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Authors: Roger L. M. Dunbar, John M. Dutton, William R. Torbert

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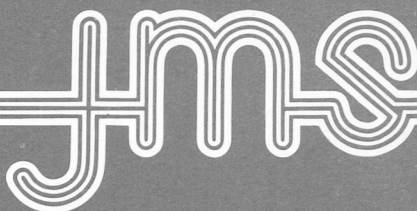
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## CROSSING MOTHER: IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

ROGER L. M. DUNBAR

*Graduate School of Business Administration, New York University*

JOHN M. DUTTON

*Graduate School of Business Administration, New York University*

WILLIAM R. TORBERT

*Graduate School of Management, Boston College*

### ABSTRACT

This paper uses a case study to explore a basic dilemma: can the people who control organizations develop ideologies which simultaneously facilitate stability and change? This dilemma is likely to become most apparent when people set out to improve an organization within its current ideological context but the consequences implicit in the improvements are poorly understood. The meaning and value of the improvements are then likely to be assessed differently by superiors and subordinates, and by loyal members and heretics. The case study illustrates how resources are mobilized to constrain improvement attempts in such a way that the consequences reconfirm the preexisting organizational ideologies and halt the improvement attempts [1].

### AN ORGANIZATIONAL DILEMMA

IDEOLOGIES are shared beliefs which reflect the social experiences in a particular context at a particular time. Ideologies are used to interpret, evaluate and understand all ongoing social activities, so their importance is pervasive. Indeed, ideologies are to social organizing as paradigms are to scientific practice.

As each organization has its own peculiar experience, so each has its own unique ideologies. Because these ideologies provide the bases for understanding, organizational members cannot easily doubt them or see them as

*Addresses for reprints:* Professors Roger L. M. Dunbar and John M. Dutton, Graduate School of Business Administration, New York University, 100 Trinity Place, New York, New York 10006, U.S.A.

Professor William R. Torbert, Graduate School of Management, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167, U.S.A.

the bases for their misunderstandings (Torbert, 1972). Rather, ideologies are assumed to define all possible behaviours by an organization within its environments. New stimuli and data are consistently interpreted as if they were similar and related to previously encountered events and, hence, are understood. Unexpected behaviours must somehow be interpreted as fitting into previously recognized categories, or else they cannot be accepted. If unexpected behaviours were not discounted, they would undermine members' beliefs in their ideologies' capacities to provide adequate understanding, and would raise questions about the organization's capacity to know its mission and to implement it successfully. People avoid such equivocality (Weick, 1979).

Organizations' resource allocations reflect their ideologies and, eventually, these decisions enact organizational environments which are congruent with the existing ideologies. An organization invests not only in its ideologies but also in the environments which it enacts. Members of a dominant coalition often have particularly large investments in the ideologies that undergird their high statuses. Resources available to an organization are likely to be used to preserve or defend the *status quo*. In addition, resources may be invested in enabling capable people to use their scientific, intellectual, technological, and other talents to serve, confirm, and augment the existing ideologies. By co-opting talent, efforts can be united to support and glorify rather than to challenge prevailing ideologies.

This marriage between those with ideological purity and political power and those with valuable talents creates a dilemma. In the short term, commitments to existing ideologies may allow clear goal setting and efficient resource utilization, and those in powerful positions may encourage improvements along these lines. In the long term, goals grow diffuse, technologies change, and new interpretive schemes become necessary. Often, changes can only occur if the established ideologies are given up. High investments in the current ideologies make experimentation and discovery almost impossible. As a result, situations may be obscured rather than understood, ongoing events and problems may be partially misinterpreted, and new methods and solutions may not be considered. Organizational stagnation may result (Starbuck et al., 1978).

This dilemma becomes highly visible when resources are invested to improve an organization in accordance with its prevailing ideological frameworks and then unanticipated changes occur which challenge the existing ideologies. Organizational members must then decide whether to adhere to and defend their existing ideologies, or whether to explore the confusing world they have glimpsed. As organizational members are likely to be divided about this issue, the next section of this paper identifies the protagonists who are likely to play leading roles in this drama. Later sections illustrate how the protagonists may interact, by describing an attempt to improve a school of business.



