Faculti Study Notes

New Public Management and the Reform of Education

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**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

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The context of this is wider changes in the macroeconomic environment

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and indeed within the political environment that were witnessed in a number of different national contexts. In the UK, for example, they began largely in the mid 70s and gathered pace in the late 70s with the election of the Thatcher government. In the US, these were trends that also can be identified as beginning in the 1970s and gathering pace under the reagan government's So what we had taking place during this time was a shift towards what have come to be described as Neo liberal approaches to the salt solution and the solving of economic problems. These were based upon what might have previously been called neo classical approaches. And some refer presearch to refer to kind of late capitalism, fast capitalism and more recently, predatory capitalism. And these are forms of approaches to both politics, economy and society that seek to emphasise the role of markets and seek to emphasise issues around consumer choice. And so we saw these ideas moving into the field of education during the 1980s. This was part of a wider trend whereby public services were being reimagined as part of a new public management. And the new public management was a deliberate and neoliberal inspired shift from older forms of Public Administration. And it positioned older forms of Public Administration is out of date, and inefficient and unpopular. The imagined public services that had been influenced by the new public management as being efficient and effective organisations that were responsive to the needs of citizens newly imagined as consumers. So this was the kind of broad context of the new public management as it emerged. And I think it's fair to say that for a number of years now, new public management has been the dominant paradigm for the reform of public sector provision. And it's, it's a long time since initially merged and emerged very strongly in the UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand in the 1980s. So it's perhaps better referred to as the middle aged public management rather than the new public management. It began initially as attempts to exert managerial control over public services. I think one reason why is the educational leadership and policy scholars don't generally work closely with scholars from the fields of Public Administration, public policy, and a lot of the ideas and theories about new public management and the identification and development of thinking in relation to it. It's very much emerged within those fields. So the shift between the two has been, it's been rather late and slow and it was flexible. Kind of disconnect, I think it's disconnected is gradually being addressed. But I think it's still fair to say that it's noticeable, certainly within the Academy. I think another reason why it's in its infancy in the field of education is that the new public management entered education in many countries through organisations like the World Bank, and the OECD. And through private consultancies, like McKinsey, few educational researchers are really focusing upon these developments, particularly in the early days of new public management.

04:39

And so, sometimes the kind of changes in practice that were occurring within educational institutions that were introduced in ways that will largely unnoticed you know, the kind of example that I always remember is, as a young educational practitioner in the 19 80s and 90s the Peters and Waterman book In Search of Excellence began to appear on the desks of head teachers and other leaders within the education sector. And this is a way in which these ideas kind of snuck in, you know, the airport lounge influence, the books that were purchased, you know, in those airport lounges influencing the kind of practices going on within schools and other educational institutions. And I think I think we can kind of isolate two particular dominant features of MPN. One is a policies that have prioritised market ization, the creation of quasi markets and the development of ideas about consumer and customer choice. So that service users being Such as parents and young people actively being encouraged to imagine themselves as consumers. So, as well as competition and quasi markets, we have this service users shift. And then of course, there was a development of market mechanisms, such as national and local school league tables, university league tables, performance related pay, contract, competitive tendering, these are all aspects of the new public management. And then there was another feature of the new public management that is now very strongly recognisable, and that is a huge emphasis upon institutional and individual performance. So this is performance in the form of the measurement of outputs. And in education, this is commonly taken the form of performance in national and all standardised tests as being a kind of key in dictator. So there have been the kindness made elements of MTN. But we can see that they've entered different national contexts and have different effects in different national contexts, according to the kind of speed, rapidity and tenacity of their entry into those different national contexts. So we start with the Anglophone, Anglophone countries of Australia, England, New Zealand, and the US, they were early adopters, and have been at the forefront of changes in relation to MPs. In Australia, England in the US. This has been a pretty relentless series of changes that have occurred that have meant that there's been a big penetration of MPs into the public education system within those countries, and they share a great deal in common with other countries such as Chile that have also been strong. The early adopters of MTM but if we take the case of New Zealand, which was a strong an early adopter, there was some quite significant rethinking of MTM. So that actually political and educational interventions quite strongly mediated the influence of MPN and the depth of penetration of NPM within New Zealand. So it's very difficult to identify highly generalised effects at a national level, we have to attend very carefully to the specifics of national contexts to try and understand the extent of the penetration of NPM within those Institut within those countries.

