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# Movement and Coalition in Contention: Gender, Management and Academe in England and Sweden

**Jim Barry, Elisabeth Berg, and John Chandler**

Contact addresses for correspondence:

Elisabeth Berg
Department of Human
Work Sciences
Luleå University of Technology
SE-971 87 Luleå
Sweden

Tel.+46(0)920491663
Fax. +46(0)920491030
 E-mail:elisabeth.berg@ltu.se

Jim Barry and John Chandler
Organisation Studies Research Group
Business School
Docklands Campus
University of East London
4 - 6 University Way
London
E16 2RD  England

Tel. +44(0)2082232207/2211
Fax +44(0)2082232899
E-Mail: j.j.barry@uel.ac.uk
j.p.chandler@uel.ac.uk

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# Movement and Coalition in Contention: Gender, management and academe in England and Sweden

Jim Barry, Elisabeth Berg, and John Chandler

## Abstract

*The paper opens by considering recent change in higher education, examined through literature on new public management. In this literature the direction of change is decided in advance, assumed to emanate from above, and conceptualised as moments fixed in time. As a consequence, it is argued, the rich processes of change enacted through time, which seek to take account of the motives of those involved, are elided. It is further contended that change is more appropriately understood as contested rather than consensual, and that civil society is implicated in processes of public sector change in the organisations affected. An attempt is made accordingly to analyse the presence of social movement influences within universities as non-social movement organisations in order to consider the influences at work. Arguments are considered for and against the status of the new public management as social movement, which is taken to be a coalition. It is then shown that women's movements, understood conventionally as social movements within social movement theory literature, is alive and well in the halls of academe, engaged in direct and indirect struggle and forms of symbolic contestation in the furtherance of gender equity in the milieu of management reform. It is concluded that empirical work, which makes use of social movement theory, is necessary to explore management change attempts in order to take fuller account of those involved, and of movement and coalition in contention.*

*Key Words: social movements, new public management, women's movements, academe, change*

## Introduction

In this paper consideration is given to recent attempts at management change in universities and to the lessons that may be learned from its contested passage in the halls of academe. The context in which these management change attempts are taking place is important, since it seems that a number of similar challenges are facing public sectors in many parts of the world. These concern principally the need to achieve efficiencies and value for money in the operation and delivery of public services, as well as promote democracy and ensure good governance. The reasons for challenges such as these surfacing at the present time are doubtless quite complex, although the pervasiveness of neo-liberal agendas and enhanced sensitivity to the volatility of changing electoral tastes, as well as concern for human rights and empowerment, all have a part to play.

The response to these challenges has seen the introduction, to varying degrees, of new public management reforms, and governance. In what follows we argue that these interventions in the public sector have been introduced from above and with little

account taken of those responsible for delivery and implementation of the new public service regimes. We contend that this has much to do with the ways in which the notion of change has been conceptualised, as a series of change moments fixed in time. We further contend that this focus on stability, rather than change, has drawn attention away from the processes of change, which are fluid, revised through time, and subject to ongoing (re)negotiation.

We then examine the part played by civil society in recent public sector change attempts, arguing that rational approaches which assume consensus elide its messy and contingent character, leading us to favour accounts that focus on change rather than stability, and offer greater insight into the processes at work. We move on to explore change processes through the vehicle of social movement theory, using higher education for purposes of analysis and illustration. We note that publicly active social movement organisations have been acknowledged in the literature, notably in studies of governance, but contend that movements operating within non-social movement organisations have been neglected. In exploring the implications within academe, we conclude that this has potential for a deeper and richer analysis of change than has been possible in the past.