POTENTIAL PROTAGONISTS

*Superiors and Subordinates*

Ideologies frequently portray hierarchical relationships as being necessary for effective accomplishment, and so organizations distinguish between superior and subordinate positions (Weber, 1947). Superiors supposedly define consistent ideologies, defend existing ideologies, and symbolize what the ideologies have accomplished. Subordinates are told to look to superiors for guidance in ideological matters, and then to carry out the functions assigned to them. However, people actually adopt ideologies which match and justify their statuses and experiences, so each member develops a unique view.

Should subordinates question ideologies' relevance or their superiors' competence, or should they doubt that their superiors respect their subordinates' contributions (Hagen, 1962), subordination becomes irrational and the existing ideologies lose credibility. Limitations that have always been there are seen increasingly as ridiculously narrow, serving only the superiors' interests, and obscuring understanding rather than facilitating it. Subordinates formulate new utopian ideologies. In many matters, these alternative ideologies may directly contradict the original ideologies; adherents often agree that the new utopia can only be achieved if the existing ideologies are destroyed or transformed. The stage has been set for severe political conflict (Mannheim, 1936).

For example, Cohen (1975) described the struggle for legitimate ideological leadership in Newfoundland during the 1960s. Newfoundland has long been a depressed area, and the traditional ideologies reflect the region's marginality and justify people's feelings of helplessness and domination. The interrelated ideologies include an extreme deference to authority, a disinclination to organize collectively, and a reluctance to accept formal positions in organizational hierarchies. Political leaders usually act reticently, avoid offending, and work to establish patronage systems through which community members can find short-term solutions to personal problems. Community members perceive their political leaders to be competent, reliable, altruistic, trustworthy, and awesome, and they defend them against all criticisms, even though commentators have observed extensive political corruption and many changes introduced by the provincial government have been needlessly disruptive and costly. In Newfoundland, such issues are largely irrelevant. As long as the political leaders continue to lead as expected, community members generally concentrate on providing for their families, an activity from which they gain pride and autonomy. This family focus diffuses collective identity and makes organized action difficult. Individual solutions continue, and dependence on a few powerful people increases, along with collective impotence.

Not everyone in Newfoundland adheres to these traditional ideologies.

There are business élite who have built up successful businesses and whose own success belies the traditional ideologies. Cohen reported that many of these business élite envisage new utopias which cherish individual aggressiveness rather than deference to authority, and which value analytical thought and impersonal, rationally controlled organizations. Because they have amassed independent wealth, these business élite and their utopian visions challenge the traditional ideologies and traditional leaders. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the business élite strove to gain political power through elected offices and to promulgate more active, organizationally oriented ideologies in the community, but their candidates were usually defeated.

Cohen said that most community members are highly suspicious of the new business élite and their utopian visions. Would-be leaders who first create their own organizations and then put themselves into the organizations' positions of authority are regarded as illegitimate tricksters and gamblers. In addition, instead of being appropriately reticent and available to all, the business élite flaunt their wealth and power by living apart from ordinary people and being accessible only through their organizations; they despise personal differences among people and, instead, emphasize objective performance criteria. Thus, their neighbours perceive the business élite to be self-interested, cold, and heartless rather than community-interested and trustworthy. This perception prevails even though the business élite have often done more for their communities than traditional leaders. Most Newfoundlanders still adhere to ideologies which justify submission, accept regional exploitation and isolation, and support individual autonomy, for these fit the shared social experience.

Newfoundland illustrates how ideologies constrain actions as well as delineate action possibilities. It shows how hierarchical positions—such as unusual wealth or economic marginality—can afford bases for ideologies. It also demonstrates that ideologies may make arbitrary assumptions about what is appropriate behaviour, sometimes leading to paradoxical conclusions such as dependence through independence. It shows how competition and conflict can arise when people in ideologically subordinate positions—the business élite—doubt the traditional leaders and formulate utopian visions; both sides may then strive to persuade others as to the merits of their perspectives (Pettigrew, 1979).

### *Loyal Members and Heretics*

Ideologies define guidelines for task accomplishment. Within these constraints, organizational members have freedom to experiment and bring about technical changes to accommodate new facts and conditions. The ideal is for an organization to maintain a dynamic equilibrium between adhering to established routines that produce consistent accomplishments and being open to new insights arising from experience.

