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*Organization Studies* 1994; 15; 683

DOI: 10.1177/017084069401500503

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# The Concept of Ideology and Work Motivation

Ysanne M. Carlisle, David J. Manning

## Abstract

Shamir (1991: 405) noted that 'current reviews of work-motivation theories are unanimous in their dissatisfaction with the state-of-the-art'. He concluded that existing theories offer an inadequate account of the impetus of employment and should be 'supplemented by a self-concept based theory of work motivation'. This paper suggests that the concept of ideology can provide a foundation for this kind of theory. First, it attempts to elucidate the explanatory power of the concept of ideology in the context of understanding the effective performance of organizational members. Second, it indicates how ideology can be shown to address the issues of organizational dynamism which Shamir found to be problematic. Third, it shows how the nature of ideologic, in conjunction with the substance of ideological belief, offers an explanation of the variety to be found in organizational behaviour.

## Introduction

Shamir (1991) considers that current work-motivation theory has at least five shortcomings which a self-concept based theory could remedy. The first is the 'individualistic bias' of existing theory, whereby motivations which transcend the selfish 'principle of hedonism' are neglected. His second point is that 'current work-motivation theories may be particularly useful in situations that strongly determine behaviour and relatively useless in "weak" situations' (Shamir 1991: 407) where expectancies, response patterns and incentives are less readily distinguished. Third, he notes that existing theories stress the explanation and prediction of instances of behaviour when more general patterns can be observed to be persistent in organizations through time. Fourth, he argues that the concept of intrinsic motivation is limited in that it does not give due recognition to the sense in which motives are meaningful to those who have them. The performance of a task may lead neither to extrinsic rewards nor to intrinsic pleasures. Nevertheless, a task may still be motivating 'due to its meaning for the individual, for instance in terms of the affirmation of his or her identity and collective affiliations' (Shamir 1991: 408). Finally, he notes that values and moral obligations are largely excluded from considerations of work motivation except in so far as they are already conceptualized in terms of orders of prefer-

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Organization  
Studies  
1994, 15/5  
© 1994 EGOS  
683-703  
0170-8406/94  
0015-0025 \$3.00

ences. In the light of his review and analysis, he outlines the key assumptions which underpin his proposed solution: (1) humans are not only goal orientated but are also self-expressive; (2) people are motivated to enhance their self-esteem and self worth; (3) people are also motivated to retain and increase their sense of self-consistency; (4) self concepts are composed in part of identities; and (5) self-concept-based behaviour is not always related to clear expectations or to immediate specific goals (Shamir 1991: 411–414). By explicating them in this manner, Shamir specifies the requirements that his ideal theory should satisfy.

In an attempt to illuminate the potential of the concept of ideology to meet Shamir's requirements, this paper focuses upon three specific issues. The first is the sense in which ideology is a form of practical reasoning concerned with the authorization of human agency and policy prescription. The second deals with the sense in which ideological arguments are persuasive for persons with organizational tasks to perform. Third is a focus upon the impact of change on work motivation and the manner in which ideological persuasion is addressed to this experience. Wherever persons have a valued identity meaningful in their relations with those with whom they are obliged to interact, as in an organization, change is the one thing that concerns them all. It is the potential of change to threaten or enhance their identity that raises the question of the relative desirability of alternative futures as they appear to the persons concerned.

### **The Nature of the Ideological Understanding**

The understanding of ideology outlined here, is neither in the tradition of the idealist historiographers nor in that of their materialist counterparts. As such, it has no place in the post-Hegelian debate between students of Dilthey and Marx on the origin and validity of the ideological consciousness. In so far as this debate has a bearing upon industrial organization, it has been discussed elsewhere (Weiss and Miller: 1987). The more recent discussion of the truth claims of the ideological understanding continued by Habermas and Bubner and Foucault and Ricoeur also lies beyond the scope of this article (Habermas 1987; Bubner 1988; Foucault 1982; Ricoeur 1981). The truth of an ideology is here taken to be no more relevant to the motivational issue than is the truth of a theology the same thing as its explanatory utility. As useful as theology is in explaining religious practices to those unfamiliar with their rituals, this utility does not enhance theological truth claims. Ideologies and theologies may be distinguished from technologies, which clearly do not function if they are not 'correct'. The truth claims of an ideology or theology may concern those who dispute them, but their epistemological grounds are irrelevant to a consideration of the logic of their motivational efficacy for those who subscribe to them.

Just as technology concerns an awareness of the motive power of controlled energy systems, and theology concerns an awareness of God and the motivation of religious practice, so an ideology is concerned with an awareness of the self and the motive sense of self-enactment in human conduct including that 'at work'. What this paper offers is a perspective on work motivation that is integral to a practical understanding of work making sense in terms of man's human being. Its concern is with the logic of work as a human activity. As such it derives more from Aristotlean logic (Aristotle: 'Works' 1928) and Wittgenstein's linguistics (Wittgenstein 1974a) than from the sociological tradition of Weber (Weber 1947) and Mannheim (Mannheim 1936).