08:49

To make things even clearer around the importance of national context, if we look at Europe, for example, you know, with England, as what might be described as the left State has been this early adopter strongly adopters, deep levels of penetration. We could move over to for example, France or Italy the what might be described as the Napoleonic state where they both be very late adopters in front of it very limited adopter, but in Italy, certainly a late adopter of MTM. And there's been quite significant resistance to MTN particularly from the professionals working within the education system. But nevertheless NPM is having some implications in Italy. And they have created evaluation machineries to measure and to, to make a spectacle, if you like, of the system's effectiveness with things like appraisal, performance management of individuals and institutions, and also say that a typically MPM inspired emphasis on schools as the Both environments with a strong focus on head teachers, something relatively new within the Italian system, but strong, strong resistance in that context. And I don't think we can describe MPM as having deeply penetrated the education system. Likewise, if we go to a country like Norway, which I think it's fair to describe as being part of the social welfare tradition, that's common amongst the Scandinavian countries. And what we see there is that MTF appearing early in the 1980s. So Norway began to adopt MTM at an early stage, but actually, it never really directly challenged the established welfares traditional schooling. So it sets up tensions between the welfarism and the kind of social democratic, imaginary school in there. The kind of MPN discourse is that we're also entering schools and other education institutions, who we saw quite quite significant tensions. And I talked earlier about New Zealand with the strong peda tape penetration of MPM and the rowing back. If we go to Argentina, we can see a similar process where it you know, prior to the Christie, the first the governments of the 2000s, we have quite strongly impacted MPN. But then a valid rejection of MPM taking place within Argentina, which then was shifted back by the election of a new president, and I understand is now being rolled back again, now that Christine Kirschner is back in power as the president of Argentina. So I think it's very important to attend to these national contexts to get a sense of How MPM has affected them? Well, I think part one, surprisingly, given what I've said is that we really do need to take, take the national context very, very seriously. And the way in which MPM policies are recontextualized in particular contexts, and draw the conclusion that it's not possible to read off from the broader strictures of NPM, how they get to interact with these national contexts. And indeed, with contexts at more local levels. I think what that means is that we do need to take what happens at a state level really quite seriously. But of course, MPN reflect some kind of super national trend. And it's deep penetration has been at least in part, down to the activities of supranational organisations like the World Bank, and the OECD.

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The most penetrating analyses of the effects of NPM are likely to lie within an understanding of the interplay between these supranational trends. And what happens at a national level. I think there are implications for those who work within the educational institutions that are affected by NPM. And those who might be described as user groups that the older co produces, the parents, the students, the those who also have a stake in local educational institutions. But it's quite clear that MTM imagines education professionals, largely as compliance operatives, implementing policies that have been handed down from on high but of course, as well as fine In themselves, responsible eyes, there's locally and actors of these policies. Those who work in educational institutions continue to grapple with complex problems. So what that means is that the lifting reality of teachers and lecturers and school leaders and university leaders is one of implementation. The reality is that they continue to deal with localised complexities in terms of handling the kind of issues that arise within their their own institutions. And I think after this has emerged, new forms of professionalism alongside the kind of new forms of managerialism that have emerged in those contexts where MPM has been strongest. I think this has deep implications for those who find themselves in leadership and management positions in schools and colleges and universities. Because often they're the individuals who was responsible for the operationalization of the new public management and the kind of policies that follow. And I think what I would argue is that, that there really is a need for much greater research about the way in which these practices move into educational institutions, and the way in which they're variously resisted, complied with and rejected within educational institutions.