An introduction to Structural Analysis

Paulo Freire visited Aotearoa only once, in 1974. Many of those who received invitations to attend his sessions were already established in positions of power and authority in the churches and academia; so how did his ideas become so influential for Māori and Pākehā community development workers and flaxroots groups in Aotearoa? At least part of the reason lies in the understanding of Freire's ideas that came through Structural Analysis workshops. The tools that were shared and developed in these workshops focus on strategising for change primarily by, but also with, marginalised groups. As many of the interviews show, they have made a significant contribution to social justice work in Aotearoa. This chapter briefly outlines how Structural Analysis came to Aotearoa and describes some of the key Structural Analysis ideas and tools.[1]

In 1970 an organisation called the Ecumenical Institute for Development of Peoples (INODEP) was created in Paris with a 'simple' goal, 'to get rid of the gap between the rich and poor in the world' (Auckland Star: 15 October 1983).[2] With Freire as the founder and first president of INODEP his ideas were obviously very influential. These included the concept of praxis—the need to integrate reflection and action in structural transformation. This meant that staff spent about half of each year working in a designated part of the world and the rest of the year together in Paris reflecting on what they had seen and heard. Thus the ideas and models that they used were a constantly developing 'work in progress', with the sometimes disconcerting consequence that over time the names of concepts and the content of models changed.

In 1980 Filip Fanchette, a priest from Mauritius who worked for them, made his first visit to Aotearoa during which he facilitated a Structural Analysis workshop at the Pastoral Centre in Palmerston North[3]. Michael Elliot, Ian Shirley and others, in association with the New Zealand National Council of Churches, were instrumental in arranging for Fanchette's initial visits which occurred regularly through 1984.[4] They provided him with introductions to indigenous groups and tauiwi engaged in social change and community development work. During his early visits Fanchette engaged primarily with churches and tauiwi community workers; in subsequent visits he worked more closely with Māori. In 1982 approximately 100 people attended a five day

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[1] We acknowledge that this account is partial and incomplete—if others have parts of the story please contact us so that we can add to this account.

[2] INODEP evolved into the Freire Institute which is still very active: www.freire.org

[3] This workshop was organised by Margaret Nolan (Urban Training Centre) and Michael Elliot (Methodist Centre).

[4] For a discussion of the social context and material on the invitation to Fanchette see Adams S. (2012) Wisdom to Act: Practical theology for transformative action (pp79-89) LAP Lambert Academic Publishing: Saarbrucken, Germany.

workshop funded by the Ecumenical Secretariat on Development and held at the Auckland Hospital Nurses Home. Over the years many people attended Fanchette's workshops—though they were not always this large—and during this period people who had participated and were excited by the learning they had gained were sharing the ideas with others.

Freire's aims were to bring literacy to the oppressed and to motivate for social change while Fanchette was focused on reading the world in ways that enabled actions for transformation. Freire and Fanchette developed their work with a clear economic analysis based on a Marxist approach. In Aotearoa the focus embraced both economics and race and wealth accumulation and racism.

Freire's writing was complex and somewhat inaccessible to most people at the time. In his workshops Fanchette enabled participants to identify what they knew from their various encounters with the work of Freire while encouraging and motivating participants to share their learning. Fanchette took Freire's definition of praxis, 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it',[5] and provided tools to work with this process. These tools and processes were referred to as Structural Analysis. Betsan Martin and Kuni Jenkins describe Structural Analysis in the following way:

> '*Structural analysis in political education exposes the way systems of power in societies are organised. The various forms of oppression—poverty, the subordination of women, the suppression of indigenous peoples and non-white people on the basis of racial/cultural difference—are expressions of the preservation of the interests of those who own resources and therefore have the means to maintain their status. ... Structural analysis of oppression reveals an oppositional economy governed by the forces of mastery. It is radical education for the oppressed in that conscientisation provides new resources for interpretations of their oppression and is therefore transformative in its actions for their liberation.*'[6]

In a 1983 interview with the Auckland Star, Fanchette outlined the underpinnings of his workshops:

> '*People can spend their whole lives revolting and falling into more and more trouble as they kick against the system. But, if they understand their situation, if their awareness is raised, there can be a creative process, building a new society. ... The formula is that if you want to understand society, you start with yourself. You analyse how you think, if you are an intellectual. If not, you begin with how you*

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[5] Pedagogy of the Oppressed. (1970) NY:Herder and Herder

[6] Martin, B and Jenkins, K. (1999). Tidal Waves of Change: Divine work with Paulo Freire. In Roberts, P. Ed. *Paulo Freire, Politics and Pedagogy: reflections from Aotearoa-New Zealand.* Palmerston North: Dunmore Press. p.45

feel, what makes you happy or sad each day. You must find out where you are. Get to your roots. We've all been conditioned. Unless we look at the conditioning and distance ourselves from our situation we can't see where to go. [7]