**New Public Management and Governance**

Hood (1995) has noted the growth of new public management reforms in a number of OECD countries where he identifies leaders, such as New Zealand, the UK and Sweden, and laggards, who include Germany and Japan. These reforms have seen the transplantation of management techniques and ideologies from the private sector, such as performance measurement and cultural evangelism, designed to revivify what has been seen as an antiquated, even moribund, public sector. The consequence, it has been argued, is that those public sectors taking the lead have been undergoing considerable transformation, leading Clarke and Newman (1997) to talk of the growth in Britain of a 'managerial state'. Furthermore, it appears from published literature that the management reforms have been felt quite sharply in some sectors with Stoker and Wilson (2004: 262), for example, commenting in respect of British local government, '[w]e know that many people in the local government world feel they have, since the 1980s, been on the roller-coaster from hell'. Indeed the dominance of a management template introduced from above, also noted in health care (Ferlie and Fitzgerald 2002), appears well established and unlikely to be supplanted any time soon.

Similar processes appear to have been at work in British higher education, with Halsey (1995) commenting on the 'decline of donnish dominion', Parker and Jary (1995) the development of the 'McUniversity', and Dominelli and Hoogvelt (1996) the 'Taylorization of intellectual labour'; accompanied by a decline of trust in academics (Trow 1994) and the growth of what Power (1997) has dubbed an 'audit society'. The consequences for academics, according to some commentators, have been quite severe, with reports of bullying and growing levels of stress at work (cf Kinman 1996; Chandler et al 2002; and Berg et al 2004), as collegiality comes under pressure to conform to the dictates of management control and shift from professional to responsible autonomy (Dent 1993). There are also studies that indicate pressures on higher education quality controls (Hoecht 2006). The literature does point to some

resistances by academics (cf Chandler et al 2004), but this seems limited when compared, for example, to medical doctors who appear to have maintained a stronger resilience in the face of attempts to reform them, although this is an issue that seems far from settled (Dent and Barry 004).

Nonetheless, attempts to import and further embed management hierarchies and techniques in academe have continued, despite evidence that points to failure in the private sector prior to their introduction in the public (Cutler 2003). It seems that hard-pressed managers continue to place faith in the certainties of abstract management conceptions to solve the problems they face in the everyday governing of public sector institutions since, even though they are likely to disappoint in practice, failures can always be rationalised away and discarded in favour of the latest fashion or fad (Brunsson 2004). Yet even as advocates seek a continuance of management reforms in academe, a change of emphasis is discernible in the literature concerning a shift to governance.

This is evident in the case of university governance. Ackroyd and Ackroyd (1999: 171, 179 and 183), for example, have argued in respect of the British case that it is 'at times of great change that issues of governance are at their most significant'. They point to differences of governance between pre-1992 (traditional) and post-1992 (new or modern) universities, with the former vulnerable to financial difficulties but excelling more frequently in research and teaching, in contrast to the latter which are more managerially regulated, innovative and financially robust but susceptible to excesses of control, misappropriation and corruption. Yet this dichotomy can be questioned with differences manifest within each sub-sector and indeed within each university, their concern at proposals (the Dearing Report of 1997) to assimilate the systems of governance evident in each suggesting a tension, bordering some might say on incompatibility, between 'effective management of universities … [and] … their academic dynamic'; with the need for some kind of management presence in governance taken for granted. It would certainly seem that governance within universities is linked to management in an uneasy relationship.

Nonetheless, there is a lack of conceptual clarity in use of the term governance. The literature makes reference to the growth of networks, partnerships, dialogue, collaboration and the coordination of institutions and systems, suggesting multi-level activity and new processes of governing (cf Pierre 2000; and Bevir and Rhodes 2003). Yet Stoker and Wilson (2004:10; see also Bovaird and Löffler 2003:8) see the term governance as 'contested and slippery'. This may be significant since language can be used to obfuscate as well as clarify. Indeed, it can be argued that the lack of clarification of the term governance serves to maintain tenuous state control of the public sector, however vicarious this might be. Support for this view can be found in Newman's text *Modernising Governance* (2001; for development see Hood et al 2000; and Dent 2005), where each of her models concerning change, viewed through axes of de/centralisation and order/change– *hierarchical* (bureaucratic) *rational* (management), *open systems* (networking) and *self-governance* (consensus and partnerships) – reveal state involvement and influence (Barry et al 2006).

