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Epochal Change and Second Modernity as a Sociocultural Manifestation of Managerialism

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Abstract- This paper returns to the prevalent notion of an epochal change that transformed advanced societies towards the turn of the millennium. Using the neutral term 'second modernity' to capture this polyonymous phenomenon, three of its constitutive cultural attributes are discussed – uncertainty and insecurity; immediacy and accelerating rates of change; and the flattening of hierarchies and rigid organisations. The paper first reviews the way these attributes and their consequences were analysed by proponents and opponents of a postmodern break with the past. It is then shown that the new managerial discourse and practices which arose concurrently with all these transformations both endorsed and propelled them. At the same time, these processes, their effects and interpretations all increased the importance and social standing of management in organisations and society at large. They also promoted the ethical and ideological foundation of the social ascendency of managers. Together, this lends support to perceiving the rise of second modernity as the sociocultural manifestation of the new social order of managerialism.

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Epochal Change and Second Modernity as a Sociocultural Manifestation of Managerialism

Sharron Shatil

Abstract- This paper returns to the prevalent notion of an epochal change that transformed advanced societies towards the turn of the millennium. Using the neutral term 'second modernity' to capture this polyonymous phenomenon, three of its constitutive cultural attributes are discussed – uncertainty and insecurity; immediacy and accelerating rates of change; and the flattening of hierarchies and rigid organisations. The paper first reviews the way these attributes and their consequences were analysed by proponents and opponents of a postmodern break with the past. It is then shown that the new managerial discourse and practices which arose concurrently with all these transformations both endorsed and propelled them. At the same time, these processes, their effects and interpretations all increased the importance and social standing of management in organisations and society at large. They also promoted the ethical and ideological foundation of the social ascendency of managers. Together, this lends support to perceiving the rise of second modernity as the sociocultural manifestation of the new social order of managerialism.

I. Introduction – Second Modernity and the Managerialist Revolution

Around the turn of the millennium, significant academic attention was devoted to the swift and comprehensive transformations of the social, economic and cultural foundations of advanced societies. These transformations were explained as anything from a postmodern break with the character of modernity to its hypermodern intensification. Eventually, a type of 'overlapping consensus' emerged out of these debates, concerning the rise of a *second modernity*, to borrow Beck's relatively neutral term, involving a set of fundamental shifts in the makeup of current society.[1] The consolidation of this consensus was probably one of the reasons why the discussion has somewhat abated since, while some of its themes found their way into subsequent discourses, such as globalisation and consumerism.

Furthermore, as Delany claimed, 'The postmodern challenge… now no longer sets the terms for debate, for its radical claims have been more or less accepted, having been to an extent realised in social practice today' (Delany, 1999, p. 180). However, I wish to readdress this notion of a second modernity based on the contention that the changes associated with it are manifestations of the rise of the new social order of managerialism. I argued previously (Shatil, 2021) that at the same time frame as the rise of second modernity, notably the final two decades of the previous millennium, a surreptitious and unannounced social revolution took place. A new social order emerged, in which a corporate elite of managers and associated professionals replaced the business owners as the dominant class in society. I wish to argue that the prominent features of second modernity are the effects of the managerialist social order, constituting the *sociocultural logic of managerialism*, to paraphrase Jameson'sfamous turn of phrase.

The impact of managerialism on various characteristics of second modernity will be analysed using a small number of typical managerialist ideological constructs. I will explain them in the context of management's home ground of the business world, but it should be remembered that in managerialism, they become integral to the constitution of society at large. First, the definitive social and psychological character of a managerialist society is busyness and the maximisation of hustle and bustle. Ever since Taylor's first experiments with the stopwatch, management's concepts of efficiency and productivity have always been tantamount to maximising output per unit of time. Amid constant activity and pressure for time, careful management becomes crucial to success. This results in an unprecedented rate of activity in all aspects of social existence. While change is the mark of modern life, and Marx already identified the need of a capitalist economy to constantly transform the means of production, change in managerialism is no longer the result of discovery and invention, but an end in itself.

Another distinctive feature of managerialism is its construal of social reality, in which everyone is capable of satisfaction and success in their social dealings. This picture forms the core ethical order and value system of managerialism (cf. Shatil, 2021). In particular, management's typical employment of scientific based value neutrality – its purported ability to efficiently achieve any desired ends – thereby acquires an ethical dimension. Weber famously highlighted the dangers posed by the merely instrumental rationality that is prevalent in

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[1] Nowadays, we are already seeing the phrase 'third modernity' being increasingly used in reference to contemporary society (see for example de Vulpian, 2008). However, I do not believe that historical ages actually change at the pace that researchers require for the production of original concepts and catchphrases.

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modernisation processes. He claimed that it potentially constitutes an 'iron cage' counteracting the substantive rationality of modernity, including the capitalist work ethic and individual human rights (Kalberg, 1980). Managerialist ethics resolves this contradiction by positing instrumental rationality as the means of satisfying everyone. Management's value neutrality thus becomes a new substantive ethical order, which is presented as superior to the classical individualism of the business owners. The latter relied on conflict, competition and ruthlessness as routes to success. Aggression, frustration and loss are therefore endemic to this ethical model. In managerialist ideology, in contrast, people need only perform well with others in a productive setting to merit satisfaction and success. Their sociability, quick adaptability, flexibility and commitment to the demands of tasks and organisations, which make them ideal team workers, are the principal virtues that entitle everyone to be a winner. This portrays management as the means of making everyone successful, regardless of unique skills or prowess. Managerialist ideology first denounces the meritocracy and elitism of the business owners as involving conflict, frustration and inequity. Elitism and meritocracy are consequently reaffirmed as long as they optimise the quality of *service* provided to everyone. Management's control of social assets and activities is therefore justified because management practices are supposedly the means of achieving universal satisfaction in all fields of life.

An equally important element of managerialism is its surreptitious nature. The social domination of management intrinsically aims to remain unrecognised. It operates by providing the best service and offering maximised performance to everyone. Managements are thus rarely the official heads of organisations, a position usually reserved for elected officials in the case of public institutions and owners of private ones. Not only has profit remained the definitive objective of business, but emphasis on shareholder value is frequently used to justify managerial practices. Management therefore never aims to be widely proclaimed as the dominant or determining factor of social values and objectives. Its authority is justified by scientifically backed claims of neutrality, efficiency and universal satisfaction. Managerial social dominance is always oblique and has to be extracted and uncovered beneath appearances.

These highly distinctive attributes of managerialist ideology and social order will help to identify its influence on the character of second modernity. Due to considerations of length, I will limit the discussion to three of its essential aspects, appearing in almost every analysis of second modernity, however it is construed. These are endemic uncertainty, insecurity and risk; the perpetual and accelerated rates of change; and the dissolution of hierarchies. It should be remembered, however, that the distinction between them is largely analytical, while in reality, they are inextricably linked. Thus, reference to all of them is unavoidable while discussing each in turn.

