

Lynch, K. and Grummell, B. (2018) in F. Sowa R.Staples and S. Zapfel (Eds.) The Transformation of Work in Welfare State Organizations. London: Routledge. PP. 203-222.

Chapter 11

New managerialism as an organisational form of neoliberalism

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This chapter demonstrates why new managerialism is not a neutral management strategy but rather a political project, borne out of a radical change in the spirit of neoliberal capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). It shows how it operates as an ideological configuration of ideas and practices that is instituting new orthodoxies in the running of public education in Ireland, aligning it more closely with the organisational logic and practices of the private market system. Although united by its ideological re-configuration towards market-place logic, managerialism is realized differently across countries; it is shaped by the historical antecedents and the specifics of nation-state politics. Drawing on three empirical studies¹ undertaken by the authors on the impact of managerialism across primary, secondary, further and higher education (Grummell, 2014; Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015; Lolich & Lynch, 2016) the chapter explores the cultural and political specifics of managerialism across the education sectors in Ireland. It also explores the resistance to market norms, the counter-hegemonic actions of educational mediators within the machinery of the state and across the community (Lynch, 1990; Fitzsimons, 2017a).

Globalisation, trade and marketing public services

To understand the role of new managerialism in reframing education policy and practice, it is important to locate it in the wider political economy of neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberalism is governed by the principle of the small cheap state, where welfare is a personal responsibility and the state operates as a regulatory body in the market system (Harvey, 2005, pp. 70–81). The role of the state is to facilitate the development of markets for entrepreneurial entities and citizens. As

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neoliberalism is at once an ideology and a form of politics and set of practices (Peck, 2010), the commercialisation of what were hitherto public services is but one part of the neoliberal project. The changing relationship between the services, manufacturing and agricultural sectors in a globalised capitalist economy has contributed significantly to attempts to commercialise public services. The investment returns from manufacturing declined significantly in rich capitalist economies in recent decades, for a range of complex reasons, not least of which is the emergence of a large, non-unionised labour pool for manufacturing in South East Asia. Agriculture, already a relatively minor player in employment terms in Western and Northern economics, could not provide alternative forms of employment to manufacturing, especially in the existing context of heavily regulated agribusiness and international trade agreements for agricultural products. The focus shifted to trade in services, including trade in some or all of particular public services. The goal of transforming public services into marketable service was part of the ideology of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) agreement, (Robertson, Bonal & Dale, 2002; Tomasevski, 2005), and, more recently, of the as yet unratified Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement. The rationale for making education a tradable service was articulated by Merrill Lynch in *The Book of Knowledge* in 1999; it was defined as a service that presents major new profit opportunities for investors (Moe, Bailey & Lau, 1999). Multilateral agencies, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, and political institutions such as the European Union (EU), played a key role in promoting the marketisation of education and the related knowledge-economy ideology as they exercised increasing normative influence over national education policies from the 1990s (Dale, 2005; Figueroa, 2010; Lingard & Rawolle, 2011; Sellar & Lingard, 2013). The cultural shift was especially evident in higher education (Jessop, 2008). World Bank reports,

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Constructing Knowledge Societies 2002 and *The Challenge of Establishing World Class*

Universities, 2009 consolidated the market-led view of higher education in particular. While the power of multilateral agencies often operates indirectly, as through the ‘Open Method of Coordination’ within the EU, or expert ‘advice’ from the World Bank or the OECD, such advice is often a thinly disguised ‘surveillance’ procedure promulgating a new market instrumentalism under the guise of ‘independent’ expertise (Henry et al., 2001). Control may be exercised as ‘soft’ power in education; it is real power nonetheless (Lo, 2011). The scope of scale of European Union (via structural funding and research frameworks) and OECD influence on Irish education policy is not always clear. However, the close alignment between Ireland’s strong policy focus on creating a knowledge-based *economy* rather than a knowledge-based *society* over the past 20 years is living proof of that influence (Loxley, Seery & Walsh, 2014; Fleming, Loxley & Finnegan, 2017).

