

# Chapter 4

## New Conditions of Professional Work or the Fall of Professions? On Managerialism and Professionalism

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### 4.1 A Changing Society: From Welfare to Competition

The point of departure is to understand capitalist society as a society being in a permanent crisis of accumulation. This encompasses a crisis in service provisions influenced by or reflecting the economic development. In this case we focus on professionalism as an example of the impact of that crisis. When discussing professional work, we need not to forget societal conditions outside the field of social work which constitute the scope of the public intervention. Basically, we assume that social work and capitalism are still parts of a mutual intersection.

In the following paragraph, the intention is to present some of the main features of what may be labelled a societal change.

#### 4.1.1 *The Competitive State*

The concept ‘competitive state’ reflects deep-going changes of the economic, political and cultural institutions which for instance characterise current Danish as well as European political economy. The concept of the competitive state points partly to another state and partly to another political culture compared to the years after WWII. Those years became more and more dominated by discussions on

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the welfare state, introduced as a concept in 1953 in Denmark. The left wing criticised the welfare state of being a sign of repressive tolerance, whilst the right wing thought it as a threat to individual freedom, and to the family as the kernel institution of society and as dependence, a kind of political discussions which has now disappeared. The political debate of today is oriented at enlarging the welfare state. Instead, the critique of the state taking over civil society is replaced by a discussion on the welfare state as a burden for the private sector (cf. a broader discussion in Sect. 4.3 of this chapter).

The argumentation above emphasises why the welfare state is changing, though the question is: are we observing a modification of the welfare state, or are we in fact seeing the emerging of a new type of state?

If so the *competitive state* is something different from the *welfare state*. Whereas the welfare state aimed at protecting the population and the companies against the international conjunctures, the competitive state aims at mobilising the population and the companies to participate in the international or global competition. Further, the competitive state aims at making every person responsible, whilst the welfare state weighted moral education (general education), democracy as community and freedom as the possibility to participate in political processes.

The competitive state aims at making the individual responsible for his/her own life, understands community as community of work and interprets freedom as being identical to the freedom to fulfil one's own needs, whereas the welfare state stressed the moral education or *Bildung*, democracy as community and freedom as the possibility of participating in political processes.

The competitive state improves dynamics on the cost of stability and has developed a never-ending process of reforms. A central trait of the competitive state is the balance between accumulation and regulation which is presented and discussed in the next paragraph.

### ***4.1.2 Accumulation and Regulation***

An approach to understand state and market will be offered in the following pages. Our emphasis is placed on two points: every state is a product of a social practice, and social practice has a lot to do with production, reproduction and conduct. The first dimension is labelled accumulation (of capital, culture, power, etc.). The second dimension is labelled regulation (by means of law, norms, etc.). By means of this model, we are capable of looking at educational policy as a matter of socialisation. This is concerned with two analytical levels:

- A regulationist perspective
- The welfare regime perspective (cf. Esping-Andersen 1990)

Education and educational policy are seen as a part of the general process of socialisation.

Within the *regulationist perspective* the analysis would usually focus on four central mechanisms: (1) accumulation regime, (2) mode of regulation, (3) life regime and (4) mode of life. Bob Jessop defines that the regulationist approach is looking at:

regulatory mechanisms, i.e. institutional forms, societal norms and patterns of strategic conduct which successfully expressed and regulated these conflicts until the inevitable build-up of tensions and disparities among the various regulatory forms reached crisis point. When this occurred there would be an experimental period from which a new accumulation regime and a corresponding mode of regulation might – or might not – emerge. (Jessop 1990: 308)

Then, the accumulation regime is defined as *‘a particular combination of production and consumption which can be reproduced over time despite conflictual tendencies’* (ibid.). This goes hand in hand with a specific mode of regulation, i.e. *‘an institutional ensemble and complex of norms which can secure capitalist reproduction pro tempore despite the antagonistic character of capitalist social relations’* (ibid.).

Life regime and life mode are defined in parallel to the economic dimensions. Thus, under life regime we understand a combination of factors regarding the individual, locating him/her in the physical and social environment that can be reproduced over time despite conflictual tendencies. On the other side, the mode of life is defined as an ideological and psychological constellation of various and complex norms that can secure the individual’s integration into the capitalist circle of production. This allows understanding processes of socialisation as a matter of the ‘conflation’ of structure and agency. Socialisation is in social science generally approached by looking at two dimensions, namely, the socialisation of production on the one hand and the socialisation of the personalities on the other hand. Though the perspectives on each have been very different, the core dividing line had been one of the objective processes around production in the widest sense and subjective processes on the other hand, the latter by and large seen as educational processes.

