are trained to routinely analyse organisational situations in a quasi-scientific fashion in which they, as analysts, take an ‘objective’ position above and outside the situation, in much the same way as scientists distance themselves from a laboratory experiment. Managerialism also endorses the conventional scientific epistemology which holds that scientific facts have universal application: just as the laws of gravity hold on the moon as much as in Manchester, so too can a theory of management, once ‘proven’, apply to a large organisation in Maine and to a small workshop in Lyon. It is this epistemological commitment to universalism that fuels the search by students of management across the globe for prescriptions that will identify both the causes and effects of business phenomena.

Reductionism. Descartes’ influence on management thought is doubly significant because as well as developing his egocentric ideas he also articulated a philosophy of reductionism, which constitutes probably the most enduring of managerialism’s core
tenets. Descartes saw the universe as a giant mechanism, not unlike the innards of a clock, consisting of innumerable elements all fitting and working together. For him, any system could be best understood, and hence managed, by breaking it down into its component parts. His ideas were developed by Adam Smith who described the increased efficiencies that could be gained by the division of labour at work and the routinization of life generally. The principle that dividing up was essential for successful organisation was demonstrated in practice by Eli Whitey in 1801 when he showed how guns could be quickly assembled from stacks of interchangeable parts. This principle of division proved successful, even addictive, and before long the notion of organisation was axiomatically understood as involving the delineation and maintenance of boundaries. Soon, hierarchical organisations consisted of a myriad of horizontal divisions between levels and vertical divisions between functions. In addition, managers were distinguished from workers, owners from managers, staff from line personnel, and people inside an organisation from those outside it. This technique undoubtedly proved successful, at least on the basis of production efficiency, and it formed the basis for rapid development in industrial technology and organisation during the 19th century.

Representationalism. Management has always been about control and managers quickly realised that one could never become powerful over a large number if one had to engage with each individual in a group. Thus, the successful management of large organisations required that effective techniques of abbreviation and representation be devised whereby those at the top of the organisation could control those at the lower levels. Such techniques range from mathematical models to accounting records to management reports.

Standardisation. The seventh basic attribute of classical managerialism was a belief in standardisation or homogenisation. This belief grew out of the reductionist philosophy sparked by Descartes’ writings in the seventeenth century and further developed by Adam Smith in the eighteenth. By the beginning of the twentieth century this idea had become virtually an ideology, most famously captured by Henry Ford slogan that his customers could have his Model T “in any colour as long as it’s black!” The extreme importance placed on the ability to produce standard products continues to remain a core concern of business and is a main reason why quality standards like ISO9000 have been implemented so widely over the last decade.

Standardisation means that not only are all products the same, but so too are component parts and the tasks involved in manufacture and distribution; at the extreme, even individual workers can be ‘standardised’. Moreover, since identical
products require identical forms of consumption, this homogenisation necessarily extends from the productive to the consumptive realm. It took a number of centuries to develop such a model of mass production/consumption, and it is often termed ‘Fordism’ in recognition of Henry Ford’s influence in its development\textsuperscript{iii}. In the next section we will discuss this in more detail.

**Synthesis: Ford and Weber**

The demographic expansion of the eighteenth century provided a fertile environment in which the arts of administration and government could develop. This development proceeded apace during the nineteenth century as the focus of employment shifted from the farm to the factory. In hindsight, classical managerialism probably reached its peak in the early twentieth century, when its key principles and techniques were independently synthesised in two distinct domains by Henry Ford and Max Weber. Ford recognised that it would be possible to manufacture products at a low unit cost if he systematically applied the approach on a much larger scale than had previously been attempted. In applying the principle of reduction to the extreme, he was able to reduce tasks to their most basic elements whereupon he could either use unskilled labour or else replace the human by a machine. In addition, he made a significant innovation in the traditional approach to production by adopting the principle that the worker should remain in a fixed position while the product moved through the factory. His ability to produce the Model T in high volume meant that it sold for less than a tenth of the price of a craft-built car in the US in 1916. The result of his innovations was that his large production plants supplanted the traditional, craft workshops and he quickly took 50 percent of the automobile market.