The literature on governance nonetheless promotes a welcome emphasis on state-civil society relations when considering the public sector, important given the recent emphasis on democracy and good governance. This is significant since new public

management reforms and governance offer prescriptions for change that take scant account of the constituencies responsible for the operation and delivery of services. Why this is so is an interesting question and may have something to do with an imagined consensus in the state-civil society nexus. Yet there is no good reason to assume consensus given the plurality of interests evident in existing democracies, with contemporary material and/or symbolic pressures of neo-liberalism likely to exacerbate tensions rather than ameliorate them. In any event, the issue is how democracy is conceived, our position closer to the agonistic type of real-time milieu advocated by Mouffe (1999), than the imaginary abstractions of Habermas (1995). Reasons for presupposing consensus may also have something to do with the self-interest of management and state elites. Even so, and keeping an open mind on elite theory which reveals a less than flattering view of followers by those in positions of power than might perhaps have been expected, an appreciation of the limitations of studies of management change suggests quite strongly that this has a great deal to do with conventional wisdom on management change itself.

**Changing Times: Shifts in management and civil society**

Turning to management change we note two key assumptions in the published literature. First, that change is to be understood as the outcome of rational, consensual processes, conceptualised through a series of snap-shots, taken before, during and after change processes, that effectively freeze moments in time (Thomas and Davies 2005). Studies of change, seen from this vantage point, are little more than studies of organisational stability and order, analysed at what are largely stationary moments of time (Tsoukas and Chia 2001). Second, that change is decided in advance of its introduction and initiated from the top of organisational hierarchies. Whether or not consensus is manifested, change is nonetheless assumed to be in everyone's interest, much like Rousseau's (1763) 'general will' that presupposed a consonance of the collective and the individual (Merquior 1980: 44). In such circumstances stakeholder concerns and internal organisational recalcitrance derive from ignorance and/or misunderstanding, which can be remedied through revelation of purpose or, if necessary, managed and marginalised in order to realise desired change.

This unitary or visionary view of change invariably denies legitimacy to alternative agendas in civil society, which are associated with social movements. It also serves to marginalise the existence of social movement values that, whilst emanating from civil society, operate through members of non-social movement organisations to effect change in the organisational status quo, challenging thereby the significance of organisational boundaries. An alternative approach would thus focus on the processes of change rather than their static intervals and a broader field of players than has hitherto been the custom, particularly from middle and lower levels of organisational hierarchies. From this perspective the institutions of the public sector, such as academe, can be seen as embedded in civil society and conceptualised as in contention through everyday processes and interactions, where outcomes remain uncertain.

By seeking to take fuller account of civil society and the social processes of change that emanate from within the subterranean levels of organisations themselves, from where social movement activities and values can surface, it is argued that a more

complete picture of public sector change comes into focus. It is here that we are likely to find reasons for support and resistance to elements of change attempts in public sector organisations such as universities, at least in contrast to the dues ex machina 'neo-liberal globalisation' (Clarke 2004: 44) which is an incomplete and flawed project, its limitations rendering dominance problematic. This approach is certainly at odds with Leys' (2001) view that 'neoliberal democracy' stifles and suffocates potential disturbance to its rule. As Clarke (ibid) explains,

> …dominant strategies are just that – strategies. They require intense political-cultural work to make them come true – and we should be wary of reading outcomes from strategies … [they] have to overcome resistances, refusals and blockages.