However, without having suffered some clearly recognized losses, organizations are usually unwilling to change their ideologies. Instead, they defend current accomplishments and seek to perpetuate the ideologies on which these are based. Thus, as long as members behave consistently with organizational ideologies, organizations generally do not change. Changes may occur when behaviours contradict beliefs.

One defence of organizational ideologies is to select as new members only those who show they are eager to adopt the current organizational ideologies. The members so chosen may submerge their own personal awareness to the point that they want to do what they should do (Kanter, 1977). Loyalty and consistency become virtues in their own right. Such members may believe, increasingly, that the ideologies they use to interpret the world are not only correct in some absolute sense, but that the world seen through these ideological lenses is basically so stable that no experimentation or change is necessary. New experiences that demonstrate ideological limitations may be denied, and attempts to bring about ideological changes evoke vigorous resistance.

Organizations cannot choose their members solely for ideological conformity: they also recruit members with needed specialties. During their technical trainings, such specialists also acquire professional ideologies (Schriesheim et al., 1977). Organizational socialization processes are supposed to teach the specialists about organizational ideologies and to engender commitments to these ideologies (Louis, 1980; Van Maanen, 1976). Daily behaviours, as well as any proposals for improvement, are expected to be constrained and directed by the organizational ideologies, rather than by professional ideologies (Vandivier, 1972). But organizational socialization processes often fail.

Harshbarger (1973) suggested that organizations distinguish between deviance, which occurs when members do not conform to expected behaviours, and heresy, which occurs when members question social realities defined by organizational ideologies. If the selection and socialization processes were functioning perfectly, deviance would never occur, but perfection is impossible. Behaviourally deviant, ideologically critical people can come to symbolize organizational inadequacies for dissatisfied members. As a result, deviant members become notorious and controversial, loved by some and hated by others. They may be subjected to difficult trials and emotional ordeals as well as adulation.

Ancient myths portrayed some such people as heroes who ultimately confronted the very depths of their beings and achieved unusual self-knowledge (Campbell, 1949). But organizations rarely value such people. While deviant people remain members of organizations, they frighten leaders, arouse uncertainty, evoke righteous anger, and encourage disaffection. Thus, organizations tolerate them for only short times and then expell them. Most often, they depart too soon to bring about significant changes.

More difficult for organizations to handle and, hence, more likely to stimulate changes are those people who behave as expected but who also hold heretical beliefs. Harshbarger noted that sociocultural norms endorse organizations' efforts to control behaviours, but organizations' attempts to control personal ideologies are considered illegitimate. Thus, heretical members who behave in conforming ways stand outside of legitimate organizational control. Harshbarger pointed out that where heresies are suspected, organizations apply subtle pressures such as delays, inaction, and no responses to requests; the heretics' private lives and those of their families may be investigated to see if behavioural deviance can be found there. Such steps are designed to be so frustrating and unfair that the heretics will react by behaving deviantly. The organizations can then censure these deviant behaviours without appearing to infringe on ideological freedom. On the other hand, if the heretics do not succumb, but continue their behavioural conformity, their ideologies retain potency. However, the odds against a heretic gaining ideological control in an organization are high.

#### THE ORGANIZATIONAL DILEMMA REVISITED

If all heretics could be identified and eliminated, and if all members were equal on all dimensions of status, there might be consensus about organizational ideologies. These conditions may be approximated in some organizations that apply stringent selection and socialization policies and that isolate themselves from environmental influences, but Niv's (1978) studies of communes suggest that such organizations wither for lack of sustenance. Normal organizations have frequent contacts with their environments and they use diverse selection criteria, and these exchanges with environments and inconsistent selection criteria spawn ideological variety.

This again raises the overall organizational dilemma: is it possible to develop ideologies which simultaneously facilitate stability and change? Ideologies which are believed by all members integrate organizations and enable resources to be mobilized towards focused objectives. Performances improve over time, but this very success along narrowly defined dimensions also erects new constraints. Over time, organizational members with different statuses come to believe that different performance dimensions should be emphasized, and heretics question the value of successes on traditional dimensions. Uncertainty develops and political coalitions realign themselves to propose new organizational ideologies.

Ideally, organizational ideologies would emerge rather than be established (Boguslaw, 1965). Emerging ideologies would enable organizations not only to improve their performances in the short term, but would also ensure that organizations discover new realities. This discovery requires varied perceptions of organizational ideologies, along with heretics who continually challenge traditional ideologies. Such organizations may

exhibit minimal consensus and minimal contentment and wide-spread skepticism and uncertainty about future plans (Hedberg et al., 1976).