Based on the leading values and beliefs plus the cultural power structure, normative theories are designed and developed. In the next step, such theories imply normative regulations and normative institutions (the rules are so to say an outcome of a compromise of interpreted values, moral and power). Besides or below such theories, one will find the social and economical power structure. From the normative regulations and institutions, one may also point to social practice and the distribution of power belonging to social practice. And then in turn the outcomes or products are assessed from the perspective of legitimacy as well as the perspective of utility (or use on behalf of one’s own interests). This is a question widely discussed in educational sociology. Althusser’s article on ideological state apparatuses can be seen as an answer to the question: how is it possible to provide a contradictory society with social cohesion? Why don’t people revolt? Althusser points to the mechanisms of the ideological apparatus of state (like family, church, school, workplace) and the concept of interpellation (Althusser 1970). Boltanski and Chiapello point to the

‘new spirit of capitalism’ as an answer to the same question. Just to emphasise their argumentation we quote:

In many respects, capitalism is an absurd system: in it wage earners have lost ownership of the fruits of their labour and the possibility of pursuing a working life free of subordination. As for capitalists, they find themselves yoked to an indeterminable, insatiable process, which is utterly abstract and dissociated from satisfaction of consumptions needs, even of a luxury kind. For two such protagonists, integration into the capitalist process is singularly lacking in justification. (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 7)

In addition, they point to how activities or projects are justifying this system. This means doing networking and being engaged in a discontinuous process of project planning, project implementation and project finishing. If they are right, this feature offers a plausible explanation for challenges of the professions.

### ***4.1.3 A Dialectical Viewpoint***

By underlining this new social practice the intention is to avoid being bound or tied to limited ranges of challenges and understandings. In epistemological respect practice – encompassing the simultaneity of the societal, social and individual dimension – has to be seen as key feature in overcoming the dichotomy between structure and action as it is suggested in mainstream social science. The social is then understood as the outcome of the interaction between people (constituted as actors) and their constructed and natural environment. With this in mind educational and social policy refers to people’s productive and reproductive relationships. In this perspective the constitutive interdependency between processes of self-realisation and the processes of the formation of collective identities is a condition for the social, realised by the interactions of actors, being – with their self-referential capacity – competent to act and their framing structure, which translates immediately into the context of human relationships.

In other words, we deal with some contradictions. Processes of self-realisation are contradictory to processes of the formation of collective identities. From self-realisation we derive the self-referential capacity and thus further the competence to act. From collective identities we derive the framing structure – which in turn is in contradiction with self-referentiality – and further the context of human relationships, which may or may not support or impair the individual competence to act. All of these contradictions form the social.

### ***4.1.4 Outline of a New Society?***

The welfare society is much discussed in the press, among politicians and citizens. Some politicians are promising to develop ‘the world’s best level of health’ or aiming at becoming in the top five of the PISA ranking, etc. Are the promises close

to realities, or are they distant from realities? Are such promises simply used to cover that, for example, Denmark is no longer a classical welfare state? A similar tendency is obvious all over Europe. To find an answer, one must ask questions like: are we undergoing deep societal changes? Where are those changes heading and for what purpose? A serious analysis is developed by Joachim Hirsch. He demonstrates the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism and from classical welfare to neoliberalism. Fordism was characterised by the assembly lines, mass production aimed at a growing domestic market and an increasing mass consumption. The state played the major role in the governance and development of a national economy, and economic theory was primarily influenced by Keynes. In contrast to Fordism, post-Fordism is characterised by an individual production, a consumption based on lifestyle and oriented at a global market. The state maintains an important role, but governance takes place as a negotiated interaction of state and organisations. At the level of the nation state, there is a shift from government to governance where the state becomes one agent among others operating in subnational, national and international domains. This change is often labelled paradigmatic, shifting from a strategy influenced by Keynesian Welfare National State (KWNS) to a strategy influenced by a Schumpeterian Workfare Postnational Regime (SWPR) (cf. Hirsch 1995; Jessop 2000; Antikainen 2008). The realm of the state, which was formerly 'exterior' to civil society, becomes localised and hence 'interior' to the realm of private interests (civil society) which becomes global – through transnational capital. One consequence is that the nation state cannot sustain social welfare and thereby may lose its cohesion.