While mass production was central to Ford’s success it was, on its own, insufficient. Ford’s key insight was that he would make massive profits if, and only if, there was mass consumption as well as production. Ford’s ingenious solution was to pay his workers the outlandishly high rate of $5 per eight-hour day, which ensured their compliance with the strict code of discipline required on the assembly line - guaranteeing Ford’s ability to produce - and it also provided them with sufficient income and leisure time to consume the mass-produced products. The scheme would only succeed if the workers bought cars and not, for example, alcohol, which meant that Ford had to extend the disciplinary regime of the workplace to the social life of the workers. This extension meant that Fordism was not simply about perfecting an assembly line; in essence it was an attempt to engineer a whole way of living.
At around the same time as Henry Ford was revolutionising the structure of industry and society in America, a German sociologist and economist, Max Weber, was producing the definitive texts on the nature of bureaucracy. According to Weber, a bureaucracy

(a) consists of a hierarchical structure of offices bound by rules, with each office having a specific sphere of competence requiring certain technical skills.

(b) is based on the principle that office holders cannot own the means of production associated with the office nor can they appropriate bureaucratic office.

(c) requires that all administrative acts, decisions and rules are formulated and recorded in writing.

Weber clearly based his theory of bureaucracy on his observations of the routinization and mechanisation of industry. He was in no doubt that the needs of mass administration made bureaucracy completely indispensable since

\[
\ldots \text{a bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency, and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings.} \quad (\text{[1921]} 1968: 223).
\]

Weber’s analysis remains fresh to this day and bureaucracies, in both the public and private sectors, continue to exhibit most of the characteristics that he first catalogued.

**Deconstruction**

Ford’s great experiment in social and organisational change in the early part of the century followed over two centuries of relentless scientific and industrial development. At that time there was a real sense that progress could continue unabated and that there were no limits to human potential. Indeed these beliefs continue to be strongly held today, notwithstanding the twentieth-century experience of world wars, social inequalities, and environmental degradation. In the context of business, many of Ford’s beliefs are still regarded as axiomatic to good business practice, even if classical managerialism reached its high-water mark by 1920. What happened over the remainder of the century was that the paradigm was inexorably criticised from both within and without, or, to borrow a term from literary theory, it was repeatedly *deconstructed* (that is, its inherent paradoxes were exposed). In this section we briefly discuss some of the more important critiques.

First, Fordism proved that the contradictions and instabilities in capitalism, which Marx had first identified, were actually real. Marx had argued out that capitalism is based on the principle that (a) there has to be a surplus value between the cost of a
product’s inputs (which include the labour cost) and its value in the market, and (b) the owner of capital can legitimately appropriate the whole of this surplus. The difficulty, however, is that this gap means that labour, in aggregate, will have insufficient funds to purchase the commodities, in aggregate, that it produces. This was compounded during Fordism when increased labour efficiency and mechanisation reduced the demand for labour, and hence, as night follows day, increased unemployment. Marx predicted that these enigmas would result in a series of crises in which there would be idle production capacity (capital), idle labour (unemployed workers) and a glut of commodities and inventory in the market. Such conditions prevailed in the Depression of the 1930s, much to the bewilderment of capitalists like Henry Ford. The English economist John Maynard Keynes first identified the policy of laissez-faire (the non-interference by governments in the market) as the root of the problem. This was a key insight because laissez-faire had underpinned economic philosophy for over a century. Keynes argued that, during a depression, the imbalance between production and consumption that Fordism entailed could not be redressed by individual consumers, since they lacked the necessary resources. Instead, he claimed that the only actors in the economy with real power to act were investors and governments. This suggested that, during a depression, either private investment should be enlarged or there should be public substitutes for private investment. The problem, as Keynes saw it, was to stabilise capitalism through an appropriate set of scientific managerial strategies and government interventions in the economy. In this way managerialism survived, albeit regulated and supported by the substantial legislative and material resources of governments.

Second, managers, informed by the work of psychologists like Elton Mayo and Abraham Maslow, came to understand that classical management, taken to the extreme, actually decreased efficiency, because de-skilled workers were less motivated and more likely to strike or disrupt production. To counter any adverse affect to the ‘bottom line’, managers had to develop and implement techniques that were much more subtle than the sledgehammer approach of classical management. Today, libraries are well stocked with books describing a multitude of recipes, buzzwords and programmes on how to change, re-engineer, motivate and manage an organisation’s human resources. However, despite the hyperbole, very few of these prescriptions envisage fundamental change in the managerialist paradigm. For example, I have yet to come across a ‘how to’ management book that says that managers should be paid less! Neither has the paradigm addressed the central paradox in its libertarian philosophy of human agency. The paradox is that an individual’s freedom to act means nothing unless it constrains another individual’s freedom. In other words, a theory in which agency is equally distributed among
everyone is not viable. Traditionally, managerialism has avoided this enigma, or else it has implicitly accepted its truth and taken the logical step, as Ford did, of shifting all responsibility for the organisation of work from the worker to the manager.

