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Historical role preparedness: A Bourdieusian analysis of the differential positions of professional staff and academics in an Australian managerialised university

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Abstract

This study examines the historical role preparation experiences of professional staff and academics in a managerialised university field. Semi-structured interviews were used to identify the impact of these experiences on the individual's ability to 'play the game' of the managerialised university field. The Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, doxa and illusio were used to analyse the data. The results showed that professional staff had a more advantageous position in the managerialised university field due to their pre-existing mastery of the rules of the game, which was attributed to their similarly structured educative role preparation experiences. Conversely, academics had a less advantageous position due to their lack of understanding of the managerialised nature of the university administrative field. This manifests as a heterodoxy, in which academics feel abandoned, disregarded and subordinated by managerial orthodoxy. The results of this case study reveal that managerialised universities in the Anglosphere are in crisis. It is argued that recognising academic heterodoxy could pave the way for their situation to alter and improve.

Keywords

Historical role preparedness, Admin School, habitus, doxa, illusion, Higher Education, Bourdieu, professional staff, managerialism

Introduction

The 'game' of the managerialised university is recognised as being marketised, competition-driven, efficiency finding, performance monitoring, and generally concerned with managing 'things' as its

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primary concern (Alvesson and Spicer, 2017; Klikauer, 2023; Pick et al., 2012; Winter, 2009). For academics, this game conflicts with their academic identity, and they feel stressed and unable to cope in a sector 'under attack' by managerialism (Loveday, 2018; Loveday, 2021: 904), as well as lonely, unsupported and lacking in confidence (Billot and King, 2017; Gravett and Petersen, 2007). However, professional staff appear prepared for the game. Blame is laid firmly upon the rise of managerialism in the broader field of higher education (Kinman, 2014; Macfarlane, 2015; Wheeldon et al., 2022a; Wheeldon et al., 2022b). Academics blame university management (Anderson, 2008; van Houtum and van Uden, 2020) and professional staff for arising conflict (Chandler et al., 2002; Loveday, 2018; Winefield, 2008), whilst professional staff blame the academics (Collinson, 2006). However, the extant literature concentrates on the current conditions of the conflict rather than the habitus (cultural background and personal history) of individuals currently participating. Although there is limited study on how academics enter the workforce, the preparation of professional staff for work in the higher education sector is even less understood.

We contend information about historical role preparation is important to know because individuals succeed within a field by knowing the rules of the game, and playing astutely (Grenfell, 2014). Bourdieu (1990: 81) described this field success in terms of the player who is caught up in the illusion (illusio – their passion to play the game) of the game, adjusting 'not to what he sees but to what he foresees, sees in advance in the directly perceived present'. We contend this ability to foresee the game is dependent on historical role preparation or prior life experience of the game, which includes one's learning, employment and education and can be considered an aspect of habitus. Individuals with a habitus and illusio already aligned to the doxa (the taken for granted assumptions) of a field of practice have an advantage in the field in which they practice (Grenfell, 2014), as 'how to play the game' is already historically embedded in their habitus (Lamaison and Bourdieu, 1986).

Grounded in Bourdieusian ontology, the concepts of field, habitus, doxa and illusio combine as a way of understanding the impact historical role preparedness has on university academic and professional staff. By comparing perceptions of historical role preparedness of professional and academic staff, this study seeks to disclose how individuals are historically prepared to succeed (or not) in playing the managerialised university game. Semi-structured interviews revealed professional staff already knew the rules of the university administrative field before they entered the managerialised university game. An emphasis on customer service (the illusio) comes naturally to them, allowing them to gain satisfaction and reward from playing this aspect of the game. Their common historical role preparation experiences (doxa) are relatively homogeneous and correspond significantly with the administrative roles they execute in the university administration field.

On the other hand, interviews with academic staff reveal they are disadvantaged in the university administrative field due to both limited historical role preparation and a misaligned doxa and illusio. Academics feel clueless about fulfilling administrative and operational duties as they lack the habitus of professional staff. Furthermore, university management engages in maintaining a managerialised orthodoxy, which professional staff are quite comfortable with – but academics are not. Academics are frustrated, fearful and not coping. They feel neglected, taken for granted and subjugated.