From the point of view of its persuasive performance it might be said that for the idealist, the ideological world is the conception of the world within the mind. At the same time, it is a world for whose history we, as rational agents, are responsible (Oakeshott 1933). It might equally be said that for the materialist it is the perception of the external world in the mind. At the same time, this perception is determined by our sensory experience of the world, and as agents of change in this world, we are responsible for the future (Macintyre 1971). However, despite the differences, the logical procedures involved in the idealist's conception and the materialist's perception are comparable. They are found at work in the projections of the ontological, nomological and teleological forms of reasoning, which will be explained in this article as they apply to conceptions/perceptions of preferred states of affairs evaluated in such terms as desirable product and superior productive process, loyal and skilled workforce, company growth and market domination, etc. It is within the form of a particular ideology that these values are deployed in authorizing and justifying specified courses of action.

From the point of view of linguistic philosophy, the deployment of beliefs of the kind that sustain an ideological understanding, involves the legitimization of agency rather than a description of agency (Wittgenstein 1974b). It is a set of interrelated beliefs that might best be described as constituting an attitude of mind towards human obligations in relation to authorizing some meaningful activity in the ongoing present. Such a representation of the ideological understanding is supported by the work of writers whose ideological commitments are as diverse as those expressed in Oakeshott's essay 'On Being Conservative' (Oakeshott 1962), Hayek's 'Why I am not a Conservative' (Hayek 1960) and Spender's 'Forward from Liberalism' (Spender 1937). These writers display differing orientations towards the problems of life in general, and to change in particular. From their different viewpoints they ascribe different values to institutions, organizations or to persons stipulated as being conservative, liberal or socialist. However, what those terms refer to is something more fundamental than institutional, organizational or personality characteristics. It is something more like the manner of reasoning described as ontological (based on a prior

commitment), nomological (rule following), or teleological (goal orientated), respectively. As such they afford their respective attitudes of mind the force of a practical argument articulated as a commitment.

Within the context of an ontological ideological argument, the future may be seen as a threat to the present. In relation to an organization it can be seen as placing the present in the irretrievable past, thereby destroying the existing identity of an organization as a valued set of human relationships. This conception of the future is evident in the classic statement of the conservative disposition outlined in Bradley's essay 'My Station and its Duties' (Bradley 1876). It is the attitude of mind prescribed in the writings of Oakeshott (Oakeshott 1962) and it may be identified in a number of organizations which ascribe value to existing practices which they are committed to retain. The retailer J. C. Penneys, as described in *Business Week*, may be cited in this respect (*Business Week* 1980). The humanistic guiding principles of 'The Penney Idea', which were laid down by the company's founder were valued by its existing management. They were regarded by the company chairman as principles which would always be relevant to the conduct of business, regardless of economic and other contingent circumstance. His commitment to them was explicit. In the opinion of those who are committed to a more competitive ethic, the decline in profitability and sales which the company had suffered could be taken to indicate that the company's guiding principles were no longer attuned to its current trading environment. This was indeed the suggestion made by the article's authors. However, as the management was committed to 'The Penney Idea', which set out the principles of a valued way of life, a future with the potential to destroy that way of life could only be seen as a threat and not as a new opportunity.

Alternatively the future may be seen as open ended, offering an opportunity to shape the course of events in so far as they can be beneficially accommodated within the ongoing practice of an established organizational procedure. Within the context of a nomological argument, this is how the future is perceived. It is the perception of the future evidenced in the writings of Hayek (Hayek 1960) which may also be identified in a number of forward looking companies, such as those imbued with the competitive ethic which are, as Morgan notes, associated with the United States (Morgan 1986: 119). The goal of Pepsi Cola, as reported in *Business Week* was to become 'number one' in the soft drinks market (*Business Week* 1980). Such a goal clearly reflects a perception of a future which can be so shaped.

Lastly, the future may be seen to offer an opportunity in a crisis situation to transform the present state of affairs into an alternative state of organizational arrangements by bringing about the realization of a premeditated programme of organization reality reconstruction. This is the conception/perception of the future which is offered by Spender (Spender 1937). It has its place within the context of a teleological

argument and is compatible with rational comprehensive programmes of change of the type which may be exemplified by a strategic approach to multinational reorganization which was popular in the 1970s, i.e., the application of 'stage theories' geared towards the achievement of a corporate matrix (Stopford and Wells 1972; Naylor 1986). Each of these projections of the future involves an 'evaluation' of the desirable in the form of a prescribed state of affairs. An ideological argument is one which ascribes an acknowledged value to a course of action which is then presented as a means of defending, improving upon or transforming the present organizational arrangements and performances of those to whom it is addressed. It is always a purposeful argument for those who believe in it (Trigg 1973).