II. Uncertainty, Insecurity and Risk

One characteristic of second modernity that is evident in nearly all its social and cultural manifestations is the growing levels of uncertainty and general scepticism about values, goals, technologies and institutions. First modernity was an age imbued with certainty and confidence. The imperialist industrialised West, enjoying unrivalled global domination, was confident in its concept of progress and its abilityto rationalise human existence. Disease, poverty, prejudice and ignorance were to become a thing of the past in the wake of a new and transformed civilisation. This is surely somewhat of a caricature, but accepted wisdom considers it the distinctive perspective of modernism. Second modernity, in contrast, is marked by 'a realization that the goals and values which have been central to Western 'European' civilization can no longer be considered universal, and that the associated 'project of modernity' is unfinished because its completion is inconceivable and its value in question' (Smart, 1990, p. 27).

Uncertainty and doubt concerning the values that have shaped Western civilisation ever since the Enlightenment clearly resonates from the term 'postmodernity'. It signifies a break with the sociocultural codes and values of the modern age:

> Where the modern world was allegedly well organized along a linear history yielding straightforward meanings, the post-modern world is thought to be poorly organized in the absence of a clear, predictable historical future without which there are, at best, uncertain, playful and ironic meanings (Lemert 1997: 36)

For Lyotard (1984), modernity was based on the scientific conception of knowledge, in which legitimacy is the crucial factor and truth is the aim of the game. The mark of truth is objective proof, which is accessible to the expert community and leads to a consensus amongst it. The scientific abhorrence of contradictions and discrepancies makes scientific knowledge systematic and universalistic, or as Lyotard has it, totalising. It aims to unify all fields of knowledge, while any other type of knowledge is perceived as illegitimate and baseless. Combined, these features establish a universal and imperialistic drive towards rationalisation and progress inthe name of the emancipation of humanity, which Lyotard perceives as the grand narrative of modernity. Instead

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of unity, universality and rationality, the emerging postmodern condition emphasises discontinuity, incommensurability and paradoxicality. The modern narrative of legitimation is displaced along with grand narratives of the emancipation of humanity through knowledge. Instead, there is a heightened sense of the ability to change and transform the rules of scientific practice and the ways in which knowledge is acquired. Mistrust and uncertainty regarding systems, predictability and control become the commonplace attitude to knowledge. In these circumstances, knowledge is legitimised based on performativity – usefulness and profitability become the only measure. Decisionmakers attempt to manage uncertainties based on the optimisation of the system'sperformance, and the only demand in matters of truth and justice alike is to be operational or disappear.

Best and Kellner also consider uncertainty as a primary feature of postmodernity. They identified 'a unique social configuration, modernity, organized around profit and growth imperatives, engineering and architectural marvels, mechanistic visions of the universe, and postanimistic identities in a "disenchanted" world ruled by instrumental rationality and exchange value' (Best & Kellner, 2001, p. 101). Emerging postmodern tendencies undermine this modernist social configuration and its conception of knowledge, generating a series of significant paradigm shifts. Thus, the concept of nature as a law governed causal order fathomable by reason is replaced by a dynamic perspectivism full of riddles and paradoxes, unpredictability and indeterminacy. These aspects increase uncertainty concerning the models of reality and the ability to predict and control phenomena, and therefore concerning the future of science and technology and their social ramifications. Consequently, Science, technology, economics and culture amalgamate and adopt the principal postmodern characteristics (Heaphy, 2007). These include the rejection of unity, universal schemes and established meanings in favour of difference, plurality, contingency, uncertainty, and chaos.

Those who deny the occurrence of a postmodern shift in second modernity reject many of the features commonly associated with postmodernity. They deny that second modernity demonstrates the undermining of objectivity, truth and the scientific understanding of reality or the return to a more enchanted and playful worldview. However, they equally stress the increased levels of uncertainty, doubt and risk involved in the current era. Reflexivity is often considered the definitive mark of second modernity in these interpretations, tantamount to the self monitoring and reconfiguring of social systems, institutions and knowledge.

For Giddens (1990), Reflexivity arises because of the incorporation of growing levels of knowledge and technology into everyday social practices. These technological systems continually reshape social existence, and open up new and unpredictable ways for it to evolve. In particular, work, leisure, consumption and social relationships are increasingly taking place within a cyberspace which effectively cancels space and time differences, and offers large volumes of information and interaction at the click of a button. Therefore, knowledge becomes a resource for social interaction, and at the same time, changes its character. Reflexivity places a set of expert systems at the heart of second modern society, whose role is to examine, evaluate and modify the workings of social institutions. Traditional social bases are increasingly undermined by this dynamism, and institutions are constantly redesigned. Technology magnifies these effects of reflexivity on a global scale, and projects them onto the natural environment, which is no longer separate from the social. Thus, pollution, waste, plagues, deforestation and climate change represent the permeation of the social and the natural and its global and often uncontrollable ramifications. Similarly, the interconnectedness of investment and labour markets means that local economic events may have unforeseeable global effects.

Contemporary life is therefore based on acute awareness of the unpredictable and uncontrollable aspects of modern technological and social change (Heaphy, 2007).

While Giddens perceived reflexivity as a result of growing reliance on knowledge and information technology, for Beck reflexivity is mainly the results of gaps in our knowledge. This is manifested in the manufactured risks of second modernity. These risks lead to competing claims by experts, generating a conflict about what and how we know. Beck defined risks as spectres of impending catastrophes, which have a manufactured source – they are the results of human intervention in the natural order. Risks are delocalised, as their effects are global, crossing national, ethnic or class boundaries, and are therefore everyone's responsibility; they are incalculable and uncompensatable as they are based on scientifically induced uncertainty and irreversible potential repercussions (Beck, 2014). In first modernity, risks were justified by their supposed benefits such as economic growth, employment, scientific and technological progress, rising standards of living and the security of the welfare state. The transition to a risk society takes place in face of the collapsing faith in these promises because of the adverse aftereffects of modern technology and society – the risks of pollution by nuclear and chemical industries, climate change, genetic modification, unpredictable global financial markets and the economic crisis of the welfare state. Risks highlight the fact that the strive to control reality may

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lead to adverse and unforeseen result. Risk's global and inherently uncertain nature therefore undermines the modern political and social project of technological control. This induces an ambivalent attitude towards knowledge, undermines modern forms of organisation and the social institutions of first modernity with their ethical and political principles, and renders them uncertain, contingent, and radically uncontrollable (Heaphy, 2007). Risk, uncertainty and ambivalence thus explain the erosion of the values and institutions of first modernity, and largely determine the unique character of second modernity:

> Take what you will: god, nature, truth, science, technology, morality, love, or marriage—modernity transforms everything into 'liberties fraught with risks'. All metaphysics, all transcendence, all necessity and certainty, is being replaced by artistry (Beck, 2014, p.92).

The uncertain nature of social processes in second modernity give rise to reflexivity,which for Beck involves the necessity to make decisions without recourse to certain knowledge or sources of legitimacy and authority (Eid, 2005). Reflexivity highlights the radical doubt and uncertainty generated by expert knowledge in second modernity, while we continue to rely on it to learn about risks and deal with them.