Existing literature

Our literature review examines the Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus, doxa and illusio in a sufficient manner for this study. We then consider the literature that reports the experiences of

academic and professional staff in the managerialised university and articulate our research question along with its importance.

To begin, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of each of the roles discussed in this study and define what we mean by historical role preparation. Academics are the knowledge workers of the university who engage in the core business of teaching and research (Clegg, 2008; Macfarlane, 2015). Professional staff undertake a multitude of operational roles within the university, including administration (Whitchurch, 2018). The professional staff in this study all held administrative roles. 'Historical role preparation' is the product of experiences, upbringing, education and social environment that shape an individual's views and behaviour. It relates to *habitus* as it similarly describes the personal background and context that an individual brings to a certain field (Bourdieu, 1990), to *doxa* as it incorporates the accepted values and beliefs of a particular society or community (Bourdieu, 1998), and to *illusio* as it projects the aspirations of an individual (Bourdieu, 2000). All three of these concepts are important in understanding how an individual's ability to 'play the game' has been shaped by their historical experiences. In this study, historical role preparation does not refer to the more mechanical and material actions of workplace preparations, such as workplace orientations, onboarding sessions or policy familiarisation.

Field, habitus, doxa and illusio

Field is a 'boundaried' social space, with its own set of laws that govern practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu likened this social (not physical) space to a football field or battlefield where actors strive to succeed. For Bourdieu, field is a meaningful social and conceptual space where an individual decides and therefore strives, to create value and establish personal worth (Wacquant, 1989). An individual's habitus interacts with the field and their practice, which is a product of the relationship between an individual's dispositions (*habitus*) and the current state of the arena (*field*) the individual is acting in (Bourdieu, 1990; Grenfell, 2014). Simplistically, the field can be viewed as constituting the behavioural norms (doxa) derived from the large number of individuals who share a social space.

Habitus is the sum of the ways an individual acts, feels, thinks and presents themselves in the world and is an outcome of one's past and present circumstances (Bourdieu, 1990; Lawler, 2004). Bourdieu viewed an individual's habitus as a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures … which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted' (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). Individuals navigate the field through stable (structured structures) and dynamic (structuring structures) influences (Bourdieu, 1977). Through experiences such as education, an individual's habitus carries the genesis for new responses to fields they find themselves in (Reay, 2004). In this way, habitus is not static. And through conscious, intentional self-fashioning or pedagogical efforts, habitus can change when exposed to new experiences (Bourdieu, 2000; Friedman, 2013).

Doxa is pre-reflexive intuitive knowledge formed by life events that shape an individual's unconscious physical and relational predispositions (Grenfell, 2014). It is the set of assumptions that an individual brings to the field: 'The dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of those taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, failing that, in establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, orthodoxy' (Bourdieu, 1977: 169). An individual's habitus and doxa can be aligned or misaligned with a field (Grenfell, 2014). This tenant constitutes the

theoretical foundation for this enquiry. The degree of alignment affects an individual's ability to comprehend and play the game.

Orthodoxy supports a field's accepted doxa by portraying it with a 'veneer of correctness' (Fram, 2004: 556). The ruling class uses orthodoxy to maintain the status quo through persuasion and control of resources. In contrast, *heterodoxy* manifests itself in a field as a conflict with orthodoxy (Fram, 2004). When members of the dominating class detect and question doxa, heterodoxy emerges. According to Bourdieu, it is only by challenging doxa that a space for change can be formed and a political consciousness may be awakened (Bourdieu, 1977).

