New paradigms for change? Theories of organization and the organization of theories

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Introduction

Over the last few decades western economies have been rocked by a series of economic shocks (Stewart, 1993) and crises (Iacocca, 1986). As a result, the field of management and, indeed, managers generally have suffered some degree of dislocation (Huczynski, 1993). Reacting to this dislocation, managers have turned to consultants and business school academics for advice and for solutions to the problems which threaten to swamp them. In recent times the solutions developed have taken what might be called a "cultural turn" (see, for example, Reed and Hughes, 1993), such that the shared conviction among managers, consultants and many business school academics seems to be that business success requires management attention be directed to the "soft", cultural and humanistic aspects of organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Legge, 1995; Thackray, 1986). Indeed it has been argued that the cultural management of organizations carries with it a requirement for a new paradigm of management and, by implication, the requirement for a new paradigm by which to research the management of change and the management of organizations more generally. This has been stated explicitly in the works of Burnes (1992) and Mink (1992) and exists clearly, if more implicitly, in the works of many other key figures such as Kanter (1989), Ouchi (1981), Peters and Waterman (1986) and Schein (1985, 1991) to name but a small sample.

While acknowledging and applauding the wider theoretical reflection which this interest in paradigms invites, this paper will attempt to cast more light on the notion of paradigms for change and the prospects for the development of new paradigms for change. However, unlike mainstream (generally managerialist) considerations of change management which tend to operate with a simple scientific model of theoretical change and development, this paper will examine theory as a social and organizational process (Alvesson, 1991; Reed, 1993). Viewed in this way the prospect for a new paradigm for the analysis of change in organizations is properly viewed as a social and political question and will be addressed accordingly. Thus, in analysing theories of change the paper will attempt to locate the theorist and will raise questions as

to the ends and objectives to which the theorists of/for change address themselves.

To this end the paper is structured as follows. The paper begins with an attempt to contextualize the changing orientations of the students of change management and will give an account of the new and emergent paradigms, so-called. From here, the discussion of paradigms of/for change will be placed within the context of the larger discussion of sociological paradigms (Burrell and Morgan, 1980). Having placed the discussion of these new paradigms of/for change within the framework of Burrell and Morgan, the paper will assess the validity of the claims made for these new paradigms and will assess the prospects for radical theoretical change and development within the arena of organizational change management.

The need for change
Hollway (1991) argues that knowledge and practice, especially within the field of management, are inseparable. Alvesson (1991) makes a similar observation and notes the impact of "non-theoretical" influences on management research. This is also in line with the work of Perry (1993) who, in discussing the process of theorizing, notes:

> since organizational theorizing is at once cognitive and social, it is neither unsullied by social interests nor unproblemmatically deducible from them (p. 85).

Baritz (1965) also makes a similar point when he argues that specific conditions and problems have produced different emphases in industrial psychology and management more generally. Indeed Baritz notes that it took the problems and upheaval generated by the First World War to overcome management prejudice with regard to academia.

In more recent decades, however, managers seem to have shrugged off this hostility and have, in fact, elevated key academics to the status of guru. Indeed, managers now seem to expect academics to develop new methods and templates to address the salient problems of the day. In this way business school theorizing should not be thought of as representing a disinterested process of discovery and "excavation" but instead might be better regarded as a "knowledge-product", called forth to service the demands and orientations of management. When discussing theories of change and developments in theoretical orientations, therefore, it is vital to set such discussion against a backdrop of the changing economic and political context of western economies and against a consideration of the aims and objectives which these theorists attempt to address. As Ackroyd (1993) notes:

> Organizational analysis is an organized and an organizing institution (p. 104).

He continues:

> ...it is shaped by and shapes its social context (p. 105).

In the following section, therefore, we will look more closely at the process by which theory shapes and is shaped by social processes.

Theory as product innovation

Huczynski (1993) notes that, in recent years, the job and indeed the life of the manager has become more complex and less certain. This dislocation probably accounts for the number of books which have some reference to "chaos" in their titles (see, for example, Peters, 1988; Stacey, 1992) since business academics, like their business counterparts, must ensure product innovation if they are to be sure of a presence in the market. At the root of this change lies a decline in the economic fortunes of key western businesses compared with the rise of Far Eastern economies.

