

New vistas for development management:

Examining radical-reformist possibilities and potential

by Nilima Gulrajani

FULL CITATION

Gulrajani, N. (2010) “New vistas for development management: Examining radical-reformist possibilities and potential” *Public Administration and Development*. 30(2): 136-148.

New vistas for development management:

Examining radical-reformist possibilities and potential

Nilima Gulrajani

Summary

This article provides an overview of contemporary development management scholarship, suggesting that a longstanding division between radical and reformist development management research continues to exist. The article offers a closer examination of critical development management (CDM), the most recent example of radical development management thought that is connecting scholars in critical management studies to those identifying with post-development theory. CDM's suggestion that all development management is perniciously managerial is scrutinized and challenged on both theoretical and normative grounds. Overall, an argument is sketched out to support a future for development management that is neither defined nor destined for failure. The future of development management scholarship can and should concern itself with a non-managerial development practice that bridges the divide between radicals and reformers.

Key words: development management, development administration, managerialism, post-developmentalism, aid effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1960s, Schaffer reviewed the state of development administration scholarship and concluded that it was in a “deadlock” that derived from intellectual divisions over the value of bureaucratic reforms in the developing world (Schaffer, 1969). In an attempt to update Schaffer’s analysis, Hirschmann observed additional and ongoing divisions that plagued the community of actors with interests in development planning (Hirschmann, 1981; Hirschmann, 1999). One important dichotomy for development management was articulated as the “radical view of bureaucracy which saw it as an inherent part of the ruling classes...and those who continued to believe that with reform the bureaucracy could serve the interests of their people resulting in a communication breakdown in development planning” (Hirschmann, 1981). The purpose of this article is to trace the contemporary landscape of radical thought on development management and suggest that there exists both possibilities and potential for bridging the chasm with its reformist counterparts. This contemporary radical perspective is ascribed as the school of Critical Development Management (CDM) to highlight its intellectual debts to two key literatures—Foucauldian post-development theory and neo-Marxian critical management studies.

The article asks whether CDM’s main claim—that development management is a product of a rational modernist ideology that is perniciously managerial—is tenable on both theoretical and normative grounds. By examining CDM’s roots in critical management studies, this exclusive characterization of

development management as managerial is challenged. CDM remains predicated on a partial understanding of critical management studies and thus ignores its own capacity to theorize a non-rationalist concept of modernity and by consequence, a non-managerialist development practice. By borrowing from Romantic intellectual traditions, we can obtain an alternative theory of development practice that challenges managerial constructions inspired by Enlightenment social ideologies of planning and progress.

In offering this criticism of CDM, it must be stated from the onset the intention is not to question the value of its contribution to development management scholarship. Indeed, there is in CDM the opportunity for a development management that is more ‘democratic, tolerant and self-critical approaches to analysis and action’ (Cooke et al., 2008). Moreover, the incisive criticism CDM offers of the development management apparatus make us aware of its darker side and keeps ‘the raw nerve of outrage alive’ (Corbridge 2007: 143). Yet, if the claimed purpose of CDM is not to dismiss management or suggest it has no place in development (Willmott, 2008: xiii), this generally appears to be a subordinate goal to their radical deconstruction.¹ Critical development management is largely a subscription to a vision of development practice that is unnecessarily and excessively bleak.

The overall aim of this article is to demonstrate that it is both theoretically possible and normatively desirable that CDM moves towards a more radical-

¹ This destructive tendency is beginning to frustrate even those who associate themselves with CDM (de Vries, 2008: 160).

reformist centre. In the next section, the radical and reformist positions of development management are presented. This is followed by a deeper understanding of the ways the radical CDM position characterises all development management as managerial. The dominance of Enlightenment ideological apparatus is attributed to the construction of development management as managerial. Romanticism is then introduced as an intellectual tradition that can challenge this managerial conception of development management and inspire a different kind of practice. This is done by recognising the limits of narrow mechanical models of scientific explanation and seeking a more holistic, dynamic and indeterminate framework for steering development. The concluding sections demonstrate how the ideas of Romanticism practically and normatively inspire a non- managerial development practice.

Development management ultimately needs greater integration across radical and reformist arguments in order to build societies where equality, sustainability, empowerment and justice all prevail. This centrist position is feasibly achieved by seeing the possibility of a new kind of development management inspired by Romantic understandings of society and the social world. The future of development management depends on establishing linkages between those who would radically criticize it as well as optimistically reform it.

RADICALS AND REFORMERS: THE DILEMMA OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

What is development management? Early definitions of development administration, the precursor to development management², underlined two broad definitions: the development of administration in the developing world and the administration of development programs (Riggs, 1970). The simplicity of this definition belies the conceptual imprecision that still afflicts this field (Collins, 2000; Siffin, 1991: 8). Despite a variety of alternative definitions, it seems clear that development management can be considered in two dimensions: as a theory of planning and a description of the contents, locus and manner of this planning. Any definition of development management will have both these analytic and practical components. For example, Thomas suggests development management can be understood as the practice of managing *in* developing countries or management *of* the development effort, depending on whether development is theoretically understood as an uncontrollable historical process (former) or steered via deliberate efforts at social progress (latter) (Thomas, 1996).³ Development management is thus an implicit statement on the analytical scope of the planning process to direct development, as well as a statement on the location of its practice (ie. within the local country context or in the development policy process).

Another well known definition speaks with more certainty to the idea of development management as being able to deliberately steer social progress via

² Development administration in the post-World War II era sought to transfer modern Weberian administrative apparatuses to developing countries to improve planning, direct service provision and economic management (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Hughes, 2003; Turner & Hulme, 1997).

³ Management for development was later added as an additional category used to describe an empowering style of engagement (Thomas, 2007).

the application of certain kinds of practices, including as *means* to foreign aid and development policy agendas, as *toolkits* to achieve progressive social change by linking intentions to actions, as positive *values* that address both the style and goal of management in political and normative terms, and as *processes* that operate at the individual, organisational and sectoral levels (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999).

