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movements**

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Paradigm Change in Action: the role of social movements

Kuhn's notion of paradigm has been influential in organisational theory and development. However, there is a danger of understanding 'paradigm' and paradigm shift' in a deterministic way. Other ways of talking about the same phenomena may be more helpful in focusing and guiding the change effort, and thereby encouraging participants to be proactive in the contributions they make. In this paper we examine the role of ideology as articulated and sustained by coalitions of social interest groups, and offer an approach to organisational development that draws on the theory and practice of social movements. This approach is particularly useful in these times of rapid social and global change. We illustrate our account with reference to large scale organisational and social change,

'Paradigm' as philosophical, sociological, and concrete

The paradigm concept (or the paradigm of paradigms) used in popular discourse stems from Kuhn's 'Structure of Scientific Revolutions' (1963). The idea has been developed in the field of organisational studies by Burrell and Morgan (1979). On the basis of an analysis of Kuhn's usage, Masterman (1970) revealed three overlapping meanings of 'paradigm'. These were

- the philosophical, almost metaphysical sense, where the paradigm determines or organises what is believed, seen, or held to be real;
- the sociological, or what we would call 'normative' sense, where the paradigm relates to a community who use the same standards for defining something as a scientific achievement, or who follow the same rules of judgement, or are governed by what amounts to the same political institutions; and
- the construct, or artefact, usage of the term, where the paradigm refers to common investigative tools, key texts, and other concrete artefacts.

In our discussion, we want to focus on the sociological usage. It is possible to read societal influences on investigative behaviour as constraining of possibilities (e.g. Burton, 1983). However, here we will use the idea to stress the agency inherent in a sociological conception of paradigm. Paradigms change and are changed by people, acting together, albeit in particular social circumstances.

Alternative metaphors for 'paradigm'

We need to note that the concept of 'paradigm' is not necessarily the only, or the best, metaphor for exploring the tendency of disciplines to move from one fashion to another. There are alternative ways of describing the phenomenon, and indeed we just did through the use of the term 'fashion'. 'Fashion' captures (i) the *conformity* (and hence the determination) involved - the fashion victims feel strange in last year's or next year's clothes; (ii) the *community* which confers membership on those following it; (iii) the

creativity behind the change from one fashion to another. But if Kuhn had written about fashions, rather than paradigms, in science perhaps he would not have become so fashionable!

Lakatos (1970) proposed a more sophisticated alternative, namely the 'research programme'. Whilst retaining some of the irrationality in Kuhn's concept (scientists may go on believing in and working in a paradigm after it has lost its usefulness) the 'research programme' also incorporated a feedback loop from experience, and a criterion for judging whether a particular research programme was progressing or degenerating.

There is also the well known concept of 'Weltanschauung' or 'world view', that while perhaps vaguer than 'paradigm', suggests a connection with wider intellectual and social perspectives.

The phenomenological notion of Weltanschauungen is not so far from the concept of ideology, that is to say a system of ideas, usually understood to be linked to a social identity. We have drawn on Gramsci's analysis of ideological hegemony in trying to understand how organisational and social development can be linked to both ideology - belief, vision, values, and social belonging - the mobilisation of social identity, common purpose, shared action in social movements.

A Gramscian alternative to the paradigm account

Gramsci was a revolutionary activist and social theorist who was explicitly concerned with problems of political action and the organisation of power in a society that showed at least some of the features of the Western democracies (Italy in the pre-Fascist period).

Gramsci's analysis can be contrasted with a more dualistic notion of ideology, that sees it as ideas disconnected from the fundamental social relations, as it were standing above them as non-functional epiphenomena.

Gramsci developed an alternative and more integrated approach to ideology in his Prison Notebooks (1971). They are not the easiest of writing, but Williams (1973),

Sassoon (1980), and Simon (1982), among others, provide accessible discussions. Elsewhere we discuss Gramsci in relation to the radical behaviourist concept of the 'verbal community' (Burton and Kagan, 1994) linking private emotions to social forces and relations.

