

INCREMENTAL SOCIAL INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP: LEAFING THROUGH THE PAGES OF HISTORY FOR MENTAL MODELS AND ENACTMENT STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to understand the role of incremental social innovation, with the aid of its key manifestations- mental models, and enactment strategies. Social innovation denotes a phenomenon that often varies along a scale of bringing either a radical or incremental conversion in society concerning how it accomplishes its objectives and preserves its existence in the bigger, global perspective. This shift is often backed by mental models which guide the social innovator for achieving such change and implementation strategies that reform the society. Employing a case study approach and deriving supporting evidence from historical records, this study reinforces and builds upon contemporary research done on this topic to explore mental models and implementation tactics of an incremental social innovator in historical leadership scenario. The findings of this study about incremental social innovation in Islamic society led by second (Khalifa-e-Rashid) Caliph Hazrat Umar (R.A) are based on several historical archives. These results corroborate the findings of global research in the field.

Keywords: Social Innovation, Incremental Social Innovation/Innovator, Mental Models, Implementation Tactics

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a quality that works in different ways and at different levels to achieve the desired level of compliance, obedience, or commitment of its followers. The qualitative impact of leadership to exercise influence and power may range from good to bad or vice versa. Social innovation, by and large, is yet one of the more subtle forms of leadership that brings silent, subtle, and profound changes in society. This change, then very slowly and gradually over the centuries, trickles down the posterior civilizations.

A study of significant literature shows an important understanding of social innovation. Some researches, (Richard & Mumford, 2007; Mumford, 2002), described social innovation as “the generation and implementation of new ideas about how people should organize interpersonal or social interactions to meet common goals.” In Management we can find numerous examples of social innovation in different eras and different schools. The industrial revolution brought a change. There was a shortage of skilled labor force and the only way to expand productivity was to raise the efficiency of workers. Thus, Fredrick Taylor (Sheldrake, 2003) with his time and motion study analyzed and predicted worker productivity to achieve the highest level of efficiency. Consequently, performance criteria were set to achieve organizational goals. In Post Bureaucratic Neoclassical shift, Elton Mayo (Sheldrake, 2003) studied the work environment and altered various social parameters and studied their effects on human activity levels and proposed the Hawthorne effect, according to which, employees work harder if they believed organization or supervisors paid special attention to them.

The concept of “social man” – motivated by social needs, wanting reward on the job relationships, and responding more to workgroup pressure than to management control is

necessary to complement the classical management concept of a rational man motivated by economic needs only. Theorists of this era recognize this human aspect, the relationship between leader behavior, employee satisfaction levels, organizational productivity, etc. under the basic paradigm: Individuals operate effectively when their social needs are met. Mary Parker Follette (Sheldrake, 2003) is considered the mother of modern-day management. She studied, worked on group dynamics, and proposed that there are various types of groups within and outside the organization and power comes from combining diverse talents in the groups which is a co-active power and a genuine one rather than coercive power which might not be so beneficial for employee morale and performance.

The computer Age, post the Second World War is yet another form of social innovation which brought changes to the way management solved problems using mathematical techniques, Optimization models, computer simulations, Linear programming, CPM, and PERT. Situational and Contingency Theories which are yet another form of social innovation arose due to the unprecedented social changes wherein entities like customers, shareholders, vendors, local community and employees posed different situations for managers; and managers needed to deal with various entities according to different social and changing job parameters like job maturity level and psychological maturity of the workforce as proposed by Hersey and Blanchard; contingency variables like leader-member relations, task structure, and leader position power by Fiedler (Yukl, 1981).