Illusio refers to an individual's investment, interest and competition in the field in which they are functioning (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). All of these parts are necessary to effectively 'play the game' in the field, and via repeated actions and routines, participants build an unconscious commitment to reproduce these actions and routines, which reinforces and enforces the game's rules. This causes individuals to feel emotionally immersed in the game and to believe that their effort is worthwhile (Bourdieu, 2000). Illusio, as a set of personal ideas, values and goals influenced by historical events, is also a projection of an individual's aspirations, which may not be attainable or practical in their present situation (Bourdieu, 2000). As a negative factor, illusio can result in dissatisfaction and disappointment if these goals are not attained. As a positive force, illusio can motivate people to strive for what they believe is achievable and to take risks in pursuit of their goals.

The rise of the managerialised university

The global rise of managerialism in universities, where the traditional culture of knowledge production and dissemination as a public good prevailed, has resulted in universities adopting the managerial characteristics of accountability, market orientation, focus on securing funding, increased concern for issues of efficiency and economy, performance management, quality assurance mechanisms, budgetary devolution and departmental restructuring (Croucher et al., 2019; Graham, 2016; Rawlins et al., 2011). Parker et al. (2021) characterise the accountingised university as a trend that has prioritised revenue generation and expenditure over societal benefit. As academic integrity and long-term financial survival must be balanced, tensions have arisen within the walls of universities (Jabbar et al., 2017).

Managerial work ideologies conflict with academic ideologies, resulting in a hybrid organisational identity where different expectations and discourses arise around roles, rights, individual obligations and the nature and purpose of universities (Chong et al., 2017; Evans, 2017; Smyth, 2019; van Houtum and van Uden, 2020). The hybrid nature of the managerialised university is now a source of anxiety and distress to academics (Klahn Acuña and Male, 2022; Shams, 2019; Teelken, 2012). As a reaction to the increasing intensification of academic workloads and institutional performance pressures, the now 'managed academic' is disengaged from their institution's direction, as they express more commitment and value to their discipline and academic expertise than their institution (Winter, 2009: 126). But academics feel they must adapt to this 'always-on' environment by sacrificing portions of their family and home life and choose to work excessive hours at home (Gornall and Salisbury, 2012: 146). Academics also prefer to work off-campus as a means of expressing autonomy and reclaiming time for research, which they view more vital than managerialised duties (Wheeldon et al., 2022b).

Academic preparation for university work life

Studies describe an academic's entry into academia as a negative experience. Entry experiences are a 'daunting, challenging process', and the academic environment is 'alienating and lonely'

(Gravett and Petersen, 2007: 199, 200). It is also a precarious environment to navigate for academics who are non-tenured, as opposed to tenured colleagues (Smithers et al., 2021). Early career researchers who enter academia from a non-traditional study pathway feel they lack confidence in their research abilities and require the sponsorship of more senior researchers to survive in this environment (Hemmings, 2012; Utoft and Cecchin, 2022), and some experience isolation stemming from feelings that senior researchers are too busy to support them in pursuing research, and this leads to early career researchers feeling overwhelmed (Billot and King, 2017). For academics entering from professional practice, the experience can be stressful, confusing and disillusioning (Wakely, 2021).

Professional staff experience university work life

Much less is known about the work life experiences of university professional staff (Connell, 2019; Gander, 2022; Graham, 2010). It has only been in recent decades that professional staff have been recruited into the university sector from other sectors (Gander, 2018) and as such have become known as the 'accidental administrators', given that they did not necessarily set out to work for a university (Lewis, 2014: 47). Another historical trend in universities has been the growth of non-academic staff in proportion to academic staff, which is driven by managerialised conditions and impacts the power dynamics and growing complexity of the corporate structures of universities (Baltaru, 2018; Croucher and Woelert, 2021). Professional staff now have access to administrative knowledge that academics struggle to obtain, making them more adept at navigating the managerialised university environment (Wheeldon et al., 2022b).