Conceptions of civil society as in need of control and government (management and governance?) have a long intellectual history, with the relationship between civil society and the state having long interested social and political intellectuals. Yet if there is a distinction that marks a boundary between them it is at best loosely drawn and poorly conceptualised, the connectivity between the two having been recognised by theorists of social movements, who have identified civil society as the terrain on which a lively politics has been making its mark. This has given rise to one of the two dominant schools of social movement theory, the political process or resource mobilisation school. This school was developed in North America, where pressure groups are in evidence, and has focused its attention on the routines and forms of oppositional social movement organisations (cf Zald and MacArthy1987) and publicly visible forms of action (cf Tilly 1985). Its proponents have analysed the visible and measurable aspects of social movements identifying, for example, local experiences of organisation and protest that are transferable to differing situations where protest and repertoires of contention ebb and flow in cyclical movement (Tilly 1995). This approach has found favour with those studying the American civil rights movement (cf McAdam 1982: 2). More recent research has identified circuits of social movement communication linked through relays that create networks of networks, and a 'movement society' (Rucht and Neidhardt 2002). The other dominant school is known as the new social movement or identity-oriented approach. Originating in Europe and the so-called 'decade of protest', the1960's, this approach looks beneath the surface of the observable to the invisible social linkages and subterranean networks of those with like mind who oppose the status quo. The individuals involved do not carry movement membership cards, but they do act collectively as well as separately, sharing an orientation that is oppositional to the status quo, and those with power in order to render it visible and thereby negotiable. For Melucci (1995; and 1997), involvement in social movement networks is sufficient in itself to provide purpose and meaningful identities for the participants who might, for example, choose to identify themselves with the women's movement or the environmental/ecological movement. From this vantage point, the values and affiliations of movement supporters become significant, providing an impulse for the positioning of those involved (Barry et al 2007a).

The two approaches differ in focus: the 'political process' school examines the *how* of change, and advocates of 'new social movements' the *why*; the former studies the observable organisational forms of protest, whilst the latter considers the submerged networks, affiliations and symbolic challenges to the dominant order. What they have

in common, albeit perhaps to varying degrees, is a focus on social movement action and change, with each consisting of degrees of reformism and radicalism, suggesting that action and change take place along a continuum and attract a broad base of appeal as a result. Yet action is something that Touraine (1985; and 2002), an advocate of the new social movement approach, has been at pains to emphasise. This suggests that although change appears in 'political process' studies, it is perhaps from the perspective of a 'new social movement' approach that its mechanisms can best be explored if we are to consider movement, rather than static moments frozen in time.

Social movement theory has yet to make its presence felt fully in the world of organisation, management and governance studies. There are some references to social movements in studies considering governance, but these suggest that the authors have in mind the political process variety, which are at least observable (cf Newman 2004: 203 and 217; see also Clarke 2004: 40). This is perhaps clearest in studies of environmental movements where stakeholders, identified in one study of the private sector variously as customers, shareholders, environmental campaigners, governments, green pressure groups and regulators, are managed and sometimes played off against one another (Fineman and Clarke1996:728-729). Yet, despite this, it seems that attention has yet to turn to the study of change and social movements within non-social movement organisations, especially those within the state, for which a new social movement approach would seem appropriate. We turn accordingly to a consideration of management change processes, to see what movements might be identified. We begin with the new public management itself, in order to consider its status as a social movement.


**New Public Management: Movement or coalition?**

To assess he degree to which new public management qualifies as a social movement we need to examine, in a little more detail than earlier, its genesis and characteristics as identified in the literature. Hood documents the recent changes in the public sector as representing a move from progressive public administration and democratic accountability towards 'accountingization'. This comes about, he argues, through the adoption of private sector management techniques and an emphasis on 'accountability in terms of results' (Hood 1995: 94 and 96). Yet whilst he argues that these shifts indicate the presence of a 'managerial reform movement' (Hood et al 1999:189-90), there is no explicit use of social movement theory with which to conceptualise the phenomena, not surprising perhaps as this approach is to be found in the domain of political sociology. Studies of social movements generally focus on those left of centre, or are seen as somewhat progressive, and have included the labour movement, student movement, green movement, and women's movement, though in principle there appears no sound reason to restrict the field of enquiry on political grounds, especially as the position of an object of study depends on the perspective from which it is viewed. In what follows we consider, therefore, whether we might conceptualise the new public management as a social movement.

