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Management as ideology: "New" managerialism and the corporate university in the period of Covid-19

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine how Covid-19 was utilized by the management of a university as a catalyst for ideological change, with the objective of transforming the ethos of a university management school and the role(s) of the academics employed within. Through new modes of working that maintained corporeal distance between university staff, market-based ideology was mobilized to institute radical and lasting change within the roles of academics and operations of the institution. We focus on a singular case study: "Blue Management School" (BMS, pseudonym), based within an English mid-tier research university which has historically embraced corporatization more readily than most of its peers. We conducted a qualitative analysis of management email communications and from interviews with nine academics (both current and former employees) who were working at BMS during the time concerned (March 2020 onward). We observe that Covid-19 posed significant challenges to corporatized universities, and that university managers at BMS sought to address these challenges by undertaking further steps toward corporatization and mobilizing organizational change legitimized by the need

to manage the Covid-19 situation. This included hierarchical forms of accountability, with academics answering for module content to teaching convenors and the management team ("manager academics"). We draw attention to how management communications carried profound effects for the mobilization of ideological change within the institution, during this period. In addition, academic identity was affected, moving away from traditional research and teaching scholars toward revenue-generating customer service workers, facilitating a power shift away from academics and further toward managers.

KEYWORDS
academic identity, Covid-19, higher education, new managerialism, sociology of the professions

1 | INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, universities in many countries have experienced a shift toward corporatization (Parker, 2011, 2012, 2013; Readings, 1996). Against the background of wider New Public Management (NPM) reforms, higher education (HE) institutions began to adopt managerialist and marketized approaches, including a growing emphasis on performance measurement (Harvey, 2005), the emergence of professional university "manager academics" (Deem, 2004; Deem et al., 2007), rising tuition fees, and the positioning of students as customers (Ginsberg, 2011; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Parker, 2018; Tuchman, 2009).

Academics have been strongly critical of corporatization's impact on university research and teaching (e.g., Fleming, 2021; Readings, 1996; Rolfe, 2013) and the overall image of academic institutions as they embrace corporatization (Parker, 2014; Thompson, 1970). Regarding the former, academics have argued that corporatization has led to undue emphasis on journal lists (Chatterjee et al., 2020; Tourish & Willmott, 2015; Willmott, 2011) and a drive toward publication in a relatively small number of highly ranked journals (Gendron, 2015; Hopwood, 2008). They also argue that corporatization had stifled innovation in research as academics feel compelled to pursue more conservative and conformist research projects (Hopwood, 2008; Neumann & Guthrie, 2002). Corporatization has also been argued to lead to separation of research and teaching (Gebreiter, 2021), and adoption of vocational, textbook-driven teaching approaches (Hopper, 2013; Parker, 2013). More generally, it has been suggested that the corporatization of HE has undermined collegiality and academic freedom (Kallio et al., 2016, 2017; Parker & Jary, 1995).

Covid-19 posed significant challenges for HE globally. In this paper, we explore how our case organization "Blue Management School" (henceforth "BMS") sought to manage the Covid-19 situation, in the context of the highly marketized English HE system. We draw from nine semi-structured interviews with staff who were working at BMS during the initial months of the Covid-19 pandemic, with an additional four follow-up interviews. We also draw from email memos sent by senior managers of the university and the management school in the initial stages of the government lockdown period and focus on the discourse stemming from these communications.

Our study allows for empirical contributions to be made, providing observations of how a HE institution responded both to the initial stages of the pandemic, and subsequently. We observe how Covid-19 opened new spaces for communication between managers and other employees, with at times, daily emails from management. We also observe

how these communications went from "keeping in touch" to conveying a much more ideologically charged message emphasizing financial vulnerability of the institution and symbolizing future managerialism and operational change. This, on the one hand, is contrary to Parker's (2020) assertion that Covid-19 could offer opportunities to reflect on the negative impact of corporatized approaches to governing HE and, in particular, the financial vulnerability that this approach promotes for institutions and the sector as a whole (see also Jones, 2022). On the other hand, this presents a competing vision of the crisis as both a political and an economic development that paved the way for an almost "austerity like," management driven, financially centric approach to university management (Bracci et al., 2015; Hopwood, 2009). We highlight this with reference to our case study organization, and initiatives proposed and enacted (via a new, more authoritarian management style, justified by the Covid-19 situation), such as the introduction of "à la carte" approaches to education determined by student preferences, increased teaching loads, and encouragement of personal marketing by academics to students (referred to as "online dating"). We highlight the inherent dangers with this approach, including the compromising of academic identity and academic freedom, along with further vulnerability to sudden changes within the "market" for students in English HE.

In Section 2, we discuss relevant literature regarding HE, corporatization, and concerns raised by other academics regarding this phenomenon. Section 3 contains a brief overview of the English HE sector and a description of the case organization. In Section 4, we outline our theoretical framework based on management as ideology and new managerialism in English HE (Deem, 1998; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Deem et al., 2007) with reference paid to the impact on the professional academic, with Section 5 covering our methodological approach. We outline our findings from the data in Section 6, with Section 7 containing a discussion of these findings with respect to the theoretical framework and extant literature. We conclude the paper in Section 8.

2 | NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (NPM), MANAGERIALISM, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

For a large amount of their history, universities sought to provide societal benefits without commodifying their services, anchoring their governance in a social welfare logic. This style of governance has been characterized as democratic, and one through which these organizations consider local constituencies as well as strengths and weaknesses of their respective local contexts. Achieving this has been through the expertise of professionals committed to fulfilling the social mission (Gewirtz & Ball, 2000; Hopper, 2013; Jensen, 2021; Parker, 2013). Such a setting sheds the light on the relationships between these professionals the higher authority (e.g., state). Historically, academics held a position of authority within universities, with right to regulate their own teaching and scholarship practice (Burawoy, 2005).

Nevertheless, this traditional social welfare governance style has been influenced by the logic of managerialism and NPM (Deem, 1998, 2004; Ginsberg, 2011; Grey, 1999; Kallio et al., 2017; Mueller & Carter, 2007). To a higher degree this reorients such organizations toward the values, organizational forms, and management practices typical of "for-profit" organizations (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Jensen, 2021; Yeatman, 1993) in-line with other subsections of the public sector, and the overall NPM agenda pursued in the United Kingdom from the 1980s onward (Hyndman & Lapsley, 2016; Hyndman & Liguori, 2016; Lapsley, 2008, 2009). This complicates the relationship between previously largely self-regulating professionals (such as academics) and their higher authority that adopted NPM approaches (Evetts, 2011).

