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**Leadership, Movement and Change in Public Sector Organizations**

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# Leadership, Movement and Change in Public Sector Organizations

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## Abstract

*In this paper it is argued that notions of leadership and modern management have become closely aligned and draw on a legacy that conceptualises them in terms of a coercion-legitimacy dualism which continues to the present day. Their introduction in the guise of new public management reforms, which have sought to embed a range of private sector managerial techniques and ideologies into the public realm, have nonetheless occurred in a milieu quite different to that of the private sector. As a result, it is argued, neo-liberal pressures and political realignment have elevated efficiency, accountability and associated forms of performativity and surveillance, resulting in the rise of the 'regulated professional leader'. In addition, the decline of faith in the certainties of government and party politics has been significant as pressures grow on the leaders and diverse workforces of the public sector to take account of the differing interests of civil society, conceptualised as a space for the development of the new politics of oppositional social movements. Yet, it is further contended, social movements, such as the environmental and women's movement, also operate within non-social movement public sector organizations. As a result, there is a need to engage with differences of value, interest and orientation of lower and middle level organizational members in order to enrich future directions of change and to demonstrate an accountability that enacts the democratic endowment of the public sector.*

## Introductory Comments: Contexts, Issues and Overview

Approaches to leadership have traditionally focused on organizational, group and individual levels, with early historical concerns evident in the analysis of great political and military leaders. More recently, under the sway of US literature, students of leadership, including those reading organization and management, have been treated to prescriptions concerning formal leadership style and its contingent and varied character, with transformational approaches linked to gender (cf Rosener 1990; Goode and Bagilhole 1998). Whilst acknowledgement has also been paid to the importance of informal leadership this, along with research into formal varieties, has remained largely circumscribed within organizational boundaries, and linked with management approaches to change. This has also been evident in recent years in the public sector, with techniques and ideologies of management being carried over from the private (cf Hood 1991; 1995; and Hood et al 1999; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000, Holmberg and Henning, 2003) to breathe life into what has been seen by some as a lumbering, inefficient, self-serving bureau-professional monolith. Further impetus has come from recognition of financial crises in the public sector, prompting a series of organizational changes and the elevation of leadership ideals to provide a solution, the latest appearing in the guise of the new public management (Holmberg and Henning). There have been a number of critiques of this intervention (cf Clarke and Newman 1997), but its appeal to beleaguered political and managerial elites in the public sector, facing

pressures from fickle electorates for efficiencies and value for money, should not be underestimated.

Leadership has traditionally been analysed in different ways in public and private sectors, with leadership in the private sector having had no need to consider the kinds of regulations and rules found in the public, and often being seen as tending to the authoritarian. In the public sector, by contrast, any attempts to introduce management, not least the new public management, have encountered a bureaucratic organization, in which managers have striven to become the leaders, even though it is politicians who take decisions that can affect the work of public officials quite significantly. Leadership, as with management, is often portrayed in the literature as deploying a top-down perspective, whereby leaders take decisions that are passed down and reacted to in different ways by subordinate staff (Taylor 1911). Gulick (1937) regarded leadership as one of the most difficult tasks in an organisation because of the importance of coordination, to ensure that staff acted together. Weber (1921) also pointed to the significance of management - even if the distinction between management and leadership was not always maintained in his work - through the characterisation of the ideal type of bureaucracy whereby staff were required to follow rules and regulations in line with political decisions. Leadership has also been distinguished in terms of a dichotomy between transaction and transformation, with transactional leadership emphasising goals, tasks, results and rewards, in contrast to transformative leadership which is based on charisma, the leaders' behaviour, and closeness to the staff where trust is built.

Approaches that, by contrast, look beyond the boundaries of organization for sources of leadership and change, such as social movement theory, rarely find their way into the literature in question. Social movement theories focus their attention on civil society (Cohen 1985), with two schools of thought presently in vogue. The first is the *political process approach* that considers the routinised activities of SMO's (social movement organizations), with leaders known as political entrepreneurs who seek to advocate their cause publicly (cf Zald and MacArthy 1987). This approach, like management leadership studies, surfaced in the US, where social movements are viewed as close to pressure groups that act out repertoires of contention through cycles of protest (Tilly 1995; Traugott 1995). The appearance of such SMO's has not been confined to the US, with environmental movements and political or movement entrepreneurs found elsewhere, and involved for example in 'green' politics.