In the late 1970s, theorists moved from situational factors to transactional leadership styles (Yukl, 1981). But later they realized that Leaders need to change the inside of the workers and motivate employees to work together to create sustainable development and productivity. So, the concept of transformational leadership style (Yukl, 1981) arose. Stephen Covey (Covey, 2013), one of the contemporary management gurus stresses upon the need for caring for employees' minds, heart, body, and soul to win their "creative excitement" and "heartfelt commitment." He favors the concept of principle-centered leadership as the best resort to inspire followers. Big or small, practicing, or yet recessive or emerging, all and many more sorts of social innovations that are, or are not, cited here have all contributed to the societies and civilizations globally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social innovations usually occur in response to some type of social stimulus. Sometimes the stimulus occurs in the form of a problem and needs to be resolved as in the case of Taylor who needed to deal with the shortage of labor force. However, sometimes the change brought comprises total social restructuring, and for this end force and violence are employed for the renewal of the society and by taking issues with an elite paradigm. Yet, at other times, the change brought is through non-violent and softer techniques which comprise debate or contest (Specht, 1969) and training or inspiring others through preaching, mentoring, or any other non-violent means. We witness such changes on many occasions in life which are either temporary or long-lasting. Thus, the level of change brings the response initiated to that end, and the way it is brought often differs along a continuum. Specht in his taxonomy (Specht, 1969) has categorized these levels of incremental and radical changes in the society.

Social Innovators: Incremental and Radical

According to renowned researches social innovation has been described as how people should interact in social and interpersonal contexts to achieve mutually beneficial goals (Richard & Mumford, 2007; Mumford, 2002). The same authors have further described and differentiated between two important concepts in leadership literature: one being a radical social innovator and the other being incremental social innovator. The same definition of social innovators has been extended in its concept by differentiating between radical and social innovative leaders for the basic principle that innovative social leaders bring

incremental improvements in society in technical, financial, and physical domains, whereas radical social leaders bring radical changes in a society by sense breaking of maladaptive linkages of elites' mental models (Richard, 2015). Other features of incremental social innovators by the same author are highlighted as follows:

- a) Incremental social innovation is often reared in a protected environment.
- b) Incremental social innovation has the same mental models as elites, and it agrees with elites.
- c) Incremental social innovation has legitimated, coercive, reward powers.
- d) As for the implementation tactics of both (radical and incremental) directly 'collaborate' with the elite.

Collaboration

Collaboration is when individuals or groups contribute their specific shares of work to achieve a common purpose and a bigger collective goal beneficial to all parties or contributors involved in it. The major tactic of incremental social leaders is a collaboration with elites since incremental social leaders are enmeshed in their social surroundings and are generally in "consensus" with prevailing social values and goals (Mumford, 2002). Benjamin Franklin was considered as an incremental social innovator and has been researched with respect to the tactics and implementation strategies that he employed for achieving "social innovation" of his time (Mumford, 2002). Benjamin Franklin as an incremental social innovator introduced and institutionalized practically the ideas of "police force," "gentleman club," "street lighting." Franklin's social innovation has been viewed as incremental since his tactics focused on technical, financial, and physical improvements in society and he worked in consensus with the societal norms and elites.

A review of previous literature shows that a majority of research has been done incremental social leadership and has focused on their modes of intervention mainly "Collaboration" and "Campaign" in response to elite/challenger response of consensus and difference under the perceptions of social change of "Rearrangement of resources" and "Redistribution of resources (Specht, 1969). Benjamin Franklin was taken as an example of incremental social innovator with his implementation tactics of Gentleman's Club and police force, creation of subscription libraries (Mumford, 2002)

. This paper explores the Eastern and Muslim scenario as an example of incremental social innovation, which is a less explored dimension.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Applying incremental social innovation model, some incremental social innovators from Muslim history are studied with regards to their collaborative tactics and strategies. This incremental social innovation model aims at maintaining stability while bringing improvement in technical, financial, physical, social, and psychological or any other front, wherein the whole society gets involved and participate for achieving mutually beneficial goals.

Incremental social innovators are socially embedded and well placed and well-knitted in the social environment. People of the former category have mostly experienced a peaceful and easy flow in life comprising the normal course of development and growth and a well-entrenched sense of belongingness with their homes and environment within which they are nurtured. Thus, incremental social leaders mostly think about maintaining the status quo or improving society in incremental terms.

Thus, in the light of the above literature review and pertinent dimensions discussed in the conceptual framework regarding incremental social leaders, the following hypotheses are being proposed.

Research Argument 1a: As for the background for the development of mental models for incremental social innovators, it is observed that they mostly live normal and peaceful lives in their early formative years, thus giving them a sense of ownership and belongingness with their environment.