Governing public education organizations in the same manner as corporations has broadly been rationalized based on a set of beliefs and practices that private-sector style management practices will provide solutions for a wide range of economic and social issues (Pollitt, 1990; Tuchman, 2009). Thus, managerialism can be considered an ideological project that aims to spread corporate discourses and practices across economic, social, cultural, and political spaces (Farrell & Morris, 2003; Klikauer, 2019; Lynch, 2014; Pollitt, 2016) and has resulted in the cultural ubiquity of management in various aspects of our lifeworld (Shepherd, 2018).

Managerialism usually carves its path by characterizing existing styles of governance as anachronistic and in need of abrupt replacement (Kornberger & Carter, 2010; Mueller & Carter, 2007), including education organizations (Connell, 2013; Saltman, 2009). Starting with early speculations of whether corporate strategy may well be applied to the domain of education (Easterby-Smith, 1987), "strategic management" and "strategic managers" have increasingly become components of the reformation of HE (Agasisti et al., 2008; Degn, 2015), along with strategic change (Carter & Whittle, 2018), internationalization (Poole, 2001; Warwick, 2014), and quality management (Rhoades & Sporn, 2002). Similarly, an emerging body of literature shows that strategic management has begun to spread to different levels of public education organizations, evidenced by emphases on strategic leadership of large-scale reforms (Leithwood et al., 2004) and management of human resources (Odden, 2011). In short, increasing levels of managerialism associated with the translation of these initiatives downward in organizations (Hyndman & Lapsley, 2016) have been making inroads into the mainstream in education (Ginsberg, 2011; Readings, 1996).

It is with this background of increasing NPM-styled management practices and the influx of market-based ideology that we position our study. In the next section, we consider a brief history of the UK HE (UKHE) sector, providing valuable context for our observations and interpretations of events and accounts from the case organization both during the initial Covid-19 period, and subsequent to the recommencement of face-to-face teaching and other elements of "pre-Covid" HE operations.

3 | THE ENGLISH HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR, COVID-19, AND "BLUE MANAGEMENT SCHOOL"

3.1 | The English higher education sector and Covid-19

English HE, from a purely commercial and economic perspective, is a "success story." Together with their Northern Irish, Welsh, and Scottish counterparts, English universities contribute more than £95 billion of output and more than 815,000 full-time-equivalent jobs to the UK economy (Universities UK, 2021). English HE is also competitive internationally, with 5 of the world's top 30 universities located in England.[1]

This success comes against the background of successive shifts toward corporatization in English HE over the last four decades. Historically, most of the teaching and research activities of English universities were funded by government block grants. In the 1980s, the government decided that research funding should be allocated to individual universities on a competitive basis and introduced the Research Assessment Exercise[2] for this purpose. A decade later, it decided that students should bear part of the cost of their university education and introduced modest undergraduate tuition fees of £1,000 per year. These fees were increased in the mid-2000s, and further increased to £9,000 per year in the early 2010s. At the same time, the government removed caps on the maximum number of students individual universities were allowed to recruit. As a result of these measures, many English universities engaged in fierce competition for domestic undergraduate students, whose tuition fees now accounted for a large proportion of their revenues.

HE in England has a history of leading managerialist and market inspired public sector reforms. With initiatives such as the "research excellence framework," and more recently, the "teaching excellence framework," increasing managerialism to satisfy the forms of measurement that such initiatives require has become common. In addition, student fees are significantly higher than a lot of other European countries, and the largely unregulated market for international student fees sets apart English HE from many of its European counterparts, with resulting increasing student fee revenue and numbers.

As HE is a service that has historically relied on personal, face-to-face interactions between students and lecturers, the Covid-19 pandemic had a strong and immediate impact on English universities. Reflecting the need for physical distancing between individuals, and following government guidelines, universities quickly suspended on-campus activities, in many cases before the government implemented the full "lockdown" on March 23, 2020. Utilizing virtual

learning environments and videoconferencing programs, universities were able to move much of their teaching and assessment operations online (Sangster et al., 2020). The physical working environment for academics and university administrators moved into each of their homes, familiar ground for some, while a completely new experience for others.

The pandemic posed several risks to the sustainability of student fee income (McKie, 2020b). First, anticipating fewer international students would take up places at English universities, suggestions emerged that there would a significant reduction in international tuition fee income (Baker & Lau, 2020). Second, there were risks of fewer domestic students enrolling, as the idea that some could defer their entry amid concerns that teaching quality or the wider university experience may be compromised due to online learning. Third, it was projected that prestigious universities would lower their entry criteria and expand their intakes of domestic students at the expense of less prestigious universities (McKie, 2020a). In order to mitigate these risks, English universities took a number of actions, including recruitment freezes, redundancies, and significant reductions to the number of courses they offered (Grove, 2020). It is with this contextual backdrop that we now consider our theoretical framing of the case, through management as ideology and new managerialism in HE.

4 | IDEOLOGY, NEW MANAGERIALISM, AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE PROFESSIONS

For this study, we adopt a theoretical framework situated within the established realms of new managerialism (Deem, 1998; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Deem et al., 2007) and NPM (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994; Hood, 1995), with ensuing accountabilities and control issues associated with these concepts. We further unpack the effects of these ideologically motivated shifts in HE management for front-line academics with reference to the sociology of the professions literature, and how professional occupations are socially constructed and fit into the larger social, economic, and political structures of society (Tams & Arthur, 2010).

Ideology can be broadly defined as a system of ideas or ideals for the operation of society and socioeconomic polices that support it. It is a term that attracts some controversy in the philosophical world, as to its epistemological nature (Freeden, 2006), and whether or not it is can easily be defined or particularized entirely. For our purposes, we remain close to the Marxist interpretations of ideology, namely, that is serves the interests of groups of people within society, at the expense of the interests of others, and yet also, provides a symbolic method of making sense of the world for individuals (Žižek, 1989). Ideology can come into view through objects, practices, culture (Al Mahameed et al., 2020), and expressions. For example, symbols and imagery can form but one way in which ideology can be realized. Language (written, spoken, and imagery) and the associated symbolic meaning derived from it (Lacan, 1977) contributes toward a discourse of practice for the subjects involved and can be utilized to institute change within social spaces (Ezzamel et al., 2004; Ezzamel et al., 2007). We propose that new managerialism, as a phenomenon, is one way in which ideology comes into view and imposes itself on social spaces, for example, the English HE environment. Deem (2004) described new managerialism as

> as a set of ideologies about organisational practices and values used to bring about radical shifts in the organisation, finances and cultures of public services such as local government, health or education.
>
> (p. 109)

Effectively, new managerialism is an ideological subset, a derivative of neoliberalism, and market-based ideologies that place great value on capital as one of their core values and feed into the wider state ideological approach to public management (Ferlie et al., 2008). It is therefore unsurprising that new managerialism has been likened to the NPM practices that dominated public sector policy from the 1980s onward in the United Kingdom (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994;

Hyndman & Lapsley, 2016). Effectively, NPM offers a mechanism and by which the public sector can easily integrate with markets and be marketized in itself.