Managerialism as a neoliberal project

A managerialist approach to governance provides a unique type of moral purpose and regulation to public service organisations: efficiency and effectiveness are prioritised at the expense of more broadly based moral and social values related to social rights, care, trust and equality. This has the ultimate impact of defining human relationships in works in transactional terms, as the means to an end, the end being high performance and productivity (Lynch, 2010) Managerialism reduces first-order social and moral values to second-order principles; trust, integrity and solidarity with others are subordinated to regulation, control and competition. When managerialist practices achieve hegemonic control within organisations, they parasitise and weaken those very values on which the organisation depends. While few would question the value of efficiency, in terms of maximising the use of available resources, the difficulty with

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managerialism is that it does not just prioritise efficiency, it suppresses other organisational values so that they become incidental to the running of the organization (Ball, 2012). The net effect of the devaluation of moral purposes, in and of themselves, is that public services, such as education, are increasingly defined as commodities to be delivered on the market to customers who can afford to buy them. They are no longer defined primarily as capacity-building public goods that are governed by rights protected by law at national and international levels.

While managerialism is implemented in different ways across cultural and economic contexts, within the public sector, one of its primary objectives is to inculcate market values and practices in systems and processes (Clarke, Gewirtz & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 7). It is operationalised through a narrative of strategic change, realised through the linguistic reframing of organisational goals in output and performance terms (Holborow, 2015). It literally changes how we speak about education: the nomenclature of the market is adopted with references to clients, customers and efficiencies, rather than citizenship and social rights². Power is also exercised through a practical control technology that challenges established practices among professionals (Deem, 2004). The process of managerialism involves a dualistic reformulation of control through the decentralisation of authority to line managers combined with retention of power at central level. Given its market logic, more casualised contractual employment arrangements also tend to be a feature of new managerialism (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Chandler, Barry & Clarke, 2002). Once operationalised in state bureaucracies, these changes have profound implications for the purpose and operation of the welfare state, including education, which this chapter explores with respect to Ireland.

Neoliberalism in Ireland

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The long tradition of conservative nationalism and anti-intellectualism in the Irish socio-political sphere (Garvin, 2004) provided a fertile ground in which to breed neoliberal policies (Lee, 1989; Phelan, 2007). The country's deep indebtedness in the 1980s, in particular, led to neoliberalism being adopted through political pragmatism and opportunism. It was also strongly reinforced by the media elite thereby consolidating its position in public discourse (Phelan, 2007). By late 1987, there was acceptance of three core principles of neoliberalism, that: (1) public spending had to be cut back (2) tax cutting was the key to encouraging enterprise by individuals and companies and (3) wage costs had to be reduced and union power restricted through legislation (Allen, 2000, pp. 14–15). Accompanying this economic curbing of the welfare state was the incorporation of commercial values into public service provision. This involved offloading the cost of the welfare state from capital to labour through processes of marketisation, deregulation, and privatisation of what were once public services (Allen, 2007).

The neoliberal turn happened within a broader context of the global capitalist marketplace, as the Irish state sought to attract transnational investment through a low regulation and taxation regime (Allen, 2000). As Ireland's economic base shifted from agriculture and industry towards marketable services, education became a central strategy in the promotion of the image of the 'knowledge' economy. Ireland sold itself to foreign direct investors as a vibrant 'knowledge economy' (AIB, 2013).

New managerialism was initiated in the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) (1994) and enacted in law through the Public Service Management Act (1997). The new managerial project was framed as one of 'modernisation', as politically neutral, promoting greater efficiencies, openness and better services (Murray, 2001). However, the goals of the SMI were distinctly political in terms of the values and mores incorporated into systems of public governance,

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regulation and accountability. The language of the market was encoded in the law and in policy with a strong emphasis on accountability; systems for performance appraisal and measurement of outputs was built into the framework of governance. The objective was to run the government like a business (Collins, 2007, p. 31).

Impact of neoliberal policies on education

Like most European countries, Ireland greatly increased access to upper secondary and higher education in the post-war era (although in Ireland's case it did not take place until the later 1960s). Justification for investing heavily in education was increasingly based on its market potential, its ability to develop skills leading to new products and markets in the 'knowledge economy'. The market-informed human capital approach to education was first articulated as a policy objective in Ireland in the highly influential *Investment in Education Report* (1966); the massive expansion of free secondary education in 1967 and the subsequent development of Technological Institutes of higher education (originally known as Regional Technical Colleges) were premised on human capital assumptions. As was true in many other countries in Europe, a knowledge-based imaginary (KBI) developed over time: it sought to valorise 'knowledge' as the key driver of economic growth, wealth generation, and job creation in the private, public, and 'third' sectors (Hazelkorn, 2011; Loxley, Seery & Walsh, 2014; Jessop, 2016). While the cultural and personal value of education was formally endorsed, a new emphasis on entrepreneurship emerged in the first decade of the 21st century: *'the provision of the innovative and creative graduates equipped with the skills needed to perform successfully in a competitive environment and contribute to fostering an enterprise culture and the nurturing of entrepreneurs'* was proclaimed as a key part of the 'vision' for higher education (HEA, 2008, p. 12). The entrepreneurial focus of education was reiterated in 2011 in the *National Strategy for Higher*