In contrast, the third attack on managerialism did raise questions about the paradigm’s core tenets. This attack came from an unlikely source: biology. In 1859 Charles Darwin published *The Origin of the Species* and its impact was so great that it ultimately affected fundamental understandings about organising and the ontological status of the manager. The key insight that theoreticians and practitioners drew from Darwin’s work was that the power of the individual (either human being or organisation) was much less than egocentric or voluntarist philosophies like managerialism presumed. Evolutionary theory suggested that the *environment selected out* the most suitable organisms leaving the others to die out. Moreover, any individual organism has a very limited ability to adapt to the environment, since its particular situation owes more to a combination of chance and prior evolutionary paths than to any specific actions on its part - either the organism ‘fits’ or it doesn’t and if the latter then *c’est la vie.* Applying this philosophy to social and organisational settings fundamentally undermined the core egocentric tenet of managerialism, because if change was determined by the ‘environment’ then the individual manager’s power to effect change was severely limited, if not absent. And if this was the case what justification was there for believing managers or for paying them such high salaries? Neither was this just empty speculation, because the available data suggested that change in many industries does follow an evolutionary logic. For example, it could easily be argued that the small craft workshops in the car industry of the early twentieth century simply did not fit an environment more suited to large organisations. And contrary to the philosophy of managerialism, the managers of these workshops were clearly unable to effect any change in their situation.

 Darwin’s theory also cast doubt on the value of planning, a basic and precious managerial competence. According to his theory, the future unfolds on the basis of chance, unlikely mutations and particular combinations of circumstances, and at any point in time it is impossible to predict with any certainty. At best we can say that the future will be similar to the present, but the nature and scope of any change from the present is always beyond us. For managers, the theory says that attempts to map out an organisation’s long term future or strategic plan are pointless, since outcomes invariably escape intentions. In recent years, this point has been expressed and developed by Henry Mintzberg who has long argued that strategic planning, as conventionally understood within management, rarely achieves its explicit objective.
Fourth, managerialism has been attacked by those it has displaced to the margins. Feminists, for example, have argued that the androcentrism in contemporary organisations and society has created a ‘glass ceiling’ that effectively confines women to the lower offices in business and bureaucracy. Up until relatively recently, the feminist movement has concentrated its effort on basic issues like suffrage, equal pay and conditions, and is now only beginning to engage and critique the managerialist paradigm at a more fundamental level. Marxist scholars have also contributed a large volume of literature critiquing the capitalist system and the relative position of workers and managers. If this critique has lost much of its potency with the collapse of the great experiments in communism, Marx’s ideas continue to influence a range of social and organisational theorists. In particular, the Critical Theorists have taken up some of his concepts to mould a powerful argument against the spread of managerialism. There is now a large body of work in this tradition, so I can deal with just one of their hypotheses, and in summary at that.

Critical Theorists argue that corporations provide meaning around a very narrow set of instrumental values - namely power and money - compared to language-based ‘primary institutions’ like the family, community, and religions. Much as Fordism showed that businesses ignore wider social issues at their peril, the critical theorists argue that these primary institutions provide a fundamental function of system coordination through balancing the relatively shallow value-system of managerialism with ‘deeper’ values based on loyalty, tradition, community, family, honour, etc. In particular, these institutions provide meaning and coherent value systems to those that lose within the managerialist system (and, managerialism must, axiomatically, produce losers as well as winners). This thesis suggests that as life becomes more corporatized there will be a corresponding increase in the demands placed on families, religions and community. Ultimately, these institutions become ‘overloaded’ and, as they are perceived to be unable to fulfil their function, they are supplemented by more bureaucracy and/or coordination through the instrumental values of the market. For example, where once we might have turned to friends and relatives for help and support in dealing with the general difficulties of life, we are now more likely to purchase such assistance from counsellors either directly or through the state system. Once this vicious circle gets going, the primary institutions gradually break down as society loses faith in their value. In addition, the Critical Theorists argue that managerialism defiles the sanctity of human beings in two ways. First, it distils down the human character to the ability to reason, compute and decide, which necessarily diminishes other attributes like emotion and romance and activities like play and the carnivalesque. Marx said it well back in 1848 when he wrote that we have “drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous
enthusiasm, of Philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistic calculation”. Second, managerialism constitutes individuals as mere objects of impartial and neutral managerial decision-making. As well as debasing human identity, this also downplays the moral and ethical issues involved in management decisions and actions. The critical theorists argue that the cumulative consequence of these factors is that managerialism ends up narrowing the human character and destroying the social and natural environment. At the very least, the arguments make it clear that we cannot simply represent management as a purely technical-rational-instrumental activity and turn a blind eye to the social relations through which managerial work is accomplished and upon which it ultimately depends.