Understandings of development management do not only bifurcate in terms of whether planning for development is or is not possible but on whether it is desirable. A 'reformist' understanding of development management believes in the desirability of planning for the achievement of economic, social and political progress in developing countries. While development management is not above reproach, there has always been an assumed ability and commitment to work towards improvements to policy and practice, particularly in areas of administrative concern. Early definitions underlined this desire to improve both the administration of donor and foundation-sponsored development programmes and national administrative capabilities (Riggs, 1970). In the contemporary period, development management has also focused on enhancing performance in both realms, often defined by the twin goals of efficacy and efficiency (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007; Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007). Failures to improve performance appears to derive from the sub-optimal application of theories in misunderstood and/or unfavourable contexts (Otenyo & Lind, 2006) or poor specification of variables and units of analysis (Jreisat, 1991, 2005; Peters, 1994), rather than any intrinsic failing in the concept of development management *per se*.

Altering the tools, values, processes and means of development management is an implicit concern for scholars identifying with a reformist perspective (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Brinkerhoff et al., 1999; Thomas, 1996, 2007).

Nevertheless, over the years, an alternative understanding of development management has highlighted the power and violence of bureaucratic planning in development. If reformists can be described as *critiquing* development management, radicals are fundamentally *critical of* development management. It is the contemporary radical perspective of the left that is identified as Critical Development Management. Although not of central concern to this article, it is worth noting that there are a growing number of neo-liberal ‘radicals’ who argue that centrally planned, geo-politically motivated aid needs to be dismantled and replaced by devolved market-based solutions like micro-finance and social entrepreneurship (Easterly, 2006, 2008; Moyo, 2009).

Radical development theory originates in neo-Marxist political perspectives that suggest development management is a project designed to transform developing countries into market-based, elite controlled societies (Farazmand, 1996; Loveman, 1996). Contemporary approaches inspired by this critique adopt a Foucauldian ‘post-development’ perspective to deconstruct the discourse of planning in development and advocate for the dissolution of development architectures in favour of those that celebrate indigenous social movements (Corbridge, 1998, 2007; Escobar, 1993, 1995a, b; Ferguson, 1994). This critical deconstruction highlights the way development exists as a power-knowledge complex that propagates itself via development interventions,

subordinates the poor as citizen-subjects and neo-liberalizes social transformation to the advantage of elites (Escobar, 1995a, b; Esteva, 1993; Ferguson, 1994; Rist, 2002). Scholars working in organizational studies departments in European business schools have built linkages between this post-development position and a tradition of critical management studies⁴ to theorize the totalizing and de-humanizing effects of international development management (Banu O Zkazan, 2008; Cooke, 2004; Cooke & Dar, 2008b; Dar, 2008; Murphy, 2008). It is this group of scholars that this article identifies as constituting the contemporary radical perspective of Critical Development Management. Their claim hinges on a conviction that there is something “intrinsically wrong with the very idea of management and its application in international development” (Cooke & Dar, 2008a: 1). This is largely because an apparently benign development management legitimates a universalized and abstract planning apparatus with detrimental effects for Third World representation and power.

The most coherent and powerful formulation of CDM comes in the form of a recently published book *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*.⁵ In the introductory chapter, editors Cooke and Dar theorize critical development management by highlighting the continuity between the works of Barbara Townley in critical management studies and James Ferguson in post-developmentalism.

⁴ The field of critical management studies constitutes a vibrant left-wing research community within organizational studies, with growing numbers situated under its umbrella working on development-related issues (Academy of Management, 2009).

⁵ A number of past works have nevertheless provided a foundation for this formulation (Cooke, 1997a, b, 2003; Cooke, 2004).

Both these studies question the ethics of managerialization (in Townley) or bureaucratization (in Ferguson) through seemingly mundane and neutral practices. [...] Identifying the similarity in these approaches...indicates how the demarcation between critical work on development and critical work on management might begin to be bridged. (Cooke & Dar, 2008: 2).

As CDM draws greater linkages between these two sub-fields within management and development studies, Cooke and Dar suggest there is a theoretical basis for a *new development management*. The term ‘new development management’ is both an attempt at irony and a political tactic, for CDM is in the main a critical analysis of the ways in which contemporary development management sustains ‘modernization and the modern’ by emphasizing “new” technical fixes that do not address deeper structural challenges of under-development. The new development management is the object of criticism for CDM, where this critical analysis derives from the perniciousness and pervasiveness of *managerialism* in aid interventions. For CDM, there are long-standing managerial continuities between an earlier terminology of development administration and a more recent turn to development management, even if the latter is largely associated with a smaller and reinvented role for government in the image of the entrepreneurial private sector (Hood, 1991; Minogue, 2001; Minogue, Polidano & Hulme, 1998; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Development management is united to earlier understandings of development administration in its perception that Third World countries and subjects have still not yet achieved

modernity, even as its themes and topics shift (Esman, 1988). Development management, like development administration before it, expresses faith in the falsely neutral social engineering of modernization (Cooke et al., 2008: 2, 9, 10). As such, for CDM to describe development management as something ‘new’ is ironically to highlight its pernicious continuities with development administration.⁶

Contemporary development management remains an important site for both reformist and radical scholarship. Both perspectives suggest development management is increasingly served by a number of different agendas, rationales and actors (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Cooke, 2004; Cooke et al., 2008). Nevertheless, they continue to disagree on the prospects for development management as a positive source of change. Radical and reformist positions thus co-exist, although with substantial differences and considerable mutual suspicion of each other. The literatures and research communities that each side engages with are almost always distinct. If reformists view radicals as excessively nihilistic, radicals perceive reformers as unjustifiably naive. These differences and mutual suspicions are at the root of the fundamental cleavage between scholars of development management. Nevertheless, it is a central argument for this article that the breakdown is both mis-specified and problematic. There exists within the theoretical core of CDM the possibility of a reformed development practice. By

⁶ The evolution from development administration to development management is more than just a semantic difference for reformers. It represents a fundamental shift in planning practice that has its origins in the bifurcation that occurred between public administration (traditionally linked to political science) and public management scholarship (connected to public policy and business schools) (Kaboolian, 1998).

ignoring this possibility, CDM partially represents critical management studies as well as unnecessarily polarizes the radical and reformist positions in development management. The remainder of this article is an attempt to demonstrate why a radical-reformist position is both theoretically and ethically defensible.

