Off-grid? Critiquing metatheoretical frameworks using a social entrepreneurship triptych

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Introduction

- Paper brings together meta-theorising and SE.

    - Builds on our recent projects exploring post-structuralism and SE.

    - Driven by awareness of a comparative lack of PM and PS research in entrepreneurship research more generally (e.g. Grant and Perren 2002).

- Q1: How useful could relational paradigm models be for developing SE field?

    - Pre-paradigm developments in post-paradigm times?

Introduction

- Q2: What alternative approaches can we conceive of? How might such approaches assist our field development?

- We explore (exploit?) the liminal zones suggested in the model by Hassard & Wolfram Cox (2013).

- We thereby use a triptych to demonstrate an alternative (critical and complementary) approach.

Meta-theorising & metaphors

- Hassard & Wolfram Cox (2013) reinvigorated a conversation about paradigm thinking.

    - Building on Burrell & Morgan (1979), acknowledging other efforts in this space (e.g. Tsoukas and Chia 2002).

    - Extending a model to account for 'post-structural' theories, acknowledging discourse as an overlaying feature across each domain.

    - Focusing on overlaying a third order of discourse that is missing in action when reflecting on the agency-structure binary.

    - Arguing for rapprochement in post-paradigm times, revisiting Kuhnian conception of paradigms as a 'disciplinary matrix'.

Meta-theorising & metaphors

- They suggest that post-modern and post-structural theories, approaches and techniques deserve integration in a 'quasi-essentialist' paradigm model.

- Structural, anti-structural and post-structural domains, each with a normative and critical component.

- They do this to remove the obvious agency / structure binary that tends to preclude PM/PS.
  - This will rehabilitate the position of PS in organisation theory by addressing relations with other paradigms.

Positioning PS in the model

	Structural paradigm	Anti-structural paradigm	Post-structural paradigm
Ontology	*Realist*	*Nominalist*	**Relativist** **Neither objective nor subjective – meaning contingent on appropriation of material.**
Epistemology	*Positivist*	*Constructionist*	**Relationist** **The values and position of the subject and social context influence the production of knowledge – i.e. co-produced identities**
Human Nature	*Determinist*	*Voluntarist*	**Deconstructionist** **The subject as a 'convenient location for the throughput of discourses, i.e. decentred.**
Methodology	*Deductive*	*Interpretive*	**Reflexive** **Recognising there is no one 'best way' to conduct research.**

Metaphor model (Hassard and Wolfram Cox 2013, p. 1708)
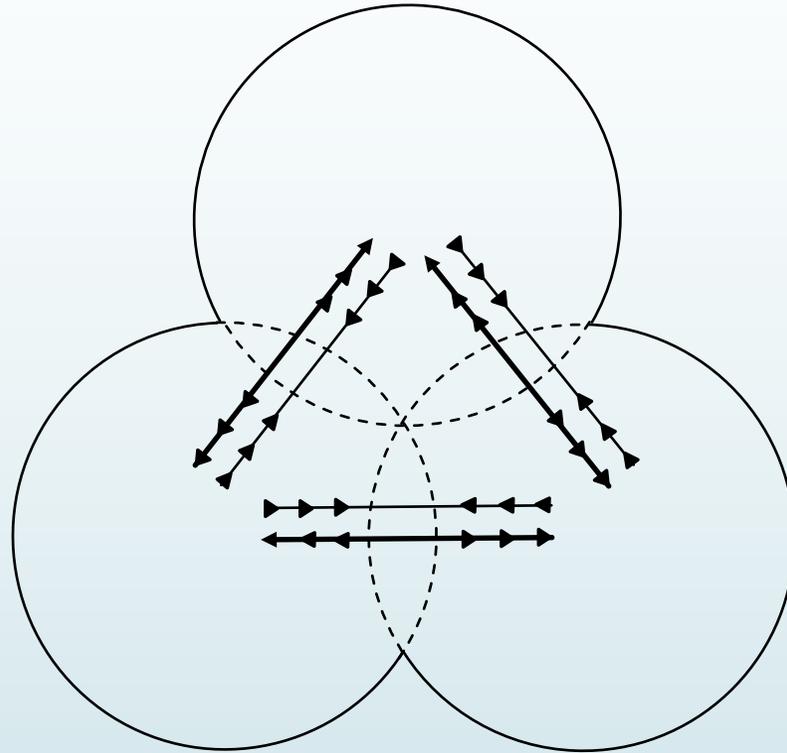
Model continued

- PM and PS are treated as a single domain…

- The model shows each of the paradigms in equal proportion.

- Semi-permeable 'liminal zones' between each domain.
  - These argue that movement is possible between domains.
  - Supports the possibility of interdisciplinary work within the framework.

