



Complexity theory and fuzzy logic in strategic management : searching the pattern that connects

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COMPLEXITY THEORY AND FUZZY LOGIC IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

SEARCHING THE PATTERN THAT CONNECTS

John Anthony Darwin

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of Sheffield Hallam
University for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

September 1998

COMPLEXITY THEORY AND FUZZY LOGIC IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT



***SEARCHING
THE PATTERN THAT
CONNECTS***

To the seekers of truth the Buddha says:

"Do not accept anything on mere hearsay. Do not accept anything by mere tradition. Do not accept anything on account of mere rumours. Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures. Do not accept anything by mere supposition. Do not accept anything by mere inference. Do not accept anything merely by considering the reasons. Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your preconceived notions. Do not accept anything merely because it seems acceptable. Do not accept anything thinking that the ascetic is respected by us, therefore it is right to accept his word.

"But when you know for yourselves - these things are immoral, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken conduce to ruin and sorrow - then indeed do you reject them.

"When you know for yourselves - these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to well-being and happiness - then do you live acting accordingly."

SEARCHING THE PATTERN THAT CONNECTS

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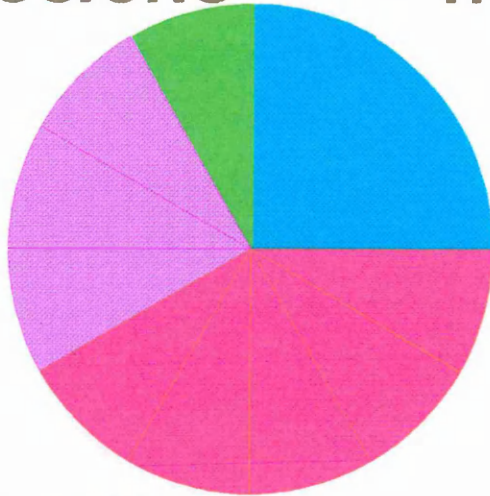
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COMPLEXITY THEORY AND FUZZY LOGIC IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: SEARCHING THE PATTERN THAT CONNECTS

ABSTRACT

The thesis begins by discussing the Modern Paradigm, which, it is argued, forms the underpinning to much contemporary management thinking. This in turn is seen as having its own foundation, the Cartesian-Newtonian Synthesis. It is argued that this does not form an adequate basis for strategic management, and the thesis then draws upon four main streams of thinking: complexity theory, fuzzy logic, the debate on power in organizations, and critical theory. The material developed from these four streams is integrated, thereby developing a number of principles for strategic management. The context within which most of the case studies are set is also outlined, by reviewing the recent history and present situation in local government.

We then turn to the practical implications. When teaching strategic management and change, a frequent response from managers is that they are comfortable with the rational planning approach, which they find straightforward in approach, and its tools and techniques readily usable. But when we get on to all this other stuff ... what does it mean, and how is it used? This relates also to my own experience as a manager, particularly in local government. The practical implications are important, and this whole thesis can be seen as an action research programme, with practical interventions enriching the theoretical perspective, which in turn has fed back into practice.

This discussion begins by considering methodology, and identifies three interlinked methods - action research, action learning and whole systems intervention. These are related to critical theory, and it is argued that these approaches provide a practice based upon the theoretical themes developed earlier. This is followed by a discussion of action research, exploring one case study in some depth, chosen because it helps to illustrate both the strengths and the potential limitations of a critical approach to action research. The work is assessed, and its implication for contemporary management are considered, drawing also upon a current action research project concerned with the roles of trade unions in the regions of Europe.

The thesis then turns to what can best be seen as an extended action research project concerned specifically with whole systems intervention. It examines the extent to which this can be developed and undertaken on the basis of the principles developed in the thesis. Five case studies are presented in which Search Conferences and/or ColourFlow Dialogue have been used. Reflecting the original remit of the thesis, these case studies have a common link in local government. Two involve local authorities directly; one concerns local government politicians and their political party, and one involves an area of local authority activity being moved into independent Trust status. The fifth has a more tenuous link with local government: it is a voluntary body which receives significant funding from Councils, but is otherwise independent; it is included because it was the first such exercise undertaken, and brought with it significant personal learning.

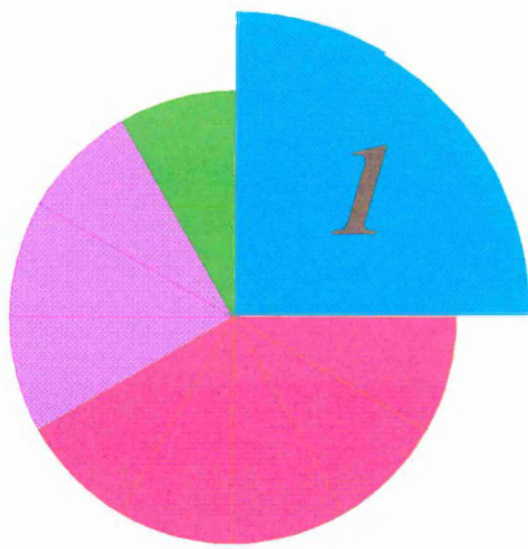
Finally, the thesis reviews the findings, considers their implications, and draws conclusions. Thus the purpose of this thesis is both to present an approach to strategic management and organizational development which is richer than those premised on the Modern Paradigm, and to argue that this is more than a set of interesting or provocative ideas - it is an approach which can be put into practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my two supervisors, Phil Johnson and John McAuley, who provided the support I needed, when I needed it.

Thanks also to my partner Denise, and to the many people who have taken part in the various events considered in the course of this thesis.

This is dedicated to Colin, who died too young.

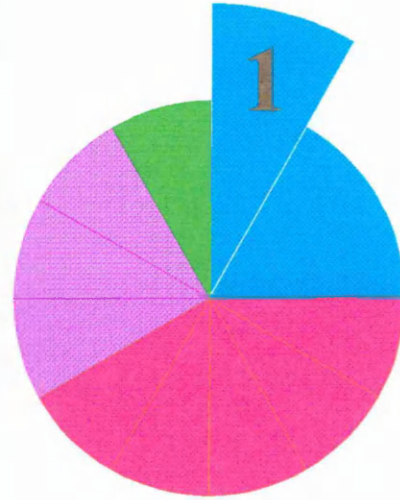


THE THEMES DEFINED

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present

T.S. Eliot Burnt Norton

Part One begins with the Introduction, explaining the background and motivation to the thesis, and summarising the argument. The next two Chapters explore the themes under debate, identify concerns about current management theory, and locate this theory in a wider context.



INTRODUCTION

Chapter One explains the origins and motivation for the thesis. It first sets out the process of thinking and discovery which led to the identification of the issues explored in the thesis.

It also includes a summary of the overall argument of the thesis, explaining the role of each of the remaining eleven Chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This introductory Chapter is in three parts. The first explains the origins of this thesis in my previous work, both academic and managerial, and identifies a number of themes, interests and concerns which are pursued in the overall argument. The second part sets out three important aspects of the 'mindset' which I am considering - in myself as much as in anyone else. The third part is a summary of the overall argument of the thesis, explaining the role of each of the remaining eleven Chapters.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGER

It may help the reader if I begin with a personal heuristic which can also explain the issues to be considered in this thesis, since this work is an attempt to bring together a number of my interests, both theoretical and practical. After taking degrees in philosophy and logic, I took a postgraduate diploma in community work, and was then involved in the national Community Development Programme, an action-research programme which ran in twelve areas in the 1970s. I subsequently worked for an independent trade union research unit in the north east, and then spent 12 years in local government. More recently, my work has included management functions within higher education.

Alongside this, I have taken an active role in discussions and decisions about the management-political interface within local government, both from a political perspective and as a consultant [on occasions combining these]. As a result, I have now been a manager in a variety of [mostly public sector] organisations for two decades. I have also been an employer, as the member of the management committee of a number of voluntary organisations, covering work with the unemployed, the elderly, the disabled, and as a Board member on several public-private companies and trusts, whose concerns have included a Science Park, product development, and the management and renaissance of a major arts and entertainment facility.

My initial approach as a manager fell very neatly into the concept of the 'rational manager'. It was through hard experience that I discovered the limitations of this approach. The most graphic example of this occurred when the Department in which I was then working was warned by the City Treasurer that, if it did not dramatically improve its financial and organisational systems within three months, he would be recommending to Councillors that it be closed down. This arose about 18 months after the Department had formed. It may well have been a hollow threat, but the Department's management team took it as a sign that it was time to address these issues seriously. Then comprising fifty people, the Department was an excellent example of an adhocracy, with a series of initiatives underway, and everyone actively pursuing and developing new ideas. Two of us, who were by then acting as Assistant Directors, spent several months identifying what we saw as the minimum systems required to meet the demands of the Treasurer, without unduly restricting initiative in the

organisation. We prepared a detailed paper setting these out, and sat back to await the plaudits. Instead a large number of brown bricks fell on our heads: we were accused of attempting to destroy the whole ethos of the Department, fatally damaging its experimental and innovative nature, and turning it in to no more than another conventional Local Authority Department.

We had completely failed to think through the cultural and political implications of what we were doing. We had focused entirely on the 'public performance', and failed to consider the 'backstage activity'. As a result it took over a year to get the systems implemented, when a more sensitive approach might have delivered results more quickly [and given us much less aggravation!] As someone trained and rooted in mathematical logic, this was an important lesson in realpolitik, akin to the lesson cited by Kissinger: *"Before I served as a consultant to Kennedy, I had believed, like most academics, that the process of decision-making was largely intellectual and all one had to do was to walk into the President's office and convince him of the correctness of one's views. This perspective I soon realised is as dangerously immature as it is widely held"*. [cited in Pfeffer 1992:36-7]

It is worth noting that the fears of damage were unrealised: the Department continued to place a high premium on innovation, though often at the expense of longer term implementation. This characteristic was illustrated about five years later when the management team of nine did a Belbin profile: six were shapers [including myself], one a chair, one a company worker, and one a resource investigator. Completer-finishers were conspicuous by their absence [fortunately, this was not the case for the whole Department, as is evidenced by the fact that one major initiative, Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter, continues to develop more than a decade after its inception, still partly inspired by officers there at the start, and is now seen as a central element in the overall regeneration strategy for the city - not least by a number of people who were once its loudest critics!]

However this chastening experience was one of a number of events which brought home the limitations of 'rational management'. Subsequent experience made me question the rational approach to strategy. Working with consultants on the development of economic strategy for Sheffield, I discovered their penchant for a neat rational, linear approach which commenced with a tabula rasa. This of course downplayed over five years of work already in place; it also showed scant attention to the cultural and political dimensions. The schemata they provided looked impressive - I was subsequently to find them in many strategy textbooks. But they bore little relationship to strategy development as I had experienced it.

This dilemma was partially resolved when I discovered Quinn's work on logical incrementalism [1980]. The approach which he articulates appears messier than simple linear rational models - but it resonated much more with the reality of the work we were undertaking.

Rationality is closely related in many people's minds to logic. Here for example is a list of synonyms from the American Heritage Dictionary of the English

Language: *“logical, analytic, ratiocinative, rational. The central meaning shared by these adjectives is “capable of or reflecting the capability for correct and valid reasoning”: a logical mind; an analytic thinker; the ratiocinative process; a rational being.”* Having trained in mathematical logic, I was already aware of the limitations of logic. Partly as a result of the experiences described above, I began to investigate further the limitations of rationality, and the misunderstanding of logic frequently found in the literature. Out of this came an interest in new thinking in logic, in particular fuzzy logic, which extended in a fascinating way the multivalued logic of the interwar Polish School which I had studied years earlier in my first Master’s degree.

Six further elements are important to this background. First, my experience of management within a highly bureaucratic organisation [a local authority employing at one time over 30,000 people] frequently reinforced my belief in the inadequacy of machine structures. I was by this time closely involved in the development of a number of partnership initiatives requiring inter-organisational work straddling the public and private sectors, and developed my thinking on these issues in the dissertation prepared for my MBA on ‘The Network Organisation’. In the period since leaving employment in local government, as part of my political role, I have attempted - with mixed success - to identify and develop opportunities for change in the local government arena, as well as in other public and voluntary sector organisations, based upon my developing understanding and analysis of new approaches to strategic management and organisational development. A number of these are the subject of reflection in this thesis.

Second, I was by this time aware of the new ideas developing in science, which contrasted radically with the dominant thinking about science which I found in the management and strategy literature. This related well to my interest in more recent developments in logic - notably those which challenged the supremacy of ‘crisp’ [two-valued] logic. These themes together formed the basis of my decision to work on a PhD: I wanted to explore their potential in providing new ideas on effective management, strategy, and organisation development. Since this original decision was taken several years ago, there have been a number of significant developments - notably, a growing literature on the application of chaos and complexity theories to management [a literature to which I have made a small contribution (Darwin 1996b, 1996c, 1996d, 1997)]. This debate has made it possible to change the approach adopted here: there is less than originally intended in the way of exposition of these new ideas, and more in terms of critical appraisal, in particular of the way in which they have been applied.

Third, this critical appraisal has identified a number of key themes to which the debate must relate. Perhaps the most obvious example is power: it will be argued that the debate to date has tended to ignore important dimensions of power and politics in organisations. Since I have been actively involved in politics [with both large and small ‘p’] for over a quarter of a century [a confession of misspent adulthood if ever there was one], this jarred. As several of the organisations discussed within this thesis are either governed by political people [local authorities] or are themselves political organisations, it is hardly

surprising that the omission of power should be a cause for concern, but there is more to it than that: power is an important theme in every organisation.

Power plays a role in the maintenance of existing belief systems - and discussion of complexity theory means discussion of the approach to knowledge which it challenges, here characterized as the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm. The latter embraces a viewpoint on control which legitimates much management practice, while one of the themes that emerges when complexity theory is applied to organisations and strategy is the challenge to control, for example through the notion of self-organizing systems. Paradigms are rarely, if ever, replaced through logic and rational debate alone - particularly when what it means to be logical and rational is itself part of the debate.

Fourth, my experience of teaching strategic management and organisational development over the past five years has been helpful in testing many of the ideas presented here with practising managers. Two simple conceptual tools which have stood the test can usefully be introduced here, because they will be revisited several times as the argument develops. They are both outlined in the following extract from a text developed several years ago to accompany postgraduate courses on strategic management.

"Coming to management theory late in the day, I repeatedly encountered a puzzle - perhaps even a paradox ! All texts stress the importance of Implementation, usually as the third leg in the model of Analysis-Choice-Implementation. They reflected this in the material presented, devoting a substantial section to implementation. And yet after reading these I felt I was no nearer to understanding what they were saying about this crucial aspect of management, because little of what was said related to my understanding of implementation in practice, which I crudely took to be 'making things happen'.

"I suggest the following solution to this puzzle. Taylor, the founder of 'scientific management', made a sharp division between thinkers and doers. Similarly, strategic thinking frequently draws a dividing line between the preparation of strategy and its implementation. I suggest that much of what is written about implementation does not cross that line. It is not about making things happen, but about setting the conditions, apparatus and framework within which things can happen. It thus remains in the domain of thinking. The only exception has been the material on the management of change, and it is encouraging to see this given greater emphasis in recent work. Yet the dominance of 'framework' material remains.

"To address this, the following argument uses a fourfold, rather than triple, conceptual structure. This is characterised by the stunning acronym IDEA : Investigate, Decide, Enable, Act. Strategic matters relating to organisational structure and resource planning [which are usually discussed in text books on strategy under the heading of 'implementation'] I identify with the third element: this is work done to enable the organisation to take action and deliver. Actually making things happen, whether in conditions of incremental change, or in conditions of radical change, falls within the fourth element. Each part of this conceptual structure links to the 'triple analysis': Knowledge, Belief and Power.

It is the meaning given to each of these, and the relative importance given to each, which characterises the differing approaches. Within the context of the Strategy IDEA all have their place - although sometimes in a way quite distinct to that used in other approaches!

"There is an interesting link between this fourfold division of strategic management and the learning cycle developed first by Kolb, and later adapted specifically for managers by Honey and Mumford. Managers may well find that their preferred role in the Strategy IDEA cycle corresponds to their preferred learning style. Since, in practice, managers need to have a role in all parts of the Strategy IDEA, this may give them a clue about the skills they need to develop." [Darwin 1995c: 7-8] [This link will be further developed in this thesis, particularly in Parts Three and Four, when it will be argued that a more fruitful approach to strategic management is one that draws upon similar fourfold frameworks to be found in action research and action learning.

Fifth, the explorations of theory and practice undertaken in preparing this thesis have led me back into earlier work and academic interests. A particular route in this has been reflection on the relationship between new thinking in science and logic and the themes arising from the application of Critical Theory to management. As should by now be clear, dissatisfaction with prevailing theories of strategic management has been an important driving force in the thinking presented here. Critical Theory proves a helpful way of structuring this dissatisfaction, as well as allowing the integration of considerations about power. It also helps the development of the relationship between management theory and deeper philosophical considerations.

The sixth and final element relates to practice. The exploration of themes such as complexity theory and fuzzy logic is interesting - but is it only 'academic' [in the pejorative sense which managers and politicians are quick to use!]? I wished to explore the practical implications, for the individual and for the organisation, and this has led down two routes. One of these has been recognition of the importance of the 'managerial mindset': in part, the implications of complexity theory are that managers can benefit from thinking about what they do, how they organise and how they manage change, in different ways to those implied by more conventional approaches - and here again there is a link with Critical Theory, which from a different starting point develops a similar argument.

The other practical route concerns method and process. The approaches to organisation development which seemed to me most consistent with the implications of complexity theory, when informed by considerations of power, are Critical Action Research and Whole Systems Intervention, the latter an overall title for a number of related methods such as Real Time Strategic Change, Technology of Participation and Future Search Conferences. This too, I will argue, relates well to the debate on the relevance of Critical Theory to management. Several proponents of Critical Theory have pointed to its link with both action research and action learning. Outlines of both Critical Action Research and Critical Action Learning have been articulated, and these can be

enriched by exploring their interface with each other and with Whole Systems Intervention.

These considerations underpin the methodological base of much of the fieldwork considered here. They have also allowed me to reconsider work which I did within the action research tradition some years ago, to see how this can further enrich the argument being developed.

The background presented above can be crystallised by considering three levels of thinking. The first level is that of philosophy, logic, epistemology, ontology and scientific method. My argument will be that any viable theory of management and strategy needs to consider these - although, as will become clear, there is no suggestion of 'firm foundations', for such a notion will be challenged in the discussion.

The second level is the theory itself - an attempt will be made to construct a theory of management which is richer than many current offerings. The third level is the practice of management and strategy: here the contribution to be made is by way of examining approaches to practical strategic intervention, as described above, which are or can be underpinned by this theory. My intention is to make a small contribution at all three levels, and this is the canvas of the present work. There are also implications for the teaching of strategic management, long dominated by the linear, rational approach, which I wish to explore - and see whether there are other ways of introducing the subject to actual and potential managers, ways which give them a deeper understanding of their role, and hopefully enable them to be better managers [which of course begs the inevitable question - what is a good manager?]

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The reference above to 'firm foundations' leads to some further introductory remarks which may be helpful. During my time discussing strategic management with postgraduates and other practising managers, and during the time spent developing this thesis, I have been aware of the extent to which the mindset I am critiquing is present in my own thinking - providing further testimony to its significance. I have seen this in three ways, and comments on an initial draft of the thesis indicated that traces of these three traits were to be seen therein.

The first is the desire for foundations. It is fair to say that part of my initial research programme was the idea that complexity theory and fuzzy logic could contribute toward an alternative set of foundations for strategic management to those critiqued in the remainder of Part One of this thesis. This reflects one of the most common metaphors used in discussions of ideas: the building metaphor. Thus Capra [1996:37-8] argues that Western scientists and philosophers have for centuries used the metaphor of knowledge as a building,

with fundamental laws and principles, basic building blocks, and firm foundations¹.

But an important part of the argument here is that no such solid foundations exist. Indeed the alternative metaphor would be that of weaving a pattern that connects strands of thinking from a number of disciplines, each reinforcing the others, but none providing the 'base'. The ideas discussed below thus provide a framework for what I will argue to be a coherent and fruitful approach to strategic management, and can thereby be used in discussion with people when advocating the value of this approach. But there is no solidity.

The second has been the tendency to slip into two-valued frames: to set up, for example, tables which contrast 'old' thinking with 'new' thinking. This has been easier to confront, but I am repeatedly reminded of the hold which two-valued logic has when working with students on themes related to modernity and post-modernity, and the implications for strategic management. No matter how much I, and my colleagues, stress that we are not setting up an 'either-or' debate, many respond with the worried cry that we are 'debunking' everything that previous lecturers have told them. This is not too surprising when we consider the use of 'contrast tables' to advocate organisational change. Thus Keizer and Post [1996] suggest that it has become common practice for organisation development consultants' reports to provide a metaphoric gap to be bridged, advising organisations to move from a 'classic paradigm' to a 'modern paradigm', the former emphasising efficiency, hierarchy and stability, the latter networks and learning. While their language is surprising [the former is more commonly characterised as 'modern', and will be in this thesis], this type of dichotomy is widespread [they provide a number of further references on this]. Two-valued thinking, as we shall see, is pervasive.

The third relates to the contrast raised in the literature between descriptive and prescriptive approaches to strategy - a contrast which again shows the dominance of crisp logic. In the course of this thesis I develop a number of frameworks and strategic techniques. While some of these are intended to help in description, as well as in analysis, none are intended to be prescriptive: rather, they are heuristic. That is to say, they are put forward as helpful ways by which those interested in strategic management can think and act [and most commonly do both simultaneously].