**Neo-Managerialism: The Manager Strikes Back**

Paradoxically, the mounting arguments against managerialism have had little impact and it has continued to gain more adherents during the second half of the twentieth century. This was undoubtedly due to critics’ inability to go beyond criticism and articulate a viable alternative to both capitalism and communism (since the latter was an even more obvious failure than the former). Furthermore, managerialism proved itself adept at re-invention through reflexive criticism. The fashion for management fads (figure 1) is but one example of this re-invention.

These fashions have been concocted and promulgated by both business academics and management ‘gurus’ like Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Tom Peters, Peter Drucker, Charles Handy, and Michael Porter. While there is a bewildering array of buzzwords and guru-speak, possibly the most important thesis that emerged during the 1980s was that large, bureaucratic organisations were no longer suited to the business environment. This argument was put forward most forcibly by the gurus who typically contrasted ‘traditional’ and ‘emerging’ organisational forms in a manner such as the following:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL</th>
<th>EMERGING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Stable, Competitive, Economies of Scale</td>
<td>Dynamic, Competitive and Cooperative, Economies of Scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Permanent, Mechanistic, Centralised, Hierarchical, Functional Boundaries</td>
<td>Temporary, Organic, De-centralised, Heterarchical, Fluid Boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Analyst, Specialist</td>
<td>Synthesist, Generalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>Unskilled, uneducated</td>
<td>Skilled, educated</td>
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</table>
Leveraging Darwin, they advised businesses to either ‘change or die’. Darwin’s theory was important because implicitly it gave ontological priority to the market, the business equivalent of the habitat in which organisms compete for resources. Of course managerialists have always ritually celebrated the market, but they received a considerable fillip in the 1980s when gurus suggested that networks of small organisations were more appropriate than individual large firms. This was because working through this idea in practice meant that more transactions were carried out in the market than within firms. This thesis received further support from economists like Oliver Williamson who argued that the presence of organisations (firms and bureaucracies) was a sign that the market had ‘failed’. In essence, organisations were depicted as deviant phenomena or aberrations from the norm of the market. Most importantly, this rhetoric (there was little empirical evidence supporting the assertions) made no distinction between public and private organisations, merging both under the umbrella term ‘hierarchy’, the more negative side of the market-hierarchy dichotomy. This duly provided Conservative governments in the UK with an intellectual basis for widespread privatisation of the public services and the transfer of government assets to the private sector during the 1980s. In addition, the blurring of the categorical distinctions between public and private sectors meant that the ideology of managerialism quickly colonised those areas that still remained within the public sector. The traditional role of bureaucracy was further diluted by the argument that while it was accepted that Keynesian macro-regulation of supply and demand had to be provided by the state when the economy was dominated by large, mass-producing firms, this balancing could now be automatically and more efficiently provided by the market when the economy consisted of flexible networks of small firms.

Management in Heritage

The above short history provides a sketch of the discourse out of which the notion of ‘heritage management’ has emerged. We can, for example, see that the commercialisation of heritage is but a logical next step in the spread of managerialism and the apparent demise of bureaucracy and hierarchies. However, this will only be of academic interest unless those in the heritage sector (industry) can learn real lessons from the story and acquire an understanding of likely future developments. It is to these issues that I turn in this final section of the chapter.
The first point to make is that one should be skeptical of dualistic thinking that depicts a dichotomy between, for example, the public and private sectors or between markets and hierarchies (firms and bureaucracies). Such dichotomous thinking underpins the belief that activities which were previously understood as being the remit of the state - heritage is one such example - should be transferred to the private sector. The biggest flaw in such thinking is that it reduces ontologically distinct phenomena to a single discriminating category. For example, transaction cost economics, which is based on the market-hierarchy dichotomy, uses efficiency as the single criterion for divining a transaction’s appropriate location. Ethics, justice, and moral values do not enter the equation unless they can be reduced to the same efficiency calculus. This leads us to what I think is the most important argument in defence of bureaucracy. It is simply that bureaucratic institutions are set up to provide and ensure equity, neutrality, probity, permanence and accountability, and this list, it should be noted, does not include efficiency. Thus, arguing that bureaucracies are not as efficient as the market is as daft as saying that cricket is a bad game because there aren’t enough goals scored in it. Unfortunately, this fairly basic point has not been made nearly enough, allowing glib claims about how managerialism is ‘transforming’ the public service go uncontested. This, of course, does not mean that business practices that have originated and proved successful in the private sector should have no place in public bureaucracies, or that hierarchies are inherently ‘better’ than the market. The point is that a commensurate measure of performance is not available.