While in the nineteenth century social and organisational order was maintained chiefly by overt force (the threat of starvation or violence) in modern capitalist societies it is maintained on a day to day basis (although the threat of force is always there) by the organisation of consent. Gramsci uses the concept of ideological hegemony to explain how this is done. His understanding of hegemony is not just about beliefs and ideas, but concerns the whole of society, "saturating" it as Williams (1973) puts it, and even defining the nature and limit of common sense.

As Williams puts it

...hegemony is not to be understood at the level of mere opinion or mere manipulation. It is a whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy,It is a set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices appear reciprocally confirming.

(Williams, 1973, p. 38).

For Gramsci, then, ideology acts as a kind of 'social cement', unifying a bloc of varied social groups and interests. In this, a hegemonic social group exercises leadership and power, not through crude ideological domination, but rather through the combination of key elements from the ideologies of those social groups that form an alliance or social bloc with it. Thus the Thatcher government was able to appeal to the anti-egalitarian sentiments of the skilled working class, as well as to the more traditional ideologies of middle England.

We can also use Gramsci's analysis to examine the maintenance of power relations in other social and organisational contexts, using his theoretical understanding of

domination to construct an action orientation that leads to a transformation in social relations.

Elsewhere we have identified the following postulates about the exercise of ideological hegemony in organisations (Burton, 1994).

- 1. Ideological hegemony, with its ideological coalitions, has boundaries other than those of the organisation.** Therefore change efforts at the ideological level must focus on both the internal coalitions (Mintzberg, 1983) of the bureaucracy but also on other external interest groups who can be empowered in the process of cohering in a hegemonic coalition. This is well illustrated in movements for better provision in learning disability services. That in New South Wales in the 1980s involved an external alliance of parents, academics, civil rights activists who for a period formed a hegemonic bloc with professionals, managers and politicians within the state government bureaucracies, and thereby enabled a shift in both *thinking* about people with learning disabilities and through practical action, in the *services* available to them (Burton, 1989). In North Western England a similar but more internally dominated (managers and professionals in the two linked service systems of National Health Service and local authority Social Service Departments) coalition has led and sustained principled change since the early 1980s (Kagan, 1994).
- 2. Ideological coalitions are likely to have varying degrees of hegemony.** The effective range of their hegemony over diverse interest groups will vary as will the intensity with which such groups identify with the hegemonic ideology. In both the Australian and British cases described above, the coalitions failed to exert hegemony over the minority of parents who wanted to retain large scale institutional provision. In New South Wales the Trades Unions were also largely outside the coalition whereas in Britain they have given critical support (Carpenter, 1994).
- 3. In order to continue uniting diverse interests under changing conditions, the dominant group will need what Burton (1989) has termed *necessary hegemony*, i.e. a sufficient degree of hegemony (in range and intensity) to handle threats**

to the hegemonic view. (In this sense the idea is similar to Kuhn's (1962) notion of paradigm in the sciences; however the Gramscian notion also offers an analysis of the social dimensions of these world views.) Where there is a deficit in the necessary hegemony of the dominant group in the coalition then there can be signs of hegemonic strain with the breakdown of ideology and the splitting off of components of the coalition. The New South Wales coalition lost its grip when the state Labor government was defeated in the 1988 election - it did not have the necessary hegemony when faced with an altered distribution of power. In North Western England the coalition withstood successive reorganisations of the NHS and changes in key managers, partly because of the continuity of certain leaders and partly because it was able to straddle the two separate systems of stakeholder organisations.

4. We therefore have a basis for the succession of hegemonic groups and their wider coalitions. **The more successful hegemonists will be able to alter both the ideology and the assemblage of allied groupings to adapt to changing conditions, protecting a core ideology** (which is probably generative of the more peripheral elements of the ideology; cf. Lakatos, 1970) **and the core membership of the alliance.** It is this *active* engagement that Gramsci refers to with the metaphors of the 'Modern Prince' and the 'War of Position'.

Gramsci, then, shows us how the exercise of power suffuses civil society, including its formal organisations, so even if people are not silenced, their understanding of social reality may reflect the ideology of the hegemonic coalition. However, none of this is fixed, and because we all take part in reproducing power and ideology (c.f. Giddens, 1979), we have numerous points at which we can subvert it, and join with others to construct counter-hegemonic alliances.