We begin by noting that the new public management shares a number of the characteristics of other social movements. Some of its advocates, for example, adopt radical, ideological postures in their desire to usher in and embed its precepts with evangelical fervour, anxious to impart their visions, develop mission statements, and

regulatory procedures of surveillance; we would characterise these supporters as managerialist, rather than simply managerial, in their pursuit of managerialism. There are also those who support the new management in reformist ways, ready to play their small part in overseeing the discharge of public duties in the pursuit of cost containment, efficiency and individual accountability, bending to what are seen as the prevailing winds of change. As with other social movements, supporters of the new public management do not carry membership cards and are not easily identifiable, with some choosing to emerge from the organisational woodwork only when they judge the time to be right. Some may favour particular styles of generic private sector management, and adopt the perspective of tough minded Taylorism, or the participatory eulogies of Human Relations, the twin bedrocks of modern management; or they may prefer an updated variation of these, realised through performance management or cultural evangelism respectively, seeking in short to embrace whatever fashion or fad is currently on offer. But whatever their take on management, they have something in common. As with the different wings and perspectives of the women's movement, for example, who share a concern over historically and spatially sustained gender inequality and a desire to alter the current state of affairs, so supporters of the new public management share an unease with public administration and a desire for change and control - of pennies, procedures and people in the public sectors of the present.

To this end, supporters of the new management reforms seek to further their objectives through organisations and forums created to meet their various purposes, in line with the political process school (for early developments in British local government see Cochrane1993: 101-2 and 119). Such bodies may disseminate their values through the media, as well as through public sector institutions themselves, as in the case of entrepreneurship. Here, for example in Sweden, we note the development of entrepreneurship education for young people delivered via upper secondary school and universities, a Trojan horse whose purpose is to enhance the image of the private sector whilst simultaneously lowering expectation of future public sector employment (Cervantes 2005). Supporters of the new public management also use networking, following the new social movement approach. However, a note of caution is in order before we conclude that the new public management is indeed a social movement. As Pakulski (1988: 247) argues:

> The concept of social movement suffers from an acute form of "stretch," which reduces its analytical utility and hinders empirical research' … [t]he first task of the sociology of social movements is [therefore] the restoration of intentional clarity and extensional precision of the central concepts.

What then are the implications for the new public management? Our contention is that, despite similarities between the two, the instrumentality that is characteristic of the phenomena under consideration renders it closer conceptually to coalition than movement. Della Porta and Diana (1999: 20), who draw on the work of Pakulski, sum this up as follows:

> In contrast to social movements, interaction in coalitions does not result necessarily in the emergence of collective identities, nor does it imply necessarily any sort of continuity beyond the limits of the specific conflictual situation, let alone a global redefinition of the issues at stake. For these

reasons, it is impossible to reduce movements to purely instrumental coalitions.

It is interesting to reflect on the development and permeation of management, not just through the increasing use of private sector consultancies as well as some obliging University Business and Management Schools, but also through civil servants, political think-tanks and the offices of the European Commission, as researchers and leaders of public sector opinion mix together and exchange ideas. As Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000: 20-21) explain:

> the OECD's Public Management Service … PUMA has been one of the nodal points in an international network … [that] has helped to shape what has now become an "international community of discourse" about public management reform … [with the] World Bank, the IMF and the Commonwealth Institute … also … international disseminators of management reform ideas

The changes that have followed have led some authors to examine the independence of public sector professionals, who become increasingly accountable and responsible to the dictates of the new management as it pursues an instrumental agenda of change concerned more with means than ends; here the professional autonomy traditionally associated with their work can be transmuted into responsible autonomy, as their 'freedom' over working routines comes under challenge from the new managers (Dent 1993). Others have sensed a growing management colonisation of the public sector, at least in Britain as noted earlier, with resistance among professional workers of an apparently limited and individualized kind (Clarke and Newman 1997).

Yet there are those who are unsure about the very existence of a 'new' public management, identifying the presence of already well-established, tried and trusted, management strategies co-existing with a recent emphasis on cultural change (Pollitt and Bouckart 2000: 15) and performance management (Barry et al 2003). Others still, have questioned the unity of the changes, reporting in the case of local government a variety of 'management recipes' and 'mess' (Lowndes 1997). Published academic literature in Sweden, another forerunner in public management reform, also talks a little less of a new public management and more about the recent changes in terms of reforms, with the element of competition often associated with the changes rather less in evidence (Von Otter 1999), even though it may be increasing. This casts further doubt on the social movement status of new public management. Furthermore, its oppositional credentials are far from established since it appears to work at the behest, if not on behalf, of those in power who cascade their requirements from above; although this may not in and of itself be decisive. This could mean that new public management, which is under-theorised at present, may be an imagined movement, an abstraction whose virtual existence can be conjured up at appropriate moments in time by those who seek short, or perhaps longer, term advantage.