In a preface to *The Art of Japanese Management* (Pascale and Athos, 1986), Parker expresses both the dislocation and the soul-searching brought about by perceptions of an increasingly dominant Japanese economy. He notes:

> Japanese competitiveness has become one of the paramount economic events of the post-war world. Nowadays our mirror on the wall is no longer giving the West the flattering answers of the fairy-tale. The Western manager… has been able traditionally to go to straighten himself up...by having a private, cosy chat with his own image. Just a matter of popping the question, and the reliable answer would be: "You are the best, the most beautiful of them all – the Number One, positively." Now the mirror's voice seems to have cracked a bit; the tone has changed. Rather shakily it suggests we take a second opinion (p. xiii).

Yet the 1980s and the early 1990s represent a period in which the management introspection and reassessment which Parker observes has been transformed from self-doubt to self-confidence (Huczynski, 1993). Here the political changes over the last decade or so, which have been expressed in a managerialist vocabulary, have played a key role in revitalizing management and in restoring its self-confidence. Selden (1991) notes:

> The rhetoric of enterprise has dominated British Culture at virtually every level during the 1980s (p. 58).

Similarly, Keat (1991, p. 1) notes:

> During the course of the 1980s, the idea of an enterprise culture [the necessary remedy for a series of economic ills including inflation, unemployment and international competitiveness] has emerged as a central motif in the political thought and practice of the Conservative government in Britain.

Thanks, in part, to this state interest in enterprise and competitiveness, Japan and the Far East have become more than just the source of crisis for western economies. They have also been a source of inspiration (and product innovation) for management and for consultants, politicians and business school academics alike. Japanese economies were successful, it was surmised, because Japanese managers had become adept at managing the "softer" aspects of organizations (Fukuda, 1988). And so it was argued that, in order to compete, western managers would have to learn, or relearn (Pascale and Athos, 1986), to manipulate the cultural levers of their organizations. Thus by a combination of economic crisis, political change and academic re-dedication, the "cultural turn" in management was brought about. However, as we shall see, not everyone buys this new culture of management!

The culture of management

In a relatively short period of time the need to manage culture and the need to develop strong cultures (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) has become something close to an orthodox set of beliefs among management. Yet not all are keen on this notion of cultural management. Feldman (1986), for example, is very much against Schein's modelling of culture. Wright (1994) also has key reservations about Schein's use of the term. In fact as an anthropologist, Wright confesses that she finds the managerial usage of the term both unfamiliar and perplexing. She does acknowledge, however, that interest in cultural matters has led to some degree of methodological change in the field of management. Yet others would go much further than this and would, in fact, claim the existence of new paradigms of/for management. In the following section this claim will be examined. Initially the arguments of Mink and Burnes will be analysed and from here parallels will be drawn with the works of Schein, Ouchi and others.

Paradigms and change

Reflecting the dynamism of both economy and polity, noted in previous sections, Mink has stated the need for a new paradigm of change. Similarly, Burnes, in his text *Managing Change* (1992), has claimed that the works of Kanter, and of Peters and Waterman represent emergent paradigms for change.

In outlining his new paradigm Mink contrasts the "old" with the "new" paradigm of organization which he is keen to promote. The old paradigm, he claims is founded on transactional leadership and behavioural compliance, the new on transformational leadership and the release of organizational talent. This new paradigm, Mink tells us, is required to meet the rapidly changing economic and technological context of business. Mink's new paradigm, therefore, exists to face up to what he refers to as the new and changing needs of organizations. The logic which underpins this approach is fairly transparent and now quite familiar. Beaumont (1993), for example, notes that human resource management (HRM), which resonates with ideas of transformational leadership and cultural management, is a response to economic globalization and, in part, should be viewed as an attempt to bring about political and economic change within the national economies of the USA and Britain. Legge (1995) makes similar points and expands the discussion of HRM to encompass micro-political movements within organizations and within the markets for academic products. Elger and Smith (1994), discussing "global Japanization" also note the ways in which the language of management has been reconfigured, stressing such things as teams, empowerment, leadership and cultural management. This reconfiguration, they tell us, stems from management attempts to fashion the perception of a new interdependency between workers and managers as attempts are made to shake out western economies. This is also reflected in the work of Hopper (1990) who, in discussing technological change and innovation, outlines a similar, if more managerialist, line of argument when he states that the skills and attitudes of workers count for more than the technological elegance of an information system.

