

# Ideology, Practice, and Process? A Review of the Concept of Managerialism in Civil Society Studies

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**Abstract** Managerialism is today a frequently applied concept in studies of how ideas and practices related to corporate management are diffused in society. Some assert that managerialism even is what mostly affects the development of contemporary civil society organizations. It is, however, far from clear how the concept of managerialism is used and defined across interest fields. The main conclusion in the present review, involving 105 peer-reviewed articles in civil society studies published between 1990 and 2014, is that the concept of managerialism is so broadly defined that it runs the risk of losing its analytical powers. To avoid this, the paper argues for a more precise conceptual use and suggests that the concept of managerialism should be applied to denote an ideology, the concept of management to capture managerial practices, and the concept of managerialization to describe an organizational change process.

**Keywords** Civil society organizations · Ideology · Managerialism · Management · Managerialization

**Résumé** Le managérialisme est aujourd’hui un concept souvent appliqué dans les études qui montrent comment les idées et les pratiques liées à la gestion d’entreprise sont diffusées dans la société. Certains affirment que le managérialisme est même ce qui affecte principalement le développement des organisations de la société civile contemporaine. Toutefois, la définition et l’utilisation du concept du managérialisme sont loin d’être évidentes dans l’ensemble des domaines d’intérêt. La principale conclusion de la présente analyse, qui comprend 105 articles, évalués par des pairs concernant des études sur la société civile, publiés entre 1990 et 2014, est que

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la définition de la notion de managérialisme est si large qu'elle risque de perdre son moteur analytique. Pour éviter cela, l'article préconise une utilisation conceptuelle plus précise et propose que le concept de managérialisme soit utilisé pour désigner une idéologie, le concept de gestion pour saisir les pratiques managériales et le concept de managérialisation pour décrire un processus de changement organisationnel.

**Zusammenfassung** Der Managerialismus ist heutzutage ein häufig angewandtes Konzept in Studien darüber, wie die Vorstellungen und Praktiken aus dem Unternehmensmanagement in der Gesellschaft verbreitet sind. Einige behaupten, dass der Managerialismus sogar den größten Einfluss auf die Entwicklung heutiger Bürgergesellschaftsorganisationen ausübt. Dabei ist es allerdings nicht eindeutig, wie das Konzept des Managerialismus in diversen Interessensbereichen angewandt und definiert wird. Die vorliegende Prüfung, die 105 Beiträge aus Studien zur Bürgergesellschaft umfasst, welche von anderen Wissenschaftlern bewertet und zwischen 1990 und 2014 veröffentlicht wurden, kommt zu der wesentlichen Schlussfolgerung, dass das Konzept des Managerialismus sehr allgemein definiert wird, wodurch die Gefahr besteht, dass es seine analytische Aussagekraft verliert. Um dies zu vermeiden, plädiert man in dem Beitrag für eine präzisere konzeptionelle Verwendung und schlägt vor, dass das Konzept des Managerialismus eine Ideologie, das Konzept des Managements zur Erfassung von Managementpraktiken und das Konzept der Managerialisierung bezeichnen sollte, um einen organisatorischen Wandlungsprozess zu beschreiben.

**Resumen** El gerencialismo es en la actualidad un concepto aplicado frecuentemente en los estudios de cómo las ideas y las prácticas relacionadas con la gestión corporativa son difundidas en la sociedad. Algunos aseveran que el gerencialismo es incluso lo que afecta en mayor medida al desarrollo de las organizaciones contemporáneas de la sociedad civil. Sin embargo, no está nada claro cómo se utiliza y define el concepto de gerencialismo en los campos de interés. La principal conclusión en la presente revisión, que implica 105 artículos revisados por iguales en estudios de la sociedad civil publicados entre 1990 y 2014, es que el concepto de gerencialismo es definido de una manera tan amplia que se corre el riesgo de perder sus poderes analíticos. Para evitar esto, el presente documento define un uso conceptual más preciso y sugiere que el concepto de gerencialismo debe ser aplicado para denotar una ideología, el concepto de gestión para capturar prácticas gerenciales, y el concepto de gerencialización para describir un proceso de cambio organizativo.

## Introduction

Logics, identities, and behaviors typical for the corporate world are expanding into all corners of society. Fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, maximizing profits, extending market shares, executing relentless improvements of efficiency, and effectiveness together with never ending rationalizations and quality enhancements

are just a few examples of what today's many market proponents in politics, media, and academia argue that both corporations, public agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) need to commit to in order to survive (cf. Brinckerhoff 2000; Dolnicar and Lazarevski 2009; Echols and Neck 1998; Elkington and Hartigan 2008). Critics, on the other hand, tend to perceive this development as detrimental to individuals, organizations, and society at large because it is assumed to lead to increased segregation, marginalization, and social instability while things like democracy, quality of life, reciprocity, and solidarity erode (cf. Crary 2013; Deetz 1992; Eikenberry 2009; Skocpol 2003).

Whether we perceive it as good or bad it seems, however, difficult to escape the current global trend by which aspects of what constitute markets and companies appear to play an increasingly important role in our private lives, organizations, and societies. With respect to civil society, this trend has, for example, been acknowledged through the observation that CSOs more and more are becoming what, Dart (2004) has described as business-like and others (e.g., Billis 2010) as hybrids in terms of structures, discourse, identity, activities, and behaviors. A development involving everything from various collaborations between corporations and CSOs (cf. Galaskiewicz and Colman 2006), intensified market orientations and marketing activities among CSOs and efforts to commercialize their operations (cf. Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Guo 2006; Weisbrod 1998) to an amplified hiring of professional managers and other specialists with professional expertise (e.g., Hwang and Powell 2009). Central in all this, as well as in the present article, is also observations of an increased circulation and use of ideas and practices typical for the management of corporations across social domains and organizational boundaries (e.g., Grey 2002; Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall 2002), including CSOs (e.g., Bozzo 2000; Speckbacher et al. 2003). From a critical perspective, Diefenbach (2009: 1), for example, asserts that there is hardly anything left where management is not present:

Like myths and mythology in ancient times, like cancer even, management has crawled into every fiber of our work and social life. It has reached hegemonic status—and it continues to spread.

The developments pointed out above constitute, today, an established research field, especially in relation to corporations (e.g., Grey and Willmott 2005; Staw and Epstein 2000) and public sector contexts where it often is approached in terms of New Public Management (e.g., Christensen and Lægread 2001; Pollitt 1993; Thomas 2012). Despite a growing scholarly interest (e.g., Eikenberry 2009; Powell et al. 2005; Skocpol 2003) this is, in relation to CSOs, still an area marked by fragmented empirical research in need of more relevant metaphors, concepts, conceptual relations, and theoretical frameworks that can help us to better understand what occurs on the ground (cf. Harris 2012; Maier et al. 2014). Regardless if one primarily focuses on the corporate world, public agencies or CSOs—it seems as if managerialism has become one of the more, if not the most, frequently applied concept in research aimed at capturing central aspects of the above-described developments. Some even suggest that what managerialism involves also is what currently affects the development of CSOs the most (cf.

