

**Samier, E. A. (2016). *Ideologies in educational administration and leadership* (pp. 1-233). New York, N.Y: Routledge. ISBN: 9781138958586**

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What insights might we obtain from exploring the ideological dimensions of educational administration and leadership from different vantage points? After all, as the editor of this collection, Eugenie Samier, notes in her introduction, ideology is a multidimensional term with many contested and sometimes contradictory meanings. Not only that, ideology is a term with a long history in Western society, traceable back to the Enlightenment. Samier's comprehensive introduction sets the tone for what is a thoughtful and diverse volume that is likely to increase readers' understanding of the multi-faceted ways in which ideologies affect educational administration and leadership.

From a Foucauldian perspective we might view this edited collection as a genealogical archive that traces the various meanings of ideology via different socio-historical and theoretical pathways. The field of educational administration and leadership, Samier argues, is reliant upon the epistemological and theoretical assumptions emerging from administration and leadership studies. But many of these assumptions emerge from varied disciplinary routes. These disciplines include, but are not limited to, philosophical pragmatism, existential phenomenology, and sociological theory. It is by exploring the ideological dimensions of educational administration and leadership through multiplicity lenses that we gain insight.

In her insightful introduction, Samier shows how ideology informs not only political debates but also policy decisions; these decisions can have major ramifications for society at large. The main aim of the collection is to examine ideology through diverse foundational theories that pertain to diverse national perspectives affecting the understanding, analysis, and practice of education. There is a nice balance between chapters, which focus on issues concerning higher education, and other chapters, whose primary focus is schools. The diversity of local and national contexts, covering not only the UK, USA, and Australia but also several countries in Eastern Europe is a strength of this volume. Other strengths of the collection include the diversity of disciplinary perspectives and socio-cultural issues covered by the various authors.

One intriguing perspective offered by Woods is that democracy should not be seen as a singular ideology (p. 35). In his chapter, Woods takes up Joas' critique of Dewey's term "sacralized democracy," arguing that Dewey does not fully address the affective dimensions of democracy. Woods also shows how diverse efforts to promote social justice in scholars can counteract the debilitating effects of neoliberalism. By focusing on holistic democracy, Woods argues, it is possible to develop an alternative framework that can subvert neoliberalism's instrumentalization.

Woods adopts Giddens's notion of ideology as a belief system that promotes the dominant values of those in charge. Contending ideologies serve to both construct and shape knowledge. Thus, the primary aim of ideology is, Woods argues, to "shape and present ideas in ways that favour certain relations of power" (p. 38). In contradiction to Zizek's argument that one cannot step outside of ideological frameworks, Woods maintains we need an "extra ideological critical viewpoint" (p. 38). Such a viewpoint has two important functions. First, critical illumination enables us to gain understanding of societal inequities and give voice to the marginalized. Second "positive illumination" reveals the humanistic potential within the human condition. This humanistic potential must, Wood argues, be grounded "in some sense of transcendent validity" (p. 38). Furthermore, he bases his holistic democracy on "a critical appreciation of the merits of Distributed Leadership" (p. 39). Although Distributed Leadership (DL) has been taken up in

instrumental ways, seen through the lens of holistic democracy, we can deepen our comprehension of the merits of DL. In addition, there is an ethical and spiritual dimension to Wood's argument that has much power. Yet, it is also important to consider how unconscious ways of thinking, as Žizek tells us, impact our ideological stance. Ideology is not cognitive, it is also affective, but whether we can ever understand its full affects is unlikely.

Woods grounds his account of holistic democracy in "a foundational philosophical anthropology." He argues that such a foundation helps us to create "more authentic accounts, values and understandings" (p. 40). This philosophical anthropology enables us to realize our ethical and spiritual awareness, and our capacity for engaging in non-instrumental relationships. Woods contends that "what kind of being one experiences – is of profound importance for what one learns and does" (p. 40). He is surely right here in his assertion that our experiences influence learning and doing. Moreover, a reflective approach enables us to think about human interactions and can affect us in profound ways. Such a humane response helps us connect with others in a deeper way, helping to mitigate more instrumental ways of being.

