

# New Management Practices and the Question of Regulation: A Reflection on the Incapacitation of State Intervention

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- A general overview of debates on new management practices
- The way forms of management intervention can be considered to be forms of regulation in their own right and how these have evolved
- The role of the state and the issues that are emerging in relation to this topic

# 1) Why relevant to a discussion on regulation or the state

- Early debates 80s-90s
- ‘New Management Practices’
- Concerns with non-corporatist models ‘Japan’
- Emergent forms of labour control as in lean production (Danford, Stewart)
- Direct participation (Marchington)
- Crisis of trade unionism and issues of decentralisation in industrial relations (Fairbrother)

- The micro-corporatism agenda (Alonso)
- Identity and loyalty:  
Redefining Collectivism and Identity (Bacon and Storey)
- Micro political processes
- New forms of performance management and control (Appraisal – Townley; Surveillance and performance – Sewell, Taylor and & Bain)

# Industrial Relations and Change

- Trade Union Responses
- Employee responses
- New points of contention
- Politics of Quality and New Forms of Engagement

# The political in all this

- The erosion of autonomous worker representation
- The erosion of spaces of autonomy within the workplace
- The new political dimension of the workplace and management as an increasingly political and regulatory actor (often implicit in many studies)

- The Labour Process agenda:

**Questions of Control  
Redefining participation  
Work intensification**

- But less on participation and more focused on strategy and practice of management with performance management as a moulding element of participation
- This emerges in latter phase
- Not clear where regulation sits in relation to this
- Relative absence of the state in discussion - But residues and references existed

## 2) ...one way of seeing things...

- Internalising and corporatising of regulation through such practices (Martinez Lucio and Simpson, 1992)
- Management as a new & revised actor with its own knowledge and intellectual resources
- Linking the social into the ‘economic’ explicitly at the micro level

# Focus on interventionist state can be found in much of the debate

- So politics of FDI and inward investment as in finance and supportive conditions (Garrahan and Stewart, 1992: Chapter 2)
- The facilitative role of the state in creating a new regime of control and employment relations
- ‘Rather than simply retreating to the sidelines to function as the game’s referee, the state must strategically co-ordinate the interaction between key economic actors in a way that will stimulate deep and crosscutting developmental linkages. These linkages are necessary to facilitate information flow, increase vested interests through participation (as opposed to simply consultation), and improve cross-checked monitoring and implementation — all while maintaining appropriate autonomy from distributional interests. But this new role for the state is also dramatically different from the theoretical role of the developmental state. Instead of simply directing investment and ameliorating risk, the state must now encourage, facilitate, and co-ordinate the formation of *intangible* assets, which often requires more private-sector leadership.’ (Ritchie, 2002: 32)

- The authoritarian populist state as in Stuart Hall's work and Andrew Gamble regarding the free state and the strong economy in providing the political context
- The analysis around collective action and the curtailing and containing of the state – a legacy of union marginalisation in many studies: the unfolding of a systematic stigmatisation of collectivism
- (for a review see MacKenzie and Martinez Lucio, 2004/14)

- The new representation and sponsorship of business unionism during the 1997-2010 period
- Partnership and the Representative arena:

Reconstructing labour relations around mutuality

The new business corporatism which links the social and economic  
(Danford et al)

Micro-corporatism

No extensive regulatory support; voluntarist corporatism: state as rule maker and indirect facilitator (Stuart & Martinez Lucio, 2005; Martinez Lucio and Stuart 2011): the consultancy and benchmark state

- The role of ideology:
- The question of language within Hyman's early work: the role of language and ideology is part of a broader tapestry of Marxist analysis. For example, the language of 'fairness' was mobilized in the 1970s by the state, in terms of wages and working time, and assumes reciprocal relations and obligations between managers and workers. The agenda was developed with a view of moderating unions and not management alone. Fairness is a common feature of current trends in the study and practice of industrial relations where fairness at work, 'good jobs' and the role of the 'good employer' are exalted as desirable features of employment relations.
- the accumulation state: fusing economic interests into the employment relation
- the regulating state: creating new sets of rules in terms of representation and conflict for example
- the ideological state: learning, training, behaviours
- the coercive state: surveillance and control of conduct in and around the workplace

# ....divergent movements

Employers and management (an unclear relation – Thompson) are internalising regulation and control and articulating it around ‘business agendas’ (which are increasingly financial agendas ...)

- The state is facilitating and attempting to sustain the rules of these new engagements but there is a process of withdrawal and reinvention taking place at the same time

### 3) Some approaches

Frameworks are needed to be able to engage with these complex movements as in the notion of regulatory space (Hancher and Moran); broader understandings of collectivism as site of engagement and re-definition; and a broader awareness of how management control is understood as more than just an ensemble of practices or levels (which raises the key issue of management capacity and identity)

## 4) The compulsive return to direct control?

- However we are seeing a return to a fascination and dependency on performance measurement
- The ‘positive side’ or fiction of the smiling worker, the quality circle, and the loyal employee is abandoned or marginalised within an ever more Taylorised approach which also envelops the social and the notion of fairness at work

- Instead, we see benchmarks, standards, auditing, even in the social - maps of responsibilities but no support.
- The emergent obsession with codification, measurement, surveillance and control (Taylor)
- The performance side of the state - the increasing enactment of Pollitt's astute observation of the state - is becoming obsessively developed with glaring contradictions but on the other hand the state has to put in places rules and rights and regulation and learning. It has to teach organisations to get on with the 'business'.

There is no ‘compact’ as such and that makes the state more volatile, eccentric, and xenophobic - this is a deliberate strategy but is also an outcome of the reduced options for the state and the contradictions of its policies of economic withdrawal.

Also the social democratic polity is drawn to this - delivery and performance state, the entrepreneurial and managerialist dimension as sign of maturity, distance from trade unions in political and personnel as sign of modernity, the denial of collective language of any type, ... There is less policy on labour beyond minimums and basic economic issues .

So authoritarianism and direct intervention is seen as an outcome of failure, panic, lack of resources, and not just neoliberal trends - Work degradation and ongoing controls are driven by a fundamental disinterest in the quality and nature of work.

So the disconnected state .... As in disconnected capital ... But a state that is obsessed with covering for its withdrawal through greater rule making and frameworks of performance management. Pushing responsibility onto others: especially in public sector as in workers, professionals and managers within a decentred environment.

Questions of ***deliberate*** strategy and/or crisis management and/or neo-liberalism?

The regulatory industry

The need to keep returning to the scorched landscape of withdrawal  
(Rubery 2011)

The incapacitated state as in disconnected capitalism (Thompson) perhaps

Coping with a capitalist neo-liberal state but also a dysfunctional one  
which is unclear even in its relation with organisations

In this respect the debate on NMP, HRM etc is about the remaking of the state and regulation yet this project is clearly faltering and reverting to one of establishing basic targets and performance oriented approaches