Along with more general managerialist approaches and observations, such increasing managerialism has the potential to affect the professional identities of academics within this social and cultural context. On one hand, the new managerialism creates a set of expectations and norms that plays an important role in shaping the academic identities (Evetts, 2011). On the other hand, drives toward NPM and greater private-sector style solutions to societal problems can influence the values and beliefs of wider society (e.g., students, professional bodies, and governments), through which academics are perceived and valued. Therefore, new managerialism in academia reshapes the social and cultural settings of the universities, and the expectations, values, and perceptions that individuals employed within universities may encounter (Tams & Arthur, 2010). The discourse of this new governing style does not only become a sine qua non of managing these organizations as corporations but it also becomes vital for managerialist projects of institutional change in public domains (Carter et al., 2010; Chia, 2000; Gaffikin & Perry, 2009; Greckhammer, 2010; Knights & Morgan, 1991).

Practices associated with new managerialism, such as those offered by increasing audit and inspection (Power, 1997) and performance management (Arnaboldi et al., 2015), contribute toward new ways and means of doing things, for example, new normalities that become taken for granted within practice. Examples within the English HE sector could include student satisfaction surveys, tracking facilities spending, course-by-course financial evaluation of viability, and so on. Following repeated completion, such practices soon become routine, and almost as part of what constitutes management within the space in question, that is, to manage in another way would be considered unorthodox. However, when taken to the extreme, such practices can result in alienation (Craig et al., 2014), as those who are not engaged or resist changes brought about by new managerialism cannot reconcile such practices with their own social construction of their academic identity. The maintenance of such an identity is a complex and ongoing process that is not only shaped by professional factors but also rather by personal and social ones (Webb, 2017).

The emergence of "manager academics" as described by Deem et al. (2007) in the context of new managerialism in academia has the potential to change the professional identities of academics in a number of ways. One way in which this hybrid model of an academic may change professional identities is through the breakdown of traditional academic roles. As administrative responsibilities, such as managing staff and handling budgets, become more prevalent in the work lives of those who hold these positions (see also Gebreiter, 2021). The boundary between traditional academic roles and administrative responsibilities becomes less clear. This can lead to a blurring of the lines among these different roles, potentially changing the way academics view and understand their own professional identities. Faculty Deans and other senior roles may experience these changes more intensely, as their prior research and teaching commitments are reduced or eliminated, whereas they are in managerial roles. This shift in responsibilities can lead to a more pronounced stratification of roles within academia, with a wider divide between administrative and managerial activities on the one hand and scholarship on the other (Abbott, 1988). These changes may also affect the way that academics view their own professional identities, as they adapt to and navigate these new roles and responsibilities.

This theoretical framework that we have outlined within this section allows us to take a particular viewpoint on the observed changing practices and increasingly new managerialist style that we observed within our chosen case institution (BMS). The following section outlines the methodological considerations and methods that we employed in our data collection within this study.

5 | METHODS

For the purposes of this study, we adopted a single case study methodological approach (Yin, 2003), focussing on the case of an English university business school, presented under the pseudonym of "BMS." BMS is a relatively large management school within a mid-tier public research university. In recent times, BMS has further embraced the marketization of the English HE sector by placing a strong emphasis on "teaching quality" as defined by high student

satisfaction scores, degree accreditations, and an "impact-led" research strategy which focused primarily on applied research and consultancy. Both the wider university and the management school have seen significant change within senior management in recent years and have adopted a more "business-like" approach in how they operate which involved a significant restructuring of the university prior to Covid.

In particular, we wished to explore how more arguably strategic level ideological change and initiatives filtered down through the organization, and how this was operationalized and interpreted at the operational level. To explore this complex interrelationship from different perspectives, we collected two types of data from our case organization, which we will now discuss in turn.

5.1 | Senior management memos

From the start of the Covid-19 crisis in March 2020 until August 2020, two senior managers ("Professor A" and "Professor B") associated with our case organization sent regular email or video-recorded memos outlining their thoughts about the developing crisis to all staff employed at BMS. Professors A and B were generally perceived to be strong supporters of adopting more commercial and managerialist approaches toward HE, and both were involved in extensive restructuring of BMS and the wider university prior to Covid. Overall, the employees of BMS received 41 Covid-related memo updates from Professors A and B between March and August 2020. An overview of them is available in Appendix A. This element of the data allowed for us to observe organizational responses from BMS as the initial stages of the pandemic unfolded.

5.2 | Semi-structured interviews

During December 2021 and January 2022, we conducted semi-structured interviews with nine academics who were working at BMS during the early stages of the pandemic (and in some cases that were still employed by the institution at the time of interview), and whom received the senior management memos discussed earlier. We also carried out four follow-up interviews during October and November 2022 to capture perspectives further outside of the initial pandemic period that the emails related to. We adopted a purposive approach to selecting our sample and thus contacted potential interviewees from different departments, different levels of seniority, and different types of contracts (i.e., research only, research and teaching, teaching only) within BMS.

Interviewees were drawn from all but one of the academic departments of the school, and from a wide spectrum of seniority levels (ranging from professor to research assistant), and also from all types of academic contracts offered by the school (i.e., research only, research and teaching, teaching only). As a result, we were satisfied that a wide range of perspectives were represented in our sample. Having said this, we recognize that purposive samples are non-probabilistic; therefore, we are not claiming that our interviewees and their views are representative of the wider population of academics employed at BMS, but that they offer a rich insight into the experiences of academics at BMS during the periods referred to.

Although our number of interviewees is relatively small, as we collected and analyzed our data, it became apparent that we had reached a degree of what Saunders et al. (2018) referred to as "data saturation," in the sense that we started to observe similar comments and themes across different interviews. Furthermore, it is worth noting that we did not approach Professors A or B for interviews. We felt that their extensive email and video communications during the period investigated gave us a sufficient understanding of their positions.

In the initial interview stage, interviewees were asked 22 questions that prompted responses regarding how both the initial stages of the pandemic played out at BMS, and longer term effects that they had witnessed. These included descriptions of responses from BMS to the early stages of the pandemic, how teaching and research changed, and communications from BMS to staff. In addition, participants were asked to reflect on some captions from the email and

video memos utilized as part of the data (provided that they could recollect receiving these communications). These discussions centered on the commitment to teaching delivery and student experience, student recruitment strategies, and the (communicated) financial situation of BMS given the pandemic. Participants also reflected on the longer term changes that had been integrated into a "new business as usual" following the initial pandemic period, and how these had carried profound and lasting change for the operations of BMS. Follow-up interviews consisted of 11 questions, designed to promote a deeper reflection on the lasting effects of management initiatives initially brought in at BMS in an attempt to manage the effects of Covid-19. An overview of the interviews is contained in Appendix B.