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

The remaining two chapters in Part One develop a number of the themes under debate in this thesis. In Chapter Two the Modern Paradigm is presented, and it is argued that this forms the underpinning to much contemporary management

¹ Thus Descartes commented: *"I was especially delighted with the mathematics, on account of the certitude and evidence of their reasonings; but I had not as yet a precise knowledge of their true use; and thinking that they but contributed to the advancement of the mechanical arts, I was astonished that foundations, so strong and solid, should have had no loftier superstructure reared on them. On the other hand, I compared the disquisitions of the ancient moralists to very towering and magnificent palaces with no better foundation than sand and mud."* [1968:31]

thinking. But this paradigm in turn has its own foundation, the Cartesian-Newtonian Synthesis, which we explore in Chapter Three.

Thus far we will have journeyed down a road which a number of commentators have travelled in recent years. One conclusion to this trip has been to return to the start and post a no-entry sign across the road, then directing travellers down a new one [which might be labelled postmodern, or chaos, or complexity].

The response here is, hopefully, more subtle and in keeping with an important element of the overall argument - the rejection of two valued thinking. It will be argued that we do not face a choice of either modern or something else - at minimum we see a spectrum of possibilities, in both thought and action. For example, the 'modern' or 'classical' [Whittington 1993] approach to strategy is not here rejected, but placed in context, its limitations indicating both where it can be used and where its use becomes problematic. In the latter cases, other possibilities exist.

In Part Two this argument is developed from the literature. Four main streams of thinking are considered. We begin, in Chapter Four, with complexity theory, centring the discussion on the concept of the Complex Adaptive System. The approach presented here is compared to that of other writers, and the role of power is delineated. The chapter then reviews the theory of autopoiesis, and concludes by looking at the contexts which managers face in their work.

Chapter Five looks at the role of logic and language in management thinking. We begin with crisp logic, and then move to fuzzy logic and other ways of thinking, including the use of paradox and metaphor. These ideas are brought together in an approach called ColourFlow Dialogue, which is illustrated through a local-authority based case study [this approach is explored further in Chapter Ten].

As the heuristic above has identified, my initial excitement about the potential of complexity theory and fuzzy logic to enrich management thinking and practice was tempered by concern about the relative poverty of argument in relation to power. Chapter Six attempts to address this by identifying four Arenas of Power, and considering their implications. The approach developed here is compared and contrasted with that of other writers. Three of the Arenas are well known; it is the introduction of the fourth, the Political Arena, which provides, it is argued, an enhanced way of considering power in and between organisations.

The next stream of thinking is Critical Theory. This, it is argued in Chapter Seven, provides a conceptual framework which helps to integrate the ideas developed in the previous three chapters, in particular through the identification of three 'categories of inquiry' - the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory. Critical theory also enhances the link between theory and practice, and points toward the methodological approaches employed in Part Three.

The final chapter [Eight] in Part Two has two purposes. First, it reviews and integrates the ideas of the previous four chapters, identifying from these a number of principles for action which are taken forward into Part Three. Second, it outlines the context within which most of the case studies are set, by reviewing the recent history and present situation in local government.

In Part Three we turn to method and to the case studies. It is perhaps worth expanding on the purpose of this Part. When teaching strategic management and change, a frequent response from managers is that they are comfortable with the rational planning approach, which they find straightforward in approach, and its tools and techniques readily usable. But when we get on to all this other stuff ... what does it mean, and how is it used?

I take this point seriously. As I have argued above, the practical implications are important, and throughout the time when I have been developing the theoretical ideas, I have also wished to explore their practical implications: what sort of method and approach to strategic management do they imply, and how can managers make use of them? In many ways this whole thesis has been an action research programme, with practical interventions enriching the theoretical perspective, which in turn has fed back into practice.

Chapter Nine begins this discussion by considering methodology, and identifies three interlinked methods - action research, action learning and whole systems intervention. These are related to critical theory, and it is argued that these approaches provide a practice based upon the theoretical themes developed in Part Two.

Chapter Ten focuses upon action research, exploring one case study in some depth. This is a programme in which I was involved some years ago. It has been chosen because it helps to illustrate both the strengths and the potential limitations of a critical approach to action research. The work is assessed, and its implication for contemporary management are then considered, drawing also upon a current action research project concerned with the role of trade unions in the regions of Europe.

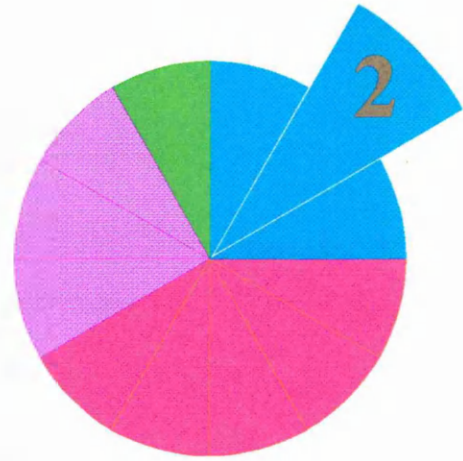
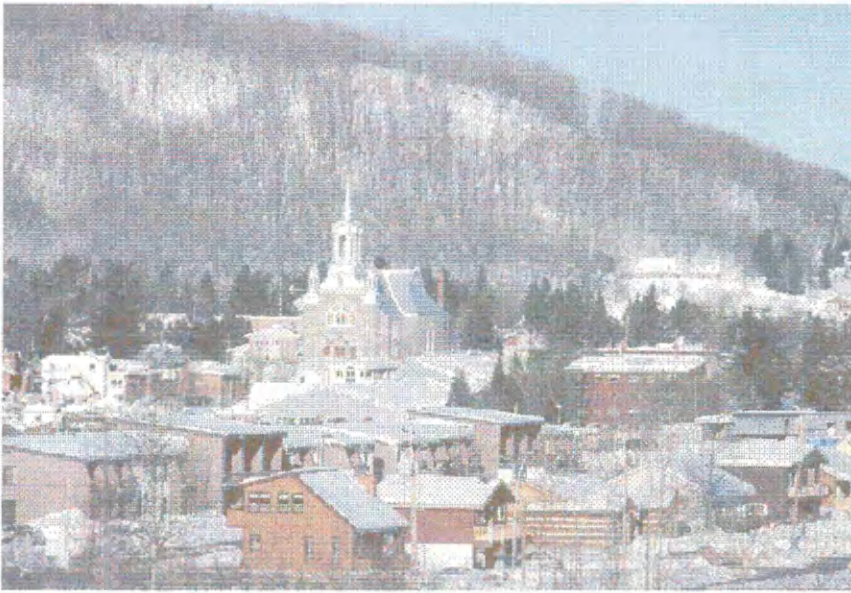
Chapter Eleven can perhaps best be seen as an extended action research project concerned specifically with Whole Systems Intervention. It examines the extent to which this can be developed and undertaken on the basis of the principles developed in Part Two.

Five case studies are presented in which Search Conferences and/or ColourFlow Dialogue have been used. Reflecting the original remit of the thesis, these case studies have a common link in local government. Two involve local authorities directly; one concerns local government politicians and their political party, and one involves an area of local authority activity being moved into independent Trust status. The fifth has a more tenuous link with local government: it is a voluntary body which receives significant funding from Councils, but is otherwise independent. It is included because it was the first such exercise undertaken, and brought with it significant personal learning.

All the case studies came about through opportunity. I was approached by the voluntary body to help them think about their future strategy, and this was a first chance to employ the methodology. In one case I approached a local authority department which I knew to be thinking about its future strategy, and offered myself as facilitator to the process. In another case I was approached by a local authority which wished to explore a key area of its future strategy [partnership with other bodies]. In another case [a political party], I initiated a programme of review and action in response to a particular problem [poor election results]; this programme then took on its own dynamic, within which I continued to play a focal role. Finally, in the case of the Trust being created, I was invited to share responsibility for taking the activity into independent status, and driving it forward in a new strategic context.

Thus all the case studies have had a strong action focus, while at the same time providing the opportunity to explore and reflect upon both theory and method, in different contexts, with different communities, to different time-scales, and with different purposes.

Finally, Chapter Twelve in Part Four reviews the findings of the thesis, considers their implications, and draws conclusions. Overall, it is argued that this thesis contributes toward the development of an approach to strategic management and organisational development which is richer than those premised on the Modern Paradigm, and that this is more than a set of interesting or provocative ideas - it is an approach which can be put into practice.



THE MODERN PARADIGM

Chapter Two reviews thinking about strategic management and organizations. It sets out what is here called the 'Modern Paradigm', explores its key characteristics, and the underlying principles.

It is argued that this continues to have a dominant influence on management thinking, despite many attempts to discredit it.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MODERN PARADIGM

INTRODUCTION

Writing about management and strategy is mostly a 20th century phenomenon. But is it based on 18th century thinking? Keynes once argued that: *"The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist."* [1936] Are managers in practice the slaves, not only of defunct economists, but of defunct scientists and philosophers?

In a perceptive analysis of current thinking on management Eccles et al [1992] identify many of the current buzzwords in strategy [see Figure 2.1]. They also argue - and we will return to this point below - that most, if not all, of these are reinventions - old wine in new bottles, with packaging and presentation the critical factors. Here we take the same starting point, but will reach a conclusion which deepens that of Eccles et al, in part by exploring also the implications of Keynes' proposition for management theory and practice. I wish to suggest that this theory and practice has been dominated by an amalgam of ideas taken primarily from economics and the philosophy of science which together constitute a sort of paradigm - which will here be called the Modern Paradigm - and which in turn has its roots in the Cartesian-Newtonian synthesis which came to prominence several centuries ago.

FIGURE 2.1: CURRENT BUZZWORDS

Globalization	Information technology	Total quality
Benchmarking	Best practices	Customer focused
Micromarketing	Flexible manufacturing	Value creation
Core competence	Competitive advantage	Strategic intent
Strategic alliances	Partnering	Outsourcing
Networks	Time-based competition	Continuous improvement
Concurrent engineering	Computer-aided design	Computer-aided engineering
Computer-integrated manufacturing	Computer-aided manufacturing	Cross-functional teams
Downsizing	Rightsizing	Flattening
Delaying	Information	Revitalisation
Restructuring	Reengineering	Organisational transformation
Business process redesign	Mission statements	Organisations as orchestras
The information-based organisation	The new organisation	The network organisation
The learning organisation	The adaptive organisation	The knowledge-intensive
organisation		
The self-designing organisation	The informed organisation	The shamrock organisation
The cluster organisation	The hybrid organisation	The post-entrepreneurial
organisation		
The post-industrial organisation	The transnational organisation	Knowledge workers
Empowerment	Pay-for-performance	Diversity
Entrepreneurs	Intrapreneurs	

Eccles, Nohria and Berkley 1992

The pure form of the Modern Paradigm was long ago shown to be untenable [as indeed, as we shall see, was the Cartesian-Newtonian], and it has been widely critiqued in the management literature. Over the years it has been interwoven with what Gergen [1992:208-10] has described as the 'romantic dimensions of organisational life', and a modified version developed which can fairly be considered as dominant in current management thinking. In its overt manifestation in the field of strategy, the core of this is strategic planning. But even more important is its covert manifestation, which persists despite the frequent debunking of 'rational, linear, logical, scientific strategic planning' [for example by Mintzberg [1994]; see also Eccles and Nohria [1992]].

Underpinning the argument here are four themes. First, managers share with many other people the need to be - and be seen to be - rational. We are all aware of the 'backstage activity' which plays a crucial role in the development and implementation of strategy - power, politics and organisational process. But the 'public performance' is rational - the argument that takes place in meetings and committees, the documents that are proposed to justify positions. As Grint argues, a convention of Western thought since the Enlightenment has been that rationality is the means by which individuals are persuaded to execute decisions made by others, or to change their opinion, attitude or behaviour [1995:114]. Coming as I do from a background in mathematical logic, I have no desire to denigrate rationality. But I want to suggest that our conventional concept of what it is to be rational is rather limited. This is not a plea for adding 'right brain' to 'left brain' thinking, or for the importance of 'intuition'. The suggestion made in this thesis is that we rethink what it is to be rational.

Second, dynamic capability has become in recent years a central concern of strategy, and one of the most important capabilities is the way the organisation's management think. The individual mindset of the manager determines how she or he reacts to new issues, shapes and understands the environment, and acts. And as information and knowledge become the most important assets of an organisation, outstretching the traditional resources of land, labour and capital, the collective mindset - organisational intelligence - also becomes ever more important. If therefore management thinking is based on outdated concepts, it may itself be outdated and inadequate - with potential damaging implications for the success of the organisation.

This is one of the major current debates in strategic management: the contrast between the 'competitive forces' approach to strategy and the 'resource based' or 'dynamic capability' approach. This thesis leans towards the latter, but this is not a matter of accepting one and rejecting the other, which would be to accept a crisp divide between organisation and environment. Rather, the argument will be that the former is subsumed in the latter - that the organisation's analysis of its environment is itself part of the organisation's core dynamic capability, which is its intelligence, and that managers need to take account of the way in which the organisation enacts its environment, and the environment enacts the organisation.

It is useful to begin by summarising the resource and capability approach, which involves:

- Identifying the resources the organisation has - both tangible and intangible.

- Ensuring that these resources are not wasted, through inappropriate use.
- Identifying ways of improving the tangible resources.
- Turning the intangible resources into capabilities - the capacity to deliver.
- Developing and sustaining an integration between these capabilities so that they genuinely become organisationally based.

The distinction between this and the competitive forces approach has been summarised by Teece et al [1992], who describe the latter approach as involving three stages. First, pick an industry (based on its 'structural attractiveness'; then choose an entry strategy based on conjectures about competitors' rational strategies; and finally, if not already possessed, acquire or otherwise obtain the requisite capabilities to compete in the market..

By contrast, they see the 'resources perspective' leading to this process of strategic formulation: [1] identify your firm's unique resources; [2] decide which markets those resources can earn the highest rents; and [3] decide whether the rents from those assets are most effectively utilised by (a) integrating into related market(s), (b) selling the relevant intermediate output to related firms, or (c) selling the assets themselves to a firm in related businesses. Teece et al extend this to their concept of the dynamic capabilities approach not dissimilar to the approach described above.

Resources are limited. Like the traditional resources of land, labour and capital, the intangible resources of knowledge and information can be expanded and enhanced through use, but in addition they can be shared without losing them. More and more, these are the basis for capability in the organisation. These competencies include knowledge, skill, experience, organisation and culture, communication and work across boundaries. Normann and Ramfrez [1993] argue that successful companies do not just add value, they reinvent it.

The emphasis on knowledge as one of the central assets of an organisation will be developed further below, since knowledge is viewed here as an element of the wider concept of intelligence. As the first step in this, I want now to relate the capability approach to the debate about 'management mindsets'. Prahalad and Bettis have set out an approach to the latter in two papers on 'The Dominant Logic'. In the first [1986], they argue that few organisational events are approached by managers as being totally unique and requiring systematic study. Instead, they are processed through pre-existing knowledge systems. They define a dominant general management logic as the way in which managers conceptualise the business and make critical resource allocation decisions: this is stored via schemas and hence can be thought of as a structure. As part of their supporting evidence, they point to the work of Allison on the significance of alternate frameworks in the context of analysing government actions during the Cuban missile crisis - we will return to his ideas in Chapter Three.

In their second paper [1995], Bettis and Prahalad extend their discussion. They relate it first to the vast quantity of information available to managers as a result of information technology. While this data should make the task of sensing change and responding effectively to it considerably easier, what is seen instead are information-rich but interpretation-poor systems. Thus we have, systems that seem

to confuse raw information or data with appropriate actionable knowledge. [It is worth noting at this stage that part of the subsequent argument will be that it is important also to avoid conflating information with data.]

They conclude that the dominant logic can be seen as an information filter. Organisational attention is focused on data deemed relevant by the dominant logic, and is filtered by this logic, as well as by the analytic procedures managers use to aid strategy development. This 'filtered' data is then incorporated into the strategy, systems, values, expectations, and reinforced behaviour of the organisation. The dominant logic thus puts constraints on the ability of the organisation to learn, and is a primary determinant of organisational intelligence.

Bettis and Prahalad also usefully link their concept of dominant logic to the concept of complex adaptive systems, which will be explored later. They see the dominant logic as an adaptive emergent property of complex organisation.

The third underpinning argument is that, despite the fact that management literature is young [relative at least to other disciplines], there is a remarkable amount of 'old wine in new bottles'. Eccles et al [1992] trace the origins of many currently fashionable ideas in work stretching back to Mary Parker Follett in the 1920s. Table 2.1 extends this analysis. [Those who would like to join the enterprise might care to try the Management Fad Generator outlined in Figure 2.2, taken from Darwin 1996c].

TABLE 2.1 : OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES	
Horizontal authority	1926
Promoting organisational knowledge	1926
Network organisations	1931
Post industrialism	1946
Decentralisation	1946
Continuous innovation	1956
Turbulent changes	1950s
Core competence	1957
Temporary task forces	1965
The new organisation	1965
Self-management	1965

Why is this? Eccles et al give part of the answer - the importance of rhetoric in the work of management. By way of example, the past is often depicted in management discussion as a more placid age in which hierarchies were able to prosper; yet this stereotype may well be inaccurate. Language - and thus ideas and concepts - are indeed the lifeblood of managers - which is why it is so important to analyse their origins.

The fourth underpinning theme follows from the above. Extending the metaphor [and with apologies to the squeamish] we need new blood - a transfusion of ideas into management from sources beyond those traditionally tapped. This will be done in subsequent chapters.

FIGURE 2.2: THE MANAGEMENT FAD GENERATOR

Why leave it to the gurus? You too can create a new Management Fad. First, think of a three digit number and take the corresponding word from each column below. Thus 218 gives Networked Operational Transformation; 390 gives Responsive Quality Management; 052 gives Integrated Evolutionary Capability; and so on.

Second, develop the fad you have chosen. Feel free to incorporate:

- New words or buzzwords [LeaderShift, Underlearn]
- Clever acronyms [for example, the SHOCK Programme - Strategic Harmonisation Of Company Knowledge]
- Additional buzz-phrases to ensure the proper ring of decisive, progressive authority [Exocet Culture Change, Downsized Realignment]

Now you are ready - hit the lecture circuit!

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
0 Integrated	0 Professional	0 Management
1 Adaptive	1 Operational	1 Strategy
2 Networked	2 Incremental	2 Capability
3 Responsive	3 Competitive	3 Organisation
4 Complex	4 Collective	4 Paradigm
5 Post-Industrial	5 Evolutionary	5 Culture
6 Benchmarked	6 Differentiated	6 Performance
7 Corporate	7 Environmental	7 Reengineering
8 Knowledge-intensive	8 Innovative	8 Transformation

PARADIGMS

This discussion makes use of the idea of paradigms, and in particular the notion of 'paradigm level'. This will be explored more fully at a later point, but for the moment we will take as the definition of a paradigm that it is *"the totality of thoughts, perceptions, and values that forms a particular vision of reality, a vision that is the basis of the way a society organises itself."* [Capra 1988] It is useful to distinguish three paradigm levels. The first is the 'paradigm' ascribed to a single organisation. The second is the overall approach to management, strategy and organisation considered legitimate by theorists and practitioners. The third level comprises the general set of beliefs, theories of knowledge and attitudes toward power on which that management approach is based.

This three level approach partly parallels Schein's [1992] approach to culture, with his distinction between artefacts and creations, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions [such as beliefs about the nature of human nature]. But it is here used to characterise much more than 'organisational culture'. The mindset of managers establishes what is legitimate, and what is not legitimate, in the fields of knowledge, belief and power [see below for discussion of this 'triple lens'] Significant advances can be made by an organisation which changes its first level

paradigm - but one of the of the arguments in this thesis is that a change at the second level will be far more valuable, and that this can only be achieved by scrutiny and reappraisal of the third level.

This is the case for all organisations. But as information and knowledge become increasingly the most important assets of an organisation, outstretching the traditional resources of land, labour and capital, the individual mindset becomes more important, and so does the collective mindset - organisational intelligence.

THE MODERN PARADIGM

'Management science' has sought to be just that - a science. Theorists have therefore sought to analyze the nature of natural science, and in particular its method, to find parameters and principles for adoption in their own work. At the same time, the influence of that social science seen as closest to natural science - economics - has been substantial, and this has been reinforced by the influence over the last decade of the 'competitive positioning' approach to strategy. It is therefore possible to suggest that three types of 'ideal person' underpin modern management thinking [most of the writings would refer to these as 'ideal men', but I prefer an ungainly turn of phrase to a sexist one]:

'Economic Person'

Economic person operates in the market place. Ideally this market place should be one where competition applies, which is to say that the following assumptions should hold:

- There is a large number of buyers
- There is a large number of sellers
- The product is homogeneous
- There is perfect information
- There is perfect freedom of entry
- There is an absence of all economic friction [Dictionary of Economics]

Economic person - at least in her/his scientific mode - also operates within the conditions of equilibrium theory.

'Rational Person'

Rational person is characterised by the property of perfect knowledge, and the ability to obtain and retain perfect information. In addition, Cooke and Slack [1984] argue that there are two assumptions about the general nature of human behaviour, based in classical economic theory; the first is that in a decision situation in a business context or at work, human beings behave in an entirely rational and logical manner; the second is that, other things being equal, the aim of the decision maker is to maximise satisfaction by choosing the alternative with the greatest value. As Cooke and Slack argue, these assumptions are simplistic. They have been modified as the paradigm has matured.

'Scientific Person'

Scientific person uses scientific method, and the source for this is natural science. An important part of the dominant paradigm in the management literature identifies what constitutes good method [see for example Kast and Rosenzweig, 1985].

There are seven supporting themes to this characterisation of the scientific approach. The first is **logic**. Scientific person is expected to be logical, although it is rarely explained what this is supposed to mean, and it often appears to be used as a synonym for 'rational'. If we take it, more precisely, as the theory of valid inference, then this would certainly be expected to apply in areas such as management decision making. Closely related to this is the assumption of **linear thinking**, which is to be seen particularly in the models and schemata which characterise much of strategic thinking, from flow diagrams to two-by-two matrices.