### **The Logical Structure and Function of Ideological Reasoning**

Within the ontological framework, an argument for or against a proposed course of action has a number of distinguishing features that it shares with Euclid's geometric method. As we have seen, the ontological thinker starts from the premise of the certainty of existing commitments. He then proceeds on the basis that, given that these are unquestioned, certain courses of action are precluded from serious consideration (Bradley 1876). From the fact that men believe that  $x$  is a valuable human experience, it follows that they have obligations of the type  $y$  towards those whose valued experience it is. In other words, all people who have  $x$  beliefs have the obligation to sustain the conditions and requirements of type  $y$  if they are to act in a way which is consistent with their beliefs. Now, from the fact that men have substantive beliefs  $x$  about human conduct of the kind that  $y$  obligations ought to be fulfilled, it follows that obligations of the type  $y$  prohibit conduct of the type  $z$ . It is important to note that  $z$  is not a substantive prescription. It merely offers a range of prohibitions. A commitment to maintain certain standards precludes consideration of a range of policy options offering material benefit that are incompatible with the standards of conduct recognized by those beliefs. For example, from Penney's ethic, it is not possible to derive an answer to the question of what policies 'ought' to be pursued, but, given Penney's ethic, it is possible to say that, within the ontological form of reasoning, certain courses of action do conflict with it. In an ethic such as that represented by Penney, it is long and loyal service to company ideals, rather than the competitive successes of employees, that will give personally selected members of the company the recognition and trust of seniority. In the course of this process, salary may indicate status.

The nomological state of mind shares features in common with arithmetic reasoning as essentially a rule-following procedure (Sidgwick 1874). From the rule it can be seen that if the value of the beliefs  $x$  are in themselves limited by their dependence on meeting the require-

ments  $y$  of a legitimate course of action  $z$ , then  $x$  plus  $y$  alone guarantees the whole sense of  $z$  as a legitimate course of action. In this context,  $y$  is not in itself a decision. It is a condition of a legitimate decision, namely the correct decision-making procedure, that authorizes the progression. The common feature of a nomological procedure is that it provides for the equal consideration of all alternatives. For example, within the terms of reference provided by the kind of competitive ethic which was considered earlier, the following provides an example of a nomological argument. If  $x$  is taken to be a true statement about the most valued attribute of an employee's motivation, namely its competitive character, and  $y$  is a true statement about the appropriate consideration of his employment opportunities and rewards, it follows that legitimate company decision-making in connection with his terms of employment and pay is one based on equal consideration being given to the evaluation of every individual's work performance. In other words, the legitimate satisfaction of employee expectations by policy  $z$  on the reward of work performance is explained in terms of the valued motivation  $x$  and the legitimacy of procedure  $y$ . If it is true that employees are wage motivated and if it is true that their productivity is intelligible in terms of earnings opportunity, it follows that any legitimate expectation of their work performance has to be understood to be conditional on the terms of their employment. Nomological firms are committed to impartial rule following. In matters of employment opportunity, it is a principle of the management to consider fairness strictly in relation to the worker's contribution to competitive organizational performance.

The teleological form of reasoning is akin to algebraic reasoning (Aristotle: 'Works' 1928). If the value of the initial premise is  $x$ , expressed as the potential in an actual state of affairs, and the value of the conclusion is  $z$  expressed as its projected realization, then it follows that if the policy  $y$  is derived from the critique of  $x$  that  $z$  implies, the value of  $y$  must be admitted to bridge the temporal gap as the appropriate means to what is now a practical objective. What is effected by this kind of teleologic turns the commitment to the projected future ( $z$ ) into a judgement that the present situation of the employees of an organization is unsatisfactory. Where the ontological argument takes the present situation to be one of value and the nomological one ascribes value to the decision-making procedure as an impartial process, the teleological argument takes the objectives of the organization to be above suspicion.

For example, if it is accepted that the nature of the employee is to seek his potential self-fulfilment in the creation of the perfect working organization then the means to achieving that ideal, conceived as an objective, must take the form of the performance of certain tasks, since the present situation is deemed to be unsatisfactory. Thus, union representatives orientated towards the teleological goal of worker democracy ( $z$ ) would need to perform the task of establishing mechanisms for

worker participation in management ( $y$ ) to bridge the gap between the existing situation ( $x$ ) in which only the possibility of such mechanisms exist and the desired situation in which they are operable. Such a programme of worker participation has been a feature of German industrial life where the history of trade-union activity has been very different to that of Britain. In the German context, the teleological approach to the problems of future development on the part of a management can be illustrated by the example of the Volkswagen factory, which was custom built after the war (Sampson 1968). Such an approach is distinctive. Not only does the end justify the means, but because the end itself has been ascribed an ethical value, those means which bring the goal nearer to realization are seen to be part of the situation that has been ascribed that value. Indeed at Volkswagen, under Allied supervision, the legitimate teleological decision on employee promotions had to be seen to favour right minded people. In this case, it was the turn of the 'democratically' minded to benefit from 'positive' discrimination.

Articulated projections of alternative futures are significant motivating factors in strategic decision making. They are also pertinent in terms of motivating the responses of those for whom such decisions are consequential. In 1991, one of the authors of this paper, completed an in-depth qualitative study using three garment manufacturing firms which were in the process of implementing computerized garment technologies. The studies explored senior managerial ascriptions of value to the technological adoption decision and the forms of practical reasoning whereby they were administered. The methods deployed included in-depth interviewing, attendance at meetings as a 'fly on the wall' observer, and the examination of available documentation, such as the minutes of past meetings. Taken as a whole, these studies may be taken to affirm empirically the significance of the concept of ideology in the terms in which it has been elucidated in this paper (Carlisle 1992). At this point, two of the firms which were investigated may be briefly contrasted as a means of illustrating the foregoing arguments. The first was identified as ontological. Its management was clearly motivated in its decision making towards the retention of certain existing valued features of the company way of life. The second was identified as a nomenological firm. Its management was equally clearly motivated in its decision making to continue making progress in the direction of an established goal. The account is divided into two sections. The first considers the ideological motivations of the managements in deciding to adopt the new technology. The second addresses those of their workforces in responding to those decisions.