Once in the university, professional staff find the work rewarding and valuable, building careers with opportunities to progress into powerful and influential senior leadership roles (Gander, 2018; McCann et al., 2020). Despite (or perhaps because of) their success in the university field, professional staff have strained relationships with their academic colleagues, which is attributed to professional staff engaging in managerial activities that undermines academic priorities (Croucher and Woelert, 2021; Gray, 2015; Wheeldon, 2022). Professional staff express believing that academics perceive them as inferior, especially under the centralised circumstances that many universities opt to implement (Wheeldon et al., 2022a), and stereotype academics as eccentric, lacking in interpersonal skills, and a 'cross that must be borne' (Pitman, 2000: 173).

Summary

Academics entering the managerialised university field face negative experiences such as isolation, alienation and precarity. The experiences of professional staff entering higher education are not well understood, but it is known that they come from other sectors. There are conflicts between academics and professional staff, in part because of the dominant managerial orthodoxy. To understand this conflict, it is important to investigate historical role preparation, as it shapes habitus, doxa and illusio, and consequently influences experiences. Using a Bourdieusian perspective, this study aims to investigate how past life experiences affect present experiences in the managerialised university field. The question this study seeks to answer is: *Does the historical role preparation of both professional staff and academics assist with an ability to 'play the game' of the managerialised university?*

The study design

The research question is explored through the analysis of interviews with professional staff and academics at an Australian university. The use of qualitative case studies to seek deeper understandings

of the experiences of those working in universities is common (Ball, 2007; Collinson, 2006; Floyd, 2012; Fram, 2004; Lawless, 2017; Miller, 2019). Further to this, as an assurance of validity and reliability, the use of Bourdieu's theory of practice has precedents in higher education research and in this journal: revealing field struggles between academic and manager practitioners (Gunter, 2002), the distinctions that gives a university field its character and meaning (Fitz, 1999) including university middle managers (Thomas-Gregory, 2014), and mapping academic fields (Gunter and Ribbins, 2002).

Data collection

The participants in this study (professional staff ($n = 11$) and academics ($n = 13$)) are affiliated with a single Australian university with approximately 2000 full-time equivalent employees, which is comparable with other institutions in the same sector (Department of Education, 2021). Participant employment duration ranges from 1 to 30 years. Ages range from early 20s to mid-60s, and both professional and academic groups have equal gender representation. Academic participants include those in the early, middle and later stages of their careers. The interviewed professional staff occupied a variety of administrative positions, including managerial positions. The duration of interviews ranged from 45 min to 1.5 h.

Central to the interview was the prompt to imagine if they had attended such a thing as 'academic/admin school'. This was to establish if there was a metaphorical place where the participant had been 'taught' how to be an academic or administrator. The question was then asked: What sort of things were you taught in academic/admin school? By invoking the school metaphor, these questions scaffold thinking around the form of educative experiences that may have historically prepared each of the participants for their respective roles. This technique aligns with the study's theoretical framework, as Bourdieu considered 'schooling' to be one of the major pedagogic experiences that shapes an individual's habitus, which is then applied to the social field (Bourdieu and Farage, 1994; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

Data analysis

The interview transcripts were thematically analysed by all authors working independently and then comparing their results using a framework strongly informed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Smith et al. (2009). Using a Bourdieusian lens, the scripts were firstly read and reread, with initial notation. The NVivo platform was used to code emergent themes relevant to historical role preparation as an aspect of habitus. These themes were then collated across all interviews and analysed. This study has human ethics approval H18REA293 (Human Ethics Committee, University of Southern Queensland).

Findings

In short, professional staff have historically similar 'admin school' role preparation experiences. They are recruited to the university with a habitus, doxa and illusio that is already strongly aligned to the managerialised orthodoxy of the university. However, the converse is true for academics who lack an historically comparable 'academic school' role preparation experience. The number within square brackets represents the type of participant (A = academic; P = professional staff).

Admin school exists: Aligned professional staff habitus brings field advantages

Professional staff narratives reveal similar preparatory learnings, such as professionalism, customer service and the importance of time management, of process and of accuracy.