Third there is **quantification**. A high premium is put on quantitative methods, especially in decision making. Fourth is **cause and effect**: science involves the search to identify the time order of events; Establish causal links between variables. Fifth, there is **reductionism**, which involves the search for basic elements. Sixth, there is the **split between thinking and doing** - or mind and body - expressed by Taylor in his fourth principle of scientific management: *"A more equal division of responsibility between managers and workers, with the former doing the planning and supervising, and the latter doing the execution."* And finally, there is the concern for **control**, so evident in much management behaviour.

Vaill [1989] identifies similar characteristics, although in his case they constitute a reason for rejecting a scientific approach to management - a conclusion as questionable as the one which identifies all the above as best practice. Alvesson and Willmott [1996] link this concern for scientific respectability to power.

The characterisation of modernism above may be compared with that given by Gergen [1992:211-12]. It embraces the four aspects which he identifies: a revival of Enlightenment beliefs in the powers of reason and observation; a search for fundamentals or essentials; a faith in progress and universal design; and absorption in the machine metaphor. As Gergen argues, from these premises come views including scientific management theory, general systems theory, and theories of industrial society based on rational laws of economic organisation and development [within which we could include much of what is called competitive or positioning theory].

EXAMPLES

It is possible to give many examples of the way in which these assumptions have been played out in management thinking. In their purer forms, they underpin the whole movement of Scientific Management, including the work of Gilbreth and Taylor. The latter's basic principles include "the replacement of rule-of-thumb methods for determining each element of a worker's job with scientific determination", and "the cooperation of management and labour to accomplish work objectives, in accordance with the scientific method." Although few would claim to be Taylorists today, many practising managers can identify the features he

presents in their own organisation, and indeed Pollitt [1993] has argued that 'neo-Taylorist managerialism' underpins many of the key aspects of the assault on the public sector we have witnessed during the 1980s and 1990s. The assumptions are also pivotal to the classical theories of bureaucracy developed by Weber and Fayol, and discussed earlier.

Ford added to Taylor's principles his vision of "a new kind of rationalized, modernist, and populist democratic society" [Harvey 1990:126] in which there was new politics of labour control and management. Both Taylorism and Fordism took time to spread: Harvey suggests that it was not until after 1945 that class relations and the deployment of state powers changed to allow Fordism to come into maturity.

Grint [1991] argues that Taylorism only had a limited influence upon the USA, and its impact was to found elsewhere: one of its greatest advocates was Lenin. Certainly the Modern Paradigm fits well with authoritarian regimes [ironic, given the emphasis in the Enlightenment project on toleration and freedom], and not only state communism. Thus Bauman [1989] has argued that it is almost impossible to conceive of the idea of the extermination of a whole people separately from the engineering approach to society and the practice of scientific management of human setting and interaction. He sees the exterminatory version of anti-Semitism as a thoroughly modern phenomenon: something which could occur only in an advanced state of modernity.

Turning to a less horrifying example, consider the schemata beloved of the Strategic Planning approach [for example Bryson 1987], which illustrate two key themes:

- Linearity, and cause-effect, with each stage following from the previous one
- The separation of analysis/choice from implementation, which again flows from Taylor's fourth principle. It is this thinking which leads to the Analysis-Choice-Implementation division of strategic management, with the third element focusing on enabling - setting the structures and resource allocation within which the workers will faithfully execute the wishes of the managers.

The primary alternative to the rational approach offered in the textbook literature on strategic management is the emergent, process approach advocated by Mintzberg. Grant's treatment of this is illustrative, and worth quoting in full. He summarises Mintzberg's 'crafting', and then comments: *"The approach of this book is to follow a rationalist, analytical approach to strategy formulation in preference to the 'crafting' approach advocated by Mintzberg. This is not because I regard planning as necessarily superior to crafting - planning in any detailed sense is not what strategy is about. ... Strategy development is a multidimensional process that must involve both rational analysis and intuition, experience, and emotion. However, whether strategy formulation is formal or informal, whether strategies are deliberate or emergent, there can be little doubt as to the importance of systematic analysis as a vital input in the strategy process. Without analysis, the process of strategy formulation, particularly at the senior management level, is likely to be chaotic, with no basis for the comparing and evaluating of alternatives. ... The danger of the Mintzberg approach is that by downplaying the role of systematic analysis and*

emphasizing the role of intuition and vision, we move into a Shirley MacLaine world of New Age mysticism in which rationality is devalued.” [Grant 1995:20-21]

The assumptions of the Modern Paradigm are also present in theories of management decision making, when presented as a linear and logical process through the stages of option generation, analysis [against such criteria as suitability, feasibility and acceptability], and choice of the optimum option which results.

Indeed we can bring together these approaches to management, strategy and decision making in the overall concept of technocracy, which Fischer [1990] sees as originating in the Enlightenment ideology, and involving a system of governance in which experts rule by virtue of their specialised knowledge and position. It is *“fundamentally founded on an unswerving belief in the power of the rational mind to control societal change in constructive directions”* [ibid.:41-2]. Technocracy is logical, instrumental and orderly, seeking ‘true knowledge’ through the neopositivist method. All this gives ‘technocratic man’ “legitimation for his own rapacious appropriation of the physical world” [ibid.:44]. In other words, technocracy is the Modern Paradigm in action, weaving an integrated view of Knowledge, Belief and Power, the latter involving an authoritarian perspective [the rule of the wise].

Finally, important features of our three ideal persons manifest themselves in the approach to strategy which focuses on competition and positioning in the competitive market environment. But here a fourth person enters to make a quartet. This is Evolution Person, characterised by concern with survival of the fittest in hostile environments.

CONCERNS

It may be fair to argue that no one has adhered to the purest form of this thinking since the time of Gilbreth and Taylor. Numerous limitations in applying it to the ‘real world’ have been recognised, including the lack of perfect competition, perfect knowledge and information; and the rarity of the conditions under which it might actually be possible for managers to operate in a rational and maximising way in their decision making

One key development has been the notion of limited rationality. A second key concept to emerge is that of satisficing. For Simon ‘management’ is equivalent to ‘decision-making’. On what basis do administrators make decisions ? In place of ‘economic man’ Simon proposes a model of ‘administrative man’, who satisfices. Another consequence of the limitations to the pure approach was the emergence of ‘Muddling through’, Lindblom’s description of ‘reality’, and Quinn’s Logical incrementalism.

The softening of the pure scientific method, with its strong mechanistic overtones, has led to the desire to include the ‘human’ element, through the human relations school, which has sought to humanise the machine, and to raise the profile of organisational culture as an element on which theory and practice should focus.

The limits of linearity have been recognised, and this has most characteristically resulted in a circular approach to Decision making and to Strategy. The articulation of these, however, continues to follow the sequence Analysis - Choice - Implementation. The paradigm has also been modified through the recognition of what managers really do. One consequence of the above has been a sharper distinction between the positive/ descriptive and the normative/prescriptive.

The pure paradigm, with its focus on the equilibrium state, had obvious difficulties in the face of the increasing recognition of the importance of the environment. One consequence has been open systems theory, based on characteristics including steady state and the balance of maintenance and adaptive activities. The environment, however, continues to be 'out there', and to cope with this, static equilibrium is replaced by dynamic equilibrium [Hodgetts and Kuratko 1990]

The second major form of modification to the 'pure' form of scientific management has been the attention paid to the human factor, leading to the human relations perspective. This has been both as a way of managing and as a way of providing a richer account of what is happening in organisations. Thus Anthony [1986] refers to two principal accounts of management now available. 'Official theory' is the classic account of management as rational purposive activity directed at the efficient achievement of goals usually determined in economic terms. 'Real theory' recognises the role of self-protective behaviour, of the way people construct their own priorities and agendas, spend their time in brief unscheduled conversations, develop and maintain wide personal networks.

The human relations perspective can also be seen as a more sophisticated form of management control than that offered by Taylorism and Fordism. Fischer points to the number of studies showing that the Hawthorne experiments were either unscientific or inconclusive, and asks why they nevertheless occupy such a hallowed position in management thinking. He quotes Rose to provide the answer: *"What, after all, could be more appealing than to be told that one's subordinates are nonlogical; that their uncooperativeness is a frustrated urge to collaborate; that their demands for cash mark a need for your approval; and that you have a historical destiny as a broker of social harmony?"* [in Fischer 1990:134].

OUTCOME

This gradual enrichment of the traditional paradigm has led to the debate on whether there is 'one best way' or the need for a contingency approach, and to the recognition of the legitimacy of multiple approaches. But underlying these themes are a number of shared values:

- They recognise the problematic nature of the pure scientific approach
- They accept the importance of strategic planning/design, but recognise its cyclical nature
- They take for granted the importance of competition, and accept the merits of extending this throughout the economy, through privatisation and internal markets
- They accept the importance of organisational culture, most frequently through shared vision, common purpose, and mission statements
- They desire humanised bureaucracies and organisations

- Organisations are seen as open systems, interacting with and adapting to their environment

By way of summary of the above, Table 2.1 attempts to indicate the way the traditional paradigm has been developed on a number of dimensions into the paradigm currently accepted as the basis of management theory and practice. These added or altered dimensions reflect the human relations movement, open systems theory and the contingency approach. This is an important paradigm, not to be discarded easily. It provides a valuable structure within which management theory can be explored and explained. But ultimately, its propositions are best seen in the same way as Wittgenstein characterised his arguments in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: *"My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright."* [1921: 151]¹

TABLE 2.2 CHANGES IN THE MODERN PARADIGM	
ORIGINAL	MODIFIED
Rationality	Bounded rationality
Maximisation	Optimisation or satisficing
Rational decision making	Be as rational as possible, or use post hoc rationalisation
Rational design	Logical incrementalism
Linear	Circular or cyclical
Linear design	Open systems
Static equilibrium	Dynamic equilibrium / Homeostasis
Scientific method	'Art and Science'
Logical	Logical and intuitive
Quantification	Quantification where possible
Hard	Soften

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

Thus far we have focused on adaptations to the Modern Paradigm. But interwoven with this has been the frequent espousal of principles and practices which are seen to reject it - the Romantic approach characterised by Gergen [1992], who argues that organisation theory has drawn from two hegemonic bodies of discourse. First, theories have been enriched and informed by romanticist discourse of the

¹ This quotation, and Table 2.1, illustrate the comment in the Heuristic about the power of crisp logic, and the desire to put forward a prescriptive 'old ways bad, new ways good' argument. Recognising this problem I have ceased using Wittgenstein's comments in discussions with managers and students. I have kept it here, both as illustration and because it continues to serve as a provocation to think through the implications of removing foundations.

nineteenth century, and second, by the modernist understanding of the person dominant within the twentieth century. The former he identifies in the work of the Tavistock Institute, Mayo, Maslow, McGregor and others. The 'dead hand' of bureaucracy, the limitations of hierarchy, the negative consequences of a Theory X view of people - all these are seen to be consequences of the slavish implementation of Taylorist or neo-Taylorist theory.

Alternatives [such as those listed by Eccles and Nohria] are proclaimed, and if they can be shown to take a swipe at poor Frederick, then so much the better [see for example Lorenz, Financial Times 1993]. The distinction between the 'Control' and the 'Commitment' approach is one which a number of writers have delineated [Walton 1985]. The seductive power of 'the new' is both strong and profitable - the degeneration of management theory into fads and hype may seem a small price to pay for the consultancies that flow .

But beneath the heady excitement of novelty comes the sobering recognition that there is little new in the hype. Thus Eccles et al [1992] recall the work of Mary Parker Follett, suggesting that her discoveries in the 1920s are quite similar to the kinds of lessons that are today packaged as 'cutting edge'. They identify five clichés of the new organisation:

- 1 Smaller is better than larger
- 2 Less diversification is better than more
- 3 Competition must be replaced by collaboration
- 4 Formal authority must be diminished
- 5 Time cycles must become shorter

They then give many examples of the long lineage of these ideas, including networks organisations, a reference I find particularly salient, having researched in 1991 what I thought to be new thinking on organisations for my MBA dissertation. The lineage of this idea [the network organisation] gradually unfolded. To the list above may be added Emery and Trist's comparison of longwall and continuous mining methods in 1951. A book on 'Tomorrow's Organisations' published in 1973 [Jun and Storm] also offers some fascinating insights into the principle that packaging has become more important than content, with its emphasis on the importance of self-management.

Forester [also in 1965] identifies these characteristics of the new organisation

- Elimination of the superior-subordinate relationship
- Individual profit centres
- Objective determination of compensation
- Policy making separated from decision making
- Restructuring through electronic data processing
- Freedom of access to information
- Elimination of internal monopolies
- Balancing reward and risk
- Mobility of the individual
- Enhanced rights of the individual
- Education within the corporation

STRATEGIC PLANNING RULES OK

Despite these many examples of 'new thinking', stretching over many years, the following comments are not untypical. *"Hierarchy still rules corporate life"* [Harvard Business Review: Survey of 12,000 managers, May 1991] *"Part of the problem is that [companies] still measure themselves by classical input-process-output methods, based on Frederick Taylor's ideas from a century ago"* [Economist 1993]

One reason why the 'old habit' of 'scientifically based' rational management retains its power is its educational value. Roberts [1996:56] comments that there are practical interests at work for the teacher that tend to push him or her towards the transmission of knowledge as fact. But there is also the continued evidence of the Modern Paradigm in action. Ritzer [1996] has identified the late 20th century successor to Fordism: McDonalidization. Ritzer identifies four alluring dimensions which lie at the heart of the success of the McDonald model: efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. Subtle control is exercised over the customers, while those who work in such organisations are also controlled to a high degree, often more directly than customer.

Critical to the global sweep of McDonalidization is the support it receives from the customer - people appear to want this predictability, and thereby promote the whole approach. Thus, one of the many examples Ritzer gives is higher education, and recent personal experience has reinforced this. Following the untimely death of a colleague, I found myself the leader of a final year undergraduate course involved nearly 400 students and eight tutors. The pressures toward standardization and predictability were very strong - students in one seminar group would check what their colleagues in other seminar groups had been told by their tutors, and express concern if they perceived any difference. The most graphic illustration came when one tutor warned me that when asked if a particular question would be appearing on the exam paper, he had blushed - and he was now concerned that students would take this as confirmation [as indeed it was] and that others might then object that they had not been privy to this "information".

The roots of McDonalidization in the Modern Paradigm are unmistakable. As Ritzer recognises, his argument provides a healthy challenge to those who see us now within an entirely postmodern world. McDonaldism embraces both modern and postmodern elements.

A further important manifestation of this paradigm, thoroughly embracing the fourth of his tenets of scientific management [involving the separation of thinkers from doers] is strategic planning, with its basis in rational design. One of the most persistent critics of this has been Mintzberg. He supports Dror in arguing that a central concern is the desire for control, which we can couple with concern about the consequences of dynamic environments which *"threaten to crush them at every turn"* [Grint 1995:66]

Why, Mintzberg asks [1994], does the planning school make such a fuss about turbulence, the very thing it cannot handle? It would be possible, as Grint argues, to choose a different representation of the environment and the actions it implies of

the manager. But the strategic planner takes a different course [hardly surprising, as s/he would eschew any suggestion that the environment has been created]. Mintzberg suggests that planning is so oriented to stability, so obsessed with having everything under control, that any perturbation at all sets off a wave of panic and perceptions of turbulence. He identifies four assumptions behind strategic planning: those of formalization, of detachment, of quantification and of predetermination.

These, it will be noted, relate closely to the seven characteristics of the Modern Paradigm cited earlier. If people believe that strategic planning is the 'right' way to do things, then it is hardly surprising that it remains so popular, whatever Mintzberg and others say. This is particularly notable in the public sector, where 'strategy' and 'strategic planning' are frequently used interchangeably in discussions, and where 'neo-Taylorist managerialism' [Pollitt 1993] has become an important factor.

More recently, as we have seen, the management 'gurus' have put considerable stress upon the 'coming of the new organisation'. Although each may advocate this as a new idea, it is arguable that they have tended to be little more than a variation of Burns and Stalker's divide between the Mechanistic and the Organic.

"OLD"	"NEW"
Mechanistic	Organic
Hierarchy	Network
Modern	Postmodern
Entrepreneurial	Post-Entrepreneurial
Fordist	Post-Fordist
Taylorist	Post -Taylorist

Earlier we identified the way that this practice of repackaging, often on a cyclical basis, the old as 'brand new' extends throughout management. The great fashions [or fads] which sweep management thinking at intervals have usually incorporated elements of a new approach: for example, Peters and Waterman's rejection of rational planning in favour of 'strong culture' organisations, the push for Total Quality Management, or the current pursuit of Business Process Reengineering [on the latter, see Grint 1995, Chapter Five]. The underlying prescription is that the world built on the beliefs of Taylor, Weber, Ford and Fayol - the Control and Command Economy - is dead. The mechanistic organisation must be superseded by one which is 'alive', which is adaptive, empowers its workforce, liberates its management, replaces control with commitment, is more democratic, is a learning organisation.

There are of course examples of organisations moving toward a different way of working, and managers adopting new methods. But despite this many organisations remain mechanistic and bureaucratic, and many managers cling to traditional concepts of good management and planning. 'Liberation' finds its counterposition in the need for scrutiny. Freedom is contrasted with the need for

accountability [especially in the public sector]. Linear, rational planning remains strong, as does 'logical' decision making based on ever more powerful quantitative tools. Competitive/positioning strategy remains focused on the use of rational tools, often derived from neo-classical economics. Human Resource Management appears as another form of control, albeit more subtle and 'humanised'.

The question that arises therefore is why this shift in thinking is so prominent in the literature, stretching back over 25 years, but so little evident in practice. There are many possible explanations, of which I would like to focus here upon four, each of which helps paint the picture.

First, it can be argued that although these changes have been advocated for many years, it is only now that they are becoming possible. Information Technology is seen as of particular importance to this, and it is argued that technological development has at last reached the stage where it can and will have a substantial effect on organisations [this is the argument, for example, of Tapscott and Canton 1993]. Linked to this is the view that change is happening, but it is not yet very evident. This explanation considerably overplays the role of technology: as we have seen, the developments advocated were seen to be quite feasible years ago, when information technology was of a much more primitive nature. It is the argument of 'technological fix', and in its technocratic aspects its lineage goes straight back to the Cartesian-Newtonian Synthesis which we explore below.

Second, there is the argument that much of the debate is rhetoric [the thesis of Eccles and Nohria]. Allied to this argument is the view that much of management thinking occurs in cyclical fads: swinging between centralisation and decentralisation, between single and multiple financial centres, between focus on the core and expansive organisational policies.

This argument takes no account of the role of the Modern Paradigm, although it undoubtedly helps to explain the role of management fads. It should be noted that the argument of Eccles and Nohria is subtle: they seek to move 'beyond the hype' by developing an action perspective on management underpinned by three key elements: rhetoric, action and identity.

Third, it can be seen as closely linked to resistance to change. Like any major change, there is resistance from those with most to lose - and in this case proposals have been put forward which have substantial implications for large swathes of managers, in particular middle managers. Delaying and management downsizing do not necessarily prove attractive to those who may thereby find themselves occupationally challenged.

Fourth, there is the argument that changes are being seriously attempted, but they are being done in organisations where the dominant paradigm remains based, ultimately, on the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm [in line with the comment of Keynes at the start of this chapter]. For example, if those who advocate empowerment nevertheless believe, fundamentally, that control is essential to prevent abuse, then the results may not be effective.

A variant of this fourth argument focuses upon the role of management fads. Thus Gill and Whittle identify several themes: the role of consultants with 'cure-all' products; the arguments of Tichy that the prevailing belief system of American managers seems to be dominated by the grand strategy or bold vision which is high on masculinity and status and perhaps low on reflection and learning; the anti-intellectualism involving *"a regression to check lists and eight-point plans typified by Peters and Waterman's In Search of Excellence"* [1993:290] More fundamentally, they look to psychoanalytic factors, drawing upon the work of Kets de Vries and Miller. Thus the 'dramatic' organisation is characterised by boldness, risk-taking and a fascination for techniques and new methods. What emerges here is a picture of chaos very different to the one to be considered later in this paper - *"uncertainty, constant frenetic activity and unrelenting pace, fear of losing ground to competitors, the inability to reflect for more than a few minutes are the costs of a role interpretation which is coming to be increasingly valued in western, middle-class, managerial cultures."* [1993:291-2]

TRIPLE ANALYSIS

The four arguments above are not mutually exclusive, and it is possible to develop a theory of change rooted in the fourth, but taking account of valid elements of the other three. There is however an added dimension to be considered before doing so. At a number of points in this thesis a multiple perspective approach will be used, in part to escape the trap of relying on a single 'rational' approach to decision making. This idea, introduced earlier, originates in the study by Graham Allison in 1971 of the United States' response to the Cuban missile crisis. He considered it from three perspectives: the 'rational actor' model, an 'organisational process' model, and a 'bureaucratic politics' model. A number of writers have embellished this theme, and modified the concepts, but the threefold model has remained largely intact. As used here, the three 'lenses' are Knowledge, Belief and Power.

Using this triple analysis we can recast the debate thus far as follows. The Modern Paradigm [like the Cartesian-Newtonian Synthesis to be explored below] incorporates an epistemology and scientific method which are considered to be the basis of sound Knowledge. This therefore provides a Belief system which managers can adopt. A crucial element of this is the view of Power: power is seen as control - over nature, over machines, over systems, over people, over the future.

However the Belief system is not unproblematic. We have already seen the many modifications made to the original Paradigm in the light of its failure to fit what *is*. But, it may be argued, it continues to reflect what *should be*. This distinction between the positive and the normative is a strong vein running through management theory, with rational planning modes tending to reflect the latter. A common practice in management is post hoc rationalisation, as Mintzberg, Quinn, Eccles and Nohria have all identified.