Research Argument 2a: As for the generation of mental models by incremental social innovators, since they are nurtured in a secured environment and are socially embedded in the society, they often formulate mental models aiming to improve the society and thus do not challenge its norms.

Research Argument 3a: As for the implementation tactics of incremental social innovators they directly deal with the elite or public of society.

Research Argument 4a: The implementation tactics of incremental social innovators are mostly collaborative in nature.

Research Argument 5a: The results of the implementation tactics of incremental social innovators are often witnessed by the society with incremental improvements or value additions aimed at the welfare of both the elite and the public.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach employed is qualitative research. Case study research is an empirical inquiry that thoroughly investigates a particular instance, case, or phenomenon in its real-life context using manifold sources of evidence (Yin, 1994). The research question for this study may be stated 'How and why do incremental social innovator form their mental models the way they do and continue with their specific implementation tactics? Hazrat Umar, the second caliph of the caliphate era has been selected as an incremental social leader since his contributions are viewed in history as incremental changes or value additions to the society. This paper studies his incremental changes to evaluate this mode of social innovation. Next, the conclusions drawn are matched with existing theory for possible support or modification.

RESULTS

Analysis of Results for Incremental Social Innovator

As for incremental social innovator Umar (R.A), the second caliph has been selected to recount his contributions towards Muslim society. The analysis views the reforms introduced by him as incremental value additions to the society in technical, financial, and physical aspects. These contributions of an incremental social innovator are his/her defining features according to which s/he tries to maintain the status quo (Richard T Marcy, 2015).

Case 1: Youth, Childhood, & Adulthood

Umar (R.A.) was born forty years before the emigration of Muslims to Al-Madinah in a house of dignity and honour. His father, Al-Khattab, was the chief of the Bani Makhzum clan. He was also a well-traveled merchant and a prominent personality among the inhabitants of Arabian Peninsula (Ahmad, 2014). According to Nomani (1898), Umar was raised in a secure and protected environment with a formal education in his childhood and adulthood, something not easily accessible to all people of his age. Thus, he was quite privileged to receive formal education and was among the literate minority of unlettered and illiterate pagan society (pp. 36-56).

Even before embracing Islam his valor, compassion and justice was quite exemplary. At one occasion when a slave was being persecuted by his master, Umar was passing by him and gave a hand to the fallen when his master had gone after beating him severely. At this moment the slave said to Umar that he was better of the two. His remark was based on the Prophet's ﷺ wish that Allah may make either of the two, Abulhakam (Abu Jahal) or Umar, to convert to Islam and strengthen it (Ali, 2012). The slave meant that Umar was the better of the two if he understood the truth.

Immediately after embracing Islam, Umar went to the Ka'bah to announce before the chiefs of the Quraysh that he had converted to Islam and the Prophet ﷺ and would fight its enemies till the end of his life. A fight ensued and the pagans attacked 'Umar but he bravely fought them all until an elderly man came and convinced the people to leave Umar alone. Umar and twenty people of his clan emigrated to Al- Madinah in daylight. This was an open challenge for the chiefs of the Quraysh to stop him but none of them dared to stand in his way (Ahmad, 2014).

Umar was quite an embodiment of Islamic teachings since he had been one of the key companions of prophet Muhammad ﷺ and was directly under his spiritual mentorship (Nomani, 1898). There is a well-known hadith (happening) about Umar that while he was thinking about different ways to call for prayers, he dreamt one night. He saw that a man was holding a bell in his hand and Umar seeks the bell from the man with the intention of using it as a call for prayers, but the man told him that he had something better than a bell. And he told Umar about Adhan as a way for a call for prayers (Ahmad, 2014). He narrated his dream to the Prophet ﷺ and this way of calling to prayers is what we have today.

There are several other occasions when the revelations of the Quran came in favor of his opinion. For instance, for the prisoners of war of the Battle of Badr, Abu Bakr was of the opinion that they should not be killed while Umar's opinion was to kill them so that they should not fight against Islam anymore. The Prophet ﷺ favored Abu Bakr's opinion but the revelation later on endorsed Umar's viewpoint (Ahmad, 2014). The Prophet ﷺ said about him:

"Among the Children of Israel who lived before you, there were men who used to be inspired with guidance though they were not Prophets, and if there were any such person amongst my followers, it would be 'Umar." (Ahmad, 2014.)