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Education to 2030 report (DES, 2011, p. 32). It called for the development of a ‘smart economy’, an objective first outlined in 2008: *The objective is to make Ireland an innovation and commercialization hub in Europe – a country that combines the features of an attractive home for innovative R&D-intensive multinationals while also being a highly-attractive incubation environment for the best entrepreneurs in Europe and beyond* (HEA, 2008, pp. 7–8). While this vocational and employment orientation had prevailed in Irish educational discourse since the 1970s, what was striking was that it became detached from the broader social development ethos of the public education system; the focus shifted to the creation of a labour market primed for a global knowledge economy.

Fostering the ‘entrepreneurial imagination’ that it believed would ‘empower future workers’ (DES, 2011, p. 37) required a new mode of governance in higher educational organizations in particular (ibid., pp. 88–95). New managerialism became the new norm, resting on the neoliberal assumption that the management of change can be best understood through the deployment of market logic and market mechanisms (Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015). Concerns about inequalities in access, participation and outcomes of education, that were central to debates about public education in the 1990s, were peripheralised in favour of analyses about the market value and relevance of education services: there were only three references to ‘disadvantage’ in the *National Strategy for Higher Education* (DES, 2011) while there were twenty-eight references to the relationship between business and higher education. It was made clear that securing the ‘short’ and ‘longer-term prosperity’ of Ireland was higher education’s primary remit (DES, 2011, p. 29).

Sharp distinctions emerged too in the strategies for developing the so-called ‘high-skilled’ and ‘low-skilled’ knowledge workers required by a global knowledge economy (Brine, 2006). The

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neoliberal distinction between high-skilled knowledge workers, trained through higher education for R&D (Research & Development), and the low-skilled knowledge workers trained through the Future Education and Training sector, became central to the Irish government's employment and education strategies. The Irish promise was to provide high-skilled knowledge workers capable of R&D work for the global knowledge economy, as well as 'skill-upgrading' for lower-skilled workers servicing the other end of the knowledge economy (Solas, 2014, p. 5, 22). Running throughout this transformation of the welfare state was a discourse of flexibility and employability of a mobile and transferable workforce primed to respond to the needs of a global marketplace and supported by national business-support agencies (such as Enterprise Ireland). The move to make education into a handmaiden of the market has had profound implications for the purposes of education in terms of what is taught (and not taught), who is taught and what types of subjectivities are developed in schools and colleges (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Lolich, 2011). To encourage second-level students to take higher-level mathematics, bonus 'points' (extra marks) are given to students who take the subject at the higher level in the final year national examination at second-level (the Leaving Certificate); no other subject is prioritised in this way. There is a fetishizing of the marketable capabilities of mathematics that is deeply problematic educationally (Kirwan & Hall, 2016).

While recognising the merit and value of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), the degree to which they have been prioritised in the research field in Ireland is striking. The *Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group* (by the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation in 2012) did not reference any arts, humanities and social science research field among its 14 priority areas. The unintended consequence of this emphasis on STEM is that the knowledges, pedagogies and learning styles of these disciplines are

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prioritised at the expense of the arts, humanities and social sciences; rational-critical, calculative mathematical logics are prioritised over ways of knowing the world through indigenous, plebian, peasant or experiential knowledge (de Sousa Santos, 2014).

However, there is also quiet resistance to the smart economy narrative: a survey in the Dublin region of 4,245 higher education students found that many challenged the prioritization of the 'smart economy' and entrepreneurial framing of higher education. While most students' primary reason for attending higher education was to realize their career ambitions through getting 'a well-paid job', 'a job I like', and/or being 'educated', their ambitions were not confined to career alone (Lolich & Lynch, 2017). When asked for their personal reasons for choosing to study in a particular field, the three most important factors, in order of priority, were '*Becoming an expert in my field*', '*Helping others who are in difficulty*', and '*Raising a family*'. '*Being well-off financially*' or '*Having a successful business of my own*' were lower priorities (Lolich, 2015). Students had '*an affective imaginary*' as well as a market imaginary; post-college employment was valued not only in itself, but also as a way of securing their relational (care) futures and doing socially valuable work. While students recognise the employment realities of a global labour market, they align their moral and affective (care) priorities with their labour market goals (Lolich & Lynch, 2017).