Stacey argues that the following characterises what managers say about strategic choice:

- Leaders of organisations should set objectives, make statements of mission, articulate vision, dreams or intents
- The leaders should inspire all members of the organisation to believe in the vision
- Strategic management requires action, embodied in a long term plan which sets out the route to the goal
- The purpose of strategic management is to match the company's capabilities to the requirements of its customers in a more effective manner than the competition
- Success flows from
 - * Developing a clear vision of where and what we are to be as an organisation in the long term future
 - * Analysing information on how and why the environment is changing and will change in the future
 - * Continuously matching our competitive capability to the change, maintaining a dynamic equilibrium so that we continue along our predetermined path to the future
 - * Inspiring and enthusing everyone in the organisation to commit to the vision and work together as a closely knit team with strongly shared cultural norms [Stacey 1991: 10-11,19]

But is this what managers actually believe? Consider Schwartz's experiment with a class of students [1990]. He described two types of organisations. One type was a textbook organisation, operating like a clock: everybody knows what the organisation is all about and is concerned solely with carrying out its mission; people are basically happy at their work; the level of anxiety is low; people interact with each other in frictionless, mutually supportive cooperation; and if there are any managerial problems at all, these are basically technical problems, easily solved by someone who has the proper skills and knows the correct techniques of management. The other type, the 'snakepit' organisation, is the opposite. Here, everything is always falling apart, and people's main activity is to see that it doesn't fall on them; nobody really knows what is going on, though everyone cares about what is going on because there is danger in not knowing; anxiety and stress are constant companions; and people take little pleasure in dealing with each other, doing so primarily to use others for their own purposes or because they cannot avoid being so used themselves. Managerial problems here are experienced as intractable, and managers feel that they have done well if they are able to make it through the day.

Schwartz outlined these alternatives to his students, and asked them to indicate which type of organisation more closely approximated the picture of the organisation they knew best. The results were dramatic. Approximately three quarters of the students responded, and of those virtually all indicated that the snakepit model fit better. [I have done the same experiment a number of times with MBA classes, getting very similar results.]

My own experience has been similar: management meetings, for example, are frequently attended not for positive reasons, but out of fear of what might happen if you are not there. Three year plans are developed and then abandoned within

three months. The most significant new developments may be ones not contained in any plan [to give a single example, the plan for the future of Sheffield, developed with countless hours of work in the 1980s, identified the land at Meadowhall for manufacturing industry. Then along came Paul Sykes with thoughts of a shopping centre ...]

Schwartz's further comments are also relevant: he found that, irrespective of this result, his students wanted to know the techniques for managing clockworks. He concluded that the idea of the clockwork organisation had much more than pragmatic significance for them. It was rather an article of faith. I would put a different slant on this, based on my own discussions with managers: the clockwork is a form of security. Faced with uncertainty, and the need for 'proven tools and techniques with which to cope', they retreat to the Modern Paradigm.

The clockwork picture is of course derived from the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm, and is part of a belief system about what should be, based on the beliefs held about that Paradigm. This is strongly reinforced by the prescriptions on power which are integral to the Paradigm, and give legitimacy to the use of power by managers. [Thus the divide is not as neat as Schwartz' metaphors would suggest - and it has proved important when discussing his approach to emphasize that it serves also as an illustration of the power of the dichotomy.]

The Knowledge base of the Paradigm and the Paradigm has been severely undermined in the last century, although following Keynes we would argue that this does not imply a change in the Belief system [and we should bear in mind that many of the implications of modern science appear both counter-rational and counter-intuitive, while the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm continues to explain perfectly adequately much that we see in every day life - how many of us, for example, use non-Euclidean geometry, or find it easy to envisage the coastline of Britain as a fractal with a dimension of 1.25 - about a quarter of the way between a line and a plane?]

Equally important, as we shall see, the most enthusiastic protagonists of the 'new science' in management adopt an apolitical approach, neglecting many of the implications of Power. Extending the third of the arguments above to all in management, how realistic is it to expect them to abandon bases of power on the grounds that their scientific perspective is outdated?

The argument to be developed in this thesis seeks to provide an approach to strategic management integrating new scientific insights. It would be naive however to think that this will be adopted because it 'makes sense'. Part of our earlier argument about the weaknesses of the rational approach to management has been a critique of precisely this naiveté - the belief that good rational arguments will prevail, irrespective of people's belief systems and power relationships [a belief which incorporates the view that there is a single rationality].

Despite the partial development of alternatives put forward by a number of authors, the Modern Paradigm remains so strong that it acts as a fundamental determinant of management and organisational activity. It provides a strong underpinning to concerns about loss of control, about the consequences of 'letting go'.

Management control systems are maintained and developed because there is fear of the alternative - of things 'getting out of control' leading to chaos - as well as a desire not maintain control. In the public sector the imperatives of expenditure restraint and public accountability provide powerful arguments for the maintenance of control. Distrust also has empirical support - the reality of abuse following relaxation of monitoring systems, and this again is a particular concern in public bodies [the 'sleaze factor' is only one manifestation of this].

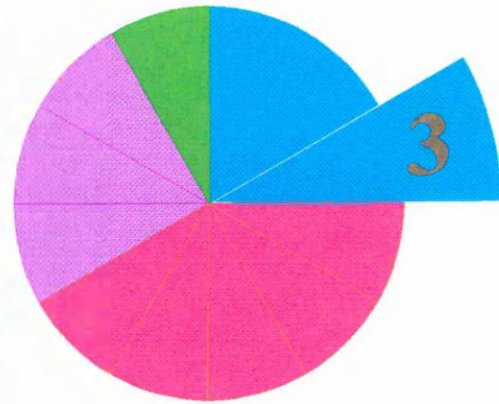
The argument here is that these concerns are reinforced by a now-outdated perception of science and rationality, which sees control as both possible and desirable. The extent to which this is rooted in human thought can be seen by considering the work of Argyris, and in particular his two works, co-authored with Schön, on Organisational Learning. In these they consider the *"theories of action with which most people are acculturated in modern industrial societies"* [1978:4] They find that *"when human beings deal with issues that are embarrassing or threatening, their reasoning and action conform to a particular models of theory-in-use which we call Model I"* [1996:92] This model has four 'governing variables', or values, that actors strive to satisfy through their actions:

- 1 Define goals and try to achieve them
- 2 Maximize winning and minimize losing
- 3 Minimize generating or expressing negative feelings
- 4 Be rational *"This is the counterpart to value 3. It is an injunction to be objective, and intellectual, and to suppress feelings. Interactions should be construed as objective discussions of the issues, whatever feelings may underlie them."* [1996:93-4]

The action strategies adopted to satisfy these governing variables are:

- 1 Design and manage the environment unilaterally
- 2 Own and control the task
- 3 Unilaterally protect yourself
- 4 Unilaterally protect others from being hurt

In another work on the subject Argyris states *"Our hypothesis is that Model I has been learned through socialization. This hypothesis ... has yet to be proven directly."* [1992:26] Argyris and Schön argue that the methods of organisational learning in most organisations are embedded in this Model, with harmful consequences that reinforce single-loop learning and irrational behaviour. They then develop an alternative Model [O-II], which they acknowledge to be rare: *"Neither of the authors knows of an organisation that has a full developed Model O-II learning system"* [1996:112] We will return to this in a later chapter, but for the moment what is important to note is the relationship between the values underpinning Model I and the tenets of the Modern Paradigm. In each we see the imperative to control - self, others, the task, the environment - and to be rational. Model I, Argyris argues, *"is held by all of the individuals studied so far."* [1992:26] If we accept his hypothesis, then it is worth asking why this socialization takes place. An important reason, argued here, is the web of ideas about what it is to be rational, reasonable and scientific - and thus, in the present context, an effective organisational worker. This web is explored further in the next chapter.



THE CARTESIAN NEWTONIAN SYNTHESIS

Chapter Three explores the scientific principles which underpin the Modern Paradigm, and which stem from the emergence of modern scientific thinking in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, as part of the 'Enlightenment Project'. The scope of this thinking, and its limitations, are considered.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CARTESIAN NEWTONIAN SYNTHESIS

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter considers the roots of the management thinking identified in Chapter Two, and finds these in the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis. It is important to emphasise three points on this. First, scientific method is only one element of the 'Enlightenment Project' - there is much else in that which is not explored here. Thus Hamilton [1992] suggests that the 'paradigm' of the Enlightenment would, at minimum, include the following ten ideas: the primacy of reason and rationality; empiricism; scientific knowledge based upon the experimental method; universalism; progress; individualism; toleration; freedom; uniformity of human nature; secularism. Of these, the first six are important in the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis.

Second, the critique below is not intended to belittle the achievements of the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis; rather it is concerned with identifying its limitations. Third, it is not suggested that science has now abandoned that Synthesis: much current work [for example in evolutionary theory] continues to have this method as its centrepiece.

The Modern Paradigm is underpinned by a deeper synthesis - a world view perspective which explains much of what Argyris and Schon have characterised as Theory in Use. In characterising this, we can usefully begin by a fuller consideration of the notion of paradigm. Popularised by Kuhn, paradigms are seen as important to understanding how people work and act, and how fundamental changes in perspective can occur. The underlying concept, however, has a longer lineage: it is that of the World View Perspective. There are three important elements here. First, while the world perspective affects - indeed determines the boundaries of - behaviour, it is fundamentally based in language. Second, changes in the perspective can be hard to identify because the language may not change substantially - while the concepts within it do. Third, even between different conceptual structures, there is partial commensurability.

Ajdukiewicz [1973] also considered the relationship between different categories of statement. A demarcation has frequently been sought between empirical and interpretative statements, especially by those who seek to maintain the notion of 'value-free' statements. Ajdukiewicz holds that the decision to accept or reject empirical statements on the basis of given evidence is as arbitrary as the decision whether to accept interpreting statements. For by choosing a particular conceptual apparatus we may make it impossible for these empirical statements to be even formulated. The decisive factor in determining our World Perspective therefore is not empirical evidence but the conceptual apparatus in which we choose to work; in other words, the language we use.

This theory implies that it may be possible to choose two different types of conceptual apparatus in such a way that, from the same evidence, two radically different World Perspectives may be formulated, both fully compatible with that evidence because that is how it is interpreted. This of course relates back to the discussion on rationality, for it implies that there will be different interpretations of what is rational depending on how that and related concepts are formulated within each World Perspective. It has implications also for management, since it challenges many of the approaches and ideas which rely on the belief that there can be a single perspective, and a single concept of rationality: these include notions of common culture, common values, and the management of resistance to change. In this sense culture is part of a shared World Perspective, and will therefore be shared only in so far as the latter is.

Before proceeding further, an important caveat needs to be expressed, for the implications of this argument are recursive: *"The epistemologist is not suited to the role of an impartial umpire in the struggle between two world perspectives for the title of truth"*, for the epistemologist is also trapped within a World Perspective, and this will decide her/his decision. Instead *"he should give his attention to the changes which occur in the conceptual apparatus of science and in the corresponding world-perspectives, and should seek to ascertain the motives which bring these change about."* [Ajdukiewicz] There are in truth no impartial umpires, be they theorists, managers or 'independent' consultants or change agents.

While there have been attempts to define what we mean by a paradigm, few are as rich as the approach taken by Ajdukiewicz, who recognises the central role of language and the extent to which the World Perspective embraces method and conscious thinking. Indeed one could go further: the closely related Sapir-Whorf hypothesis argues that each language has its own metaphysics. This is more in line with Capra's definition given in Chapter Two. The word 'paradigm' has become something of a catch-all term in recent years: it is used here in the sense given by Capra.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Lakatos has provided some useful additional conceptual tools in his delineation of Scientific Research Programmes. He distinguishes two types of methodological rules

- Negative heuristic: tell us what paths of research to avoid. It *"forbids us to direct the modus tollens at the 'hard core'. Instead, we must use our ingenuity to articulate or even invent 'auxiliary hypotheses', which form a protective belt around this core, and we must redirect the modus tollens to this."* [1978:48]
- Positive heuristic: tell us what paths to pursue. It *"sets out a programme which lists a chain of ever more complicated models simulating reality: the scientist's attention is riveted on building his [sic] models following instructions which are laid down in the positive part of his programme."* [1978:50]

In effect, this thesis may be seen as a Scientific Research Programme exploring the potential of an interlinked set of ideas for strategic management.

THE CARTESIAN-NEWTONIAN PARADIGM

The modern paradigm relies on a view of science and scientific method born of the stunning success of the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm. After decades of uncertainty, as Western science moved painfully towards a heliocentric picture of the Universe, with all its profound metaphysical implications, it seemed that a basis for 'certain knowledge' had been achieved. For several centuries the implications of the 'mechanical universe' were to be explored, developed and refined. To understand the Modern Paradigm, we therefore need to understand the nature of this Paradigm, and the method and epistemology it embraced.

There were many philosophers, scientists and thinkers who contributed to the Paradigm. I will select five here. The first is Francis Bacon. In discussion with Capra, Carolyn Merchant argues that Bacon connected two principal strands of what was to become the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm: the mechanistic conception of reality and the male obsession with domination and control in patriarchal culture¹. Tarnas comments that the argument for the subjection of nature to human dominion was reinforced by the biblical support as found in Genesis - subduing nature could be seen as a religious duty [1991:241-2]. A third important strand in Bacon's thinking was the argument for a technocratic society, founded on scientific rationality and technological progress [Fischer 1990:67].

The second is Galileo, who emphasized the overriding importance of mathematics: "The book of nature is written in the mathematical language ... without its help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of it" [Il Saggiatore, Opere, VI, 232: quoted in Koestler 1959:535] Galileo separated what could be measured or quantified, which he considered real, from what could not, which exist only in the observer's mind.

The third is Descartes, for whom mathematics provided the certainty that could underpin knowledge: *"Above all I enjoyed mathematics, because of the certainty and self-evidence of its reasonings, but I did not yet see its true use and, thinking that it was useful only for the mechanical arts, I was astonished that on such firm and solid foundations nothing more exalted had been built, while on the other hand I compared the moral writings of the ancient pagans to the most proud and magnificent palaces built on nothing but sand and mud."* [1968:31] *"In our search for the direct road towards truth we should busy*

¹ "Bacon was the first to formulate a clear theory of the empirical approach of science, and he advocated his new method of investigation in passionate and often downright vicious terms. I was shocked by the extremely violent language, which Merchant exposed in her papers in quotation after quotation. Nature has to be 'hounded in her wanderings' wrote Bacon, 'bound into service' and made a 'slave'. She was to be 'put in constraint' and the aim of the scientist was to 'torture nature's secrets from her'." [1988:238]

ourselves with no object about which we cannot attain a certitude equal to that of the demonstrations of Arithmetic and Geometry." [1967:5]

For Descartes, the machine is the dominant image; this extends to living beings, which are seen as machines, albeit very special ones. One of the most dominant themes in management stemming from the Modern Paradigm has been the Clockwork Organisation, and the notion that all phenomena can be reduced to machine characteristics has its origin in Descartes: *"We see clocks, artificial fountains, mills and other similar machines which, though merely man-made, have nonetheless the power to move by themselves in several different ways ... I do not recognise any difference between the machines made by craftsmen and the various bodies that nature alone composes."* [quoted in Capra 1982:47].

The third important element which Descartes brought to the Synthesis was the mind-body split: *"I am not this assemblage of things called the human body ... But what, then, am I? A thing that thinks"* [1968:105-6]

We now come to Newton himself, who synthesised Descartes' mechanistic philosophy, Kepler's laws of planetary motion, and Galileo's laws of terrestrial motion in one comprehensive theory. Capra [1982] comments that before Newton there were two opposing trends in seventeenth-century science, which we have identified above; the empirical, inductive method represented by Bacon and the rational, deductive method represented by Descartes. Newton, in his Principia, brought them together, emphasizing that neither experiments without systematic interpretation nor deduction from first principles without experimental evidence will lead to a reliable theory. Thus he went beyond Bacon in his systematic experimentation and beyond Descartes in his mathematical analysis, thereby developing the full methodology of the Cartesian Newtonian synthesis.

The profound impact Newton had is well illustrated by Alexander Pope's poem:
"Nature and Nature's laws,
lay hid in night:
God said, *Let Newton be!*
And all was light."

The fifth thinker to be mentioned here is Locke, who began the task of translating the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm to the human sciences. *"Following Newtonian physics, Locke developed an atomistic view of society, describing it in terms of its basic building block, the human being. As physicists reduced the properties of gases to the motion of their atoms, or molecules, so Locke attempted to reduce the patterns observed in society to the behaviour of its individuals."* [Capra 1982:55]

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF CARTESIAN-NEWTONIAN METHOD

Capra identifies four sets of concepts that form the basis of Newtonian mechanics:

- 1 The concepts of absolute space and time, and of separate material objects moving in this space and interacting mechanically with one another
- 2 The concept of fundamental forces, essentially different from matter
- 3 The concept of fundamental laws describing the motion and mutual interactions of the material objects in terms of quantitative relations
- 4 The concept of rigorous determinism, and the notion of an objective description of nature based on the Cartesian division between mind and matter

From these we can identify the following themes. It should be apparent how these have been retained in the perceptions outlined in Chapter Two.

ATOMISM AND REDUCTIONISM

As Harre [1984: 128,144] has described this, atomism invites us to explain the properties and powers of individual things and of materials as due to their fine structure, that is as due to the dispositions and interactions of their parts. The properties of individual things and of materials, he argues, should be redefined for scientific purposes as structural relations among standard elementary individuals. In addition, in an ideal form of description, quantitative items replace qualitative items.

We may illustrate this by returning to the management literature. Hosking and Morley [1991] argue that the 'entitative concept of organisation' dominates the literature in organisational behaviour and human resource management. Following Meyer, they identify five elements to this perspective, including membership and organisational boundaries; the whole having an identity recognized by its members and by others; the entity having relatively well defined purpose[s]; the entity having a formally prescribed structure; and the distinction between the organisation and its environment[s]. We can see here also the interlinking between atomism and crisp logic.

Reinforcing the argument in Chapter Two, Hosking and Morley find this entitative approach not only in scientific management, but also in human relations and organic systems approaches.

QUANTIFICATION

The importance of quantification to Newtonian science is apparent in the comments of Harre above. It has been reflected in the paramount role given to mathematics in any discipline wishing to be worthy of the name 'science'. This was the particular contribution of Galileo, with both its positive aspect, providing a powerful analytical methodology, and its negative, excluding that which cannot be expressed in numbers from the domain of science.

DETERMINISM AND PREDICTION

Determinism flows naturally from reductionism. Hawking [1988] refers to the French scientist the Marquis de Laplace, who at the beginning of the nineteenth century to argue that the universe was completely deterministic. He suggested that there should be a set of scientific laws that would make it possible to predict everything that would happen in the universe, if only we knew the complete state of the universe at one time. A key element of determinism is the nature of cause-effect relationships. If these can be shown to be direct and predictable, then the case for strategic planning has strength; without this foundation, there are serious questions to be raised.

CRISP LOGIC

Crisp logic - the thinking based on 'either-or' - is an essential element of the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm. It is two-valued logic: propositions take one of two unique values, True or False. Composite propositions, and those constructed within predicate calculus, take their truth values on the basis of rules defining logical connectors and valid inference. This will be considered in depth in Chapter Five.

THE ECONOMIC AND EVOLUTIONARY DIMENSIONS

The Modern Paradigm in management derives many of its elements directly from the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm. It has additionally inherited a number through its acquisition of themes from other disciplines. Two in particular are worth noting. The first is economics, whose extended influence was magnified in the eighties by the development of competitive strategy². The second, touched on briefly in the previous section, has been evolutionary theory [which of course has close connections with competitive strategy in the descriptions of organisations competing in hostile environments]. Articulations of Darwinian theory frequently place heavy emphasis on Cartesian-Newtonian thinking.

In defence, however, of Darwin [and this is more than simple nominal loyalty], we should recognise that he developed his theory within a dynamic tension between the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm and an alternative view which we

² "Smith based his economic theory on the Newtonian motions of equilibrium, laws of motion, and scientific objectivity. One of the difficulties in applying these mechanistic concepts to social phenomena was the lack of appreciation of the problem of friction ... Smith imagined that the balancing mechanisms of the market would be almost instantaneous ... This idealistic picture underlies the 'competitive model' widely used by economists today. Its basic assumptions include perfect and free information for all participants in a market transaction; the belief that each buyer and seller in a market is small and has no influence on price; and the complete and instant mobility of displaced workers, natural resources, and machinery. All these conditions are violated in the vast majority of today's markets, yet most economists continue to use them as the basis of their theories. As Lucia Dunn, professor of economics at Northwestern University, describes the situation, 'They use these assumptions in their work almost unconsciously. In fact, in many economists' minds, they have ceased to be assumptions and have become a picture of how the world really is'." [Capra 1982:208-9]

shall see articulated in the final section³. Howard Gruber has examined Darwin's development of his theory: *"The meaning of his whole creative life work is saturated with ... duality ... On the one hand, he wanted to face squarely the entire panorama of changeable organic nature in its amazing variety, its numberless and beautiful contrivances, and its disturbing irregularity and imperfections. On the other hand, he was imbued with the spirit of Newtonian science and hoped to find in this shimmering network a few simple laws that might explain the whole movement of nature."* [quoted in Briggs 1992:37-8] And Briggs comments: "Darwin's admiration for complexity and his belief in the Newtonian model of simple natural laws brought him an important step toward the artist's aesthetic (sense of harmony and dissonance), but in the end the emphasis of evolutionary theory fell on the simplicity side of the equation - on scientific law." [39]

THE CRACKS IN THE CARTESIAN-NEWTONIAN PARADIGM

The success of the paradigm was dramatic for many years: so much so that it still dominates thinking by lay-people when they consider science. But in the nineteenth century cracks began to appear. Three of these cracks are briefly described below to illustrate the theme.