- Tensions working between each domain.
  - They use ANT to explore how PS might be shown in each zone.

- NB. their aim was to try and show how PS might be accommodated, thus reinvigorating debate.
  - Postponing post-paradigm times?

Critique

- Dissolving binaries? Reasserting new patterns of regulation over how theory / research is performed?
- Boundary disputes:
  - The model does not surmount the problem of essentialism, nor that of determinism.
  - Many would argue PM and PS should be treated differently in any such exercise.
- Tension headaches:
  - The introduction of tensions between domains is useful.
    - Dynamism vs instability?
  - But too linear: perhaps limited by the visual metaphor?
- Implications for developing the SE field
  - Pre-paradigm building work framed by post-paradigm times?
  - Do we have a choice outside of such a framework?
  - What are the implications for creating new possibilities in SE research?
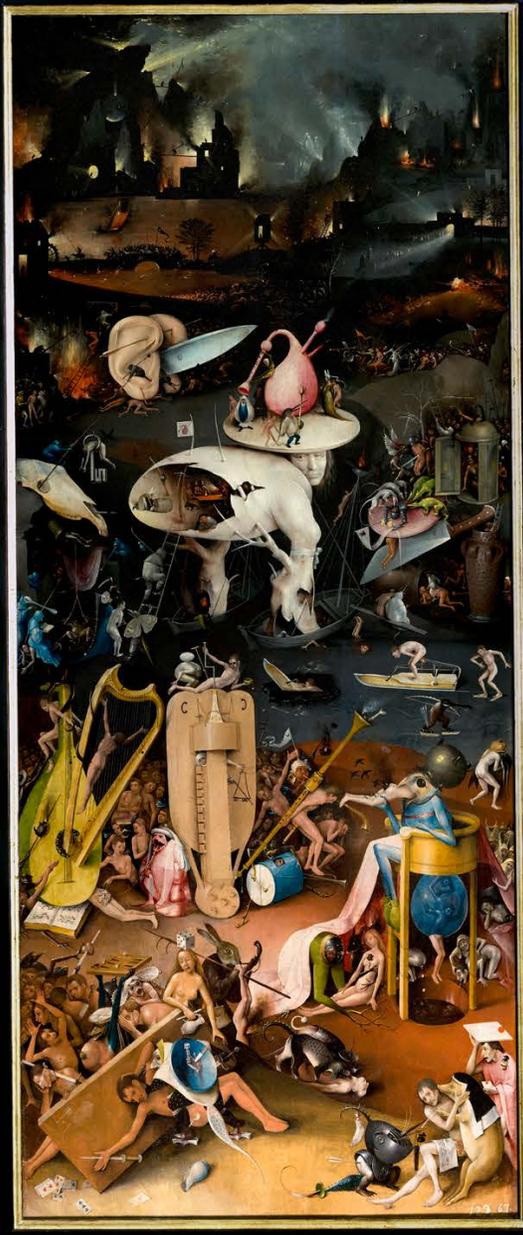 - Non-traditional research? Where might it fit? In the liminal zones?

Pre-paradigms and possibilities

- Nicholls (2010), SE research field in a pre-paradigmatic state.
  - How might we conceive the trajectories of field development?
  - How does our research impact on this process?
  - Are we telling new stories, or retro-fitting our discipline to fit old frameworks?
- Thus, we use the model as a starting point:
  - We acknowledge the need for scholars to follow a framework to guide / frame interdisciplinary scholarship.
  - Also exploring how we might conceive of PS in SE research specifically.
- H&WC seek to integrate the 'third order' of discourse with the first (agentic) and second (structural) orders.
- This idea is powerful – especially since a growing body of SE scholarship confronts 'discourses' of many kinds:
  - E.g. Dey and Teasdale 2013, Steyaert and Dey 2010, Teasdale 2012, Teasdale, Lyon and Baldock 2013, Mason 2012.

Triptych

- In response to H&WC, we propose one alternative to encourage new research possibilities.

- Inspired by the idea of liminal zones, we use a triptych which visually represents a scene, or a story.

- Famously deployed by visual artists, especially Bosch, Bacon, Rubens and Giotto.

- Why this approach?

  - Encourages deep engagement with myths, lived experiences, historical accounts of phenomena.

  - Not limited by epistemological or ontological position: the triptych can function as an historical commentary without necessarily being fixed to the creator's own time and context.

  - Encourages wide frame of reference, non-traditional interpretations, ambiguity is tolerated.

- Has been used in entrepreneurship before as a descriptive framework

  - Describing three identity positions revealed in literary analysis (Steyaert 2015).

  - Positioning community-entrepreneurship-transformation (Daskalaki, Hjørth and Mair 2016).