Teachers and new managerialism

One of the objects of new managerial reforms is to curb the power of professionals in public welfare sectors through the enactment of performance indicators and the availability of surveillance mechanisms (Farrell & Morris, 2003). Accountability was one of the key principles informing policy development in the Education White Paper in 1995 and Department of Education and Skills (DES) policy since then. Management complicity was vital for delivering

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the new managerial project, with the role of the senior manager or leader being reconstructed since the early 1990s in a new managerialist form (Gleeson & Shain, 2003; Houtsonen et al., 2010). The concept of the school leader as a chief executive officer (CEO) gained considerable ground in the 1990s and 2000s. The Universities Act (1997) gave chief executive powers to university presidents. Both primary and second-level principals formed their own management networks (the IPPN, Irish Primary Principals' Network and the NAPD, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals). School leadership became an area of training and development in its own right, often following a technicist and executive focus that narrows the scope of professionals delivering education. Principals felt under pressure to conform to new managerialist principles, so that accounting for your achievements in a school became a project in itself.

Most of the primary and second-level principals we interviewed for *New Managerialism in Education* felt that their work was increasingly subjected to greater regulation and accounting than previously. They claimed there was '*too much bureaucracy*', in terms of monitoring and accounting for achievements and standards, work that was distracting from the core work of the school, which was attending to the educational needs of children. The feeling that schools were increasingly accountable, not just to the Department of Education, statutory bodies, parents and children, but also to the media, was notable (Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015). The impact of reforms arising from the financial crisis has also affected the status of teachers. Since 2008 there is a growing casualisation of the teachers in both second-level schools (Mooney-Simmie, 2014) and in higher education (Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015; Cush, 2016): approximately 35% of second-level teachers were employed on a part-time and/or fixed-term basis while 9% of primary teachers are employed on a part-time and/or fixed-term basis after the financial crisis (Ward,

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2014, p. 3). Two thirds of newly qualified second-level teachers were also on temporary or part-time contracts even when the crisis was over (ASTI, 2017), while 45% of lecturers in universities and 25% of core lecturing staff in the Institutes of Technology were temporary and/or part-time (Cush, 2016). These figures represent major changes from 20 years ago, when almost all primary and secondary teachers were on permanent contracts, and far fewer lecturing posts were temporary and/part-time.

The licensing of several for-profit second-level and higher education colleges in Ireland over the last 20 years has also been a significant development in Irish education; as labour market conditions in these colleges is generally not governed by trade union agreements, staff pay and general working conditions are generally very inferior to those in the public sector. While most of these colleges are small, Dublin Business School (DBS) is comparable in size to a number of the Institutes of Technology while Hibernia College is the largest single provider of primary teachers in Ireland, as well as an increasingly important provider of second-level teachers. These trends exemplify the extent to which education is now seen as a business and a marketable product that can be traded nationally and internationally, a concept that was unthinkable a generation ago. While Ireland has always had an education market (Tormey, 2007) due to the constitutional rights of parents to send a child to the school of their choice for religious reasons, a culture of market competition has developed between schools in the last 20 years that is unprecedented; it is driven primarily by parental desires for class advantage rather than religion (Lynch & Lodge, 2002). New managerialism is both a product and facilitator of this new market trend.

Challenges to new managerialism in Irish schools: the role of educational mediators

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Government control over education is subject to two major limitations, one being practical and the other organic (Dale, 1982, p. 139). First, the scale of the educational bureaucracy makes it practically impossible for central government to exercise complete control over all aspects of education. Second, each State apparatus, including education, has its own unique history. The balance of powers that exist within the educational site are historically and culturally conditioned, and the way these play out varies across nation states depending on the relative status and power of those who manage, oversee and administer the services at local level (Lynch, 1990).

While regional Education and Training Boards (replacing the original the vocational education committees in 2013), school management bodies, and national parents' organisations, exercise power over education policy-making in Ireland, there is compelling evidence that the most powerful mediators of primary and secondary school services are the teacher unions and the Churches, especially the Catholic Church. Thus, despite pressures towards marketisation, there are nation-state-specific social conditions that have militated institutionally and culturally against new managerialism.