In every account of second modernity, the rapid transformation, revisability and hence contingency of practices, scenarios and structures affects all aspects of society. Which professions, investments or pension funds will still exist in the foreseeable future is something just as uncertain as which technologies will be available – not to mention the uncertainty about which new fields of action and forms of practice will emerge (Rosa, 2013). Growing levels of uncertainty characterise lifestyles, careers, relationships etc., and they thus assume a form similar to consumer choices (Bauman, 2000). This is supported by the postmodern construal of diversifying consumer markets as a pluralistic world that provides opportunities for people to carve their own niches and identities. In its extreme, postmodernism views consumerism as a witty journey through a cultural supermarket of fleeting impulses and desires (Gabriel & Lang, 2006). No relationship is considered stable and constant, while both people and things move in and out of one's field of vision like the "schizophrenic" succession of video images that is typical of postmodernism according to Jameson (1991). Yet the making of consumer choices has also become unavoidable, and being uncertain also generates fear of losing the value and sense behind our choices. Thus, we experience the world as risky and unsafe, in which our social standing, income, the market value of our skills, our relationships, our neighbourhoods are all unstable and vulnerable (Bauman, 2001). The fate of the poor and outcast underclass is presented as the only alternative to participation in the race, thus making our decision to risk the horrors of the flexible world easier.

Management was among the first fields to focus on escalating uncertainty as a prominent feature of the business world. Managerial discourse underwent a significant metamorphosis concurrently with the advent of second modernity. At the heart of the new discourse lay the observation that the social and business environment is rapidly changing, challenging existing forms of knowledge and organisation. These changes involve spiralling levels of uncertainty concerning consumer tastes, financial markets and successful strategies in a global setting wrought with unpredictable risks and intense competition (Thrift, 2005). Facing such conditions, organisations must become flexible, adaptable, knowledgeable, and continuously act and react to developments.

This new managerial discourse marks the transition of management theory from a specialised academic discipline to a prolific popular business involving authors, publishers, media outlets, consultancies, a range of academic departments etc. It posits management as a rational, scientifically based field for devising strategies and policies to cope with the dangers of uncertainty (Jackson, 2001). Management is portrayed as a source of existential comfort for professionals, being the rational way to quickly adjust social systems and handle growing uncertainties on route to success (Knights & Morgan 1991). Thus, management presents itself as the ultimate meta system to control all expert systems, and becomes a prime agent of reflexivity. It generates change by encouraging swift responses to developments in world economy, and promotes the spread of new knowledge and technology as a means of organisational survival (Jackson, 2001). In conditions of such rapid reflexivity, control of the global economy increasingly lies with knowledge rich systems such as finance and management, which steer the relationship between productive systems (Lash, 2003). Moreover, when knowledge and praxis are legitimised by performativity then management, with its expertise in maximising performance, is what determines legitimacy. The managerial ethics of neutrality therefore reflects the postmodern release from comprehensive value systems and metanarratives. Lyotard already clairvoyantly claimed that the ruling class in the postmodern world will be made up of corporate leaders and the heads of organisations (Lyotard, 1984). Their unique asset is control of the access to knowledge that allows for the best decisions to be made in conditions of uncertainty.

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At the same time, however, managerial practices are greatly responsible for introducing uncertainty into social reality in the first place. Management theories keep reinventing and restructuring organisations while rapidly succeeding and contradicting each other, often undoing the changes imposed by previous fads in the process (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 1996). This swift succession of management fads generates uncertainty concerning the structure and operations of organisations, the feasibility of investments and decisions etc. New managerial discourse and practices also make employment increasingly precarious and temporary by means of significant downsizing, delayering and redefinition of jobs (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017). The work process becomes chaotic to the point of defying understanding, as one day workers are praised for their achievements and the next they are part of a delayering plan, fired and then rehired (Sennet, 1998). Constant reconfiguration of the work processes becomes a permanent feature of working life and a major means of managerial control. Firstly, the more the work process is reconfigured, the more crucial is the managerial regulation of the work process. Second, such constant reorganisation means that professionals are never fully familiar with organisational procedures and practices, and are never quite certain how to properly do their job. Under invasive monitoring of their performance, workers are always on trial and never certain of their goals or methods. This increases their reliance on management for even the most basic routines. These measures therefore transpose effective power from both owners and staff to managers. This is joined by the frequent changes of products and technologies, so that both workers and consumers accept the uncertain and insecure nature of knowledge, skills and products.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the rise of risk management, concurrently with second modernity and the new managerial discourse, as the principal organisational response to risks and uncertainties. Risk management helped to consolidate a new and comprehensive concept of risk, which compounds the wider social risks as discussed by Beck with organisational risks posed by rogue traders, Ponzi schemes, legal liabilities, changing consumer fashions and so on. The promise of risk management is to mitigate and control these risks. Not only did management thereby assume functions previously performed by professional accountants, analysts and legal specialists, but risk management has also quickly become the core around which corporate governance has been totally reshaped:

> It is as if the managerial instruments of the 'risk society' have undergone a mutation which cannot be entirely explained in Beck's (1992) terms of the increased risk reflexivity of individuals. Rather, the phenomenon is better described as a new reflexivity of organizations and organizing around riskmanagement (Power, 2007, p. 4).

The practical outcome of these developments was the establishment of internal managerial control systems, galvanised by the rhetoric of deregulation, entrepreneurship and self governance. Every aspect of organisational structure and function was subjected to these mechanisms and redesigned so as to become auditable, i.e. susceptible to managerial and regulatory review. Auditability was reinforced as an ethical norm that became the mark of corporate responsibility, accountability and good practice. While there is little evidence or agreement concerning their efficacy even among risk management practitioners, such practices are circularly justified mainly as preventing the 'second order' risks of disrepute, liability and blame incurred for failing to implement them (Ibid.). Risk management has therefore become an ethical norm equating responsible, transparent and virtuous organisational behaviour with managerial control. This complements managerial performance based ethics, and reinforces the perception of all knowledge and praxis as inherently partial and contingent. Not only has risk management become almost synonymous with management at large, but the more this norm strikes root, the more it spreads to all aspects of social life. Health, finance, and the environment all find themselves newly governed by similar risk management standards and guidelines defining cultural values and beliefs about what is proper organisational conduct. Management is construed as the only reliable means to negotiate a risk ridden environment. The more we become uncertain of the environment, the more we put our trust in managing it. Careful management of the business, public and personal spheres seems to offer the only reassurance and hope of success in steering the high seas of uncertainty. Management thus gains more power, value and importance in organisations the more it initiates audits, performance assessments and modifications of organisational structure and function.