Clayé and Jackson 2012; Meyer et al. 2013). Yet, the increased frequency in the use of the concept of managerialism does not seem to have been accompanied by equally obvious progress regarding its definition. Stated differently, even if managerialism seems to play an important role in studies of how modern organizations both within and outside civil society change it is not always clear what it means.

From this emanates also the purpose of this article—to review where and how managerialism has been used in peer-reviewed articles in civil society research, and to suggest ways in which this concept can be clarified and developed. The review aiming at fulfilling this two-folded purpose is guided by the following questions: In what academic journals and with what frequency do scholars apply managerialism in relation to civil society-related topics? How is managerialism approached and defined in these publications? Can the revealed conceptual use of managerialism be developed, if so, how?

The main finding of the conducted review is that managerialism is used to describe everything from ideology and practices to processes of change. In order to avoid letting managerialism be defined by an excessive content and thereby run risk of becoming an “empty signifier” (Offe 2009), I argue for a more precise conceptual use and suggest that the concept of managerialism should be applied to denote ideology; the concept of management to capture managerial practices; and the concept of managerialization to describe a change process.

The rest of the article includes first a section on method followed by a section presenting observed patterns in the empirical material. The final section discusses the more salient patterns observed and presents the main conclusion as well as suggestions for further research.

## Method

Finding relevant articles began with the creation of a master list of search words.<sup>1</sup> Each word on this list was first discussed with colleagues active in civil society studies, and then individually paired with the word managerialism and tested in a pilot-search to check their relevance. All words on the master list were then combined into various search strings, each one construed according to requirements for each accessed database.<sup>2</sup> The following databases were then searched for peer-reviewed articles on the 21st and 22nd of August, 2014 (number of hits in parentheses): Academic Search Premier (14), Discovery (69), JSTOR (61), Social

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<sup>1</sup> Except managerialism, the master list included the following key words: civil society, third sector, nonprofit sector, civil society organization, nonprofit organization, nongovernmental organization, social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, voluntary organization, voluntary association, social movement, volunteers, and volunteering.

<sup>2</sup> Search string in e.g., Academic Search Premier looked as follows: (DE “MANAGERIALISM”) AND (“civil society organization” OR DE “nonprofit organization” OR DE “nongovernmental organization” OR DE “social movement” OR DE “social enterprise” OR DE “social entrepreneurship” OR DE “nonprofit sector” OR DE “civil society” OR DE “volunteering” OR “third sector” OR “volunteers” OR “voluntary organization” OR “voluntary association”).

Services Abstracts (9), and SOCINDEX (7). Civil society-related journals with a searchable website<sup>3</sup> were then also examined via the single word “managerialism”. These supplementary searches rendered a total of 54 hits. The total amount of hits was then checked and cleared for duplicates, which gave a gross list of 137 articles. A subsequent inspection targeting relevance with respect to focus and content resulted in an overall sample of 105 articles. The reason behind this first reduction of 32 articles was that although managerialism appeared in all of them, it was not included in relation to either civil society or CSO-related issues and topics.

The overall sample of 105 articles was then first examined with respect to when and where each article had been published, and further examinations of how managerialism was approached and defined in each of these articles coincided in the following three categories.

Category 1: includes a definition: 34 articles (carrying \* in reference list).

Category 2: mentions the concept, but does not define it: 48 articles.

Category 3: concept appears only in list of references: 23 articles

All articles in Category 2 and 3 were then excluded from further analysis since the use of managerialism in these cases was so unclear that further inquiries were not possible. Thus, the remaining review focused entirely upon the articles in Category 1. These 34 articles were first examined on the basis of when and where they had been published, how and with what theoretical linkages managerialism was used. The next step focused entirely on how managerialism was approached and defined in terms of content and scope, and if the authors contributed with some kind of conceptual developments. All above-mentioned steps appear in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 below.

## Patterns in the Use and Definition of Managerialism

The most recent publication among the 105 articles in the overall sample was Baines et al. (2014) and their article “Fragmented outcomes: International comparisons of gender, managerialism and union strategies in the nonprofit sector” (*Journal of Industrial Relations*). The oldest articles, both published in 1990, were Ralph M. Kramer’s “Change and continuity in British voluntary organisations” (*Voluntas*) and Peter D. Hall’s “Conflicting managerial cultures in nonprofit organizations” (*Nonprofit Management and Leadership*). Looking at the entire overall sample there seems to have been a relatively low interest in the concept of managerialism from the early 1990s until the later half of the 2000s, when a dramatic shift in frequency took place. Table 1 displays how 47 of the 105 articles were published between 1990 and 2008 and the remaining 58 articles between 2009

<sup>3</sup> Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, Cosmopolitan Civil Societies, International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing, International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing, Journal of Civil Society, Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, Nonprofit Management and Leadership, Nonprofit Policy Forum, Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Voluntary Sector Review, Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations.

**Table 1** Numbers of articles published each year in overall sample of 105 articles

| Year | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 2000 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| No   | 2  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 3  | 2  | 5  | 5    | 2  | 3  | 1  | 5  | 3  | 5  | 8  | 2  | 13 | 6  | 13 | 13 | 12 | 1  |

Articles published between 2009 and 2014 are emphasized in italics

and 2014. From an overall level, it is difficult to find one single way to explain this dramatic increase. One possible explanation, though, could be that scholars have until recently not satisfactorily been able to demonstrate the empirical realities managerialism is believed to capture. Another explanation could be that it is not until now that scholars, with an interest for the development of CSOs, have become aware of the concept and therefore also started to use it. Regardless, a concept that gains in popularity as rapidly as in this case calls for further investigation of its use and definition.

With respect to journals, we can conclude that there are a total of 43 in the overall sample. Ten of those journals relate to the field of civil society (see Table 2). Yet, despite the relatively low number of civil society-related journals they account for more than 55 per cent of the articles in the overall sample. Among the ten civil society-related journals *Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Quarterly* and *Voluntas* stand out with 24 and 14 articles, respectively. These are also the only journals in this group with an impact factor (currently 1837 and 0750, respectively), which might explain their pronounced presence. Among the 33 non-civil society-related journals, *Public Administration Review* together with *Journal of International Development* has five and four articles, respectively. Closely behind come *Journal of Social Work* and *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* accounting for three articles each. The remaining 29 journals are represented by one or two articles each.

