



Personality, pathology and mindsets: part 3 – pathologies and corruption

Maurice Yolles

Business School, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK, and

Gerhard Fink

Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria

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Abstract

Purpose – Context and cultural condition given, cybernetic agency theory enables the anticipation of patterns of behaviour. However, this only occurs under “normal” conditions. Abnormal conditions occur when pathologies develop in the agency, especially within its Piagetian intelligences. An understanding of these pathologies, therefore, constitutes an appreciation of how abnormal behaviour develops. The paper aims to discuss these issues.

Design/methodology/approach – Different classifications of pathology are considered: autopathic and sociopathic, transitive and lateral pathologies, epistemological and ontological pathologies, within a system and outside system effects of pathologies. The effects of pathologies are inefficacy, loss of cohesion within a system, emerging neurosis, and not least corruption.

Findings – Within Agency Mindset Theory, four types of pathologies are identified: being detached from the cultural system, behaviour does not conform to extant values; an inhibited figurative intelligence is disturbing self-reference and resulting in incapability to learn cognitively; the operative system does not respond to strategic intentions: operative decision making is not anchored in ethical, ideological or strategic specifications of the social system; action and behaviour of the organisation are driven by outside interests.

Research limitations/implications – This part of the research could only provide a framework for theoretically identifying the systemic roots of pathologies within social systems, but not provide an in-depth analysis of the shifts in values and practices, which accompany the emergence of pathologies.

Practical implications – The research is indicating that emergent pathologies and moves towards corruption could be either identified through underlying shifts in values and practices, but also through reduced functions (inefficacies) of the indispensable internal processes of an organisation (a social system), be it action-oriented or learning-oriented processes.

Originality/value – The paper draws on earlier work undertaken in the last few years by the same authors, who in a new way are pursuing new directions and extensions of that earlier research.

Keywords Corruption, Agency, Cultural traits, Normative processes, Pathologies, Abnormal personality, Sagiv-Schwartz mindsets

Paper type Conceptual paper

This article extends and concludes the analysis in parts 1 and 2 of this series of papers (Yolles and Fink, 2013a, b).

Transitive and lateral pathologies

Context and cultural condition given, cybernetic agency theory enables the anticipation of patterns of behaviour. However, this only occurs under “normal” conditions. Abnormal conditions occur when pathologies develop in the agency,



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especially within its Piagetian intelligences. An understanding of these pathologies therefore constitutes an appreciation of how abnormal behaviour develops. Transitive pathologies occur as ontological connection between the different systems. These connections indicate the “living” nature of the agency, and are represented by the intelligences. Through intelligences, processes occur that are essential for the efficacious functioning of the agency. The inefficacious functioning of intelligences are a result of agency pathologies, and this can affect the mindset types that an agency is deemed to take. This is because inefficacy can misrepresent the cognitive attributes that exist across the ontological parts of the agency, resulting in an altered mindset type – which is sensitive to context.

Besides transitive pathologies, there are also lateral ones. Laterally based pathologies are not ontological, but rather epistemological with respect to the agency model. They therefore relate to within system rather than between system interactions of an agency supersystem, and any interest in improving the social collective is restricted to understanding the nature of what is happening within systems. The recursive nature of the living system model that results in Figure 3 of Yolles and Fink (2013a) implies that lateral pathologies can often be expressed in terms of lower level transitive pathologies.

Orientations of pathologies

When exploring agencies from a lateral perspective it is useful to recognise that two pathology orientations may develop. They may be inwardly directed creating general conditions that affect the internal operations of the collective adversely, and they may be outwardly oriented affecting the social environment in which they exist. A collective may have pathologies that are both inwardly and outwardly directed at the same time. This distinction in orientation can be formalised, allowing us to define the two orientations of lateral pathology as follows. Social collectives may be: autopathic which is consistent with an intrinsic analysis and primarily affects a collective agency internally and therefore its internal processes or conditions, or sociopathic which is consistent with an extrospective analysis of how the agency affects others in the social environment, where the stress for the organisational sickness may take a distinctly different explanation.

While autopathology may have an unintended impact that is external to the agency, it primarily affects its internal environment. It can therefore have a significant impact on the ability of the agency to operate intelligently when the pathologies interfere with this intended capacity. It also affects the capacity of individuals and groups to operate effectively and efficiently. However, sociopathic collectives contribute to the creation of pathologies within their external environment, sometimes through strategic motivations. In general they maintain egocentric as opposed to sociocentric behaviour, and have extrospective oriented attitudes that are likely to include callousness and a conscience-defect. That a social collective is sociopathic does not mean that it is not also autopathic, so that being a member of one category does not exclude it from being a member of the other.

