Ideology in Management
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IDEOLOGY IN MANAGEMENT

In order to understand the world we live in, we have to approach it from a firm meta theoretical base which is rooted in a philosophy of the world we live in. Or we can say that all interpretations of phenomena is take place within a paradigm which makes the ground rules for our interpretation of phenomena, puzzle solving and decision making etc. In doing this we make definite statements on ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology, each has important consequences for the way in we attempt to obtain 'knowledge' about the world. The possible range of Philosophical choice in our endeavour is large, ranging from Solipsism as the most subjective to rampant objectivism on the other hand on the subjective/objective axis of investigation. On the radical/status quo axis we can move from critical theory to positivism. The world, depending on the philosophy one apply leads to a hard external world which is outside our consciousness to a world which is subjective and can only exist in ones consciousness. The epistemological debate can be located within the positivist anti-positivist debate. The former is characterised by epistemology's which seek to explain and predict what happen in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements. The link to the natural sciences and the scientific method can clearly be seen. The anti-positivist, the social world is essentially relativistic and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be investigated. In this paper the anti-positivist critique of positivist epistemology will take the view that positivism has taken the form of an Ideology rather than an legitimate form of inquiry. The relationship between science, positivism and domination together have developed a new 'truth' to sustain the bourgeois domination of the labour process.

At this juncture the concept of Ideology as it is used in this paper must be clarified. The term ideology was first used by Destutt de Tracy in 1790 to describe a science of mental clarification by way of analysing concepts into their empirical components, (Minogue,K,1993).

Dolbears(1971) describes the following way: " anyone who holds an ideology has in effect, a series of expectations or a map in his mind, orientating him and telling him how things work. Thus he knows where to fit the facts that he perceives and how to understand their significance. One could say that the term 'Ideology' incorporates the contradiction of referring to truth and to falsity.

The phenomena of legitimating social domination and distortion of knowledge and truth, is nothing new. It has taken place as long as it has been a class distinction in society. N. Machiavelli (1469-1527) in his book the Prince can perhaps be seen as the first author who dealt with matters concerned with ideological phenomena. He raises various points on domination of men by religion and religious driven education which leads to the glorification of humble and mundane behaviour rather than action. Maciavellies prescription to the "Prince" on how to stay in power includes force and fraud as well as the practice of deceit because force will never suffice by itself. His advice also includes how the Prince should behave, on one hand he should be a man of goodwill and trust at least in appearance, but if the need arose he should be able to act the opposite. This distinction between what one appears as and the reality of ones action has become an important part in how Marx saw ideology and had a profound influence on Gramsci's distinction between hegemony and coercion.

Minoger (19) proposes that present Western Ideology is based on a rational choice theory of man as a bundle of needs, utilities, satisfaction and preferences. This lead to a conversion of humans into organisms suitable for management in terms of their happiness.
The Marxist use of the word refer to the false ideas in philosophy and economics generated by uncritical reflectors of bourgeois society.

This view can be seen in Engels' letter to Mehring in 1893: "Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise, it would not be an ideological process at all.....It is, above all, this appearance of an independent history of state constitutions, of systems of law, of ideological conceptions in every separate domain, which dazzles most people." The concept of false consciousness becomes an important issue in determining how the world is seen and how Ideology may cause false consciousness.

This is clearly evident in Gramsci's theory of hegemony which is found in the superstructure of society. Gramsci was not the first to adopt the term. The term gegemoniya (hegemony) was one of the most central political slogans in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, from the late 1890s to 1917. (Andersen.P 19).