This case supports research argument 1a about the development of mental models for incremental social innovators. Umar fits this quality of incremental social innovator, as generally speaking, he lived a normal and peaceful life in his early formative years, thus giving him a sense of ownership and belongingness with his environment. When he saw Islam as a challenge to his environment, he was against it but when he understood the truth, he developed a strong sense of ownership and belongingness for the betterment of his milieu.

Case 2: Consultation

Umar followed the Prophet's ﷺ tradition of a mutual consultation for all state matters specifically as Prophet ﷺ had a high regard for his companions and used to say: *"Do not say anything bad about my Companions "* (Ahmad, 2014). The members of Umar's majlis-e-shura or consultation cabinet were Ali (A.S), Abdur- Rahman Bin Auf (R.A), Maaz bin Jabal (R.A), Ubaiy bin Kaab (R.A), and Zaid bin Sabit (R.A). The important intelligentsia of the companions of Muhammad ﷺ was consulted for every important and specific matter whereas for matters common Muslim community was also consulted (Nadwi, 1948). His parliament's members had equal say in state matters, sometimes had even more agency than the caliph himself. Two of his popular sayings could be cited in this stead: "No government can be established without consultation" and "Had there been no Ali, Umar would have been ruined (Nadwi, 1948)." These words are quite natural for such "closest of friends" (Ahmad, 2014.) that Umar and Ali were.

For the battle of Qadsia, Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib if he himself should take part in the march towards Rome (Byzantine Empire), to which Imam Ali replied:

If you will yourself proceed towards the enemy and clash with them and fall into some trouble, there will be no place of refuge for the Muslims other than their remote cities, nor any place they will return to. Therefore, you should send there an experienced man and send with him people of good performance who are well-intentioned. If Allah grants you

victory, then this is what you want. If it is otherwise, you will serve as a support for the people and a returning place for the Muslims. (Ali bin, 2009)

These words, spoken in Imam Ali's 133rd sermon were accepted with gratitude by Umar and he did not go himself to this expedition as Ali had advised.

Since Umar was nurtured in a secured environment and was socially embedded in the society, he may be seen as embodiment of incremental social innovator supporting argument 2a, who erred (his opposition before Islam, or his reaction on the Pact of Hudaibiya), but realized his hastiness and was often seen formulating mental models aiming to improve the society and never challenging its melioristic norms.

Case 3: Taxes

In state matters Umar (R.A), like a great example of an incremental social innovator introduced reforms and regulations. His implementation tactics are a beacon for the incremental social innovators of research argument 3a as he dealt directly with the elite and public of the society. Umar (R.A) spelled his policy for collection of taxes:

"I am liable to get from your wealth only that much which a guardian is liable to take from an orphan's wealth. If I am wealthy, I take nothing of your wealth, if I am in need then I take only that which suffices my food. You have many rights on me for which you can ask about. One of them is that neither the taxes should be imposed unnecessarily, nor they should be wasted. Secondly, I should keep on increasing your wages and salaries and guard the national borders so that you may not get exposed to foreign dangers" (Nadwi, 1948; Nomani., 1898).

It was his vision and wisdom that at the time of conquests he even exempted the taxes from newly converts to Islam in order to encourage them or to overcome the hardships they may have to face in adopting their new community and social norms (Haekal, 1944).

He divided all the territory during his reign into eight provinces in the West: Makkah, Medina, Syria, Jazeera, Basra, Kufa, Egypt, and Palestine, and three in the east: Khuraasaan, Azerbaijan, and Faris. There were chief ministers, chief accountants for the armed forces, collectors, Chief police officer, treasurer, and chief Justice for every province. However, in districts only collectors, treasurers, officers, and judges were appointed. For example, in Kufa Ammar bin Yasir was chief minister, Usman Bin Haneef was collector, Abdullah Bin Masood was treasury officer, Qazi Shuraeh was the judge and Abdullah Bin Half was chief accounting officer. He was very cautious in selecting the government officers and would always select them based on merit (Nadwi, 1948). Whenever he appointed any government official, he would give a written document which would be announced to the public at the time of his appointment (Nadwi, 1948).