However, what is less obvious is that management is itself the origin of many of the risks it is called upon to handle. Beck defined risk as manufactured and therefore the *indirect* outcome of human conduct. But the risks which management promises to control are often the *direct* result of its own interventions. For one thing, risks are often born simply by management's recasting of operational, legal and marketing issues in terms of risks in order to apply risk management measures to them. Furthermore, while the uncertainties of the global market are often invoked in order to justify deregulation, short term thinking and flexibility, these

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measures are, in fact, responsible for many of the environmental, financial and employment risks that are typical of second modernity. The behaviour of financial markets, for example, is largely the result of the decisions of global investors, the most significant of whom are institutional. It is now accepted wisdom that myopic and reckless investment policies stand behind the frequent financial crises of recent decades (Dallas, 2011). A major reason for the volatility of markets and their sensibility to distant disturbances in general is 'the political economy of uncertainty [which] boils down essentially to the prohibition of politically established and guaranteed rules and regulations, and the disarming of the defensive institutions and associations which used to stand in the way of capital and finance becoming truly sans frontières' (Bauman, 2001, p.119). This plays a crucial role in establishing the global freedom of the major corporations. Many of the risks of second modernity are therefore the price paid for the free rein given to transnational corporations or the dominant position of managements within them. And management profits again by offering what is presented as the only cure for these risks and uncertainties, and the only compass in a storm which it is largely responsible for creating. Bauman (2000) claimed that Crozier's law of bureaucracy still holds in second modernity. According to Crozier, those whose positions are unregulated and therefore unpredictable rule those whom they regulate. But the truth is that in managerialism, those who generate uncertainty (while enjoying a relative job security) rule those who are subjected to it.

III. Perpetual and Accelerated Change

The accelerated rate of change, constant reshaping of institutions and social processes and the growing levels of activity and stress for time are closely related and much discussed definitive attributes of second modernity. Change has always been a hallmark of modernisation. The 19th century saw unparalleled innovation driving the sweeping growth of a new industrial and mechanised society. Life during the industrial revolutions of the 19th century was radically transformed. New ways of travelling, communicating, producing and living were introduced at an unprecedented rate. More people, particularly in the cities, joined the middle class urban lifestyle, and realised their civil liberties. Yet the innovations of first modernity involved mainly improvements of existing technologies and routines such as lighting, housework, food preparation and preservation, transport etc. Both the social institutions and the technologies of the period proved to be rather stable. National, racial, class and gender identities and relations endured and continued to dictate social roles, which did not significantly begin to change till the 1960's. While someone from the early 20th century would probably find our cars, washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners etc. greatly improved, they would not find them unrecognisable or unmanageable.

On the other hand, the typical technological inventions of the decades leading up to the turn of the millennium – mainly information and communication technologies – have a radically different character. Rather than fit into existing lifestyles and cater for existing needs, they tend mostly to create new needs and lifestyles. A typical example is multichannel cable television and 24 hour news or music channels, which reshaped the home viewing experience and were central to the early discussions of postmodernism (Jameson, 1991). It continued in full force with the likes of video gaming, social media, smart mobile devices and intelligent chat bots. The fact that such technologies create the need for their services provides them with a high degree of autonomy, which allows them to change and replace each other in ever briefer successive cycles. The general atmosphere of constant transformation spreads to other products, so that even more lasting features of the digital world, such as operating systems or web browsers, typically undergo significant redesigns every few years. They continue to offer more or less the same services (with some heavily hyped extra features) in a different layout. Such frequent redesigns have become commonplace for all types of products and services on the market in a general culture of evanescence endemic in society at large.

The experience of using media and information technology is effortless and instantaneous. Based on such information and communication technologies, second modernity is an era of speed and immediacy, manifested in rapid delivery, ubiquitous availability and the instant gratification of desires (Tomlinson, 2007). ICTs allow us to receive quick and immediate responses to our communications and to stay connected anytime and anywhere to online information, services and businesses. Immediate ubiquitous connectivity and availability has become the social and professional norm to such an extent, that we are enraged when our communications are not answered within a very short timespan. Boundaries between work, leisure, consumption and social interaction are thus blurred as they blend into each other and can take place anywhere and anytime. However, in paradoxical contrast to the rapid pace of change, people's lives in second modernity are no longer revolutionised as dramatically as during first modernity. Rather, it seems that the rapid succession of innovations and fashions is required simply to *maintain* life in second modernity in its current form.

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The proponents of postmodernity explained the immediacy and speed of second modernity as the cultural logic of changes in its economic system and modes of control (Jameson, 1991). New forms of coordination were set up, using a variety of subcontracting arrangements to integrate multinational operations of many small businesses under powerful transnational firms. This constitutes a new means of profitability through dispersal, mobility and innovation, which serves to accelerate production processes and shorten the lifespans of products. Competitive edge is achieved by swift data analysis and instant response to changes in fashions, tastes and financial markets. This is made possible by the financial deregulation and fast and easy communication and transport (Harvey, 1989). Furthermore, the swift flow of information from one commercial arena to the others is the basis of a global financial market that functions without a break, and largely determines the fate of economic players (Tomlinson, 2007). These financial players, like the major banks and institutional investors, tend to focus on short term gains, rely on immediate responses to global changes and encourage the invention of new financial instruments. Such accelerated rates of production, delivery and change of commodities require a corresponding acceleration of the rate of consumption. This is achieved to a large extent by the aesthetisation of everyday life, and the formation of a 'casino economy' in which cultural items such as art, fashion, media and entertainment are the main products: 'The relatively stable aesthetic of Fordist modernism has given way to all the ferment, instability, and fleeting qualities of a postmodernist aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural forms' (Harvey, 1989, p. 156). Postmodernity is therefore frequently described in terms of the fragmentation of time into a series of eternal presents (Vattimo, 1988), in which it is impossible to integrate signs and images into a meaningful narrative. Such an evanescent stream of signs and images gives rise to isolated, powerful and highly affective experiences that cancel the distinction between real and imaginary (Baudrillard, 1994). This postmodern culture is embedded in the context of leisure consumption. It is evident mostly in theme parks, tourist attractions, shopping centres and nightlife hubs (Featherstone, 1995). Postmodern culture is therefore perceived as a carnivalesque consumer culture of quickly changing, custom made, semiotically laden products supporting an equally diverse range of lifestyles. Culture has been disembedded from real conditions and needs and became its own 'hyperreality'.

The need for speed and its social ramifications are equally prominent in discussions of second modernity which do not interpret it as postmodern. The reflexivity attributed to second modernity is also deemed responsible for the highly ephemeral and continuously changing nature of its systems and institutions. Disequilibrium and change are endemic to these reflexive systems, by means of internal feedback mechanisms (Lash, 2003). First modernity was rooted in a non modern foundation that damped the dynamics of modernisation. The nuclear family, traditional gender roles, clear class structures and the nation state all performed social integration functions in first modern society. All were eventually called into question by the growing uncertainty engendered by reflexive modernisation. They have become experienced as variable, plastic, and as the product of free choice (Beck, Bonss & Lau, 2003). This brought them under constant pressure to justify their current form, and to change continually as a result of redefinition by individuals. Progress, which in first modernity was a calling justifying effort, has become in second modernity an unstoppable process demanding effort in order to stay in the game. Not only the individual's place in society but the places themselves melt too quickly to serve as life projects. People are relentlessly driven and uprooted without the satisfaction of ever reaching a destination in which they can stop worrying (Bauman, 2001). The modernist voluntarism of the brilliant future is thus replaced by the adoration of change, reform and adaptability without a secure horizon and a major historical vision. The emphasis is upon motion without a utopian destination, dictated by the demands of efficiency and performativity as a survival nevessity and dominated by the comprehensive rule of urgency (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2005). Stress for time becomes a significant factor in pushing levels of activity to the maximum in all ages and all fields of life, and:

> actors operate under conditions of permanent multidimensional change that make standing still by not acting or not deciding impossible. Whoever does not continually readapt to the steadily shifting conditions of action…loses the connections that enable future options. The circumstances of action and choice themselves alter continuously and along multiple dimensions such that there is no longer a resting place from which one might "calmly" explore options and connections (Rosa, 2013, p. 117).