MANAGERIALISM AS DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Critical development management rests on a singular and foundational assumption, namely that all development management is intrinsically and exclusively managerial. But what exactly is managerialism? Simply, it is an ideology inspired by Enlightenment rational science and a practice that believes in the ability to achieve organizational success by borrowing from the corporate sector (Edwards, 1998; Parkin, 1994; Pollitt, 1990, 1997; Terry, 1998). It is the modern-day version of a rational-comprehensive model of the policy process, inspired by the methods of the corporate sector that are associated with the hard sciences (Lindblom, 1959; Wood, 1986:477-478). As McCourt aptly puts it, managerialism is “a belief that every political problem has a management solution, so that the means of management substitute for the ends of policy” (Mccourt, 2001). It is a mindset that glorifies “hierarchy, technology, and the role of the manager in modern society” (Edwards, 1998: 555). As a planning process, it pursues the value of efficiency, exhibits faith in homogeneous, neutral and abstract technologies and separates the management function from political processes (Edwards, 1998: 561, 572 ; Wilson, 1941). Managerialism rests on the power and prestige of an elitist class of managers who control knowledge and access in such

a way that ensures their status and preferential treatment (Murphy, 2008). The ideology and practice of managerialism is supported by reformist values that regard management as a science that can generate progress efficiently and objectively.

What propels the construction of development management as managerial? Managerialisation is a trend that extends well beyond the domain of development management. Western public services (Covaleski & Dirsmith, 1988; Kitchener, 2002; Townley, 1997), traditional craft-based industries (Thornton, 2004; Thornton, 2002) and non-profit ventures (Lewis, 2008; Lohmann, 2007) (Roberts, Jones & Frohling, 2005) have all been subject to modernization via the introduction of business management practices. At one level, corporate mentalities and values infuse our understanding of the best ways to organize and coordinate across a variety of sectors as a result of institutional pressures emanating from business schools and the private sector (Parker, 2002). Yet, critical management studies explore a deeper driver for managerialisation, namely Enlightenment understandings of modernity and the contribution that rational science makes to its achievement. The fact that management is predominantly associated with managerialism is a reflection of the continuing dominance of eighteenth century Enlightenment thinking in contemporary society.

The methodological style of the Enlightenment is the basis for a concept of modernity anchored to the cosmology of rational science (Bloor, 1991: 62-63; Bronk, 2009). This ideology constructs all modern knowledge as focused on ‘rationality, validity, truth and objectivity’ (Townley, 2008: 23). Actors are

individual mechanical atoms that can be unproblematically aggregated into wholes, unchanged when brought together. Historical, political and national variation are subordinated to notions of timelessness, controllability and universality. Its logic of abstract deductivism seeks stylized general principles to make sense of reality. Motivation is governed by the calculus of utility-maximizing behaviour rather than inspired by imagination, sentiment and creativity. Modernity is both produced by and governed by a 'holy trinity' that includes calculative rationality, methodological individualism and instrumental causal relations (Townley, 2002a: 561). A managerial logic thus reflects this understanding of modernity while also providing an ideological basis for the values and technologies associated with scientific management.

If we were to accuse CDM of simply constituting another colonizing discourse (Cooke et al., 2008: 3), we might say that it portrays all development management as governed by an institutionalized managerialist logic.⁷ This managerial logic expresses the theory of development management in terms of administrative modernization and the practice of development management as the application of abstract universal solutions to the problem of under-development. This singular representation of all management, including development management, as managerial belies the existence and possibility of alternative representations that may be less destructive and insidious, even whilst such a possibility exists within critical management studies. This dominant linguistic and

⁷ An institutional logic is both a practice governed by supra-organizational patterns of activity and a symbolic system by which humans infuse activities with meaning (Friedland & Alford, 1991).

discursive construction of management as managerial may occur to the detriment of empirical understandings of the actual practices and organizational contexts of development (Apthorpe, 1986: 377; Hardiman, 1987: 112).

What grounds are there to believe CDM has institutionalized a particular representation of all development management as managerial? The ‘new’ development management recognises the connection and expansion of the administrative modernization project of the colonial and post-WWII developmentalist era (Cooke et al., 2008: 10). A line of continuity is drawn between the aims of colonialism to bring modernization to ‘natives’ and those of development administration and development management that modernize ‘countries,’ their administrations and increasingly a variety of non-state actors in the image of neo-liberalism (Cooke, 2003; Cooke, 2004). Modernizing interventions that bring the poor into contemporary processes of globalization on the grounds of the West’s security are the ends of development management (de Vries, 2008: 150). The theory of modernization that underpins development management is linked to a dominant conception of certain, causal and rational progress towards modernity.

Managerialism is also related to the manner in which administrative modernization within development processes is supposed to be achieved. The application of ‘technocratic ideas and practices’ promise control, stability and progress for the development endeavour (Cooke et al., 2008: 6, 11). Critical management scholars describe this as an *abstract* form of management, by which is meant one that is disembedded and disembodied. As a disembedded

technocratic practice, management becomes a portable technology of control. Abstract management is disembodied because it is divorced from an individual's detailed experiences and/or local knowledge. It places value on scientific neutrality and the pursuit of an efficient ordering of people and things so that collective goals can be achieved, to the detriment of other values like loyalty, trust, democracy and morality (Edwards, 1998; Townley, 2001: 303-304). Context and person independent management can introduce distortions by simplifying and reifying highly complex processes in such a way that strips away nuance, differences in social context and political content.