## Ideological Motivation and the Technological Adoption Decision

The new technology with which the firms in the study were concerned consisted of two related innovations. The first was a dedicated computer system designed to perform the functions of grading and marking in the pre-cutting stages. Grading is the process of sizing a pattern. Marking involves determining how to maximize material usage in cutting the number of pattern pieces required from the cloth. The second was a C.N.C. cutter which can be used to cut out those pattern pieces. Although designed to complement each other, dedicated grading and marking systems can be deployed without a C.N.C. cutter. However, achieving maximum financial benefits in terms of unit-cost reduction invariably involves the deployment of both innovations. One of the reasons is that traditional cutting methods require skilled hand cutters. This occupational grouping has acquired the status of an industry elite and this is reflected in their rates of pay. High-volume garment producers need large quantities of cut pieces and they need to employ comparatively large numbers of skilled men to supply them in the traditional manner. The C.N.C. cutter is a high-volume machine. It requires two operators and, according to one of the factory managers in the second firm to be described, could do in a shift the work previously undertaken by forty men. It was pointed out that although it was uneconomical to set up the machine when only a small number of pieces were required, cost savings for high-volume runs were substantial.

Both of the firms to be considered were high-volume producers in that they required large numbers of pieces from the same pattern. The first firm manufactured outdoor coats to a classic, and therefore unchanging, design. The second was a high-fashion producer. Although its patterns changed frequently, it typically produced large numbers of garments from each one. The first of these companies was identified as ontological in its outlook. It had deployed the grading and marking technology, but was by no means the first company in the region to do so. With regard to the cutter, the management had, in principle, taken the decision to deploy it at some point, but the time was not yet perceived to be right. The motivations behind the outcome and timing of their adoption decision were not wholly explicable in economic terms. They were seen to be intelligible in the light of the ontological form of reasoning which predominated amongst management and employees.

Throughout the firm, it was noticeable that value was ascribed to what was termed the 'company culture'. Management-worker relations were good, the working atmosphere pleasant and friendly and there was a degree of openness concerning major decisions that is not found in some companies. This is not to say that decision making was participative, in fact it was found not to be the case. What was the case was a high level of awareness throughout the organizational hierarchy concerning what decisions had been reached, were likely to be reached and

why. The management believed in decentralizing decision making as far as possible, and considered it to be important that people derived satisfaction from work, no matter how menial their jobs might seem to be to outsiders. Satisfied workers were viewed as committed workers, and commitment to the company and to the product was regarded as desirable, and was actively encouraged. The workers considered that the company looked after its staff. The product was found to be a source of pride. There was a belief in its superiority over its potential competitors. The name of the coat was synonymous with the name of the company, and was never referred to just as a coat. Though expensive in comparison with other outdoor garments, there was little doubt in the minds of management, or for that matter many of the workers, that their products were of superior quality and worth the extra cost. There were no discounts available to staff. The only saving they could make on a purchase was the retail mark up. Yet many had bought coats for themselves and for members of their families. Reject rates were not high, but in so far as rejects occurred, they were rejects for everyone. No matter how trivial the reason for a coat failing to pass quality standards, it would not be sold as a second, even to staff. This policy was not the subject of criticism by the employees.

The grading and marking technology had been deployed at a time when output pressures upon graders and markers had been growing as a result of an increasing number of export orders. English and foreign sizing is not the same. However, grading and marking had already come to be seen as an area which would benefit from the new technology because the jobs were regarded as relatively routine. In high-fashion firms, there is scope for good markers to achieve material savings on new designs. In this firm, as the coat patterns had changed little, the most efficient material layouts had already been found over the years. As a result, there was little that a marker could do, however talented or experienced, to improve upon what already existed. The firm's policy was to automate as many routine and monotonous jobs as possible, but it was not an early innovator in the sense of being first. The grading and marking systems were implemented only after the management was convinced by the experiences of others that its adoption could help them to satisfy both their increased production requirements and their goals with respect to improving the scope for job satisfaction in grading and making. The cutter, however, was a different matter.

Rapid expansion and growth, a strategy which the cutter could have facilitated, was regarded as undesirable. The workforce was loyal and labour turnover rates, even amongst machinists, where it is traditionally high in the industry, were low. In the year the company was studied they were 3 percent and had, to the best of the M.Ds knowledge, never exceeded 5 percent. Levels of trust were also high and the workforce evidently did trust the management to look after everyone's interests. Even machinists described the management as good. The management was aware of the fact that if the company expanded too rapidly, the