The constitutive instability of choices and actions due to accelerated social change forces individuals and organisations to repeatedly revise their conduct and redefine what counts as relevant. The only aspiration left is for immediate satisfaction through rapid consumption and disposal. This becomes the definitive promise of a market designed increasingly along the logic of fashions, fads and

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short term lifestyles, motivated by the uncertainty of long term projects and institutions. Culture is thus no longer about maintaining current social practices and values but rather conceived as an uncompromising demand for constant change (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2005). It is a consumer culture presenting the world as a warehouse of consumer goods that vie for the rapidly shifting attention of customers, trying to grab attention for more than an instant (Bauman, 2000). Contrary to the theorists of postmodernity, this fashion world is understood as the fulfilment of the modern promise of individualisation, personal choice and freedom.

Change being both a necessity and a virtue is also a major theme of the new managerial discourse of the 1980's. Citing both the uncertainties of the contemporary world and the economic setbacks of the previous decade, it focused on the need to radically transform organisations in order to succeed. Increasing the speed of production and technological innovation in response to the perpetual changes in consumer demands is perceived as essential to survival. At the same time, change was also extolled as a virtue, and willingness to change and adopt new managerial and organisational forms and practices was praised as the mark of leading and visionary organisations. Learning to embrace change is seen as the way to improve the performance and efficiency of workers, optimise operations and provide a competitive market edge (Clarke & Newman, 1997). On the one hand, the constant introduction of new technologies and products is vital for the creation of a short lived competitive window in which to sell products for higher prices than the costs of production before the competition catches up (Rosa, 2013). On the other, catering for evermore diversifying tastes and lifestyles is also the highest form of excellence in a society that had personalised values and made every choice ephemeral. Furthermore, when rapid change is required for survival in the present rather than progress to a better future, then careful management rather than research, learning or exploration becomes the quintessential pursuit. Managerial proficiency in increasing performance and coordinating change becomes a social *sine qua non*. This fixes management as the epitome of rationality as well as merit in anything from personal life to the global economy.

Management theories and policies, while presented as an unavoidable response to change, are also major causes of acceleration both ideologically and practically. The new managerial discourse itself was instrumental in promoting the view that the global economy and terms of employment are rapidly changing. The view spread from management gurus to the media, government think tanks and eventually to government policy, all based on scant empirical evidence (Doogan, 2009).[2] The ever changing and customised product lines are the result of the managerial drive for constant innovation and redesigning. The myriad management theorists, gurus and consultants themselves comprise a huge industry whose very raison d'être is their ability to generate change and transform organisations. Facing widespread dissatisfaction with the first wave of reorganisation because of declining morale, erosion of trust and poor team cooperation, management theory responded by claiming that organisational transformation is a continual if not perpetual process and not a onetime improvement (Jackson, 2001). Therefore, in second modernity, the firm belief in organisational restructuring is evident throughout corporate life as part of an overall process of social acceleration. All major corporations are incessantly occupied with reinventing their corporate culture, markets and products. Management has all but become synonymous with transformation of organisations rather that with oversight and control.

The clearest demonstration of management as a driving force of change and flexibility in second modernity is project management. Projectification started gaining momentum in the early 1980'along with other phenomena associated with the rise of second modernity. It was first described by Midler (1995) as a restructuring of organisations around projects as the central unit of activity. Estimates are that between 30%-40% of work and about 25% of total value added (and a far higher proportion of non financial value) in OECD countries is currently generated by projects (Lundin et. al., 2015). Projects are executed in a sequence of short term tasks in flexible corporations which quickly respond to changes. They are therefore hailed as a perfect vehicle for organising activities in situations of instrinsic instability and rapidly changing global environments, technologies and consumer demands (Jensen et. al., 2016). At the same time, projects have been a major engine of accelerated change. A significant part of projects involves organisational change programmes, such as IT change initiatives, performance improvements, strategy deployment and research (Lundin et. al., 2015). Projectification encourages permanent cost reduction, maximal speed of execution, fast and flexible industrial investments and opportunistic utilisation of often unforeseen circumstances (Ibid.). To balance the uncertainty involved in being inherently

[2] I believe there is enough evidence to counter Doogan's rather denialist view that the flexible and quickly moving global economy and job market are merely ideological justifications of neoliberal government policies.However, the discourse of the new economy was probably as much a driving force for its realisation as a merereflection of it (in perfect tune with postmodernist theory).

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one time affairs, production is kept lean and on demand without long term obligations, and employment is flexible and temporary. Projects therefore stimulate the significant reshaping of employment patterns along with organisational structures and processes. This includes delayering, downsizing and outsourcing to independent contractors and freelance workers. It is often associated with short term, part time or freelance positions, which are on the rise almost everywhere (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017). Working in projects is thus a major contributor to the growing precarity of employment, stimulating the growth of the gig- or sharing economy. The very existence of roles and positions, the knowledge and procedures needed to fulfil them and the employment conditions involved have become uncertain and in constant flux. These conditions increasingly preclude prediction and long-term planning for nations and organisations alike. Thus, the transformation of organisations, of work and of government policy is intimately linked to projectification. Time also becomes flexible and simultaneous by networks of outsourced and subcontracted service providers, which enable the immediate supply of a variety of custom services and products. Furthermore, projects can be worked on anywhere and anytime, dissolving the boundaries between work, home, leisure and travel, contributing to the blurring of boundaries in second modernity. Aided by the ubiquity of mobile communication devices, they undermine work-life boundaries, leading to the indefinite extension of working hours.