### Articles in Category 1

The earlier identified pattern of an increased frequency of publications is even stronger among the articles in Category 1, since 22 of these 34 articles were published between 2009 and 2014 with a clear peak in 2011 (see Table 3). Furthermore, in contrast to the overall sample we may, from Table 3, also conclude that the civil society-related journals represented in Category 1 accounted for less than half of the published articles (14 out of 34). Yet, looking at the number of articles published by each journal, *Voluntas* and *Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Quarterly* once again dominate with six and four articles, respectively. Closely behind follows *Journal of Social Work* and *Journal of International Development* with three articles each. The relatively strong presence of articles published in journals relating to foreign aid, nongovernmental organizations and public administration and its organizations is also noteworthy (see Table 3).

Further scrutiny of the articles in Category 1 reveals that as many as 25 of them qualify as above all empirical studies, four as literature reviews (Nos. 11, 14, 22, and 32, Table 3), another four mainly as conceptual papers (Nos. 10, 15, 23, and 25, Table 3) while one explicitly carry the label personal reflection (Nos. 13, Table 3). While all articles in Category 1 clearly use managerialism there is a great variety of topics with which managerialism is related. These topics range from, for example, adaptation strategies with respect to changing structural and cultural conditions, marketing behaviors, and career paths to organizational identity and legitimacy as well as aspects of women volunteer management.

**Table 2** Journals in overall sample and number of published articles in each journal

|   | No art. |
|---|---------|
| Journals (civil society related)                                |         |
| Voluntas  | 24      |
| Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Quarterly                            | 14      |
| Nonprofit Management and Leadership                             | 7       |
| Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing                  | 3       |
| Journal of Civil Society  | 3       |
| International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing          | 2       |
| International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing | 2       |
| Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics                      | 2       |
| Third Sector Review   | 1       |
| International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law                     | 1       |
| Journals (non-civil society related)                            |         |
| Public Administration Review                                    | 5       |
| Journal of International Development                            | 4       |
| Annals of the Association of American Geographers               | 3       |
| Journal of Social Work  | 3       |
| Administrative Science Quarterly                                | 2       |
| Third World Quarterly   | 2       |
| Administrative Theory & Praxis                                  | 1       |
| Alternatives: Global, Local, Political                          | 1       |
| American Journal of Sociology                                   | 1       |
| Australian Journal of Political Science                         | 1       |
| California Law Review   | 1       |
| Community Development Journal                                   | 1       |
| Environmental Values  | 1       |
| European Journal of Development Research                        | 1       |
| International Organization                                      | 1       |
| Journal of Business Ethics                                      | 1       |
| Journal of Industrial Relations                                 | 1       |
| Journal of Latin American Studies                               | 1       |
| Journal of Political Marketing                                  | 1       |
| Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory            | 1       |
| Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment        | 1       |
| Perspectives on Politics  | 1       |
| Public Administration and Development                           | 1       |
| Qualitative Social Work   | 1       |
| Signs   | 1       |
| Social & Cultural Geography                                     | 1       |
| Sociological Perspectives                                       | 1       |
| Systematic Practical Action Research                            | 1       |
| The Academy of Management Review                                | 1       |
| Theory and Society  | 1       |



**Table 2** continued

|  | No art. |
|--|---------|
| Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers | 1       |
| Women's Studies International Forum                  | 1       |
| World Development                                    | 1       |
| Total  | 105     |

Sorting according to civil society linkage or not, number of published articles and alphabetic order

## Critique and Change

From how managerialism seems to be used and defined more generally in scholarly work it seems possible to conclude that there is often little or hardly any room for nuances. Instead, most scholars seem to apply a kind of black or white perspective in the sense that they are either positive or negative towards developments related to managerialism. In Category 1 there is only two articles (Chad et al. 2013; Shoham et al. 2006), both of which have first authors with a relation to business administration, entailing an explicit positive attitude towards managerialism and whatever it is supposed to generate. While as many as 24 of the 34 articles were either openly critical and/or expressed a concern regarding what managerialism may bring about in civil society and its organizations, eight articles approached and discussed managerialism in a more descriptive and value neutral manner (see Table 3).

Along similar lines, Table 3 also clarifies how most articles in Category 1 links managerialism with organizational change, which also is how this concept often is used elsewhere (see e.g., Diefenbach 2009; Pollitt 1993). One of the exceptions, though, is Goodlad (1999), who associates managerialism with an allegedly changing state-citizen relationship. The other is Studer and von Schnurbein (2013), who apply it as an analytical category in a literature review. All other 32 articles in Category 1 associate, in one way or the other, managerialism with CSOs and how they, due to altered external or internal factors, change. A short and telling illustration of this is Claeys and Jackson (2012) who, already in the introduction of their study of how South African nonprofit organizations become more and more business-like due to a global discourse on aid effectiveness, state that managerialism equals “*.../a set of ideas and practices that increasingly shape management and organisation in the NPO sector*” (ibid.: 603).

As mentioned already, most articles in Category 1 do not only assert that managerialism is about change, a clear majority are also critical about its consequences. Although these articles differ in their critique, Leonard's (2005) line of argument illustrates well how change and critique are combined. In relation to her definition of managerialism, she argues that as governments around the globe “*.../have been persuaded that a managerial orientation will provide better services for lower cost*” (ibid.: 80) implies an increased pressure on CSOs to adopt typical corporate management concepts and practices. A development, she asserts, crowds out the input of volunteers and make these organizations more professionalized and

**Table 3** Articles/authors in Category 1 (sorted according to publishing year)

| Author(s)                            | Outlook     | Associated with                  | Main theoretical linkage(s)            |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Desai and Imrie (1998)            | Critical    | Organizational change            | New Public Management (NPM)            |
| 2. Goodlad (1999)                    | Descriptive | Changing relations state-citizen | NPM                                    |
| 3. Alexander (2000)                  | Descriptive | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 4. Townsend et al. (2002)            | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 5. Leung (2002)                      | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 6. Townsend and Townsend (2004)      | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 7. Lonne et al. (2004)               | Critical    | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 8. Leonard et al. (2004)             | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 9. Leonard (2005)                    | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 10. Roberts et al. (2005)            | Critical    | Organizational change            | Various                                |
| 11. Shoham et al. (2006)             | Positive    | Organizational change            | NPM, Nonprofit Marketing               |
| 12. Walker et al. (2007)             | Critical    | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 13. Brandsen (2009)                  | Descriptive | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 14. Tsui and Cheung (2009)           | Critical    | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 15. Srinivas (2009)                  | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM, Critical management studies (CMS) |
| 16. Suárez (2010)                    | Critical    | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 17. Peci et al. (2011)               | Critical    | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 18. Milbourne and Murray (2011)      | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 19. Shrestha and Adhikari (2011)     | Descriptive | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 20. Engel and Georgeou (2011)        | Descriptive | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 21. Maier and Meyer (2011)           | Descriptive | Organizational change            | Social systems theory, NPM             |
| 22. Kreutzer and Jäger (2011)        | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM, Nonprofit Management (NM)         |
| 23. Jones et al. (2011)              | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 24. Gulrajani (2011)                 | Descriptive | Organizational change            | NPM                                    |
| 25. Johnson et al. (2012)            | Critical    | Organizational change            | CMS                                    |
| 26. Valentinov (2012)                | Critical    | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 27. Baines et al. (2012)             | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM, Labor process theory (LPT)        |
| 28. Claeys and Jackson (2012)        | Critical    | Organizational change            | CMS, Neo-Institutional theory (NIT)    |
| 29. Studer and von Schnurbein (2013) | Descriptive | Unclear                          | Unclear                                |
| 30. Chad et al. (2013)               | Positive    | Organizational change            | Unclear                                |
| 31. Suárez and Hwang (2013)          | Critical    | Organizational change            | NPM, NM                                |
| 32. Meyer et al. (2013)              | Descriptive | Organizational change            | NIT                                    |