5.3 | Data reduction and display

We utilized a three-stage coding mechanism (Miles & Huberman, 1994) for the data derived from both interviews and emails. Codes were assigned according to a thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998), with an initial reading of the emails and interview transcripts followed by the application of the three coding levels according to emergent themes from the data in a repeated reading (Scapens, 2008). The first level of coding for both the emails and the interview transcripts was according to the period in which the email was sent, and the academic's position within BMS. We have opted to keep academics anonymous in terms their department, their position, and the time that they were employed by BMS, in order to preserve anonymity as a key element of our research protocol.

Emails were then coded (second stage) according to emergent themes, which soon encompassed topics, such as (inter alia) management (or need for increased management), the market for students, financial situation, longer term strategic change, and learning and teaching methods. Subcodes (third stage) such as academic identity, academic freedom, and operational change were emergent from our data in this stage and formed part of the analysis, allowing patterns within the data to be both identified and interpreted.

Interview coding focused on how academics felt and reflected on the initial pandemic period and subsequent changes to their role and the longer term direction of BMS, and so therefore, (second level) codes pertained more to academic identity, tasks and roles, communications, and changing work practices. These themes contributed to what was observed and written up in our Sections 6 and 7, along with the main observational themes that are present within our writing up of the data (Section 6). Both interview and email data were subjected to a modified form of template analysis for data display, to present the emergent themes alongside one another for comparison and evaluation. The following section outlines our findings from these processes of data reduction and data display.

6 | FINDINGS: THE RESPONSES FROM A CORPORATIZED UNIVERSITY

In this section, we separate our findings into four interrelated themes. The first subsection covers how market-based ideologies quickly became part of the new, constructed "reality" that university managers communicated to staff, with the three subsequent subsections covering how this was operationalized within BMS and with greater emphasis on the reactions of academics to the changes that were being implemented rapidly during the pandemic period.

6.1 | Communication and market ideology: ideological reminders from senior managers

At the start of the pandemic lockdown period, the email memos from senior staff were generally presented as friendly, personable, and with the aim of keeping in touch and maintaining some form of academic community. However, these soon became more concerned with the state of, the "market" for students. One senior manager emphasized this in

their emails to all staff, highlighting their perception of the financially fragile state of this "market" and the "product" that it offered:

> Their (UK universities) main product has its price set by the Government. This highly politicised price always lags inflation of the cost structure, so Universities are forced to grow or die. Universities push to get higher-fee overseas students but are limited by the (also politicised) visa/work restriction policies of the Government. The system is a medieval guild, with a collective monopoly on something that is still valuable - degrees. But this monopoly can't extract its potential profits because the public won't allow it. They don't think of Universities (sic) as independent businesses but as social enterprises working for the public good. The supposed autonomy justifies no direct formal support from the Government but the constraints mean that Universities can't accumulate enough cash reserves to cushion volatility. Their dependence on political will makes them poor credit risks so they can't borrow much for working capital. As the coronavirus crisis brings into stark relief, Universities lack adequate financial resilience.
>
> (Professor B, Email, March 2020)

Within this piece of communication, the market-based ideological position of the sector (as observed by Professor B) is evident. The call for greater liberalization and "extraction of profits" appears particularly poignant. Frequently in email communications, financial precarity and reliance on student fees were highlighted by interviewees. One academic recollected that this theme had been pressed before the pandemic by Professor B:

> there were other pressures as well. Probably with the restructuring going on. And so, You know, we at least some of us were made to be constantly mindful of those concerns … (Professor B) once did this very, very strange, I don't know if (they) thought it was a pep talk, but (they) essentially, basically told everyone during the (staff meetings) … 'Well, everyone's job's on the line, where, you know, you're only as safe as our student numbers are.' … not exactly the best way of motivating people.
>
> (Academic 2)

Interviewees further reflected on the environment and the feelings that they had following the recurrence of this theme in the time of the pandemic through the emails from Professor B:

> (the message was) 'we're gonna (sic) have to recruit more (students). Well, just so your salaries can be paid' … I remember once there was an email about not wanting to let (staff) go. I remember feeling quite mixed about that one because it was, in part, couched in benevolent terms. Was almost sort of a kind of a threat as well, you know, it's 'we don't want to let anyone go, but, you know, if things change, we might have no choice' … and so when they then send an email saying, 'you've got to do this, you've got to do that or we've got to do this as a university, we've got to change', it makes you more compliant. This is just part of, kind of that hidden agenda.
>
> (Academic 6)

> To me it felt like that it was … 'you don't want to lose your job; if you want to continue working, look at the sector, the sector looks bad, international students are not coming and so on and so forth, and that's why you should put your biggest effort to support (BMS), because otherwise we will also have to fire people' … It was a little bit fearmongering, especially the comparisons to other institutions and I think in hindsight … financially (BMS is) in a better position then what it was (before) … could the senior management have anticipated that?
>
> (Academic 1)

The overtone from the emails and the data we observe is that some staff feared that they would lose their job, in a period where finding a replacement job would be extremely difficult, as the sector was in a financially perilous situation. The power for staff to resist changes that were being implemented (and effectively maintain control over their own practice) was already significantly reduced by the need to stay at home (therefore limiting opportunities to collectively organize), which was now exacerbated by the strong message that changes needed to be made or jobs would be at stake. This sets the scene for the practical changes (and their effects on academics) that we discuss in the following subsections.

6.2 | Reshaping the academic I: ramping up "production" in teaching

The first strategic response that senior managers proposed in response to the Covid-19 crisis was a radical reorganization of BMS' educational offering. It was made clear that student preferences would be a key factor in what was going to be taught at BMS, and how it was going to be taught. This included increasing the number of hours staff spent in preparation and delivery of courses to students.