Even if it appears to originate from above, from those who seek to direct, regulate and oversee change, it nonetheless finds instrumental support through small business links and Rotary Clubs (Cervantes 2005). Furthermore, the messy compromises and settlements forged in different situations between those acting to co-ordinate, steer, manage and govern from on high and those lower down the organisational hierarchy

charged with the implementation and oversight of change indicate less than a collective identification between those pushing for change, suggesting that we are witnessing may just be coalition and movement in contention.

Many of those involved in the operationalisation of new public management in higher education may indeed have alternative agendas to those delivered from above, derived from affiliation with a number of social movements; and whilst this is likely to complicate any analysis of change it can also be seen to enrich it, once we recognise that supporters of social movement values may be seeking to alter the processes of managerial change in different directions. More than this it enables us to extend an analysis of change to those within organisations who are responsible for the implementation and subsequent oversight of change. This is further complicated by the fact that those in middle positions in universities come from a variety of discipline backgrounds, or tribes (Becher 1989), and differ in age, social class, gender and ethnicity. It seems difficult to know where to begin to unravel the processes at work, which can involve labour movements, environmental movements and, if we were to follow the notion of a social movement society, many others not least the student movement that would appear to have had an impact on academe (cf Cockburn and Blackburn 1969).

In the next section of the paper we focus on the women's movement, in relation to the new public management movement. We have chosen this particular movement for three reasons. First, academic literature has already identified what have been termed femocrats operating in public sector organisations, not least in higher education; these are women who identify themselves as feminist and/or are vocal in their representation of equal opportunities (Deem and Ozga 2000). Second, the new social movement theorist Touraine (2002:94), taking issue with the political process school, has contended that there is 'one central social movement in our society, comparable to the labour movement in industrial society. This is the women's movement'; and, whilst mindful that Touraine is noted for his predilection for a central movement, we contend that the women's movement has a vibrancy world wide (cf Braig and Wölte 2002; and Molyneux 2004) at least comparable to others. Third, we acknowledge a pragmatic consideration: that, for purposes of the paper, we need to limit our scope. Given this, our intention is to consider the relationship of women's movements to new public management coalitions in universities, taking England and Sweden as illustrative of OECD countries at the forefront of the recent management reforms (Hood 1995).

**Women's Movement in Academe**

In contrast to new public management, a great deal has been written about the women's movement as a social movement (cf Freeman 1975; Dahlerup 1986; Rowbotham 1992). It has been identified as comprising many strands of feminism including liberal, socialist, Marxist, radical, revolutionary, post-structuralist and postmodernist; some have even used the term post-feminist although, given the enduring nature of gender inequality, this latter is hotly contested. The wide range of perspectives identified is indicative of reformist and radical tendencies, as well as a broad church that aspire to a variety of notions of gender equality; indeed it can be argued that vagueness of aims and objectives is a prerequisite of social movement

viability in attracting widespread support. Organisational forms of women's movement activity, in line with the political process school, have been noted, not least in the USA. These include NOW (the National Organisation of Women) and the right-wing WEAL (Women's Equity Acton League), identified by Freeman (1975: 49). In Europe, where the new social movement approach surfaced, studies have sought to examine the processes of networks and not least collective orientations (Melucci 1995). There have also been studies, as we noted, which have examined women's movements as worldwide phenomena (Braig and Wölte 2002; see also Khan 2002). Yet there is no work of which we are aware, beyond our own, on women's movements as social movements operating in non-social movement organisations such as universities.