'company culture' and its good management-worker relations could be destroyed. In the past, and continued at the time of the study, the strategic decisions of the board had to reflect this ascription of value. The decision not to introduce the C.N.C. machine until a later date was complex. First, the disinclination to expand at what was perceived to be too rapid a pace led to an evaluation of it as desirable in the long run, but not immediately necessary. Second, the firm was not disposed to borrowing. Its preference was, where possible, to finance innovations and expansions from reserves. The high interest rates in the late 1980s and early 1990s discouraged borrowing within the context of the 'strict payback rules' which operated. Third, the firm was disposed not to be a leading edge company in production technology. The orientation was towards reaping benefits sought from the tried and tested rather than running the risks involved in being first. Finally, the basic and most persistent economic arguments were twofold. First, that the maintenance of market share, which was in effect in a niche market, was more important than growth. Second, that maintaining the product image and its high profit margins was more important than volume sales. The image of the product as a prestige item of clothing and the high margins it commanded as a result, coupled with the image of the firm as a 'family' business, did not call for any expansion drives. There was no belief in the notion that bigger is somehow better, and no desire to expand any more quickly than the existing niche market the company served. In this sense, the value of the C.N.C. machine was seen to be relatively marginal at the present time, although its future worth was acknowledged. Compared with the next company, this one was emphatically not a high-risk venture. It was important to this management that the company culture was retained intact and that the company should remain the kind of company it was, which was the kind of company everyone desired it to be.

The second company, identified as nomological, was a high-fashion producer. Though it manufactured some classic designs, the bulk of its output was destined for the high-fashion market. A primary motivation on the part of the management for adopting both the grading and marking technology and the C.N.C. cutter, was their desire to increase the firm's competitive edge, and, in doing so, expand sales. By adopting the grading and marking technology early, they had been able to offer retailers faster pattern and style changes than later adopting competitors. In deciding to adopt the C.N.C. cutter early, they had hoped to steal an advantage over slower rivals who could not supply bulk orders so cheaply. Both decisions were seen as a means of expanding market share at the expense of the competition. In this firm, profit margins were not an issue. It was accepted that the giant retailers — which the previous firm did not accept, and would not as a matter of policy supply — offered low margins. However, it was also noted that these giants controlled the bulk of the U.K. market. The most persistent economic arguments in this firm were firstly, that high-volume sales

increase profits in absolute terms and secondly, that productive efficiency ensures that unit costs are minimized and therefore profits maximized.

The reasoning of this management was intelligible within the terms of their orientation towards expansion and growth, a goal evidenced to have been prioritized. The early adoption of a C.N.C. cutter was viewed as a means of advancing their 'conception of the desirable' future, namely the projected 'future fashion empire' which was the reported dream of the company's founder. The managers of this firm wanted it to become big. They wanted to expand their volume market share by whatever means possible. The cutter was considered to provide a means of expanding output without a commensurate rise in employment. Unlike the previous firm, this one would supply any customer with any garment they could supply at a profit. They were not adverse to taking risks. Rising interest rates had not deterred its management from 'taking advantage' of two new takeover opportunities which had necessitated additional borrowing. Diversification, within the constraints imposed by available technologies and a broad conception of the firm as a clothing manufacturer, was regarded as desirable. Such a strategy was perceived as a means of expanding market share. The problem it posed for the management was seen in terms of how to organize production of a more diverse range of products in the most efficient manner. Diversification as a strategy was evaluated differently and not perceived as an unnecessary and potentially damaging course of action which would affect the image and identity of the firm and its products.

### **The Ideological Motivation of the Workforce in Responding to Technological Innovation**

The employees of the ontological organization described above took the informal conditions of their employment to embody part of the value of their work experience. Like the management, they valued the 'company culture' and took a pride in the product as reflecting the standards of excellence appropriate to the style of their organization and the values of its customers. Their motivations were found to be more than instrumental. Increasing purchasing power in the market was not their only, or even their primary, concern. The company was acknowledged to pay above-average rates for the region, and this was a reason given by machinists, graders, markers and cutters for their judgement of it as a good employer, but it was not the only one. They expressed other satisfactions. They described the management as 'considerate' and the product as 'worth making'. Machinists talked of having friends at work and a number of the younger ones said that they would like to carry on working for the firm after they had families, and not just for the money. In short, employees evidently regarded their basic needs as human beings as being at least partially satisfied by their

working relationships. Inseparable from their pattern of working life was the hierarchy of relationships within the firm itself which afforded the security of a variety of respected statuses. There was an awareness of the interdependency of the various tasks. For example, it was recognized that the quality of a finished garment depended as much upon the work of the machinist as that of the cutter. All employees were regarded as having a contribution to make in this respect. Within this particular firm, doing a good job, in whatever capacity, was something which commanded respect from work mates as well as being expected by the management.

The cutters, as a group, however, were found to be the least personally committed and the most utilitarian in their motivational reasoning, but even amongst this group, levels of trust in the management were remarkably high. They were aware of the fact that a C.N.C. cutter would, at some point, be installed. They pointed out that cutters who had left were not being replaced, and that output pressures had begun to mount, making overtime more commonplace. They were also aware of the fact that once a cutter had been installed, the firm would not need all its current manpower. However, they believed, not without justification given the experiences of other firms, such as the nomological one considered here, that the company would not dispense with its skilled cutting force altogether. They thought that skilled cutters would still be needed in other firms, and their consensus view was that there would be no compulsory redundancies and that redeployments would be offered. This was an intention which the management confirmed. Given the implications of the cutter in terms of its manpower requirements, and the low skill levels required of its operators, the trusting attitude of the cutters was remarkable. They were fully aware of the fact that a C.N.C. cutter would be installed at some point in the near future, yet levels of anxiety were not high.