#### ***4.1.5 Education Is a Central Vehicle in the Transition***

In order to better understand these contradictions, we use further Pedersen's analysis which is inspired by Joachim Hirsch (1995). Pedersen frames the hegemonic trend in Western societies by means of 'the societal illusion or assumption of economy', e.g. a certain understanding of the relationship between state and economy. The old state is changing and a new state is emerging. Pedersen differentiates between welfare state and competitive state. The competitive state does not any longer protect citizens and companies against oscillations of the international economy, but intends actively to mobilise the population and the companies to participate in the international competition. This shows a move from compensation to mobilisation defining the individual as responsible for his/her own life. Freedom, then, means to realise own needs and no longer as a possibility to participate in political processes. The new state promotes a dynamic which can be seen in never-ending processes of reform. Further the new state tries to influence international environments (among other things EU). In brief this is a state '*which is organized with the purpose of influencing and adapting in order to mobilize and reform to take care of national interests*' (Pedersen 2011: 12 – own translation). Drawing on Gramsci (1972), Pedersen assesses school to be the most important factor. The new task of schooling

is to educate competent individuals possessing skills and put them at the disposal of the labour market – on the conditions of the market and at best a lifelong process. The basic idea is: work will shape the community and not education, participation, democracy or equal possibilities (ebenda: 170). In particular he underlines a change of the person from being irreplaceable to become opportunistic. By opportunistic it meant at least two interpretations: first, the economic one means that the person already is what he should be, namely, selfish and motivated by incentives (Bobbitt 2002: 228–235). Second, the opportunistic version means that the person is surrounded by incentives (technological, financial, social) but at the same time has to be educated in order to use these by means of acquired skills (Pedersen 2011: 190–191). As stated above Pedersen presents an argumentation heavily based on ideas.

## **4.2 A Changing Concept of Professionalism: A New Kind of Socialisation of Professionals Leads from Professionalism to Managerialism**

We are in this section going to show how these ideas are shaping the contours of a new socialisation moving from professionalism to managerialism. This shift is closely connected with neoliberalism. ‘Neoliberalism is a vision of society in which competition for wealth is the only recognised value and virtually all social decisions are left to unregulated markets’ (Faux 2006: 5). Essentially, the same thing is said by Treanor when he writes: ‘Neoliberalism is not simply economic structure, it is a philosophy. This is most visible in attitudes to society, the individual and employment. Neo-liberals tend to see the world in terms of market metaphors’ (Treanor 2009: 9). We should add that neoliberalism is more than an economic theory or political philosophy; it is a way of seeing reality in terms of quantifiable transactions.

In his history of neoliberalism, David Harvey uses the term ‘commodification’ to describe this process. Harvey defines neoliberalism as follows: ‘Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. ... Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects in ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world’ (Harvey 2005:2–3).

However, we have to be conscious that there are many ways of conceptualising neoliberalism. The approaches have been varying: is it a policy paradigm? Is it more broadly understood as a hegemonic ideology? Or is it a distinctive form of governmentality? For our purpose, the most important point is to avoid a totalising interpretation of neoliberalism. Instead of that, we follow the lead of Clarke (2004),

who highlights variation in the manifestation of neoliberalism. First and foremost, Clarke maintains the possibilities of contradiction and contestations as well as form of resistance (Clarke 2004: 30).

Summing up our considerations, we turn to Hood (1995) who has identified seven principles of NPM:

1. Reorganisation of the public sector into corporate units organised along product or service lines – a shift from a unitary, functional form to a multi-divisional structure
2. Emphasis on contract-based competitive provision, with internal markets and term contracts – the introduction of ‘managed markets’ with public agencies as funder and contract manager and private for profit and non-profit providers as contractors
3. Stress on private-sector styles of management practices, including more flexible hiring and firing, greater use of marketing and improved budget policies
4. Stress on discipline and frugality in resource use, including a focus on cost and revenue accounting
5. More emphasis on visible hands-on top management, fewer middle managers and increased span of control for executive management
6. Greater use of explicit, formal standards and performance measures
7. Greater emphasis on output rather than input controls