On the other hand, if an organization selects and socializes new members for ideological conformity, and if it achieves some success according to its criteria, its ideologies may become valued as correct, familiar, and beneficial, and the limitations of these ideologies may be unnoticed or denied. The organization may then become unified, satisfied, and intransigently consistent as well as insensitive to the subtleties in changing external conditions. Such conditions suppress the ongoing political processes that would generate emerging ideologies, and so the organization gradually exhausts its ideological resources. The organization may eventually dissolve, or its environment may take steps to revitalize it.

Revitalization efforts usually consist of no more than providing new financial resources, which is an extremely ineffective method for bringing about changes. Significant changes depend on amplifying the ideological differences between superiors and subordinates and on recruiting heretics. Such change attempts probably will not follow expected trajectories (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973).

Ideological changes grow more likely when an organization has suffered some clearly recognized losses and faces continuing external pressures. Such circumstances create strategic indecision, as members attempt to redefine both the organization's missions and its supporting ideologies. Usually, members voice different opinions as to what should be done, and this provides opportunities for covert heretics. The antithetical positions in such debates are likely to be held by those members who are completely committed to the traditional organizational ideologies on the one hand, and those members who hold beliefs that would historically have been considered heretical. Jönsson and Lundin (1977) observed that during this adjustment phase, political coalitions develop around vague, highly general proposals—solutions in principle—and that members' enthusiasm surges from one proposal to another. Proposal acceptance depends on enough members somehow perceiving meaningful roles for themselves and others in the reconstituted organization. New ideologies develop from the shared experiences encountered while pursuing the new missions.

It would be helpful to understand more about the processes active in changing organizational ideologies. Because organizations may legitimately control deviant behaviours, blatant deviance probably does not signal impending ideological changes but rather a test of defence capabilities. Ideological changes may well succeed while behaviours are being so strictly constrained by rules that observers cannot easily detect that anything unusual is going on. For this reason, ideological changes may have to be studied by involved insiders, who would face objectivity problems. Yet this is still another reason why these changes should be better understood, for understanding may enable people to respect rather than to fear the uncer-

tainties engendered by emerging ideologies, and enable them to appreciate evolving and ongoing political processes. The following case study, describing an attempt to change a university's school of business, seeks to contribute to such an understanding.

#### THE UNIVERSITY

The University was founded by a Protestant church in the early 1900s. A self-study conducted during the 1960s concluded that the University's history had been characterized by high academic aspirations, continuous growth in both student numbers and physical facilities, and a continuing struggle to find financial support. The University has catered primarily to families who could afford the relatively high fees.

According to one early president, a former minister, the University's primary aim was to inculcate students with Christian principles and moral ideals. This goal statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees during the 1930s, but it became increasingly controversial over the years. In the 1960s, the University revised its statement of purpose to encompass seven goals emphasizing broad, liberal education as well as service to the community. This revised statement reaffirmed the relationship with the founding church, asserted that basic arts and sciences constituted the University's core, and advocated balanced development in the humanities, social sciences and physical sciences, and balance between undergraduate, graduate and professional education.

The self-study noted discrepancies between aspirations and reality. Specifically, the University has had persistent difficulty maintaining academic standards. Prior to the 1960s, racial and class criteria were used more consistently than academic criteria to select students, so the students were homogeneously white and upper-middle-class. Nonacademic criteria also determined more than one-third of undergraduate scholarships. The University facilitated high commitments to sororities and fraternities, and over half of the undergraduates belonged to these. The University also sponsored strong and diverse intercollegiate athletic programmes. The students of the 1960s judged themselves to be apathetic, and many felt that their fellow students hindered rather than helped their academic achievement. Not surprisingly, the University was famous for its country-club atmosphere.

Numerous faculty have tried to improve the intellectual climate. During the 1960s, many of these faculty taught in the New College that was created to reemphasize goals advocated in the revised statement of purpose. Most New College faculty were young, newly hired and untenured, and they had been hired during the rapid enrollment expansion of the 1960s. Few senior, tenured faculty participated in the experimental efforts at the New College.