Case 4: Judiciary

He established the institution of judiciary in explicit details (Nomani, 1898), and as a first step, he separated the judiciary from the executive (Shibli, 297-306). For policing in the sphere of the judiciary and whenever he appointed any judge he would give the following directive,

Justice is a very important duty. Deem everybody equal while establishing justice so that the weak should not be disappointed and the elite should not expect any favors. The petitioner was bound to bring the witnesses to support his case and if ever he is unable to do this, he should take a serious oath on his statement. (Nadwi, 1948)

To ward off bribery from perpetuating in the society, he awarded high salaries to judges, e.g., the salaries of justice Shuraeh and justice Salman bin Rabiya were around five hundred dirhams each (Nadwi, 1948).

On a personal level too, Umar had a strong sense of justice (something common in all the four rightly guided caliphs). There are many instances about his sense of justice to the

extent that once we see him forsaking food except for bare minimum need when there was famine in the 18th Hijri (Azad, 1974).

Case 5: Police Force

Umar established the institution of police permanently to maintain peace and stability in society and administer accountability to every citizen of the country. Before his time there were no prisons, but he formed them to correct and rehabilitate the deviant criminal behavior among the society (Nadwi, 1948; Nomani, 1898).

Case 6: Land Reforms

Nadwi (1948) has commented thoroughly on the land reforms introduced by Hazrat Umar. Before his reign, there was no formal way or institute for the collection of revenues and taxes (Nadwi, 1948). To establish this institution, he had to take some innovative steps which had not been taken before, e.g., he systemized the process for measurement and demarcation of land identifying them with their owners so that the revenues could be fixed for lands and collected from their respective owners. He also demarcated ownerless lands, forests, and holy places and declared these lands to be owned by the government. He would also take good care of the consents of the lands belonging to minorities for the collection of revenues and taxes (Nadwi, 1948). In conquered laws he maintained the laws relating to land according to pre-existing laws, only making corrections and improvements where necessary (Nadwi, 1948). He also took the lands from the elite landlords of Egypt and Syria and redistributed them among the native laborers, cultivators, and growers of the land (Nadwi, 1948). He used to fix a meager amount of taxes and revenues on lands and made sure that the collecting officers were accountable before respectable and honorable public representatives (Nadwi, 1948). As one of its many land reforms, any person who was able to cultivate the untilled land was given its possession (Nadwi, 1948).

Case 7: Irrigation Department

He established the department of irrigation to enhance the quality of the produce of the cultivated lands. He made the canal systems, dams, ponds, and extracted the tributaries from the main canals to distribute water properly (Nadwi, 1948; Nomani, 1898).

Case 8: Bait-ul-Maal / ‘State Treasury for Public and National Welfare’

This institute of Bait-ul-Maal had been there since the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ but Umar expanded it and established the offices of bait-ul-maal (State Welfare Fund) in every province (Nadwi, 1948). The revenues were collected from the province and then after having spent the revenues on the welfare of provinces, the balancing money was forwarded to the central bait-ul-maal (Nadwi, 1948).

Case 9: Military Reforms

Among many of the military reforms (Nadwi, 1948; Nomani, 1898) that Umar made the established vast and organized institution of armed forces on a formal basis and documented the names, ranks, and their respective salaries and privileges and established military cantonment areas for armed forces, vast stables, and pasture lands for the same. He maintained an open-door policy for inducting military personnel and did not make any discrimination in this regard based on nationality, minority, or ethnicity (Nadwi, n.d; Shibli, n.d)

Case 10: Innovations in Education

Umar established schools (Nadwi, 1948; Nomani, 1898) in all his conquered territories and appointed salaried education personnel or instructors for running the same. He made the receiving of education necessary for people of rural areas especially and imposed fines on parents who would not send their children to school (Nadwi, n.d; Shibli, n.d).

Case 11: Highways and Infrastructure

For public welfare a lot of infrastructure and construction (Nadwi, 1948) was carried out. Bridges were built, cleaning of the silt from canals was done, posts and inns, public baths were made along major highways of the country (Nadwi, n.d).