NON EUCLIDEAN GEOMETRY

Formulation in mathematics began with Euclid, who set out five axioms, and rules in inference, through which all geometrical propositions could be proved. This axiomatisation was of course 'true', since it was a statement of the geometry of the real world. Or was it? There were always doubts about Euclid's fifth axiom [which stated that through a point outside a given line one and only one parallel to the line can be drawn]. Many attempts to derive it from the other four axioms were unsuccessful, and finally in the nineteenth century it was shown that this was impossible, since these four were in fact consistent with two other very different parallel axioms. One of these, developed by Lobachevski, states that an infinite number of parallels can be drawn through a point outside a given line; the other, developed by Riemann, states that no parallels can be drawn. The significance of these discoveries lay in the way they undermined an area of apparent 'certain knowledge', giving weight to the view that no such thing is possible. This is reinforced by the argument that Lobachevskian geometry may provide the better account of our world on a cosmological scale [see for example Penrose 1990].

³ For example: *"If the eye attempts to follow the flight of a gaudy butterfly, it is arrested by some strange tree or fruit; if watching an insect, one forgets it in the strange flower it is crawling over; if turning to admire the splendour of the scenery, the individual character of the foreground fixes the attention. The mind is a chaos of delight."* [in a letter home on his impressions of the Brazilian tropical rain forest.]

The Cartesian-Newtonian view is not so much wrong as it is limited. In many situations of everyday life Newton's mechanics are all we need; in almost every situation where we encounter Euclid's geometry it works fine. But as this view has been pressed into service in other areas of life it has proved much less successful [see for example Schaef [1992] on the implications in psychiatry and psychotherapy]. Science and logic in the 20th century have brought many new ideas and theories - and it is of value to consider the implications of these for our working lives.

We are not faced with choices between 'rational planning' and other modes, such as intuitive, incremental, adaptive, visionary or interpretative. Instead, we have three options, which have been well summarised by Willmott, who suggests three possible paths of development in responding to the crisis of (hyper)modernity, where all forms of meaning and authority become problematized and parodied.

- The first is a conservative path, which reasserts the value [or at least the functional necessity] of modernity's certainties and virtues
- The second path celebrates the crisis through a full embrace of hypermodernity, making a virtue of contingency and impermanence by constructing a sense of self-identity through the incessant undermining of all divisions and barriers - e.g. Peters' incitement to thrive on chaos
- The third path is to seek the development of a radically postmodern mode of being in which dualistic theory and practice is challenged: sharing the scepticism about all authority and divisions, but equally sceptical about the taken-for-granted influence of a dualistic mode of being in which, for example, the mind is assumed to act independently of the body. [Willmott 1994:118-9]

Recasting this within the present argument, the first response would be to persist with the Modern Paradigm, and when it clashes with what actually happens, cloak the latter in the words of the former [for example through 'post hoc rationalisation', where we construct rational explanations of what happened after the event], or say 'so much the worse for theory', or blame the environment for its excessive turbulence.

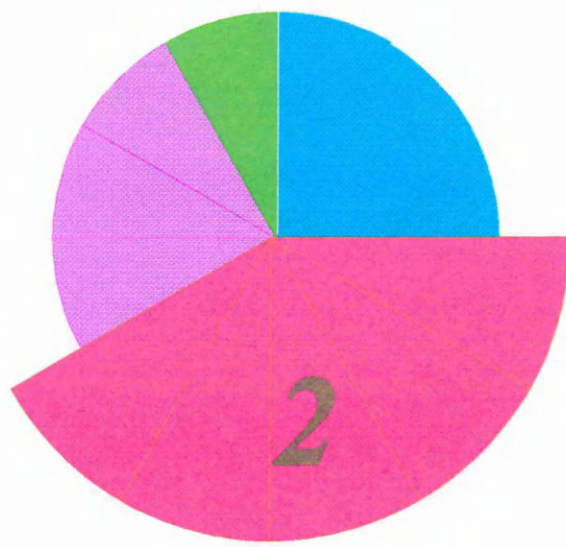
The second would be to reject any coherent theory - still more any grand narrative - perhaps instead following the Tom Peters line, where the search for excellence is rejected in favour of thriving upon chaos, which in turn is replaced by liberation management and the pursuit of Wow! The Management Fad Generator would thus acquire an additional rule - ensure that your fad has built-in obsolescence.

triumphant' (ibid.: 3). Perhaps the most obvious symptom of this disaster is the relentless effort to dominate nature, associated with the ruthless exploitation of scarce natural resources and widespread environmental destruction and pollution. Although Horkheimer and Adorno do not refer directly to ecological crisis as a force of negation, their analysis certainly points in this direction. For them, civilization is doomed by the inescapable instrumentalism of our relationship to nature." [1996:75]

The third option is to develop a framework with the following characteristics:

- It does not negate the value and use of the Modern Paradigm
- Rather, it helps us to a richer way of thinking and acting in management, strategy, and organisational development
- It provides the 'legitimacy' which is currently to be found only in the Modern Paradigm, not by seeking firm foundations, but through negotiated bases for thinking and activity

This is the path explored here.

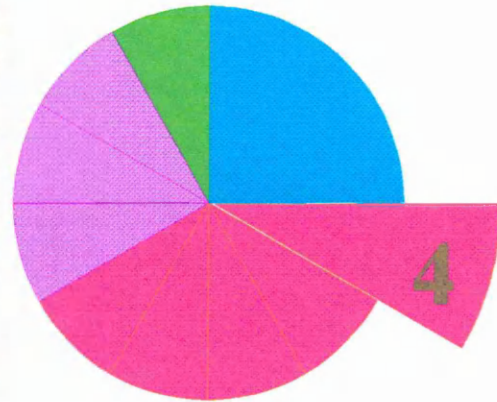


THEORY

There is, it seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.

T.S. Eliot East Coker

Part Two explores the literature. First we look at complexity theory, followed by language, truth and logic. Power is then considered, and the contribution which critical theory can make is evaluated. The final Chapter in Part Two integrates these various themes, and sets the context for the Case Studies in Part Three.



COMPLEXITY THEORY

Chapter Four explores complexity theory, centring on the concept of the Complex Adaptive System. The approach presented here is compared to that of other writers, and the role of power is delineated.

The Chapter then briefly reviews the theory of autopoiesis, and concludes by looking at the contexts which managers face in their work.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPLEXITY

INTRODUCTION

In 1948 Weaver wrote an article on 'Science and Complexity', in which he identified three kinds of problem. First, there are those of Organized Simplicity, usually involving two variables; before 1900 science was primarily concerned with these - indeed, this was the terrain explored within the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm.

From 1900 onwards problems of a second kind - Disorganized Complexity - were tackled, using the techniques of probability theory and statistical mechanics then being developed. These are problems in which the number of variables is very large, and each of these variables has a behaviour which is individually erratic, or perhaps totally unknown. Despite this, the system as a whole possesses certain orderly and analysable average properties.

Weaver argued that scientific methodology in effect went from one extreme to the other, and left a vast middle ground untouched. In this ground there may be many variables, but what is really important is that these problems "*show the essential feature of organisation*" [1948:539] These are the problems of Organized Complexity, and they are to be found "*in the biological, medical, psychological, economic and political sciences ... Science must, over the next 50 years, learn to deal with these problems of organized complexity.*" [540]. He saw two promising developments which might help science begin to deal successfully with these problems. The first was "*the wartime development of new types of electronic computing devices*" [541], the second the 'mixed team' approach of operations analysis.

Weaver would no doubt be intrigued by what has happened in the fifty years that followed. His call for interdisciplinary teamworking has become a familiar one in management texts. As to the other promising avenue, there is no doubt that computers have made a massive contribution. But as Klir and Bo Yuan have argued "*Initially, it was the common belief of many scientists that the level of complexity we can handle is basically a matter of the level of computational power at our disposal. Later, in the early 1960s, this naive belief was replaced with a more realistic outlook. We began to understand that there are definite limits in dealing with complexity, which neither our human capabilities nor any computer technology can overcome.*" [1995:2]

Today a group of interconnected ideas [some emerging through the use of computer power] are seen by many as offering the route to addressing the problems of organized complexity. This new approach - complexity theory - provides a distinct challenge to the mindset embedded in the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm; it involves different language, and different ways of thinking about issues. At the same time, it is consistent with a number of

arguments put forward in the management literature, and may be seen as giving a theoretical underpinning to these.

Complexity theory is the third wave of ideas introduced into a wider setting from mathematics in recent years - its predecessors were catastrophe theory and chaos theory [now generally seen as a subset of complexity theory]. Each time this happens, initial excitement about the new approach is followed by reservation, as people seek - and fail to find - 'hard evidence' that this is more than hype, more than metaphorical rhetoric. It is, after all, easy to see chaos and complexity in much that organisations do, and it is commonplace to argue that the past was predictable and relatively static, while the future is uncertain and unpredictable; new ways of thinking which offer guideposts in this dangerous environment are therefore attractive. The parallel with the taste for management fads is obvious.

But by way of cautious reminder, consider the words of Marx and Engels: *"Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away; all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts in air."* [1848] It is not the perception of a move towards increasing turbulence that stimulates the discussion of this thesis; rather the recognition that change is always there - 'becoming' is the constant - and it merits consideration.

A number of attempts have been made to relate these new ideas to management, strategy and organisations. Rather than set out anew on this path, the intention here is to review several such contributions, and consider their implications. Critically, the argument will be that complexity theory does have promise, and offers exciting new ways of thinking. But while it is **necessary** to an adequate approach to strategic management, it is not **sufficient**. Subsequent chapters will therefore seek to add further elements, and to synthesize these. The language of complexity is illustrated in Table 4.1. Some of the concepts used in the right hand column not discussed further in this Chapter are developed in Appendix 4.1.

One of the oldest features of the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm, stretching back at least to the time of Aristotle, is the use of bipolar, crisp logic - the 'either/or' approach which has dominated Western thinking for more than two millennia. The desire to polarise and establish antonyms is strong. Since the argument here must be presented in part by contrast, it would be easy for this also to fall into such a dichotomous trap. It is important to note immediately, therefore, that while in some cases the two columns represent contrasts, in others the concept on the right may be seen to embrace that on the left. Thus two valued logic [which will be explored in the next chapter] is a special case of both four valued logic and fuzzy logic. Similarly, linear thinking may be considered a special case of systems thinking. This parallels the situation in both science and mathematics. Newtonian physics may be seen as a special case of the physics of Einstein, applicable in certain circumstances, or Euclidean geometry as a subset of the full family of geometries.

TABLE 4.1 : CENTRAL CONCEPTS COMPARED

CARTESIAN NEWTONIAN SYNTHESIS	THE COMPLEXITY APPROACH
Certainty	Chaos, Complexity and Self-organised criticality
Structure preserving systems	Dissipative systems and Complex Adaptive Systems
Independent existence	Codependent existence and Autopoiesis
Equilibrium	Far from equilibrium; At the edge of chaos
Reduction	Emergence
Crisp [two valued] logic	Four valued logic and Fuzzy logic
Body Mind split	Body Mind link
Command and control	Self-organisation
Linear thinking	Systems thinking; Triple lens vision
Competition	Mutualism and Coevolution

Referring back to Weaver's approach, we can see that organized simplicity is itself a subset of organized complexity, where the number of variables has been kept very low. And similarly, the Modern Paradigm is a special case of a wider, complexity-based framework, applicable in contexts where the number of variables is low, perhaps allowing predictability, or where uncertainty is at a minimum. But just as the Cartesian Newtonian methods become less relevant as we move away from organized simplicity, so the methods of the Modern Paradigm - including strategic planning, control techniques, and the management of culture - become less relevant as levels of uncertainty and complexity increase in organisations.

COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS

Perhaps the central concept which allows us to explore the implications of complexity theory is the Complex Adaptive System [CAS]. Once again, the application of this has its precursors in earlier writings. Thus in 1968 Buckley argued that *"the mechanical equilibrium model and the organismic homeostasis models of society that have underlain most modern sociological theory have outlived their usefulness."* [in Jun and Storm 1973:198] Equilibrial systems are relatively closed and entropic, losing structure in going to equilibrium. Homeostatic systems are open and negentropic, maintaining a moderate energy level within controlled limits. Their main characteristic is that they function to maintain the given structure of the system within pre-established limits, using negative feedback loops with the environment to achieve this. The complex adaptive system is also open and negentropic, but is open 'internally' as well as externally in that the interchanges among its components may result in significant changes in the nature of the components themselves with important consequences for the system as a whole.

The following expansion of this concept is based closely on the discussion by Holland in Waldrop [1992], together with the explanation of CAS given by Gell-Mann [1995]. Each part of the description is given in italics, and followed by comment.

A Complex Adaptive System is a network of many 'agents' acting in parallel.

The CAS is not a single entity - like an organisation, it has many 'agents', but these are not in a hierarchical system of command and control - they form an interconnecting network. This idea parallels one which has become very popular in discussions on new forms of organisation, the network or cluster, which is seen to offer an alternative to the hierarchy/market dichotomy [Darwin 1992].

They are "adaptively intelligent" - constantly seeing and imagining patterns, testing ideas, acting upon them, discarding them again-always evolving and learning.

Constant change occurs through learning, adaptation and evolution. The connection with the vogue concept of the 'learning organisation', and with emergent theories of strategy, is apparent.

The control of a complex adaptive system tends to be highly dispersed.

Here again we have the contrast with a hierarchical structure. This is not to suggest however that there are not layers and levels, as the discussion below illustrates.

Coherent behaviour in the system arises from competition and cooperation among the agents themselves. Competition can produce a very strong incentive for cooperation, as agents spontaneously forge alliances and symbiotic relationships with each other for mutual support. It happens at every level and in every kind of complex, adaptive system, from biology to economics to politics. Competition and cooperation are closely interrelated.

Evolutionary theory in the nineteenth century stressed the 'survival of the fittest', and in economic theory this was reflected in the emphasis given to competition. Cooperation was for a long time regarded with some suspicion. In discussions of business strategy this was interwoven with the fondness for military metaphors. Astley [1984] has critiqued "business policy's battlefield analogy." *"Strategic management is seen as an entrepreneurial adventure in which firms must circumvent 'threats' and exploit 'opportunities'. ... The importation of ideas from the field of industrial organisation ... has simply reinforced the notion the organisations are confronted by fundamentally alien environments 'out there'. The managerial task is viewed as one of devising a 'competitive strategy' for bettering rivals. Business policy's debt to military science becomes evident here : policy making approximates a cut-throat game of 'warfare' [Porter] in which astute choice of 'competitive weapons' [Uyterhoeven, Ackerman and Rosenblum], 'strategic moves' [Hofer and Schendel] and 'counterpunch moves' [MacMillan] sorts out the 'winners' from*

the 'losers' [Allen and Hammond]. In other words, interorganisational relationships are seen as ultimately competitive and antagonistic."

In similar vein, Jorde and Teece [1989] have commented that the basic tenet of textbook orthodoxy is that competition drives resource allocation towards efficient outcomes. Consequently, cooperation is generally analyzed only in terms of its negative impacts on economic welfare. They suggest that it is difficult to find conclusions before 1980 that interfirm cooperation can be beneficial to the public.

In the life sciences the role of symbiosis and mutualism is today given much greater emphasis. The same applies in thinking about strategic management, where the virtues of cooperation today are more widely accepted, and the search is for new linkages. By way of illustration, the Independent on Sunday [27 July 1997] reported that four leading consumer goods companies - Unilever, Bass, Cadbury-Schweppes and Kimberly-Clark - together accounting for about 18% of UK television advertising spending, and a large number of consumer goods on supermarket shelves, were considering a wide ranging cooperation to improve the terms they get when dealing with supermarkets, and when buying advertising airtime. This was beginning with a pilot programme to share market research and to explore joint marketing initiatives. A consultant was quoted as saying that "It is impossible to detect any downside to this arrangement. It will lessen the influence of retailers in price negotiations and allow the companies to extract better terms from ITV and Channel 4 for airtime rates." This comment reinforces an important point - this is not cooperation pure and simple, but cooperation intertwined with competition. Coevolution embraces both competition and cooperation - and is perhaps a better term than the neologism 'co-opetition' which has been suggested for this feature of modern business.

In the public sector 'partnership' has become the sine qua non of activity, stimulated by both carrot - it is a good thing to do - and stick - it is a prerequisite in many funding regimes, and becomes more and more necessary as traditional forms of expenditure are restricted. Again, however, it is not a case of swinging from one extreme to the other. The middle way is reflected in the advice given to those involved in partnerships that they should carefully consider and protect their 'black box' [Lorange and Roos 1992]. It is seen also in the negotiating system developed at Harvard [Fisher and Brown 1989; Fisher and Ury 1991]

Organisms in an ecosystem coevolve. In the natural world this has produced flowers that evolved to be fertilised by bees, and bees that evolved to live off the nectar of flowers. It has produced cheetahs that evolved to chase down gazelles, and gazelles that evolved to escape from cheetahs. In the human world, the dance of coevolution has produced equally exquisite webs of economic and political dependencies - alliances, rivalries, customer-supplier relationships, and so on. Coevolution is a powerful force for emergence and self-organisation in any complex adaptive system.

Emergence and self-organisation are both important concepts in complexity theory. Reductionism is an important tenet of the traditional paradigm; the scientific method involved is to disaggregate everything to the lowest level, and then investigate the properties of those 'corpuscles', with the belief that a full understanding of these parts allows a full understanding of the whole. This is a belief as simple as it is mysterious, since emergence is everywhere to be found, and emergent properties in turn often produce emergent behaviours. Cool liquid water molecules, for example, and at 0°C they will suddenly stop tumbling over one another at random. Instead they will undergo a 'phase transition', locking themselves into the orderly crystalline array known as ice. By going in the other direction and heating the liquid, those same tumbling water molecules will suddenly fly apart and undergo a phase transition into water vapour. Neither phase transition would have any meaning for one molecule alone.

Emergent properties have been described by Harre [1984] as those properties of a group or aggregate that are not properties of the individuals of which they are a collection. This has implications both for understanding and for action. It means, for example, that attempts to develop management strategy by systematic [reductionist] analysis of individual elements - resources, capability, position, the environment - are likely to miss important emergent themes. "The ability to reduce everything to simple fundamental laws does not imply the ability to start from those laws and reconstruct the universe. In fact, the more the elementary particle physicists tell us about the nature of the fundamental laws, the less relevance they seem to have to the very real problems of the rest of science, much less society." [Anderson 1972:81]

It means also that in taking action we have to recognise that issues will arise - emerge - as action takes place. "At each level of complexity, entirely new properties appear. [And] at each stage, entirely new laws, concepts, and generalisations are necessary, requiring inspiration and creativity to just as great a degree as in the previous one. Psychology is not applied biology, nor is biology applied chemistry." [Anderson, 1972:82] This suggests that emergent strategy has an important role to play in complexity-based management.

Capra [1996] has traced the concept of self-organisation to the early years of cybernetics. In the 1950s, when binary networks were built using an array of lamps which could flicker on or off, experimenters discovered that after a short period of random flickering, ordered patterns would emerge in most networks. This spontaneous emergence of order became known as self-organisation. Later work explored this phenomenon, and identified three common characteristics of models of self-organisation. First, there is the spontaneous emergence not only of order, but also of new structures and new modes of behaviour, including processes of learning and evolution. Second, they deal with open systems which are operating far from equilibrium, and third, there are internal feedback loops described mathematically by nonlinear equations.

A complex adaptive system has many levels of organisation, with agents at any one level serving as the building blocks for agents at a higher level. For

example : proteins, lipids, nucleic acids --- cell --- group of cells --- tissue --- collection of tissues --- organ ---- association of organs ---- whole organism ---- group of organisms ---- ecosystem.

The same applies in organisations, especially the large ones which are the focus of later debate. Thus local authorities may have within them a number of directorates, each including a number of departments, each having divisions, each having sections [or more likely these days, business units]. And each of these exists within a wider environment with which it is constantly interacting.

Complex adaptive systems are constantly revising and rearranging their components as they gain experience. Examples are to be found in the evolution of organisms, the brain changing neuron connections, firms reshuffling organisational chart, countries realigning in alliances. At some deep, fundamental level, all these processes of learning, evolution and adaptation are the same. And one of the fundamental mechanisms of adaptation in any given system is this revision and recombination of the building blocks.

Within this constant change there are layers. In particular the distinction between structure and organisation is important - a distinction which plays a key role in a theory closely related to complexity - autopoiesis. We will return to this below.

All complex adaptive systems anticipate the future. They build models that allow them to anticipate the world. These may not be conscious models, but implicit predictions. In the cognitive realm implicit models include skills and expertise - huge, interlocking sets of standard operating procedures that have been inscribed on the nervous system and refined by years of experience. Consider for example the skill of the medieval architects who created the great Gothic cathedrals. They had no way to calculate forces or load tolerance : they built high vaulted ceilings and flying buttresses using standard operating procedures passed down from master to apprentice.