Transitive pathologies are also connected with cognitive projection, as we can explain. Following Yolles (2006) (who cites Piaget (1977, p. 20) in a discussion of human cognitive processes), social collectives have an associative projective capacity when

they are active in forming an image of reality, and as already indicated it involves the two kinds of properties:

- (1) an interrelation or coordination of viewing points; and
- (2) the possibility for deductive reasoning.

In (2) there are logical processes at work that enable the consequences of relationships to be determined. We have already noted that a pre-requirement for this involves the ability to develop an object conception as indicated in (1). For Piaget (1977, p. 87) object conception derives from the coordination of the schemes that underlie the activities with objects. This is in contrast to the notion of objectivity, which more generally is seen as a derivative of the coordination of perspectives. The capacity of an individual to change the relationship between object and subject through the coordination of perspectives results in an ability to shift roles (or to use the theatre metaphor, change characters). The ability to assume the role of another is seen as a special case of a more fundamental capacity to decentre or departicularise the focus of one's conceptual activities to consider and coordinate two more points of view. One of the apparent facets of the coordination of viewing points is the necessity to subjectify the object, thereby connecting one's own comprehension and deductive reasoning from actions or operations that have been subjectively assumed. This leads us to want to consider further the subject-object relationship. Subjectification has been discussed at some length by Foucault (Rabinow, 1984) in relation to power, and in relation to freeing knowledge and creating possibility (Allan, 2013). The process of subjectification may be seen as a shifting boundary problem, the boundary defining what it is that constitutes the subjective and the objective. As such the two are irrevocably bound together, and it is from this association that social action originates. The object and subject are in dialectic interaction, and this enables properties of the former to be discovered freeing knowledge of its subjective illusions. This dialectic interaction enables the subject to organise its actions into a coherent system that constitutes its intelligence and thought.

Now the real natures of the subject and object are distinct, and this very distinction is fundamental to associative projection, as explained by Piaget (1977, p. 62). The subject appears to be formulated through tacit knowledge while objects are only seen as pictures that have been theorised such that they can be interpreted. This has implications for the rise of transitive pathologies between the figurative and operative systems of the personality (see Figure 1 of Yolles and Fink, 2013a). These transitive pathologies are primary in nature, when the agency is incapable in some way of normally relating the cognitive image of an object to its operative processes within a context indicated by the tacit subject. Now, the collective agency coexists with the phenomenal environment with which it interacts. However, the object is external to its own behavioural system. As a result any of the transitive pathologies or their combinations constitutes a condition of collective sociopathology. Sometimes pathologies that arise that may be disguised through the personality orientation of the agent towards the object.

There is an obverse of this proposition. Let us take it that associative projection is a normal attribute of those individuals who populate a social collective. Within the collective it occurs through normative processes. So when associative projection is bounded because of an inhibited ability to adequately create subjective association, then the collective at least has the behavioural potential to be sociopathic.

It comes from the inability of the collective agent to recognise objects, thereby limiting the inclusiveness of the perspectives that need to be coordinated.

Autopathic situations arise with structural and other problems. Thus, for example Claver *et al.* (1999) explore problems that reflect on the development of social pathologies that arise because of the restrictive hierarchical nature of organizations and their authoritarian governance and relationships that operate through power-based leadership roles. Such environments can create emotional and rational bases for pathologies.

Another problem often comes with structures, especially since many collective agencies maintain restrictive hierarchical structures. They are the result of a political culture of the collective agency that is responsible for political awareness. For Rosenbaum (1972, p. 13) political culture is “learned behaviour”, implying processes of socialization involving the creation of values, attitudes and beliefs that influence a political positioning and the formation of political ideology and ethics. According to Hunter (2002), political culture is the normative context within which politics occur. This context includes the ideals, beliefs, values, symbols, stories, and public rituals that bind people together and direct them in common action. Political culture is ultimately responsible for political processes that establish power distributions, which act to constrain and facilitate certain types of politically acceptable behaviour. This occurs through political structure with relatable action that is a reflection of that culture’s ideals, and, in turn, reinforces that culture’s normative boundaries.

Political culture also provides the boundaries of political legitimacy and the horizons of political possibility, and defines modes of operations that reside in the political structures that are defined and that constrain social processes. These structures normally maintain political executives (in a pluralistic political environment there may be more than one executive, which can result in competition and conflict) supported by a political bureaucracy. This mediates between members of the social collective subjected to the political processes, and the executive(s). However, the bureaucracies also maintain political cultures with resulting power structures and modes of operation that may be, but are unlikely to be, a complete reflection of the social collective’s political culture in which they reside. This occurs because the nature of bureaucracy is that that it controls meaning and develops systems of administration (Mazlish, 1990).

