



The First Neo-liberal Science - Management and Neo-liberalism

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The First Neo-liberal Science - Management and Neo-liberalism

There has been much recent scholarship on the nature of neo-liberalism. What follows develops these connections by examining early neo-liberal and management thought. The paper explores the foundations of neo-liberal and management theory to argue they share fundamental features – namely active intervention, prioritising competition, and the necessity of elite leadership. The purpose of all three is to reshape subjectivity and social relations. This exploration argues both projects share similar origins and that the objective of neo-liberalism, wherein subjectivity and social relations are changed along competitive lines, lies at the heart of the management programme.

Key words: Neo-liberal management, Elitism, De-democracy, Leadership, Neo-liberalism, Management, Post-bureaucracy.

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3 One important recent contribution to knowledge is the excavation of neo-liberal
4 thought (Dardot and Laval, 2013; Davies, 2014; Gane, 2013, 2014; Mirowski, 2013).
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7 What follows develops this by examining the shared programme of neo-liberal and
8 management thought. It argues these two dominant discourses share common origins
9 and should be viewed as part of the one project because both responded to the same
10 political problems of the early twentieth century with similar answers. The paper
11 suggests management thought developed as a mechanism for delivering neo-liberal
12 social relations - relations that are undemocratic and elitist (Biebricher, 2015; Brown,
13 2003, 2006; Megay, 1970; Mirowski, 2013; Müller, 2015). The argument explores
14 the first systematic management and neo-liberal thought programmes to expose their
15 parallels. In particular, it highlights the centrality of three elements - the necessity of
16 constant intervention, prioritising competition, and the need for elite leadership. All
17 three seek to reshape subjectivity thereby recasting social relations in particular ways.
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35 Neo-Liberalism and Management

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38 Neo-liberalism is a political not an economic project because it aims to generate
39 certain forms of subjectivity. It argues positive cooperative bonds are fostered
40 through markets and that these generate new enhanced subjects. It further suggests
41 these bonds must be nurtured through constant vigilance and the maintenance of
42 competition because interest groups seek to avoid markets. Such vigilance is
43 organized through interventions designed to ensure 'spontaneity' in the
44 market/society, ever-expanding competition and the presence of elite leadership
45 (Biebricher, 2015; Dardot and Laval, 2013: 1001-20; Hayek, 1948: 92-118; Megay,
46 1970; Müller, 2015). All three help form neo-liberalism's political rationality. As is
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3 well known there is no single neo-liberal project (Brown, 2003, 2006; Gane, 2013)
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5 because it mutates across space and time with the (re)structuring of societies (Röepke,
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7 1998: 48-52). However whilst proponents often differ, the neo-liberal themes of elite
8
9 led institutional intervention to ensure competition and the moral rejuvenation of the
10
11 subject remain. Intervention to reshape subjectivity necessarily gives rise to the
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13 importance of authority and leadership because some visions are better – more normal
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15 (Brown, 2006: 699) – than others (Hayek, 1948: 108).
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23 These issues are also fundamental to management thought. An examination of two
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25 central management figures – Elton Mayo and Max Weber – demonstrates the
26
27 connections. In different ways both connect to neo-liberalism. Whilst Mayo is
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29 directly located in management, Weber's role is ambiguous because his interest is
30
31 sociological not managerial. Nevertheless, his influence on management through the
32
33 sub-fields of leadership, innovation, entrepreneurship, and organization studies has
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35 been profound and neo-liberal in direction (Hollander, 1992 for leadership; XXXXX,
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37 for entrepreneurship; Du Gay, 2013, for bureaucracy/post-bureaucracy). Using these
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39 origins, the analysis presented demonstrates how neo-liberal and management thought
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41 developed remarkably similar solutions to the social crisis of the early twentieth
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43 century – a time when markets were simultaneously growing and under threat. Since
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45 their beginnings management and neo-liberal thought have been kindred responses to
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47 the collective challenges confronting organised capitalism.
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56 What follows addresses the core themes of neo-liberalism before examining them in
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58 management. In common with neo-liberals, early management theorists stressed
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3 active planning, competition, elite leadership, and the problematic nature of
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5 democracy. For management theorists intervention was necessary if competition,
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7 moral rejuvenation and capitalism were to be saved (Bendix, 1956). Thus both
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9 projects share fundamental beliefs. Furthermore, their work informs one another e.g.
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11 Weber influences neo-liberals (Foucault, 2008: 105; Gane 2013, 2014; Gamble, 1996;
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13 Mommsen, 1974) and management (XXXXX); Mayo's (1937) work acknowledges
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15 Lippmann's Method of Freedom; and W. B. Donham (1922, 1933) – Harvard
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17 Business School's influential Dean – was informed by Lippmann and shared, with
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19 President Hoover, a desire to create management as a legitimate authority (Scott,
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21 1992: 58-60). Both programmes addressed similar issues and put forward similar
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23 solutions for societies, markets, organizations and individuals. The paper draws out
24
25 these connections and concludes by positing management as a central neo-liberal tool.
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28 As such, it builds on Davies (2014: 108-47) examination of contemporary
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30 management and neo-liberalism.
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35 At this stage two points should be made. Firstly, the paper downplays resistance.
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37 Although these ideas were fiercely contested (XXXXX), in what follows resistance is
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39 not central because one reaction of neo-liberal and management theorists to it was to
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41 emphasize theory, ideas, think-tanks, writing, and the long intellectual war (Dardot
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43 and Laval, 2014: 112-4; Mirowski, 2013; Scott, 1992). These theorists also
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45 responded to resistance by claiming the 'mass' was irrational and/or easily led. Thus
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47 resistance intensified their beliefs about the mass. As such, examining these beliefs,
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49 allows us unpick the ideological nature of these 'pure' projects.
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54 Another downplayed theme concerns the varieties of capitalism debate which stresses
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56 governance differences between and within states (Crouch, 2005). Again it could be
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3 claimed the paper over-extends the reach of ‘neo-liberal management’. Although
4
5 accepting this, it is apparent that the recent downgrading of the social market within
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7 the EU (Beibricher, 2015; Müller, 2015; Offe, 2005a: 154; Streeck 2015,) suggests
8
9 the emergence of a ‘variegated capitalism’ (Jessop, 2014). Whilst this variegated
10
11 capitalism houses different governance forms, these are increasingly subordinate to
12
13 neo-liberal governance thereby making our understanding of neo-liberalism more
14
15 important. Thus whilst not denying capitalism’s variety or resistance to these
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17 projects, neither is examined.
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20 21 ‘The Social Crisis of Our Time’