Gramsci believed that power and domination in capitalism rested not only with the materially located means of coercion and oppression, but also within men's consciousness, through 'ideological hegemony'. (Burrell and Morgan 1979). He maintained that the ruling class would always seek to legitimate its power through the creation and perpetuation of a belief system which stresses the need for order, authority and discipline, and conscious attempts to emasculate protest and revolutionary potential. Gramsci saw this ideological hegemony exercised in science, education, in the family and at the workplace with the result that it increased the unseen power of the ruling class and the result was a working class with a false consciousness. Power to exercise hegemony must be found in capitalist control of the means of communication (press, radio, television, cinema, publishing and the production of science), based of the control of the means of production (private property). Wherever we locate hegemony, in the popular culture or economic apparatus, the analytical conclusion becomes the same. In Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus" (1971), an assimilation of Gramsci's ideas on hegemony becomes clear. In Althusser's term, Ideology constitutes individuals who will more or less submit to the existing order. An obvious example of this ideology is the fundamental assumption of individual choice in neoclassical economics, where, for instance, the unemployed are seen as choosing leisure over wages. Althusser's theory of Ideology departs from early Marxist treatments of ideology. He managed to attach material existence to ideology such as the education system.

Ideology also play an important role in the formation of social thought. A necessary condition for a social doctrine to be an ideology of a social class is that the doctrine does not make explicit the actual interest and position of that class, although it may say something true about the other aspects of social life, eg., about the opposing class. (Nowak.L. 1987). This perspective may be applied to South Africa's policy of Apartheid. Ideological cooption resulted in the oppressed strata consenting to their own daily exploitation and misery. Through internationalisation of the dominant ideological and cultural values, the masses come to accept their lot. Control of education, the mass media, the legal system allowed the white elite to manipulate popular consciousness and achieve the desired consensual legitimacy. The success (in the medium term) of this ideology was summed up by Biko: "All in all the black has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave and an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish humility". In true Gramscian fashion Biko understood that any liberation of the black consciousness was to counter the ideological hegemony of the white regime. (The rest is history).

We can view ideology as a community of individuals who will more or less submit to the existing order.

Poulantzas has elaborated on Althusser's theory and argues that there are two levels of ideology: first, there are primary class ideologies and ideological sub-ensembles of minor
classes which encompass distinct world views; and secondly, apart from these class ideologies, there exist a dominant ideology which reproduces relations in the social formation as a whole. Poulantzas (1974) illustrates an historical instance of ideological dislocation in his analysis of fascism. Fascism in Germany and Italy was the product of a simultaneous political crisis (crisis of hegemony) and ideological crisis (crisis of the dominant ideology). The subordinate classes became into a position in which they were able to replace the dominant ideology which was more adapted to their interest. In both countries at the time, the working class was in an ideological crisis, resulting in the ability of the Fascist to take a leading role in forging a new ideology. Poulantzas takes a particular interest in the role of the law in juridical-political ideology. He argues that the law "materialises the dominate ideology" (1980). It does it so in such a way that social relations are mystified as individual relations. Since the law is only knowable to a small elite of society the average person becomes further mystified. As such the law becomes and reproduces the division of intellectual and manual labour. The legal system creates free and equal men, this sets the stage labour contracts which permits the real economic domination to take place under the disguise of free and equal exchange (work place bargaining). In order for this domination to be maintained requires that subordinate groups be unaware of their status. This is a functional reason why "false consciousness" is imposed by the social system on all its members. This false consciousness distorts the very nature of society, and prevents people from seeing what is really going on in their lives. In this way ideology becomes a lived experience which coerces the working class to freely perform acts of alienation. Social space becomes completely occupied by ideology and no discourse may take place such that Habermas' notion of non coercive space disappears and the better argument will never be heard.