The governance structure for primary and second-level schools in Ireland is set down in a number of Education Acts, the most significant of which is the Education Act (1998). This act gives educational partners, (namely the owners and managers of schools, parent representatives and teacher unions), authority to exercise influence in the governance of several areas of education, including school design and planning, and curriculum development through the NCCA (the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment). Teachers and teacher unions are also strongly represented in Teaching Council, the body that governs the education and professional development of teachers under the Teaching Council Act 2001–2016. The teacher

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unions are by far the most numerous and influential group on these bodies as they have the resources and professional staff to assign to various positions (Coolahan, 1981; Cunningham, 2009).

Irish teachers are highly unionised with almost all school teachers being union members. As their consultative relationship with the state and other statutory policy-making groups is embedded in law, unions are party to national wage negotiations and policy developments in the education field. They have been active in resisting new managerial reforms. While the power of the teacher unions to drive the education agenda was tested in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, and the collapse of the social partnership arrangement between government and mediator groups, teacher unions remain very powerful. They have held several strikes to resist curriculum and assessment changes and to challenge cutbacks during austerity; they have also mobilised parents at times to support them on this. Additionally, teachers hold extensive political and social capital and are very active within political parties. The Prime Minister (Taoiseach) from 2011 to 2017 was a former school teacher, as was the Minister for Finance.

The teachers' unions collectively, between them, had become the most powerful group in Congress... They had that solid institutional political clout, insofar as they permeated every parish in Ireland, every political party in Ireland, every cultural, sporting and recreational body.

(Mulvey³ in Cunningham, 2009, p. 217)

Religious bodies and boards, most of which are Catholic, control the management of the majority of schools nationally (Coolahan, Hussey & Kilfeather, 2012). In the context of an intense debate about introducing league tables and performance indicators for schools in 2009, the Catholic Church actively promoted a holistic vision of education beyond narrow academic goals or

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market demands stating that “a Catholic conception of education...[is]...primarily moral and spiritual, concerned with principled behaviour and focused upon community and public good outcomes...” Bishop Leo O'Reilly, keynote address to the CPSMA (Catholic Primary Schools' Managers' Association, April 24th Dublin 2009). While not mobilising against new managerialism *per se*, and indeed endorsing certain ‘reforms’, the Churches, especially the Catholic Church, has silently resisted others, not least by not opposing or challenging teachers’ resistance to league tables and performativity measures.

Primary schools (especially) and to a lesser degree second-level schools, are small by international standards; there are over 3,000 primary schools and 740 second-level schools in a country of 4.5 million. Their size alone militates against a managerial model. The active role that many teachers and schools play in Irish social life also militates institutionally against new managerialism: the principal is a teacher in many small primary schools and in some smaller second-level schools. The manager and worker divide that is assumed within the new managerial frame does not apply: the management and delivery of education are not always discrete functions. Teachers, as deliverers of education, are not a distant professional elite; they are deeply embedded within local communities especially outside of major cities. They are also highly organised both inside and outside formal party politics; they work through trade unions, local community associations (including sporting bodies such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) which has clubs in most large villages and towns), and through the churches and community politics.

The power that the teacher unions exercise over education historically is far from unproblematic. While primary schools did change radically and become more child-centred in the 1970s, a trend that has largely persisted over time, second-level education has been largely subject-centred,

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didactic and far from innovative in terms of curriculum change. Protecting sectoral interests plays a very significant role in forestalling change in both curriculum and assessment in Ireland (Gleeson, 2010; Harvey, 2015).

How performativity was mediated in Irish education

Performance indicators, such as school league tables, were not formally introduced in Irish schools for a number of reasons. While standardised tests are administered at primary school, these are only disclosed to parents, teachers and the school, and remain private. The first public examination (the Junior Certificate) is undertaken when students are in their mid-teens, at the end of compulsory education at age 16. These school results (and those of the final year examination, the Leaving Certificate) could be made public but are not due to teacher resistance, but with the tacit support of parents, and the religious and other administrative bodies that own and govern second-level schools. A system of Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was introduced instead; school evaluations take place on a partnership basis between the school, the management body, parents and the inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills (McNamara & O'Hara, 2012). These reports are made public; however, the work of individual teachers is not assessed in the reports. Since WSE was introduced, teachers have successfully resisted operating a system of in-school teacher assessment of their own student's work (for public examination) although this issue is still under negotiation at the time of writing.

While the government adopted the rhetoric of new managerialism, both rhetorically and in practice, by devising performance indicators, measures of accountability and strategic plans, (High Level Goals) for schools, Gleeson and O'Donnabháin's (2009) research on their implementation suggests that the reforms are less honoured in practice than in theory. A culture of 'contrived compliance' operates amongst teachers in terms of engaging with self-evaluation

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(Harvey, 2015). Most of the focus has remained on policy implementation at a general school level (Gleeson & O'Donnabháin, 2009).