A further strength of this volume is the different theoretical and methodological lenses that authors use to help us understand the diverse ways in which ideology operates. As an example, in the chapter by Yildiz, she uses her linguistic training to examine how critical discourse analysis (CDA) and critical language analysis (CLA) reveal diverse interconnections among language, ideology, and educational practice. For her, ideology refers to a system of thinking that infuses our communications and social practices with power. Yildiz argues that CDA is a "problem oriented theory and method" (p. 50), influenced by philosophy, anthropology, and linguistics. She examines how language has been used as "an ideological instrument" (p. 50) in higher education. Although language is sometimes viewed as a neutral vehicle, Yildiz argues that language promotes specific ideological worldviews. She advocates for educational research that better understands how the language used in policy tends to marginalize particular groups of people. Specifically, she shows how BME academics experience both racial and financial discrimination in higher education, and how the words "ethnicity" and "black" can be used in policy documents to further marginalize people.

While Woods advocates for a deeper understanding of democracy, Serpieri following Foucault, keeps our attention on what is before us. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault contended that instead of looking for hidden relations he chooses "to make visible what is invisible only because it is too much on the surface of things" (Foucault, 2013, p. 64). Foucault concentrated on practices that enabled him to comprehend the interconnections among institutional forms of power, subjectivity, and truth games. By turning away from ideological frameworks and specific practices, we can understand how power operates in institutions.

In his chapter, Serpieri uses a Foucauldian lens to consider DL through three different discourses. First, the welfarist bureau-professionalism advocates for rationality and autonomy. Second, the discourse of neoliberalism promotes efficiency through managerial practices. Third, the democratic-critical discourse is a reaction against neo-liberal policies. Depending upon which discourse scholars use DL appears very differently. When leadership is viewed through the lens of a Foucauldian policy *dispositif*, Serpieri reveals how contradictory ideas shape institutional practices.

## Ideologies of Research and Teaching

Karo, Kattel, and Raudla begin this section of the volume with a chapter focused on how universities and research groups are reacting to the European Paradox in Estonia, which they argue is one of the most neoliberal economies in Continental Europe. The authors discuss how the policy rhetoric in Estonia has affected the traditional university system, stating that "competitive project-based public funding forces academia to 'pretend' to be entrepreneurial" (p. 82). This suggests layers of deception within academics, disciplining themselves to do whatever it takes to get funding. The move to project-based funding and decentralization has worked to favor academically excellent universities at the expense of the overall system. Furthermore, it also has had wider societal problems. For example, there has been a move away from practice toward concentrating on publishing on top-tier journals. This is necessary for academics to prove academic excellence. But this kind of activity promotes a circular logic in that those who do this also gain more funding. Furthermore, the move to project-based funding has also meant that younger academics have been less enthusiastic about joining the research teams, because they do not know whether they will have a job, or for how long. The move away from tenure has lasting repercussions on the university, an

argument that resonates in other chapters in the volume.

Moving from Estonia to Ukraine, Kutsyuruba explores post-Soviet school practices. Through the experiences and perceptions of teachers, the impact of the post-Soviet era philosophical and ideological changes on the education system is investigated. This chapter is wide ranging in scope, a notable strength.

Another strength of the volume is Harris' chapter, which focuses on the ways in which technology is applied to education, first as indispensable tools of teaching, learning, and administration, and second, as a certain way of thinking and acting that forecloses alternatives. Harris uses Heidegger's theory of technology to explore the complex effects of technology in education, and the ideology surrounding it. His theory encourages the breaking of the bonds of an ideology through a critical lens. Harris argues that when we focus on efficiency, we may "obstruct from our view the greater political, social, and economic forces that both shape technology and are shaped by it" (p. 118). Therefore, we must look at ideology through multiple perspectives if we are to gain a deeper understanding, a theme prevalent throughout much of the book. Keeping educational leadership in mind, Harris encourages educators to heed Heidegger's advice to attend to the manner in which technology "changes our way of being" (p. 119).

### **Contemporary and International Issues**

Eacott argues that leadership is a mythology that sustains neoliberalism; its seductive rhetoric serves to further the neoliberal agenda. In short, leadership is "a self-sustaining ideology" (p. 159). Although leadership appears open to all, Eacott argues leadership is an elitist discourse that often promotes the views of a few at the expense of the needs of the many. He views leadership as "a class-based system...embraced by business schools yet shied away from by educational administration departments" (p. 160). However, if this is the case, then why have so many journals and academic departments incorporated leadership within their names? Eacott argues the reason is because leadership is not only an illusory, but also a seductive mythology.