Cases 2-11 support of Research Arguments 2a, 3a, 4a. Umar may be seen as one of the best examples of an incremental social innovator, who was nurtured in a secured environment, directly deal with the elite or public of society, and always worked in collaboration with different strata of society. Basic principles of Islam like justice, valor, and equity were the basis of Umar's management and innovative leadership.

Case 12: Effects of Implementation Tactics

Since people were recruited based on pure merit (Nadwi, 1948), the running of departments and institutions was not only made transparent but also reached their limits of perfection (Nadwi, n.d).

The effects of land reforms (Nadwi, 1948) as conclusively stated by Nadwi (1948) are that the revenues of Iraq were increased astonishingly from eight crores to twenty crores (equivalent to Pakistani currency).

Trade got a lot of impetus, when, on his orders, a ninety-nine miles long canal was dug to link Nile to the Red Sea. The trade of Egypt enhanced (Nadwi, 1948) since they got a new trade route that connected the land of Egypt directly to the shores of Medina (Nadwi, pp181). The same trade route was also helpful for easy transportation of staple food from Egypt to the Middle East and beyond.

Since many of the untilled lands were cultivated and became inhabited (Nadwi, 1948), they were made fit for agriculture, and this gave a lot of impetus to the agricultural produce and general increase in the welfare of the common man (Nadwi, n.d).

Umar's ways of running the government were based on equity and justice which perpetuated the welfare of the society and guaranteed the progression and success of the same. Umar brought forty-three social welfare reforms during his ten years of khilafat as cited in Nadwi (1948), in *Seerat-e-Umar & Tareekhul-Khilafa* by Allama Ibn-AlJozi, and in *Tareekh-e-Tabri* by Allama Tabri.

DISCUSSION

This study vividly draws out the various aspects of incremental innovators with regards to their formative years' experiences, mental models, implementation tactics, and fruits and toils of such tactics. The results of this study are quite similar in content and meaning to the studies conducted in the Western scenario conducted on Benjamin Franklin (Mumford, 2002). This study has elucidated the context for the development of mental models of incremental social innovators, their peculiar styles of interacting with both elite and the public, and the practical steps that they take to implement their ideas. The incremental value additions to the society of Umar's time had not been there before in technical, financial, and physical domains. More so, just as the strategies or implementation tactics do not challenge the elite of the society but rather are taken directly in collaboration

with the elite and public both, Umar (R.A.) may be seen as a role model for incremental social innovation.

Incremental Social Innovator

Incremental social innovators are reared in a secure and protected environment and since they thrive in an aura of social embeddedness, they do not challenge the norms of society. Case one discussed in this respect supports 1a. Since they focus more on supplanting the working of society to bring improvement in existing ways of society and thus produce technical, financial, and physical innovations. More so, they rely on elites, include everyone, and work in collaboration with both elites and the public. Cases 2-11, in support of 2a, 3a, and 4a, all vigorously discussed the aspects of incremental improvements made to the society by the incremental social innovator. Case twelve concludes the results of the implementation steps taken in Cases 2-11 and summarizes the effects of these steps, hence supporting research argument 5a.

LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explores the various facets of incremental leaders from a slice of history and is extremely limited in its scope regarding the multi-faceted personality and successful endeavors of such a social innovator.

According to a famous incident, Hazrat Umar's sense of justice was exemplary for when he put a ceiling limit on dowry money being given from husband to wife (Nadwi, 1948), one woman challenged his ruling on it by quoting verse twenty of Surah-e- Nisa from the Holy Quran. To this, the second caliph Rashidun conceded and removed any upper limit on it. Thus, this paper is limited in the scope as many other critical incidents do not get discussed in this research paper. Likewise, this study is also limited in its scope that it has not considered the Western perspective on the incremental social reforms and discusses only a case of incremental social innovation brought about in the Muslim society by the second caliph. The present study conducted on the leader of Eastern origin endeavors to explore the pertinent dimensions and attributes of only one of Eastern and Muslim caliph or leader as an incremental social innovator.

Having discussed the distinct aspects of incremental leaders there stands a need to explore the manifold dimensions of the radical social innovators separately so that novel and unique elements concerning the mental models and tactics of both could be explored in more depth and breadth. More so, more research on other leaders from Muslim leader can be done to explore the topic further.

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