The employees of the nomological organization, the cutters in particular, projected an alternative conception of a desirable future to that of the management. It was a conception in which size was not a central issue. A number of cutters had left when the C.N.C. machine was installed, but as this firm had been an early innovator locally, experienced skilled men had found alternative employers relatively easily. Whether or not those who had left were motivated in part by the prestige of their occupation, is difficult to say. Prestige was found to be a major factor in the motivations of cutters in another garment manufacturer which was studied at the same time, but not in this one. These men were primarily motivated towards their pay packet. Money was found to be the key, and in some cases was the only expressed satisfaction to be derived from work. This view also prevailed amongst women machinists and, in general, employees in all the groups investigated were primarily concerned with their own purchasing power. The cutters' conception of a desirable future was one in which, regardless of the size of the firm,

they would be able to maintain their high living standards. The elite prestige status of the traditional hand cutter was not regarded as significant, except in so far as it was related to earnings potential. In other words, these skilled hand cutters were motivated to maintain existing pay differentials and to ensure that they continued to command high rates. Not surprisingly, some of them were found to be keen to undergo retraining. In some cases this was perceived as a means of moving into areas in which future earnings potential would not be endangered by technological advance. Generally, in this company, employees readily responded to promotional opportunity. It may be said that they ascribed value to the prospect in terms of 'getting on'.

Operating a C.N.C. cutter is, unlike hand cutting, a semi skilled job. In future, the management looked to recruit a different kind of person to operate the machine, although they admitted the need to retain a core of skilled men. They recognized the fact that there were peak times when they needed to supplement the output of the cutter and also pointed out that as it was a high-volume machine, it was not cost effective to set it up for 'short orders'. The skilled cutters regarded C.N.C. cutting as boring, monotonous and routine. They derived no intrinsic satisfactions from operating it and readily admitted that C.N.C. cutting required few skills. However, they were determined to retain control of C.N.C. operations. From their point of view, they could ensure a power base for negotiations in future pay issues if they did not relinquish control of the machine to semi skilled men. It was widespread knowledge that if the machine broke down or was out of operation for any length of time, the factories in the group would not be supplied with enough cut garment pieces to meet their needs. As a result, they would be unable to meet their orders and this would result in layoffs. In short, a primary motivation on the part of management in the reasoning which led to C.N.C. adoption was their projection of a future fashion empire. A primary consideration of the cutters in determining their response to the machine was their projection of a future in which they could still command high rates of pay.

It is interesting to note that in the above connection the men did not resist the introduction of the machine *per se*. The form of their practical reasoning was as nomological as that of the management. They regarded the coming of C.N.C. cutting as an inevitable part of progress. Their aim was to try and ensure that they secured their pay objectives within the context of the new productive arrangements which such a projected programme of action entailed. In so far as their orientations were materialistic, they valued technological innovation and the 'newness' of useful things. At home, videos, camcorders and CD players were a part of their culture. What was achieved by ideological persuasion was an identification of managerial- and key-worker interests. The common interest was here understood in terms of the firm being a successful competitive enterprise, which, from the workers point of view,

was a prerequisite for the maintenance and improvement of earnings. They were resigned to technological modernity in the workplace as a means of providing it in the home.

In the preliminary approaches which were made to innovating British garment manufacturers prior to conducting the in-depth studies from which the above examples are drawn, no examples of what could properly be described as teleological organizations were found. One company, which could clearly be identified as having had an ontological identity did appear to have adopted an uncharacteristically teleological approach to the problems of change as a result of an impending financial crisis. However, this crisis effectively terminated the willingness of the management to participate in the study. As a result, little systematic research was possible. Its subsequent bankruptcy and takeover provided evidence as to the depth of the crisis to which its former management were attempting to respond. It is suggested that the nature of teleological reasoning is such as to make it untenable as an ongoing position in the context of the free-market economy. Few, if any, industrial enterprises could, in such a trading environment, survive the kind of permanent revolution which an ongoing teleological outlook would imply. However, it is suggested that, in the face of an actual or anticipated crisis situation, change of a radical nature may reasonably be entertained. It is then that alternative future reality construction can be seen to be reasonable. In short, it would seem to be the perception of the need rather than the projection that calls for foresight.

### **Ideology as the Focus of Work-Motivation Theory**

Shamir has pointed to an 'oversight of the role of values and moral obligations in work motivation' and suggested that these motivational factors may have been 'rejected by current theories on the basis of their poorly observed relationships with specific behaviours' (Shamir 1991: 409). He argues that 'what is missing . . . is the sociological concept of values as "conceptions of the desirable" as distinct from the desired' (Shamir 1991: 410). This is what he envisaged that a 'self-concept based theory of work motivation' could provide. It is already evident that a conception of the desirable is central to each of the ideologies we have described. It is essential to their function as practical reasoning. In the context of understanding the outcome of managerial deliberation, the motivational force of the ideological form of persuasive reasoning can be usefully applied and shown to be related to the 'self-concept' of an agent whose grammar and vocabulary of persuasive communication is amenable to empirical study.