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24 In 1938, at the Walter Lippmann Colloquium, neo-liberals gathered to celebrate
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26 Lippmann’s The Good Society. The book highlighted neo-liberalism’s dominant
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28 themes (Darnot and Laval, 2013). It focused on the social and political crises caused
29
30 by the maladjustment of many to organised capitalist society; the centrality of
31
32 competition; the maintenance of private property rights; and the need for new forms
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34 of leadership and authority to intervene in the state, institutions and organisations so
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36 the masses could be adjusted to the emerging society. Lippmann stressed abandoning
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38 liberal laissez-faire for elite intervention if property relations were to be maintained,
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40 collectivism defeated, competitive markets expanded, and individual subjects
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42 transformed – all ongoing neo-liberal priorities (Dardot and Laval, 2013; Foucault,
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44 2008; Gane 2013, 2014; Hoover, 1922). In light of these different priorities,
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46 Biebricher’s (2015) examination provides a useful way to analyse neo-liberalism’s
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48 heterogeneity. He suggests a tripartite divide between neo-liberals whilst stressing the
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50 overall aims of the project.
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55 56 *Restricting Democracy – Expertocracy and Rules*

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3 This aspect can be subdivided into two – one, is closely associated with ordo-
4 liberalism and the other, with the work of Hayek, Friedman and Buchanan. The call
5 for technocracy stems from a fear of democracy and the inability of the masses to
6 know their own interests (Biebricker, 2015; Megay, 1970; Müller, 2015; Röepke
7 1948, 1998). As a result, society needs protecting from democracy because it houses
8 the probability that the recently proletarianised workforce will vote against the
9 market. The market, competition and private property must be guarded through a
10 strong state managed by a set of authoritarian and objective experts who protect the
11 people from themselves. There should be a ‘revolt of the elite’ who constitute a
12 ‘natural aristocracy’ rising above sectional interests (Megay, 1970: 440-424; see
13 Streeck 2015 on this as current EU policy; and Müller 2015, 6, on ‘expertocracy’).
14 Here the economy is a necessary but insufficient motor for change and to be effective,
15 change must occur at social, political and cultural levels (Megay, 1970: 427). To
16 succeed neo-liberalism must drill down to the subject. Authoritarian expertocracy
17 restricts the democratic will of the people, breaks up monopoly, ensures competition,
18 withstands interest groups, preserves freedom, and alters subjects.
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42 Related, but different to this, is the emphasis on self-binding legal rules limiting the
43 democratic majority e.g. calls for budget surpluses. General legal rules are necessary
44 if markets are to expand and democracy curtailed (Hayek, 1960: 54-71). By
45 establishing general rules states are prevented from enacting differentiated legislation
46 targeted at particular groups e.g. a one off tax on banks. This matters because
47 differentiated measures enable interest groups undermine markets, competition and
48 private property - here neo-liberalism echoes Schmitt’s response to attempts to
49 expropriate the former Kaiser’s property (Scheuerman, 1997). In contrast to ordo-
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3 liberals, this position favours general and self-binding regulations which limit the
4 state and weaken experts who are distrusted as an interest group (Biebricher, 2015).

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7 A number of themes emerge here – neo-liberalism’s uneasy relationship with
8 democracy, its belief in (but distrust of) expertise, its need for (and fear of) strong
9 state bureaucracies, the necessity of elitism, the weakening of interest groups, and the
10 desire to alter individual subjects (themes which emerge in management).
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17 *Replacing Democracy - Institutional Competition and Consumer Sovereignty*
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20 This strand emphasises shifting power from the state to the market (e.g. privatisation),
21 affirming the public as the private (e.g. undermining universal benefits), and turning
22 the citizen into a consumer (e.g. making students into consumers who will ‘drive up
23 quality’ through exercising choice as laid out in recent UK University reforms
24 Browne, 2010: 28). Here, the ‘entrepreneurial subject’ emerges as a bundle of
25 market-like obligations and responsibilities (Biebricher, 2015; Dardot and Laval,
26 2013: 100; Drucker, 1985; Foucault, 2008).
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37 A second element to this concerns institutional change. The rule of law should counter
38 unlimited democracy by enabling the free flow of resources and making jurisdictions
39 compete for investment, labour, and consumer-citizens. This is delivered by
40 subsidiarity (Biebricher, 2015), restricting elections to once in a generation or lifetime
41 (Scheuerman, 1997: 181-2), or creating ‘interstate federalism’ (Hayek, 1948: 255-72:
42 Streeck 2015: 97-102). Here states make political choices in the presence of the anti-
43 democratic ‘Marktvolk’ (Streeck, 2015) - a mobile propertied elite hostile to policies
44 threatening their wealth accumulation. Such issues are also central to management –
45 e.g. in corporate capitalism the entrepreneurial subject is partly delivered by
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3 management; managed corporations are central to the Marktvolk; and private capital
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5 seeks to benefit from privatisation or the shift to make the public private.
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8 *Complementing Democracy - Referendums and Tax Revolts*