Burnes (1992), discussing change management, makes a similar claim to that of Mink for the work of authors such as Kanter and Peters and Waterman. Both the work of Peters and Waterman and the works of Kanter are popular and well known. Peters and Waterman have attempted to investigate and distil the key elements which separate the USA's successful firms from their less successful counterparts. Guest (1992), discussing the work of Peters and Waterman, suggests that they are in some sense anti-rationalist since they are concerned that traditional, quantitatively-based models of management and decision making have a tendency to sideline the creative and human dimensions of organizations. In their elevation of human factor considerations, therefore, they have much in common with the ideas of Mink and the proponents of "soft" HRM (Legge, 1995). In this respect they also have much in common with Kanter.

Kanter's various published works have a common thread running through them (see, for example, Kanter, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1994). Her contention is similar to Mink's. She claims that a combination of economic globalization, technological development and the economic development of the Far East has led to significant changes in the nature of competition. These bureaucracies, we are told, are too rigid to allow for effective competition since, she argues, they tend to stress quantitative analysis and proceduralism above the skills and talents of subordinates. Thanks to this fixation, large bureaucratic organizations tend to base their future plans on the extrapolation of past trends. Like military organizations, which they often mirror structurally, bureaucratic organizations might be regarded as preparing for the next competitive "war" by practising and replaying the battles of the last war, and so, according to Kanter, they tend to be unprepared for the challenges which emerge from more innovative adversaries. Not surprisingly, Kanter tells us that maintaining a bureaucratic approach to business planning and management is misguided. We can no longer base plans for the future on past experience, we are told, since the new competitive environment changes rapidly and discontinuously. Kanter, therefore, exhorts managers to develop "intra-preneurs" who, operating in "newstreams" will be allowed, and indeed encouraged, to short-circuit the normal practices of bureaucracies. To this end Kanter envisages the development of matrix structures within organizations and between organizations as they pool, ally and link up (PAL) their resources.

Schein (1985) shows a similar interest in the human side of business. Together with others, Schein has been prominent in the promotion and elaboration of the idea that managers should attempt to manage the symbolism of organization. We can see that, at some level, this calls for a new approach to management. We can certainly acknowledge that this seems to call for a new vocabulary of management (Aldrich, 1993; Wright, 1994).

Ouchi (1981) makes similar claims for his Theory Z. He informs us that there is nothing particularly mysterious or magical about Japanese management. In fact he thinks that much of it is readily transferrable to the West if managers are willing to take greater responsibility for engineering a change in attitudes.

We can see, then, that a variety of commentators have noted the need for some degree of change in the nature of management thinking and practice and indeed have argued that the changes required are, at root, cultural. At face value this notion of culture change seems quite radical. However, before we analyse the extent to which these ideas are representative of a new paradigm of/for management, we must analyse the linguistic muddle which surrounds the concept of paradigm itself.

Defining paradigm

Debate about the existence or otherwise of new paradigms of/for change is complicated by some degree of confusion as regards the term itself. Kuhn (1970), who popularized the term, uses it in a variety of different ways (Brown, 1993). Perhaps this loose usage of the term explains the general flabbiness of the concept as used in general speech and increasingly in management writing. Often the term seems to be used as some vague justification for simply having a point of view rather than encouraging reflection on the validity and sustainability of this opinion.