A number of investigations can be cited from managerial studies which have focused upon organizational communication, written and verbal (e.g. Sussman et al. 1983; Ewald and Stine 1983; Fiol 1989; Gioia et al. 1989). Their most conspicuous theoretical foundations are derived from the writings of Austin and Searl and their followers, who have

elaborated the concept of the 'speech act' (Austin 1965; Searl 1969). As a phenomenon for empirical study, the speech act has been deployed within the context of script analysis (Schank and Abelson 1977) and textual interpretation (Skinner 1972), where it has been conceived in terms of what might be called a communicative event. Within the script analytic framework, the speech act has been considered as the most elementary unit of communicative behaviour (Gioia et al. 1989). Speech acts and scripts can be conceived as cognitive representations of events appropriate to particular situations (Schank and Abelson 1977; Gioia et al. 1989). Such a situation may be exemplified for example, by the performance-appraisal interview which formed a focus for Gioia et al.'s study (Gioia et al. 1989). However, speech acts, and for that matter scripts, must be understood as communicative acts in their total contexts in the Wittgensteinian sense (Wittgenstein 1974a). As Austin puts it: 'The total speech act in the total speech situation is the only actual phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating' (Austin 1965: 147). To this remark, we might add the observation that the 'script' is only partial to the total context in that it may be considered to be something like a paragraph which is itself only part of a larger essay. In the history of an ideological argument, such an essay is part of an ongoing dialogue (Manning 1976; Graham 1986). Its ongoing nature accounts for the persistence of perspectives, attitudes and behaviours in organizations which is noted by Shamir and affirmed by a number of other writers (Clark 1972; Starbuck 1976; Starbuck et al. 1978). In the context of strategic decision making, the equivalent of that dialogue is the ongoing deliberation of senior managers and boardroom decision makers.

The concept of the self is central to the explanatory power of ideology in the context of work motivation. The self that is fulfilled in self-enactment is an ideal self, by which is meant that the self in question is seen to be responsible for the accomplishment of a desirable performance. In the context of an organization, such performances have to be coordinated. This implies that there are relationships of obligation and interdependency. These can only exist in an authority structure of the kind in which people hold positions involving superior and subordinate relationships that presuppose trust, even though complete trust may be absent. These relationships in part constitute the rationale that authorizes the direction of organized activities according to executive decision. That rationale is ideological. The adherent's understanding of an ideological argument is one that acknowledges the authority of the ideologic of decision making. The direction of subordinates by superiors would not appear legitimate and relevant to a subordinate agent who did not see himself within his ideological image of the organization as an authority structure. Accepted ideological images therefore have their role to play in the context of organized human relationships and activities. In this context they perform the smoothing of the relationship of superior to inferior that invites at least voluntary compliance with,

if not enthusiastic participation in, organization policy enactment. In so far as an employee may be invariably said to have an attitude towards his employment, his ideological image of himself in employment is inseparable from any satisfaction he derives from it. The beliefs an agent holds about himself and his employment are constitutive of the value of his work performances. They are a prerequisite for his response to a managerial directive being recognized as legitimate, thereby giving a work performance the respectability of its authority. Something has to connect the rationale of the executive decision with the rationale of the work performance. We offer the concept of ideology. As we have seen, ideologies are explicit expressions of beliefs and commitment in behaviour. Rather than try to explain ideological adherence it may be more useful to understand what that adherence explains. The suggestion here is that it affords a rational explanation of human motivation. The 'complex dispositions of mind' which ideological adherents may be taken to possess 'find their expression in behaviour' (Heath 1921: 77). In the context of the deliberation of decision makers, ideologies can readily be identified in the communicative behaviour of participants at every level of organizational decision making. It is only within the coherent parameters of ideological persuasion that absolute adherence to the outlook of an organization is achieved. Only within the performance of organized tasks can motivation be maximized.

Shamir assumes that people are motivated to enhance their self-esteem or self-worth. Ideology can be considered as a source of self-esteem or self-worth. Different ideological conceptions 'present different perceptions of human being and doing' and that involves different perceptions/perceptions of what it is to be the self whose behaviour ought to be considered as worthy of respect. 'Ideologies form our conceptions of ourselves as persons and outline the sense of the appropriate way to associate and live.' Such persons are motivated to act in accordance with such beliefs as 'something worth making a stand for in terms of gaining self respect and reaffirming one's self-hood' in the context of a collective endeavour (Manning 1989). In short, we are suggesting that in this respect the concept of ideology can form the basis of a more 'collective orientated theory of work motivation' which takes account of the importance of self-esteem. Shamir also assumes that people are motivated to retain and increase their self consistency (Shamir 1991). It is central to Mannheim's thesis (Mannheim 1936) that ideological beliefs are enduring beliefs. As Plamenatz affirms, they are beliefs held by persons who consequently constitute an historically identifiable group (Plamenatz 1971). Industrial organizations are identifiable in this sense. Those who belong to them have to share some basic beliefs over a period of time. Ideological beliefs are enduring beliefs. They are not immediately subject to disconfirmation in the light of new facts. We can, as Graham argues, persistently represent them in a consistent fashion (Graham 1986). As Seliger notes, new facts can lead to 'issue reassessment rather than systematic ideological reconstruction' (Seliger

1976: 290). Ideological understandings are not theoretical in the scientific sense. Their reasoning is thematic rather than systematic and is amended more by an occasion for accommodation than by refutation (Robinson: 1980).