Development management is a managerial endeavour then to the extent that its concept of management borrows from Enlightenment intellectual traditions. While radicals construct development management in the image of rational science, there is a different theory and sociology of knowledge from which an alternative concept of management can draw (Townley, 2002a: 561). If management is 'predicated on a very large story about social progress,' it is not the only story of progress in town (Parker, 2002: 5). The theoretical possibility of a non-managerial development practice⁸ is opened up by the presence of another style of thinking about society existing since the Age of the Enlightenment, a complementary if opposing ideological force that does not privilege an exclusive understanding of management as managerial. It is to this Romantic social ideology that we now turn.

⁸ The term 'management' is so closely associated to managerialism that it perhaps obviates reference to a non-managerial development management.

ROMANTIC POSSIBILITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

It is noteworthy that one of the founding fathers of post-developmentalism recognises that it is the underlying concept of modernity as rational science that crafts a limited conception of development management (Escobar, 2008).

Nevertheless, while CDM makes a name for itself by criticizing and deconstructing the dominant Enlightenment understanding of modernity that sustains managerialism, a discussion of alternative modernities has been much less central to their exposition. It is in this sense that CDM has presented a partial view of critical management studies as the latter has considered the possibility of an alternative modernity. Barbara Townley, the noted critical management studies scholar whom Cooke and Dar refer to in the first page of their book as sharing continuities with post-developmentalism, extensively entertains the possibility of an alternative modernity that underpins a more ethical management (Townley, 1999, 2002a, b, 2004, 2008).

These two paradigmatic theories of knowledge are reflections of two dominant social ideologies—Enlightenment and Romantic. Romanticism has been posthumously identified as a loose collection of philosophical beliefs and artistic creeds that while lacking a single essence, nonetheless share common associations that celebrate the role of imagination, creativity and emotion (Bronk, 2009: 87). Romanticism is both a product of reductionist Enlightenment thinking and a critical response to its tenets, such that while we have come to see these ideologies as binary and conflictual, the possibility for their apposite use does exist (Bronk, 2009). All knowledge, including management knowledge, has ‘unconsciously

embedded' structures that derive from both Rationalism and Romanticism, where each social ideology provides a foundation and a resource for thinking about society (Bloor, 1991; Bronk, 2009; Townley, 2002a: 555). Nevertheless, theoretical distinctions and intellectual boundaries are drawn between narrow models of scientific explanation and rationality and more holistic, dynamic and indeterminate explanatory frameworks of Romanticism that culminate in a real schism that is still felt today (Bronk, 2009). So while modern management knowledge has tended to draw upon the rationalism of the Enlightenment, this is not to say that Romanticism cannot still inspire a different ideological foundation for development management as an embedded socio-political practice.

A Romantic social ideology is presented in its archetypical format with four key methodological characteristics that rival those of Enlightenment thought (Bloor, 1991: 63-64; Bronk, 2009; Townley, 1999, 2002a, 2008). Unlike Enlightenment's reliance of mechanical metaphors, Romanticism borrows from organic metaphors where social wholes are not mere collections of atomistic individual units but the result of local conditions and contexts that cannot be aggregated. This dynamic understanding of the social world privileges locally conditioned variation of responses and adaptations anchored in concrete historical and political realities. Romantic social ideology rejects abstract principles and understandings in favour of concrete cases and embedded knowledges, acknowledging the inherently social and fragmentary basis of reality. Prescriptions and positions derive from in-depth understandings of facts but are also informed by pluralistic values and subjective descriptions. Human motivations are informed

by imagination and sentiment, where self-interest is overshadowed by motivations like loyalty, trust and the pursuit of excellence. Overall, the methodological style of Romantic social ideology cultivates an understanding of modernity as a contested goal whose achievement derives from intricate, inter-connected and non-linear processes lacking universally applicable answers to the practical and ethical problems of life.

A Romantic understanding of modernity provides a basis for theorizing a non-managerialist development. While the Age of Enlightenment feeds the dominant contemporary construction of management as managerial, it is neither a singular nor totalizing ideology.⁹ To some degree, CDM recognises that managerialism is simply one kind of ‘representation of management as a neutral, technical means-to-an end set of activities’ (Cooke, 2003: 48). And yet, CDM’s tendency is nonetheless to assume the governmentality of managerialist forms of organisation and control in development (Cooke et al., 2008: 6; de Vries, 2008: 153). In doing so, it positions itself squarely in the camp of radicals that denounce and de-construct without proposing alternatives. If CDM is truly attempting to bring the sub-fields of post-development and critical management studies together, it must recognise at least the possibility within the latter to theorize a non-managerialist development practice. Yet the question remains, what would such a non-managerialist development practice look like? With a reformulated Romantic

⁹ Enlightenment social ideology may be losing its relative dominance as advances in quantum physics robustly reject the potential for linear and predictable causal relations (Townley, 2002b). In the social sciences, such theories have led to the growth of complexity theory, a body of scholarship that embraces the possibility of progress even in the face of unpredictable, uncertain and ambiguous situations (Mowles, 2009; Mowles, Stacey, & Griffin, 2008).

understanding of modernity, we may yet open up a space to challenge the ends of development management as an unproblematic bureaucratic modernization and its means as disembedded and disembodied practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

How do the methodological characteristics of Romantic social ideology inform a non-managerial development practice? At a fundamental level, it understands administrative modernization as inherently pluralistic and political in nature and thus a site of contestation. In a sense, this politicized understanding of all administration has now been accepted in public administration scholarship (Svara, 2001, 2006; Waldo, 1948), even if development managers have tended to assume the possibility of separating questions of administration from those involving politics. Management always occurs in the fractured social orders of a polis (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Townley, 2002a: 568) and is always and everywhere a struggle for power, and thus a creature of politics. To acknowledge the politicization of development practice must move us beyond mere “reflective modernization” that reminds that development is a politically embedded process shaped by local political interests and influences (Bowornwathana, 2000; McCourt, 2008; Unsworth, 2008, 2009). In other words, development management is more than ensuring embedded understandings of political dynamics for more efficient and effective planning. It must also begin to see the modernization project and its instruments as political creatures that sustain hierarchies, conflicts, resistances, disjunctures, inequalities and power