*In the Arms of a Generous Mother*

Many senior faculty and administrators had grown up in the region, had spent most of their professional lives at the University, and were sensitive to local values and traditions. Because the sponsoring church provided weak financial support, the University conducted an annual campaign in the community to raise the funds needed to balance its operating budget. Thus, maintaining harmonious university-community relations was a primary concern of the senior faculty and University administrators. Fear lay close beneath the cordial mask of this dependent relationship.

Nevertheless, by 1970, the University president believed that mutual respect had been established between the University and the community: enrolments had reached 9,000; endowment totalled \$30 million; and the funds campaign was an annual success. This respect had been demonstrated during the turbulent 1960s, when community leaders and the University had created charitable foundations to foster developments in the schools of fine arts, engineering, and business.

The community has been generous to the University. Indeed, the president asserted that no community in the entire world has been more encouraging to the development of a first-class university. On the other hand, he also intimated that maintaining cordial relations had been difficult at times; he said his hardest job had been interpreting the role of a private university to community leaders, who found it difficult to believe that controversy should be a part of campus life. Issues around academic freedom had caused misunderstandings and had raised fears that subsequent violence, defiance and disruption would cause permanent damage.

The senior faculty and administrators believed that the University's survival depended on not offending these sensitivities. Potentially controversial innovations were first discussed with community representatives, and anything that disturbed them was judged undesirable for the University. Instead, the idea of a happy acquiescent institutional family within a generous, mothering community was repeatedly emphasized on campus.

The University and the community connected diffusely at many levels: through physical location, through the family backgrounds of many senior faculty, through the large number of students who live in the region, through the large number of graduates who reside in the region, through well-known athletic programmes, and through the community's financial generosity. Yet at times of controversy, most of these connections were forgotten and lines of communication became narrow, focused and extremely well-defined.

The community's generosity also created problems. Although the professional schools had improved, little financial support went to the core—the New College and the school of sciences and humanities—which provided the liberal educations to which the University professed commitment. As the



professional schools grew financially stronger, they gained political strength and managed to drain tuition funds generated by the core. In fact, the uneven support by the community encouraged the deans of the professional schools to compete with each other as well as with the core (Galbraith, 1967, pp. 372-4). New College was particularly affected, and the ideal of broad, liberal education usually lost out to professional ideals.

#### THE BUSINESS SCHOOL

The self-study gave low ratings to the teaching and research contributions by Business School faculty, and consideration was given to closing the School. Instead, the problem was explained to community leaders, and a group of wealthy businessmen established a foundation to support and improve the Business School. In consultation with University administrators, foundation members selected a new dean to lead the improvement efforts.

Business School faculty were well-integrated ideologically with the University's culture and strongly supported its programmes and ideals. Most had family ties to the region, valued cordial community-university relations, and appreciated the University's dependence on the community for financial support. Indeed, as their salaries were low in comparison to other faculty at the University, and still lower in comparison with national business-school salaries, many faculty supplemented their incomes by spending much time managing small businesses and providing consulting services.

In the five years prior to the new dean's arrival, University administrators had reallocated over half of the tuition funds generated by the Business School to politically more powerful schools. Hence, the establishment of the Business School foundation gave the Business School faculty hope that the community's generosity would alleviate the disproportionate financial burdens which they had been forced to bear. However, the foundation and the new dean agreed that the new money was to be used to encourage improvements, not to redress inequities arising from past administrative policies.

The new dean had a national reputation and a charismatic personality, and he intended to create a nationally recognized business school within five to ten years. He emphasized the importance of the region, its growth and diversity, and how a first-class business school would make valuable contributions to the area. He proceeded to explain what should be done. To develop a national reputation, the School would have to acquire unique characteristics that distinguished it in recognizable ways from established programmes. He said that the school he had in mind would innovate and change many traditional educational methods, and this would require initiatives and change by the faculty. He wished the faculty to educate whole persons and to be sensitive to students' individual needs. He proposed that the Business

School should take advantage of its interface position between business practice on the one hand and university research on the other.

Although the dean was eloquent and he spelled out his proposals in detail, what meaning the faculty attributed to them is unclear. They probably assumed that any proposed changes would be checked out in advance with community leaders, who were known to be conservative. Further, the new dean was diplomatic and reassuring even as he was threatening. He criticized business education in general, not the University's Business School, and he further emphasized that change and adapting to change were general problems, not specifically local problems (Gordon and Howell, 1959; Pierson, 1959). Above all, he appeared a sensitive leader who, with the financial support of community leaders, could bring the Business School into a strong political position within the University and a respected status in the community.