This approach has not been without its critics with Furedi (2004), much like Michels (1911) a century before him, pointing to the incorporation of such leaders into the establishment through the 'professionalisation of protest'. This has given rise to an alternative approach to social movements, which considers informal networks that operate at subterranean or submerged levels in civil society (Melucci 1997), and has been dubbed the *new social movement school*. For those involved in such networks, the means (participation) are as important as the ends (goals), their concern being to spread values and develop affiliations in opposition to the prevailing social order. Their challenges are often symbolic and they operate unseen through networks in civil society and, we argue, through the channels of non-social movement organizations. This makes their activities somewhat difficult to chart, though they do influence members at individual, group and organizational levels, albeit invariably contrary to the visions of organizational 'leaders'.

Social movements, such as women's and environmental movements, thus offer challenges, both symbolic and real, to the leadership of the new public management, itself a coalition rather than a social movement (Pakulski 1988). It is this relationship, between leadership and movement, as well as their relationship to change (Tsoukas and Chia 2002; see also Thomas and Davies 2005) - the former we argue focused on *moments frozen in time*, the latter seeking to *act through time* - which the paper explores. It is contended that women's movement supporters act through subterranean networks that are as much involved in 'leadership' as those in formally recognised organizational positions, acting to shape and steer the processes of change in the public sectors of the present.

The paper thus attempts to reflect theoretically on approaches to leadership and organizational change, and attempts to make a case for social movement theory. We begin with a discussion of traditional approaches that consider leadership from above, a kind of birds' eye view of leadership that tends the prescriptive. We continue our reflection on leadership in the public sector by considering recent change and new directions. We focus in particular on the context of public sector leadership and the networks of non-social movement organizations and civil society, in order to consider the place of social movements and social movement theory in helping to lead a diverse public sector in diverse times. We draw our thoughts together in the concluding comments.

### **Leading from above?**

The study of leadership has long interested social and political thinkers, and certainly from ancient times. Machiavelli's (1970) attention to the history of Rome, for example, and the impulse for his much-cited text *The Prince* (1514/1975), attest to such interest. Yet it is precisely here, in *The Prince*, a text in which he offers advice - on what we might term the darker side of leadership - to would-be princes, where he makes clear that force alone is insufficient to ensure a following. In considering 'Whether it is Better to be Loved than Feared', he writes:

The answer is that one would like to be both the one and the other; but because it is difficult to combine them, it is far better to be feared than loved if you cannot be both ... The bond of love is one which men, wretched creatures that they are, break when it is to their advantage to do so; but fear is strengthened by a dread of punishment which is always effective.

Machiavelli (1514: 96-97)

Here then we see the importance of legitimacy for Machiavelli, since it is important to be both loved and feared, and only when one *cannot* be both that coercion of some kind becomes salient. This suggests that leadership is a field of both enquiry and practice where lessons can be learned, giving lie to the notion of 'great man' approaches that rely on traits or mystical characteristics, despite their apparent simplistic appeal and the somewhat patchy appearance of great women.

The concern with leadership in terms of the dualism of coercion and legitimacy is also found in the field of organisation and management studies, linked principally to private sector or commercial organisations, which informs research in the US into modern management. Indeed, much of the research into modern management, under the rubric of leadership, rests on the twin bedrock of pioneering studies into scientific management (Taylor 1911) and what is known as the human relations approach (cf Mayo 1933). These schools of thinking offered variations on the theme of control, albeit from directive or autocratic and participative vantage points reflecting the dualism of coercion and legitimacy respectively. The legacy of the former, acknowledged as resulting in massive increases in productive efficiencies, was also considered to be deskilling and alienation, whilst the latter was coined ‘cow’ sociology (Bell 1962: 250) since happy workers, like contented cows, were likely to be productive cash cows. And if scientific management, or Taylorism, led to forms of association based around interdependence and linkages of production that required flexibilities on the part of human labour evident in so-called Fordism, it has also sparked a labour process debate around issues of deskilling and dehumanisation (cf Braverman 1974; Kitay 1997) that lasts to the present day.