However, a focus on performativity is becoming evident in other ways across Irish education. Standardised testing of individual students occurs at three stages (early, middle and end) of primary schooling and, while this data is only disclosed to parents and the school, this operates as an indirect form of regulation. As the performance of Irish students is compared with those in other countries in PISA and TIMSS tests, these also operate as a form of control and regulation (MacRuairc, 2012). Moreover, both the policy emphasis and the language-of-analysis have changed and are becoming more market-led, most notably at second level (Mooney Simmie, 2012, 2014). Although school-level examination results are not published as league tables, newspapers have created a type of second-level league-table system by using Freedom of Information requests to identify the percentage of children from different schools who go to higher education (Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015). This practice has been strongly critiqued, but has persisted as it has parental support, especially, among middle class parents, who have the resources and time to choose schools (Lynch & Lodge, 2002).

More widely, the power of the media to promote neoliberal values continues both outside (Phelan, 2007) and inside education (Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015, pp. 205–224), a trend that is not unique to Ireland (Blackmore & Thorpe, 2003). Although the media are not usually identified as major players in education policy-making, they are increasingly powerful in setting public agendas that school managers must heed in a media-driven age. In an increasingly competitive and diverse society, the reputational status of a school becomes increasingly significant (Lynch & Lodge, 2002; Devine, Grummell & Lynch, 2011). Principals become ever more conscious of how ‘their’ school is positioned in the competitive stakes. This is allied with

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We have inserted Devine et al 2011; Blackmore and Thorpe should be 2003 and that is already in the references

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the apparent objectivity of rankings systems, which ‘become naturalised, normalised and validated, through familiarity and ubiquitous citation, particularly through recitation as ‘facts’ in the media’ (Lynch, 2013, p. 8).

Higher education accommodating new managerialism

The situation in higher education, especially in the universities, is quite different to the primary and second-level school sectors. The government-initiated OECD review of higher education in 2004 (OECD, 2004) was a watershed in Irish higher education. The report strongly critiqued the lack of investment in higher education research in the sciences and technological areas in particular, emphasising the key role of higher education in developing a ‘skilled work force for the economy’. There was almost no reference in the report to the developmental role of the universities or higher education in enhancing the civil, political, social or cultural institutions of society, either locally or globally. The National Strategy for Higher Education (DES 2011) set out the framework for the future development of higher education in Ireland to 2030. It was even more heavily laced with the new managerial language of efficiency, flexibility and accountability; a whole section of the report is devoted to *Efficiency and Productivity*. The report highlights the role of higher education in rebuilding ‘an innovative, knowledge-based economy’...having graduates who will be ‘the productive engine of a vibrant and prosperous economy’ (DES, 2011, p. 1). Reviewing the work of academic staff ‘continuously...in all institutions as part of a robust performance management framework’ is seen as central to the realisation of the new goals (ibid., p. 2). It also proposed to curtail university autonomy by ensuring that ‘institutional strategies will be defined and aligned with national priorities’ (ibid., p. 4). The Report also supported the idea of ‘up-front fees and [an] income-contingent loan scheme’, and ‘...greater productivity and commercial activity’ (ibid., p. 5) to help fund higher

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education into the future (DES, 2011). While the debate about the future role of higher education continues, and there is strong resistance to the introduction of student loans *in lieu* of grants in particular, what is noticeable is the redefinition of higher education's purpose. It is defined by government increasingly as a public investment that should be more commercially-driven and market relevant.

Performance appraisal and ranking play a much more significant role in Irish higher education than at school level. Bibliometric databases, such as the H Index, Scopus, Google Scholar Citations, the Science and Social Science Citation Indices, catalogue and rank individual publications and citations and also contribute to subject ranking within and between universities. New modes of ranking universities as corporate entities has also been developed, such as Uni-Rank, the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), the Times Higher Education World University (THE) rankings and that of Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a number of which are commercially controlled (Lynch, 2013, p. 6). The apparent objectivity of such ranking systems disguises the highly selective nature of their measurement procedures: they are heavily reliant on data provided by Thompson Reuters and Elsevier, companies that own many journals used in rankings, the majority of which are in English. Moreover, none of the prestigious rankings grade colleges in terms of their accessibility, inclusiveness or the quality of student experiences.