The concept of ideology has been shown to be central to Shamir's assumption that self concepts are composed in part of identities. The articulation of an ideologically formed opinion discloses something of that identity. It reveals an adherent's attitude of mind towards set tasks and proposed courses of action. That attitude is one that expresses a preference for the performance of tasks compatible with the identity of the self (Manning and Robinson 1985). Finally, Shamir assumes that not all self-concept-based behaviour is goal orientated. Not all forms of reasoning are oriented towards a goal. Some are, but equally, others are not (Raynor 1980). The nomological and teleological forms are, in their different ways, goal orientated. The ontological on the other hand, beyond making provision for the survival of the valued practices and relationships it defends, is not. Whether or not a given form of reasoning is goal orientated depends upon the conception of the desirable, and such restrictions on its attainment that it entails. The ontological precludes radical innovation; the nomological is restricted by its procedures. The teleological admits of no such restrictions on its programme; its guiding light is its goal. What Shamir describes as an 'individualist bias' and a 'bias towards strong situations' is, in fact, a bias towards the nomological style of reasoning in organizational life. It is no less ideological than either the ontological or the teleological style. However, it is more prevalent in Western European cultures where entrepreneurial liberalism is the dominant political, commercial and industrial ideology.

## Conclusion

An ideology has been argued to involve particular ascriptions of value which are deployed within the specific ideologic of its form of reasoning. Each of the three forms of ideological reasoning identified in this paper have strengths and weaknesses. It may now be said that the strengths of each can be identified as weaknesses in the others. Similarly, the sense in which each has weaknesses is the sense in which the others have strengths. The situation may be taken to be analogous to a consideration of the three numerical disciplines with which they share common features. Geometry does not perform the functions of arithmetic, nor arithmetic those of algebra. They each perform different tasks. The strength of the ontological form of reasoning is the stress that it places upon certain existing features of the company way of life which can be a strength. In this it emphasizes the fact that the existing organizational reality represents the sum total of all its resources, not least of which is the commitment of its employees. The ontological

argument highlights the fact that an organization has an objective to achieve and change which is potentially disruptive and necessarily costly in terms of, for example, retraining and re-equipping. The strength of the nomological form of reasoning lies in its ability to concentrate upon the changing circumstances of the firm and to focus upon initiating changes that will sustain the impetus of the firm in an uncertain economic environment. The strength of the teleological style lies in its ability to rationally plan a programme of action, given the certainty of its objectives. Resources can be marshalled according to such priorities.

The weaknesses of each of the three forms are now apparent. Ontological reasoning is neither as sensitive to changing circumstances as the nomenological form, nor is it as appreciative of the potential for long-term development as the teleological. Nomenological reasoning tends to undervalue the importance of such existing practices and commitments as provide for the kind of secure work satisfaction that makes the company a going concern. The basic weakness of the teleological form of reasoning is that a 'permanent revolution' is not a viable state of affairs. This is not to deny its value in times when radical change is deemed to be required by radical change of circumstance. For example, when an old company has been taken over, perhaps as a result of bankruptcy, or when nationalized industries are privatized, or vice versa, teleological reasoning may be appropriate to the circumstances faced. However, no viable organization can continually engage in the kind of radical upheaval it implies, given that perfection is always an elusive goal.

It is the manner in which any one kind of ideological understanding acknowledges the authority of beliefs in ascribing value to alternative human relationships, procedures and objectives that makes it a formidable instrument of practical reason. The guidance offered by ideologic is not so much in terms of its efficacy in determining the outcome of policy decisions as in terms of its being accepted as authoritative and conducive to voluntary compliance. The argument of this article has been that ideological values are held by persons in employment disclosed in the form of an attitude towards their working life. It is suggested that work motivation is entailed by the ideologic of the ascription of value effecting the import of a value judgement into decision making and task performance. An ideological evaluation is carried forward by the force of an ideologic that entails the required sense of obligation that makes task performance an achievement. Considering the fact that many organizational tasks are routine tasks, the importance of an enduring sense of obligation, as distinct from a transitory incentive to work in terms of an immediate reward, does not require emphasizing. Once the logical relationship between the concept of ideology and the concept of obligation is exposed, the intelligibility of work motivation takes on a new dimension. The employees of the nomenological firm in the aforementioned study lacked loyalty to their firm in comparison with

the employees of the ontological organization, but they were no less work motivated. Their image of themselves in their home circumstance involved a loyalty to a domestic aspiration that carried with it the ascription of value to the pay packet that made an efficient work performance obligatory.

In the ascription of value to the practices, procedures and objectives of organizations, the authoritative character of an ideology makes it central to the motivational commitments of its participant adherents. Economic and technological facts cannot be altered by an ideology that ascribes greater or less importance to different aspects of company life. The fact that certain values are stressed at the expense of others does not prejudice the 'hard facts' of accountancy. However, a command of the logical structure of a company ideology helps us to understand how those facts came to be what they are in the course of a particular company's history. Where there is a job to be done, man is by nature an organizational animal. He is also an ideological one. Whatever may have been the case in Aristotle's polis, in the modern industrial state, for most of us, the personal ideological experience is now more likely to be encountered in industry than in politics.

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