One of the first initiatives was to introduce staggered starts, or a "carousel" approach to teaching, meaning that a prospective student could enter the university in semester two (January) of the traditional academic year, and finish their studies at the end of the summer period, in addition to traditional September entries. Obvious effects of this approach were to increase the occurrences that courses needed to be delivered by academics, as semester one courses would effectively need to be repeated January entry students. Professor B outlined this in an email relatively early after the pandemic hit:

> we continue to move our (BMS) team focus from the emergency jump online towards the future, in particular the January starts and the desire for a carousel with three annual intakes for all our postgraduate programmes. We are sharing our approaches and templates (across the faculty) so that the (faculty) will be able to begin as a flexible educational entity.
>
> (Professor B, Email, March 2020)

Little consideration as to how research-active staff could maintain their publishing ambitions and requirements was paid in communications from senior managers, and the emails were almost completely teaching-focussed in terms of the actions that staff needed to take. Some teaching-focussed staff too raised concerns over workload and increasing strain, whereas one professed to adapt well (Academic 8). Interviewees revealed that subsequent to these changes being, repetition of modules would not carry as much workload allocation (see Sangster et al., 2020),[3] and in fact, this would mean more teaching for them overall in their academic workload:

> and at the repeat … people were not given the full workload (allocation). They were given half the workload (allocation), which in a way is very intriguing for me because you are delivering the whole module and you still have to prepare for the lecture, even if you have your slides ready. … my delivery time is the same, my engagement time is the same and my preparation (is the same) because I'm not just doing that one module delivery all the time, I'm doing tens of other things … If it was 80% or three quarters (allocated time), I would understand, but slashing the workload (allowance) by giving you just half the allocation of the original, I think some of my colleagues really, really struggled
>
> (Academic 5)

Further memos set out BMS' short-term, operational response to the crisis, which included a temporary hiring freeze, a reduction of operating budgets and the deferral of capital expenditure (Professor A, May 2020). At the same time, interviewees detailed how research budgets were frozen, and their commitment to their own personal research

interests were compromised, especially as the valuable summer "teaching down-time period" was now to become teaching intensive also:

> we're almost getting this impression that okay (BMS) is not going to support us now in our research. So it's either stay in and teach pretty much full-time or you've got to leave and find a university that will support you.
>
> (Academic 6)

Although these measures were billed as short-term responses to the crisis, some academic staff raised questions as to whether the shifts toward a more teaching-focussed operation were to become more permanent:

> It's not just a pandemic thing, it's also a change in tone from the top increase bureaucracy at the university management level and that has been cascaded down to the departments. So, more control, more admin work, more emphasis on teaching, no appointment of new professors
>
> (Follow-up Interview, Academic 3)

In-line with this these concerns, interviewees further reflected on how they felt that this new way of managing was turning them into something akin to factory workers charged with providing more and more fee-bearing activity (teaching), with little respect for their level of training, expertise, and scholarship:

> The PhD is the highest level of qualification. We are a part of an industry where we have the most qualified set of people. But I don't think there's enough regard for any of that learning and experience that you put in. Because the way we are managed is exactly the same that, you know, workers elsewhere … there is not enough, I would say recognition or respect or even acknowledgment of that. You are you get treated the same way … we felt as if we were a part of an 'academic assembly line'
>
> (Academic 5)

Academics were also keen to share the opinions of colleagues as to how academic roles were changing into ones that were more concerned with completing increasing volumes of teaching rather than focussing on quality and depth:

> One person used the term Fordism to describe, you know, kind of the new means of teaching and assessment practices, and I don't think in the context of higher education (that) Fordism is actually, you know, a good term … It implies mass production roles, you know? Breaking things down and into a very granular way, but not because you're trying to teach detail because you're trying to find the easiest way of doing things.
>
> (Academic 2)

> if you (were to) run a university as if it were a light bulb factory, then you would look at others like light bulb factories (and) would try to outdo your competitors … you can't run a university (in this way).
>
> (Academic 3)

With this theme evident in the discourse and the impressions of academics, other substantial changes with longer term institutional effects could be imposed. Teaching loads remained high even after the pandemic had subsided, including the reduced recognition of increased workloads, with interviewees detailing how this constituted the "new normal":

everybody now says, the department has turned into a teaching department. That is quite a correct statement, I would say

(Follow-up Interview, Academic 3)

if you teach the module twice per year, so you teach it in September, you (will then) teach it again) in January. The workload for the second, one is only half … so that's stuck.

(Follow-up Interview, Academic 7)

The next subsection details how against the backdrop of potentially falling student numbers and the need to teach more, the pedagogical methods involved in teaching, and the overall image and representation of teaching activity could be changed according to the desires of management.

6.3 | Reshaping the academic II: à la carte education and "the customer is always right"

Early following the first UK government lockdown in 2020, students began to question whether newly instituted online teaching methods would give them value for money. Professor B was quick to highlight this in one of their early emails citing a student petition regarding dissatisfaction at the proposals of the university (Professor B, March 2020). Part of the response to such increasing pressure from students was to produce a new program to be marketed to students under the name of "BMS Students First." This choice of language and branding was remarked upon by one academic in particular, who summarized how they thought the ideological position coming into view was a little too close to something within wider current affairs:

I remember this '(BMS) Students First' campaign which was a horrendous name … because it's drawing on Trump's 'America First' slogan. I think the intention behind it was a good one in that we put students' interests at the top of our priorities … but the label '(BMS) Students First' was horrendous, I don't think any university should have used such a slogan which relies on more or less far right US agendas.

(Academic 1)

Part of this campaign was to offer student greater flexibility in how they conduct their degree, with online offerings, blended learning, and face-to-face modes of delivery proposed as interchangeable options for students (learning "by the slice"):

The world is becoming more flexible and we are too. In the future we should adapt our modes of education to allow students to choose approaches that best fit their circumstances and preferences, for example, simultaneously running on-campus and online courses and *assessments. Also we will use the carousel approach, and micro-credentials/learning by the slice to allow students to choose the cycle of learning that works best for them.*

(Professor B, Email, March 2020)

Learning by the slice was an approach that had been proposed within BMS before the pandemic hit. However, as in the above email, justifications for it became more widespread in communications. Interviewees often expressing their alienation with this notion:

> We had some discussions about 'pizza degrees', another horrendous term of communication, which essentially suggests that students have a base in terms of some courses on their degree, then they can pick and choose the other modules similar to pizza toppings. … Why would you compare a university with a restaurant?
>
> (Academic 1)

Later in the pandemic period, in order to illustrate the need for this à la carte vision of HE, Professor B used one of their memos to compare English universities to a postcommunist restaurant, highlighting their view on more traditional approaches in HE:

> (we) encountered a surly but reasonably English speaking waiter … I asked for lecso. The waiter said "we don't serve it to non-Hungarians" … he said to me 'you will have gulasch'. I said that I didn't want gulasch and he replied that I would have gulasch, and so would everyone else. Under the communist regime, the restaurants told you what you could eat, not the other way round … Today, doing what the customer wants has become almost as important in education as in food service …

> We can't tell our applicants that they have to eat gulasch … If they want lecso, we have to cook it for them. Indeed, we have to anticipate what they might want and be prepared to offer it before they inquire what is on offer. If we don't they will just go elsewhere to dine and our restaurant will be out of business. Much of our approach to education, from recruitment to the learning and teaching to the assessments and employability support, remains built on the 1991 Budapest restaurant model. Dictatorial, unchanging, user-unfriendly, bureaucratic and slow. Either all this goes or we do.
>
> (Professor B, Email, June 2020)

Some interviewees reflected on this view with respect to how they felt as though they were perceived, and how they felt being potentially likened to the waiter in the anecdote.