### *The Managerial Grid*

The dean and his new administrative group decided to instill new perceptions and norms—new ideologies—among the faculty. Toward this end, they invited an outside consultant, Scientific Methods, Inc., to conduct a programme of organizational development using the Managerial Grid (Blake and Mouton, 1968). This programme was supposed to emphasize high task achievements and high emotional commitments to interpersonal relationships within the Business School. It was hoped that the programme would continue for two years and bring about rapid, orderly and constructive changes.

As the first phase of this programme, a week-long workshop was held for 75 participants, including all current Business School faculty and staff plus selected students, invited faculty from other departments, top University administrators, and businessmen. Confusion, hostility, suspicion, and defensiveness ran extremely high among the faculty—higher than had ever been experienced by a Scientific Methods staff member who had attended more than a hundred such workshops. Instead of seeing new ideologies being adopted, the dean and his aids discovered that the faculty found their ideas incomprehensible, and they were immersed in severe and unexpected conflicts. At one session, the dean was attacked repeatedly because he had not used the new funds to increase salaries, nor had he explained, in language they could understand, how the faculty could contribute in the reorganized School.

### *Hiring Supporters*

These problems were never resolved. The Managerial Grid programme was terminated. Instead, the new dean decided to hire new faculty who supported his goal of educational innovation. The new faculty were generally young,

from outside the region, and with doctorates from the best American universities. They came to the Business School because of the innovation and experimentation the new dean was encouraging. One candidate who later joined the faculty described his first visit to the Business School as follows:

Unlike many universities, where I interviewed for jobs by going through a succession of one-on-one interviews and then giving a presentation, at the Business School I was invited to help design a course and some research to test its effectiveness. Then the next morning, I sat in on a tense faculty meeting of the subject area I was to join and was thanked for bringing a conflict I observed into the open. These experiences gave me confidence that persons were really struggling to work together differently at the Business School, not merely packaging the same old individualistic, competitive, academic activities in a new language.

Many new faculty had high commitments to learning as a highly involving, personal process. Many also spurned the methods used by university administrators and governmental officials to avoid rather than to resolve conflicts that appeared on campuses during the 1960s, and they did not respect the superior statuses of such people.

The new faculty saw it as the dean's responsibility to manage all external relations, including those with the University administration and the community. They saw themselves as responsible for establishing, within the School, ideologies that valued learning and would improve teaching and research. The new faculty introduced sweeping changes reflecting their own ideals about personal involvement in education. A new M.B.A. programme was approved, and the undergraduate curriculum was revised. With one exception, all course requirements were abolished, because students should design their own learning programmes rather than follow course sequences dictated by the faculty. However, having observed the intellectual atmosphere on campus, the new faculty doubted that most students would do such designing responsibly. Therefore, one new undergraduate course was required, a course that would show students how they could take responsibility for their own learning and actively design their own educational programmes (Dunbar and Dutton, 1972; Torbert, 1978).

The new faculty then focused their teaching efforts on the new M.B.A. programme and on the new required undergraduate course. To prepare, the new faculty met in groups discussing plans for the various courses. Many different opinions were voiced. For example, in the group planning the required undergraduate course, one person believed that careful structuring was necessary, otherwise students would feel utterly bewildered and would withdraw and become resentful rather than actively enquiring; another person believed that all structures should be removed, but that students should have access to consultants when problems developed. In the words of one participant:

The argument flared into loud voices. We attacked each other as well as one another's ideas, trying to show how each proposal reflected the person's total ideological style and presumed blindness. After a few ineffective efforts to stop us, the rest of the staff sat back, somewhat aghast at the level of conflict occurring in this normally saccharine culture. After forty-five minutes of back and forth, Guy yielded. He decided that he had not been thinking very clearly about the characteristics of the students we were to deal with or about the size of the course.

I could not have been more surprised at this outcome. Moreover, he thanked me warmly and our friendship was obviously deepened rather than destroyed. Nor were these the only positive outcomes of the fight. I found that I somehow communicated my ideas and convictions much more clearly and convincingly to others in the course of the argument than I had been able to the previous day when I introduced myself. What had threatened already to become a familiar split between pro-structurers and the non-structurers transformed itself into a common commitment to liberating structure.