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11 Contrasting with some neo-liberal fears of the masses, this strand encourages the use
12 of referenda and plebiscites. It embraces public choice theory wherein the state is
13 feared as something captured by interest groups (often state bureaucrats - Biebricher,
14 2015; Schuerman, 1997; Von Mises, 1944). Here neo-liberals use the masses to limit
15 the Leviathan state through charismatic leadership. Even some ordo-liberals, who
16 most feared the masses, endorse this point. Röpke and Eucken were most suspicious
17 of democracy whereas Rüstow and Erhard had more faith in it (Megay, 1970). This
18 faith resided in insisting that (neoliberal) statesmen had greater moral and personal
19 qualities than others – these leaders earned public confidence thereby undermining
20 democracy's rejection of the market. The referendum supporting California's
21 Proposition 13 capping property taxes embodies much of this wherein leadership,
22 alongside public choice analyses of the tax raising state, constrains democracy via
23 rules (Biebricher, 2015; Megay, 1970: 440-2). Once again, management addresses
24 these issues - bureaucracy, leadership and charisma.
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43 The Mass as Social Crisis

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46 Neo-liberalism's crisis manifested itself as collectivism – fascism, communism,
47 welfare states, and market protection (Hoover, 1922: 1-22). Collectivism was created
48 by those seeking sanctuary from competition (Von Mises, 1944). Such threats were
49 widespread – from farmers, to capitalists, to professions. Indeed, neo-liberals argued
50 interest groups sought to foist markets onto others whilst pushing them away from
51 themselves. Nevertheless, the biggest collectivist threat was the working class¹
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3 because it was maladjusted to organized capitalist social relations and capable of
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5 using its numerical strength to capture the state thereby protecting itself from markets
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7 and threatening freedom (Hayek, 1944: 89-113, 1948: 107-18; Lippmann 1935: 74-9;
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9 1943: 45-54; Röpke, 1948: 132-7; Von Mises, 1944: 4-5).
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16 Importantly, this made democracy dangerous because it enabled the majority to
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18 separate life and the market (Brown, 2003: 9; Gane, 2013). If capitalism – not
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20 democracy - was to be saved, the mass had to be moulded to the market's form. The
21
22 economy must be collapsed into a polity where economy and society were one
23
24 (Mirowski, 2013: 89-157). If unmanaged, the mass pursuit of security and its
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26 numerical advantage in a democratic state forced society to 'its lowest common
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28 denominator' (Hayek, 1948: 109; Lippmann, 1935: 24; Megay, 1970; Röpke, 1948;
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30 Von Mises 1944: 1-19). To stop such descending states and the private organizations
31
32 needed to ensure people competed for work (Lippmann, 1944: 198-9)². Organizations
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34 with their selection and recruitment, structuring of careers, promise of progress,
35
36 generation of new desires, practises and routines become key mechanisms for
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38 securing 'spontaneous' labour competition. As such, the managed organization
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40 becomes a core institution for delivering 'everyday neo-liberalism' (Mirowski, 2013).
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50 Everyday neo-liberalism operates at two levels – it externally regulates behaviour via
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52 rules, rewards and punishments and it internally instils new values and ways of being
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54 to engineer a new subject. As such, elite activity, planning and management could
55
56 never end (Lippmann, 1935: 73). Crucial here is selection which both Weber (1994:
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58 283) and Mayo (1937) understood was reshaping society through new forms of
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3 external and internal 'discipline'. This discipline meant not only would labour heed
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5 the call for work but it would adapt to be chosen in the competition to work.
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8 Creating Possessive Individualism and the Entrepreneurial Subject

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11 The desire for security emerged because of liberalism's failings which themselves
12 were not natural and could be remedied. Indeed, not only is collectivism abnormal
13 within a developed capitalist society but competition becomes the normal, free and
14 spontaneous way of being (Brown, 2006; Foucault, 2008; Gamble, 1996; Hayek,
15 1948: 1-32). Market competition drives knowledge and allows individuals to learn
16 and behave rationally so that markets are educational (Dardot and Laval, 2013: 101-
17 20; Hayek, 1948: 33-57; Kirzner, 1973; Von Mises, 1996 – as we will see Weber
18 expressed similar views). Because of this, individual competition replaces collective
19 security. The nineteenth century need to destroy the regulatory system of the earlier
20 order encouraged capitalist collectivism which undermined markets, impoverished
21 labour, generated the inability of many to maintain property rights, and weakened
22 labour's traditions of socialisation. This forced the mass towards collectivism and
23 created the tendency to concentrate power in distributive states (Lippmann, 1943: 23-
24 4; Megay 1970).
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56 Neo-liberals agreed the 'proletariat' was created (Lippmann, 1935: 92-5; Megay,
57 1970; Röepke, 1948: 139) and argued market societies had progressed too quickly for
58 social traditions thereby generating the false urge to collectivise. This drive
59 proletarianized much of the population making them potentially unmanageable by
60 destroying their established routines and practises. These groups needed to be
externally regulated by organizations selecting workers, providing incentives and