By implementing these principles, the professions seem to be forced to drop their own criteria of professionalism, first of all their professional estimate of situations of interference with users, in favour of economisation, e.g. market criteria. Walker states f.e.:

the professionals are described in a new way by emphasizing three basic, but interdependent changes of the modern state. First is the introduction of a new discourse aiming at both preparing and improving public servants to handle reorganizations while those are made. Thereby the new discourse becomes governing and manipulating. Second: the driver for changing the discourse is originated in the need of modernization which in turn changes the social relationships between the leaders of the state, citizens and professionals. A modern state aims at governing the employees, making them flexible and mobile. The outcome of this process is or will be a loss of status, professional creativity and autonomy. Third: behind the project of modernization lies coercion originating from globalization of markets and the processes of accumulation of capital. (Walker 2004: 87 – our translation)

Walker adds that Ford succeeded in ‘splitting up working processes in smaller items and organizing them and similarly the social relations in new ways, too’. Like Ford the modern state gets rid of the semi-professions. The outcome is ‘post-Fordist flexible accumulation of capital’ (ibid.: 112). Summing up the critique Walker emphasises some key words: performance, strategic plans of action, leadership, continuous evaluation, external control of finances, competition and profiling of institutions. Social relations are expressed in terms of teams, supervision, control of quality, wages linked to performance, manuals and modules, internal evaluation, differentiation between core and peripheral labour force, differentiation of levels of work, etc. We would like to draw attention to the consequences of the

welfare reforms as involving the reshaping of social pedagogical and educational practice. This reshaping seems to involve the fragmentation of educational work, deprofessionalisation, the increased technicism and managerialisation of the role and the loss of professional autonomy. Fragmentation has already occurred in more ways, e.g. social pedagogical work has been undermined as work with young people with special needs has been removed to a 'specialist area' requiring different qualifications, based on supposedly its own knowledge and practice competence. But fragmentation has also occurred in relation to ordinary tasks as specialist teams are becoming responsible for contact, assessment and service provision to young people. Deprofessionalisation has occurred as its claims to a certain knowledge base or specialised body of knowledge have been eroded. The role of the social pedagogue or the teacher has itself become more technicist and managerial with practitioners assessing need and then coordinating the work of others as opposed to engaging to direct encounters with young people. In terms of professional autonomy, professionals of the past decades enjoyed a relatively high degree of freedom to analyse the circumstances of their users, choose the preferred method of working and organise their time accordingly. Since the middle of the 1980s, this has been undermined. In brief, the reshaping of educational work does not only concern knowledge, skill and fields of responsibility and expertise but also the increased importance of managerialism.

The consequence of the changed working conditions is a new socialisation within the professions.

Similarly societal values have been changed. Jørgensen (2004) mentions four basic values for the public sector:

1. The public sector bears the responsibility for society in general.
2. There should be public control and supervision.
3. Protection of the law should be safeguarded.
4. Autonomous professional standards should be followed.

Jørgensen underlines important changes as the state draws back from earlier responsibilities. Our hypothesis is that points 1 and 4 of the above-mentioned values are under the hardest pressure. Citizens are no more in the focus of state interventions, and we observe how old distinctions between worthy and not worthy poor or unemployed are re-entering the public debate. The focus is moved to underpin the ability of competition of private companies. Likewise one could point to a discourse of bio-political governmentality emphasising the responsibility of the citizen in all fields (employment, health, education, etc.). This individualisation of responsibility becomes a decisive value in the public sector, and the population is over the years getting used to 'full freedom' and 'full responsibility' (Beach 2010: 555; see also Beach 2009).

Concerning point 4 the trend seems to be blurring the borders between professional standards and political intentions. The outcome is a sharpened demand of identification with the values of the leadership in the institutions and municipalities. One could talk about 'the encircled institution' (Pedersen 2011: 246), characterised by a number of governing and controlling systems (accountability, etc.). We sum up what we label the discursive formations within this issue, namely, the discourse



of performativity, the discourse of accountability, the discourse of standards (or commodification) and the discourse of surveillance and control (cf. Jensen and Walker 2008, Ch. 10).

Having presented an overall framework above, we continue by getting closer to the professions to show how the overall societal changes impact the professionals.

### 4.3 Changes in Professionalism

The described discursive formations are accompanied by enhanced strategies of standardisation and bureaucratic rationalisation which reflect a pursuit of ‘measurable’ results. Practically therefore, a key characteristic of the current organisational culture are efforts to quantify goals, practices and outcomes. This is performed through the development of a multitude of more or less sophisticated indicators (cf. Power 1997; Otto et al. 2009). This organisational culture is at conflict with the organisational culture which governed welfare professionalism in the Fordist welfare state. A central feature of the decline of traditional welfare professionalism is an eroding trust in the discretion of front-line professionals in favour of the allegedly higher accountability of managerialist rule (cf. Scott 2000).