Meanwhile, the power and security of management significantly increases in a project based economy. Project management arose in order to deal with the uncertain environment in which projects form and operate, and is 'increasingly used to deal with more complex business opportunities and problems, rapid technological obsolescence, shortening product life cycles, and cross-functional product development' (Ludin et. al, 2015, p. 135). Project management is perceived as the field of expertise in organising and steering projects to their successful completion. Its definitive role is to 'transform this uncertain, tenuous, and fuzzy initial identity [of the project] into a clear tangible reality. It is defined… as the responsibility for conducting all operations necessary for the study, development, and implementation [of projects]' (Ibid., p. 82). The position of project managers is therefore firmly secure at the core of all project work, while the position of all other professionals involved becomes rather more tenuous. As project managers choose who they want to work with, this also encourages a high level of internal competition over employment (and managerial favour). Employability becomes a major concern for employees, which largely depends on the level of success and attention attracted by the projects in which they participate, and how their own contributions are rated by others, particularly managers. Individual learning also occurs throughout a project, based on the problems and tasks for which each individual is responsible. Training outside project work consequently diminishes in favour of on-the-job training, and thus the acquisition of skills and experience, so crucial for continued employment, become dependent on employability (Ludin et. al, 2015). Consequently, workers must assume relatively high responsibility for their career development, and constantly compete for their supply of work by being attractive to project managers and customers. In this manner, workers, redefined as independent contractors, can be made to assume risks and responsibilities previously handled by the firm (Schor, 2017).

Projectification is also the basis of a new ethical order that gives rise to new definitions of justice and liberty. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) famously associate it with the 'third spirit of capitalism'. Yet, significantly, they base their entire discussion on the analysis of management textbooks and theories. According to this new ethical order, the 'bureaucratic prison' has been broken, and the association with a specific division or role disappears along with subordination to a single boss. Work is portrayed as a meaningful personal engagement, in which nothing is forced upon workers who are considered partners in the project. The key worth of a person is measured in terms of employability, which depends on perceiving each project as an opportunity to develop new skills, forge new relationships and prepare the ground for more projects. Thus, management leads to the creation of a new type of person, talented in a variety of roles, constantly and independently learning, adaptable, self organising and people oriented. This is the ethical edifice of the project society, built on the primary value of the individual's self development and employability as his or her long term project. In return, the individual is promised self realisation and satisfaction in all fields of life.

This ethical framework leads to the extension of projectification from business organisation to every aspect of society. This has been called the 'projectification of everything', defined as:

> a proliferation of a temporary, future-oriented, purposeful, time-limited organizational form that is more agile, sensitive, and flexible than the disciplinary codification and planning, which operates in one-off activities (Jensen et. al., 2016, pp. 25-26).

The result is continual future oriented change, as all life activities become projects, which are intrinsically designed in order to make changes. The primary condition of projectification is activity at all costs. Activity is the creation of a project, and the core

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activity is the development of personal capital and employability skills. Constant activity thus turns into a necessity in order to maintain relevance at work, the social media and personal life alike. People are no longer judged by what they do and achieve but primarily based on activity, and therefore their flexibility and willingness to transform themselves and adapt to new technologies, fashions and social practices. Projectification is thus associated with the search for personal style among the rapid flux of diversifying fashions and consumer lifestyles, and with the emphasis on immediate satisfaction and disposal typical of second modernity (Lash & Urry, 1994). Whoever fails to readapt to the steadily shifting conditions of action loses the connections that enable future options. As the options rapidly go in and out of style, no choice is ever final and made from a position of control and consideration of available alternatives and their significance (Rosa, 2013).

Careful management becomes more vital and indispensable in such stressful circumstances of constant activity and stress. Managerial practices help to recognise faults, seize opportunities, perform as efficiently as possible, maximise chances of success. As a result, they permeate every aspect of life, which becomes a matter of performance skills, while management is its primary means of success. Consequently, social existence, no less than work, becomes something to be carefully monitored and controlled, using managerial expertise and practices. Personal success depends on the ability to utilise techniques of self management, which acquire the ethical aura of being the democratic promise to enable everyone to become what they aspire to be. Agility, flexibility, adaptability and constant metamorphosis become the most esteemed virtues (Rose, 1999). At the same time, it places everyone under permanent self examination. Beyond reflexivity, the culture of projectification is a culture of constant self reinvention. Yet, contrary to the managerial promise of universal satisfaction and fulfilment, this projectification in fact encourages perpetual discontent. As a motivation for further activity, improvements and projects, people are never what they need to be, never have what they need to have. Performance, success, quality of life can always be enhanced, and thus any contentment and tranquillity are paradoxically denied in the name of satisfaction and fulfilment. As management is the remedy for this sense of underachievement, a cycle typical of addiction is formed, in which relying on management increases discontent, and discontent leads to further dependence on management. This social logic extends from the corporate ethos of perpetual self transformation and reinvention to the wider conception of self identity. Personal and professional reinvention stands behind coaching, speed dating, reality TV, obsessive consumption, cosmetic surgery, dieting etc.: 'In a world of short-term contracts, endless corporate downsizings, just-in-time deliveries, multiple careers and short- term contract employment, the cultural logic of endless self-fashioning and self- remaking has become crucial to the operations of the global electronic economy at large (Elliot, 2016, p. 4). By way of projectification, management shapes second modernity as a condition of perpetual change in which managerial practices are necessary for survival, and as the key to remain relevant and become fulfilled and successful.

IV. Flattened Hierarchies

The final definitive attribute of second modernity to be considered here is the flattering of social hierarchies and rigid bureaucratic structures. Second modernity is unique among human societies throughout history in its avowed disbelief in social and cultural hierarchies. The contention that current society is actually unstratified along racial, ethnic, gender or socioeconomic lines, or becoming increasingly so, may be reserved for the most optimistic exponents of postmodernist thought. However, the rigid stratification of society along such lines has largely been discredited, and is openly upheld only in explicitly reactionary political circles. Even if socioeconomic differences remain a prevalent feature of second modernity, they are increasingly perceived as illegitimate when based on circumstances of birth or personal identity. In fact, the only perfectly legitimate way of rising up the ranks is through the appreciation and consent of the many, whether by way of popularity, votes or consumer preference.

First modernity was marked by the formalisation of social roles and positions that had traditionally been held and administered depending on the persons occupying them. Premodern institutions were based on rigid social categories of kinship, birthright, gender, age etc. Modernisation reconstituted major social institutions according to the values of rationality, efficiency, impartiality, transparency and accountability. The creation of bureaucratic, formal and rule based hierarchies was an integral part of this process (Kallinikos, 2011). The bureaucratic adherence to strict rules, rigid hierarchies and systematic procedures facilitated the creation of the difference between the private and public realms so crucial to a liberal and industrial society (du Gay, 2011). However, the countermove towards dissolution of such hierarchies and rigid structures is considered a prominent feature of second modernity.

Those who believe in its postmodern character analyse the flattening of social and cultural stratification in second modernity as part of its

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generally disorganised and sceptical character. Free and unrestricted flow of funds, people, technologies and products has an anti hierarchical and disorganising effect on the geographical, political and economic frameworks of modernity. Boundaries are permeated while social and geographic polarity is actually intensified (Luke, 1995). Consumerism also bears a democratic and fragmentary effect, which cancels rigid class distinctions, and replaces them with individual and communal lifestyles. This results in a radical cultural change, dissolving the cultural hierarchies of modernism, blurring the distinction between high and popular culture along with the intermixture of styles. Omnivorous consumption (Peterson, 1992) emerges, with a willingness to cross and mix established cultural boundaries. The expression of personal value systems and tastes is encouraged, while equal respect for various groups and values becomes a primary ethical demand, focusing on their cultural representation (Dunn, 1998). The new aesthetisation of everyday life unsettled entrenched value systems and allowed new and popular cultural layers to define fashion, culture and style (Featherstone, 2007). The postmodernist undermining of scientific objectivity as the mark of knowledge was also associated with a positive appraisal of popular and traditional cultures, otherness and a plurality of lifestyles which were excluded by the universalist pretensions of modernism.

