Growth and Collapse of Societal Power

Professor Derek K Hitchins
Focus of Power

- *Homo sapiens sapiens* is instinctively gregarious
- Fundamental, inescapable urges:—
  - **Propagate**—the prime directive
    » Families exist to nurture and protect offspring, band together for mutual protection
  - **Create (perception of) order**
    » Principle goal of human left-brain cortex
  - **Control local environment**
    » I.e. create surrounding order, hunter/gatherer (*still...!*)
  - **Extend domain of order**
    » I.e extend control and dominion

Infant development, bonding, assertion, control freaking, empire building—all very *human*
The Growth of Power

1. The ©Social Genotype
2. Belief Systems
3. Behaviour
4. Battles between Belief Systems
The ©Social Genotype

A Theory of Social Structure, Belief and Behaviour
The Social Genotype®—Basis of Identity, Culture and Adaptive Social Behaviour

- **Analogue/extension of DNA**
  - expresses identity of individual.

- **Social Genotype expressed in identity/culture of social group**

- **Rôles/groups and relationships form stable, palpable structures**

- **Relationships mediated by shared beliefs**
Social Genotype—Aspects

• Social Genotype takes time to form within nascent social group, and time to set

• Once set, evolves only slowly, resists rapid change
  - rôle-relationship mesh “glued” by shared beliefs

• Determines the identity/culture of society or group
  - Individual behaviour coloured by cultural norms
  - New Recruits accepted only if “likely to fit in”
  - New Recruits “learn the ropes”—adopt rôle—or ejected—“immune response”

• Individuals come and go, rôle-relationship structure—and so, group behaviour—eternal
  (c.f. body cells replaced, identity of individual remains)
• Beliefs permits rapid reaction in uncertain situations
  - homo sapiens evolved through swift fight or flight decisions
  - based on ability to categorize, like stereotypes
• Beliefs persist if they give "satisfactory explanations"
  - Belief in drugs, crime, music, youth…tenable if they work
  - "Ground truth" irrelevant. Beliefs not rational/logical
  - "New" beliefs continually being generated and tested
    » without check in an individuated society with no institutionalized counter—ethics, morality, etc.
    » Process may be chaotic in Open Societies
• Self-perpetuating through generations—in Social Genotype? (N. Ireland, Yugoslavia, Russian Religion…)

The Nature of Belief
GRM—Behaviour Management

Tacit knowledge

Nature

Evolution

Activation

Constraint

Stimulus

Cognition

Selection

Excitation

Response

Intent

Belief System

Nurture

World models

Experience

Motivation

Environement

- Instinct
- Collective
- Unconscious
- Archetypes
- Libido
- Aggression
- Energy
- Emotion
- Character

- Beliefs
- Rôles
- Stereotypes
- Categories
- Values
- Ethics
- Morals
- Ideologies
- Training
Belief system

Interpretation of everyday events, situations

Straightforward believer's World Model

Reducing psychological uncertainty

Certainty of Belief
For the Individual

Reinforcement

Rôle models of "good" and "bad" behaviour

Reward/punishment concepts

Indoctrination / education in belief system

Belief as an Attractor, the nucleus for the Growth of Power

Icon establishment

Co-operative social behaviour

Power structures

Social cohesion

Maintaining/reinforcing the belief system
Central Rôle of Belief

- Beliefs emerge to explain the unexplainable
- Beliefs propagate *comforting perception* of order, understanding and control
- Culture and Power build around powerful ideas, ideologies and beliefs
- Shared Beliefs, it seems, are at the heart of social power, both for good and for evil
- Opposing beliefs are at the heart of power struggles
- Fundamentally, conflict is a “battle between belief systems”

C.f. Clausewitz—“war is an extension of politics”
Battles between Belief Systems
Joining two or more such models enables differential interactions between belief systems to be explored.
Belief vs. Policing, Punishment and Education

Sudden, major increase in policing, punishment and education

Belief-based Subculture outnumbering Establishment
• Two identical belief systems, α and β, competing for believers.
• β Belief System is held at nominal—believers interchange according to differences in respective education/indoctrination, policing and strength of belief
• Policing—threshold effect; higher levels \(\rightarrow\) diminishing returns
• Education—even a little helps; higher levels \(\rightarrow\) diminishing returns
• Strength of Belief (“believability”) has major effect—sigmoid approximates 2-state system
Belief & Persona

N.B. The work presented in this and the next three slides was carried out originally for Surrey Police.
Resonance & Group Attractor

Individual's Belief System

Believer's World Model

Straightforward explanations of everyday phenomena
Reduced psychological uncertainty

Self image

Group rôle-relationship structure
Individual-to-group rôle-relationship bonding

Acceptance by group

Conformant behaviour

Non-conformant behaviour

Tail and Point operate in same sense
Tail and Point operate in opposite sense

Positive feedback loop
Negative feedback loop

Training

Individual's rôle Models of "good" & "bad" behaviour

Group icons, images and rituals

Individual's reward and punishment concepts

Identification?

Rôle conformance motivation?

Resonance & Group Attractor

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Dissonance & Search for Group Membership

- Individual's Belief System
- Believer's World Model
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- Acceptance by group
- Conformant behaviour
- Identification?
- Rôle conformance motivation?
- Positive feedback loop
- Negative feedback loop
- Straightforward explanations of everyday phenomena
- Reduced psychological uncertainty
- Reinforcement
- Resonance
- Training
- Individual isolation & uncertainty
- Mutual rejection
- Search for group membership
- Non-conformant behaviour
Isolate

Substitution

Individual's Belief System

Believer's World Model

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Training

Belief System Adaptation

Individual isolation & uncertainty

Individual's reward and punishment concepts

Group icons, images and rituals

Identification?