In order to elaborate this suggestion, it is instructive to bring to mind the close relation between the properties of the state and the peculiarities of welfare professionalism.

Typically, welfare professionals deliver services within both state and non-governmental agencies. Yet most of these non-governmental organisations have contracts with and are financed by state agencies. Insofar they used hardly to be organisations beyond the state but rather a part of the enlarged state. Against this background welfare professionals might be described in terms of what Terrence Johnson (1972) used to call ‘(state) mediated professions’. This term points to professions, in which the state or a state agency acts as a mediator between the profession and its clientele, deciding in broad terms who the clientele will be and what should be provided for them through a legal framework and through the overall allocation of resources and powers. The state legislation embodies particular perspectives on the way people with ‘problems’ and ‘needs’ are defined and subsequently outlines the ways and modes in which welfare services may respond to them and are obliged to respond to them.

Given the fact that a central feature of projects of professionalisation is to gain monopoly of credibility with the public which restricts the control by outside agencies over the actual ethicality of the transaction of professional services, professional theories often assumed that a key trait of professionals is their autonomous decision-making. This was suggested to be underscored by a distinct, scientifically founded knowledge base and relatively unhindered by pressures from either the state or the clients themselves. In reality however this has always been only a part of the truth. What is valid however is the fact that in the context of the Fordist welfare state, the typical form of rule, i.e. bureaucratic hierarchy, was compatible with considerable

(technical) discretion of welfare professionals. Welfare professionals were capable of determining specific responses to service users' needs, and also the determination of what clients' needs are was basically a product of interpretations and categorisations of the professionals. It were basically the welfare professionals (rather than managers or the clients themselves) who had the power to define who their clients were, what they needed and which measures for which aims should be taken. Such broad discretionary realms opened up as, even though bureaucratic rules were typically rather unambiguous, their practical implementation necessarily involved interpretation and judgement and thus at least technical autonomy. Factually decision-making in service provision took place through combining of bureaucratic rules and discretionary professional judgement. It is thus convincing when for instance John Harris (1998) argues that for the 'mediated' welfare professionals, the bureaucratic hierarchies were as much a basis for the power exercised by welfare professionals as they were a mode of exercising power over welfare professions. Against this background it is applicable to argue that the dominant form of appearance of professionalism within the Fordist welfare state was bureau professionalism, i.e. it was a kind of 'organisational settlement' between the rational administration of bureaucratic systems and professional expertise in control over the content of services as two different but interconnected modes of coordination.

Service provision in the Fordist welfare state was insofar basically founded on two pillars: firstly, a legalistic, conditionally rather than target programmed, hierarchically structured bureaucratic administration and, secondly, a largely self-regulated professionalism with a broad realm of professional expertise in control over the content of services (cf. Rüb 2003; Otto and Ziegler 2011; Clarke and Langan 1993). Based on a state-regulated training, the professionalism of service providers was considered to be by and large sufficient for a rational and effective steering of services, whilst other tools of governance seemed to be rather non-essential. On the fundament of a hierarchical bureaucracy and professionalism, the Fordist welfare state was considered to be able to perform its functional tasks more or less successfully and appropriate. Yet in particular since the early 1980s, the Fordist welfare state was increasingly accused to be both omnipresent and impotent, i.e. excessively large and costly and at the same time inefficient in performing its proper task. The diagnosis was that the Fordist welfare state faced a two-folded challenge which it was incapable to resolve. On the one hand, the welfare state was challenged by an alleged 'demand overload' and notoriously escalating expectations. On the other hand, it was challenged by its own institutional insufficiency. The notion of 'ungovernability' became a central buzzword: 'The condition of ungovernability results from institution allowing for the rise of kinds of problems and conflicts that these very same institutions later turn out to be incapable of processing in orderly and routinized ways, such as in models of *endogenous* demand overload' (Offe 2011). The notion of ungovernability was basically tantamount to the presumption that the more or less social-democratic 'Big Government' has generally failed. In particular the logics of bureau professionalism were now considered to be 'too cumbersome, too inefficient, too unresponsive, too unproductive' (Simmons et al. 2006) and too little adaptable to the normative demands of individualism and the market.

The allegedly too large influence on public policymaking of the 'new class' of bureaucrats, intellectual consultants and particular welfare professionals which was derived out of the Fordist welfare state and their personal commitment to expanding the role of welfarism was considered to be a part of the misery.