#### THE CRISIS

##### *A Disorientation*

As course planning progressed, the new faculty considered how they could prepare students to participate actively in their educations. Most students came to campus a week prior to classes, when the University sponsored an orientation—conventional social activities generally organized by the fraternities and sororities. The new faculty decided to organize a 'dis-orientation' which would symbolize that learning in the Business School was going to be different and also more enjoyable than what most students had previously experienced. Young architects were invited to erect a large, cheap plastic structure, held up with air pumps and guy ropes, in front of the Business School building. This structure consisted of a 200-foot-long tunnel linking two 50-foot-diameter, mushroom-shaped endpieces. It was hoped this visible and unusual structure would attract students to explore what learning in the School would be about. Activities were planned to punctuate three days and nights. Students were invited to bring their families and friends each evening to picnic around the structure. Pots of paint were available for writing responses and comments on the structure, a powerful music and sound system was installed, and strobe lights were to create unusual effects at night.

The plastic structure had been up for perhaps three hours when sirens were heard coming closer. Suddenly, the School and the structure were surrounded by the local fire brigade, and the fire marshall demanded to see the 'tent permit' for the plastic structure. The new faculty said they had never heard of such a thing, but if it was necessary, they would immediately make application and pay whatever fees were required. This was an unacceptable

response, for the structure was a fire hazard. After long negotiations, with the fire brigade's blockade of flashing red lights continuing all the while, the fire marshall agreed that the 'tent' could stay for one night only.

The evening was a marvellously relaxed success, and many students left the official orientation dance in order to join the disorientation.

### *A Controversial Figure*

The disorientation had been primarily promoted by a newly hired, young faculty member with an inimitable, highly energetic living style. He had transformed his diminutive, grey, windowless office by draping the interior with a parachute, substituting a string of neckties for the door, and installing a stereo tape deck. Being accustomed to a nomadic, collaborative, uncertain way of life, and having learned how to live in his Volkswagen, he decided not to rent an apartment. Instead, he volunteered to stay with faculty families for short periods during which he would cook, inspire impromptu parties, organize games for both children and grown-ups, and generally bring people, and particularly family members, closer together. His success in these endeavours quickly became legendary, and he never lacked a place to stay.

This living style, along with the disorientation, generated great anxiety and hostility among some senior faculty. They induced the F.B.I. to investigate his background for possible connections with subversive organizations; nothing was found because he had no such connections. Among students, his reputation spread rapidly. The campus newspaper interviewed him and published an article before classes actually began, in which he explained his educational philosophy and why he was excited about having joined the Business School's faculty. A picture showed him in his office, long hair flowing, parachute in the background. At one point, he was quoted directly as having said 'Traditional education is shitty'.

These deviant behaviours upset many people. The newspaper article was xeroxed and handed around executives' meetings in the community. Critical faculty arranged breakfast meetings with businessmen to solicit negative letters to the dean.

### *A Confrontation*

Then, during the first week of classes, two businessmen—the head of the Business School foundation and the head of the University's Board of Trustees—visited the dean. They explained that there would be no more financial support if the controversial new faculty member stayed . . . none even if he changed his behaviour and conformed. If he left, it might be possible to get continued support. Both businessmen declared that further discussion was unnecessary, and they refused to meet the controversial faculty member himself.

This unilateral demand shocked the new faculty. Based on their ethical standards and notions about academic freedom, such external interference should not have occurred. The University's provost and president indicated by inaction that they would provide no help. The president later expressed the view that the controversial faculty member was a nice, open, honest but immature kid who just did not fit in. The dean believed that if he and the Business School faculty supported their controversial colleague, the entire change effort would fail through lack of financial support. He refused to confront the foundation or its representatives; instead, he sought to keep the problem as quiet as possible in order not to alienate them further.