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3 punishments, and supporting individual property rights. But they also needed to be
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5 internally disciplined through the creation of new desires, ambitions, motivations and
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7 ways of being if social order was to be maintained (Lippmann, 1935: 91-7). New
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9 governance through new regulations and new routines would form new subjectivities
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11 housing new desires – an everyday neo-liberalism. Collectivist threats to knowledge
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13 and progress could only be eradicated through widening property rights, markets, and
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15 competition. To break collectivism the world of possessive individualism must be
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17 opened to all – nobody could be protected because everyone was naturally a
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19 bourgeois (Mirowski, 2013: 110).
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27 Embracing this project meant labour – indeed all who rejected competition – needed
28 moral reconstructing, re-educating, individualising and creating anew as bourgeois
29 subjects. Such a project reaches far beyond the economic (Megay, 1970: 427) but is
30 difficult because the mass is unthinking, prone to ‘drift’ (Lippmann, 1914: 101-12),
31 led by ‘dreamers’ (Hoover, 1922: 1-2), and in need of an intellectual elite (Von Mises
32 quoted in Dardot and Laval, 2013: 115 ft. 33). Indeed, mass susceptibility to
33 demagoguery led neo-liberals to question democracy - something Lippmann (1935:
34 74-79), echoing de Tocqueville, referred to as the tyranny of ‘transient majorities’.
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36 The will of the people is problematic because they seek security and the wrong forms
37 of intervention (Hayek, 1944; Röepke, 1948; Von Mises 1944 – in a contemporary
38 setting see Brown, 2003, 2006; Davies, 2014: 136; Müller 2015; Streeck, 2015).
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40 Collectivism thus creates war economies and undermines freedom (Gane 2013, 2014;
41 Lippmann, 1936: 54-90; Röepke, 1948: 1-40; Von Mises, 1944). To deliver freedom
42 (Gamble, 1996: 26-49) the spontaneous market must be led by the elite who would
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3 carry 'the Schmittian burden to decide on behalf of others' (Davies, 2014: 133,
4 original emphasis). In this world public opinion becomes important because the
5 conditions of mass existence render workers incapable of thought (Lippmann, 1922:
6 75). It became the elite's role to shape public opinion and institutions thereby better
7 moulding the mass along neo-liberal lines (Bernays, 1928; Biebricher, 2015:
8 Lippmann, 1992: 107-8; Megay, 1970; Müller, 2015; Röepke, 2009: 176-94). To
9 overcome 'loose thinking' (Röepke, 2009: 151-3), neo-liberals must manage opinion
10 and intervene in institutions as a moral endeavour. Institutional restructuring and
11 moral reform merge so the citizen is worked on through rules, desires, and ways of
12 being (Röepke, 1948: xxii).
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29 This developing society requires new forms of authority because older forms – craft,
30 age, gender, or status – were uncompetitive and being eradicated (Röepke, 1948:
31 1998). Whilst this was positive, because it unleashed potential and competitive merit,
32 it threatened society. To save society and the individual social restructuring must
33 expose people to the 'emery wheel of competition' (Hoover, 1922: 9). Competition
34 trumps democracy because democracy succumbs to interest groups (Biebricher, 2015;
35 Lippmann, 1943: 263; Müller, 2015; Scheuerman, 1997; Von Mises, 1944: 1-19).
36 Competition in the pursuit of efficiency, the sanctity of private property, and the use
37 of the market as the arbiter of worth, rises above other values. All action becomes
38 economically determined (Gane 2013, 2014). At neo-liberalism's core is elite
39 intervention ensuring the institutions of society are subject to competition and the
40 individual is moulded to capitalist social relations and reformulated as an enterprising
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3 being (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002; Dardot and Laval, 2013; Foucault 2008). Such
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5 processes secure private property, liberty and peace.
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11 Trickle down competition structures behaviour and makes managed organizations
12 central alongside the institutions of market and state. Significantly, neo-liberal self-
13 care makes (expert) management pivotal to creating competition as the foundation of
14 society because if organizations must compete then so too does human capital
15 (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002; Drucker, 1985). Through state regulation and
16 management, subjects are entrepreneurially recreated in markets and competitive
17 work organizations. In light of this, these concerns also emerge in some of the first
18 analyzes of management.
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30 Neo-Liberal Themes and Early Management?

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33 If neo-liberalism's origins emphasise intervention, competition, and elite authority
34 aimed at reshaping subjects, then it shares much with management theory. From its
35 inception management thought analyzed ways to actively intervene, push competition
36 onto labour, and provide leadership to ensure labour was externally regulated,
37 rewarded and punished and internally disciplined so it embraced new behaviours,
38 desires, ambitions and ways of being. That labour both heard the call to work but also
39 needed, or better still desired, the prospect of being chosen.
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53 To do this management had to be (re)invented. One of the features of early
54 management is the transition from management as expense – 'mere superintendence'
55 (Pollard, 1965: 250) - to management as the productive organisational activity
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3 (Drucker, 2007: 97). Through this transition, management becomes the new form of
4 authority at work. This authority is explicit in F. W. Taylor – the seminal
5 management theorist. Taylor’s project is structured around the productive gains of
6 ‘good’ management. Management is an intervention into the struggle for knowledge
7 of production on behalf of capitalist accumulation – such knowledge is only good if it
8 is management controlled. Management is not about coordination – although it is that
9 – it is primarily about change through redistributing knowledge from one group to
10 another aimed at developing new routines of working (Taylor, 1903: 1390). This
11 redistribution is important because, as with neo-liberals, Taylor (1903: 1412) felt
12 workers did not know their interests and needed leadership. They could be improved
13 but the necessity of greater effort and the benefits of good management had to be
14 explained to them by objective experts. Without interventionist management
15 organizations failed because workers used their knowledge to collectively control the
16 pace of work thereby lowering competition and damaging themselves and, crucially,
17 citizen-consumers (Taylor, 1947: 18-9). Competitiveness only trickles down from
18 markets to organizations to individuals with management intervention. Unbeknownst
19 to workers they need management’s leadership if they are to be individualised, made
20 competitive and hence fulfilled and free. Individuals, organizations, and society
21 require management because it delivers a (neo-liberal) world of competition, markets
22 and freedom. As such, management bears the burden of responsibility for
23 competition, authority and leadership (Taylor, 1919: 37).
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Management sets worker against worker, breaks collectivity, and individualises workplaces. This occurs through constant intervention in organizations via piece