To accomplish the total control of consciousness and the formation of social reality, power must be in the hands of the ruling class. Gramsci describes the normal structure of capitalist political power in bourgeois-democratic states is in effect simultaneously and indivisibly dominated by culture and determined by coercion. It is nothing that can deny the dominant role of culture in contemporary power system, this cultural domination is embodied in certain irrefutable concrete institutions: regular elections, civic freedom, rights of assembly all of these exists in most western societies and poses no direct treat to the present power structure in society. The reasons may be found in Weber's famous definition in relation to the legal monopoly of the capitalist state, the state is the institution which enjoys a monopoly of legitimate violence over a given territory. Ideological institutions can retain a high degree of autonomy in such states, and therefore can conceal the degree to which they belong to the system of capitalist power. Therefore it becomes an illusion that an electoral majority can restore the already in place false consciousness. No better notion of this power is found in Weber's 'IRON CAGE OF BUREAUCRACY', and his elaboration of the complexity of modern social stratification, in his emphasis upon power and authority. In Discipline and Power (1977) Michele Foucault takes a similar view to Weber, power is a strategy which traverses every point in the social formation yet resides nowhere. While ideology is controlled and disseminated by the ruling class, power is neither a "property" nor a "privilege that one might possess'. Rather, it is "a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity", and it joins with knowledge to create mechanisms that dominate the body by entwining it in myriad "dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques and functioning’s". This view of power leads to an image of a spatial "network of relations". These networks can first be seen with the rise of industrialisation which demanded a new set of relationships between the factors of production. Foucault sees this culminating in a set of techniques designed to render the body's forces obedient to authority yet useful in apparatuses of production, " and this means not only 'production" in the strict sense, but also the production of knowledge and skills in the school, the production of health in the hospitals. the production of destructive force in the army"
At first, disciplinary techniques were adopted "in response to need" (Foucault. M. 1977). They brought strategies of power and relations to knowledge together to help solve medical problems such as diseases, epidemics, to help industry to adapt to large scale production and changes in technology, a whole new science of management was developed. Slowly the techniques infiltrated all major institutions and transformed them into disciplinary space. Before long, techniques which had been adopted in different institutions began to "overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, and to support one another" and they gradually joined together to form a network of coercion, reaching out" to ever broader domains, as if they tended to cover the entire social body". (Foucault.M. 1977).

In examining the school system it becomes clear from an Althusseren point how these techniques created new institutions. They are there ready to play host to the ruling ideology. One is regularly reminded what industry wants from school leavers and University graduates so they make a better fit to the present system. Foucault notes that before industrialisation students were instructed on one to basis. As the population grew a demographic crisis developed, and a new way of teaching was needed. The students had to be instructed in a group, so every body could be put to work at the same time, but also to be given personal attention to those who either required help or indulged in unruly behaviour.

The school responded to the new demands by transforming itself into new, disciplinary arena where human multiplicities were subject to strict regulation. The body of students were ranked put into different classes examined given individual marks and subjects followed a degree of difficulty. Each hour was broken into segments of learning and it was all driven by and ideal point that would result in maximum speed and efficiency. The system of techniques was controlling students body and "soul" in relation to power and knowledge. Christopher Bracken .( 19 ) considers the procedure of distributing individuals in the classroom. " When students are arranged in rows, they become clearly visible to the teacher. This visibility creates a relationship of knowledge between the teachers gaze and the body of each student, because a teacher who has an unobstructed view of the pupils in a class sees what they are doing and knows when to step in to provide help with lessons or to control unruliness. To know the class, therefore, is to be able to deploy the power to assist and the power to restrain. Visibility creates knowledge, and knowledge opens up avenues for the exercise of power." Of course, the school was not the only coercive space that grew up with industrialisation.