**Table 3** continued

| Author(s)                | Outlook  | Associated with       | Main theoretical linkage(s) |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 33. Hvenmark (2013)      | Critical | Organizational change | NPM, CMS                    |
| 34. Baines et al. (2014) | Critical | Organizational change | NPM, LPT                    |

Display of outlooks and approaches to managerialism, and if discernable, main theoretical linkages

hierarchical, which, in the long run, may reduce “*.../the ways that they [the organizations] can make a difference and the extent to which they can make a difference*” (ibid.).

### NPM Dominance and Few Conceptual Developments

Although several articles in Category 1 draw on and combine different research fields and theoretical strands in relation to managerialism, it is noteworthy that as many as twenty of them retrieve theoretical nutrition from studies on New Public Management. Other theoretical strands and fields of research present in the 34 articles in Category 1 are, for example, critical management studies, labor process theory, and social systems theory (see Table 3).

Table 4 (see Appendix 1) displays that three of the 34 articles define managerialism with reference to above all corporate management practices. Ten articles define it in terms of an ideology or as ideas and beliefs originating in corporate management. Another four articles define managerialism either as a discourse, personal characteristics or an institution while the remaining articles involve definitions combining something of the above mentioned. Further and more detailed examinations of these definitions reveal that most authors do not provide any problematizations or conceptual developments with respect to managerialism. That is, while most adopt and accept other scholar’s definitions, it is only three articles that explicitly involve some kind of problematization of and/or attempt to develop the concept (see Table 4, Appendix 1). Referring back to the theoretical strands and/or research fields scholars draw upon, it may be suggested that the articles in Category 1 mostly define managerialism based on knowledge deriving from analysis of empirical contexts alien to civil society dittos (both New Public Management and Critical Management Studies build predominantly on studies of either public sector organizations or for-profit companies). Although this is not necessarily a weakness, one could also claim that the way managerialism is presented in most of these 34 articles may not be fully relevant for or compatible with whatever civil society context it is supposed to cover. This calls for further conceptualizations of managerialism based in the specific reality of CSOs, which I will return to in the final section.

### From Basic to more Elaborate Definitions

There is a link between the authors’ efforts to develop the concept of managerialism and the scope of the definitions applied. That is, the articles including some sort of

conceptual problematization and/or suggestions for developments are also the ones offering what appear to be more elaborate definitions. It is, therefore, possible to imagine a spectrum ranging from briefer and simpler definitions containing only a few words to much more elaborate ones, stretching over several pages. Table 4 (see Appendix 1) is an attempt to arrange these 34 articles in accordance with such an imagined scale, where less elaborate definitions are found towards the top and more advanced dittos towards the bottom.

At the less elaborate end of this spectrum, we find Studer and von Schnurbein (2013), who in a literature review include managerialism in an analytical framework where it is defined as *“the application of best practices”* (p. 108). Suárez (2010), who investigates how personal backgrounds and experiences affect career paths among nonprofit leaders, put forth another of the less elaborate definitions. In one of his tables we are offered the following five-word definition—*“Managerialism (Management Experience or Management Credential)”* (p. 706)—which clarifies that managerialism in this case concerns leaders’ experience-based skills and formal educative credentials in management. A somewhat more elaborate definition is represented by Baines et al. (2014: 25), who with reference to labor process theory, conclude that managerialism can be viewed as *“/.../a form of work standardization and intensification/.../”* that has decreased workers’ autonomy through the implementation of *“/.../rigid performance-based outcome measures and other processes of tracking work practices.”*

Entering the mid section of the spectrum we find, for example, Alexander (2000) and her analysis of changing relationships between a public sector, more and more permeated with ideas and practices related to New Public Management, and human service CSOs. From what she characterizes as changing social programs forcing CSOs to compete *“/.../in their traditional service areas with for-profit agencies for contracts and clients”* combined with a novel emphasis on *“/.../business-oriented practices”* she claims that funders of CSOs increasingly expect these organizations to professionalize their management and *“/.../demonstrate measurable outcomes while keeping costs low”* (p. 287). A development here claimed to alter previous rules for CSOs and their long-time survival. Based in literature critical to New Public Management, Alexander then chooses to define managerialism as a belief in *“/.../the efficiency of markets and the value of competition as a strategy for improving organizational performance and/.../the conception of management as a generic practice perfected by the private sector”* (p. 288).

Another telling example from this mid section of the spectrum is Leonard et al. (2004), who from observations of an ongoing blurring of borders between different societal spheres, assert that things have become messy for coordinators of women volunteers in Australia due to *“/.../the rise in status of managerialism”* (p. 207). Managerialism is in this case defined as an ideology in the sense of: *“/.../a focus on efficiency, the centrality of management as explaining the success or failure of a venture, and the belief in the transferability of management practices across all industries and sectors”* (ibid.). To this they add that managerialism also is about mechanisms or practices, such as business plans and performance indicators, aimed at ensuring competition and accountability.

In the mid section of the spectrum we also find Tsui and Cheung (2009), who, in their reexamination of concepts, contexts and contents related to the nature of the administration of CSOs active in social work, state that managerialism equals a strong belief in that “*.../effective management can solve social and economic problems in our society*” (p. 152) and that this belief—which often involves aims like cutting costs, increasing the status of the customer, improving job performances, enlarging market shares, and maximizing profits—gradually is being handed over to a business elite that currently also is becoming a more pronounced part of these CSOs. Understood as such, Tsui and Cheung claim that when managerialism is introduced in human service organizations it tends to imply a strengthened position for executives at the expense of other employees as well as an enforced emphasis on everything from customers’ desires and rights, administrative and financial accountability, and an internal distribution of resources based on job performance.