### ***4.3.1 The Cultural Basis***

This perspective dispossessed the cultural fundament of professionalism. This becomes particularly obvious when we keep in mind that professionalism does not only contain a cognitive but also a cultural dimension. The cognitive dimension of professionalism includes a body of knowledge and skills which is officially recognised as one based on abstract concepts and theories and requiring the exercise of considerable discretion. The cultural dimension of professionalism points to an 'ideology serving some transcendent value and asserting greater devotion to doing good work than to economic reward' (Freidson 2001: 180).

Whether professionals themselves believe that they possess these virtues is a relevant issue. However, even more important is the question whether the public and public policy believe that professionals have these virtues. Political and public confidence in professional competence and virtue was essential to support a mode of service provision which finds its pillars in the axiomatic assumptions that at least case-specific welfare judgements are and should be embodied in the person of the professional and that the regulation of professionals is and should be enshrined in the ethos of the profession and its bodies. There is a reason to suggest that the public confidence in professional competence and virtue can no longer be taken for granted. Rather this confidence has been sustainably shaken. In the last decades there has been a substantial change in the interpretation of the role of professionals. As Mike Bottery (2004: 9) puts it: 'views of professionals have changed over the last 50 years, from ones of high trust, peer-based accountability, mystique, and autonomous practice, predominantly low-trust, involves extensive external quantitative accountability, and grants only limited professional discretion'. Academically and political professional was substantially criticised. The political left inter alia criticised that professional power over clients was demeaning and patronising, whereas the political right suggested that bureau professionalism does not resolve but create dependency and that it serves the interests of service providers rather than the clients or the welfare of the population. In particular the relative autonomy of professionals and the broad realm of professional discretion were accused for failing of guaranteeing clients the highest standards of service provision, but rather leading to an unacceptable and unregulated arbitrarily variability in the nature and quality of interventions. Instead of relying on the arbitrary and subjective decisions of professionals, the augmentation of statistical diagnosis by judgements embodied in intelligent devices such as tests, norms, tables, charts and risk levels promised a more rational fundament for effective welfare provision.

### 4.3.2 *The Challenge of Governability*

This tendency was enhanced by the suggestion that a general suggested solution of the supposed failure of 'Big Government' of the Fordist welfare state was to redefine the central state functions: instead of providing common goods in terms of services, the new task is to supervise and monitor sectors beyond the state which should provide these services. In other words, state functions should be shifted from 'rowing to steering' (Osborne and Gabler 1992): patterns of direct service delivery (i.e. rowing) are to be transformed into modes of governance based on setting policy direction and providing requirements and incentives for others to provide services. To resolve the problem of ungovernability, an overall shift towards the use of regulation over other governmental tools deemed to be necessary. The Fordist redistributory (or 'producing') welfare state which provided money and social services through state bureaucracies or agencies close to the state should be at least partly replaced by measures which mandates welfare tasks to non-state providers and agencies, whilst at the same time it should be more than ever the state which regulates the activities of the non-state providers and agencies. Thus, processes of 'deregulation' go alongside new regulatory measures ensuring that privatised spheres operate safely. These measures are in particular rankings, ratings, inspection, 'Aufsicht', audit, and licensing. 'Less state' (in particular less redistribution) should go alongside with 'more state' in terms of more regulation and monitoring of the spheres beyond the state. A further central dimension of the new philosophy of governing welfare was fostering competition among service providers. This was sometimes called devolution or 'privatisation'. Yet there was hardly much 'private' about this privatisation; in effect the developments rather come close to a reassertion of the central state or more specifically the idea of a core executive, control over policymaking. Most of all it allows the state to perform an alternative mode of governing: 'governing at a distance' (cf. Rose and Miller 1992). This governmental mode seems to allow governments to replace their propensity to reach their aims with governance by directing and thus to put more social institutions into motion and do more regulating whilst shifting the operative task responsibility away from the central state.

Against this background the figure of the mediated bureau professional does not seem to fit in the political landscape of welfare provision. This seems to be an important background for a process of successively replacing bureau professionalism by managerialism. A major feature of managerialism seems to be that it replaces trust in professionals as well as the trust relationships between practitioners and clients by organisational forms of regulation such as target setting, performance managements, audits and accountability but also by market forms of customer relations. The Australian sociologist Pat O'Malley (2009) delivers an instructive interpretation of this process. O'Malley argues that what we currently observe might be interpreted as a general shift from 'social liberalism' to 'advanced liberalism'. In social liberalism, O'Malley argues governmental welfare programmes were closely linked to the esoteric knowledge of the positive sciences of human conduct.