Participants reported their admin schooling experience of professionalism as involving the maintenance of a certain demeanour, regardless of who you are interacting with:

> You need to maintain that level of respect and professionalism to go 'Right, I may not really like you on a personal level, but I have to deal with you and here is my professional face'. [P8]

One participant was taught about 'professionalism when communicating and tailoring what you have to say to your audience' [P7]. Another participant even thought their admin schooling experience extended 'right down to mannerisms, in the way I present myself, in the way I conduct myself in a professional manner' [P3].

Professional staff describe being schooled in the importance of customer service. For one participant, it was viewed as being 'massively' important: 'They would teach me customer service skills. I think customer service skills is a massive thing that is needed' [P7]. Another participant described being taught particular behaviours associated with customer service: 'If you're facing a customer at the counter and the phone is ringing then your priority is always the person that is standing in front of you' [P4].

Time management was discussed frequently. 'Obviously being timely is important' [P1], and that one should 'make sure everything is on time' [P7]. One participant noted that 'time management would be a skill that admin school would teach'. For this participant, time management was interconnected with quality and attention to detail: 'I would say the quality of my work and the timeliness and the attention to detail' [P4].

Regarding the importance of process and accuracy, one participant stated that they were taught 'it is certainly important that processes are accurate' [P7], and the importance of 'not giving inaccurate things and not making mistakes' [P6]. Adjusting your ways of working to the process was noted by one participant: 'processes are very important. And I think, adapting to processes' [P5].

Professional staff illusio is strong: They find reward, meaning and pride in their work

As a demonstration of a strong illusio, professional staff spoke of their roles in terms of pride and reward. One professional staff participant said, 'I take a great deal of pride in the work I do' [P8]. Another said, 'There's lots of rewards in this job. Lots and lots' [P5]. Another thought that without the administrative work of professional staff 'the students wouldn't be able to do what they're doing at the moment. They wouldn't have this journey or progression throughout the university' [P7]. One professional staff member explained their contribution to the case university as the 'oil that keeps the machine moving' [P1]. Another had similar sentiments and felt that without professional staff, things would start to 'fall over':

> I think the lack of us would definitely … They [academics] would quickly understand what our purpose was. [P4]

Some professional staff specifically enjoyed the managerialised nature of their work. 'I really like the professional space because I like doing those administrative things. Like the running of reports and the gathering of data is the kind of role that I gravitate to' [P6]. For another, having good time

management skills was expressed with a sense of achievement, 'When you do get the days where you have more time in your office, you can actually prioritise and feel like you're achieving' [P8]. Another viewed the students as customers and saw their work as important work 'in terms of giving students a good customer experience' [P20].

Academic school is non-existent: Academic habitus is misaligned, bringing field disadvantages

In contrast to professional staff, academics responses indicated a lack of historical role preparation saying, 'There is no academic school' [A9], and 'It was always assumed that I knew how to be an academic' and that 'I just worked it out myself' [A19]. One said they 'didn't know what on earth was going on' [A21], and another noted, 'You just get thrown in the deep end' [A18], as the feeling of learning to be an academics is 'a bit by osmosis' [A17].

Reflecting on their experiences at a different university, one participant said, 'Nobody inducted me, I didn't know where to park my car. I didn't know about the photocopying. It was a totally different campus and so I had to like totally find my own way with it' [A9]. Upon commencement, one academic recounted:

> I just sat here, and you know what I did for the first probably three months, I read policies. I dug around the website because I thought well, I can't do nothing. Like I've got no classes I know that. Semester isn't starting. I was not given a task list of anything to do. There was no folder of orientation that was put on my desk. There was just - there was absolutely nothing. I was told where my office was by the support staff who were here at the time, and I was given a computer. That's it! [A10]

Admin and operational rules are 'unspoken': Academics perceive doxa

Professional staff appear to intuitively understand the rules of the university administrative and operational field, but for academics, these fields are a minefield of unspoken rules, making them feel like they are 'winging it to a certain extent' [A15]. One academic observing that professional staff as having clear guidelines that 'keeps the crabs off them':

> If anyone's going to be taken to task here, from the customers – which are the students – that won't be the professional staff. The academics are quite exposed [A15].