The same is evident in the organisation of the shopfloor in industry the parallel to the school system can bee seen in the development of scientific management. The most important aspect of scientific management was to remove all knowledge from the worker and make it a management property. Functional supervision was introduced such that each step in the production process could be controlled by management. The notion of efficiency as in the school system became and still is the holy grail of production. The production of an management ideology is very apparent in F. W. Taylors description of scientific management.(1916). " Scientific management does not exist and cannot exist until there has been a complete mental revolution on the part of workmen working under it, as to their duties toward themselves and toward their employers, and a complete mental revolution in the outlook for the employers, toward their duties, toward themselves, and toward their workmen. And until this great mental change takes place, scientific management does not exist. The new outlook that comes under scientific management is this: The workmen, after many object lessons, come to see and the management come to see that a great surplus can be made, providing both sides will stop pulling apart, will stop fighting and will push as hard as they can to get as cheap an output as possible, that there is no occasion to quarrel. Each side can get more than ever before. The acknowledgment of this fact represent a complete mental revolution...". Taylor laid the foundations for the classical management school and an Ideology of work which is based on the legitimisation of management power over the
workforce in the term managerial prerogative. The manager became the teacher, the keeper of knowledge and the controller of myths, symbols, rewards and punishment. The worker was reduced to an mechanical artefact which could be changed by management. This ideology reached it's peak in "Fordism" which not only used power at work, but also tried to control the workforce's private and moral life. Gramsci (1973) makes the point that Ford attempted, with the aid of a body of inspectors, to intervene in the private lives of his employees and control how they spent their wages and how they lived is an indication of this ideology. Once this ideology of work has been established, the problem arises: Whether the type of industry and organisation of work and production typical of Ford is rational? Or it could be a malignant phenomenon which through workers action will disappear? The latter seems not to be the case. Through coercion and persuasion, which offer the possibility of a better standard of living seems to have won the day.

An indication of lack of radical content to the American Labor movement can be seen in the fact that while Samuel Gompers, the recognised leader of Labor at the beginning of the century I.W.W. were a threat to the nation. Indeed, unionists proved to be more active than capitalists in purging radical ideas from the labour movement.

The United States Information Agency could propagandise the world about "People's Capitalism," in which there were no robber barons, only little people, working, saving, and being the real owners of enterprise. (Carson. R. B. 1971). To legitimise "Fordism" as a world view of industrial organisation, it needed support in Philosophy and Science and both were provided by Pragmatism, Naturalism and the Scientific method. And though none of the philosophies in America from Puritanism to Naturalism worked out a system or integrated plan toward any particular goal, their emphasis upon movement, action, practice, and utility reached its culmination of sterility in Naturalism. The Naturalist believed that common surd of his program was "the whole-hearted acceptance of scientific method as the only reliable way of reading truth about the world, nature, society and man". Hook.S.(1944).

What is significant is that these philosophies do not try to change the world, but are the defenders of the status quo. The development of the productive system of capitalism armed with the Scientific method and control of the forces of production lead to claims of "progressive" capitalism. This doctrine spread throughout the American education system and its influence were seen everywhere, especially in Naturalism and to some extent in its European cousins: logical positivism, general semantics, and unity of science. Following Charles Taylor's definition of ideology as "the locus of widespread attempts at self understanding of a theoretical or scientific status", American philosophies appears as an attempt to establish such ideological framework. In order for this ideology to claim authority, it becomes necessary to employ a value-free methodology. At this point, as Ricoeur points out, ideology gains a non pejorative meaning and is viewed as a potential communicable mediational device of legitimisation, a vehicle for politics, Vichot.R. (1988). The legitimisation of "Fordism" through the development of Pragmatism and Naturalism gave creed to the notion of 'one right way to manage'.

This view was powerfully backed by the use of the scientific method to find the underlying natural laws of management. This managerial ideology can clearly be seen in the development of organisational theory from the 'classical school', human relation movement, systems theory, contingency theory, strategic management and organisation behaviour theory just to mention a few. The world of organisations is treated as if it were the world of natural phenomena, characterised by a hard concrete reality which can by systematically investigated in way which reveals its underlying regularities. Above all else it is a world of cause and effect; the task of management theorists is seen as the identification of the fundamental laws which characterise its day-to-day operation. Given this overall view, the individual is assigned an essentially
passive and responding role. The individuals behaviour at work is reduced to being determined by the situation to which he/she is exposed.

The famous Hawthorne experiments influenced by Durkheim's positivistic analysis of the process of social change shows the link to the scientific notion of equilibrium very clearly. Mayo remarks that

Human collaboration in work, in primitive and developed societies, has always depended for its perpetuation upon the evolution of a non-logical social code which regulates the relations between persons and their attitudes to one another. Insistence upon a merely economic logic of production - especially if the logic is frequently changed-interferes with the development of such a code and consequently gives rise in the group to a sense of human defeat. This human defeat results in the formation of a social code at a lower level and in opposition to the economic logic. One of its symptoms is 'restriction'. (Mayo, 1933.)