Advanced liberalism transferred these powers to an array of calculative and more abstract technologies, including budget disciplines, audit and accountancy. These require professionals and experts to translate their esoteric knowledge into a language of costs and benefits that can be given an accounting value and made 'transparent' to scrutiny. In the form of marketisation, the authority of experts is determined not by their own professional criteria, but by the play of the market.

Whereas in classical liberalism markets were understood as 'natural' phenomena, these natural markets are displaced by the conception of markets as purposively created as techniques of policy, in order to maximise efficiency, accountability and competition. O'Malley's analyses of advanced liberalism dovetail well with the basic ideologies of managerialism. In other words managerialism seems to be the central policy programme of advanced liberal policies.

### ***4.3.3 Where Management Misses the Point?***

There is no doubt that professional welfare practice was always conducted in organisations and that management coordinates and facilitates professional practice but also controls welfare professionals by supervisory mechanisms which ensure work-force compliance and task achievement. So on a surface level, there is no contradiction between management and professionalism. Yet the notion of managerialism does not simply point to the uncontested fact that professional welfare provision needs an efficiently and enabling management. Managerialism indicates something different. It legitimises a particular version of 'how to manage', for what purposes, in whose interests and with what knowledge. As Christopher Pollit (1990: 1) points out, managerialism is basically a set of expectations, norms, 'beliefs and practices at the core of which burns the seldom-tested assumption that better management will provide an effective solvent for a wide range of economic ills'. It is therefore a kind of general ideology that legitimises and seeks to extend the 'right to manage' and is composed of overlapping, and sometimes competing, discourses that present distinctive versions of 'how to manage'. Most importantly managerialism is a normative system that is concerned about what counts as valuable knowledge and about who is empowered to work on this knowledge base. On this fundament the ideology that the 'the professional knows best' is replaced by the belief that managers 'do the right thing' and that this right thing will provide the most effective and efficient solution for the kind of problems social work is engaged with.

Therefore, managers should have the power, agency and responsibility to provide solutions and the kind of value for money deemed to be lacking in professionally dominated welfare bureaucracies. In order to reach this, however, managerial judgement has to count more than professional judgement. Or, in other words, managerialism works at the expense of professional control and discretion. Instead of acting as the passive custodians of services controlled by front-line staff, managers should determine policy goals and actively seek to implement them. The basic idea is that it is through the agency of managers rather than professionals that services needed

to be delivered. This kind of managerialism is embedded within a shift towards a mode of public policy which denotes the importance of regulation relative to macroeconomic stabilisation and income redistribution. Based on an implemented division between the purchaser and provider of services, the idea is that the state should concentrate at controlling and steering welfare provisions – provided by the market, local communities, volunteers but also by local welfare agencies – rather than provide services itself. Budgetary management, audits, standards and the setting performance indicators are some of the fundamental regulatory instruments through which the central state tries to enhance its capacity to shape, monitor and steer local institutional practice. On the behalf of service providers, this is accompanied by the rise of a number of accountancy-derived concepts and technologies. In order to guarantee the accountability of the service providers – which is regarded as the core problem – evaluation, monitoring and performance management or more general auditable management control systems are the key tools.

#### ***4.3.4 Forms of Control***

Functionally these tools are a kind of equivalent to trust in professional decision-making. Yet in terms of governing service provision, these tools promise to liberate the state from its dependence from unreliable professionals. The tension between managerialism and professionalism seems thus to be obvious: whilst managerialism seems to be devoted to the lure of the objectivity of numbers and calls for control and measurement in defining objectives and the quality of public service delivery by welfare professionals – who may insist on their professional autonomy – thereby having many uncontrollable features. The ungovernability of professionals who may be resistant to control from politics is suspected to leading to an exponential rise in costs of services and to diminish the quality and effectiveness of service provisions. Therefore, governing service provision from a managerialist perspective is most of all a mode of ‘management by measurement’, respectively, of governing by numbers. The corresponding audit cultures in service organisations represent most of all new modes for governing professionals.