One academic described the experience of hidden rules, saying they felt 'left alone as to what is right, what is wrong, what is the norm, what are the rules? What are the hidden rules? The things that you can and can't do. It's not known' [A13]. Whilst another described this as a 'hidden curriculum' and saw it as a sector-wide problem, saying, 'Absolutely there's a hidden curriculum. There's a hidden curriculum in every single university – and [the case university] has quite a pronounced one – you wouldn't even call it hidden sometimes' [A24].

There was a feeling that the existence of unspoken rules in the administration field was also purposefully designed as a way for academics to 'get into trouble'. One academic reflected that 'I've seen people going different ways and they still get in trouble. You observed that someone got into trouble for that. Obviously, that is not the right thing to do' [A13]. Another noted a lack of protection for academics who failed to understand the unspoken rules, saying 'I'm always fearful of

overstepping the mark, in one area or not doing enough in another area. The academic doesn't have protection' [A15].

One academic pondered, 'What are the expectations? … What are the minimum standards? What are the guidelines? Because I'm sure professional staff have them' [A10]. Another felt clueless about unspoken rules, saying, 'the processes and the underlying procedures, I didn't have a clue. I didn't know if I was doing it right or not. I didn't know!' [A19]. Finally, another simply stated, they had to 'make a lot of shit up' [A9].

Academics illusio is weak amidst orthodoxy: They feel neglected and taken for granted

Academics expressed feelings of being undervalued, taken for granted, and feeling as though they are not making a contribution to the case university. In terms of being undervalued, one academic felt that 'everyday people are taking you for granted and not really saying thank you. Not really even noticing that you exist and that your job is of some value to the whole organisation' [A11]. When asked about making a contribution, one academic said, 'I'm not sure if I'm making a contribution to the university, depending on what the university sees as a contribution' [A13]. Another said:

> No. I think it's a lie. I have no concept of explaining to an administrative professional staff member how rotten our jobs are. I guess they look pretty from the outside, but they're not, they're awful. It's a shit job. [A14]

Another reflected that they felt eroded by the increasing lack of recognition, and it feels like 'this constant feeling, like you're on the treadmill. Yet there's such a lot of goodwill from academics. They want to do well. But there's a lack of recognition. And people are sort of feeling it' [A10].

Academics are controlled, coerced and subjugated by strong orthodoxy

Academics discussed how the university subjugates academics by unfairly labelling them with limitations, failings and ineptitudes and coerces them in their roles as academics by restricting their resources. One academic felt they worked in an 'industry now that doesn't like that concept of having autonomous academics' and that 'younger academics have no conception of where we have come from in terms of being able to do our jobs freely with the so-called spirit of academia and actually being the expert in the topic' [A14]. Another said, 'Except for a little group surrounding the VC, everyone else was not trusted to do their job' [A17]. Another academic recognised the strong orthodoxy by observing:

> There's a lot of people now who feel that they don't have a lot of say in what's in their course, how the course is taught, what sort of things you assess, to the point where in the previous administration [a senior academic leader] had intervened overtly in the structure of the program, and so I think it's just that people have been disempowered – they don't feel as though they've got much ownership of what they're doing. [A23]

On the matter of coercion, one said, 'They're [the case university] trying to actually put us all into little square pegs with the learning and teaching and structure how everything should be uniform across the university'. This academic went on to reflect that 'certain things can be uniform, but

how [the learning management system] is presented within different areas [disciplines] should be left up to the academic' [A22]. With respect to working after hours, 'there are leaders – academic leaders – who believe that you should be on call, including on weekends and that comes through in conversations' [A10]. Another expressed this as:

> The discourse of the university in the market is that we'll be there 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the punter [student]. It doesn't matter that the university says, 'Oh but that's not what we say'. Have a look at the damn website. It says 24/7. The moment you present that to a customer, that's what they expect. [A14]

Academics feel controlled by having their resources restricted, saying, 'They [professional staff] have the access to do it [the university student management system]. I don't have access. I need to be able to go in to see all of that stuff and see what's written in there. I can't do it from my level of access' [A11].