In part the interest in complexity theory in management has arisen from the disillusion with planning systems which seek to predict the future. This does not however imply a disinterest in the future, nor a process of 'just muddling through'. This different approach to the future has been described by Bartlett and Ghoshal as 'Beyond Strategy to Purpose', a move from emphasis on a strategic plan to building "a rich, engaging corporate purpose". [1994:81]

Complex adaptive systems typically have many niches, each one of which can be exploited by an agent adapted to fill that niche. New opportunities are always being created by the system. It is therefore essentially meaningless to talk about a complex adaptive system being in equilibrium: the system can never get there. It is always unfolding, always in transition. In fact if the system ever does reach equilibrium, it isn't just stable. It's dead. Agents in the system can never 'optimise' their fitness or their utility. The space of possibilities is too vast; they have no practical way of finding the optimum. The most they can ever do is to change and improve themselves relative to what the other agents

are doing. In short, complex adaptive systems are characterised by perpetual novelty. [Holland]

A complex adaptive system functions best in a situation between order and disorder. [Gell-Mann 1994:249]

The argument within complexity theory that systems are never in equilibrium has been one that has particularly attracted interest. It challenges the equilibrium theory so important to neo-classical economics, and taken from that into strategic management, for example by Rumelt et al: *"The challenge is to retain the power of thinking. ... Equilibrium assumptions are the cornerstone of most economic thinking. Researchers who eschew equilibrium assumptions risk gross errors in the causal interpretation of data. ... While equilibrium assumptions often drive out consideration of innovation, change, and heterogeneity, this is not invariably the case ... More sophisticated views now permit more sophisticated equilibria."* [1994:43, 537]

In complexity theory the language is of systems which are 'far from equilibrium', sometimes expressed as being at the 'edge of chaos'. The idea of a 'transition zone', an area of instability which is neither order nor chaos, is one which has been well developed by Miller [1990] in his analysis of the 'Icarus Paradox'. His four trajectories of decline include two where the change is toward excess stability - decoupling and focusing - and two where the change is toward excess instability - venturing and inventing - even though the momentum driving change is associated with orderliness, the search for greater internal consistency. He identifies a number of factors which cause this - the 'lenses' through which people view - and indeed create - reality, retrospective rationality [such as attributing success to previous personal action], overconfidence, and defence mechanisms.

Another to explore this territory is Pascale [1991], who uses one of the metaphors arising from complexity theory when he advocates 'managing at the edge', which involves avoiding excessive consensus, stimulating 'creative conflict', and encouraging a state of dynamic tension in organisations.

A complex adaptive system acquires information about its environment and its own interaction with that environment, identifying regularities in that information, condensing those regularities into a kind of 'schema' or model, and acting in the real world on the basis of that schema. In each case, there are various competing schemata, and the results of the action in the real world feed back to influence the competition among those schemata. [Gell-Mann 1994:17]

Again we have here the notion of 'lenses', the schemata. This is a topic to which we shall return in the next chapter.

There are other important concepts in complexity theory, such as dissipative structures, which have not been explored above, but hopefully we have enough to see that there is here a very different conception of an organisation to that of the machine or clockwork [order], and different also from the 'snake pit' [chaos]. Thus it suggests that we move beyond a binary approach and recognise that in

addition to order [organized simplicity] and chaos [disorganized complexity] there is the possibility of organized complexity. In Chapters Ten and Eleven we will return to this concept of the complex adaptive system, and consider case study and methodology in relation to it.

COMPLEXITY AND CREATIVITY IN ORGANISATIONS

Stacey [1996b] has also used the framework of complex adaptive systems to develop his argument about the relationship of complexity theory to organisations, and through this the scope for creativity. He compares the key features a Human System with those of a CAS [see Appendix 4.2], and concludes that they have the same basic structure, but with one important difference - the human nature of the agents in a human system, which involves:

- The dynamic of inspiration and anxiety
- The dynamic of conformity and individualism
- Power differentials - the leadership - followership dynamic
- The property of self-consciousness and self-awareness

Although he does not indicate why these particular dynamics have been chosen, the role of 'human factors' is undoubtedly important. However, Stacey argues that these four do not provide grounds for doubting the applicability of the general properties of non-linear feedback networks in organisations. But they do add potential complexity - indeed two further control parameters [asterisked below] are added to three he has already identified as driving CAS [99,104]. He subsequently suggests [215] that while the emphasis on managing long term specific outcomes in organisations is completely misplaced, it is possible to influence these control parameters.

- The rate of information flow through the system
- The richness of connectivity between agents in the system
- The level of diversity within and between the schemas of the agents
- Power differentials *
- Levels of anxiety containment *

He continues: *"It will be argued that large power differentials and high levels of anxiety avoidance produce stable human systems, whereas very small power differentials and high levels of uncontained anxiety all produce explosively unstable human systems"* [1996:114] The latter argument, however, does not appear, except as the assertion: *"If a vacuum in expected leadership exists, anxiety levels are likely to rise. We then find the nature of leadership being dictated by the basic assumption behaviour of the group."* [157] The leader-followership relationship which develops may be participative, which *"holds out the promise of much faster rates of creativity and innovation if it generates enough trust and respect to contain the anxiety."* [159] The alternative, which he sees as most commonly used, at least in the west, is a specialization strategy, where one or a small number of people take responsibility for holding the ambiguity and anxiety.

Later Stacey asserts the same link between power and anxiety, but here links it to a central line of his argument - the distinction between the legitimate and the shadow systems: *"if power is equally distributed and few people exert what power they have, then a power vacuum is experienced. This tends to raise anxiety levels and plunges an organisation's shadow system into a disintegrative state. Because equal power distribution implies a weak legitimate system, the total result is an organisation close to an anarchic state of disintegration with 'garbage can' decision making processes."* [182]

This distinction between the legitimate and the shadow systems is fundamental to Stacey's textbook approach to strategic management [1996a], and links closely to his distinction [ibid:71,72] between 'ordinary management', which *"is about rational processes to secure harmony, fit, or convergence to a configuration, and it proceeds in an incremental manner"*, and 'extraordinary management', which is *"the use of intuitive, political, group learning modes of decision making and self-organizing forms of control in open-ended change situations. It is the form of management that managers must use if they are to change strategic direction and innovate."*

Similarly the legitimate system is *"the hierarchy, bureaucracy, and shared ideology that members of an organisation recognize as having the authority to sanction actions and allocate resources"* [1996b:288], while the shadow system is *"the set of interactions among members of a legitimate organisational system that fall outside that legitimate system. It comprises all social and political interactions that are outside the rules strictly prescribed by the legitimate system. It is the arena in which members of an organisation pursue their own gain, but also the arena in which they play, create, and prepare innovations."* [ibid:290]

Here we have, albeit expressed in different language, two dichotomies familiar from textbook theory - between the management of stability and the management of change [sometimes expressed as management vs. leadership], and between the formal and the informal system. The latter follows the advice of Scott, that *"management should recognize that the informal organisation exists, nothing can destroy it, and so the executive might just as well work with it"* [quoted in Fischer 1990:124]. As Fischer argues, coordination of the formal and the informal organisations has long been a goal of human relations theorists.

The injection of complexity theory into this framework provides important insights into the way they work. In particular, the tension between them is seen to produce both learning and creativity. But there is a very different way to address this which is more in keeping with the principles of complexity theory, namely to argue that the implication of self-organisation should be taken much more seriously, and the dichotomous approach should be avoided. Instead, we can consider the whole question of 'legitimacy' in organisations. Legitimacy is created within the schemata of those in the organisation or currently influencing it [and often, crucially, of those who once were involved in the organisation - their legacy persists]. It originates in views of what is acceptable knowledge, in belief systems, and in power structures [the triple lens]. Decisions on what is

legitimate, and what is illegitimate, range across the full range of thought and action, including:

- What can be done
- What can be seen
- What can be known
- What are facts
- What is information
- Who controls
- Who and what is controllable
- What is acceptable behaviour
- What routines are acceptable
- What learning occurs
- What unlearning occurs

Stacey is unusual among writers on complexity theory in giving explicit consideration to power in organisations. But his treatment of power leads to a conservative view of organisational change, and it is not too surprising that his ultimate conclusions on the implications of complexity theory for management come as something of an anticlimax. *"The complexity perspective indicates that many of the messy processes that managers employ behind the cover of technical rationality are entirely appropriate. In that sense, the complexity theory of organisations does not present anything new, anything that is not happening or has not happened. What it does present is a more comprehensive and more useful way making sense of what managers actually do. ... I am not talking about a new way of managing. ... What I am saying is that a new overall framework is now available with which to think about and try to make sense of what people in organisations are already doing."* [1996b:272,277]

While this new framework is undoubtedly important, it will be argued here that power needs to be given a much more extensive treatment, and that this deepens the insights and implications for management theory. Power therefore will be the subject of Chapter Six, but first it will be helpful to bring into the discussion a concept mentioned earlier - autopoiesis.

AUTOPOIESIS

The theory of autopoiesis is frequently linked to complexity theory, and originates in the work of Maturana and Varela. The word means 'self-producing': they used it to characterise living cells as things which produce, and are produced by, nothing but themselves. Thus they define an autopoietic system as: *"A network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) of components that produces the components that: (i) through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate the network of processes (relations) that produced them; and (ii) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in the space in which they (the components) exist by specifying the topological domain of its realisation as such a network."* [1980:79]

This network has both an organisation and a structure: Maturana and Varela's use of these terms is important. The structure is the total set of actual components and relations belonging to a particular concrete example. The organisation is a subset of the relationship between components that determine the properties of the network as a whole and thereby its identity, type or class. All networks of a particular type have the same organisation. A change of organisation implies a change of identity. Networks with the same organisation may have different structures, and structure of a particular network may change without its organisation changing. Thus organisation is abstract, while structure is concrete.

An autopoietic system is organisationally closed: that is, all possible states of activity must always lead to or generate further activity within itself. But it is interactively open: it interacts with its environment through its structure. This happens through structural coupling, which is a mutual relationship or correspondence between the structure of a network and the structure of its environment. The network undergoes recurrent interactions within its environment [including interactions with other networks in the environment], but it maintains its identity and therefore its organisation. The changes in structure which occur must allow the maintenance of the organisation within that environment.

Maturana and Varela restrict their domain to living beings, and use this as the definition thereof: *"Our proposition is that living beings are characterized in that, literally, they are continually self-producing. We indicate this process when we call the organisation that defines them an autopoietic organisation. Basically, this organisation comes from certain relations."* [1992:43]

Respecting this, Morgan [1997] uses the theory of autopoiesis as a metaphor to draw out a number of implications for our understanding of organisation. First, it reinforces the argument that organisations enact their environments as extensions of themselves¹. Second, it helps us see that many of the problems that organisations encounter in dealing with their environments are intimately connected with the kind of identity that they try to maintain. Finally, it helps us see that explanations of the evolution, change and development of organisations need to give attention to the factors that shape the patterns embracing both organisation and environment in the broadest sense.

¹ This links to Weick's argument: *"The concept of an enacted environment is not synonymous with the concept of a perceived environment. ... People have talked for some time about the fact that reality is constructed. These views stress that reality is selectively perceived, rearranged cognitively, and negotiated interpersonally. In most cases it is assumed that something tangible is the target of these efforts. ... The notion that reality is a product of social construction does have some connotation of action conveyed by the word construction. But this construction is usually thought to involve activities of negotiation between people as to what is out there. Less prominent in these analyses is the idea that people, often alone, actively put things out there that they then perceive and negotiate about perceiving. It is that initial implanting of reality that is preserved by the word enactment. ... The enacted environment, being an output of organising activities, is in some ways an anachronistic, dated, belated stimulus. The enacted environment is a sensible rendering of previous events stored in the form of causal assertions, and made binding on some current enactment and/or selection."* [1979:164-6]

Brønn, Von Krogh and Vicari have recently considered the implications of autopoiesis for organisations. They note first an important aspect of this theory: that autopoietic systems do not receive information from the environment. *"A thinking system cannot be externally steered by the input or output of information in what is called an open system. The human cognitive system is closed and autonomous and thus constructs its own reality, a process which involves making distinctions in observation. ... The human brain, however, must be open if it is to even register a subject such as a painting. It registers stimuli, or signals, not to be confused with information. People create information by assigning their own meaning to signals. Thus the brain, or cognitive system, is open to signals but closed when it comes to information. ... If we look at a firm as a cognitive system, we see that it acts in a similar manner as the human cognitive system."*

The implication of this, when applied to the organisation, is that knowledge results from processes of social interaction: it is the ability of the organisation to make distinctions in observations. And this knowledge exists at the level of the individual, the group, each work process, and each link with other organisations. This knowledge is specific to the organisation: *"Knowledge accumulation happens in a closed system. This means that in order for the firm to accumulated and use knowledge, the notion of errors, or strange events, or accidents becomes important. A firm cannot change and adapt its own systems if it can not recognise and take advantage of happenings outside of its own internal 'norms'. ... The firm must begin experimenting, it must shift from adapting to active experimental learning. ... Strategic experiments are what will be used by the firm, and they have a two-fold purpose: 1) to produce knowledge about the knowledge of the organisation, and 2) to increase variety in the knowledge of the firm."*

They conclude that strategic management is primarily concerned with how to maintain the best fit between the firm and the environment by adapting to the environment through change in the knowledge of the organisation. Note that this relates to earlier discussions of capability, but enriches them. For we are no longer talking about a dichotomy between the resource perspective and the environment perspective: both are part of the process of knowledge creation and accumulation in the organisation. The development of strategic capability needs to address the way in which the organisation transmutes input into information [through, for example, its rules and regulations about what is - and is not - valid input].

In his work with Thompson and Rosch, Varela draws the following conclusions relating to cognitive science - but again of great interest to management thinking:

"An important and pervasive shift is beginning to take place in cognitive science under the very influence of its own research. This shift requires that we move away from the idea of the world as independent and extrinsic to the idea of a world as inseparable from the structure of these processes of self-modification. This change in stance does not express a mere philosophical preference; it

reflects the necessity of understanding cognitive systems not on the basis of their input and output relationships but by their operational closure. A system that has operational closure is one in which the results of its processes are those processes themselves. The notion of operational closure is thus a way of specifying classes of processes that, in their very operation, turn back upon themselves to form autonomous networks. Such networks do not fall into the class of systems defined by external mechanisms of control [heteronomy] but rather into the class of systems defined by internal mechanisms of self-organisation [autonomy]. The key point is that such systems do not operate by representation. Instead of representing an independent world, they enact a world as a domain of distinctions that is inseparable from the structure embodied by the cognitive system." [1993:139-40]

CONTEXT: THE ORGANISATION AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

Finally in this Chapter we relate this discussion of complexity, and the interrelationship between an organisation and its environment, to the overall context which managers face. This takes its inspiration from a public policy paper written almost a quarter of a century ago. Rittel and Webber [1973] distinguish the problems of natural sciences - tame problems - from the problems faced in public policy - which "are inherently wicked". They identify ten characteristics of the latter [see Table 4.2], concluding that *"the problems that planners must deal with are wicked and incorrigible ones, for they defy efforts to delineate their boundaries and to identify their causes, and thus to expose their problematic nature. The planner who works with open systems is caught up in the ambiguity of their causal webs."* [ibid.:167]

TABLE 4.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WICKED PROBLEM

1	There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem
2	Wicked problems have no stopping rule
3	Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad
4	There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem
5	Every solution to a wicked problem is a 'one-shot operation'; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly
6	Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan
7	Every wicked problem is essentially unique
8	Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem
9	The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution
10	The planner has no right to be wrong
Rittel and Webber [1973:161-6]	

For the purposes of the present argument, Rittel and Webber's thesis needs to be developed in three ways. First, we should move away from dichotomy. Managers are not presented with 'either/or' - they face a spectrum of situations, four of which are characterised in Table 4.3. Conventional 'rational' approaches work well at the Tame end of the spectrum - decreasingly so as we move to the wild and wicked.

As an example of the latter, consider the 'situation' faced by local authorities confronted with rising crime rates on housing estates. The stakeholders in this include residents, young people, local employers and shopkeepers, the police, the probation service, churches, tenants and residents groups, black and Asian groups. Within the local authority itself relevant departments include Housing, Social Services, Education, Youth Service, Leisure, Economic Development and Planning [and therefore outside unitary authority areas there will be at least two Councils involved]. The value systems of stakeholder groups will vary considerably, with causal factors cited including 'human nature', unemployment, poverty, racism, family breakdown, lack of role models. Solutions offered will advocate resource allocation to the youth service, to education and schools, to police on the streets, to police detection, to more deterrent devices, tougher sentencing in courts and harsher prison regimes, to job creation, to family planning, to improving race relations. The list of frequently conflicting, often contradictory, causal factors and proffered solutions could be greatly extended.

Second, as the above implies, we can extend their argument from 'problems' to 'contexts - by which is meant the dynamic interaction between an organisation, its enacted environment, and the issues being addressed. This also points to a distinction between the approach being suggested here and the one which identifies different organisational environments, such as Emery and Trist's four 'ideal types' of causal texture [1965], or Ansoff and Sullivan's five levels of increasing environmental turbulence [1993]. Here the environment is not seen as something external to and distinct from the organisation and its situation - managers need to recognise in their analysis the extent to which they create [enact] that environment by their mindsets and actions.

Third, this implies that managers need to consider where along the spectrum a particular situation lies. Needless to say, no neat algorithm is available. As Table 4.3 implies, the 'triple lens' of knowledge, belief and power can however be helpful. Take power as an example. As Rittel and Webber argue, after reviewing the various approaches open to those seeking to address wicked problems, *"whichever the tactic, it should be clear that the expert is also the player in a political game, seeking to promote his [sic] private vision of goodness over others". Planning is a component of politics. There is no escaping that truism.*" [ibid.:169]

Power will be the subject of Chapter Six. Before that, we turn to the second underpinning theme of this thesis: logic.

TABLE 4.3: THE SITUATION

TAME	TRICKY	WILD	WICKED
KNOWLEDGE Single issue Best solution possible Known ways of solving problems Predictable diagnosis and outcome	KNOWLEDGE Issue harder to define Optimising solution sought Experience a good basis for solving problems Partly predictable diagnosis and outcome	KNOWLEDGE Multiple issues, difficult to define Issues interacting New factors likely to appear No best solution possible Past experience offers little guidance No agreed diagnosis and outcome	KNOWLEDGE Multiple issues, with no agreed definitions Issues interacting with emergent factors New factors appear No agreed solution possible or basis for judging 'rightness' The situation is essentially unique No agreement on diagnosis and outcome
BELIEF Little or no challenge to people's beliefs People share common approach	BELIEF Manageable challenge to people's beliefs People have different approaches which can be mostly reconciled	BELIEF Multiple criteria involved Challenge to people's beliefs People have different beliefs and criteria	BELIEF Multiple criteria involved Challenge to people's beliefs People and organisations have very different views and beliefs
POWER Little or no challenge to existing power structure Power structure allows effective implementation	POWER Challenge to existing power structure can be managed Power structure can be adapted to enable effective implementation	POWER Challenge to existing power structure May be several competing power bases Little basis for effective implementation	POWER Challenge to existing power structure Several competing power bases No basis for effective implementation

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

We began this Chapter by identifying the area of 'Organized Complexity' as one of growing interest to human inquiry. The central concept then introduced was that of the complex adaptive system, for which eleven properties were identified which bring together many of the key ideas in complexity theory. These are summarized in Table 4.4, which will be used as a connecting template in Chapters 8, 10 and 11.

TABLE 4.4 COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS	
1	A network of many 'agents' acting in parallel
2	"Adaptively intelligent" - constantly seeing and imagining patterns, testing ideas, acting upon them, discarding them again-always evolving and learning
3	Control tends to be highly dispersed
4	Coherent behaviour arises from competition and cooperation among the agents themselves. Competition can produce a very strong incentive for cooperation, and they are closely interrelated
5	Coevolution is a powerful force for emergence and self-organisation
6	Many levels of organisation, with agents at any one level serving as the building blocks for agents at a higher level
7	Constantly revising and rearranging components as they gain experience. At some deep, fundamental level, processes of learning, evolution and adaptation are the same. And one of the fundamental mechanisms of adaptation in any given system is this revision and recombination of the building blocks.
8	Anticipate the future, building and implicit predictions based on experience
9	New opportunities are always being created by the system. It is therefore essentially meaningless to talk about a complex adaptive system being in equilibrium: the system can never get there. It is always unfolding, always in transition.
10	Function best in a situation between order and disorder
11	Acquire information about their environment and their own interaction with that environment, identifying regularities in that information, condensing those regularities into a kind of 'schema' or model, and acting in the real world on the basis of that schema.

We have here a conception of the organisation which differs radically from the two most common characterisations given to it - the machine/clockwork and the organism. It differs also from the snakepit delineated by Schwartz [1990], although there will be aspects of the snakepit present: indeed, it is the concern about the lack of a political dimension to complexity theory applications that has inspired Chapter Six.

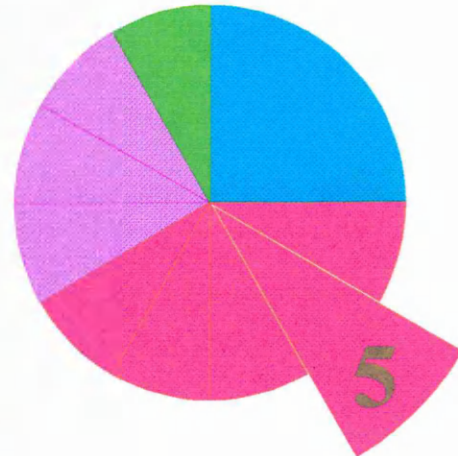
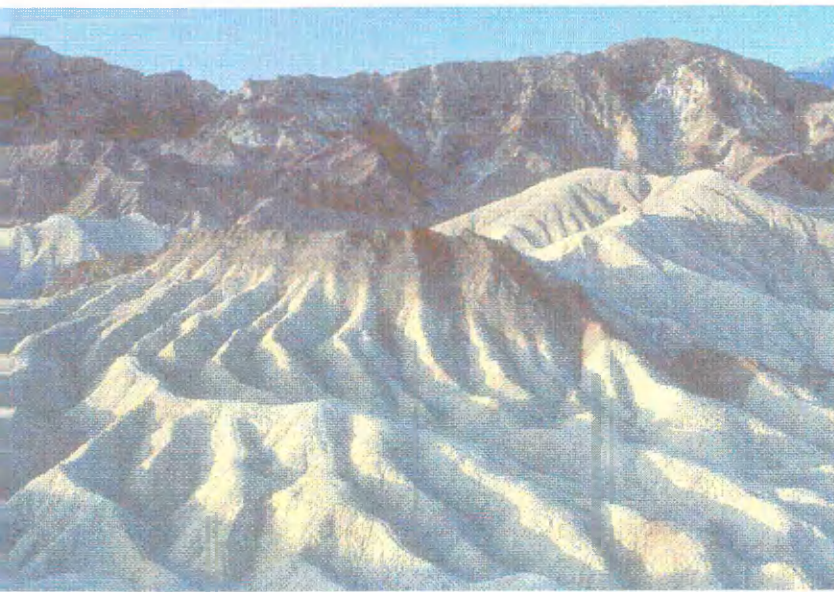
This conception of the complex adaptive system has been employed by others - notably Stacey [1996b] - to consider organisations, but the value of this has been limited by a dichotomous and apolitical approach. These are themes to be addressed in the next two Chapters.