Resonance

+ Reinforcement

Group rôle-conformance motivation?

Positive feedback loop

Negative feedback loop

Search for group membership

Mutual rejection

Fading of Group-references

Exposure to alternative anti-social behaviours

• media portrayals
  - videos
  - films

• books & magazines

• subcultures

Identification with mythical or anarchic group "substitutes"

Individual's Rôle Models of "good" & "bad" behaviour

Identification?

Mythical / contrived icons, images & rituals

Developing isolate / anti-social behaviours

Individual-to-group rôle-relationship bond

Reduced psychological uncertainty

Conformant behaviour

Acceptance by group

Conformant behaviour

Mutual rejection

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Identification with mythical or anarchic group "substitutes"
Maintaining Power

Lessons from History
Pharaoh as Military Leader
conquering all foreigners

Widespread pursuit of
Eternal Life

Shared Belief

Religious ethic
—afterlife only
after good behaviour
in this life

Pharaoh as Horus/Osiris
Amon-Ra as supreme god

National wealth
Tribute—gold, ivory, slaves, etc.

Pharaoh as Uniter of
Two Lands

Rule via Pharaoh-appointed Viziers
and town Mayors

Nobles
power

Ethic of
'Service' and
'Noblesse Oblige'

Middle class—
professional Civil Service

Concepts of
“right” and
“wrong”

Ma’ at—Truth,
Justice & Harmony

Wealth/Power of priesthood

State security

Pharaoh final arbiter as Osiris
in the Hall of Judgement

Nation state organization
and administration

• scribes
• accountants
• schools
• priests

Order

Danger

Power, Belief and Ma’ at in the New Kingdom.

Economy

Subjugation
of southern/eastern aggressors

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Generalized Rise and Fall of “Epochs”

- Epochs (periods of relative stability) initiated by powerful leaders
  - “Style” of epoch set by initial leader

- Epoch stability depends on:
  - iconic, synergistic leadership
  - sound economy and infrastructure
  - shared collective unconscious / experience
  - group social ethics, morals and widely held beliefs

- Epoch breakdown caused by:
  - fluctuating economy–degradation of spirit, loss of ethical, altruistic spirit…leading to…
  - …internecine struggle, often leading to group weakness and invasion / take-over
During Societal Maturation—Overview

• Social groups individuate, i.e. go through stages of development just like individuals

• Gradually, maturation leads to interests in power, to individuation, to challenge of cannons and traditions

• With individuation come factions, energy absorption in internecine struggle, resistance to change, uncontrolled change, breakdown

• Avoiding loss of control—leader’s guide:—
  - avoid promotion of subordinate, self-ruling groups
  - create and manage infrastructure
  - appoint/replace bureaucrats on merit, not inheritance
Seeking Contemporary Roots of Conflict
Competitive Pressure to Individuate

- Commercial pressure promotes societal factions by age, persuasion, sex:—
  - sells more fashion, music, stationery, drugs…
- Competition seen as ideal:—
  - Icon—lone individual against all odds
- Significantly, emergence of arcane beliefs—
  - LGM, UFOs, Corn Circles, Astrology, Pyramids, Black Magic, Ghosts, Crystals, Reflexology, Alternative Everything, Palmistry, Economics, Spiritualism, Management Science, TQM, BPR…
  - people need *some* Belief System, and it need not be rational

Fragmenting belief system = fragmenting society
Western Culture—on a Knife Edge

**Individuation**
- Essential duality
- Political opposites
- Ideology
- Options adopted by other Cultures

**Cult of the Individual**

**Economic Wealth**

**Social factions, fractions & sub-cultures**
- Collective unconscious / experience
- Intellectual Inheritance
- Social Evolution

**Pressure to Individuate**
- Commercial pressure
- Competition

**Social cohesion**
- Inter-necine conflict
- Police & Army
- Establishment
- Institutionalized Power Groups

**Autonomous "dynasties"**
- organized crime
- international "big business"

**Options adopted by other Cultures**

**Political opposites**

**Socio-economic targeting**
- media
- fashion

**Intellectual Inheritance**

**Time Needed to mature intellectually**

**Establishment**
- Police & Army

**Pressure to Individuate**

**Collective unconscious / experience**

**Establishment**
Western Culture—Simulation

**Internecine Conflict**
1–3 Economic Improvement alone
1A–3A Economic Improvement with Widely Shared Belief

**Social Factions and degrading Economy, (low shared belief)**

**Social Cohesion**
1–3 Economic Improvement alone
1A–3A Economic Improvement with Widely Shared Belief

**Social Cohesion vs. Wealth + Shared Belief**
Deduction From Analysis of Western Culture

- Factions generate spontaneously, esp. in weaker economies
  - economic pressure for competition
  - individuation
  - degraded infrastructure
- Small changes in shared belief cause big changes in social behaviour, esp. with weak economy
- Stronger economies may still generate internecine strife, but need not lose social cohesion
- Robust Economy not enough—order, shared belief/ethic/behaviour pattern needed too
Dissolution of Power
Causes of Power Breakdown

1. Where belief provides social power focus (e.g. theocracy, ethnic/tribal enclave, jihad, gang):—
   - invalidation of the belief, or…
   - overpowering by a demonstrably stronger belief

2. Where a power-system forms from complementary, interacting parts (e.g. army, economy, ecology, political ideology)
   - rise of dominance leading to…
   - suppression of interacting variety, leading to…
   - inflexible system, unable to adapt to environmental change
• Represents macro-view of today’s world…but…
• What is driving all this beneath the surface…?
• How will it end?

Exit stage left, wringing hands in despair!

The Nation State Vs. Civil Liberties “a fight to mutual destruction?”

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