One academic felt that 'conversations are cautious, there's not a lot of trust' [A23]. And another noted a demonstration of subjectification at the time staff morale survey results were circulated:

> Successive surveys indicated two important findings to me. Among the academic colleagues, our respect and regard for one another was all green. It was all good. And disrespect and disregard for the managerial positions of the university was all red. And the person in charge of that place at that time said – we're not interested because academics are whingers anyway. So, when you tell that to your workforce. That it doesn't matter what you say. We don't care. What do you think happens. [A14]

Academic heterodoxy exits: Academics believe they should do things differently

Academics commented on how they view themselves differently to how university management views them, which reveals an awareness of heterodoxy. For example, 'Institutionally they [university management] would much prefer that I would go out and aggressively market the major and increase our load externally. Do you know that's at odds with what I see as my actual kind of role here' [A24]. Another spoke about a colleague saying they were

> a tremendous researcher, but a complete anarchist when it came to dealings with the head of school, dealing with the Dean, dealing with anybody from that level up, dealing with professional staff. [He] just moves in a completely different way. People should just know whether someone's a good academic or not. And I guess you do! [A23]

One academic revealed how they deviated from orthodoxy by saying that 'academic leaders who believe that you should be on call, including on weekends and that comes through in conversations. Right. So, you can discount that and go "oh well suffer in your jocks, I'm not going to do that because I need some time"' [A10]. When reflecting upon whether orthodox practices contribute to academics feeling as though they a making a contribution, one said:

> I didn't really enjoy some of the politics that would go with that [management role] and you are sort of sitting there going – well how do I spend my time in my life? Do I want to be part of this? Do I feel I am going to be able to make a valid contribution here that will have impact on students? And I came away with the answer of – no. [A21]

Academics face oppressive orthodoxy: They are fearful and cannot cope

One participant noted academics are 'afraid they might fail in the work, so they then work extraordinary hours' and 'many of them are afraid to resist because they think it will go against their academic careers. And it will!' [A14]. Another extended this feeling of fear to teaching, saying, 'People [academics] don't like having people [other academics] in their classrooms because they are not sure whether they're doing it right [teaching]' [A10]. On the theme of not coping, one academic summed up by saying:

> Academics are sort of like a barnacle on a big ship, not part of the crew of the ship. You're sort of stuck on this big hulking ship that's trying to get through this water and all the crew up there are doing their darnedest to steer it and you're just like, 'we'll just hang on and see'. So, it feels like you're weathering it. Not actively participating in it. Which is insane because we're at the front line. [A10]

Discussion

According to the findings of this research, it appears that a managerial approach that is driven by the aligned habitus, doxa and illusio of professional staff plays a critical role in maintaining the current state of managerial affairs in Anglo universities. This procured alignment of habitus, doxa and illusio, in which professional staff are 'bought in' from other sectors, can be regarded, we suggest, as a more pernicious strategy for managerialising universities than other more obvious mechanisms like accounting-isation or market orientation, which have been discussed by Parker et al. (2021), Graham (2016), Rawlins et al. (2011), and Croucher et al. (2019), respectively. The findings also demonstrate that the hybridised nature of managerialised universities, which has been shown to be a source of anxiety and distress for academics (Klahn Acuña and Male, 2022; Shams, 2019; Teelken, 2012), is not the result of a random occurrence but is, rather, a deliberate design choice.