While there has been some resistance to the increased marketisation of higher education in Ireland, the power of the unions in the higher education sectors, especially in the seven Universities, is not comparable to that of their colleagues at primary and second-level. This occurs not only because there are a range of unions representing different staff, but also because union density among academics is much lower than that among teachers. In addition, many

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junior academics are on temporary and/or part-time contracts (Cush, 2016), and are not unionised, while many general services in higher education have been outsourced to private providers over the past 20 years. The highly individualistic culture that has always pervaded higher education is another factor that militates against collective action; in an age of individualised academic capitalism, many academics see themselves as sole traders, or even potential ‘stars’ who can, if successful, have very profitable academic careers (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). All of these factors reduce the scope and influence of unions at the higher education levels, especially in the universities. However, it is important to note that the Teachers’ Union of Ireland (TUI), which represents academic staff in the higher education Institutes of Technology (and also represents many teachers at second-level), has been more active in resisting managerialist changes in the third-level sector than have unions in the universities. It held strategic strikes and lobbied successfully against legislative changes that would have undermined the autonomy of academics in the Institutes prior to national elections in 2016.

Overall, however, higher education colleges are being pressurised to change and be more business-oriented; there is a strong emphasis on productivity and targets with funding from government increasingly dependent on meeting specified benchmarks. The values of the commercial sector are increasingly encoded in the heart of the higher education systems and processes, often without reflection (Lynch, 2006), marking a profound shift in values away from the ideal of education as a public service.

Further education: susceptibility to new managerialism

The further education sector in Ireland is highly susceptible to the influences of new managerialism (Murray, Grummell & Ryan, 2014). As it has never had a clearly defined role or

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institutional framework, further education's position, between and on the borders of second and higher education, locates it at the margins. It is characterised by a diverse student cohort, most of whose families would have little or no further or higher education; the workforce is heavily casualised, and it has a complex funding and organizational structure, all of which increases its vulnerability to control and regulation.

Further education developed a new policy focus arising from the neoliberal demand for a flexible, employable and mobile workforce in the post-austerity period. The establishment of SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna, the Irish national education and training body) in 2013 led to the adoption of more explicit employability and performativity discourses. These were influenced by EU strategies such as the *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training* and *EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* (Holford & Špolar, 2012). In the Irish case, this greater alignment of education and training agendas, which had always characterised further education, was now incentivised by new statutory changes in labour market activation strategies, the increased conditionality of welfare, new public procurement processes for education providers, and the expanded reach of the accreditation processes of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (Fitzsimons, 2017b). An increased focus on market-oriented further education is aligned with the decimation of community development and community education support frameworks that are non-market led. There have been severe cuts in funding to community development programmes, family resource centres, special education needs programmes, disability and other support services (Fitzsimons, 2017a).

The further education sector has been particularly targeted by neoliberal discourses of performativity aimed at upgrading the employability of low-skilled and marginalized sectors of

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the population (Brine, 2006). The training agenda within further education and training (FET) moved from vocational education to employability and enhanced labour activation (Gleeson, Davies & Wheeler, 2005). The policy shift is evident in the discourses of the new statutory agencies of SOLAS and INTREO (Employment and Income Support Agency) (Hardiman, 2012). Both agencies emphasise employability and labour activation – a readiness to work rather than actually becoming employed. Measureable evidence of employability is stated as a priority in the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014–2019* which focuses on

Skills as a resource for economic growth; Skills as drivers of employment growth; Skills as drivers of productivity increase; Skills and ‘smartening’ of the economy; Skills as drivers of productivity increase, Skills and ‘smartening’ of the economy, Skills as a driver of social inclusion and social mobility; and Skills as an insulator from unemployment.

(SOLAS, 2014, p. 4–5)

The focus on employability in further education was accompanied by continuous reforms in the accreditation system. Established under European quality assurance frameworks, QQI developed a national qualifications framework for learning awards across further and higher education. It focusses on hierarchical learning outcomes that the learner can visibly display for verification and accreditation purposes. This emphasises learning as individual achievement, output and performance that is dependent on the subjective interpretation and self-regulation of the learner, educator and assessor (Fitzsimons, 2017b).

The formalising of educational outcomes through qualifications structures places enormous pressures on students and staff who struggle to capture the complexity of their learning into measurable performance-related categories (O’Neill, Fitzsimons & O’Reilly, 2014; Fitzsimons, 2017b). The non-traditional background of many students and the diverse access routes provided

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by further and adult education struggles to fit into the performativity radar of formal learning outcomes of FET and QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland). As Allias argues, this emphasis on the end product disguises the learning context and processes, leading to a market-driven procurement process awarded to those who can deliver on prescribed measureable outcomes at the lowest cost (2014, p. 69).