> It was it that touched a nerve for me, and I think that … pushed me over the edge a little bit … I thought this is fundamentally out of how I view HE and the role of HE. (Management are) wanting to turn (BMS) into a training provider. And at that point, I was clear that they didn't really respect my role and who I view myself as an academic, and I kind of was getting that inkling anyway.
>
> (Academic 4)

Initially, how this shift in delivery panned out was to increase standardization and quality assurance initiatives within departments. The message of increased centralization and potentially standardization was present within emails from one of the senior managers, such as the one in the following:

> we are being incredibly creative in devising new ways of recruiting, admitting, inducting and teaching in light of the uncertainty over how the next academic year will run. This "we" also consists of teams in various Schools and Departments, drawing on internal resources and experiences specific to each team. But in the end we need to use the same pool of technical resources, language resources, recruitment and marketing resources. And we need to convey one very clear message on how we will operate to potential students and to the agents, families and others who advise them. So we need to do all this in a quick but coordinated way, once again through the central University team.
>
> (Professor B, Email, April 2020)

This was followed by a further email emphasizing that, from the viewpoint of Professor B, teaching methods and pedagogical approaches at a more operational level needed to change:

> Many people still teach "theory first, applications afterwards". This is the equivalent of the surgeon starting a conversation with a patient by discussing the different types of scalpels.
>
> (Professor B, Email, June 2020)

The proposition of standardization of resources and the emphasis on the need to convey a clear message of how BMS would operate raised questions as to how this would pan out within departmental teaching. Soon after this email, efforts to promote standardization began to creep in at departmental levels:

> I would say the number one characteristic of the university's approach was to follow a very detailed recipe in terms of how teaching was supposed to take place for the next year at least.
>
> (Academic 7)

This left little room for academic freedom in terms of choosing how to deliver each module from the academic's point of view and, thus, infringed in their ability to regulate their own practice as previously associated with such professionals. One interviewee emphasized that how they had seen this unfold within their department, along with their own, personal alienation with what was happening:

> The suggestion to check up on module leaders and how they are delivering their modules in an online format would be more of an idea of supporting people. I think some teaching convenors saw it more with the intent of controlling people, for example they set very stiff deadlines for when modules had to be on (the virtual learning environment), materials had to be uploaded, so on and so forth … considering that we are talking about people who are essentially who have delivered modules for years, five years, ten years, successful, good teaching feedback (etc.), the question is why would you need now to control their materials when moving online?
>
> (Academic 1)

This feeling of increased surveillance and monitoring is to be expected somewhat with the greater emphasis on achieving a notion of "managerial transparency" (e.g., see Strathern, 2000) with regard to course material, and the resultant auditing of a space that was previously left to the academic in question (see Freidson, 2001) highlighting the impact of such technological changes and the potential for a drive toward greater managerialism (Sangster et al., 2020).[4] Further frustrations were raised over being told how to teach. One academic expressed their discontent at being told how to deliver aspects of their teaching to students:

> heads of education, telling people, university-wide how they should arrange their teaching and in a quite detailed way, which I didn't like … I know my students best and maybe I will just ask them how they want their sessions to be arranged. I find that more helpful and constructive than follow some twenty-point bullet list informing me how to arrange and run my sessions. So, I found the information we ultimately got (was) overly instructive and overly restrictive.
>
> (Academic 3)

These quotes from academics show how a managerial idea regarding reshaping delivery was formed, with little input from front-line academics, and then imposed upon them through efforts to standardize and (theoretically) increase quality, while stifling individualism and academic freedom in teaching, and reducing the role of the academic largely one of service-provision. The following subsection looks at student positioning as customers, and how aca-

demics were encouraged to incorporate recruitment activities into their role, further changing the role of the academic in the name of the pandemic and the need to maintain and increase student numbers (and tuition fee income).

6.4 | Reshaping the academic III: online dating and academic "mad men"[5]

The need to increase student numbers that messages from senior management had pushed early in the pandemic period (see Section 6.1) resulted in another attempt to change the role of the academic and institute a focus on marketing courses to students. One interviewee reflected on initiatives before the pandemic that sought to "make programmes sound 'sexier' to students, to recruit more" (follow-up interview, Academic 4).

During the pandemic, marketing of courses changed emphasis, with senior managers paying greater consideration as to how academics could be utilized to recruit students. Managers emphasized that one way for BMS to attract fee income in a competitive market was to offer potential students more engagement than other universities at the application stage. Although some academics had taken part in student recruitment initiatives before, such as open days and school visits, Professor B emphasized how this needed to ramp within the context of the pandemic, likening this activity to "online dating":

> Colleagues, I think that I should change the title of this note, at least for today, to online dating! … Brand is an important but not the only important driver of student choice. Applicants respond to being wanted in a personal way, not just for their tuition.[6] Our experience has been that clear communication of the benefits of studying with us, direct responses to questions from truly relevant people (aka people who will be teaching on the programmes that they take) and quick and clear responses to their many practical questions can overcome simple brand value … We are now entering the critical period of applicant decision-making. I ask you to please respond with alacrity to requests to participate in virtual Applicant Visitor Days, applicant webinars and telephone, online and emailed applicant questions. Our Admissions and Marketing teams also welcome your suggestions for more ways for us to succeed in kindling applicant enthusiasm. I thank you in advance for your contributions to our dating initiatives.
>
> (Professor B, Email, May 2020)

The highlighting of "truly relevant people" as above shows how academics were now expected to turn their labor efforts toward recruiting students, as well as delivering their education. Again, how this would pan out at an operational level was a question that stemmed from this announcement. One directive was for departments to conduct "taster sessions" for prospective students. Several interviewees reflected on this, with one noting how staff workload had not been considered with this increased offering:

> there was a particular initiative which was started in my department … some modules which will kind of give (students) a taster. It was like a taster thingy which was started to attract more students, right? … that practice, I know that has stayed so that change which I and I think it has workload implications, how it has been worked out.
>
> (Academic 5)

The increased workloads suggested that this was simply accepted as part of the new role of the academic and not considered part of teaching activity. In addition, the likening to "online dating" suggested a selling aspect and a personal, emotional labor dimension (Hochschild, 1983) on the part of the academics involved. Some academics enjoyed undertaking recruitment activities (Academic 2, Academic 8), both pre-pandemic and during this period. However, others responded negatively to these proposed changes to their role, not seeing it as part of their academic identity:

> calling (telephoning) students … where people were asked to, actually call people to convert like offers into enrolments or whatever and I think that's terrible. This shouldn't be done by academics … it's a sales job, it should be done by salespeople.
>
> (Academic 7)

The concerns that academics raise in these quotations show that the imposed role as a service provider and a recruiter for student does not necessarily sit well with them and their academic identity. The changes that were implemented during Covid-19 transformed the role of academics within BMS to include greater activity orientated at recruiting students and teaching in greater quantities. In the next section, we discuss this with respect to the theoretical framework outlined in Section 4.