Published literature appears to have relatively little to say historically about women and men academics in higher education. What we do know comes from fairly recent consideration of the topic (cf Deem 2003; Thomas and Davies 2002; Fogelberg et al 1999; Morley 1999; Acker 1994) as well as analysis of earlier literature whose purpose had been other than an examination of gender, management and social movements in academe; though Virginia Woolf, writing early in the twentieth century (1938; see also Evans 1997) did reflect on the presence a male elite running universities. Recent scholarship has also pointed to the existence of an 'invisible college' or old boy network in academe, dating back to the seventeenth century (O'Leary and Mitchell 1990: 59). The literature has only relatively recently begun to examine the implications, suggesting that the new management changes may be affecting women academics and their female students more adversely than their male counterparts (Cotterill and Waterhouse 1998; Elg and Jonnergård 2003). Even so, there is relatively little on gender, management and the public sector generally (cf Barry et al 2003; and Whitehead and Moodley 1999), let alone on gender, management and academe (cf Deem and Ozga 2000; and Deem 2003).

From what we do know, it seems that higher education has not been a particularly favourable environment for women to work in, although it is a place where it might have been thought that women had opportunities not readily available elsewhere (Halsey 1995: 216). This is understandable given recent increases in female representation in higher education, certainly in Britain (op cit: 221-222). Even so, despite recent increases in the number of female academics, universities have proved somewhat resilient to the pressures of equity legislation to democratise and allow free rein to equality of opportunity, reflecting a masculine culture in its daily routines (Thomas and Davies 2002). Indeed, there is plenty of evidence in the literature that women in universities suffer a variety of forms of disadvantage and discrimination. This is evident, for example, from their continuimg dominance in insecure, low level and low paid occupational positions (cf Lie and O'leary 1990; Acker 1994; Lie and Malik 1994; Morley 1994; and Fogelberg et al 1999). Recent management change, through the vehicle of the new public management, would appear to have done little to remedy this, with a variety of both opportunities *and* constraints appearing for those involved (Goode and Bagilhole 1998) who suffer the stresses and strains of the new public management reforms (Doyle and Hind 1998) that spill over into the domestic sphere (Davies and Holloway 1995 12-16).

Indeed, the introduction of new public management reforms would appear to be putting traditional elements of academic work - teaching, research and administration

– under such considerable pressure that a sharpened academic division of labour is developing in a number of universities. The consequence for women is that they are finding themselves increasingly disadvantaged in respect of particular elements and sub-elements of academic work. This is noticeable in *teaching*, since they outnumber men in lower to middle level positions where teaching loads are most heavily concentrated. It is the case in terms of *pastoral care* for students, whose needs multiply if they come from social backgrounds where families have little prior experience of higher education. They also find themselves disadvantaged in *research*, because men occupy research positions such as Docent/Reader and Professor disproportionately to women (Berg et al 2003).

Given the picture of disadvantage, it may be difficult to discern the influence of women's movement activity in academe. Yet it is contended here that women's movement influences have operated through the daily life of universities, even though these are non-social movement organisations. This is because organisational members are at one and the same time members of civil society, carriers of myriad personal experiences and social movement values that impact on the organisations in which they work. Social movements as we have seen comprise reformist and radical wings, with some of their followers relatively easy to identify from their espoused views and/or actions, whilst others move more quietly, unseen, through their daily routines. Their presence is thus not always obvious or visible; with 'woodwork' feminists (Freeman 1975) making their presence felt only when the time is right. There is thus a need to consider bearers of social movement values, with their alternative and oppositional visions of the world who use non-social movement organisations for the advancement of their values. This include those who seek gender equity and represent the neo-liberal wing of the women's movement, reformist in character and subjected to the vagaries and fashions of the moment, their objectives frustrated by dominant tendencies that favour individualism and marketisation, and the very meritocratic principles to which they aspire which endorse equality of opportunity to be unequal (Knights and Richards 2003).