asymmetries (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; de Vries, 2008; Mosse, 2005; Toner & Franks, 2006; Townley, 2001; van de Berg & Quarles van Ufford, 2005). To illustrate the weaker variant of this conception of politics in development management, consider a recent World Bank evaluation of public sector reform projects asks for greater ‘realism about what is politically and institutionally feasible’ and recognises that ‘technology is not enough by itself’ (Independent Evaluation Group, 2008: xv-xvi). The World Bank’s considers political context without an understanding of the ways their instruments of strategic planning and diagnostics are political artifacts that may themselves contribute to the failures of civil service reform, for example as a result of the uni-dimensional understanding of social reality they can capture. A non-managerialist development practice must be an exercise in activism that incorporates a more substantial notion politics, an effort to re-politicize all aspects of the modernization project without resorting to the extreme CDM positions that simply denounce Western capitalist forces (de Vries, 2008: 166; Edwards, 1998). A non-managerialist development practice it ultimately a call to consider all aspects of development management in robust political terms.

A non-managerialist development practice will also sustain embedded and embodied practices. An exclusive reliance on the abstract and universalist tools and techniques is rejected in favour of practical reason that is embodied in humans and contextually bound (Townley, 2002a: 568). Practical reason borrows from Aristotle’s concept of *phronesis* that recognises a localized rationality and applies knowledge in concrete cases that deal with actual problems. Practical reason thus

straddles Enlightenment and Romantic perspectives as it is oriented towards getting things done, but also counter-balanced by a recognition that accomplishing goals must encompass context, judgment, experience, intuition and common sense (Townley, 2008: 215). A non-managerialist management is thus about coping with daily situations and resolving mundane problems while still holding onto some definition of purpose and final objectives or ends despite uncertainties, conflicts and contingencies (Blunt, 1997: 347; de Vries, 2008: 153; Parker, 2002: 5-7, 183). In this way, practical reason can construct unified pictures of the world guided by the general principles and norms emerging from what has gone before. Embedded knowledge and experience, working theories, and instrumental goals thus co-exist in this reconceived development management, in something that approximates a practical science of “muddling through” (Joy, 1997; Lindblom, 1959).

Taking Romanticism to heart will require three things from development management. First, development management will need to become anchored in experiential realities of all those involved in the planning relation (Townley, 2008). Reducing the physical and psychological space between developers and those for whom development is sought is one way to ensure this embeddedness. This requires building organizations that support and value such experiential knowledge, for example ones that are deconcentrated, decentralized, smaller, democratic, more responsible and less bureaucratic. Creating all organizations in the mirror image of private corporations does not recognize that humans can coordinate their activities and achieve collective goals via a huge variety of

organizations from chess clubs to virtual communities (Parker, 2002: 202-209).

Development practice would then, perhaps, need a little more emphasis on “organization,” and a little less of an obsession with “management” (Parker, 2002: 10, 209). Moving from the vocabulary of management to organization might thereby encapsulate greater sensitivity to the myriad of ways of coordinating the development endeavour, taking us beyond the universalist managerialist frame.

Secondly, moving away from managerialism recognizes development management as performance art, by which is meant an improvised, flexible, contingent, intuitive and sensitive practice (Escobar, 2008). Imaginative receptivity to unforeseen windows of opportunity, divergences and unexpected events will also be called upon because of the uncertainty and unpredictability of constructing casual connections in dynamic socio-political processes like development. For example, while contestation within the modernization process may be predictable, the ends and the manner in which differences are negotiated will have no obvious fixed or universal solution. Ambiguity becomes the natural state at the expense of fixed prescriptions and structures (Brinkerhoff & Ingle, 1989; Bronk, 2009: 111). An uncertain and disorderly practice need not be feared for its lack of coherence and closure but embraced as a source of creative and productive solutions to the problems of under-development (Gulrajani, 2006; Pritchett & Woolcock, 2004; Quarles van Ufford, Kumar Giri & Mosse, 2003). The result is a development practice thus becomes an act of improvised political steering rather than planned social engineering.

Finally, a Romantic conception of management will involve development actors considering their own problematic position within the development endeavour, as well as the limitations of the technologies and organizations at their disposal. Such professional reflexivity can hopefully reduce the triumph of optimism over good judgment, recognizing the ways in which the ways even well-intended actions and actors can maintain the structural and institutional conditions that maintain under-development. Cultivating discerning managers in development will require that planning process are continually revisited, revised and reexamined in a constant interaction between experience and strategy (Abbott, Brown & Wilson, 2007; Eyben, 2003; Mowles, Stacey & Griffin, 2008). This can provide the basis for an “emergent ethics” as those involved in development at all levels reflect on their place in the contradictory social orders sustained by their engagement and consider how to advance cross-cutting values (Joy, 1997: 456; Quarles van Ufford, Kumar Giri & Mosse, 2003: 23; Townley, 2008: 216).

THE DESIRABILITY OF A NON-MANAGERIALIST DEVELOPMENT

CDM is a relatively new and radical perspective on development management. By linking post-developmentalism to critical management studies, CDM highlights the inequality, violence and power of development management over subalterns in the Global South. The hegemonic tendencies of development management are thus made visible in such a way that a sense of complacency is

never allowed to emerge regarding its failings and its problems. Like the post-developmentalism that inspires it, the aim of CDM is largely to add to debate and put forward new ways of thinking, rather than to consider practical policy-based solutions (Corbridge 2007: 199-200; Quarles van Ufford, Kumar Giri, & Mosse, 2003: 11). As this article has suggested, however, the critical appraisal of development management may be unjustifiably one-sided. Development practice need not necessarily be constituted by the pernicious effects of managerialism. It is also desirable that CDM begin to consider the possibility of a non-managerial development practice as this may go some way to resolving the fundamental radical/reformist impasse that characterizes development management and hampers efforts to build a more ethically and politically engaged development practice.