Fanchette's fundamental approach was to begin sessions with a gathering of 'social knowledge' or 'anecdotal evidence' in relation to the specific issues or a situation under analysis. Drawing on the convictions of Freire, he emphasised that the 'oppressed', those regularly disadvantaged by a ideological/political/economic position, knew more than they usually believed. This was at the heart of the core structural analysis model the 'Wave', a non-judgmental assessment tool people can use to locate themselves and to understand the positions of others in relation to issues and change processes.[8]

This gathered data[9] was categorised according to its economic, political and ideological/social/cultural significance. Economic factors included financial influence and ownership of production and resources; political factors included who has the power to make decisions, who benefits from decisions and how they are enforced; social/cultural factors included what society believes about itself, its core values and where they come from.[10] This 'social knowledge' was then verified by subjecting the data to analysis using the IPA Code (The Ideological-Political Apparatus). Verification by groups working together involved converting the data from subjective knowledge to objective data and by doing so served to remove the responsibility for oppression from the individual to the structures of society.

The IPA code was therefore a system for locating ideological and political data in relation to cultural influences. Within this the euphemistically termed 'auxiliary class' referred to people who provided services of one kind or another in 'the system'. Members of the auxiliary class—who could choose to work on behalf of the upholders of the ideological and political apparatus or to work for people on the underside (those without choice) in the interests of social transformation—were named and located in relation to the specific issue being analysed.[11] Nothing and no one was exempt from the question, 'who benefits?' and nothing and no one was beyond critique. In developing an IPA code on an issue, it was considered essential to examine one's actions and vision and to locate these in the code. Analysis of the capacity of the auxiliary to influence the

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[7] Auckland Star: 15 October 1983

[8] A fuller description of the Wave and how it can be used is at http://awea.org.nz/introducing-wave.

[9] A simple method for expanding the collection of data has been named Spaghetti Junction by AWEA: http://awea.org.nz/spaghetti-junction

[10] Further explanation of these sociological concepts as applied to structural analysis is at http://awea.org.nz/3-ring-circus

[11] The 'Power Pole' is a simple but graphic tool for demonstrating the auxiliary position, as well as other conflicting interests; it is available at http://awea.org.nz/power-pole

ideological framework and the political mechanisms was considered essential regardless of whether or not the auxilary was attempting to change the status quo.

Another tool centred around asking the question,'Where do you get your information from? The subsequent listing of sources inevitably proved to be a revealing exercise as people identified where their information and values originated.[12] Fanchette provided a variety of additional tools to assist analysis and action planning, including: [13]

- force field analysis—where forces (individuals, corporations and institutions and even ideas) are named and given a 'weight' according to their capacity to hold the status quo or be influenced in support of change
- an analysis tool, useful for strategising as well, links the roles of key change agent, translator and early adopters [14]
- an assessment tool to gauge responses and develop actions to counter-balance different levels of opposition[15]
- a tool which is useful both for planning action and/or for evaluating the effectiveness of action applies the need for autonomy, solidarity and mobility in the areas of political, ideological and economic activity

Diagrams and other visual representations were central to how the tools were communicated and understood and were a key part of their accessibility. Collectively, these tools supported people to:

- understand and identify decision making, resources, and the workings of power—how ideas are put in place and stay in place

- identify the interactions between land, colonisation, economics and class; their own positioning and the best place for them to do their work for change

- identify the importance of 'joining the dots' between issues

- challenge dominant ideas.[16]

While these tools were being developed in Fanchette's workshops in Aotearoa they were also being 'trialled' in urban development contexts in Africa and amongst slum dwellers in Manila. In 1984 Anne Hope and Sally Timmel compiled them into a series of guides

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[12] Today in addition to print media and television, the internet and the various news and social media sources available on it need consideration.

[13] For further descriptions of these and other tools see http://awea.org.nz/about-structural-analysis and Hope, A. and Timmel, S. (1984). Training for Transformation. Books 1-3. Zimbabwe: Mambo Press.

[14] See discussion at http://awea.org.nz/amoeba for further information

[15] Responses to opposition: Give in, counter anger, attempt to hear the other; one version of this tool is at http://awea.org.nz/ladder

[16] These points are based of reflections of participants in at a Structural Analysis hui held in Auckland in 2010; an overview is at http://awea.org.nz/structural-analysis-gathering

for community workers called *Training for Transformation*. This valuable series opens with these words:

> *'Development and education are first of all about liberating people from all that holds them back from full human life. Ultimately development and education are about transforming society.'*[17]

Here in Aotearoa many of the tools are available via the AWEA website. Others are held in the memories, practices, and documents of those who attended Structural Analysis workshops led by Fanchette and later by those he inspired. As the interviews in this series demonstrate Structural Analysis was, and continues to be, a critical means by which the ideas of Freire have taken root and developed in social justice work in Aotearoa.

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[17] Hope, A. and Timmel, S. (1984). Training for Transformation. Book 1. Zimbabwe: Mambo Press. (p3)