For Eacott, we need different frames for thinking about leadership. He suggests that a relational approach to the topic offers an alternative framework to uncover some fundamental features of knowledge production in the field of educational administration. Leadership discourses are often decoupled from broader sociological and organizational inquiry. This decoupling leads to a lack of interrogation of their economic and political dimensions. Furthermore, Eacott maintains that two assumptions underpin much of the leadership literature. First, leadership enhances organizational performance. Second, leadership is always present when organizations exceed expectations. But in his view, this is circular reasoning with the result that leadership in the guise of the individual leader predominates. This focus on the individual leader highlights the inequitable features of this discourse.

Instead of studying leadership, Eacott argues we must interrogate the reasons why it is seen as desirable. To do so, we need to disrupt current ideological ideas by placing scholarly attention on how leadership became the dominant ideology in educational administration. Rather than deconstructing leadership we need to understand how it connects with temporal and spatial conditions by comprehending the human condition in its fullness.

In rhetorical topoi of academic ideology Ahonen examines how particular universities use specific rhetoric in their overall strategy to position themselves in the post-secondary marketplace. This rhetoric is all too familiar, such as statements that these institutions recruit the best students and promote academic excellence. In his case study of seven Finnish and three Estonian universities, he focuses on the rhetorical devices used in university documents so as to accentuate the perceived strengths of each institution. In Ahonen's view, universities use rhetorical topoi to bolster particular ideological strategies that position higher education in a positive light. His research findings point to the continuation of the Humboldtian traditional view of higher education in Finnish universities, which is also, to a lesser degree, used in the Estonian university documents he examined. In the Estonian university values such as academic freedom and autonomy are stressed. Specifically, rhetorical exaggeration is used to emphasize university strengths, as in the core value of the University of Helsinki being "the quest for truth" (p. 186). The ways in which universities use language to promote particular ideological perspectives, is a recurring theme in this volume, as is the ongoing move to rationalize universities along neoliberal lines. Although Polish universities remained relatively untouched by neoliberalism, recently, they have been undergoing radical changes. Indeed, according to Kwick, Polish policy makers are intending on creating institutional change. Yet as he notes, such change can be difficult when the beliefs of Polish academics are "fundamentally incongru-

ent with the ongoing reforms” (p. 198). Kwick’s study reveals that Polish universities still view higher education as governed by “a community of scholars” (p. 196). Although Polish policy makers desire organizational change, university personnel are resistant. Here we see the clash of ideological viewpoints with policy makers pushing reform onto a resistant university community. However, Kwick concludes by saying that the fast pace of institutional reform in higher education in Poland is starting to change academic environments even though many within the higher education community resist.

The idea of higher education as a site of contestation is also highlighted in the concluding chapter, written by Monkevicius and Urbanovic. Their central theme focuses on the process of education decentralization, which they argue “demonstrates parallels with public management and reform ideology” (p. 217). Monkevicius and Urbanovic contend that in bureaucracies, top down decision-making can lead to rule-bound organizations that are seemingly indifferent to citizens. Because education is a priority area of the public sector, public administration reform has had a direct impact on the functioning of the education system. Thus, education policy, governance structure, and achievements are interactively linked with society’s values and expectations, which change over time. This chapter serves as a useful starting point to explore the operation of educational policy in a variety of educational contexts.

## Conclusion

This volume has demonstrated the importance, influence, and implications of considering how ideologies influence educational administration and leadership. That said, some chapters would have benefited from a clearer connection to ideology. In several chapters, despite multiple readings, it was not clear to the reader how ideology was central to the author’s argument (chapter 5, chapter 9, chapter 13). That said, the theoretical, geographical, and disciplinary diversity offers the reader a depth of understanding of how ideology can shape diverse issues such as ethics, governance, diversity, and power within education. This book may appeal to researchers, policy makers, and scholars and practitioners interested in how ideologies inform educational administration and leadership. The strength of *Ideologies in Educational Administration and Leadership* lies in the diversity of educational perspectives and geographical contexts from which ideology is analyzed and discussed.

## References

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