The human relations approach also inspired an academic and practitioner industry around leadership, job satisfaction and motivation studies. Its influence is clear in the work of MacGregor, Herzberg and countless others and surfaces in approaches to leadership style in Blake and Mouton’s (1978) managerial grid that focuses on the balance between dualistic concerns for task and staff, all of which originate in the US. Likert’s four systems can also be seen as a dualism, even if one that operates at different ends of continuum, from exploitative-authoritative to participative. The need to accommodate style to context was advocated in contingency approaches (Fiedler 1967) that offered guidance to leaders and practising managers, albeit based on such differing groups as basketball teams and bomber crews (Thompson and McHugh 1995: 290); with its reception subject to much subsequent debate (Linstead et al 2004 :233). The influence of human relations thinking can also be seen in the turn to softer forms of management control advocated by the management guru Tom Peters in the wake of his airport best-seller (Silver 1987) *In Search of Excellence*, with co-author Waterman (1987).

More recently there has been a tendency to dethrone or at least decentre leaders from their transformational vantage point, in favour of a post-heroic approach that views leaders as developers of their subordinates, engaging and working with followers in the joint pursuit and realisation of leadership (Linstead et al 2004:343-346), even if this represents little more than a variation on the legitimacy aspect of the coercion – legitimacy dualism. This development is connected to a related strand in leadership studies that has sought to link perceptions of women’s different abilities and predispositions, rooted in an ethic of care in contrast to a male logic of justice (Gilligan 1982; White 1995). It has, nonetheless, proved somewhat difficult to maintain academic credibility for such a position in the face of contrary studies that develop theoretical arguments which draw on elements of the cultural turn and link behaviour to factors such as experience and positioning in understanding gender relations at work (Barry et al 2006a), discourse (Thomas and Davies 2002), and performativity (Whitehead 2001). There have also been developments that have favoured a management of diversity (Kandola) in organisations that effectively undercuts recognition of structured inequality, in terms of gender and ethnicity for example, by individualising the focus of attention.

Even so the coercion – legitimacy dualism and its legacy should not be dismissed too easily and remains of interest for the purposes of this paper because of its influence on notions of leadership in public sector organisations in the wake of new public management reforms from the late 1970s (cf Hood 1991 and 1995; Pollitt 1993; and Pollitt and Bouckaert 2001). These seek to transplant a variety of private sector management techniques and ideologies in the pursuit of efficiency, accountability, transparency and probity in public affairs. This legacy can be seen in the detailed scrutiny of performance (Smith 1995) and surveillance (Hood et al 1999) on the one hand, and cultural evangelism (Cochrane 1988) and the revelatory visions and missions of charismatic transformational leaders on the other (Binns 1994).

Yet there has also been a shift to post-heroic leadership, perhaps following private sector influences, or perhaps in recognition of the tradition of a public service ethos (Pratchett and Wingfield 1996) that has been thought to characterise the administrative arm of government. This is important because the new management reforms, with their post-war cadre of credentialised ‘New Class’ managers (Yeatman 1987: 343), have been introduced into a public sector led traditionally by politicians on the one hand, and a senior mandarin who advised creatively and innovatively on policy matters on the other (Yeatman 1987:342), leaving routine procedures to middle and lower level bureaucratic functionaries. The separation of the two spheres of bureaucracy and politics was, for Weber (1918), important since politicians he contended should live *for* rather than *off* politics. As he explained:

‘To be above parties’ – in truth, to remain outside the realm of the struggle for power – is the official’s role, while this struggle for personal power, and the resulting personal responsibility, is the lifeblood of the politician as well as of the entrepreneur  
(Weber 1978: 1404)