Although the theory of autopoiesis was developed separately to complexity theory, they resonate well together. Through this resonance, complex adaptive systems may be understood as systems which enact their environment, while the environment in turn enacts them - we have a process of codependent arising. Knowledge in turn arises from social interaction: recalling the earlier comment: *"The key point is that such systems do not operate by representation. Instead of representing an independent world, they enact a world as a domain*

of distinctions that is inseparable from the structure embodied by the cognitive system." [Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1993:140]

Managers therefore face a context in which organisation, environment and knowledge are mutually enacted - organized complexity indeed. But the level of complexity can vary. The spectrum of contexts stretching from Tame to Wicked was introduced to illustrate this. It serves two purposes here. The first is to emphasize once again that the argument is not for the rejection of the Modern Paradigm and its many tools and techniques, which continue to have value in many contexts. The second however is to recognize that many contexts managers face are indeed Wicked - and here a new Mindset, and new methods and practice, may prove beneficial.

We now develop this discussion by considering the roles of language, truth and logic.



LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC

Chapter Five looks at the role of logic and language in management thinking. We begin with crisp logic, and then move to fuzzy logic and other ways of thinking, including the use of prototypes and schemata, paradox, metaphor and assumption challenge. These are linked to the theory of learning developed by Bateson.

The idea of dialogue is then introduced, and is used to bring together the themes of the Chapter through an approach called ColourFlow Dialogue, which is illustrated by means of a case study.

CHAPTER FIVE

LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC

INTRODUCTION

When Ayer wrote 'Language Truth and Logic' in 1936, he introduced to a wider audience the ideas of the Vienna Circle, outlining the principal theses of logical positivism, a philosophy linked closely to the scientific method which is a part of the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm. In management circles, as we have seen, the influences lives on. Here we consider somewhat different perspectives on logic, and from these move on to matters relating to language and truth.

The role of logic is important because it plays a significant part in the way people think. As Ford and Ford [1994] have argued, logic refers to the underlying assumptions, deeply held, often unexamined, which form a framework within which reasoning takes place. It provides the lens through which we view everything: it tells us what is real, what is true, what is beautiful, and what is the nature of things. When someone is 'operating' in a particular logic, he or she takes its rules and boundaries for granted. Logics pose the problems, provide the language for explaining and understanding them, and determine their solutions.

The particular logic with which we begin here is two valued, or crisp, logic. This has the binary code of True/False, Yes/No, Right/Wrong, and is a persistent theme in western thinking. The three key axioms of this logic are:

- Axiom of Contradiction: A thing cannot be itself and something else
- Axiom of Identity: A thing is equal to itself
- Axiom of Excluded Middle: A thing is one of two mutually exclusive things [illustrated in Table 5.1]

TABLE 5.1 LAW OF THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE	
A	NOT A
TRUE	FALSE
FALSE	TRUE

In recent years this has become a popular theme to challenge in management writings, with the exhortation that we shift from 'Either/Or' to 'Both/And', and take paradox more seriously [See for example Pascale 1990; Stacey 1996a; Bate1994; Collins and Porras 1994]. In effect, we have here a revival of dialectics, whose equivalent three axioms are:

- Axiom of Transformation: A qualitative shift occurs from a gradual increase or decrease in quantity
- Axiom of Oppositional Struggle: Each entity is a unity of contradictory opposites
- Axiom of Negation: Change occurs in the negation of the previous form

These axioms allow for 'both/and' as well as 'either/or': we thus have an extension of the truth table as shown in Table 5.2

TABLE 5.2 DIALECTICS	
A	NOT A
TRUE	FALSE
FALSE	TRUE
TRUE	TRUE

This debate however does not take us much beyond two valued logic, which tends to reappear in other aspects of the same writers' work. We have seen this in Chapter Four, where Stacey, who has many useful things to say about paradox, nevertheless retains a binary structure when he considers organisations and management. Similarly Collins and Porras in effect create a new bifurcation of Either/or vs. Both/and ['Tyranny of the Or vs. Genius of the And].

This can even stretch to the work of those concerned with fuzzy logic, which we explore next. Kosko [1994:24, 69-78] sets up a polarity between Aristotle 'prophet of A or Not A' and the Buddha 'prophet of A and Not A'. This illustrates a more general point: it is difficult to talk about new ideas without setting up a contrast with those being challenged. We can relate this to the present work: the attempt has been made throughout to avoid unhelpful dichotomies; hence the emphasis, for example, in the previous chapter on complexity based thinking as an extension, as well as a 'rival', to the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm. It is for the reader to judge whether this attempt has been successful overall!

FUZZY LOGIC

Beginning with Brouwer's intuitionist school of logic in the early twentieth century, there have been a number of alternatives to two value logic developed, involving many-valued logics. But the most extensive new area of thinking originated from Zadeh in 1965, with his first paper on the theory of fuzzy sets, which challenged Aristotelian two-valued logic. When A is a fuzzy set and x is a relevant object, the proposition "x is a member of A" is not necessarily either true or false, as required by two-valued logic, but it may be true only to the degree to which x is actually a member of A. The degree of membership in fuzzy sets [as well as degrees of truth of the associated propositions] can be represented by numbers in the closed unit interval [0, 1]. The extreme values in this interval, 0 and 1, then represent, respectively, the total denial and affirmation of the membership in a given fuzzy set as well as the falsity and truth of the associated proposition.

Fuzzy sets do not only give us a powerful representation of measurement uncertainties; they also provide a meaningful representation of vague concepts expressed in natural language. As an example, we can take the set comprising all the delegates at the British Academy of Management, and ask how many of

them are in the subset comprising middle-aged delegates. A crisp definition is possible [all between the ages of X and Y], but will represent only the view of the person giving that definition. We could instead take particular ages. 20 would not be seen as middle-aged. 40 would be accepted as middle-aged. As we move from one to the other, at what point does middle-age appear? If someone is young at 23, then she will still be young at 23 and one week, and therefore at 23 and two weeks ... and example of Wang's Paradox: If a number x is small, then $x + 1$ is also small. If $x + 1$ is small, then $x + 1 + 1$ is small as well. Therefore, a thousand billion is a small number, and so is infinity.

To resolve this paradox, the term *middle-aged* may introduce fuzziness by allowing some sort of gradual transition from youth to middle-aged, and beyond. This is, in fact, precisely the basic concept of the *fuzzy set*, a concept that forms a generalization of the classical or *crisp set*.

The crisp set divides the individuals in a given universe of discourse into two groups: those that are in the set, and those that are not. But many of our concepts do not allow this neat 'logic chopping'. Consider for example the set of dangerous dogs, expensive houses, highly contagious diseases, endangered species, modest profits, numbers much greater than one, or cloudy days. These sets have imprecise boundaries that facilitate gradual transitions from membership to non-membership and vice versa.

A fuzzy set can be defined mathematically by assigning to each possible individual in the universe of discourse a value [between 0 and 1] representing its grade of membership in the fuzzy set. This grade corresponds to the degree to which that individual is similar or compatible with the concept represented by the fuzzy set.

Returning to our earlier example, a fuzzy set representing the middle aged people at the BAM conference might assign a degree of membership of 1 to those aged 40 to 45, reducing this figure by .1 for each year above or below these boundaries. These grades signify the degree to which each age approximates our subjective concept of *middle-aged*, and the set itself models the semantic flexibility inherent in such a common linguistic term. Because full membership [40-45] and full non-membership [those below 30, or above 55] in the fuzzy set can still be indicated by the values of 1 and 0, respectively, the concept of a crisp set is a restricted case of the more general concept of a fuzzy set for which only these two grades of membership apply.

Research on the theory of fuzzy sets has been growing steadily since the first papers by Zadeh in the mid-1960s. Interestingly this is a field which has been more rapidly adopted in applied science than in the philosophy of science: video camcorders are often advertised as incorporating fuzzy logic in their software. This recognition led to a study by the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1991. One of the issues that concerned the Department was why this approach, although developed in the west, was being most quickly applied in Japan. Thus by 1992 the list of products from Japan and South Korea using fuzzy logic included air conditioners, car engines, chemical mixers, copying machines, cruise control, dishwashers, dryers, lift controls, factory

controls, health management systems, microwave ovens, computers, refrigerators, televisions, video camcorders, translators and toasters.

The Department commented that *"From a philosophical viewpoint, the fuzzy logic concept is attuned to the fundamental teachings of Zen Buddhism, which perhaps contributed to the Japanese acceptance of this concept. There are others who believe that the fuzzy logic success in Japan is a result of that country's perceived need to become competitive in advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and optical computing."* [Fuzzy Logic : A Key Technology for Future Competitiveness, quoted in Kosko1994:156-7]

A widely quoted comment of Konosuke Matsushita, founder of Matsushita Electric Ltd - is relevant here: *"We are going to win and the industrial West is going to lose out; there's not much you can do about it because the reasons for your failure are within yourselves. Your firms are built on the Taylor model. Even worse, so are your heads. With your bosses doing the thinking while the workers wield the screwdrivers, you're convinced deep down that this is the right way to run a business. For you the essence of management is getting the ideas out of the heads of the bosses and into the hands of labour. We are beyond your mindset. Business, we know, is now so complex and difficult, the survival of firms so hazardous in an environment increasingly unpredictable, competitive and fraught with danger, that their continued existence depends on the day-do-day mobilization of every ounce of intelligence."* [Quoted in Pascale 1990:27]

This thesis is written partially from the belief that such mindsets can be changed, and are not inevitably culturally determined [indeed Matsushita may be seen as creating here a two-valued structure dividing the East and the West, although it is worth adding that Matsushita are among the leading users of fuzzy logic in their products]. Fuzzy boundaries were introduced in the previous chapter, when considering the boundary between the legitimate and the illegitimate, and this will be developed further in the next chapter. The approach can also be used to help give a better understanding of organisational structures and stakeholders, especially in strategic alliances and joint ventures. Thus instead of Mintzberg's sharp distinction between internal and external stakeholders, we can recognise partial membership of intersecting sets¹. We can replace 'crisp' boundaries within and between organisations with fuzzy ones. It will rarely be necessary to employ the impressive mathematical structures which underpin this theory, but the concepts themselves can be of great value.

¹ A personal anecdote illustrates this. While working as a local government officer I was the Company Secretary of a public-private partnership. A dispute arose between the manager of the company and one of the local authority's departments, which was providing a contracted service to the company. I sought to protect the department's interests in discussions at the Company Board, and was criticized by another Board member who said that I should be representing the Company's interests. But I was only on the Board by virtue of being a representative of the Council, and appointed by it. So was I internal, or external?

Fuzzy logic helps us to recognise the way in which apparently sharp and absolute dichotomies are socially constructed. Grint [1997] illustrates this in the field of medicine, applying fuzzy logic to the distinction between life and death. Transsexualism provides another example. Our conventions demarcate sharply between male and female, although this is complicated when we recognise the different categories involved: physical gender [male - female], behaviour patterns [masculine - feminine], sexual orientation [homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual]. Lewins [1995] argues that the overall concepts of male and female are socially constructed, and that most transsexuals seek to locate themselves securely in one or other of the two: typically, they desire an 'alignment' between the mental and the physical [feeling themselves to be women trapped in the bodies of men, or vice versa].

But as Archer and Lloyd [1982] show by reference to Omani society, a third gender role is feasible [the same has also been found with the berdache in some Native American cultures]. And Star [1991] identifies the way in which the dichotomy between male and female can be enforced on transsexuals. In a graduate class on feminist theory one participant had ambiguous appearance and name [Jan]. It turned out that Jan was considering transsexual surgery, but was currently enjoying the experience of being ambiguous: *"It's like being in a very high tension zone, as if something's about to explode"*. [1991:45] [This comment illustrates an important link between fuzzy logic and complexity theory, in which the 'high tension' of the boundary between order and chaos is considered the most creative arena. Perhaps living on the boundary of a constructed dichotomy can be like living at this edge.]

Jan later undertook transsexual surgery, but discovered in the process that the 'gender identity clinic' required that *"s/he dress more like a conventionally feminine woman to 'prove' that s/he was serious in her desire for the surgery"* [ibid.:46]. Star refers to other gender clinics which require candidates for transsexual surgery to dress and act "as stereotyped females", denying them surgery if they do not.

Fuzzy logic has the potential to free us from the restrictive view which two-valued logic can engender². But before moving on, it is worth noting that fuzzy

² "The fundamental assumption upon which classical logic [or two-valued logic] is based - that every proposition is either true or false - has been questioned since Aristotle. In his treatise *On Interpretation*, Aristotle discusses the problematic truth status of matters that are future - contingent. ... It is now well understood that propositions whose truth status is problematic is not restricted to future events. As a consequence of the Heisenberg principle of uncertainty, for example, it is known that truth values of certain propositions in quantum mechanics are inherently indeterminate due to fundamental limitations of measurement. In order to deal with such propositions, we must relax the true-false dichotomy of classical two-valued logic by allowing a third truth value, which may be called indeterminate. ...

"Fuzzy logic is actually an extension of many-valued logics. Its ultimate goal is to provide foundations for approximate reasoning with imprecise propositions using fuzzy set theory as the principle tool. ... Fuzzy logic allows the use of fuzzy predicates [expensive, old, rare, dangerous, and so on], fuzzy quantifiers [many, few, almost all, usually, and the like], fuzzy truth values [quite true, very true, more or less true, mostly false, and so forth], and various other

logic - like many of the ideas being considered in this thesis - has its critics. Thus McNeill and Freiburger [1994] refer to Kalman, who commented at a conference in 1972 that Zadeh's enthusiasm for fuzziness had been reinforced by the prevailing political climate in the U.S. - one of unprecedented permissiveness. He suggested that 'fuzzification' is a kind of scientific permissiveness, tending to result in socially appealing slogans unaccompanied by the discipline of hard scientific work and patient observation. They quote also Kahan: *"Life affords many instances of getting the right answer for the wrong reasons. It is the nature of logic to confirm or deny. What we need is more logical thinking, not less. The danger of fuzzy theory is that it will encourage the sort of imprecise thinking that has brought us so much trouble."* [ibid:47]

The argument here contends with their views, seeing fuzzy logic as a valuable way of stretching the mindset of people - but not rejecting two-valued logic, which will often prove of value in itself. Once again, it is not a question of either-or. This contrasts also with the approach of Butler [1991], who adopts fuzzy logic in his analysis of organisational design, but after exploring the idea of fuzziness he then develops his argument primarily in terms of a series of dichotomies, such as fuzziness vs. crispness; complexity vs. simplicity; robustness vs. focus.

To date there have been few other attempts to employ this approach in management theory. One exception is Grint [1997], who employs fuzzy logic to allow reconsideration of a number of management themes, such as measurement systems. Another is provided by Lerner and Wanat [1983], who have explored the implications for bureaucracy, in particular the practice of categorisation therein. They argue that fuzzy sets allow a more realistic and humane public service. They see the crisp set as *"the appropriate perception for the Weberian bureaucracy-as technical-tool whose discretionary decisions have been legitimately pre-empted by the legislature"* [1983:503]. This is a familiar problem in local government, where the need for overt parity leads to the imposition of crisp rules which are also very inflexible. A good example of this operates in housing allocation policy, and as we shall see in Chapter Ten, overtly crisp rules are on occasion subverted by fuzzy interpretations which however remain hidden to those most affected. Overt fuzzy rules might address this problem.

FOUR VALUED LOGIC

Returning once more to two valued logic, and its extension into dialectics, we can now take this a step further by reconsidering the law of the Excluded Middle. Dialectics accepts a third possibility - that both A and its negation may be true. What is interesting is to consider also the fourth possibility - that neither are true [see Table 5.3]. This has rarely been examined in Western thinking, but there are examples in Eastern thinking, especially in the work of

kinds of fuzzy modifiers [such as likely, almost impossible, or extremely unlikely]." [Klir and Folger 1988 : 26-31]

Nagarjuna, the second century Indian philosopher prominent in the Madhyamika school, who argued for an ontology based on this approach which has the potential to enrich the debate on postmodernism.

TABLE 5.3 FOUR VALUED LOGIC	
A	NOT A
TRUE	FALSE
FALSE	TRUE
TRUE	TRUE
FALSE	FALSE

Nagarjuna had a specific purpose in developing this approach. *"The method of the Madhyamika demonstrates the absurdity and uselessness of concepts and aims at showing the reality of emptiness as dealt with by the Prajnaparamita³. It is not a linguistic philosophy, a simple play of words, or an intellectual exercise. The aim of the Madhyamika is to reduce all concepts to absurdity in order to open the door to non-conceptual knowledge. It is not the intention of the Madhyamika to propose a view of reality in order to set it up in opposition to other views of reality. All views, according to the Madhyamika, are erroneous, because the views are not reality."* [Thich Nhat Hanh 1994:121]

This contrasts directly to one of the key principles of the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm - the desire for firm foundations and certainty. For Nagarjuna argues against again such foundations - this is a philosophy of groundlessness. Varela, Thompson and Rosch suggest that the philosophical analysis of Madhyamika is directly relevant to current preoccupations in part because it explicitly recognises that the search for an ultimate foundation is not limited to the notion of the subject ["I think therefore I am"]; it also includes our belief in a pre-given or ready-made world.

Epistemologically, the Madhyamika approach is a critique of concept chopping, or, as Thich Nhat Hanh has eloquently put it, the use of the sword of conceptualization: *"Our concept of self arises when we have concepts about things that are not-self. Using the sword of conceptualization to cut reality into pieces, we call one part 'I' and the rest 'not I'. ... We usually think of 'life span' as the length of our life, beginning the moment we are born and ending when we die. We believe that we are alive during that period, not before or after. And while we are alive, we think that everything in us is life, not death. Once again, the sword of conceptualization is cutting reality into pieces, separating one side, life, from the other side, death."* [Thich Nhat Hanh 1992:38,40] Again, what we see here is the possibility - and value - of stretching or breaking categories.

PROTOTYPES AND SCHEMATA

Fuzzy logic raises an important question about language: to what extent are our concepts themselves fuzzy? Although developed quite separately to the

³ The *Prajnaparamita Sutra* was developed in the second century BCE and is the major text of the Madhyamika school. The words mean the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra.

theory of fuzzy logic ⁴, Rosch's work on prototypes illuminates this. She began from the Sapir Whorf hypothesis, that differences in language in different cultures cause differences in thought, and sought to turn this into a testable empirical hypothesis [Rosch 1977]. She used the domain of colour, and found through cross-cultural research a prototype structure of colour categories. Prototypes are, in effect, 'best examples'. In a separate study Berlin and Kay⁵ examined over ninety languages and determined that there are at most eleven basic colour categories: red, blue, green, yellow, black, white, grey, orange, purple, brown and pink.

Rosch extended her research to look at categories of concrete objects. By giving subjects a variety of items in a category, she was able to determine which were the most prototypical, those which shared most features with others on the list. Thus the most prototypical 'vehicle' was 'car', the most prototypical 'fruit' was 'apple'.

Varela et al [170] argue that the cognitive processes involved in the generation of colour categories can be modelled using fuzzy set theory. Focal colours have degree of membership 1 in their respective categories, non-focal colours have degrees of membership between 0 and 1.

Within the focal colours there are two groupings. Red, blue, green, yellow, black and white can be mapped directly onto the responses of the three colour channels in the visual system, while the others [grey, orange, purple, brown and pink] involve cognitive operations of two kinds, one universal to humanity, the other culture specific. They conclude from this that "*Colour provides a paradigm of a cognitive domain that is neither pregiven nor represented but rather experiential and enacted*" [171]. The categories depend upon our biological and cultural history of structural coupling.

We can draw two conclusions from the above. First, concepts are fuzzy, and when a group of managers are discussing their work it is important that they bear this in mind. The pressures of concept chopping and two valued logic push us toward seeking crisp boundaries. These have their value: they allow interpretation of ambiguous situations; they allow faster processing of information and problem solving. But they can also lead to group think, as everyone feels obliged to see things in the same way, to stereotyping, to the foreclosing of options, and to irrational behaviour such as scapegoating [Sutherland 1992].

Second, we have here further support for the argument that the organisation's environment is enacted. There is a process of mutual causality, in which organisation and environment are continually recreating and redefining each other. Again managers need to be aware of this, and be prepared to question the categorization of 'the world out there'.

⁴ "Prototypicality and fuzziness come from very different fields. Zadeh has a formal definition and I have an empirical definition. I suspect they'd map onto an actual category in much the same way." Rosch quoted in McNeill and Freiburger 1993:89

⁵ Cited in Varela et al 1991:168

METAPHOR

Arguably, language is the most important tool that a manager has. She uses it in everything she does - in meetings, in presentations, in written material, in individual discussion. It is the medium through which strategy is discussed and developed, through which tacit knowledge becomes explicit, through which ideas are shared and thereby implemented within organisations.

Not surprisingly there has therefore been much interest in the use of language in management, and metaphors have aroused particular excitement. This discussion is introduced here, not because anything new is to be suggested, but because metaphor has a role within the wider argument being developed. For it can be a powerful way of entrapping thought, as well as having the potential to assist in concept bending and breaking.