A non-managerialist development practice can incorporate the radical critique of managerialism without abandoning the possibility of intervention in the name of social progress. It can accept the limitations of development but also recognise that achieving a post-development world is more utopic than feasible. Unlike CDM, a non-managerialist development practice does not dismiss the value of second best solutions, the world of practical policy-making and reformist modes of engagement. It builds on radical understandings of development management, yet also moves debates forward in a critically constructive enterprise. This can incrementally, if imperfectly, build societies where equality, sustainability, empowerment and justice are all valued and cultivated.

Why is it important to hold onto the possibility of intervention in the space of international development? For post-developmentalism and the radical CDM scholarship that is inspired by it, development is pernicious and needs to be rejected outright. Notwithstanding the force of this argument, the desirability of such nihilism needs to be questioned (Corbridge, 1998, 2007). In the first place, it leaves radical development management at the level of a disengaged and deconstructive critique that implicitly sustains the status quo of under-development (Pieterse Nederveen, 2001: 106). Uncovering the hegemony of development discourse does not necessarily allow the poor to practically escape its power; more often it leaves them in an attenuated state of marginalisation with their dreams of development left unfulfilled (de Vries, 2008: 160). While CDM defends deconstruction as a correction of sorts given the dominance of mainstream reformist thought in development (Cooke et al., 2008: 17), it explicitly shies away from theorizing different ways to address the real, practical and tangible challenges of under-development. Its stated focus is exposing the violence and power of development management in order to open up spaces for dissent, give voice and make the concerns of the poor visible (Willmott, 2008). Critical analysis is the format for CDM's 'permanent revolution' (Corbridge 2007: 200). Yet, this critique does seem to come at the cost of both action and alternatives, thereby implicitly sustaining the conditions of under-development.

An additional reason to consider the desirability of a non-managerial development practice derives from the fact that it can re-establish connections and redouble efforts to create plausible actions and practical alternatives across the

radical-reformist spectrum. Radical suspicion of all development interventions currently limits productive possibilities for recovery and reconstruction and thus sustains the fundamental cleavage characterising development management (Quarles van Ufford, Kumar Giri, & Mosse, 2003: 17). A non-managerial development practice represents an opportunity to reinvigorate development management scholarship into a critically reflective and politically engaged enterprise. This is not to say that radicals and reformists will necessarily see eye to eye on every issue. Rather it suggests that we need to accept and embrace the normality of tensions and disjunctures in development at all levels, including amongst academics. Development management needs to exploit these tensions by creating meeting points for them and harnessing them as forces for experimentation and productive creativity (van de Berg & Quarles van Ufford, 2005; Pritchett and Woolcock 2004). Without the reconstitution of development management, the risk is that right-wing radical approaches that advocate the substitution of development with exclusively market solutions win the debate and actually worsen the status quo of under-development.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the desirability of a non-managerial development practice derives from the fact that it embraces the principle of responsible critique (Corbridge 2007; van de Berg & Quarles van Ufford, 2005: 4). This responsibility requires that criticism consider the consequences of thinking and acting in certain ways and take steps to mitigate the effects of the uncomfortable truths that are raised. It is arguable that CDM represents an abrogation of this responsibility as it embraces reflection without action in such a

way that actually preserves or deteriorates the conditions of under-development.

A non-managerial development practice is an attempt to bridge the worlds of action and reflection and begin the process of creating a language and mobilization effort underpinned by a global moral ethic.

CONCLUSION

CDM has tended to equate development management to managerialism and reject the high modernism that underpins it. This rejection provides the basis for a contemporary debate between radical and reformist development management scholars, a debate that has a longstanding history within the field that both can and should be reconciled. CDM has yet to consider a theory of alternative modernity that can sustain a different kind of development practice. If we accept an understanding of modernity derived from Romantic understandings of practical rationality however, we can robustly challenge an understanding of development management as straightforward modernization exclusively achieved via disembodied and disembodied practice. An alternative modernity is the basis upon which development can be undertaken as an ethical, experiential and pluralistic political engagement. Radical-reformist development practice is thus both theoretically plausible and ethically desirable and can uncover new horizons for both research and action in the sub-field now called development management. It can recognise the power and knowledge effects of development planning processes and simultaneously translate this knowledge into a commitment to reforms that can achieve greater equality, sustainability and justice. It has the

possibility to theorize alternative forms and formats of intervention that can embrace uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity and still maintain a moral and political commitment to ending under-development. To be against managerialism does not require us to be against modernity, or indeed to be against development management. The future for development management can and should be radically reformist.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, D., Brown, S., & Wilson, G. 2007. Development Management as Reflective Practice. *Journal of International Development*, 19(187-203).
- Academy of Management. 2009. Critical Management Studies: Domain Statement.
- Apthorpe, R. 1986. Development policy discourse. *Public Administration and Development*, 6(4): 377-389.
- Banu O Zkazan, P. 2008. International Management Research Meets 'The Rest of the World' *Academy of Management Review*, 33(4): 964-974.
- Bloor, M. 1991. *Knowledge and Social Imagery*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Blunt, P. 1997. Prisoners of the paradigm: process consultants and 'clinical' development practitioners. *Public Administration and Development*, 17: 341-349.
- Bowornwathana, B. 2000. Governance Reform in Thailand: Questionable Assumptions, Uncertain Outcomes. *Governance*, 13(3): 393-408.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. 2008. The State and International Development Management: Shifting Tides, Changing Boundaries, and Future Directions. *Public Administration Review*, 68(6): 985-1001.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Coston, J. M. 1999. International Development Management in a Globalized World. *Public Administration Review*, 59(4): 346-361.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Ingle, M. 1989. Integrating blueprint and process: a structured flexibility approach to development management. *Public Administration and Development*, 9: 487-503.
- Bronk, R. 2009. *The Romantic Economist*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Collins, P. 2000. The Last Fifty Years and the Next Fifty Years: A Century of Public Administration and Development. In P. Collier (Ed.), *Applying Public Administration in Development: Guideposts to the future*. Chichester: John Wiley.
- Cooke, B. 1997a. From process consultation to a clinical model of development practice. *Public Administration and Development*, 17: 325-340.
- Cooke, B. 1997b. The deceptive illusion of multi-paradigm development practice. *Public Administration and Development*, 17: 479-486.
- Cooke, B. 2003. A new continuity with colonial administration: participation in development management, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24: 47.
- Cooke, B. 2004. The Managing of the (Third) World. *Organization*, 11(5): 603-629.
- Cooke, B., & Dar, S. 2008a. Introduction: The New Development Management. In B. Cooke, & S. Dar (Eds.), *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*. London: Zed Books.
- Cooke, B., & Dar, S. (Eds.). 2008b. *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*. London: Zed Books.
- Corbridge, S. 1998. 'Beneath the Pavement Only Soil': The Poverty of Post-Development. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 36(6): 138-148.