Corruption

Another consideration that comes out of this theory is that pathology may appear as corruption (Yolles, 2009; Yolles and Sawagvudcharee, 2010). Often corruption is seen in terms of a moral imperative, but there is more to it than just this. For instance Goorha (2000) tells us that anti-corruption not only has a moral imperative, but also an economic one. Corruption has been generally vilified because it is indicative of governance that is failing to perform its chief function of limiting transaction costs, and indeed there is a direct relationship between corruption and transaction costs (Murphy *et al.*, 1993). This relationship tells us that low transaction costs encourage economic growth through institutions being able to exploit opportunities by engaging in economic exchange and transformation of resources (Goorha, 2000).

Corruption is higher where political opportunities are not realised: for example, where policies and institutions are weak (Anderson and Grey, 2006). Weak institutions do not have the capacity to enforce facilitating or constraining processes in relation to

policy provisions, or where the policies themselves do not cater for the legitimate needs that a collective has. Collectives in transition, like the countries of Asia or countries of Central and Eastern Europe, are also likely to be subjected to higher levels of corruption, though this proposition implies that the definition of corruption in each collective is the same. In periods of fast growth, formulation corruption may be exacerbated, particularly if such growth is lubricated by the provision of wealth inducing resources.

Corruption inhibits the ability of an agency in its proper development and its capacity to adapt. It is thus an autopathological condition of a collective that will ultimately impact on the way that the agency operates within its social environment. Returning to mindset theory, such situations tend to be in the prerogative of *I'* and *H'* mindset types. According to Dockens (1996, 2012), these are more prone to extremes in honesty and corruption, where in particular *H* and *I* mindscape types relate to hierarchies in different ways than do *S* and *G* types (we recall here that we consider that the *I'*, *H'*, *S'* *G'* mindset types take the same meaning as the *I'*, *H'*, *S'* *G'* mindscape types). While this understanding has been driven by Dockens' consultancy experience, it can also be shown using the Sagiv-Schwarz mindscapes: these two mindscape types (unlike those of *S'* and *G'*) have a common hierarchical trait orientation through compliance to obligations.

Another possibility of the theory we have developed is that we can assess agency pathologies in terms of a spectrum of intensity or density. To do this we need to be able to distinguish between agencies with no pathologies and those with a high density of pathologies. Identifying agencies with no pathologies may well be a mean feat. However, it may be possible to approach this. Thus, Du *et al.* (2011) are interested in the inter-relationship between generic bi-polar forces called yin and yang that are part of the Chinese philosophy of Taoism. As with Sorokin and his notion of idealistic culture, they consider that when balance occurs between yin and yang, it results in harmony or (for us in relation to mindset types) congruency – indicating the state of coming together through balance in all the traits. This reduces conflict and facilitates achievement and adaptability, when pathology density may be deemed to be reduced. Adopting the earlier noted Du *et al.* (2011) proposition and applying it to mindscapes, this would suggest that *S' H' G' H'* would constitute a highly congruent mindscape type with all of the personality traits in balance, enabling an agency to engage with achievement and adaptability. Congruency can be lost with an increase in the density of pathologies that can impact on trait balances and disturb the personality away from its natural tendency. Actually, since *I'* and *H'* mindset types constitute obverse natures for the agency as a whole, it is likely that a fully balanced personality can be developed simply through *S' H'*, which would likely embrace the potential for balance between *G' H'* as well as any other less significant types of mindscape.

It is difficult to comment at this stage of the development of the theory about the likelihood of trait balances occurring and hence an agency being congruent. If Sorokin's empirical work is anything to go by, within cultural dynamics it is much less common to have an idealistic balance than the polar orientations of sensate or Ideational culture. We cannot say the same about balance in other traits, but this would seem to be a generally feasible proposition unless shown to be incorrect. It is also a testable proposition that the degree of congruency of an agency is a function of the density it has of transitive pathologies. If Maruyama's realisation that his four canonical

mindscape can represent the majority of cognitive orientations is correct, then it is likely that congruent personalities are abnormal, just as are disordered ones.

We have said transitive pathologies occur with inefficacy in the intelligences. The consequence is the loss of agency cohesion. One aspect of this can be the development of collective neuroses (Jung, 1933). A neurosis is most simply seen as an inner cleavage that drives agents to internal conflict because of contradictory intuition or knowledge. It happens when distinct groups or factions that are part of a collective have developed their own incommensurable paradigms making it difficult to meaningfully communicate. Where the paradigms compete for domination in a social community, neurosis can develop into analytical schizophrenia resulting in the formation of contradictory organisational purposes that debilitates the organisation. Like Jung *et al.* (1916) sees that every neurosis is the result of a conflict between an agent's inherent powers and those forces that block their development. For Jung (1916), the moment of the outbreak of neurosis is not just a matter of chance – it is generally critical, and is usually the moment when a “new psychological adjustment, that is, a new adaptation, is demanded”. Examples of manifestations of plural agent's neuroses are: an employee strike against its corporate employer; the capacity of corporate managers to share information with other managers is compromised by their power seeking interests; and a riot in a prison or plural ethnic community.