7 | DISCUSSION

Covid-19 has posed challenges to universities across the world. For example, due to the physical distancing requirements associated with the pandemic, virtually all universities have had to move at least parts of their teaching and assessment activities online (Al Mahameed et al., 2021; Sangster et al., 2020). On one hand, the pandemic imposed new socioeconomic demands on universities carrying with it influence in shaping the status and power of the different ranks of academic within the UKHE, especially, in those who have been highly corporatized and marketized. As a result, the status and power of academics within these management styles influenced by factors such as market demand and financial viability. On the other hand, Covid-19 exacerbated these factors as the sector expected drastic changes in student numbers and its conditions. BMS, in perceiving this financial vulnerability executed large-scale, lasting changes to their operation, bringing the weaknesses of their corporatized approaches to their operation to the forefront.

Such approaches, which prioritize efficiency and performance measurement, have shaped the way that universities operate and the expectations placed on individual academics (Webb, 2017). Although emergency measures were necessary to sustain the continuity of education for students at this time (see e.g., Sangster et al., 2020), we also postulate that the Covid-19 crisis acted to expose and emphasize the increased financial vulnerability of HE institutions, emphasizing their reliance on fee income, and recruiting adequate numbers of students to finance these financial demands (Jones, 2022). Under such settings, academics are under increasing pressure to achieve performance goals and prove their worth to the university in order to maintain their positions.

Our observations relating to BMS indicate that, senior managers drastically changed the way they communicated with academics during the pandemic, in part in attempts to combat the effects of restrictions on operations on the overall continuity of their educational offering, but also in communications that emphasized financial precarity and the reliance on tuition fees. This discourse can be seen as an attempt to legitimize radical change within BMS, particular the requirement for greater managerialism and control (Deem, 1998; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Deem et al., 2007) over aspects of academia that were previously trusted to the judgment of academic professionals.

We observed three related themes within our data. First, the transition toward greater teaching intensity was fuelled by the emphasis on student numbers, again stemming from the market-based ideological approach of managers. Such ideology can be said to have been mobilized via increased teaching loads, reduction of recognition for the time that teaching took to prepare and deliver via changes to how repeat modules were accounted for in the workload model (arguably a form of "creative accounting"), and a neglect of research (Readings, 1996) through elimination of personal research budgets and the establishment of a discourse that almost excluded any discussion of research from the senior managers of the university in their (daily/weekly) communications to staff. These changes can be seen as attempts to create a new academic identity that better suits the prevalent corporatized approach (Evetts, 2011) and further shift power from academics to management (Deem, 2004; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Deem et al., 2007). We note that the context of the Covid-19 virus coupled with uncertainty regarding student fee revenue contributed to a discourse that legitimized these changes (Deem & Brehony, 2005), with little opportunities for socially distanced

staff to resist such change, with many vacating their positions for alternative employment during the period or shortly afterward.

Second, the emergence of an à la carte approach to HE, whereby student preferences were proposed determine many components of university teaching, including course contents and the nature of assessments. Such approaches carry implications for the social, economic, and political forces that shape professional occupations of academics and their wider societies in which they exist (Tams & Arthur, 2010). The adoption of an à la carte approach toward HE would all but remove the professional prerogative of academics to design curricula that are above all informed by their pedagogical and subject-specific expertise. Instead, student demands and preferences would come to determine the curriculum, in-line with a "customer-focussed" approach pushed from senior managers. The à la carte approach undermines the professional status and authority of academics, as their expertise and judgment are potentially overruled by student preferences, that are, in fact, translated through management interpretation and resultant discourses (Deem et al., 2007). The role of academics, under this scenario, would be largely restricted to anticipating and implementing the wishes of their students. University teachers' ability to compel students to work hard and engage with challenging and uncomfortable ideas has the potential to be lost in favor of playing to metrics (Yates & De Loo, 2021) that are associated with a market-based ideological standpoint on HE (Deem & Brehony, 2005; Deem et al., 2007) and mobilized via increasing managerialism in terms of curriculum development and pedagogical execution.

Third, a call for lecturers to "online date" prospective students to entice them into taking up offers paired with concerns over job security if such efforts were not sufficiently successful, further undermining the professional status of academics. The power disparity that exists between academics and their students traditionally gives the former control over the latter due to possessing a wealth of knowledge, authority, and expertise. The interaction (e.g., online date) between academics and potential students may be shaped by this power dynamic, which may also have an impact on the caliber of the services rendered (Burawoy, 2005). Historically, there would have been an expectation for academics, as professionals, to advise potential applicants according to their own assessments of these individuals' needs and circumstances. This expectation would have included that students are advised to apply to another university, or not to pursue further study at all, if academics believed that these options were in the students' best interests. According to the vision of BMS' senior managers, the role of academics in advising potential students would change fundamentally. It would be reduced to primarily a sales activity aimed at recruiting potential students, regardless of their needs and circumstances, and one geared toward maximization of student fee income.

We argue that these three steps, if adopted more widely in English HE, would have significant implications for the roles and identities of academics.[7] Historically, by virtue of their expertise and professional status, English academics were largely trusted to design and deliver curricula in a manner that reflected the best interests of students (e.g., Clarke et al., 2007). The notion of academic freedom (Altbach, 2001) was thought to ensure that the contents of curricula were determined by academics' professional judgment and unencumbered by political and commercial pressures on the wider institution. This combination of academic freedom and emphasis on professional judgment placed lecturers in a position from whence they could compel students to engage with a strong, academically rigorous curriculum, even if this involved hard work or digesting challenging and uncomfortable ideas, which can be unpopular with some students (Yates & De Loo, 2021).

Although the shift toward corporatization over the last few decades has somewhat eroded the historical emphases on professional judgment and academic freedom, the proposals of BMS' senior managers would imply a radical departure from them. Thus, we argue that commercially inclined university managers may use instances such as the Covid-19 crisis as an opportunity to promote further steps toward the corporatization of HE, carrying profound implications for the roles and identities of academics, along with the nature of HE offered. This change is facilitated (in our observations) by more authoritarian structures of control, rapidly implemented with little resistance in the name of "managing the effects of the virus." In the worst case, academics have the cease to be largely self-determining professionals and become customer service workers, whose principal roles are to bring in fee-paying students and cater for their preferences, thus maximizing the monetization of their labor for the institution by "manager academics" (Deem et al., 2007).