Burrell and Morgan (1980), however, use the term "paradigm" in a much more restricted sense. For Burrell and Morgan, the term involves a consideration of the ontology and epistemological nature of organizations within different paradigmatic viewpoints, as well as a consideration of the nature of humanity which each expresses. To aid their analysis and exposition, Burrell and Morgan have developed a grid which is designed to encourage reflection on the meta-theoretical concerns which structure different sociological approaches, and while it is true that there has been considerable discussion as to the aims and worthiness of this approach (see for example the contributions to Reed and Hughes, 1993), the grid does offer a useful means for grouping and locating apparently diverse contributions to the field of change management and will be used in this way.

At a basic level the term paradigm describes a set of assumptions, theories and models that are commonly accepted within a particular field of activity. Mink (1992) refers to paradigms as representing a world view. It is, we are told, a particular means of seeing, feeling and touching the world, in terms of perceiving, understanding and interpreting. However, in terms of the work of Burrell and Morgan this is an inadequate description. Crucially, the key aspect which separates the various paradigms in the work of Burrell and Morgan, and which should be stressed, is that paradigms debate and dispute the extent to which the objects of inquiry can be seen, felt and touched. This is the key point which their grid conveys.

Burrell and Morgan's grid has two dimensions (see Figure 1). Vertically there is a concern with order and conflict or change. The lower section of the grid represents a concern with social order and stability whereas the upper section of the grid represents more of a concern with the analysis of the roots of conflict and domination as opposed to the maintenance of order. Horizontally the grid is divided by a concern for objective facts as opposed to subjective interpretation.

On the right hand side of the grid, organizations are viewed as concrete entities which have a definite existence prior to the existence of the people who populate them, and external to the people employed within them. Here organizations can be seen, felt and touched. On the left hand side of the grid, the subjective interpretation of people plays a prominent role. Here organizations are viewed not as a concrete external reality, ontologically prior to human contact, but as subjective and personal constructs, defined and experienced differently by the various individuals and groups who come into contact with them.

The right hand side of the grid, therefore, denotes a focus on structural matters, and the ways in which structural matters either condition or enforce key aspects of organizational life, whereas the left hand side of the grid denotes a concern with social action and the interpretations of the actors involved.
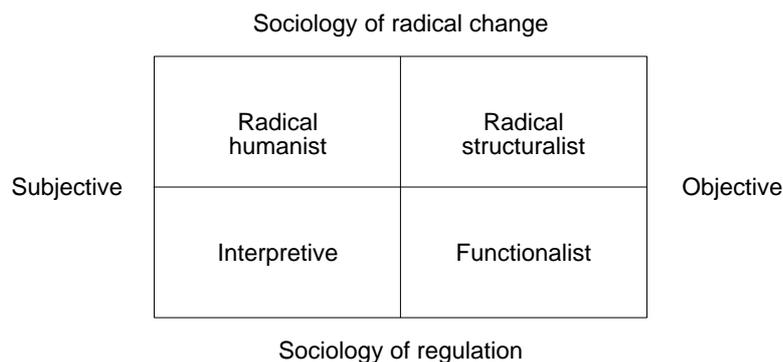
Sociology of radical change

Radical humanist	Radical structuralist
Interpretive	Functionalist

Subjective   Objective

Sociology of regulation

Figure 1.
Two dimensions, four paradigms for organizational analysis

The paradigms explained

As we have seen there has been a noticeable rise in interest in interpretive-type methodologies and forms of organization analysis (Aldrich, 1993; Wright, 1994). These forms of organization analysis are to be found in the western region of Burrell and Morgan's grid. By referring to the grid we can see that the lower left region represents a dual concern with social order and the interpretations of actors. Here social order in society is valued, implicitly, and there is a focus on how order is maintained within organizations. This focus on order is shared by the functionalist quadrant; however, unlike the functionalist quadrant, truly interpretive approaches do not view organizations as having a concrete existence prior to the involvement of actors. Instead, organizations, their departments and hierarchies, are viewed as being the creations of the actors involved. Actors within action theory, for example, do not face a concrete external reality which existed prior to them. Instead they are viewed as constructing the organizations they inhabit. Organizations within this

paradigm are often referred to as structures in process (Reed, 1992), with the structures of organizations viewed as the creations or, often, the creative fictions of the actors involved. Yet, it is argued that the fabrication and maintenance of such fictions is beyond the control of any one social interest or any single economic imperative. Reed, however, has argued that these assumptions of balanced power and harmonious relationships represent the recreation of functionalism in a new idiom (Reed, 1985, 1992).