The leadership vacuum characteristic of German society in Weber’s time, particularly at the end of the World War II, would appear to have influenced his concern for strong leadership. However, he also saw politics as about passionate conviction, and personal responsibility for any consequences. Yet, as Gane (1997: 557) has argued, these are ideal type constructions that are manifested in varying configurations in real-time, resulting in ‘sober heroism’ (Gane 1997: 557). This is important for the public sector where we see a recent alignment of thinking on politics and management, following the managerialisation of politics and vice-versa, and where sober heroism comes to prominence through entrepreneurial (for which read management) endeavour, a point also noted by Weber as we have seen. However, this is refracted through a post-heroic prism that characterises private sector leadership at the present time, resulting in what we will term ‘regulated professional leadership’ to denote the development of a leadership cadre whose followers are ‘empowered’ through performativity to achieve specific outcomes. This may just be a significant shift in an area such as social work, for example, which has seen the recent elevation of practical competencies at the expense of knowledge and understanding, evident in professional accreditation and outcome surveillance (Hugman 2001), and it may be that it is developments such as this that lie behind Lawler’s (2005) interest in the shift from the responsible autonomy of management control to the professional autonomy of leadership, albeit regulated in social work; in short a return to previous arrangements whereby social workers, as

(semi) professionals, participated in control of their own work, as well as their professional selves.

Yet control, be it direct, responsible, or regulated professional, remains within the coercion – legitimacy duality and misses the potential of those below whose orientations, values and affiliations are ignored or marginalized if they fail to reinforce preconceived elite views on the future direction of change. So how has change been conceptualised in the literature of management?

### **Changing Management Times?**

In the literature of management and organisation, change is perceived as a series of milestones or stages, fixed in time. The strategies of change involved are invariably conceived in advance and in abstraction, and largely devoid of human relationships and context. Where considered, human relationships and values are viewed as malleable and ultimately controllable on behalf of or at the behest of managerial elites. Change processes are thus conceptualised from above, and as occurring through a series of planned phases, before, during and after the transformation that is assumed to follow. The stages are thus considered almost as photographic images, as stills, frozen in time (Tsoukas and Chia 2002; Thomas and Davies 2005). This conceptualisation of time as following the utilitarian beat of artless regulated engineering rationality fails to comprehend the idea of time as process (Tsoukas and Chia 2002), as a ‘function of experience ... as duree’ (Bell 1962: 229). Yet the lessons learned about time by the labour movement, who used it in a struggle over effort where it translated into monetary values linked to strategies for overtime and ‘time and half’ (Thompson 1963: 86) suggest a capacity for leadership out with conventional management theories of change. Indeed, social movements, such as the labour movement, and more recently the environmental and women’s movement, have shown considerable propensity for innovation and leadership. This has implications for public sector leadership, since the context comprises a number of differing constituencies who may not be singing from the same hymn sheet, or even always in tune. Of significance are notions of democracy and civil society, and the ways in which they have been conceptualised.

Among those who have considered civil society was the seventeenth century English philosopher Hobbes (1651), who believed human nature unreliable, weak, and in need of regulation and a strong state. This contrasts sharply with the eighteenth century French philosopher Rousseau’s (1754) ‘state of nature’, where harmony and cooperation abounded, yet was compromised by the trammels of state activity. Yet any attempt to reach a decision on which side of the binary divide has greater intellectual power of persuasion is pointless since both are conceptualisations, albeit extremes abstracted from the everyday to live an imagined life of their own, divorced from the day-to-day reality of flesh and blood human beings (Benhabib 1987). This insight is significant for assumptions about change and civil society, as we will see from a recent debate on the character of democracy and civil society that echoes the philosophical ruminations of Hobbes and Rousseau.