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3 rates, internal labour markets, rewards, punishments, and career paths. Elite created
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5 competition within and beyond the organization delivers this and hence it is central to
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7 Taylor. These ideas structured the organizational form of the twentieth century
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9 (Stone, 1973). Management becomes a necessary elite activity delivering labour
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11 competition. Taylor's elite intervention is not an aberration or a mere historical
12
13 artefact. It emerges again and again – albeit in different forms. For example, British
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15 Airways' restructuring before its Thatcherite privatisation reflects these ideas.
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17 Restructuring was deemed necessary if investors were to buy shares. It entailed
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19 downsizing the workforce, altering work so new forms of stimulation become central
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21 (on new forms of stimulation see Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002), hiring personnel
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23 consultants to change attitudes, designing appraisal mechanisms focused on new
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25 performance behaviours, performance based compensation, and profit sharing (these
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27 last three sought to encourage individualised employee competition and new forms of
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29 legitimacy located in 'meritocracy' see Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002). This was
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31 pushed through by a new management elite (Goodstein and Burke, 1991). Here,
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33 management seeks to create the entrepreneurial subject.
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43 We also see these beliefs in the Thatcher government report on reforming the UK's
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45 National Health Service. The Griffiths Report (1983) was produced under the
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47 direction of Roy Griffiths then Head of the supermarket chain Sainsbury's. It
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49 explicitly makes management the central force for creating a more competitive and
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51 private sector like organisation. To do so, management must be recruited from
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53 outside the public and civil service sectors. Only private sector personnel
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56 management provides the leadership to deliver change, cost improvements, secure
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3 'the proper motivation of staff', ensure professionals follow management objectives,
4
5 and end democratic consensus management to create clear lines of authority
6
7 (Griffiths, 1983:11-13). These developments were aimed at changing 'morale and
8
9 attitudes' (Griffiths, 1983:16-17) through new pay structures, conditions, practises,
10
11 routines, etc. These are inherent themes to management and are central to two of its
12
13 'founding fathers' - Elton Mayo and Max Weber.
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16 17 Elton Mayo and Neo-Liberal Thought 18

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20 Although unknown beyond management, Mayo was perhaps the best funded social
21
22 scientist of the twentieth century. Between 1926 and 1946 the Rockefeller Foundation
23
24 provided him with \$1.5m – a stupendous sum for social science at the time. His work
25
26 was debated in academic and popular journals by Daniel Bell, Clark Kerr, Robert
27
28 Merton, and Reinhard Bendix, amongst others. Indeed, *Fortune* hailed him, alongside
29
30 Thorstein Veblen and John Dewey, as a modern social thinker (Smith, 1988). He was
31
32 central to the establishment of Harvard Business School as the preeminent institution
33
34 for business and leadership. When Harvard moved away from the strife associated
35
36 with Taylor, whom they sporadically employed, it turned to Mayo's 'enlightened'
37
38 management (Stewart, 2009). He is closely associated with the Hawthorne work
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40 experiments which laid the foundation for the human relations school of management
41
42 - the forerunner to contemporary human resource management. Under the auspices of
43
44 the Department of Industrial Research, which he headed with Rockefeller money,
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46 books such as *Street Corner Society* (William F. Whyte) and *Family and Community*
47
48 *in Ireland* (Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball) were published. He closely
49
50 collaborated with George Homans, T. North Whitehead, F. Roethlisberger and W. J.
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52 Dickson and was a member of the elitist Harvard Pareto Circle. This circle reflected
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3 Herbert Hoover's political philosophy (Scott, 1992: 58-60), was hostile to Marxism
4 and socialism, and included Homans, Talcott Parsons, Joseph Schumpeter, and L. J.
5 Henderson. As such, Mayo was involved in important academic projects beyond
6 management and it is unfortunate he is overlooked because 'his influence upon the
7 academic profession and especially the disciplines of sociology, psychology and their
8 various applied fields has been extensive. It has likewise been extensive with regard
9 to the education of businessmen' (Bendix, 1956: 308 ft. 126).
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19 In a striking similarity to the role of 'spontaneity' in neo-liberalism, Mayo (1919: 48:
20 1949: 120) argued work is based on 'spontaneous cooperation'. Like Röpke (1992,
21 1948) he suggested established society and its socialisation processes of craft, status,
22 gender, and age were undermined by capitalism and that an 'adaptive society' had
23 emerged which, if left unmanaged, was potentially unfree and un-civilising (Mayo,
24 1949: 11-30). As such, he (1937) believed organizationally dominated market
25 societies needed new spontaneous, unthinking or semi-thinking routines to create new
26 forms of collaboration and cohesion. Thus routines and their cooperative benefits are
27 central to social order. Although he (1937: 335) cites Malinowski, Mayo reflects
28 Hayek (1948: 1-32; 1960: 54-71) because he stresses the importance of 'custom,
29 tradition, and non-logic' to routine cooperation. He (1919) argues limited knowledge
30 - a central neo-liberal concept (Hayek, 1945, 1948: 92-106) – necessarily creates a
31 society that should be administered and managed through a small state with a large
32 market if individual freedom is to flourish. The collectivist state is a (im)moral entity
33 that inevitably forces unnatural cooperation. State intervention limiting markets is 'a
34 subtle form of state control; its decisions are inevitably moral rather than technically
35 skilled, from a strictly industrial point of view' and as such, it 'can do nothing to bring
36 about a condition of whole-hearted and spontaneous co-operation' (Mayo, 1919: 48).
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3 For freedom and spontaneous cooperation to flourish, the (democratic) state must be
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5 limited by objective (pro-market) technical decision-making.
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11 Organised, capitalist, spontaneous cooperation emerges through the creation of new
12
13 elite led everyday routines.
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17 ‘.... It must be insisted that the intelligent development of civilisation is
18
19 impossible except upon the basis of effective social collaboration and that such
20
21 collaboration will always be dependent upon semiautomatic routines of
22
23 behaviour made valuable by personal association and high sentiment. The most
24
25 intelligent adaptation will remain ineffective until transformed from logic and
26
27 the abstract into the human and actual routine with deep emotional attachment.
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29 Here then is the problem for the sociologist and administrator that I propose to
30
31 illustrate as best I may from personal experience.’
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36 (Mayo, 1937: 336)
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39 As with Taylor, management’s primary role is creating new routines, new ‘personal
40
41 associations’, and new ‘emotional attachments’ which reshape social collaboration in
42
43 particular ways. Ways located in the habits of markets and competitive organizational
44
45 life; ways which over time form deep meanings and ‘high sentiments’ for people.
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47 Mayo wanted to re-engineer the subject by creating new everyday lives located in
48
49 managed competitive organizations and markets.
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55 Echoing neo-liberals, Mayo (1919: 5) argued liberalism was flawed. His society
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57 needed competition, individualism, the rejection of laissez-faire, and the limiting of
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3 democracy because the mass would use the democratic state to undermine
4
5 competition and hence civilised society (Mayo, 1919: 5). For Mayo (1919: 10)
6
7 democracy was potentially as 'tyrannical as any historic monarchy'. The only way to
8
9 circumvent the damage of democracy was to reconstruct the subject and this needed
10
11 an understanding of the subject's 'total situation' which would then collapse life into
12
13 work. In this vision, 'spontaneous cooperation' was no longer possible without
14
15 management because of the disruptive birth pangs of capitalism. The transition to
16
17 organised capitalism generated a 'seamy side' which eradicated the traditional
18
19 routines, socialisation and knowledge transfer capacities of labour. This created a
20
21 'rabble' that threatened society (Mayo 1923a, 1923b, 1924, 1949: 3-50). As such,
22
23 labour needed to be moulded by management through new practises and socialisation
24
25 processes which supported private property, competitiveness and the market (Bendix
26
27 and Fischer, 1949: 316). Whilst acknowledging the transition to organised capitalism
28
29 had undermined labour, he (1922c: 159) accuses workers of being incapable of
30
31 developing the learning skills necessary for competitive life without elite leadership.
32
33 He further argues one of the problems of capitalism is it forces socialisation processes
34
35 onto the nuclear family which is inadequate to the task. As such, other institutions
36
37 must take up the moral role of developing everyday individual 'social discipline'
38
39 (Mayo, 1937: 829-30). Neither the family nor the dying traditions of yesteryear could
40
41 discipline the individual into the new society hence the work organization becomes
42
43 the central place for neo-liberal disciplining. Here, work and life collapse so that life
44
45 becomes the competitive discipline of employment or preparing for employment.
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47 Mayo makes management central because the work organization becomes the site for
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49 everyday neo-liberalism's reconstruction.
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3 Mayo's neo-liberalism sees the mass as corrupted and easily led so that society and
4
5 the organization need elite intervention to morally restructure the worker-subject and
6
7 secure competition, private property, the market and freedom. Management is the
8
9 source of this in the same way as today it is the 'technology' to 'make America an
10
11 entrepreneurial society' (Drucker, 1985: 15). Mayo's is a neo-liberal project seeking
12
13 to externally regulate and internally discipline people through new routines and other
14
15 forms of spontaneous cooperation to which they would have 'deep emotional
16
17 attachment'. As with neo-liberals, external and internal management of subjects is
18
19 necessary if competition, property rights, markets, and freedom are to blossom.
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24 25 Max Weber: An 'Elective Affinity' with Neo-Liberalism