The North western paradigm, Burrell and Morgan have labelled as radical humanist. Here there is a concern with the interpretation of actors in social settings. Social life in this paradigm is viewed as being characterized by conflict and dissent. The focus, therefore, is on conflict and on the attempts of managers and the state more generally to manufacture, if not peace, then some form of accommodation. Writing in this tradition is generally regarded as having a reflective mission which attempts both to contextualize organizations as arenas of domination and conflict within their wider social context, as well as contextualizing the role of the authors and theorists who commentate on them (Reed, 1993). In this sense it would probably be more accurate to say that the radical humanist paradigm encourages the dynamic analysis of organization and would show an interest in the processes of change rather than seeking to contribute towards a managerially dominated agenda for the management of change.

The different emphases of each paradigm can be represented by combining the grid of Burrell and Morgan with the commentary of Gioia and Pitre (1990) (see Figure 2).

Goal: To describe and critique and to understand Concern: Social construction of reality, overcoming distortion Radical humanist	Goal: Identify sources of domination, politicization and guidance for action Concern: Domination and alienation Radical structuralist
Goal: Describe, explain and diagnose Concern: Social construction of reality, interpretation Interpretive	Goal: Analyse organizations to find regularities, to facilitate control and functional development Concern: Relationship, casuality, functionality Functionalist

Figure 2.
Different emphasis of each paradigm

A new paradigm?

In this section it will be argued that, viewed in the light of the work of Burrell and Morgan, the claims made as to the existence or need for new paradigms of

change management do not stand up at all well. Accordingly, this section will seek to demonstrate that it is not at all clear that the particular views of management and organizations promoted by Burnes, Mink, Schein and so on, are significantly different from other approaches which have been in use for some time. In short, this section will argue that the so-called new paradigm of management is, in fact, little more than a new rhetorical construction of functionalism.

Wright (1994) argues that functionalism represents a distinctive analytical approach and, we might add, represents a particular political orientation and personal mission for the theorists supportive of it. She tells us that functionalism is a consensus oriented approach which operates with a top-down, closed system view of organization which culminates in an anti-conflict mentality for theorists and practitioners. Thinking back to our earlier discussions we can see the value in this judgement. Kanter (1989), for example, in attempting to service the needs of her senior management clientele, is concerned with organizational needs, organizational adaptation and the attainment of profit. Clearly this is a top-down view which takes the organization and, at times, the national economy as the appropriate unit of analysis.

The work of Peters and Waterman shares similar concerns and orientations with that of Kanter. Thus Peters and Waterman are also keen to revitalize the US economy by acting on the skills and talents of managers and the values and beliefs of workers. Yet as Wright (1994) notes, the top-down, consensus orientation of functionalism is ill-equipped to deal with such issues. On culture she notes:

> the problem [which cultural commentators in the field of management fail to explain] is how certain "essential meanings" [which managers hope to instil through their efforts at cultural management] become authoritative in specific historical circumstances (p. 22).

She notes, too, serious inconsistencies in Schein's approach to culture. Thus she tells us that at various points Schein offers different definitions of culture and, in fact, oscillates between a view which stresses interpretivism and multiple interpretation and an outlook which pushes measurement and unitary definition. In resolving these tensions, Wright argues that Schein is irresistibly drawn to measurement since his personal mission is to allow managers to gauge and change their cultures through the process of leadership. Thus Schein, like his fellow contributors, is committed to a top-down view of organizations, which is driven by the assumption of consensus, and so while operating ostensibly within the bounds of interpretivism, his own personal orientations and mission tend to drag his thinking back to a rather basic functionalist agenda.

Aldrich (1993), discussing the work of Schein and Ouchi, notes, for example, that:

> The methodological sophistication… is quite thin, as researchers rely on superficial interviews with small samples of leaders, and define culture as those elements everyone agrees on(p. 24).