In developing his position on deliberative democracy, in which he champions a rational consensus model of human affairs, Habermas (1995: 110) discusses Rawls' political liberalism and his notion of an 'original position', from which 'an equal system of basic liberties ... [and] ... equal access to public offices ... [could ensure that] ... social inequalities are acceptable only when they are also to the advantage of the least privileged'. Rawls' project, concerning legitimation, is one for which Habermas (ibid) has admiration, regarding its 'essential results as correct, the dissent ... expresse[d] here remain[ing] within the bounds of a familial dispute'. Habermas' (op cit: 131) domestic quarrel with Rawls is that democratic legitimation cannot be contrived a priori and requires the 'procedural aspects of the public use of reason ... leav[ing] substantial questions that must be answered here and now to the more or less enlightened engagement of participants'. In short, Habermas contends that it is the transformative potential of communicative rationality and ideal speech that enable the creation of consensus and, as a result, legitimation. Yet it is the use of a priori assumptions and abstractions such as 'original position' and 'deliberative democracy', as well as the notion of political liberalism that underpins Rawls' case, which has attracted the attention of critics such as Mouffe (1999) and Kapoor (2002:109-110).

Mouffe (1999: 745) opens her critique by pointing to the importance of context in human affairs, with the comment that the 'increasing success of the extreme right in several countries, [is because] western societies are witnessing a growing disaffection with democratic institutions'. Yet why this is so is unclear, with current theorising about democracy within liberal democratic society 'dominated ... by an individualistic, universalistic, and rationalistic framework' that hampers understanding. In order to comprehend the reasons for democratic disaffection Mouffe seeks to develop an alternative framework for analysis entitled 'agonistic pluralism', in a move designed to unsettle the rationally contrived post-political consensus model of democracy associated with Habermas, and restore the notion of struggle and politics, characteristic of the public sector, democracy and civil society to the debate.

The issue here is principally ontological, reflecting as we have seen the rational concerns of the political process school and the emphasis on values and networking processes of civil society of new social movement approaches respectively. Mouffe's concerns relate to universalistic conceptions of democracy linked to a priori assumptions about ideal speech. These, she contends, are not readily apparent in everyday life where self and vested interest, as well as struggle over values and orientations, can enter the field of social relations. On this count, agreements that appear on the surface to result from consensual processes, are rather the consequence of fluid and shifting compromises, which are invariably unsettled at or even before an agreement is reached and returned to, in order to haggle or subvert, whenever the time and circumstances are deemed to be appropriate. The everyday practices of civil society and democracy are thus spaces occupied by differences of view and interest, where compromises are reached and renegotiated through time, with civil society the arena in which the various struggles and contentions are played out; this line of reasoning has resonance with earlier work (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) where the importance of social movements, the vibrant core of civil society, was underlined. Here, the notion of politics, of both the everyday (de Certau 1988) and party political kind, assume importance in the analysis of public sector leadership as a way of accounting for time as process and lived experience enacted in real-time.

## **Managing, Leading, or Moving the Public Sector in New Directions?**

The kind of leadership conventionally offered by politicians and governments has come under strain in recent years. The decline of traditional authority and the growth of neo-liberalism have affected economic, political and social relations quite significantly. Notable, for the purposes of this paper, has been a loss of faith in conventional politics and a rise in the development of social movements, particularly post-war. Todd and Taylor see this as a:

process of political disengagement and alienation .. [that links the] ... decline in confidence in representative democracy ... to at least the 1960s ... [which also saw the] ... growth of protest movements and social activism in Europe and America  
(Todd and Taylor 2004: 3)

The ensuing concerns over oil prices, economic instability and the shift to a new right politics associated with Thatcherism and Reaganism, alongside a pervasive neo-liberalism that saw calls for the end of history (Fukuyama 1989) and marketisation, further eroded conventional political engagement, with voter apathy and a drop in membership of political parties leading to a crisis in political legitimacy (ibid: 4). The introduction of new public management initiatives that encouraged the adoption of private sector managerial techniques and ideologies with a view to increasing efficiencies in public sector organisations, and enhancing accountability and the sensitivity of public officials to fickle electorates, needs to be seen in this light. So too the recent shift to governance, as governments attempt to reach out into civil society to regain acceptance through initiatives such as partnerships and networked activities that seek the participation of communities through vehicles such as ‘deliberative forums’, which include user panels, youth forums and area based committees (Newman et al 2004). Yet this represents little more than a concern to retain a fragile grip on political control whilst maintaining public legitimacy and accountability (Barry et al 200b; Newman 2001).