- Corbridge, S. 2007. The (im)possibility of development studies. *Economy and Society*, 36(2): 179-211.
- Covaleski, M. A., & Dirsmith, M. W. 1988. An Institutional Perspective on the Rise, Social Transformation and Fall of a University Budget Category. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 33: 562-587.
- Crewe, E., & Harrison, E. 1998. *Whose Development? An ethnography of aid*. London: Zed Books.
- Dar, S. 2008. Re-connecting histories: modernity, managerialism and development. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 22(2): 93-110.
- de Vries, P. 2008. The Managerialization of Development, the Banalization of Its Promise and the Disavowal of 'Critique' as a Modernist Illusion. In B. Cooke, & S. Dar (Eds.), *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*: 150-177. London: Zed Books.
- Easterly, W. 2006. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Easterly, W. (Ed.). 2008. *Reinventing Foreign Aid*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Edwards, J. D. 1998. Managerial Influences in Public Administration. *International Journal of Organizational Theory and Behaviour*, 1(4): 553-583.
- Escobar, A. 1993. Planning. In W. Sachs (Ed.), *The Development Dictionary*: 132-146. London: Zed Books.
- Escobar, A. 1995a. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Escobar, A. 1995b. Imagining a Post-Development Era. In J. Crush (Ed.), *Power of Development*: 211-228. London: Routledge.
- Escobar, A. 2008. Afterword. In B. Cooke, & S. Dar (Eds.), *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*: 150-177. London: Zed Books.
- Esman, M. 1988. The maturing of development administration. *Public Administration and Development*, 8: 125-134.
- Esteva, G. 1993. Development. In W. Sachs (Ed.), *The Development Dictionary*: 6-25. London: Zed Book.
- Eyben, R. 2003. Donors as political actors: fighting the Thirty Years War in Bolivia. *IDS Working Paper No. 183*: 1-32.
- Farazmand, A. 1996. Development and Comparative Public Administration: Past, Present, and Future. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 20(3): 343-364.
- Ferguson, J. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Friedland, R., & Alford, R. R. 1991. Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practice, and Institutional Contradiction. In W. W. Powell, & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*: 232-267. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Guess, G., & Gabriellyan, V. 2007. Comparative and International Administration. In J. Rabin, W. B. Hildreth, & G. J. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of Public*

- Administration*, Third Edition ed.: 585-605. Boca Raton: Taylor and Francis.
- Gulrajani, N. 2006. The art of fine balances: the challenge of institutionalizing the Comprehensive Development Framework inside the World Bank. In D. Stone, & C. Wright (Eds.), *The World Bank and Governance: A Decade of Reform and Reaction*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Hardiman, M. 1987. Book Review: Labelling in Development Policy: Essays in Honour of Bernard Schaffer *Public Administration and Development*, 7(1): 111-112.
- Heady, F., Perlman, B., & Rivera, M. 2007. Issues in Comparative and International Administration. In J. Rabin, W. B. Hildreth, & G. J. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Administration*, Third Edition ed.: 585-605. Boca Raton: Taylor and Francis.
- Hirschmann, D. 1981. Development or Underdevelopment Administration: A Further Deadlock. *Development and Change*, 12(3): 459-479.
- Hirschmann, D. 1999. Development Management versus Third World Bureaucracies: A Brief History of Conflicting Interests. *Development and Change*, 30(2): 287-305.
- Hood, C. 1991. A Public Management For All Seasons? *Public Administration*, 69: 3-19.
- Hughes, O. E. 2003. *Public Management and Administration: An Introduction* (3rd edition ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Independent Evaluation Group. 2008. Public Sector Reform: What Works and Why? An IEG Evaluation of World Bank Support. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Joy, L. 1997. Developing a development practice. A commentary in response to Cooke
. *Public Administration and Development*, 17(5): 453-477.
- Jreisat, J. 1991. The Organizational Perspective in Comparative and Development Administration. In A. Farazmand (Ed.), *Handbook of Comparative and Development Public Administration*: 15-23. New York: Dekker.
- Jreisat, J. 2005. Comparative Public Administration is Back in, Prudently. *Public Administration Review*, 65(2): 231-242.
- Kaboolian, L. 1998. The New Public Management: Challenging the Boundaries of the Management vs. Administration Debate. *Public Administration Review*, 58(3): 189-193.
- Kitchener, M. 2002. Mobilizing the Logic of Managerialism in Professional Fields: The Case of Academic Health Centre Mergers. *Organization Studies*, 23(3): 391-420.
- Lewis, D. 2008. Nongovernmentalism and the Reorganization of Public Action. In B. Cooke, & S. Dar (Eds.), *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*. London: Zed Books.
- Lindblom, C. 1959. The Science of 'Muddling Through'. *Public Administration*, 2: 78-88.