There are studies of women who have been labelled feminists in the academy (Morley 1999), as well as femocrats (Deem and Oza 2000; see also Deem 2003) and tempered radicals (Meyerson and Scully 1995) that point to women taking oppositional stances. Yet there appears to be scant account taken of women's movements as social movements, which can attract support from a variety of quarters. Whilst working from within public sector organisations, those involved may be said to represent liberal and radical wings of the movement. Most of the networks of which they may be a part take visible form, as in the case of WHEN (the Women in Higher Education Network), a UK higher education network (Morley and Walsh 1996). Others are less visible but can surface on occasion, albeit rarely in the present context of constraint and work intensification, to oppose senior university male managers collectively, despite their differences of position, ethnicity and age (Barry et al 2007b); te group in this case was supported by some men who shared their values. This latter point underscores the limitations of relying on studies of femocrats, or espoused feminists, who represent the active voice of women's movements. This is because women's movements are social movements for change, with a range of affiliations, as supporters carry their values and predispositions with them as they orient and position themselves in everyday encounters and their relationships with others. Some supporters will choose to voice and act out their concerns at every opportunity, others

to bide their time, making their move at what they consider appropriate moments to join in the processes of change. There will also be those who support movement values and choose to oppose indirectly. All in all, it seems that women's movements are indeed alive and well in academe, their study illustrative not of moments in time that occur between episodes of change, but of the change process itself, revealing reasons for the 'why' of change, rather than simply the mechanistic 'how'.


**Concluding Thoughts**

In this paper we have examined the introduction of management change in the public sector generally and in higher education specifically. We have considered new public management reforms, which have been influential in many public sectors around the globe, and their use of management techniques drawn from the private sector. We have also considered briefly the shift to governance, as public sectors extend their reach into civil society in the forming of networks, collaborations and partnerships. It has been our contention that such approaches offer top down prescriptions for change, divorced form the constituencies responsible for their operation and delivery. We have argued that attempts to understand the recent changes contain key assumptions about the notion of change itself: first, that change should emanate from above; and, second, that change can best be understood when viewed at specific moments in time. Yet this emphasis, on *stationary, fixed, moments of time*, misses the insights to be gained from an examination of the processes of change, *enacted through time*.

This, we have argued, is possible through the adoption of a social movement framework, specifically the European inspired new social movement, or identity-oriented, approach associated with Touraine and Melucci. By focusing on the experiences, values, affiliations and actions of those involved, within non-social movement organisations, we have argued that the processes of change come more clearly into view. This is because change is a contingent, fluid and messy process rather than purely rationally contrived, it is conflictful rather than consensual.

We have attempted to illustrate our central themes through a consideration of new public management and women's movements as instrumental coalition and social movement respectively, operating in contemporary academe. The analysis has offered little comfort for advocates of gender equality. Published academic literature has shown that gender inequality in higher education has been sustained through time. Virginia Woolf, as we have seen, came to regard universities as bastions of elite male privilege, and little in this respect seems to have altered. Yet female representation has increased in universities and male dominance has been questioned, placing issues of equity firmly on the agenda of policy reform. By rendering power visible it does indeed seem to become, in Melucci's terms, negotiable. Change has been slow, but steady, the passage of the reforms that emanated from women's movement processes resulting in symbolic challenge to the status quo and struggle against vested interest.

The rise of the new public management, in particular, which came after these developments, has provided opportunities for some individual women who saw profit in its pursuit, strengthening thereby the tendencies which were detrimental to gender equity in the past, seeking to limit spaces for participative working arrangements and intrude hierarchical control in place of collegiality. Even so, women's movements

continue to make their mark on processes of change in the public sector, with woodwork, active and politicised female supporters, alongside some few supportive male colleagues, who seek to unsettle self-interest in the furtherance of gender equity. Though largely individualised in their actions, reflecting the neo-liberal temper of the times, we have seen the appearance, however rare in the intensified work regimes of contemporary academe, of collective mobilisation, indicative of politicised identities and movements at work. The lesson of the contention encountered in academe is clear and simple: the need for instrumental public sector management change attempts to take fuller account of those involved. Future empirical exploration of these processes, using social movement theory, will doubtless yield some interesting insights on movement and coalition in contention in academe.

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