This is not to suggest that interest in politics has declined. On the contrary lively political engagement is discernible in civil society. However, it is not through the conventional channels of party politics at local or other levels. Instead political engagement can be seen in the processes and associations of civil society, through the vehicle of social movements that have reconfigured the practice of politics in contemporary societies. Social movements have long been in evidence with the labour movement having already been identified, deriving from worker, trades union and political alignment, and concerning itself with such matters as social advancement, education, material working and living conditions, wage bargaining and worker protection. More recently recognised social movements often referred to as new social movements such as the environmental or ecological movement, have been concerned with what have been termed symbolic, and sometimes post-material, issues (Inglehart and Rabier 1986). Others, like the women’s movement, have a long history and can be seen as concerned with issues both material *and* symbolic. For the purposes of this paper, however, theoretical developments and perspectives from the US and Europe have been significant; this is important since social movements have been conceptualised differently on different sides of the Atlantic.

Social movements are not particularly easy to define. Pakulski makes the point that the ‘mass social movement’; as he terms it, is defined:

... in contrast with some other social forms, such as formal organizations, mass parties, and clubs. Its core distinctive features include substantive and diffuse orientation and polymorphous structure combined with inclusive membership ... [this] ... excludes from consideration purely local events, the organized and semiorganized activities of parties and trade unions ... Mass movements ‘proper’ involve such activities as recurrent mass rallies, blockades, marches, and petition signing, reflecting the value commitments of all supporters and sympathizers.

Pakulski (1988: 248)

He goes on to underline its ‘noninstrumental (substantive) orientation and ... polymorphous structure combined with inclusiveness’ (op cit: 249). This clearly distinguishes social movements from coalitions. Whilst both identify with notions of ‘conflict and collective activity ... interaction and coordination between different actors [in coalitions] occur mostly at an instrumental level’ (Della Porta and Diani 1999: 20). New public management, on this definition, would appear to be a coalition and certainly not a social movement, mass or otherwise, its supporters interacting through alliances and self or vested interest in specific, circumscribed, local situations. Social movements, by contrast, are ‘social processes that may lead to transformations of social-political orders’ (Pakulski (1988: 255).

On this count, social movements are concerned with challenges and opposition to the status quo, and are distinct from the new public management that is characterised as an instrumental coalition of interests. But what has this to do with leadership? Answers to this differ depending on perspective. The US inspired political process approach (Jordan et al 2002), focuses attention on rational processes of movement activity and the observable routines, strategies and successes or otherwise of social movement organizations or SMO’s (Zald and McCarthy 1987), led by political or movement ‘entrepreneurs’. Different perspectives have been associated with this broad approach to the study of social movements, from structural functionalist to resource mobilization, and political opportunity structures (Smelser 1962; Tilly 1985; and Piven and Cloward 1977). Tilly (1995) in particular has been influential in developing the approach in terms of repertoires of contention and the cycles of protest associated with movement activity. For Tilly the repertoires of contention are modern phenomena and connected via (*autonomous*) grass roots activity, the (*modular*) transferability of experiences from other contentions, and the (*national*) linking of seemingly parochial issues that target the status quo and those involved in its maintenance. Developed in a polity characterised by pressure group activity, movements are considered to flourish, with some proponents sensing a ‘movement society’ in which social movements abound (Rucht and Niedhart 2002). Studies in this vein echo the early work of Michels (1911), and encounter criticism from those who likewise see incorporation - in the ‘professionalisation of protest’ (Furedi 2004).

There are a number of studies that point to the importance of SMO’s, to the part they play in repertoires of contention and cycles of protest. At their height organised movement marches, campaigns and media publicity, as in the 1960’s decade of protest, make their mark in opposition

to prevailing orders and orthodoxies. In periods of apparent quiescence, dubbed ‘abeyance’ (Bagguley 2002, Taylor et al 2004), movement activists look for organisational safe houses, where they wait for the next upsurge in activity. This was the case, for example, in respect of the US women’s movement between two periods of high profile activism: suffrage and second wave (Taylor 1997). Even so, organisational involvement is not confined to the US, with environmental movements in Europe often associated with formal organisations, their leaders involved in ecological pressure group or green party activities and suffering emotional cost from the compromises that invariably seem to ensue. Bahro’s experiences, for example, are vividly captured in his resignation letter to the then West German Green Party, where he recounts them as resulting in:

... the end of traditional existence for me altogether. At last I have understood that a party is a counterproductive tool, that the given political space is a trap into which life energy disappears, indeed, where it is rededicated to the spiral of death. I’ve finished with it now. I wouldn’t consider it right just to withdraw silently. I am not becoming unpolitical. I am not saying goodbye to the intellectual process. I want to contribute to creating a new place and a new practice ... We must risk some cold water if we want to assemble the necessary substance for our withdrawal from the industrial system, first of all within ourselves.

(Bahro 1986: 210-211)

Such experiences can leave a bitter taste in the mouth, with Sandford (1986:9-10) referring to Bahro’s ‘comparison, at the December 1984 party conference in Hamburg, of the political rise of the Greens with that of the Nazis in the 1920’s ... [as] ... the last straw’. Certainly his experiences of leadership in a movement through the organisational vehicle of a political party point to the need for a ‘new place and a new practice’. Arguably this is provided in European studies of social movements, with two authors prominent in propounding the new social movement, or identity-oriented, approach: Touraine and Melucci. Of these, it is Touraine who has considered leadership as a means of steering the direction of social movements. This derives from his critique of functionalism and rejection of neutrality or objectivity in sociological research. Instead of stability and order, Touraine (1985) focuses on change and stresses the importance of agency through the engagement of movement activists in a ‘critical discourse’, in order to shift their actions to a ‘higher level of struggle’ (Scott 1990: 63). Touraine is known for his critique of theories of stasis, his emphasis on the need for a sociology of action, and also his search for a central social movement in contemporary knowledge-based information societies to replace the labour movement active in a period marked by industrial capitalist production. His answer to this, following a sustained search, is the women’s movement (Touraine 2002: 94).

Melucci (1985 and 1989), who studied under Touraine, shares this concern to elevate action and focus on processes, crucially *enacted through time*. However, he is less concerned with identifying a central social movement. Instead, he has considered the ways in which different movements act as magnets for those of oppositional orientation who wish existing social and political arrangements to be otherwise. For Melucci (1997), the interconnected worlds of planetary society offer many challenges and opportunities, as individuals shift among the regions of their experiences to embrace a range of identities. The growth and sophistication of

information technologies have expanded the field of experiences for Melucci, who focuses on the subterranean or submerged character of networks that operate, largely unseen, within civil society. Being involved in the processes of opposition and sharing orientation with others of like mind matters a great deal to movement supporters according to this perspective, with largely symbolic contestation in advancement of their shared values and orientations the order of the day. Movement supporters may join political parties such as the Greens or the Feminist party in Sweden, pressure groups such as Greenpeace, or campaigning movement organisations such as NOW, the National Organization of Women, but it is their orientation that is decisive. Many supporters of feminism in the US, for example, worked within state bureaucracies as ‘woodwork’ feminists, biding their time until opportunities to emerge presented themselves (Freeman 1975), an orientation shared with ‘femocrats’, even though these are women who are openly active feminist supporters who work within post-compulsory education organisations (Deem and Ozga 2000).

A number of studies have revealed differing orientations and affiliations within public sector organisations that can be conceptualised using a new social movement approach, beyond Freeman’s ‘woodwork feminists’, and Deem and Ozga’s categorisation of ‘femocrats’ that owes a debt to Yeatman’s work. In the work of Meyerson and Scully (1995: 586), for example, who drew on sources covering for example defence intellectuals, as well as higher education, we find ‘tempered radicals’, who wrestle with conflicts ‘between personal and professional identities at odds with one another’. In Morley’s (1999) work on higher education we encounter active feminists, some of who are nervous about describing themselves feminist. In our own work, we have identified a range of positions taken by those who we conceptualise as supporters of women’s movements. These are: visible activists or espoused feminists; concealed adherents, who bide their time; latent feminists, who become politicised from the sidelines; and fellow travellers, who might include men sharing the values and orientations of the women’s movement (Barry et al 2007). This is indicative of a leadership potential that emanates from civil society and is enacted through non-social movement organizations with those involved likely influence any change initiative imposed from above; and this is so because the boundaries between public sector organizations and civil society are more virtual than real, not least when it comes to values, interests and orientations. This is important, therefore, not only for those at lower organizational levels charged with delivery, but also those in middle range positions responsible for organising and managing the process. And it is the actions of those involved in shaping the processes and outcomes of change - who are simultaneously members of public sector organizations and civil society - that are likely to be decisive.