- Lohmann, R. A. 2007. Charity, Philanthropy, Public Service, or Enterprise: What Are the Big Questions of Nonprofit Management Today? *Public Administration Review*: 437-444.
- Loveman, B. 1996. The Comparative Administration Group: Development and Anti-Development. *Public Administration Review*(Nov/Dec): 361-374.
- McCourt, W. 2001. Moving the public management debate forward: a contingency approach. In W. McCourt, & M. Minogue (Eds.), *The Internationalization of New Public Management*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- McCourt, W. 2008. Public Management in Developing Countries. *Public Management Review*, 10(4): 467-479.
- Minogue, M. 2001. The internationalization of new public management. In W. McCourt, & M. Minogue (Eds.), *The Internationalization of New Public Management*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Minogue, M., Polidano, C., & Hulme, D. (Eds.). 1998. *Beyond the New Public Management: Changing Ideas and Practices in Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Mosse, D. 2005. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*. London: Pluto.
- Mowles, C., Stacey, R., & Griffin, D. 2008. What Contribution Can Insights From the Complexity Sciences Make to the Theory and Practice of Development Management? *Journal of International Development*, 20: 804-820.
- Moyo, D. 2009. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa*. London: Penguin.
- Murphy, J. 2008. *The World Bank and Global Managerialism*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Osborne, D., & Gaebler, T. 1992. *Reinventing Government*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Otenyo, E., & Lind, N. S. 2006. Administrative Development and Development Administration. In E. Otenyo, & N. S. Lind (Eds.), *Comparative Public Administration: The Essential Readings*, Vol. 15: 221-230. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Parker, M. 2002. *Against Management*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Parkin, J. 1994. *Public Management: Technocracy, democracy and organizational reform*. Avebury: Aldershot.
- Peters, B. G. 1994. Theory and methodology in the study of comparative public administration. In R. Baker (Ed.), *Comparative public management: putting US public policy and implementation in context*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Pieterse Nederveen, J. 2001. *Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions*. London: Sage Publications.
- Pollitt, C. 1990. *Managerialism and the Public Service: The Anglo American Experience*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.
- Pollitt, C. 1997. Managerialism Revisited. In B. G. Peters, & D. Savoie (Eds.), *Taking Stock: Assessing Public Sector Reforms*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.

- Pritchett, L., & Woolcock, M. 2004. Solutions When the Solution is the Problem: Arraying the Disarray in Development. *World Development*, 32(2): 191-212.
- Quarles van Ufford, P., Kumar Giri, A., & Mosse, D. 2003. Interventions in Development: Towards a new moral understanding of our experiences and an agenda for the future. In P. Quarles van Ufford, & A. Kumar Giri (Eds.), *A Moral Critique of Development: In search of global responsibilities*. London: Routledge.
- Riggs, F. W. 1970. Introduction. In F. Riggs (Ed.), *Frontiers of Development Administration: 3-37*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rist, G. 2002. *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (P. Camiller, Trans.) (2nd ed.). London: Zed Books.
- Roberts, S., Jones, J. P., & Frohling, O. 2005. NGOs and the Globalization of Managerialism: A Research Framework. *World Development*, 33(11): 1845-1864.
- Schaffer, B. 1969. The Deadlock in Development Administration. In C. Leys (Ed.), *Politics and Change in Developing Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Siffin, W. 1991. The Problem of Development Administration. In A. Farazmand (Ed.), *Handbook of Comparative and Development Public Administration: 15-23*. New York: Dekker.
- Svara, J. 2001. The myth of the dichotomy: Complementarity of politics and administration in the past and future of public administration. *Public Administration Review*, 61(2): 176-183.
- Svara, J. 2006. Complexity in Political-Administrative Relations and the Limits of the Dichotomy Concept. *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, 28(1): 121-139.
- Terry, L. 1998. Administrative Leadership, Neo-Managerialism and the Public Management Movement. *Public Administration Review*, 58(3): 194-200.
- Thomas, A. 1996. What is Development Management? *Journal of International Development*, 8(1): 95-110.
- Thomas, A. 2007. Policy Arena: Development Management--Values and Partnerships. *Journal of International Development*, 19(3): 383-388.
- Thornton, P. 2004. *Markets from Culture: Institutional Logics and Organizational Decisions in Higher Education Publishing*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Thornton, P. H. 2002. The Rise of the Corporation in a Craft Industry: Conflict and Conformity in Institutional Logics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1): 81-101.
- Toner, A., & Franks, T. 2006. Putting Livelihoods Thinking into Practice: Implications for Development Management. *Public Administration and Development*, 26: 81-92.
- Townley, B. 1997. The Institutional Logic of Performance Appraisal. *Organization Studies*, 18(2): 261-285.
- Townley, B. 1999. Practical Reason and Performance Appraisal. *Journal of Management Studies*, 36(3): 287-306.

- Townley, B. 2001. The Cult of Modernity. *Financial Accountability and Management*, 17(4): 303-310.
- Townley, B. 2002a. Managing with Modernity. *Organization*, 9(4): 549-573.
- Townley, B. 2002b. The Role of Competing Rationalities in Institutional Change. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1): 163-179.
- Townley, B. 2004. Managerial Technologies, Ethics and Managing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(3): 425-445.
- Townley, B. 2008. *Reason's Neglect: Rationality and Organizing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Turner, M., & Hulme, D. 1997. *Governance, Administration and Development: Making the State Work*. West Harford, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Unsworth, S. 2008. *Is Political Analysis Changing Donor Behaviour*. Paper presented at the Development Studies Association Conference, London.
- Unsworth, S. 2009. What's Politics Got to Do With It?: Why donors find it so hard to come to terms with politics, and why this matters. *Journal of International Development*, 21: 883-894.
- van de Berg, R., & Quarles van Ufford, P. 2005. Disjuncture and Marginality: Towards a New Approach to Development Practice. In D. Mosse, & D. Lewis (Eds.), *The Aid Effect*. London: Pluto.
- Waldo, D. 1948. *The administrative state : a study of the political theory of American public administration*. New York: Ronald Press.
- Willmott, H. 2008. Foreward. In B. Cooke, & S. Dar (Eds.), *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*. London: Zed Books.
- Wilson, W. 1941. The Study of Administration. *Political Science Quarterly*, 56(4): 481-506.
- Wood, G. 1986. 'Don't given them my telephone number'-applicants and clients: limits to public responsibility. *Public Administration and Development*, 6(4): 465-484.