Leung’s (2002) study of public service reforms and CSOs in Hong Kong borders the more elaborate end of the spectrum of definitions. In this case the author starts out declaring that although the terminology around managerialism can be rather loose, it “*.../has become a dominant ideology, structure and practice affecting public service reforms which have overriding influences over social welfare programmes and social work professional practice*” (p. 63). Moreover, Leung continues arguing that managerialism not only is closely related to other larger change processes found in the public sector, such as marketization and privatization, it also involves a recognition and implementation of values and cultures typically found in the private sector. The latter implies, according to Leung, a pronounced focus on efficiency, productivity, performance, and increased emphasis on and use of rational approaches requiring “*.../clear objectives and strategies, performance indicators and measurement of outcomes*” (p. 63).

### **Towards Even more Elaborate Definitions**

One of several interesting definitions located at the more elaborate end of the spectrum is Srinivas’ (2009) literature review, in which managerialism partly is outlined with reference to the field of critical management studies. When approaching his definition he carefully points out the difference between managing and managerialism, where the former can be understood as the enactment of local management practices aimed at coordinating and controlling activities and the latter more as an ideology resting on a set of assumptions deciding how management is enacted. From this he clarifies that the ideology behind managerialism rests on a specific chain of assumptions (Srinivas 2009: 619f), here summarized as follows: Certified professionals are the only ones that can enable social progress; social progress can only be achieved through greater control of both humans and the natural world; such dual control can only occur within efficiently coordinated organizations; and efficient coordination requires professional managers knowledgeable in management techniques.

Approaching the far end of the spectrum there is a handful of articles whose definitions certainly differ, but at the same time show similarities regarding scope

and elaboration. One of these articles is Jones et al. (2011), who, in their study of how managerialism flows through NGO networks, start out defining the concept with references to New Public Management claiming that it concerns formalized approaches to how to manage organizations, and that these formalized approaches constitute a diverse set of specialized knowledges and practices whose adoption seldom or never occurs smoothly and without negotiations, but that always shape and change organizations. In a much more detailed way they then continue refining their definition of managerialism in terms of *aspects* (similar to discourses) and *vectors* (similar to practices). In their vocabulary, managerialism involves aspects, such as accountability, transparency, participation, capacity building, entrepreneurship, efficiency, visioning/branding, sustainability, and innovation/adaptation, and vectors (or practices), like strategic planning, focus groups, logical framework analysis, audits and evaluations, situational assessments, technical assistance, participatory appraisal, leadership training, and cost-benefit analysis.

The last three articles in the spectrum (see Table 4, Appendix 1) not only involve more elaborate definitions, they also involve problematizations of managerialism as well as suggestions for how this concept could be developed. One of these articles is the study by Meyer et al. (2013) who depart from Maier and Meyer's (2011) ideas of managerialism as discourse when analyzing how Austrian CSOs legitimate themselves through discursive devices in response to institutional pressures. Accordingly, and with reference to neo-institutional theory, they establish a theoretical link between legitimation, discourse and managerialism. Their point of departure is that managerialism currently represents “*.../one of the strongest institutions in civil society*” (ibid.: 172)—a claim they relate to observations of how CSOs more and more are being “*.../expected to act according to managerialist norms or, more pithily, to be ‘business-like’*” (ibid.). Their outlook of managerialism as one of the most forceful institutions affecting contemporary CSOs around the globe involves a quite broad definition touching several different strands (see Table 4, Appendix 1). Their definition begins with the statement that managerialism generally is understood as the “*.../dominance of management practices and ideas*” that works either as a “*.../global governance regime*” in above all market-like relations between government or as a “*.../specific organizational structure*” (ibid.: 173). Their definition also puts forth managerialism as a sort of overarching superstructure or ideology—often related to pressures put on CSOs to change and become more like any other profit driven corporation. To this they add their own twist by suggesting that managerialism also can be understood as a discourse that above all builds on the following three legitimizing accounts often found in what these authors call managerialist organizations (ibid.):

- **Effectiveness and efficiency (E&E)** The first E (doing the right things) emphasizes resource allocation activities and measurements of performance and goals without any concern for costs. The latter E (doing things right) concerns the economics behind resource allocation, often measured as a cost-benefit ratio between inputs and outputs. Thus, in a managerial discourse E&E is about how organizations *should* operate, and positive results a believed outcome of “*.../the activity of management*” whose main work resembles “*.../a rational cycle*

*of defining goals, planning on the basis of objective information and technical knowledge, implementing measures to attain goals, regularly evaluating measures/.../and making improvements”* (p. 174).

- **Stakeholder needs** Identifying in-/external actors as stakeholders with specific needs in the sense that surrounding organizations either are viewed as competitors or strategic partners; donors view donations as investments and expect maximum returns; and members and beneficiaries behave and are treated as customers.
- **Innovation, or a particular understanding of time** in which aspects such as change, risk, and crisis interact with a clear distinction between past and future as well as an emphasis on innovation and progress. This gives priority to activities such as forecasts, strategic planning and budgeting as well as the conviction that you can always “*.../devise a better product than your competitor*” and the assumption that “*.../once the right management techniques are chosen, the future can be mastered*” (p. 175).

They then apply their definition of managerialism in an analysis of Austrian CSOs’ financial statements and annual reports, which suggests that these organizations increasingly succumb to a managerial discourse as a way to bring about change and legitimacy.

Another of the final articles in Category 1 is my study of the adoption of corporate management models in CSOs (Hvenmark 2013), where I maintain that managerialism is an ambiguous term since it is often associated with a vague content. This critique is based on the observation that much of earlier scholarly work uses this concept to depict both the adoption process of hands-on corporate management practices *and* a managerial ideology in society. Following this critique, I suggest that we have to distinguish between: “*.../a more ideologically laden belief that organizations could or should be coordinated, controlled, and developed through corporate management knowledge and practices and the process through which organizational actors increasingly are turning this ideological belief into practice*” (p. 228).