(Burrell and Morgan, 1979.) points out that this statement clearly reflects the central principles which inform the theoretical perspective of the Hawthorne studies. Society is to be understood in terms of a system tending towards equilibrium; if this equilibrium is disturbed, forces are set in motion to restore it. The equilibrium of modern society has been upset by technological change prompted by the dictates of an economic logic; as a result social forces have been set in motion to restore the balance. This equilibrium model, as applied at the societal level, is transferred without justification in more or less unchanged form to an analysis of the work situation. The individual now becomes an equilibrium system and any deviations from the equilibrium position becomes a managerial problem which can be solved by behavioural modification. The notion of an equilibrium model fully based on biological sciences were taken up and developed by Barnard, Simon, Selznick, Rice, Trist and Emery to mention a few. Organisations are seen as rational goal seeking systems that must maintain equilibrium in order to survive in the environment. The organisation, therefore, is a co-operative enterprise of individuals in pursuit of a common purpose. It is essentially 'unitary' in nature. The central concern of management is to manage the boundary between the rational and non-rational aspects of human social behaviour (the workforce). Formal organisations becomes the structural expression of rational action. The notion of rationality reflects Weber's view of bureaucracy and the classical management theorists', which emphasises the importance of 'inducement' to members as a basis of ensuring the maintenance of the organisation and the authority system which it reflects. A similar approach is prominent in much of the empirical work directed to study organisations. Since at least the early 1950s there has been a distinct and growing trend towards the measurement and inter-correlation of organisational characteristics. Alongside the development of the systems approaches there has been a strong surge of objectivism. Somewhat paradoxically, the systems approach has spawned a fair number of empirical investigations characteristic of the objectivist mode of scientific inquiry which many systems theorists initially set out to counter and replace. One of the earliest and certainly one of the most significant organisational studies in the objectivist tradition was that conducted by Joan Woodward in the early 1950s. The study involved the collection of quite a wide range of quantitative data relating to the organisation of the firm, manufacturing processes and methods, commercial success and general history. The hope was to find the underlying law like relationships to success. What is important about Woodward's work is employment of simple quantitative descriptions of organisations which can be subjected to statistical analysis. It opened the floodgates to a new style of research based upon the objectivist assumption that organisations are hard, concrete, empirical phenomena which can be measured. The quest is still on, as the law-like relationships seems to be very elusive to say the least. But that have not reduced the appetite of the editors of the major management journal. One journal in particular, Administrative Science Quarterly is literally packed with
reports on research in the objectivist tradition; indeed, one might say that it has helped to raise objectivism as applied to study of organisations to the status of an orthodoxy. The same trend was found by in the ten most influential marketing journal over the period 1982 to 1992, over 90% of the articles were written from a objectivist point of view. (Ward and Johansen 1994). The work conducted by the Aston group of researchers on organisations in Britain during the 1960s and early 1970s represents one of the most prominent, systematic and sustained attempts to study organisations from an objectivist perspective. Over time, there is scarcely an organisational variable which has not been measured in some form and even correlated with itself in the objectivist search for 'significant' relationships which eventually will prove determinant. May be the high point of this form of objectivism was Peters and Waterman's book In search of excellence that came up with ten variables of success which was linked to American companies in the 1970s and 1980s. Ten years later most of the companies classified successful were making large losses or had been taken over or ceased to exist in the 1970s form. The management ideological research based on the scientific method must be classified as the greatest failure of any long term research methodology into organisational theory to date. Only until very recently one can observe some serious criticism of this dominance of the management literature. One could say that this dominant perspective is characterised by an undue and extreme commitment to positivism and a naive empiricism, and that it is characterised by a complete disregard for the nature of the phenomena under investigation, tend to be of a different order. It can also be said that objectivists are over deterministic in their view of human nature. Another charge levelled at organisational theory of the objectivist kind is that it is ideological biased in favour of a managerial view of organisations. This charge comes from inside positivism as well as all non positivistic form of philosophy. Most orthodox theories of organisations in their various ways have contributed to the view that they are little more than handmaidens and functionaries of those in control of organisational life. The question 'What is an organisation?' is rarely given very much attention, the answer is taken to be self evident. As soon as one move out of the positivistic location one can yield different answers to this question. However, in order to defend their approach against the charge of conservatism and ideological managerial bias, a so called 'radical' response have come forward. According to Burrell and Morgan this is nowhere better illustrated than in the work of many socio-technical system theorists or human relations theorists who, while attracting the share of ideology and managerial ism, actually see themselves as perhaps different as they stand in favour of employees and their job satisfaction. What they fail to realise is that their radicalism is constrained by the nature of the models upon which their presume a functional unity of system parts, with certain imperative functions which must be satisfied if the organisation is to survive, their analyses is constrained by the requirements characteristic of a managerial point of view. From this analysis one can draw the conclusion that very little if any knowledge have been generated by ideologyising the scientific method as a servant of managerialism, the purpose can only be to keep the managerial class in power and impose an ideology over the powerless classes in the work situation and their private lives. Webers nightmare of the iron cage of bureaucracy has become a reality disguised as rational and effective within the capitalist mode of production. Ideology has become absorbed into the reality of organisational rationality and oppression, technology and organisational domination have become fused in orthodox organisational theory. The question that is never asked within objective organisational theory, is; is the scientific method appropriate for the study of organisations? As soon as one moves away from a philosophy that is located within the functionalist paradigm the answer is NO.