An example of this can be seen in the widespread adoption of normalisation / social role valorisation, as formulated by Wolfensberger, O'Brien, and others, in the

intellectual disability field. Much of this can be attributed to the work of activists inside and outside the formal human service system, including groups such as Values into Action and CMHERA (in the UK). Training workshops for human service workers have been a large part of this work, but because it has been possible to interpret developments in service provision (dispersed, small scale, ordinary housing based residential provision, for example) as exemplars, the endeavour has been articulated with other social forces (progressive aspects of social policy changes) and with a changing reality on the ground. As a result, although we do not want to overplay the robustness and sustainability of these gains, there is a new received common sense about people with significant intellectual disabilities and what they might reasonably expect from life - cf. Kuhn's philosophical sense of paradigm as a way of seeing. **Normalisation**, the ideology (Wolfensberger, 1972; 1992), originally counter-hegemonic, can now be seen (at least in some societies and service systems) as a candidate for hegemonic status: it combines a variety of other interest-based ideological currents, for example those of civil rights activists, service users, professionals, families of service users, and those concerned with the cost of hospital provision, and it covers several areas of content including social inclusion and equal rights, autonomy and self determination, and human development and educational/clinical technology. Cocks (1994), actually defines this as an emerging 'alternative paradigm'.

A second example is the counter-hegemonic alliance of women at the Greenham Common Peace Camp. Here a very diverse coalition of women's, feminist, and peace orientated groupings came together to mount a struggle against the U.S. nuclear missiles sited at the Greenham Common Air Base in England. In turn, the alliance was connected to, sustained by and inspiring to a wider network of groups and movements, drawing on peace, anti-imperialist, family concern, and a variety of feminist currents. We can only guess at how much movements and actions like this contributed to the

collapse of the superpower stand-off: certainly the movement concentrated on opposing Soviet militarism as well as that of the West.

So here we have the basis for an analysis of how social movements actively trigger the switch from one paradigm to another. The tasks of constructing such alliances for principled change are extremely complex, requiring a broad horizon and the opportunity for critical reflection as well as principled action. The developmental task is not so much to initiate and lead these social movements, but rather to make and maintain connections (Burton and Kagan, 1995).

Kagan and Lewis (1993, 1994) have examined some dimensions of this task in their work on women with multiple commitments:

The women themselves have done what they can by themselves. They have constantly adapted to changes in their domestic, work and welfare situations. They occupy a unique place in our social world. Unlike working men, they are not confined to the ghetto of paid full-time employment: unlike full-time carers, they are not confined to the ghetto of the home. They are able to move between home, work and welfare spheres: they inhabit plural social worlds. This means they are subject to, and exponents of, the various social rules and social ideologies of each world. Not only do they derive enriched identities from the multiple roles they occupy, but they are particularly well placed to contribute to the uniting of sectional social interests in the forging of a broader social movement that unites the interests of those marginalised by the broader social system (i.e. part time workers, informal carers, women, people with disabilities).

Kagan and Lewis, 1993

This description is suggestive of both the fluidity and the multiple layers of paradigms, ideologies, social changes and social movement alliances. Our practice in and around organisations can be understood in terms of concepts such as 'paradigm', 'ideology', 'hegemony', 'coalition', but so also can the practice of the organisation itself in its wider social context.

We believe that this way of thinking and doing highlights the non-neutrality of organisational development practitioners and managers. If by paradigms we mean hegemonic ideologies rooted in social coalitions, then we must be clear about the social interests at stake. Frameworks such as that of Ulrich (1983) might be useful here in clarifying the 'boundary judgements' we make in identifying what is our domain of intervention, what is environment, and what is irrelevant, and thereby who is included and excluded.

Chamberlayne (1991/2 p.19) sums up the challenge for the future:

Notions of a self-creative society, 'fully employed' in the sense of all being considered usefully active, with equal validation of 'time' may seem far from realisable. Yet although there may be no clear view of how to implement such ideas, they are the ideas that society has to grapple with .. for reasons .. of individual self-realisation to those of global survival.

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