This leads me to emphasize the necessity to distinguish, for analytical reasons, between *managerialism* and *managerialization*, where the former designates ideology and the latter a change process in relation to whatever empirical reality is being studied. I continue arguing that distinguishing between -ism and -zation, that is, between ideology and process, will enable us to clarify and keep better track of what it is that we actually are studying. In this sense, a more refined conceptual use also allows us to study managerialism in relation to other ideologies, such as professionalism, as well as their diffusion and adoption in CSOs. Referring to various strands of research, I then assert that managerialism, with its connection to causality, agency, economic rationality, certainty and sovereign power, is a direct result of modernity involving what Townley (2002) calls a disembodied and disembedded set of ideas presupposing an anytime-anywhere applicability and a “*.../causality between what managers do, the efficient use of organizational resources, and whatever results organizations may achieve*” (Hvenmark 2013: 227). This view of managerialism has certain implications for how organizations

ought to be structured and governed as well as how people related to these organizations are defined and expected to act. The latter means that people, from a managerialist perspective, are perceived as instrumentally rational, autonomous, self-interested and primarily related to each other via different types of markets on which they are defined as customers, competitors, investors, entrepreneurs or owners. As an ideology, I continue, managerialism implies specific expectations that people will take certain decisions and refer to specific ideas while behaving in distinctive ways. It also implies overconfidence in technological solutions and that those professionally trained and educated in management are viewed as the most capable ones in fulfilling organizational goals and visions. In addition to the above, I claim that managerialism also entails a perspective that corporations generally are viewed as role models for other organizations, not seldom leading to a crowding out effect regarding alternative ways for how organize, coordinate and control collective action.

## Conclusions and Suggestions for a More Precise Conceptual Use

Although the present review includes articles dating back a quarter of a century, as many as 55 of the 105 entries in the overall sample are published in 2009 or later. This amounts to a clear trend—managerialism is fast becoming a popular concept, and especially so in civil society-related journals. While only ten of the 43 journals represented in the overall sample are civil society-related they account for well over 50 per cent of the articles. Amid the civil society-related journals, *Voluntas* and *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* dominate with more than one-third of the total amount of articles. Among the 105 articles in the overall sample as many as 71 only mention managerialism either in passing or in the reference list. The conducted review is therefore based on the remaining 34 articles.

The trend regarding managerialism's increasing popularity is even more pronounced among the reviewed 34 articles, of which 22 are published 2009 or later. Most of these 34 articles are also primarily empirical studies, focusing on various issues ranging from, for example, adaptation strategies with respect to changing structural and cultural conditions, marketing behaviors, and career paths to organizational identity and legitimacy. A striking majority of the authors of these 34 articles tend to be critical of what managerialism is said to involve and bring about in CSOs. Further in-depth analysis of each of the 34 articles reveal definitions of managerialism built up around just a few words to those stretching over several pages offering both nuances, well-developed discussions and suggestions for conceptual developments in a few cases.

## Distinction Between Managerialism, Management, Managerialization

The concept of managerialism is, in the 34 articles, used to designate everything from assumptions, beliefs, ideas, or discourses (i.e., ideology) and hands-on managerial practices (i.e., management) to organizational change (i.e., process). Although some of the included articles contain both advanced and/or relatively



clear-cut definitions, it is clearly problematic for managerialism to remain a sharp and relevant analytical concept if we use it to describe both ideology, practices, and change processes. This problem is, however, not exclusively reserved for civil society studies. It can also be found in other areas where one may encounter authors who—just as in the present review—let managerialism denote, for example, both the ideological construct behind management and/or the process through which this ideology is being diffused, adopted and turned into practices in various organizational contexts do (see e.g., Diefenbach 2009). Still, as most of us who trade in conceptualizations know—trying to cover everything in the end equals covering nothing. Thus, the more content we assign to the concept of managerialism, the more ambiguity we add while also reducing its analytical powers, reliability, and legitimacy until we, ultimately, risk ending up with a concept without a stable core—or, a so-called “empty signifier” (cf. Offe 2009). Consequently, I suggest more stringent conceptual use in future research and that we reserve managerialism to designate an ideology prescribing that organizations ought to be coordinated, controlled, and developed through corporate management knowledge and practices; management to designate an everyday use of corporate managerial practices; and managerialization to designate change processes in which organizations adopt managerialism and management practices.

## Future Research

There is still need for more conceptual work and empirical research in order to better understand CSOs and how they change. Based on the present review of the concept of managerialism in civil society studies, I suggest that we establish: supplementary concepts and conceptual relations within this area of interest; definitions based on the empirical study of CSOs; and add historical perspectives to conclusions about present developments.

As argued above, it is necessary to establish clear boundaries within which managerialism as a concept may be charged with a more specific content. One way to accomplish this involves the creation of what now largely is missing in the reviewed articles—supplementary concepts and clear-cut relationships between managerialism and such concepts. Adding new concepts and conceptual relations to the current picture would allow us to define managerialism in a narrower way without missing out on any of its present meanings since the complex realities it now covers then would be distributed on other related concepts. Even if the earlier-presented distinction between managerialism, management, and managerialization—where -ism equals ideology and -ization equals process—can be seen as a possible step in this direction there is still conceptual work to be done.

Nevertheless, as this work hopefully proceeds, it is also important to determine how managerialism as well as potential supplementary concepts and conceptual relations connect with existing and parallel, but yet different concepts and phenomena, such as professionalism, professionalization, and marketization, also believed to bring about change in CSOs (cf. Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Hwang and Powell, 2009). 13 of the articles in Table 4 (see Appendix 1) are marked with an asterisk indicating that they do contain explicit references to this kind of parallel

concepts and developments. Yet, none of them do really expand on the relationship between the managerialism they portray and the parallel concepts and changes mentioned.

As noted earlier, many articles in the present review define managerialism with a point of departure in theories with an empirical backdrop in organizational contexts different from CSOs. For example, several articles in the present review define managerialism with reference to New Public Management (see Table 3) that at best contributes with a rough estimate and at worst a sort of conceptual blur since this understanding of managerialism largely builds on the reality of public sector organizations, which might be but not necessarily is comparable with the reality of CSOs. The same can, for example, be said about Critical Management Studies, which also appear in this review, since the main object of study in that area consists of corporations, not CSOs. Hence, in relation to future conceptual work with bearings on managerialism we cannot assume that knowledge deriving from studies of certain types of organizations per se is applicable to others. We need, instead, to explore what knowledge, if any, that may more specifically work within different organizational contexts at the same time as we carefully track and discriminate between information unique for different types of organizations.

Finally, none of the articles in the review explicitly relate their studies to longer historical developments. Instead, many seem to implicitly assume that managerialism stands for something new and typical for our time. This may very well be true, but we need more empirical evidence to state this as a fact. There is, however, historical research on non-civil society-related organizations and the topic of management and managers (e.g., Scott and Hart 1991) and similar scholarly efforts regarding CSOs (e.g., Skocpol, 2003; Wenocur and Reisch 1989) suggesting that managerialism instead ought to be viewed as something that emerged well before our days. Yet, this does not imply that the meaning of managerialism is fixed. Just as anything else, it will probably change as society changes (cf. Scott and Hart 1991). Thus, future research efforts in this area seeking to develop new empirical knowledge as well as new and relevant concepts and conceptual relations ought to take into account both the past and the present in order to remain relevant and accurate for the future.