The audit approach as a central element of managerialism profoundly alters professional relations to their organisations. There is a shift from trust and relative autonomy to measurement, standardisation and control which privileges a technicist, or ‘what works’ approach to policy that operates through adopting a seemingly ‘neutral technical’ stance to professional practice. As managerialism is based on the – unproven and empirically doubtful – belief that more managerial autonomy is better, the claim is that managerial accountability for results will improve performance and efficiency, decision-making should be the right of the management, and it is the management which is accountable for the practices and outcomes of service deliverance. As Bottery (2004: 9) points out, managerialism is based on the

‘measurement of professional work by external quantitative measures [...] emphasises a form of administrative control where professionals are ‘on tap’ to managerial strategic decisions rather than ‘on top’ autonomously deciding how their practice is best used’.

The managerial strategies of regulating professional practice and its pursuit of ‘measurable’ results depend on a largely quantitative information base which is required for documentation, regulation and finally also for reimbursement. This quantification has also implications for the construction of the client. Professional modes of working with the client are largely based on interpretive understanding of the individual needs and often changing personal characteristics of its clients as well as to fit the contextual constellations the clients are embedded in, in order to decide about every case specifically appropriate interventions and services. Professionalism was therefore based on the ‘practical or craft knowledge learned on the job through the experience of applying the logico-scientific knowledge to particular patients in concrete situations and verified through narrative’ (Cnaan and Dichter 2008: 280). Managerial modes which shift from the question ‘what is individually appropriate’ to the question ‘what is effective’ in order to reach numerically expressed performance indicators however do not depend on interpretative understandings of single cases but rather on standardised and more or less actuarial diagnoses of needs and classifications of clients. Clinical judgements and professional discretion should therefore be constrained and can be reduced to the algorithmic procedures of the actuarial assessments. Thus, managerial modes of service provision have important implications for the concrete professional practice and interaction with clients. The French sociologist Robert Castel anticipated these developments in the 1980s; however, he was not concerned with managerialism but rather with new modes of strategies of preventions. Castel (1991: 281) argues that new strategies of social administration are developed, which seem to me to depart in a profoundly innovative way from the traditions of welfare professionalism. The innovation is that these ‘strategies dissolve the notion of the *subject* or a concrete individual, and put in its place a combinatory of factors, *the factors of risk*. Such a transformation carries important practical implications. The essential component of intervention no longer takes the form of the direct face-to-face relationship between the carer and the cared, the helper and the helped, the professional and the client. It comes instead to reside in the establishing of *flows of populations* based on the collation of a range of abstract factors deemed liable to produce risk’. As a result specialist professionals with face-to-face contacts to clients are cast in a subordinate role, whilst managerial policy formations take over. What Castel describes seems to be exactly the modification of the relationship between front-line professionals and welfare administrators. The managerial technologies reduce the autonomy of front-line practitioners, deskill and subordinate professionals and finally also diminish the possibility for direct face-to-face work (cf. Webb 2001). The professional seems to be ‘reduced to a mere executant’ (Castel 1991: 281) whose primary task is generating low-level data inputs for managerial decision-making.



## 4.4 Short Concluding Discussion

We have tried to show that professionalism in managerial shape no longer functions as a societal ideal, but rather as a political one. The new regime of control and surveillance links the loyalty of the professionals neither to their professional work nor to their professional judgement, but to the economic interests of their employer. Consequently, professionals are more related to political aims and similarly constrained by public finances than to their clientele. Similarly, the power of the professionals like the power of the state had been reduced by cutting taxes and social insurance and by deregulating business and industry. Market forces were supposed to substitute state regulations, whereby national social capital and solidarity would start to erode (Svensson 2003: 325).

This new situation bears a risk, namely, that professional values and beliefs as well as knowledge and skills unintentionally sacrifice what they were meant to serve. We do not postulate an end of professional history as more scientists do (cf. Garrett 2009 as an illustration). We are still going to give professionalism so much of the benefit of the doubt, since the battle is not over. As shown in the first section, the competitive state is not fixed and solid at all. It may still be changed into a more human society, not exclusively oriented at economy and competition, but also at developing democracy and freedom. Some improvements have been made since new public management conquered the public services. Many professionals have protested or developed strategies to avoid the worst ills, partly protected by national 'path dependency'. But even the positive aspects of resistance in such areas as health, education and childcare have sometimes become a mixed blessing, since the professional tail might not exercise a good deal of leverage on the NPM-dog.

We keep our optimism intact. Let us finally quote some ancestors: 'All that is solid melts into the air'. This statement sheds light on the new conditions which are not lasting forever, as well as the professions which seem more fragile than before.

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