8 | CONCLUSIONS

> What I find so interesting as a (management) scholar, is how ruthlessly and efficiently you can turn around a certain strategy, from being a strategy to being, like, reality. I think on the other hand you could see it as a case study, as a prime example of strategy implementation. I have seldomly seen organisations being able to turn around in such an (efficient) way. Of course, the turnaround doesn't favour any academic colleagues, but then again, it is what it is.
>
> (Academic 1)

In our study, we have observed a case where the need to "manage the effects of the virus" effectively removed power from academics and into the hands of departmental and senior managers. As the discourse of a crisis within the ideologically market-based HE sector was installed via communications and a relative lack of informal talk due to government-mandated social isolations measures, little opportunity to resist such rapid change was offered to academics or others. Being physically distanced, academics struggled to maintain a sense of control over their work while feeling that their voices were less heard in decision-making processes. This was coupled with uncertainty and discomfort that were magnified, as academics had to adapt to new modes of teaching and learning and navigate unfamiliar technologies.

From our findings, we interpret how Covid-19 acted as a catalyst for organizational strategy to be enforced quicker and more ruthlessly (see the previous quote from Academic 1), sharing similar characteristics (i.e., disaster/shock events as an opportunity to push for change) as observed by Saltman (2009) during the late 2000s financial crisis. Similar to the financial crisis (see Bracci et al., 2015; Hopwood, 2009), Covid-19 legitimized the shrinkage of activities deemed to be "insignificant" (e.g., critical research), and further promotion university "products" that may appeal to prospective students as the driver of financial income. We argue that this has contributed to further erosion of the role of the more traditional, research academic within the case organization. This image of the more traditional academic has been replaced by one that is being pushed more to maximize fee income through their labor, and one that is being managed in a way to facilitate this, through shifting responsibilities onto academics (such as student recruitment) and increasing teaching workloads. We therefore provide a theoretical contribution to the established theorization of new managerialism, by highlighting the enduring reign of market-based ideological positions,[8] even when subjected to extreme shocks and threats such as the one posed by Covid-19, and previously, as seen at the time of the financial crash of late 2008. In doing so, we also argue that such settings influence the professionalization of academics, highlighting the complex interplay between new managerialism approach and Covid-19 in shaping the roles, values, and behaviors of academics.

This carries grave consequences for academic research, academic identity, and academic freedom. As staff are pushed toward this fee generation model of working, they will have less time (as we have observed) to conduct academic research, leading to one of the key roles of the university being diminished (Readings, 1996; Rolfe, 2013). At the same time, academics with budding research careers left BMS, showing how mid-tier universities could move to become teaching only institutions. Academics who remained experienced to different extents a pressure to fulfill specific roles or expectations, feeling the need to conform to new certain norms to fit in. Opportunities for genuine, personal, research led teaching will potentially be diminished, and more holistic elements of the HE experience could be lost.

Although we accept that our study has limitations associated with the singular case study method, confining it to a particular organization, space, and time, we do believe that it is relevant to the sector and to other institutions, as corporatization and new managerialism are still as strong as ever in the sector (Deem et al., 2007; Gebreiter, 2021; Gebreiter & Hidayah, 2019; Parker, 2014, 2018). We recommend therefore that policymakers consider how they incentivize universities with regard to increasing student numbers, and thereby encouraging the financial fragility

that we have observed be mobilized to push through new managerialism as a representation of market-based ideology within English HE. We also encourage further research in this area, to document other cases of how managerialism has impacted on academics, their identity, and the prospective consequences for the sector. Although we accept that many of the themes we have covered may also be present in extant literature, the context of Covid-19 allows us to observe a unique case of where managerialism was pushed toward the extreme. This argument may be a familiar one, but it is one that must be continued to be sounded as HE continues to embrace greater and greater levels of corporatization.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Research data are not shared.

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NOTES
[1] According to the 2020 edition of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.
[2] Since renamed the Research Excellence Framework.
[3] This point is made within this paper in a section by David Tyrall, where he states that *"But this on-line shift is unlikely to be an unmitigated blessing. It seems to me likely to lead to further workload intensification for academics. For example, there could easily be requirements to provide on-line lectures as well as in person tutorials—i.e. flipped teaching becomes extra workload. At the limit the managerial line could be—you have already prepared the on-line lectures last year during COVID, so you don't need time to do them again, and so you can do this (whatever 'this' is) as well. The shift to recording of lectures and tutorials will also lead to greater surveillance—whether for quality control or for political correctness. What was contained within the classroom will enter the public domain; the governable educator as a development of the governable person"* (p. 557).
[4] Although this inference is contained in the paper by these authors, it is made by Margaret Healy following reflections of the Covid-19 crisis with relation to experiences in the Irish HE sector.
[5] A term for advertising executives in the 1950s and 1960s periods, taking the "Mad" from Madison Avenue, New York, where many advertising agencies were (and some still continue to be) based.
[6] We assume that Professor B was referring to tuition fees in this instance.
[7] As noted above, BMS has adopted corporatized approaches to higher education more readily than most other English universities. As a result, it may seem unlikely that many other English universities will take similar steps in the short term. However, in the medium and long term, the movement toward corporatization in English higher education has often led to the once unimaginable becoming reality. For example, the prospect that several English universities could go bankrupt was largely unthinkable only a decade ago and, during the period in our study, was regarded as a realistic, and even likely scenario.
[8] To paraphrase the famous Frederick Jameson quote from "The Seeds of Time" (1994), it appears that in the case of BMS, it was easier to imagine the end of the university sector and academia as we know it, rather than imagine an alternative to managerialism and further corporatization of the sector.

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APPENDIX A
SUMMARY OF EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Author	Date
Professor A	April 2020
Professor A	April 2020
Professor A	May 2020
Professor A	June 2020
Professor A	July 2020
Professor A	August 2020
Professor B	March 2020
Professor B	March 2020
Professor B	March 2020
Professor B	March 2020
Professor B	March 2020
Professor B	March 2020
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Professor B	April 2020
Professor B	April 2020
Professor B	April 2020
Professor B	April 2020
Professor B	April 2020
Professor B	April 2020
Professor B	April 2020
Professor B	April 2020

(Continues)

Author	Date
Professor B	May 2020
Professor B	May 2020
Professor B	May 2020
Professor B	May 2020
Professor B	May 2020
Professor B	June 2020
Professor B	June 2020
Professor B	June 2020
Professor B	June 2020
Professor B	August 2020

APPENDIX B
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWEES

Pseudonym	Gender identity	Time in minutes (to the nearest minute)	Follow-up interview reference	Time in minutes (to the nearest minute)
Academic 1	Male	54		
Academic 2	Male	60	Academic 2, follow-up interview	33
Academic 3	Male	73	Academic 3, follow-up interview	29
Academic 4	Male	67	Academic 4, follow-up interview	42
Academic 5	Female	53		
Academic 6	Male	49	Academic 6, follow-up interview	41
Academic 7	Female	51		
Academic 8	Male	50		
Academic 9	Female	65		
Average		**58**		**36**