## Appendix 1

See Table 4.

**Table 4** Definitions

| Article/author(s)                       | Summary of how managerialism is defined  | Develop concept | Level of elaboration |
|---|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| <i>Studer and von Schirrhein (2013)</i> | Application of best practices  | No              | Low                  |
| <i>Brandsen (2009)*</i>                 | Ideology involving systemic values of control and definitions of aggregated targets  | No              |                      |
| <i>Suaréz (2010)</i>                    | Managers' personal experiences and formal credentials  | No              |                      |
| <i>Valentinov (2012)*</i>               | Management practices, e.g., formal audits  | No              |                      |
| <i>Johnson et al. (2012)</i>            | Ideology saying that social progress and ordering of people to achieve collective goals requires control of nature, human beings and organizations   | No              |                      |
| <i>Townsend et al. (2002)</i>           | Perspective of organizations as entailing low-trust relationships, auditing culture, and management techniques aiming at improving efficiency, transparency and limiting costs                     | No              |                      |
| <i>Townsend and Townsend (2004)</i>     | View of organizational change that relates to an auditing culture and deployment of specific management techniques aimed at improving efficiency, accountability, transparency, and to limit costs | No              |                      |
| <i>Milbourne and Murray (2011)</i>      | Idea that organizations include rational planning and performance measures safeguarding accountability, predicting behaviors, and suggesting handling of complexity and uncertainty                | No              |                      |
| <i>Desai and Imrie (1998)</i>           | Ideology dictating privatizations, a development of consumerist ethos, and concerns with results, efficiency and administrative expediency   | No              |                      |
| <i>Peci et al. (2011)</i>               | Discourse emphasizing superiority of a market-driven orientation. Receives legitimacy from flexibility, performance, and efficiency  | No              |                      |
| <i>Shrestha and Adhikari (2011)</i>     | Application of technocratic ideas and practices promising control, progress, and stability   | No              |                      |
| <i>Walker et al. (2007)</i>             | Discourse and practices construed from ideas of accountability, transparency, participation, and entrepreneurship  | No              |                      |
| <i>Baines et al. (2012)</i>             | Standardization of work and use of management practices, such as outcome and cost control measures and performance management models   | No              |                      |
| <i>Baines et al. (2014)</i>             | Standardizations of work leading to decreased worker autonomy through management practices, e.g., result measures and performance management models  | No              |                      |
| <i>Suaréz and Hwang (2013)*</i>         | Adoption of formalized organizational management practices, e.g., strategic planning and performance measurements originating in the business sector   | No              |                      |

Table 4 continued

| Article/author(s)                 | Summary of how managerialism is defined   | Develop concept | Level of elaboration |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|
| <i>Alexander (2000)*</i>          | Belief in efficiency of markets and value of competition in improvements of performances. Conception of management as a universal practice originating in the corporate sector. Requires leaders to emphasize efficiency, economy, and effectiveness  | No              |                      |
| Lonne et al. (2004)*              | Adoption of business-like methodologies in organizations employing strategies focused on e.g., tight fiscal controls, strategic planning, sophisticated information systems monitoring organizational processes and outcomes  | No              |                      |
| Tsui and Cheung (2009)            | Belief that management solves social and economic problems. Advocates accountability, cost-effectiveness, and resource distribution according to performance while requiring attention to customers, market shares, and profit maximization   | No              |                      |
| <i>Leonard et al. (2004)</i>      | Belief in efficiency, management's capacity to explain success/failure, and that that management practices are transferable across organizations. Use of practices ensuring competition and accountability, e.g., business plans and performance indicators   | No              |                      |
| Goodlad (1999)*                   | Ideology legitimating new organizational forms, relationships and being business-like. Relates to beliefs in markets, consumerism, competition for securing welfare, and greater transparency through new accounting practices  | No              |                      |
| <i>Chad et al. (2013)*</i>        | Development including ideas of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and competition. Associable with practices concerning missions, results, corporate planning, performance evaluation, and fiscal accountability arrangements  | No              |                      |
| Engel and Georgeou (2011)         | Knowledge and practices informing neoliberal operations and organizational governance. Aims at increasing efficiency/effectiveness while promoting the idea that social and political issues are technical, procedural and need management expertise  | No              |                      |
| <i>Shoham et al. (2006)</i>       | Process giving marketing and management concepts legitimacy and acceptance. Increases attention to practices of professional management, HR-strategies, competitive skills, perspectives of citizens as clients, and creation of citizens' charters   | No              |                      |
| <i>Leonard (2005)</i>             | Belief in efficiency, management's capacity to explain success/failure, and that management practices are transferable across organizations. Implies competition, a high degree of professionalism, and a focus on service provision, business plans, performance indicators, and accountability  | No              |                      |
| Leung (2002)*                     | Ideology, structure and practice affecting public service reforms, social welfare programs and social work professionals. Involves application of concepts, techniques and practices of corporate management, emphasizing use of rational approaches requiring clear objectives and strategies, performance indicators and outcome measurements | No              |                      |
| <i>Kreutzer and Jäger (2011)*</i> | A dominance of management practices and ideas relating to a certain form of organizational structure incorporating norms such as effectiveness, efficiency, agency, and progress. It also involves beliefs and practices based on the assumption that better management is an effective solution for several social and economic problems       | No              |                      |

**Table 4** continued

| Article/author(s)                 | Summary of how managerialism is defined  | Develop concept | Level of elaboration |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| <i>Maier and Meyer (2011)</i>     | Discourse built on the idea of corporations producing goods/services for customers. It focuses on effectiveness/efficiency, resources, and strategy. People are seen as autonomous, self-interested, rational, and agentic market actors. It is oriented towards the future, assuming constant and rapid changes, and flexible, lean organizations synched with market demands. Progress and growth stem from adequate management methods, and performance equals effective/efficient achievement of set goals   | No              |                      |
| <i>Srinivas (2009)</i>            | Ideology stating that only trained staff can achieve set goals; that professional managers using management techniques solves any social problems organizations face; and that social progress requires control of nature and humans. This control demands efficient coordination and staff trained in specific management techniques as well as standardized techniques defining and measuring outcomes   | No              |                      |
| <i>Claeyé and Jackson (2012)*</i> | Part of modernity. Entails a perspective that corporations are role models for best practices. A central belief is the need for educated managers acting as change agents and that management techniques help solve social problems. Implies a use of technocratic ideas and practices promising control, stability and progress. Characterized by notions like accountability, transparency, participation, and efficiency. Relates to practices like double-entry bookkeeping, strategic planning, logical framework analysis, project evaluation, and self-assessments  | No              |                      |
| <i>Jones et al. (2011)</i>        | Involves specific knowledges and practices related to modern management, currently also associated with 'good governance', and may be understood as a reconfiguration of well-known social practices with newer language and elements. Characterized by key aspects (or discourses): accountability, transparency, participation, capacity building, entrepreneurship, visioning/branding, efficiency, innovation/adaptation, and sustainability, and vectors (practices): strategic planning, logical framework analysis, audits and evaluations, situational assessments, technical assistance, focus groups, participatory appraisal, leadership training, and cost-benefit analysis  | No              |                      |
| <i>Gulrajani (2011)*</i>          | Ideology with linkages to modernity and rational science; receives legitimacy from corporate doctrines; advocates use of business rationalities; borrows its content from managerial logics; and includes ideals of improvement as well as beliefs and practices based on assumptions that positive change can be planned, and that traditional administration is inadequate while effective management can be universally applied as a solution to most social and economic problems. It is said to conflate different organizational contexts by introducing generic actions not adjusted to local conditions; being applied dogmatically; centralizing control in anti-democratic manners; replacing civic virtues, moral purposes and public service sentiments with managerial ethos and practices; creating new hierarchical structures with a managerial elite at the apex; and producing results contrasting original goals. Its practices seek to simplify complexity in order for processes to become generalizable and portable. It appears non-political making impartiality a dominant value of administration, and it implies a commitment to typical private sector attributes, such as entrepreneurship, business flexibility, de-concentration, innovation, and flat networks | No              |                      |