To summarize, we are relating the considerations about pathologies to the model provided in Yolles and Fink (2013a, Section 2). Pathologies emerge in social systems if the networks of processes of the model are blocked or disturbed. Such blockings are shown as in Figure 1 of Yolles and Fink (2013a) by thick bars with symbols $P_i, j, i = 1, 4, j = 1, 4$. These forms of pathology are called transitive pathologies because they refer to problems that occur within the intelligences that transitively connect the ontologically distinct systems of the agency. The first of the types of pathology ($P1, 1$ and/or $P1, 2$) occur when an agency has no access to its cultural system and hence its cultural trait has no significance and so there is no controlling value system. This can result in a personality orientation with an uncontrolled ethical or ideology that has no cultural anchors. Dissociative social behaviour may also develop that is inconsistent with collective values and norms. More it can inhibit normative coherence within the cultural fabric of the plural agent, in part because cultural learning is not possible. This has major implication for the way in which patterns of behaviour become manifested. The second type of pathology ($P2, 1$ and/or $P2, 2$) can occur when the cognitive system loses connection with the rest of the personality, and hence will affect the agency's ability to maintain self-reference, to cognitively learn. It becomes visible when figurative intelligence is inhibited. Similarly pathologies in types $P3, 1, P3, 2$ may change so that the controlling influence of the figurative personality trait may not be recognised and affecting its self-regulating capacity. It may also impact on the operative intelligence within the personality, resulting in incapacity and or inefficacy in manifesting figurative information to the operative system, this resulting in decision making that is not anchored in ethical, ideological or strategic specifications. In the case of an agency having cultural instability (where there may be a plurality of shifting norms), this can result in non-coherent and perhaps gratuitous behaviour that may simply respond to the instinctive or emotional needs or wants. A pathology in $P4, 1$ and/or $P4, 2$ disconnects the behaviour of the agency from its controlling personality, resulting in behaviour that simply responds to situations in the environment.

Conclusion

While agencies may be individuals, in this paper we have been more interested in their plural nature – that is durable social collectives like organisations or nations, with a culture. The theory for this has been arrived at from a cybernetic “living system” model that allows us to examine different aspects of an agency. It is designed to represent collectives which have an indirectly observable culture and normative personality from which, using traits, one can in principle to anticipate their patterns of behaviour given a known context.

The living system meta-model we have offered has then been coupled with Maruyama’s mindscape theory through the use of trait theory. As a result we have offered a more transparent mindscape theory than that of Maruyama based on Sagiv-Schwartz cultural values empirical study. The result, Sagiv-Schwartz mindscapes, has an empirical base and greater theoretical transparency. Not only is the Saiv-Schwartz mindscape theory more transparent than the Maruyama mindscapes in their derivation, they also permit the generation of new mindscapes that explain more clearly the way in which economic agencies are internally controlled, and contribute to the dynamic for change that they maintain under different situations and contexts. The use of mindscapes can also provide powerful anticipatory and post hoc explanations for behaviour in complex situations knowing contexts.

We have proposed that personality orientation results in individual differences and arises through pathologies. These pathologies may be the result of nurture during the development period of a young agency that in due course becomes mature in a way that conforms to the corporate life cycle (Daft, 2008). Following Janowsky *et al.* (1998), they may also be the result of nature through heritability, something that is easier to explain for the collective agency than for the individual due to the fact that norms arise from a membership that is already mature. It also seems that the same argument can apply to the general case of personality orientation. This allows us to postulate that beginning with a highly congruent (and perhaps abnormal) agency with few pathologies, an increase in pathology density is consistent with an increasing loss of congruency and the appearance of a stable and representative pattern of individual mindscape types that constitute agency differences. As pathologies increase, the cognitive conditions become locally more particular to a given agency resulting in disordered and hence again abnormal personality. This modelling approach therefore is consistent with the perceptions of O’Connor and Dyce (2001) that abnormal personality can be modelled as extremes of normal personality variation, and Markon *et al.*’s (2005) wish to see the development of a single structural framework for this. Testing this is feasible within the context of the social agency, especially when using the technique explained in Yolles and Fink (2011). This has the promise of theory that can create specific multiple causal relationships between personality state (normal to abnormal) and pathology density.

To support this promise, some empirical work has already been undertaken using a tested measuring instrument for organisations seen as living systems, through an ongoing multinational Organisational Trajectory and Coherence (OCT) Project in which the authors are participants. This project aims “to create tools for modelling, identification, evaluation and diagnosis of organisational coherence, sustainability and change, addressing function, dysfunction and pathologies of organisations” (<http://octresearch.net/about-oct/>).

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Corresponding author

Maurice Yolles can be contacted at: prof.m.yolles@gmail.com