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27 Weber also analyses these issues. In relation to management rather than being
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29 discussed as a neo-liberal, Weber is addressed as a bureaucracy theorist or viewed
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31 through his iron cage, or for his influence on entrepreneurship, innovation, and
32
33 leadership studies. In contrast, this paper stresses his epistemological 'elective
34
35 affinity' with neo-liberalism. The qualified term is used because whilst Weber
36
37 influenced neo-liberals (Gane 2013, 2014; Mommsen, 1974), he also stressed non
38
39 neo-liberal ideas e.g. vocation - the form of conduct wherein different spheres of
40
41 (competitive) activity produce their own behaviours and ethics (Du Gay 2013; Gane
42
43 2013, 2014; Hennis, 1983; Merton 1940; Weber 1948, 1994: 309-69). Indeed within
44
45 management, Du Gay (2013) argues Weber's work opposes the totalising market
46
47 project of (neo-liberal) post-bureaucracy. Equally, in contrast with neo-liberalism,
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49 Bendix (1960: 469-94) highlights his idealist thinking and his combination of
50
51 utilitarianism and Hegelian civil society. This leads Weber to suggest self-interest on
52
53 its own is not enough to understand social relations. Such views potentially conflict
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3 with neo-liberalism which prioritises self-interested instrumental rationality at the
4 expense of ideals (Gane, 2013). Thus although here Weber's work is read to support
5 neo-liberal analyses, whether or not politically he endorses neo-liberalism is an open
6 question – indeed Bendix (1960: 471 ft. 2) cautions us against politically reading him
7 through the logical consequences of his work. Nevertheless, the paper's contention is
8 management scholars use his ideas to give management a neo-liberal inflection which
9 supports active intervention, pursuit of competition, and the necessity of elite
10 leadership. These important themes in Weber allow management theorists to take this
11 neo-liberal turn. One can see this in Weber's views on economic activity, democracy,
12 and the relationship between bureaucracy and leadership.
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27 Weber's concept of economic activity is similar to neo-liberals (Parsons, 2003). Like
28 the Austrians, Weber's (1975) market is not static, the future is unknown, people
29 make mistakes, behave non-rationally, and markets teach us over time. Indeed, in his
30 analysis of utility theory Weber (1975: 33) endorses Menger's position. Furthermore,
31 rather than allowing static supply and demand determine markets, he (1975: 28)
32 stresses the importance of anticipation and social interaction in the formation of price
33 thereby rejecting orthodox economic analysis in favour of uncertainty and risk
34 (Parsons, 2003: 1-19). Finally, the entrepreneur – a key figure in neo-liberalism – is
35 central to the market and production. Through awakening and directing future and
36 uncertain needs entrepreneurs drive production (Weber, 1978: 92; see also Von
37 Mises, 1996: 299). Implicit here are time, dynamism, innovation, entrepreneurship
38 and the fear of stagnation – key concepts in neo-liberal management.
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3 Like pro-plebiscite neo-liberals, Weber also supports universal suffrage because he
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5 rejects the idea that the working 'class' is a threat to capitalism. Importantly, as a
6
7 methodological individualist, Weber (1978: 302-5) sees class as a collection of self-
8
9 interested individuals who were only uniform amongst the unskilled, property-less,
10
11 and irregularly employed. Indeed, as a (short-term) collection of self-interested
12
13 individuals shaped by consumer markets, such classes are heterogeneous and open to
14
15 influence and division. He agrees the working class is powerful but is unconvinced it
16
17 can, or wants to, abolish capitalism and thus argues for its enfranchisement (Weber,
18
19 1994: 102). This defence of universal suffrage is bound up with Weber's over-riding
20
21 fear of bureaucracy not democracy (Loader and Alexander, 1985: 4; Bendix, 1960:
22
23 458-60). He argues a consumerist working class (citizen-consumers), with
24
25 heterogeneous desires and interests, ensures markets are competitive. Like some neo-
26
27 liberals, he believes labour is susceptible to leadership and because of this, it is
28
29 reformist. Through demagoguery charismatic leaders 'manage' democracy and
30
31 provide bureaucracies and societies with the progressive dynamism they need. The
32
33 right 'Caesarist' leadership (Weber, 1978: 1452) keeps both the bureaucratic form of
34
35 organised capitalism and the democratic state in check and protects competition,
36
37 private property, and freedom (Mommsen, 1974: 72-94 – Bendix, 1960: 471, ft2
38
39 challenges Mommsen's reading).
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48 Weber sees interventionist leadership as central because through (weak) democracy it
49
50 defends society from an ossified bureaucracy. Again similarly to neo-liberals
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52 (Biebricher, 2015: 263), he argues the threat to competitive relations is an alliance
53
54 between capitalist and state bureaucratic interest groups. This alliance generates a
55
56 'robber capitalism' (Weber, 1994: 89) allowing capitalists and state bureaucrats avoid
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3 competition, thereby undermining freedom. Hence he supports universal suffrage
4 precisely to limit the push towards protection from markets. He argues the two
5 dominant sources of privilege in capitalism – property ownership and education – are
6 in the hands of those groups who benefit from a bureaucracy led economy. For
7 Weber, the enfranchised majority is a bulwark against anti-market segments (Weber,
8 1994: 105).