Pettigrew (1985, 1990) would go much further than Aldrich. He tells us that much of the study of change, in spite of routine genuflections towards theorizing, is remarkable for its atheorism, its aprocessual approach and its lack of any wider contextualism, and is, in short, a closed systems approach. This is very much a product of an often implicit functionalism. Indeed Turner (1993), discussing symbolism, notes:

> For their own reasons [economic and political revitalisation etc.], the "corporate culture" writers promote the use of symbols to achieve functional change, while taking as given the symbolic construction of an organization (p. 52).

Turner, therefore, is arguing that a theoretical standpoint which assumes consensus and takes a top-down view misses much of the dynamics of organization. Likewise, Pettigrew (1990) notes that top-down, consensus-oriented views of change tend to assume that change programmes are sequenced to produce rationally declared and defensible ends. His research, however, points out that managers may attempt to engineer crises to promote the need for change. Grenier (1988) notes, too, how managers will attempt to use what we might term academic knowledge products to engineer or stage-manage organizational dynamics and in this way Grenier would tend to argue that theorists committed to serving management needs will find that they must adopt a top-down view, and in so doing cannot commit to analysing the diversity of meaning and interpretation which surround any particular change process. In line with this, Turner (1993, p. 52) notes:

> Paradoxically, there is a limit to which such [functionalist] analyses can deal with their own ostensible goals of promoting change, for the partial picture which they have of why and how organizations function can only be completed by looking outside the framework of functionality.

Summarizing this section, we can see that the corporations envisaged by Burnes, Kanter, Mink and Schein are treated as concrete realities, adaptive, rational and goal-seeking as in the functionalist tradition. In terms of Burrell and Morgan's use of the term, these works cannot represent a new, nor an emergent, paradigm. Rather, they are every bit as conservative in approach as systems thinking and the contingency approaches which closely mirror them. From an analysis of their aims, orientations and preferences for action we can see that, in spite of pretensions to interpretivism, they fit all too neatly within the functionalist paradigm. However, before we move on we should look at a more dilute version of the term paradigm. This will allow us to consider whether these works fit the looser view of a paradigm; to see whether they represent, say, a new frame of reference, or a new way of thinking about management, for example, since this may be the sense in which Burnes and Mink make the claim for new and emergent paradigms.

It is true that the commentators and gurus noted above make much of a new managerial role, not based on authority but on mutual trust, not based on hierarchy but on contribution and not based on functional departments but on fluid team structures. It is also quite true that they demonstrate the creativity and imagination required to conceive, plan and manage organizational change. This does at least represent a break from mechanistic thinking on management, and it is acknowledged that at face value this might sound "new". But just how new this thinking is must be debatable since on closer reflection we can see that it is still driven by a top-down, consensus-fixated, closed systems view. It is not clear that anything really new or substantially different does underlie or underpin this thinking. For example, the nature of organizations, the nature of management, and the relationship of the workforce to management, are all little changed from mainstream functionalist discussion. Indeed it seems that managers charged with the role of fostering and managing change must adopt the role of social engineer, albeit a creative social engineer. Thus while all the key commentators would argue that managers must manipulate the values and attitudes of workers, we can see that, far from representing a new paradigm of management, the preferred role seems to be that of "social engineer" which can be found in the works of Mayo (which are now more than 60 years old) and many other management commentators (Hollway, 1991; Mayo, 1933; Wright, 1994).

The claims made as to the emergence of new paradigms, therefore, seem misguided. The patterns of thought on which they are based are neither new, nor out with the mainstream. Indeed it seems that as far as the study of change is concerned, these paradigms, touted as new and especially suited to the analysis of and management of change, represent perhaps the most anti-dynamic option available. In the following section, therefore, the need, and the prospects for a different approach to thinking about and analysing, not change management, but the dynamic study of organization, will be discussed.