As soon as one take in use a framework of Kantian philosophy and the thoughts developed by Weber, Freud, Hughes, Dilthey, Runiciman,Shutz, Husserl and Wittgenstein to mention a few a different picture of science and ideology emerges as well as a pointer to the development of
organisational theory. Here science is split into two; Naturwissenschaften and Geisteswissenschaften and the scientific method could not be applied to create knowledge in the latter. From this point of view the basic problems of epistemology identified by Kant which confronts both the natural and social sciences. In drawing a distinction between the natural and cultural sciences, one can maintain that the difference between them is essentially one of substance, and the two types of science addresses themselves to fundamentally different kinds of subject matter. Cultural phenomena like organisations which are no more than a social construct and not a concrete phenomena outside mind of organisational member are in essence external manifestations of inner experiences and hence organisations can only be understood from this point of view. In this situation the approach and underlying meta theoretical assumptions embedded in positivistic philosophy, with their emphasis upon the search for general laws and causal explanations, were deemed inappropriate. Based on this philosophical view scientific knowledge is in essence socially constructed and sustained; its significance and meaning can only be understood within its immediate social context. The anti positivistic argument can also be found in Marxist philosophy, critical theory and radical Weberianism. Their ani-positivism with emphasis on totality, alienation, domination and control, and their desire to develop a critique of capitalist culture goes a long way to develop a better understanding of the managerial ideology that drives present American imperialist organisational theory. But remarks of this kind may seem to have little force in removing ideology from organisational theory and the generation of scientific knowledge. To generate knowledge of social constructs such as organisations becomes very difficult as ideology has become absorbed into organisational reality. The promotion of this false consciousness has almost gone so far it has become immune to critique. In order to remove ideology from discourse, one may have to find a solution in a philosophy that meets social science in a Habermasian free space. Burrell (1994) suggests that such intermingling may well be dialectical, of course, producing an Hegelian synthesis and synergy. In Habermas' opinion we must overcome the 'colonisation of the life world' and 'cultural impoverishment' which have obscured the limitations of the current socio-economic order, and we must recover the rational potential of modern culture. (Burrell. 1994). The path to the future is wide open, but through Habermas we have the possibility to move away from the false consciousness that ideology has produced.

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