Triptych

- In our approach we use the triptych as a both a descriptive and analytical technique to explore other modes for portraying the social entrepreneur.
  - i.e. presenting three SE 'scenes' that are linked but distinctive.
- The overall scene intends only to capture part of the story, not all of it.
  - Thus, most of the portrayal resides 'outside of the frame', avoiding totalizing discourses.
  - Inherently interpretative, ambiguous, idiosyncratic: thus non-essentialist.
- This aims to encourage discussion possibilities that exist in liminal zones, i.e. PS in Hassard & Wolfram Cox.
  - Where researchers might grapple with challenging assumptions about knowledge, reality and the methods through which we portray SE.
- Framing the story tells only part of it, focusing on the 'third order of discourse'.
  - In our worked examples, we address some issues of discourse in SE.

Part 1: Mixed Discourses

- Exploring and critiquing the inherent ambiguities in multiple, political SE discourses.
  - SE is evidently a fertile ground for studies that recognise 'tacit political philosophies' of subjects.

- Engages with historical and discursive institutional assessments of SE emergence and development (e.g. Schmidt 2008, 2010).
  - Thus promotes interdisciplinarity.

- Places political discourses at the heart of analysis. Decentres the political actor.
  - Complementary as well as distinctive.

- The introduction of critical discourse analysis exposes links between language, power, subjectivity and identity.
  - Could feasibly operate in H&WC's anti-structural/post-structural liminal zone.

- Technique: Rather challenging to enact...how to engage political actors while de-centreing them in analysis?
  - Capturing accounts from actors involved in the policy-making process.

Part 2: Subversive Discourses

- Addressing the 'Other' stories of SE that exist and are performed outside of the dominant Western conception of SE.
  - Can these stories offer alternative insights from practitioners and communities about their perception of SE?
  - Can they counter-act against dominant, hegemonic conceptions of SE?

- Utilising non-traditional methodologies to uncover alternative, subversive discourses of SE (e.g. Gouge 2016).
  - Seeing practices from cultural, ethical and social perspectives that acknowledges them as equally powerful discourses in their own right.

- These discourse challenge the dominant construction of social entrepreneurship.
  - Could embrace alternative conceptions based on minorized discourses of SE (cf. CC Williams).
  - Reflecting the role of identity politics in SE?

- Technique: Use of story-telling, virtual communities, emergent identity groups and sub-cultures.
  - E.g. Jones, Latham and Betta (2008): identity construction from memoir analysis.

Part 3: Heroic Discourses

- The heroic social entrepreneur as a de-naturalised subject.
  - Builds on scholarly debate of the heroic social entrepreneur (Dacin et al 2010, Doherty et al 2006, Martin and Osberg 2007, Tracey and Phillips 2007).
  - It may now be *passé*, but maybe we could understand this shift discursively?

- Ironic in its mythic properties: heroes are often deeply flawed characters (e.g. Achilles, Odysseus).
  - These flawed qualities make them mortal, more human.

- But can we portray (social) entrepreneurs as flawed characters?
  - Does this fit with 'the message'? See Taco's presentation yesterday…
  - Where does departing from the message not matter so much? Outside of public sector engagement perhaps?

- Technique: Capturing reflexive accounts through memoir and auto-biographical sources.
  - E.g. Phillips and Rippin (2010), Daskalaki (2012).
 - Can social entrepreneurs enact their own reflexive research in this regard?

Discussion

- We acknowledge this is a work in progress.
  - The fit between visual representation and literary application of the triptych is unusual.
  - However, we are seeking to explore new vistas at a time when field development is gathering pace.

- Building on an emerging alternative research agenda that stretches the liminal zones in H&WC's model.
  - Yet it recognises the 'problem' of make PM and PS fit in paradigm thinking.

- Seeks to contribute to post-paradigm scholarship by re-engaging with the challenge of post-modern and post-structural techniques and theorising.

- The liminal zones make the most sense here…

Discussion

- What does this infer about:
  - Meta-theorising in emerging, rather than mature, fields?
  - SE research specifically?

- For us, H&WC's model introduces more pressing questions about our scholarly intervention points.
  - They are still relatively fixed, as well as being 'quasi-essentialist'.
  - Movement across and between domains inadequately deal with interdisciplinarity.

- How can it assist scholars in addressing post-modern and post-structural research in our field?
  - Addressing the development of an epistemology as per Nicholls (2010)?
  - Microstructures of legitimation – a place for PM and PS in this process?
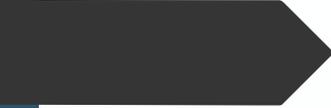
Thanks for listening...

- Questions?
- Thoughts?
- Suggestions?
- Critique?
- Ideas?

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