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18 As indicated, bureaucracy is central to Weber's society. He (1978: 956-1005) argues
19 bureaucracy reshapes society by making bureaucratic knowledge and practises central
20 to governance. In so doing, bureaucrats become a powerful group within society and
21 potentially concentrate power. In a manner similar to neo-liberals, bureaucrats use
22 organizational positions to control the populace and the populace is deskilled and
23 confronted by an efficient, objective, rational, secretive, concentrated, and powerful
24 force. Furthermore, bureaucrats follow impersonal rules thereby potentially
25 damaging freedom. The bureaucrat is characterised by an obedience located in
26 'habitual activity learned in public as well as in private organizations' (Weber, 1948:
27 229 original emphasis). Obedient habits make bureaucrats susceptible to corporatism
28 and the formation of unethical bureaucratic economies because they learn the wrong
29 routines - hence his neo-liberal like stress on the central importance of setting 'good'
30 rules by which bureaucrats operate (Bendix, 1960: 465).

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49 Undermining stagnation is achieved by organisational change, dynamism, innovation,
50 entrepreneurship and leadership which are necessary to instilling the right routines
51 (e.g. British Airways or the NHS). Using Weber, management theory embraces such
52 ideas to present charismatic leaders (and entrepreneurs/innovators) as above mundane
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3 bureaucratic rules because their genius is the central value creating agency (see
4 Iassacson, 2012). For Weber, charismatic leadership is pivotal to undermining
5 bureaucracy and its un-freedom in democratic states (Burawoy, 2013: 752-3;
6 Mommsen, 1974: 72-94; see also Bendix, 1960: 458 who highlights Weber's belief
7 that without general cultural decline this undermining was unlikely). This leadership
8 emphasis demonstrates Weber's (neo-liberal) democratic scepticism. On the issue of
9 democracy and leadership he supposedly expressed the following to General
10 Ludendorff
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20 'In a democracy people choose a leader in whom they trust. Then the chosen
21 leader says "Now shut up and obey me". People and party are now no longer
22 free to interfere in his business.'
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27 (Gerth and Mills in Weber, 1948: 42).
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30 Thus Weber's affirmation of charismatic leadership in the face of bureaucratic
31 capitalist societies is used to enable some - in contemporary language leaders,
32 innovators, entrepreneurs - to maintain their freedom and creativity whilst others
33 inevitably (if unfortunately) are subject to the rules and regulations of the bureaucratic
34 organization (Du Gay, 2013; Mommsen, 1974: 93-94). In this manner, competitive
35 based leaders set the correct rules for individuals, organizations and societies. In so
36 doing a mass dominated by competitive organisational un-freedom is generated
37 (Goodstein and Burke, 1991; Griffiths, 1983; Kantor and Streitfeld, 2015). Graeber
38 (2015: 18) suggests this is the logical end point of neo-liberalism - 'total
39 bureaucratisation'. Neo-liberals present bureaucracy as the antithesis of competitive
40 freedom (Von Mises, 1944), but in reality neo-liberal management regulates and de-
41 democratises to create increasing un-freedom and rule bound lives for the many and
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3 freedom for the elite (Briebricher, 2015; Graeber, 2015: 3-44; Müller, 2015; Streeck,
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5 2015).