Conclusion: the local contexts of the neoliberal project

While neoliberalism was initially sold as a simple modernisation project, the political nature of its purpose became increasingly visible over time. The focus on the human capital value of education persisted but it was married to a new education project focused on educating students for a market economy. This radically shifted the purpose of education in a welfare state from broader developmental and social goals towards more single-minded, market-driven objectives of employability in a knowledge economy. The development of an entrepreneurial and actuarial self-became the new mantra in an age of individualised modernity, not only globally (Peters, 2005) but also in Ireland (Inglis, 2008). Market logics increasingly began to dictate educational discourses and practices through a new managerial code. However, this process was nuanced by the varied contexts of Irish education as we explored in this chapter. The experiences of the school sectors have been very different to that of further and adult education setting, and each of these has differed from the higher education sector, revealing the complexity of new managerialism in the specific location and context of different welfare states.

While neoliberal policies have been challenged in the delivery of primary and second-level education, due to the power exercised by the Catholic Church and the teacher unions in particular, there has been an incorporation of market logic into further and higher education, and there have been demands for changes in educational management and organisation at primary

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and second-level. In the latter case, school principals are under surveillance from media and parents (especially at second level) to produce academic results through strong examination performances and to comply with new modes of school evaluation. While teacher unions and the churches can and do resist such demands, they cannot pre-empt them.

Higher education has provided a more fertile ground for new managerialism, given the globalised competitiveness of the higher education sector itself (Hazelkorn, 2011). Individualised citation counts, rankings, and the commercialisation of research funding, impel a more competitive and individualised culture that facilitates the internalization of new managerial norms (Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015). The adult and further education sectors also proved highly susceptible to the impact of new managerialism due to the lower status of the sector, the ongoing casualisation of its staff and expanding performativity and new professionalism requirements instituted in law and practice.

While culturally-specific conditions meant that there was and still is resistance to new managerialism in education, especially at primary and second level, and also by students at third-level, albeit not mobilised politically in the students' case⁴, new managerial reforms inevitably get under your skin; there is no way of escaping, even for those who are not committed to the new managerial project. The call to be market-led rather than education-led has profound implications for the educators and learners who deliver and receive education. The new managerial focus is the product not the person, both in terms of what is attained and what is counted and countable. A culture of carelessness is created, one that is most evident in higher education (Lynch, 2010) and further education (Murray, Grummell & Ryan, 2014). Increasingly, it permeates all levels of education policy and management (Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015), with different education sectors varying in their degree of susceptibility or accommodation (in

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the case of further and higher education respectively) or resistance (in the case of primary and second-level schooling).

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Blackmore and Thorpe, 2003. Fitzsimons 2017a, Jessop 2008a are now in the text

Other references to Gov. of Ireland 2008, Hartong 2012, Lynch 2014, are deleted

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¹ This paper is based on three empirical studies: the first is a study of the procedures and criteria for appointing twenty three senior managers (school principals, heads of colleges and top-ranked posts in universities across primary (N = 8) secondary (N = 8) and further and higher education (N = 7). Those appointed to the posts and those who played the key role in the appointments (usually the chair of the board of assessors) were interviewed; 52 in-depth interviews with managers & assessors were undertaken (Lynch, Grummell and Devine, *New Managerialism in Education*, 2012, 2015, 2nd ed.) The second study, led by Kathleen Lynch, is an investigation of the relationship between working, learning and caring life in higher education: 102 interviews with staff – academic, management, professional, general service – across ten higher education institutions. (<http://irc-equality.ie/>) The third study was undertaken by Luciana Lohich under the supervision of Kathleen Lynch; it was a study of students' perspective (N=4265) on the market (smart economy)-focused changes enacted in higher education following the OECD (2004) Report recommending a more market-led approach (Lohich & Lynch, 2016, 2017).

² There were 1,583 references to 'customers' on the Website of the Irish Revenue Commissioners (National Tax and Customs Authority) accessed May 10, 2017 www.revenue.ie/en/index.html Department of Social Protection – over 2,000 references to 'customers' on the website accessed May 10, 2017 www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/home.aspx

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The Department of Education has a Customer charter accessed May 10, 2017 www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Customer-Service/Customer-Charter/Service-Standards.html/

³ Kieran Mulvey served as Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Commission for over 20 years.

⁴ Although students have run a successful campaign in 2017 against the introduction of student loans, albeit one that is supported by a variety of other groups.