New analyses not new paradigms
The failure of Mink, Kanter and others to develop new forms of analysis for change does not mean that endeavours which would seek to re-jig a dynamic study of organization are without value. However, locating their theoretical work as both a cognitive and social process helps us explain why the managerialism which tends to underscore much of the treatment of change management mitigates against the self-reflection which would be required for a shift towards more reflective analysis. With this in mind it is argued that, instead of attempting to invent new paradigms there is a need to make use of paradigms for research, and so for policy, not normally utilized in the analysis of organizations under change.

Interpretive type methodologies clearly suggest themselves as a means for gaining understanding of the issues which surround change in organizations and which influence the attitudes and behaviours of both groups and individuals. Perhaps uniquely, these methods are geared up to getting beneath

the skin of organizations to detail the complexity and conflicts which every practising manager knows will surround their change endeavours. However, if it is accepted that the interpretive paradigm noted in the grids above is simply the recreation of functionalism in a new idiom (Reed, 1985, 1992), and so, not well geared to uncovering the difficulties and processes of change, this seems to leave only the radical humanist paradigm for fruitful research into the complexity and dynamics of organization and change. However, in promoting this particular orientation and the methodologies which it implies, there is a danger that a range of business school academics, in attempting to make use of the research technology associated with this paradigmatic view, may fail to commit to the larger aims and orientations necessary to cultivate something close to the understanding which those "native" to that particular culture have.

Paradigms have particular types of research technology associated with them. Interpretive-type paradigms, therefore, tend to utilize research techniques which shy away from measurement and, instead, attempt to develop a rich and informed perspective through immersion in the particular field or culture they are analysing. However, paradigms are more than a simple collection of research techniques. One of the key insights of Burrell and Morgan's paradigmatic analysis comes from its explicit focus on the ideas and values which underpin the use of these research techniques.

In making a case for the use of the insights of the radical humanist paradigm in the analysis of planning and managing change, it is important to understand the personal commitment for change which this would require. In short, it is feared that any apparent commitment to more radical humanist approaches to organization and change management might soon become debased, representing nothing more than a pragmatic departure from functionalism which, far from displacing the normal goals of functionalist research, would simply seek to attain these in an opportunistic way.

The problem, then, is that many business school academics involved in the analysis of planning and managing change have geared themselves to addressing the "practical" management goals and problems of a select and élite constituency, and in committing themselves to satisfying the (organizational) goals of this élite, have lost the personal and political commitment to indulge in reflective methodologies such as those associated with radical humanism. Thus they lack the will to feel and understand the complex and indeterminate problems of managing change as experienced by subordinate groupings since their role and mission revolves around ensuring the compliance of these groupings to the changes planned for them. In this way, with theorizing viewed as a cognitive and social process, the path to theoretical change will be more problematic than Mink acknowledges. In the concluding section a suggestion is offered which aims to move on from this rather pessimistic prognosis for theoretical advance.

Concluding remarks

This paper has attempted to appraise the claims made as to the need for and existence of new paradigms geared towards the study of change. The paper has argued that the so-called new paradigms amount to little more than the re-creation of the functionalist goals. From here the paper turned its attention towards a consideration of the prospects for radical theoretical change. Unlike those promoting the need for new paradigms, the paper has presented a much more pessimistic prognosis for such a change in theoretical orientation, and argues that with theorizing viewed as a cognitive and social process, theoretical change of this magnitude would call for a radical and personal reassessment of the aims and objectives of organizational theorizing which has been likened to a religious conversion. Sadly, few of the academics and consultants active in the field of change management seem likely to embark on such a change.

However, the prognosis for change and development need not be entirely gloomy. Perhaps we can still move forward. Instead of asking those who are committed to a "practical" and managerialist agenda to change, those like me who feel it is time to focus on the dynamic study of organization should simply seek a more active voice which challenges the top-down, managerialist focus which seems so prevalent at the moment. In this way we could seek to offer dynamic analyses of change as a challenge to the problem of change management. In the near future, especially as managers become targets for as well as champions of change, management and students of management may develop a greater dissatisfaction with these often simplistic and gung-ho approaches and may come to value more highly the sensitivity and caution which a focus on the dynamic study of organization can offer.

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