Those who deny a postmodern break with the past in second modernity tend to attribute its distinctively anti hierarchical drive to the overall individualisation of the principal social institutions (Beck, 2014). Uncertainty about the validity of the fixed structures of first modernity destabilises them. The traditional reliance on well defined and stable institutions as vital for the reproduction of the social order is thereby overturned. Instead, they are increasingly viewed as a matter of individual choice or identity (Bauman, 2001). In second modernity, an unstable identity is thus created by the institutions that formerly assisted in the creation of stable individuals – state, class, nuclear family, ethnic group. Individualised, people are no longer collectively regulated – they do not consume the same products, do not watch the same shows at the same time, do not eat or work at regular hours. These become a matter of personal decision, and in particular, individuals take control of their flexible career and course of life (Lash & Urry, 1994). Ambivalence, contradiction and internalisation of uncertainty are therefore integral to individualisation. Once strong and stable cultural and personal ties, which could be considered a form of community, are no longer given and unchallenged, they are reconstructed on the basis of individual interests, values, and projects. Faced with multiple choices, people become reflexive and constantly form and modify networks and alliances (Beck, 2014). Networking thus becomes a prominent method for forming social relationships in an individualised society.

Consequently, networks are a crucial form of organisation in second modernity, and some even define it as a network society (Castells, 2010). Yet networks tend to unravel fixed organisational structures because they allow for flexible organising. Internally, many organisations become networks of semi autonomous teams and projects. Externally, they combine into networks of collaborating organisations. This has contributed significantly to the downsizing, outsourcing, specialising and global spreading of corporate operations. In this manner, networks helped to undo the large and hierarchical corporations of Fordist production, and facilitated the acquisition of new organisational sizes, markets and modes of governance and control (van Dijk, 2006). Whereas the structure of relations in first modernity was hierarchal, the temporary nature of project-based work requires networked relationships rather than vertical hierarchies. Networked and flexible organisations combine workers, capital, and knowledge in specific projects that form, dissolve, and reform under a different configuration. Organisation by means of networks is therefore a major component of the project society (Castells, 2010). In fact, many define projects as the core activities around which networks are formed and maintained. Belonging to a network allows professionals to join projects and maintain their careers, while taking part in projectsis in turn the major means of becoming networked (van Dijk, 2006). Thus, the shift away from mass production, culture and consumption to multiple, temporary projects leads to a new order of networked, boundless organisations based on a culture of cooperative individualism (Clarke & Clegg, 2000).

The replacement of bureaucratic hierarchical organisations with flat, flexible and collaborative frameworks is also a primary focus of the new managerial discourse and practices since the 1980's. Based on Weber's classical analysis, bureaucracy has traditionally been considered as the prototypical form of modern organisation. Bureaucracy epitomises an ethical order that encapsulates the principal values of modernity – rationality, efficiency, impartiality – and thus purges the function of office from personal arbitrariness. Nevertheless, the new theories and practices of management all highlighted the weaknesses of bureaucracy in both the business and public spheres, and supported the advance of a post bureaucratic form of organisation, 'characterized by teamwork, task-groups, outsourcing, offshoring, role-flexibility, dispensing with command and obedience relations and hierarchies wherever possible

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(delayering)… networks, targets, benchmarking entrepreneurship and self motivation' (Hopfel, 2011, p. 41). The essential problem with bureaucracy was seen to be its clear division of roles and responsibilities. In particular, only the top organisational layers possess the complete picture, which entails long periods of stagnation and routine between restructurings. There is no way of making change continual, gradual and flexible (Hecksher, 1994). Another problem with bureaucracy was the clear assignment of responsibilities and roles generating a 'not my job' attitude. This utilises only a small portion of employee knowledge that may greatly improve performance yet lies beyond their immediate responsibility. Flexibility concerning products, threats and opportunities thus requires the dissolution of hierarchies, free flow of information and collective management. Managers were encouraged to draw on informal relationships and tacit knowledge for the benefit of the organisation, but these lie necessarily beyond official bureaucratic control, based on personal relationships and trust. According to the ideal post bureaucratic pattern, rules are replaced by consensus and dialogue, responsibility is distributed on the basis of ability rather than hierarchy, and the boundaries of the organisation become open and flexible. Major management gurus such as Handy and Nesbit thus hailed post bureaucratic organisations as the proper response to the 'age of unreason' in which endemic uncertainty and perpetual rapid change characterise the business world. It was claimed that flattening hierarchies would lower costs, raise productivity, improve the knowledge base of operations and increase the organisation's ability to respond to shifting conditions. Information technology was also seen as a means to restructure organisations around flexible networks and teams devoid of clear hierarchies and boundaries, in order to cope with an unstable and uncertain environment, and encourage a more independent, creative and committed personnel (Clarke & Clegg, 2000). Therefore, every management fad has emphasised a postmodernist blurring of boundaries and mixing of knowledge bases through direct communication across specialties, hierarchies and loyalties (Hecksher, 1994).

The flattening of hierarchies and transition to a post Fordist mode of production and post bureaucratic organisations never meant, however, that power and control became weaker or less concentrated. Those in position to assign the goals of networks or establish cooperation between networks naturally hold positions of power within them (Castells, 2011). Internally, this puts senior management, which sets the goals of projects and teams, in a clear position of power, and fortifies the role of project managers who assemble those teams, so it always pays to stay connected with them. Externally, as setting up networks of many organisations requires extensive resources and infrastructure, large transnational corporations often stand at the heart of such networks dealing in transaction rich exchange. In fact, behind the post bureaucratic notions of flattened hierarchies, teamwork, informality and self motivation lie sophisticated technologies of control that enhance managerial power to a greater extent than any bureaucracy. Control within teams and networks is often tighter and more comprehensive than bureaucratic control because it operates on the basis of personal commitment and peer supervision. Keeping a close managerial watch on the work process becomes unnecessary while employees operate under constant oversight by their peers as well as surveillance mechanisms. At the same time, in line with the managerialist proclivity for the shadows, such control is less discernible and portrayed as employee empowerment (Barker, 1993). Management theory describes this type of governance as enabling workers to use their skills autonomously in a range of activities, and a response to employees' demand for self fulfilment. However, as work turns into a calling, workers are made responsible for their motivation and enthusiasm. These are indicated by willingness to accommodate themselves to the changing demands and programmes of management. They must be ever ready to perceive every change as if derived from their own choice and as providing them with new opportunities for development. Their involvement and self fulfilment must always remain consistent with the benefit the business (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Paradoxically, employment seekers must reorganise their biography falsely and feign enthusiasm in order to fit to the managerial model of authenticity and self fulfilment. If the earlier normative control methods of the 1980's called on managers to generate motivation and commitment by creating a common corporate culture, later it has become employees' own responsibility to muster and demonstrate them. They are forced to think of their lives as an arena of experimental quest for personal identity, which only reinforces the restructuring and deregulation of the employment conditions at their expense. The demands upon them in terms of involvement, flexibility and entrepreneurship are intensified without compensation, becoming a way of demonstrating their self worth (Honneth, 2004).