## **Concluding Comments**

In this paper we have considered diverse leaders and diverse workforces in contemporary public sector organizations, locating them in wider social, economic and political context. We have argued that notions of leadership and modern management have become closely aligned around issues of control and conceptualised in terms of a dualism of coercion and legitimacy. This, we have shown, has been apparent from early studies of Scientific Management and Human Relations respectively, which have been conjured up in a variety of manifestations to the present

day. We have also shown that leadership in contemporary public sector organizations has been influenced by private sector managerial concerns from the late 1970s through the vehicle of the new public management. This has been evident in the attempted transplantation of techniques such as performance management and surveillance, alongside concerns for transformative capacities and post-heroic leadership, as public sector organizations have been exhorted to plan and execute change in the name of factors such as efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. This has led, we have argued, to the rise of the 'regulated professional leader' in the public sector.

In this, change processes have been conceptualised in terms of stages or moments frozen in time, imposed on those affected, fail to acknowledge the messy character of change enacted through time, where values and interests ensure a stormy rather than smooth passage and compromises fragment even as they form. Yet this, it has been contended, is the context in which public sectors find themselves, as any faith in conventional politics and governments declines, with diversity and contention rather than consensus and successfully orchestrated outcomes, the order of the day. The context of the public sector is different from the private in a number of respects, principle among these being the democratic milieu of civil society that it serves and within which it is located. Sensitivity to this is thus paramount for an understanding of leadership, as is the recognition of the virtual character of organizational boundaries, since those working in public sector organizations are at one and the same time members of civil society. An understanding of the activities and influences of social movements, which derive inspiration from civil society, is thus important.

Social movements, as we have demonstrated, have been theorised differently on different sides of the Atlantic, with the US political process school favouring an approach that elevates the visible activities of social movement organizations and their leaders. The repertoires on contention that are developed and the cycles of protest through which they operate are rational reactions to the excesses of state and other activity that require the response of those affected. The European new social movement approach, by contrast, focuses on the networks and processes of movement affiliation and orientation that develop largely unseen in civil society. For one advocate of this school, social movements need the experience and wisdom of outside influences to direct energies and focus, and ensure a higher order contention. For others, the processes of opposition to the status quo are sufficient in themselves to effect change, whether in the long or short term. Further, we have contended, their reach extends into the organs of public sector organizations themselves.

This suggests a lively politics both within civil society and non-social movement public sector organisations that the strict adoption of a political process approach might well elide. It is also suggestive of underlying values and orientations that might differ from those of political and managerial elites who seek to lead government and public sector organisations respectively and orchestrate change from above, with reasons for resistance not immediately clear at the outset and not taken into account in strategic plans for organisational change that seek unproblematically to conceptualise ahistorical, uncontextualised moments in time. In short, this points us to the need to avoid coercive and/or manipulative change attempts that fail to take account of views from below seriously and in real-time. It counsels those involved instead to

seek the engagement of those at lower and middle levels in organisations and civil society about the direction and processes of change, and not simply assume that existing values and orientations will (somehow) be brought into line. This is the contradiction faced by both leaders and managers in the practice of ‘empowerment’: how to be seen to share power whilst actually maintaining control. The shift necessary is more than a linguistic one, although this need not pose serious problems for those in positions of power once they recognise that leading the diverse workforces of contemporary public sector organizations requires an appreciation of wider social, economic and political forces at play and in contention. Where differences of value, interest and orientation are drawn on to enrich future directions of change, this can be seen not only to demonstrate accountability but also to enact the democratic endowment of the public sector.

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