The crisis lasted around three weeks. Local business leaders who were contacted often expressed sympathy but saw the situation as being completely controlled by the university's financial supporters. Local newspapers and television stations ran stories very favourable to the controversial faculty member and what had been achieved, but they were quite vague about the problem since the dean refused to specify who was applying pressure and why. Students who had flocked to the controversial faculty member's classes were outraged, but they also did not know what could be done; those with fathers who were local business leaders did not seek support at home. Finally, the controversial faculty member was persuaded by his class of part-time M.B.A. students, many of whom held entry-level managerial positions in local industries, to visit a gathering of alumni and students. Immediately recognized and applauded, he fell into conversation with several fabled millionaires who came out liking him and wondering what the fuss was about.

The controversial faculty member had said he would resign if this was agreed to be the best solution. After seeing how people were reacting to the two businessmen's demand, he came to expect this outcome, and he was not surprised when eventually the dean requested that he resign. Less than a month after classes began, he left the campus.

Following this confrontation, University administrators, critical members of the foundation, and most senior faculty no longer trusted the dean. Administrators demanded lengthy explanations for the dean's requests and then delayed responding to them. The foundation did not provide the support that the dean believed was needed and expected. The dean himself worked extremely hard to satisfy the administrators' demands, but it became increasingly clear that his power base had irrevocably eroded. Within two years, he took another position. The newly hired faculty continued to experiment educationally, but only within their classes (Dunbar and Dutton, 1972). Such limited experimentation was condoned, but attempts to initiate changes on a wider scale were not condoned. The change attempt had foundered, and the faculty who had spearheaded the effort started to leave. Few remained after five years.

## WHAT MOTHER TAUGHT ME

The case illustrates how the differing perspectives of superiors and subordinates and the differing perspectives of loyalists and heretics interacted to play out an ideological crisis. Although ideologies comprised the bases for crisis, the participants gave only marginal attention to ideological differences. Instead, they focused on behaviours which deviated from traditional prescriptions. This deviance highlighted differences, but provided no way to resolve them.

In the framework of established ideologies, the Managerial Grid programme, the disorientation, and the controversial faculty member all constituted behavioural deviance. Those who believed the established ideologies saw these events as frivolous or sabotaging, and they were angered and shocked. They felt insulted, they refused to be associated with such activities, and they worked to stop the deviance. In contrast, those who behaved deviantly were surprised at the furour that they had created, and they were shocked that their understandable and desirable behaviours had not brought acclaim.

These three behaviourally deviant episodes were all highly emotional, confronting and long-remembered by the participants. But the episodes may not have stimulated any significant ideological changes, although this was their intent. Rather, the episodes were important and involving because they justified current behaviours and clarified why other behaviours were being rejected. Although these episodes reminded the participants that alternative ideologies existed, the participants responded by renewing their commitments to their prior ideologies.

The people in established, powerful positions did not question their own ideologies. Instead, they treated behavioural deviance as a danger signal that those who were supposed to be improving the organization within ideological constraints were, in fact, violating those constraints. Intuitively and correctly, they understood that allowing deviant behaviours to continue would undermine the existing ideologies.

Looking back, the University administrators and community leaders felt confirmed, for they had made it quite clear that no more behavioural deviance would be tolerated and that they had the means to eliminate such behaviour. They showed no interest in understanding the ideologies of those who had tried to innovate and who, as a result, had been disciplined.

Senior faculty in the Business School looked back on these episodes with ideological relief. They were also disappointed and angry that the dean had not fulfilled their expectations; they treated him as an outcast.

In contrast, doubts and soul-searching wracked those who had lost the ideological battle. Although the dean argued that he had no other choices, after several years he had still not resolved the experience satisfactorily. The controversial faculty member, although poised and relaxed during the



crisis, went through a long period of self-doubt and depression after his departure. Other new faculty realized they were naive in not attempting to understand the local ideologies, and they have spent years talking about what happened and why.

At the time, however, neither the dean nor the new faculty questioned their ideologies. They assumed that these ideologies were fully adequate to determine their behaviours; and since their ideologies differed from the local culture, it was almost inevitable that they would behave deviantly. Their behavioural deviance, not their ideologies, destroyed their change effort.

The dean and the new faculty might have been more effective had they analyzed the local ideologies carefully and identified the behaviours which these ideologies would define as deviant. They might have found the inconsistencies and gaps which inevitably perforate ideologies, thus creating uncertainties and opportunities (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). They might then have discovered behaviours which would have fulfilled their own objectives without offending local beliefs (Fülöp-Miller, 1930; Torbert, 1976).

#### NOTES

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