The essence of the argument is that imperfections in bureaucracy are not, of themselves, a sufficient basis for replacing bureaucracy with managerialism. Bad bureaucratic practices can (and usually should) be replaced by good bureaucratic practices rather than an alternative ideology. Throwing the bureaucratic baby out with the bath water of poor practice may simply change problems rather than eradicate them. In particular, one can expect that as the ideology of entrepreneurial innovation colonises the bureaucratic domain then there will be an increasing incidence of corruption, inequity, fraud, and inordinate risk-taking.

A second issue relates to the commercialisation of heritage that is part of the general tendency to re-imagine the social as part of the economic. Such commercialisation turns ‘heritage’ into a commodity that is sold - exchanged for money - in the market. Here, Marx’s ideas are worth repeating. Central to Marx’s thesis was his view that human identity is created through productive and creative activity: in his words, man, by “acting on the external world and changing it . . . at the same time changes his own nature” (Marx, [1867] 1954: 177). He further argued that capitalist markets are
characterised by a process through which the products of human labour are reduced to abstract “exchange values”. Capitalist markets, therefore, are a great circulating web of transubstantiating commodities and money in which workers “appropriate the produce of the labour of others by alienating that of their own labour” (Marx, [1867] 1954: 108-9). Accordingly, for the market to operate, man - retaining his wording for consistency and convenience - must become detached from the product of his labour and, since humanity is founded on productive activity, this detachment necessarily results in the type of disorientation that he terms ‘alienation’. This thesis exposes an important paradox in the idea that heritage should be commercialised. In most cases we axiomatically relate the term heritage to an individual or group identity, which is why the word heritage is usually preceded by genitive pronouns like our, your, my, their. Marx’s alienation thesis means that this link is severed; what was previously seen to be ‘our’ heritage, now becomes simply heritage. The positive side of this is that heritage becomes available, through the market, to a wider group; the negative is that it may also become unowned (or disowned). To finish on an optimistic note we should note that Marx’s thesis is undermined by the fact that proletariat revolt, which he saw as the logical outcome of alienation, has not occurred in capitalist markets, suggesting that his thesis must be flawed. Nevertheless, his ideas do suggest that commercialisation has the potential to ultimately sterilise heritage. The likelihood of this is increased because the commodification of heritage necessarily involves both abbreviation (packaging) and standardisation (because of the need for economies of scale) both of which are liable to diminish the intrinsic nature of heritage. To ward against this situation, it is important that those who are besotted by heritage have confidence in their own skills, abilities and traditions and refuse to be overawed by either managers or management. Indeed UCC’s Higher Diploma in Heritage Management is an admirable manifestation of this principle in practice.

Those involved in heritage management must also have the confidence to be skeptical of existing normative models of administration because these have primarily emerged in competitive environments dominated by large, functionally and hierarchically organised, American, manufacturing firms. The heritage sector, in contrast, consists of dynamic networks of small organisations cooperating with one another and with the public sector, not unlike the craft networks that Fordism displaced. And while Fordism celebrated standardisation, heritage is necessarily about difference. At the very least, heritage managers might desist from the twentieth century fashion of using the ship as the major metaphor of management. Instead, they could return to the seventeenth century when the word “economy” - which is derived from the Greek words oikos, a house, and nomos, a law - referred solely to the administration of a
household and when the family provided the primary managerial metaphor. For whereas a ship has to managed, the family, like our heritage, has to be cared for.

Notes

I decided not to pepper the text with endless references to the literatures. Instead, I have included a short bibliography of works that provide the basis for many of the ideas in this chapter.

It is worth emphasising that the practice of management often departs significantly from the ideology of managerialism. This essay focuses on the latter rather than the former.

The term Fordism is somewhat unfortunate in so far as it over-emphasises Ford’s contribution, and suggests that one particular production/consumption model was more widespread, if not hegemonic, than was actually the case in practice. It also implies a distinction between pre-Fordism, Fordism, and post-Fordism, even though there is little empirical evidence to support these categories.
Further Reading

Alvesson, Mats and Willmott, Hugh (1996), Making Sense of Management: A Critical Introduction,


Osborne, David and Gaebler, Ted (1992), Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.