Table 4 continued

| Article/author(s)      | Summary of how managerialism is defined   | Develop concept | Level of elaboration |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|
| Roberts et al. (2005)* | <p>Summary of how managerialism is defined</p> <p>Captures bundles of knowledges, ideas, and practices associated with formalized organizational management governance, and operations. Primarily associated with corporations, but has infused many other institutions and social spheres. Believed to affect organizational cultures, structures, practices and projects. Mainstream northern managerialism relates to ideas of accountability, transparency, participation, efficiency/effectiveness, and practices like double-entry bookkeeping, strategic planning, logical framework analysis, project evaluation, and organizational self-assessment. Managerialism includes four major elements: Accountability, which implies transparency, legitimacy, and fostering of a culture of efficiency while being able to overburden organizations with evaluations and assessments, diverting focus from quality to quantity, redirecting resources from actions to analysis, conflating evaluation outcomes with performances, and evoking demands for specialists with assessment skills. Organizational definition, which requires everything from branding and PR activities to continuous strategic planning exercises aimed at the development and refinement of coherent set of values and not too easily reached visions and missions. Capacity building, i.e., developing staff attributes, is often conflated with HR-strategies/practices emphasizing skills-oriented training and education based in models of leadership and efficiency mirroring corporate and masculinist ideas of structures and hierarchical stratifications where skills and techniques supposedly enhance adaptability, flexibility, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Managerialism's technical rationality may align with organizations' spatial strategies and discourses entailing a conceptualization of space as decontextualized, distinct, and quantified units—visible when e.g., satellite data on environment is mapped on census data or when municipal boundaries are used to define target areas. The territorial aspect relates to the often-heard tendency among organizational representatives to use a scalar language, also a tenet of managerialism, in the sense that projects, processes, etc. are either scaled up, down or out</p> | Yes             |                      |

Table 4 continued

| Article/author(s)          | Summary of how managerialism is defined   | Develop concept | Level of elaboration |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|
| <i>Meyer et al. (2013)</i> | <p>Ideology, archetype, discourse, institution and practices. Managerialism is often understood as the dominance of corporate management ideas and practices, and as such works both as a specific organizational structure and a global governance regime in the sense of market-like relationships between government and CSOs. As institution it pressures CSOs to change while also providing them with a legitimating discourse. As discourse it comprises three themes—efficiency/effectiveness; particular social relations; and a specific understanding of time. Efficiency/effectiveness are, from a managerial perspective, best achieved via a rational cycle of managerial activities applied to all organizational levels as well as employees by the definition of individual and common goals, planning of activities on the basis of objective information and technical knowledge, and measures implemented and constantly monitored and improved relative set goals. A managerialist discourse also implies a concern with stakeholders, e.g., clients, donors, volunteers, employees, other CSOs, and public agencies. Relations to these stakeholders are interpreted via two frames. One is a market-related frame, implying that people and organizations are treated as e.g., competitors, partners, investors or customers. The other frame underlines an upward accountability towards funders and other high level-authorities. The last theme of a managerialist discourse concerns past, present and future times. From a managerial perspective, everything is in flux due to ever-changing market conditions and a relentless competition creating a constant sense of urgency and crisis. This calls for activities like risk management, forecasting and strategic planning and spawns a belief that the future can be mastered if the right management techniques are applied. From this emerges also an expectation of unlimited progress, often understood as growth, which devalues the past and the present while stressing the future at the same time as ideas like ‘visionary’ leadership, learning, constant improvements, and innovativeness are highlighted</p> | Yes             | High                 |

**Table 4** continued

| Article/author(s) | Summary of how managerialism is defined   | Develop concept | Level of elaboration |
|-------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|
| Hvenmark (2013)*  | <p>Ideology as old as modernity and the emergence of the capitalist firm. Represents a faith in the virtues of corporate management knowledges and practices, exaggerated beliefs in technological solutions, and a belief that professionally trained managers' are better than others at improving organizations and having them reach their goals. It dictates accountability, transparency, flexibility, effectiveness, efficiency, growth, and the goal of finding the best method through which a mission can be achieved. It builds on an instrumental logic requiring an agentic and progress-oriented approach regarding structures, governance and people. People are viewed as autonomous, instrumentally rational, self-interested subjects primarily connected via markets where they may be defined as e.g., entrepreneurs, owners, investors, customers or competitors. It tends to give rise to specific expectations making certain perspectives, decisions and behaviors more likely and legitimate than others. It represents a disembodied and disembodied set of ideas presupposing anywhere-anytime applicability and a direct causality between managerial behaviors, efficient use of resources, and whatever positive results that are achieved. It promotes a perspective from where corporations are viewed as role models others must seek inspiration from, which tend to have a crowding out effect regarding structures, coordination, and control foreign to the corporate world. For analytical reasons it is here stated that we need to distinguish between managerialism, as a more static and ideologically laden belief of how organizations should be structured, coordinated, controlled, and developed, and managerialization, representing a more process and change oriented approach capturing how management as ideology is adopted and turned into practice with a whole range of effects</p> | Yes             |                      |

Sorting according to level of elaboration. Articles' relative position is subjectively estimated, not exactly calculated. Each summary does not mirror exact scope of definition in article. Authors in italicized indicate publication in civil society-related journals, and articles carrying \* mention, explicitly or implicitly, managerialism in relation to parallel changes, e.g., professionalization and marketization



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