Despite awareness of the significant issues within the higher education sector, university management tend to rely on managerialism to suppress the dissent (heterodoxy) of academics and preserve the current state of affairs. However, as Fram (2004) put it, doxa can only be sustained through everyday acceptance, and by shining a light on this acceptance, the possibility of change is created. The presence of dissenting academics within universities demonstrates their subjugation, but it also shows that something about their historical role preparation keeps them from fully embracing managerial orthodoxy. Managerialism has yet to infiltrate academics' habitus, doxa and illusio. This is demonstrated by the finding that academics have a poor illusio in the managerialised game and believe they should be doing things differently. Managerialism is alien to academics. It is simply not in their nature. Academics are ill-prepared for the operational environment of the managerialised university, and as a result, they are disadvantaged and left struggling, unable to find meaning in their roles in that context. Scholars such as van Houtum and van Uden (2020) agree on this issue, stating that there is hope for universities to overcome the ruin of managerialism, which is manifested in academic outcries.

For professional staff, admin school is real in terms of experiential knowledge and preparedness for the managerialised university administrative field. Their previous and somewhat universal life experiences with managerialism means that their habitus, doxa and illusio are aligned with the doxa of the field, such that they gain a field advantage and have a sense of relative comfort and confidence amidst the orthodoxy. Not only can they play by the rules, they can play *with* the rules

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), such that they can participate in evolving the rules to gain further field advantages for themselves. Managerialism uses this illusio because it co-opts professional staff into perpetuating the orthodoxy of the managerialised university through this aligned habitus. This leaves academics even more at a loss, as this operational aspect of university life remains out of their reach (Wheeldon, 2022).

University executives, holding the most influential positions within the managerial university, have the power to alter and enforce the rules of the managerialised university game. It is they who perpetuate managerial orthodoxy by making policies that sustain managerialism (Wheeldon, 2022). This study highlights how the manifestation of this orthodoxy subjugates academics, making them feel the need to prove themselves and conform to the managerial norms. Just as the control of resources, such as time and access to the field's values and beliefs, is used to preserve the managerial orthodoxy, so professional staff are used to play a significant role in maintaining this state of affairs. By ignoring the cries of heterodox academics, universities miss opportunities for positive change and contribute to the well-documented harm caused by managerialism to academia. However, by recognising the presence of heterodoxy, universities can act to reform higher education. One solution is to shape the habitus of professional staff through educational experiences that align their values with the idea of university education as a public good and a resistance to managerialism. For example, universities could choose to nurture and develop their own professional staff, 'home-grow' them, rather than continue to recruit them from outside managerialised sectors.

Limitations

Considering that this is a single case study with a small sample size, generalisation is somewhat constrained. However, it should be noted that our demographic data suggest that academics have not all had academic careers exclusive to the case university, despite their similar experiences. This demonstrates that the gap in historical role preparation is not unique to the university in question, as academic participants with experience at other universities are involved.

Conclusion

This study, conducted in an Australian university operating under a managerial approach, explores how historical role preparation impacts the relationship between university management, professional staff and academics through the lens of Bourdieusian concepts such as field habitus, doxa and illusio. It seeks to address the gap in existing literature that focuses solely on current conditions as the source of conflict, instead of examining the historical socialisation of both academics and professional staff. Using Bourdieusian concepts, we analysed participant transcripts to determine how past experiences shape current behaviours and relationships within the university. This study aims to shed light on the underlying causes of conflict and suggest ways to address it.

Our study found that professional staff entering the managerial university field already have a strong understanding of how to play the managerialised university game. This is because they have had structuring educative experiences that aligns their habitus, dox and illusio to each other and to the doxa of the game, which they find rewarding and meaningful. The managerial university orthodoxy remains unnoticed by professional staff, allowing it to maintain control. In contrast, academics do not have a unified structuring educational background for the role they are expected to play and find the game unnatural and difficult. They feel disadvantaged, neglected and subjugated, with their different habitus, doxa and illusio driving a lack of engagement with the field. However,

their heterodoxy reveals that they can see beyond the taken for granted orthodoxy of the managerial university.

This study contributes to the literature on the culture of conflict within our universities by disclosing a source of conflict that arises from the differential background experiences of academics and professional staff. It proposes that through the emergence and recognition of academic heterodoxy, a reflective space for change can be created, such as home growing professional staff within the university to align their doxa and illusio with that of academics.

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