This is best exemplified in the recently popular human resources management rhetoric and practices that encourage workers to 'be themselves' and 'have fun' at work. There is a new emphasis on diversity, dissent, personal expression and authentic feelings, especially those that were once barred from the bureaucratic organisation, like the expression of fun. Current human resource methods and practices

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thus aim to generate motivation, identification and commitment by introducing elements such as personal interests, games and flirtations into the office. The emphasis on committed subjects is also reflected in diverse regulatory mechanisms and practices ranging from team building activities to internal competition and self and peer performance assessments. These HR practices ostensively have nothing but employee satisfaction in mind, which is also recognised as a vital component of performativity. However, even the "inner preserve" protected from the corporate culture regimes, through the separation of work from personal life, has thus been claimed by the workplace and can now be used as a self disciplinary form of control. The more work is perceived as an arena for self development, fulfilment and fun, the more it demands in terms of time, effort and emotional investment. If employees' performance is failing, this is seen to be a problem with their own values, personality or identity (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009). Enhanced and pervasive managerial control is construed as autonomy, self management, self fulfilment and fun. This reveals both the duplicitous character and ethical basis of managerialism, which posits universal self improvement and satisfaction as the promise of careful management. The notions of autonomy and selfmanagement that figure extensively in HR fit the general aim of shaping people's subjective life in tune with the demands of management.

Furthermore, the reality behind the post bureaucratic discourse often involves an idiosyncratic mix of hierarchical and new forms of organisational governance known as hybrid or soft bureaucracies. For one thing, information and communication technologies provide new means of audit and control. HR practices construed as employees' self government often take the form of subordination to surveillance and appraisal mechanisms, tight timetables, budget constraints etc. Such surveillance and assessments turn the autonomy and self management of teams and professionals into a mechanism of compliance, because everyone must constantly meet management's objectives and project milestones. Failure to do so means the trust and autonomy were unjustified, and careers may end or stall (Courpasson, 2000). The short term nature and quick circulation of projects requires employees to constantly strive for visibility, not only regarding their creativity and professionalism but also their abilityto meet tight schedules and budgets, withstand pressures and justify the trust of their superiors. Interestingly, in such hybrid organisations, bureaucratic hierarchies with their stability, authority and formality are often reserved for senior management alone. Post bureaucratic flexibility is the lot of those on lower ranks that compete and strive to make themselves valuable (Clegg, 2011). Such post bureaucratic flattened hierarchies and networks thus contain several managerial benefits. They extend discipline and control to encompass employees' feelings and identities, while presenting them as self fulfilment, achievement and even fun. They cast the practices of management as the means of personal improvement and universal satisfaction. And last but not least, they generate an elite global network of senior managers and professionals with high levels of education and income, that hold the best jobs and societal positions and make the most important decisions (van Dijk, 2006). Their jobs are typically composed of short term projects, shifting businesses and constant mobility while working in technology and media intensive environments. What makes this lifestyle possible are office workers living locally, as well as the self management methods based on productivity and performance monitoring, which require only 15% of managerial time to run the office (Elliott, 2016). This facilitates the creation of a new global power structure, typical of managerialism, which subsists though the opposition between mobility and groundedness, routine and contingency. Not only globalisation, as Bauman has it, but the whole managerialist social order 'may be defined in many ways, but that of the 'revenge of the nomads' is as good as if not better than any other' (Bauman, 2001, p. 35).

V. Conclusion

The fluid and porous character of second modernity has naturally affected social and cultural theory as well. Among else, it encouraged the view that multiple lifestyles and identities render 'abstract modernist structures' such as classes obsolete as factors of the social structure. The very attempt to link the different strands of second modernity into a single explanation has therefore become outmoded. Let alone using socioeconomic interests and divisions for this purpose. In the face of trendiness, however, the disorganised, decentred and pluralistic nature of second modernity only runs as deep as managerial social dominance requires. This paper found that constitutive aspects of second modernity are also emphasised and bolstered by managerial discourse and practices, which arose concurrently with them. Managerial discourse often cites uncertainty, swift changes and flexibility as an unavoidable social reality in order to present managerial practices as both necessary and applaudable. Yet, managerial theories and practices have also played an important causal role in shaping second modernity, while its character tends in turn to fortify the social power and dominance of management.

The world of risks and uncertainties – many of them the outcome of corporate decisions – justifies

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careful management as a necessary survival mechanism. Strategic and risk management thus become the epitome of rational conduct and the bearers of humankind's best hopes of handling potential surprises and harms. The management of risks therefore displaced industry, invention and exploration, on which depended the promise of progress towards a better world in first modernity. Particularly pertinent are the risks posed by 'today's fast changing world', a recurring trope of managerial discourse. It is a world in which technologies, products, opportunities and consumer tastes succeed each other at an accelerating pace. Careful management is seen as vital in order to increase performance and efficiency in such conditions, and is therefore the primary means of success. The managerial responsibility for implementing a constant and seemingly chaotic process of reorganisation thereby becomes the lifeblood of organisations. However, short term investment policies, constant product redesigns and frequent organisational restructuring all contribute to the creation of fleeting business environments, while presented as inevitable in order to cope with them. Working in flexible and temporary projects encourages constant change while securing the position of management at their core. At the same time, the employment of everyone else is rendered less secure and more dependent on management. Instead of merely facilitating the industrial peace negotiated between the parties to the production process, managerial decisions become the most crucial element of success, on which owners and shareholders depend no less than workers.

Furthermore, the emphasis on cultural diversity and plurality of lifestyles and identities promotes management's value neutrality ethics and self projection as the instrument for everyone's satisfaction. The dissolution of hierarchies and devolution of control helps construe work as an arena of self fulfilment, personal development, intimacy and even fun. The work environment constructed by management is just an extension of the carnivalesque cultural arena of postmodernity. Yet the blurring of distinctions between social and professional life, work and leisure, formality and fun only intensifies organisational demands on the personal and affective resources of employees. The time, effort and stress of maintaining careers increases dramatically. At the same time, the new modes of self monitoring and governance free up senior executives to use corporate resources to enjoy a global and mobile lifestyle. The typical social processes of second modernity are therefore significantly driven by management and reflect managerialist ideology. Its prominent features all help to fortify the social and ethical standing of management, justifying its centrality to the success of organisations and society at large. There are, of course, other important aspects of second modernity – consumerism, globalisation and the knowledge economy to name but a few. Further study is required to reveal the links between managerial social dominance and its supporting ideology and these important aspects of contemporary society.

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