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11 Weber argues these twin features of bureaucracy and charismatic leadership – the
12
13 ‘double nature of what may be called the capitalist spirit’ (Weber, 1978: 1118) – alter
14
15 people in two neo-liberal ways. Bureaucracy externally regulates subjects through
16
17 rules, rewards and punishments and charismatic leadership internally alters them by
18
19 giving people new ambitions, desires and beliefs (Weber, 1978: 1115-7). Thus if
20
21 managed by the right elite, bureaucracy and charismatic leadership can shape society,
22
23 buttress markets, create competitive organizations for labour, mould subjectivity, and
24
25 protect individual freedom. Here Weber’s competitive leadership and bureaucracy
26
27 dominate individuals, organizations and societies. Some get to manage, intervene and
28
29 lead and others get to follow, be disciplined, and act in prescribed manners. This
30
31 occurs in market societies overseen by large organizations with competitiveness,
32
33 individualism, and private property at its base. Charismatic leaders are the
34
35 intervening force disrupting bureaucratic rules, altering society, maintaining
36
37 competition, and protecting freedom. They are the seemingly ‘post-bureaucratic’
38
39 leaders who sit at the apex of corporate bureaucracies forcing competition onto others
40
41 (Du Gay, 2013). One sees elements of this toxic combination in Amazon with its
42
43 merciless bureaucratic use of data to foist competition onto labour and its infatuation
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45 with a competitive culture that rewards the successful charismatic leaders and
46
47 survivors (Kantor and Streitfield, 2015).
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3 In this reading, Weber favours competition, active intervention and elite leadership.
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5 Like neo-liberals, he sees dynamic markets, elite intervention, bureaucracies built on
6
7 correct rules, and consumer-citizens as part of the solution to the emergence of new
8
9 (aristocratic) organisations and the undermining of competitiveness. Furthermore, he
10
11 argued labour was more in favour of freedom than the elite. In particular, he
12
13 suggested the American worker had resisted bureaucracy, maintained individualism,
14
15 and disapproved of ascribed privilege. However, he suggested this was ending as
16
17 America was 'Europeanised' (Offe, 2005b: 50; Weber, 1994: 278-9). Central here
18
19 was the growing power of bureaucracy within state and private organisations, the role
20
21 of education, the decline of 'free land' and the growth of special interests (see Weber,
22
23 1948: 363-85, 1994: 272-303). Reversing this drift necessitated returning to
24
25 competition in the market, in leadership, and in organizations. This reversal is
26
27 necessarily combined with the limiting of democracy through demagoguery, the need
28
29 for entrepreneurship, and through developing the correct rules to chasten
30
31 bureaucracy's potential to subvert the market – all major themes in management and
32
33 neo-liberal thought today. This 'elective affinity' is at the heart of Weber's ability 'to
34
35 influence the neo-Liberalists of the 1950s so greatly' (Mommsen, 1974: 64) and
36
37 crucially, management thought ever since.
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45 Conclusion

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48 This paper argues neo-liberalism and management are the same programme. Both
49
50 share responses to the crisis of authority which emerged with the transition to
51
52 corporate capitalism. Both argue intervention, expanded competition, and elite
53
54 leadership should reshape the subject and social relations through new forms of
55
56 external regulation and internal discipline. The paper suggests management thought
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3 and the managed organizational form are central but under-developed themes in
4
5 studies of neo-liberalism. Management thought aims to restructure social relations
6
7 and subjects along neo-liberal lines (Davies, 2014: 144-7). Both programmes
8
9 addressed what they saw (and still see) as the same problem – collectivism and
10
11 democracy. Thus despite the enabling and inclusive claims of these dominant
12
13 discourses, both are embedded in elite, anti-democratic thought and practise and
14
15 should be considered elements of one project. As such, recent intensifications of
16
17 management forms located in neo-liberal individualisation, competitiveness, and
18
19 leadership through human resource management (Townley, 1993), entrepreneurship
20
21 (XXXX), leadership (Du Gay, 2013), the expansion of management as consumerist
22
23 practice and pedagogy within Universities (Browne, 2010), and the explicit demands
24
25 for more private sector management within the NHS to ensure new subjectivities and
26
27 less democratic consensus (Griffiths, 1983), are part of an extension which is not alien
28
29 to management as an practical and pedagogic programme. We are witnessing a
30
31 return to the neo-liberal roots of the subject area rather than a new departure. Indeed
32
33 it is perhaps the only subject area founded in neo-liberalism. In this sense,
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35 management differs to other social sciences in its relationship to neo-liberalism
36
37 because the relationship is far more organic than the indirect and often confrontational
38
39 nature of other social sciences to neo-liberalism.
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47 ¹ The paper uses the term working class to identify the group the author sees as the main object of neo-
48 liberalisation's ire. Importantly, neo-liberals rejected the concept of class and discussed not the working
49 class but a 'mass'. For example, when discussing the transition to twentieth century capitalism,
50 Röpke (1948) and Lippmann (1935: 92-5) used the term mass to describe a population of wage
51 dependent, property-less individuals who were easily led and subject to drift and Hayek argued that no
52 collective existed beyond the actions of its individual members (Gamble, 1996: 53-6). This refusal of
53 class is important because it denies a basis for collective rational action and allows for the construction
54 of collective action as non-rational and located in a mass of individuals who are led by a few or as a
55 brief coming together of the interests of self-interested individuals e.g. Hayek's theoretical support for
56 the idea of equilibrium is located in this whilst in practical life he criticises the idea as denying the
57 processual nature of markets and the unknowability of the future (Hayek, 1948: 33-56).

58 ² In this vision the labour market is moral because it provides individuals with a payment linked to
59 what the market will bear alongside an educational content which provides individuals with
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4 information about what is valued and how to compete to provide what the market seeks. Thus here
5 competition acts as both an interpretive source of what skills are valuable and a wage hence, contra
6 some such as Honneth (2005: 56-75), the market needs no further moral intervention because it both
7 provides recognition for the individual and it enables them improve their position through its
8 distribution of knowledge.
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For Review Only

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