Most powerful of all in management, as we have seen in earlier chapters, is the mechanistic metaphor. *"The pervasive influence of machines remains beyond dispute ... this is nowhere more evident than in the modern organisation."* [Morgan 1997:12] Another important metaphor, considered in Chapter One, relates to building; this is so rooted in our thinking about thinking that in one recent book on metaphor [Grant and Osrick 1996] there is no direct reference to it, despite its use by several of the contributors⁶.

Morgan identified eight metaphors, and argued for their use to generate multiple ways of thinking and acting.⁷ Alvesson and Willmott [1996] see danger in this 'supermarket approach', and argue that the underlying value-orientations and associated commitments of a metaphor need to be considered in order to appreciate the significance and limitations of any metaphor. Without this, uncritical selection of familiar metaphors can confirm rather than challenge preconceptions and prejudices. They illustrate this through the presentation of four metaphors - management as distorted communication, management as mystification, management as cultural doping and management as colonization.

The earlier argument on fuzzy categories provides a further dimension on this. We should recognize that metaphors themselves are fuzzy concepts. Thus presentations by managers on MBA courses, where they were asked to discuss their organisation using one of Morgan's metaphors, have revealed very different interpretations of each metaphor. We have only to consider the different conceptions of the machine, such as the clockwork, the computer, the

⁶ "one mode of building upon a basic metaphor is to extend it." "To construct a loosely coupled system is to design a system that updates itself." "Other recent developments in organisation theory have looked specifically at language and rhetoric as a hegemonic tool; structuring perceptions and buttressing power structures." "to present the former as being more foundational, or more solid, than the latter."

⁷ We can take Morgan's work as one indicator of the current importance of different images of organisations. A comparison of his first edition [1986] and the second [1997] shows that only two of the eight metaphors are seen as needing extensive development - organisations as brain [learning and self-organisation] and organisations as flux and transformation [unfolding logics of change].

engine. Supporting this, Lackoff and Johnson [1980] argue that complete consistency across metaphors is rare, but; coherence is typical. When metaphors are used in management debate, it may help if grounds for coherence are examined. In part this relates to the very nature of metaphor. The theory of enactment reinforces the view of Lackoff and Johnson that metaphor plays a very significant role in determining what we consider to be real, since much of our social reality is understood in metaphorical terms, and our conception of the physical world is partly metaphorical.

Support for this also comes from research by Boland and Greenberg [1988], who undertook an experiment based on Pepper's four structural hypotheses and their root metaphors [see Table 5.4]. They found that use of different metaphors led subjects to see the same situation very differently. They commented that even though their subjects had not been socialized into a scientific school of thought, and were not explicitly linking their analysis to metaphorically based theories, their problem formulations nevertheless closely paralleled those attributed to organisation theorists. Their subjects used these metaphorical frames to, in a sense, reproduce the world of the theorist. They concluded that metaphor is not simply used by the scientist to see the organisation in a different way, but is also used by ordinary organisational actors to create it in a different way.

Table 5.4 Pepper's Four World Hypotheses	
World Hypotheses	Root Metaphor
Formism	Similarity
Mechanism	Machine
Contextualism	Historic Event
Organicism	Harmonic Unity

Lakoff subsequently argued [1987:371] that human conceptual categories have properties that are, at least in part, determined by the bodily nature of the people doing the categorising, rather than solely by the properties of the category members, and that properties are a result of imaginative processes that do not mirror nature. Integrating these ideas suggests a view of enactment which is a continual dynamic interplay between the embodied nature of the subject, perceptual processes, and categories which have arisen previously from this interplay, including imaginative processes such as metaphor. Absent from this is any firm foundation of knowledge, any source of certainty - a point to which we return later in this chapter.

The interlinked theme of reframing has also been pursued by Bolman and Deal [1991] to encourage managers to think more holistically. They argue that, faced with problems in an organisation, people tend to adopt one of three limited perspectives: a people-blaming approach; blaming the bureaucracy; and thirst for power.

They then outline five perspectives, each of which provides a different way to reframe the organisation. Four of these are the structural [which relates closely to the machine form], the human resource frame [here they draw on the work of

Argyris and Schon], the political frame and the symbolic frame, while the fifth frame integrates ideas from systems theory and cybernetics.

There has been much critical debate on the value of reframing and metaphor-based approaches to organisations. Palmer and Dunford [1996] raise a number of concerns, for example: Do managers actually use reframing? Can the benefits always be clearly articulated? Do the benefits continue over time? In light of these, it is worth reiterating that they are introduced here primarily for their heuristic value. An example of such will illustrate both the strength and the limitations of a metaphorical approach.

This example relates to a management team of which I was a member. The OD consultant working with us at the time produced a chess set and asked team members to relate themselves and others to the pieces [and their respective power and influence]. What emerged was a consensus that the team had two 'kings', the formal, hierarchically located, leader, and another member who was seen by several as even more central. The discussion that followed helped to illuminate a number of ambiguities in relationships and behaviour which could be seen as stemming from this. But it did not lead to any action: the situation changed only when one of the two concerned left the organisation a year later. Metaphor is perhaps best seen as part of a wider 'palette' of thinking tools - a point to which we will return. But first we return to a further colour in the palette, one which also arises from the challenge to crisp logic, namely paradox.

PARADOX

This statement is false.

We have already seen that the value of paradox is now widely espoused in management literature, and we have explored its roots in dialectics. The purpose of this section is to consider the use of paradox as way of thinking about change, and link this to learning.

The argument begins with Watzlawick et al [1974], whose oft cited book on change is well worth a revisit. They employ Russell's Theory of Types to distinguish first and second order change, illustrated by Ashby's application to a machine⁸. There is a change from state to state, which is which is the machine's behaviour, and there is the change from transformation to transformation, which is *a change of its way of behaving*, and which occurs at the whim of the experimenter or some outside factor. They argue that there are two important conclusions to be drawn from the postulates of the Theory of Logical Types: 1) logical levels must be kept strictly apart to prevent paradox and confusion; and 2) going from one level to the next higher (i.e., from member to class) entails a shift, a jump, a discontinuity or transformation - in a

⁸ Once more the machine image returns to the analysis!

word, a change of the greatest theoretical and practical importance, for it provides a way out of a system.

Earlier in their discussion, they employ Group Theory to illustrate aspects of change. A simpler model is to think of the game of chess. First order change is movement within the laws of chess. These laws are about - they are meta to - the game itself. Any change in these rules would constitute second order change, and *"remembering that second-order change is always in the nature of a discontinuity or a logical jump, we may expect the practical manifestations of second-order change to appear as illogical and paradoxical as the decision of the commandant of the castle of Hochosterwitz to throw away his last food in order to survive."* [1974:12] The story to which they refer is a good illustration of the theme, and is reproduced in Box 5.1. They identify a number of characteristics of second order change:

- Second-order change is applied to what in the first-order change perspective appears to be a solution, because in the second-order change perspective this "solution" reveals itself as the keystone of the problem whose solution is attempted.
- While first-order change always appears to be based on common sense (for instance, the "more of the same" recipe), second-order change usually appears weird, unexpected, and uncommonsensical., there is a puzzling, paradoxical element in the process of change.
- Applying second-order change techniques to the "solution" means that the situation is dealt with in the here and now. These techniques deal with effects and not with their presumed causes; the crucial question is *what?* and not *why?*.
- The use of second-order change techniques lifts the situation out of the paradox-engendering trap created by the self-reflexiveness of the attempted solution and places it in a different frame.

BOX 5.1

THE SIEGE OF HOCHOSTERWITZ

When in 1334 the Duchess of Tyrol, Margareta Maultasch, encircled the castle of Hochosterwitz in the province of Carinthia, she knew only too well that the fortress, situated on an incredibly steep rock rising high above the valley floor, was impregnable to direct attack and would yield only to a long siege. In due course, the situation of the defenders became critical: they were down to their last ox and had only two bags of barley corn left. Margareta's situation was becoming equally pressing, albeit for different reasons: her troops were beginning to be unruly, there seemed to be no end to the siege in sight, and she had similarly urgent military business elsewhere. At this point the commandant of the castle decided on a desperate course of action which to his men must have seemed sheer folly: he had the last ox slaughtered, had its abdominal cavity filled with the remaining barley, and ordered the carcass thrown down the steep cliff onto a meadow in front of the enemy camp. Upon receiving this scornful message from above, the discouraged duchess abandoned the siege and moved on.

This leads to a conceptualising of reframing in terms of class membership: *"In its most abstract terms, reframing means changing the emphasis from one class membership of an object to another, equally valid class membership, or, especially, introducing such a new class membership into the conceptualization of all concerned."* [ibid:98] This has several implications. First, our experience of the world is based on the categorization of the objects of our perception into classes, which are mental constructs and therefore of a totally different order of reality than the objects themselves. Second, once an object is conceptualized as the member of a given class, it is extremely difficult to see it as belonging also to another class. This class membership of an object is called its "reality"; thus anybody who sees it as the member of another class must be mad or bad. Third, what makes reframing such an effective tool of change is that once we do perceive the alternative class membership(s) we cannot so easily go back to the trap and the anguish of a former view of "reality." Once again we see the power - but also the dangers - of conceptualization.

Watzlawick [1968:252-3] points to the potential therapeutic effect of paradoxical communication - and he points to the long lineage of this approach, by telling the Zen story given in Box 5.2 which, as he says, contains all the ingredients of a therapeutic double bind. From our earlier discussion, we can see that the use of paradox in the way they outline can be enhanced in two ways - through the use of metaphor to encourage perception of alternative class membership, and through the use of fuzzy set theory to explore partial membership of sets.

The analysis developed by Watzlawick and his comments was inspired in part by Bateson's application of the Theory of Types to learning, and I wish now to suggest that we can take the approach further by moving beyond a two level analysis of change, and using the multilevel approach which Bateson employed [and which has been borrowed in various forms by many writers on organisational learning since].

TABLE 5.5 LEARNING AND CHANGE		
	LEARNING	CHANGE
0	No learning	No or random change
1	Learning	Change within fixed rules
2	Learning to learn	Change of rules
3	Learning to learn to learn	Change of rule-set
Based on Bateson 1973:250-279		

Table 5.5 shows this multilevel method, linking change and learning together. It can be illustrated by referring again to the chess example. Level Zero would be random moves by a player who is unable through these to learn the rules. Level One learning involves learning the rules, while Level One change is the application of these rules - the change move by move in the game itself as it is played out. Level Two learning involves thinking about these rules - whether or not they constitute a good game perhaps - and Level Two change involves changes to the rules - it is possible, for example, through a step-by-step

alteration to the nature and powers of the individual pieces, the layout of the board, and the objectives of the game, to reach the game of Chinese Chess.

BOX 5.2**PARADOX IN ACTION**

A young wife fell sick and was about to die. "I love you so much," she told her husband. "I do not want to leave you. Do not go from me to any other woman. If you do, I will return as a ghost and cause you endless trouble."

Soon the wife passed away. The husband respected her last wish for the first three months, but then he met another woman and fell in love with her. They became engaged to be married.

Immediately after the engagement, a ghost appeared every night to the man, blaming him for not keeping his promise. The ghost was clever, too. She told him exactly what had transpired between himself and his new sweetheart. Whenever he gave his fiancée a present, the ghost would describe it in detail. She would even repeat conversations, and it so annoyed the man that he could not sleep. Someone advised him to take his problem to a Zen master who lived close to the village. At length, in despair, the poor man went to him for help.

"Your former wife became a ghost and knows everything you do," commented the master. "Whatever you do or say, whatever you give your beloved, she knows. She must be a very wise ghost. Really, you should admire such a ghost. The next time she appears, bargain with her. Tell her she knows so much you can hide nothing from her, and that if she will answer you one question, you promise to break your engagement and remain single."

"What is the question I must ask her?" inquired the man.

The master replied, "Take a large handful of soy beans and ask her exactly how many beans you hold in your hand. If she cannot tell you, you will know she is only a figment of your imagination and will trouble you no longer."

The next night when the ghost appeared, the man flattered her and told her that she knew everything.

"Indeed," replied the ghost, "and I know you went to see that Zen master today."

"And since you know so much," demanded the man, "tell me how many beans I hold in this hand."

There was no longer any ghost to answer the question.

Level Three learning would reflect on the nature of games as such; Level Three change could lead to a change of game, say to Pool. This is discontinuous, since the board, the equipment and the rules are quite different. Level Four would shift us out of the 'game' set completely, although Bateson comments: *"Learning IV would be change in Learning III, but probably does not occur in any adult living organism on this earth. Evolutionary process has, however, created organisms whose ontogeny brings them to Level III. The combination of Level phylogenesis with ontogenesis, in fact, achieves Level IV."* [ibid.:264]

Applying this elaboration to organisations and their markets, Level 0 would involve an organisation selling a product, but not learning as it does so. Level 1 would involve learning about how the product sells and seeking to improve performance within the 'rules' of the market. Level 2 would involve a change of market or product, while level 3 would be a change of the entire raison d'être of the organisation. Level 4 would involve rethinking the very notion of being an

organisation - an unlikely level for any organisation to reach [although aspects of this will be explored in Chapter Twelve, when we consider the implications of the arguments in this thesis for the link between organisations and ecology]. Within this we can also envisage reference to the 'unwritten rules' of the game [Scott-Morgan 1994], and to other ways in which people might challenge or subvert the rules.

However, this extension requires us to refine a basic premise of the approach adopted by Watzlawick and colleagues - the discontinuity between levels [something which also appears extensively in discussions of paradigm shifts]. Part of the confusion and paradox of change lies in the difficulty in seeing this discontinuity, which may only become fully apparent in retrospect.

We can see this by considering one of the best known scientific revolutions - the shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric universe, one of the key steps in the shift toward the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm. Copernicus himself was extremely conservative, wishing to stick wherever possible to the old principles. Thus Kuhn argues that Copernicus tried to design an essentially Aristotelian universe around a moving earth⁹. Koestler cites one of Copernicus' successors, Kepler, in saying that "*Copernicus tried to interpret Ptolemy rather than nature.*" [1959:203]¹⁰.

But Copernicus was not the only participant in this revolution who clung to ancient principles. As Tarnus [1991] points out, Kepler was inspired by his search for the celestial 'music of the spheres', a search that began with Pythagoras. Galileo prepared astrological birth charts for his patrons. And Newton reported that his interest in astrology stimulated his mathematical research, and he was also a student of alchemy¹¹.

This excursion into astronomy is intended to illustrate the complexities of changes in mindsets. Interpretations of Kuhn's theory of scientific revolution often see paradigm shift as a discontinuous process, leading to notions of incommensurability between paradigms. Yet some of the key protagonists in a major shift sought to build, rather than break, the existing paradigm. The paradoxes that ensued were the stimulus to new creativity, leading ultimately to that shift.

As a final reflection on paradox, we may note that its value in stimulating people to think outside conventional frames and thereby induce change is well established in many cultures; Box 5.3 gives one further example of this.

⁹ "As a whole the *De Revolutionibus* stands almost entirely within an ancient astronomical and cosmological tradition; yet within its generally classical framework are to be found a few novelties which shifted the direction of scientific thought in ways unforeseen by Copernicus, and which gave rise to a rapid and complete break with the ancient tradition." [1957:135]

¹⁰ Koestler comments: "Only a conservative-minded person such as Copernicus could devote himself to the task of reconciling the irreconcilable doctrines of Aristotelian physics and Ptolemaic wheel-geometry on the one hand, with a sun-centred universe on the other." [1959:214]

¹¹ "A peculiar collaboration between science and esoteric tradition was in fact the norm of the Renaissance, and played an indispensable role in the birth of modern science. ... The modernity of the Scientific Revolution was in many ways ambiguous." [Tarnus 1991:295]

Box 5.3 Paradoxical Behaviour in Native American Culture

Sometimes, in the midst of a sacred ceremony, a person will enter and make fun of what is going on. This is a clown, someone very different from our own familiar circus figure. In the West the clown has become a harmless figure of fun, but Indigenous clowns are disturbing in the way they assault, frighten, and even beat people. Clowns can also be openly sexual, waving giant phalluses and indulging in mock intercourse.

Clowns are disturbing because they turn the world upside down and openly challenge the order of nature and society. Wherever harmony and order are present, the clown intervenes. The clown makes boundaries explicit by crossing them; demonstrates the meaning of order through disorder. Most important of all, the clown reminds us that in the flux of the world nothing is certain. In Blackfoot ceremonies the circle is always open so that something new can appear.

A relative of the clown is the "contrary" who does everything in reverse. The contrary will walk backward, face the rear of a horse when riding, and wash in dirt. The contrary's behaviour is also linguistic, with *No* used for assent, and *Yes* turned into a denial. Thus, through the medium of speech and action, a contrary teaches the limits and conventions of social behaviour and social inhibitions.

Peat 1995:83

ASSUMPTION CHALLENGE

We turn now to another of the building blocks we are developing in this chapter. Assumption challenge is concerned with digging deeper into what is being said, surfacing the assumptions which underpin facts, analysis or values, and asking whether they remain appropriate, or may in fact have become obstacles to improvement. Thus a simple tool to use here would be the 'multiple whys' - Why do we do things like this round here? And to the answer we again apply Why?, and again, perhaps to five levels.

Mitroff and his colleagues have argued in several works for the need to surface assumptions, especially in relation to stakeholders. Thus he and Mason outline [1983:100-103] a procedure called Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing, as part of which groups identify the key stakeholders in a plan, and then

- Generate a series of assumptions about each stakeholder by asking the question: What must we be assuming about this stakeholder and its future behaviour in order for the plan to be successful?
- For every assumption, formulate a counterassumption
- Counterassumptions can be used to test the relevancy of the assumption. If the counterassumption's truth would have no significant impact on the plan, then the assumption is not very relevant and should be discarded

They argue [1981: 103] that assumptions and facts, or so-called true statements, about the world of stakeholders bear a close relationship to one another. A fact is an "assumption" concerning whose truth status we feel strongly confident. Conversely, an assumption is a "fact" whose certainty is doubtful. This means that every assumption is potentially capable of being converted into a judgement of fact, and conversely, every fact is capable of being downgraded to the status of an assumption. It is therefore well worth examining the basis of support for assertions, to determine on what basis our confidence in them is justified or warranted.

In his work with Linstone, Mitroff extends this into the Dialectic Inquiry System, in which opposite positions are deliberately set out. They comment: *"The guarantor of this system is conflict. It is hoped that as a result of witnessing an intense, explicit debate between two polar positions that the observer will be in a much stronger position to know the assumptions of the two adversaries and as a result clarify his or her own assumptions. It is also hoped that the observer or decision-maker will be in a stronger position to form his or her own position on a key issue."* [1993:78-9]

Here again there are ancient parallels on which to draw. Thus Kets de Vries [1993] argues for a modern version of the ancient role of the fool in organisations. Traditionally, the fool acted as mediator between leaders and followers, *"disseminating deep information [that is, going beyond the directly observable] and consciously or unconsciously seeking out the basis significance of events"* [1993:93]. He cites the Fool in King Lear as perhaps the finest example of this role, and suggests that in organisations this role, whether by an individual, or institutionalised through a team, can act as a counterweight to the person in power.

DIALOGUE

Concern about the negative effects of discussion has prompted a number of writers to develop the idea of dialogue put forward by Bohm some years ago. He suggested that there is an important difference between a dialogue and ordinary discussion. In the latter, people tend to hold relatively fixed positions and argue in favour of their views, trying to persuade others to change their own. This can lead to agreement, but is unlikely to produce anything positive. Indeed, if the positions involved are of fundamental importance to the people concerned, then discussion degenerates into confrontation, or at best a polite avoidance of the issues.

By contrast, in dialogue individuals are prepared to listen to others with sufficient sympathy and interest to understand the meaning of their position, and are ready to change their own points of view if there is sufficient good reason to do so. Bohm and Peat [1987] argue that a spirit of goodwill or friendship is necessary for this to take place: it is not compatible with a spirit that is competitive, contentious or aggressive. Participants must be prepared to suspend their own point of view, while also holding other points of view in a

suspended form and paying full attention to their meaning. This has the potential for 'concept breaking': *"when the rigid, tacit infrastructure is loosened, the mind begins to move in a new order."* [ibid:244]

In a subsequent paper with Factor and Garrett [1991] Bohm extends this description, suggesting that people normally gather either to accomplish a task or to be entertained, both of which can be categorized as predetermined purposes. But by its very nature Dialogue is not consistent with any such purposes beyond the interest of its participants in the unfoldment and revelation of the deeper collective meanings that may be revealed. These may on occasion be entertaining, enlightening, lead to new insights or address existing problems. Surprisingly, they argue, in its early stages the dialogue will often lead to the experience of frustration [a phenomenon which we shall find again in Chapter Eleven as we explore Whole Systems Interventions].

They point also to the democratic principle of dialogue: it is essentially a conversation between equals, and any controlling authority, no matter how carefully or sensitively applied, will tend to hinder and inhibit the free play of thought and the often delicate and subtle feelings that would otherwise be shared. Dialogue, they conclude, is vulnerable to being manipulated, but its spirit is not consistent with this. Hierarchy has no place in Dialogue.

The process of dialogue is as shown in Figure 5.1 [taken from Senge et al 1994:361]. The development of the spirit of dialogue in a group can take time. Isaacs and Smith [in ibid. 374] say that it may take a year or more to develop the competencies required for dialogue, and Isaacs identifies five paradoxes:

- Techniques that leave technique behind: while there are techniques of dialogue which can help build a container - an environment that promotes collective inquiry - technique in itself cannot get you to your goal
- 'Don't just do something, stand there': *"in dialogue we don't think about what we're doing; we do something about what we're thinking"*
- Intention but no decision: it is best to approach dialogue with no result in mind, but with the intention of developing deeper inquiry
- A safely dangerous setting: the issues being considered may be difficult and dangerous - the environment of dialogue is intended to be safe enough to allow this consideration
- Being individual and collective: participants need to listen to themselves, as well as the group, and understand the roots of their perceptions, and of emergent collective meanings

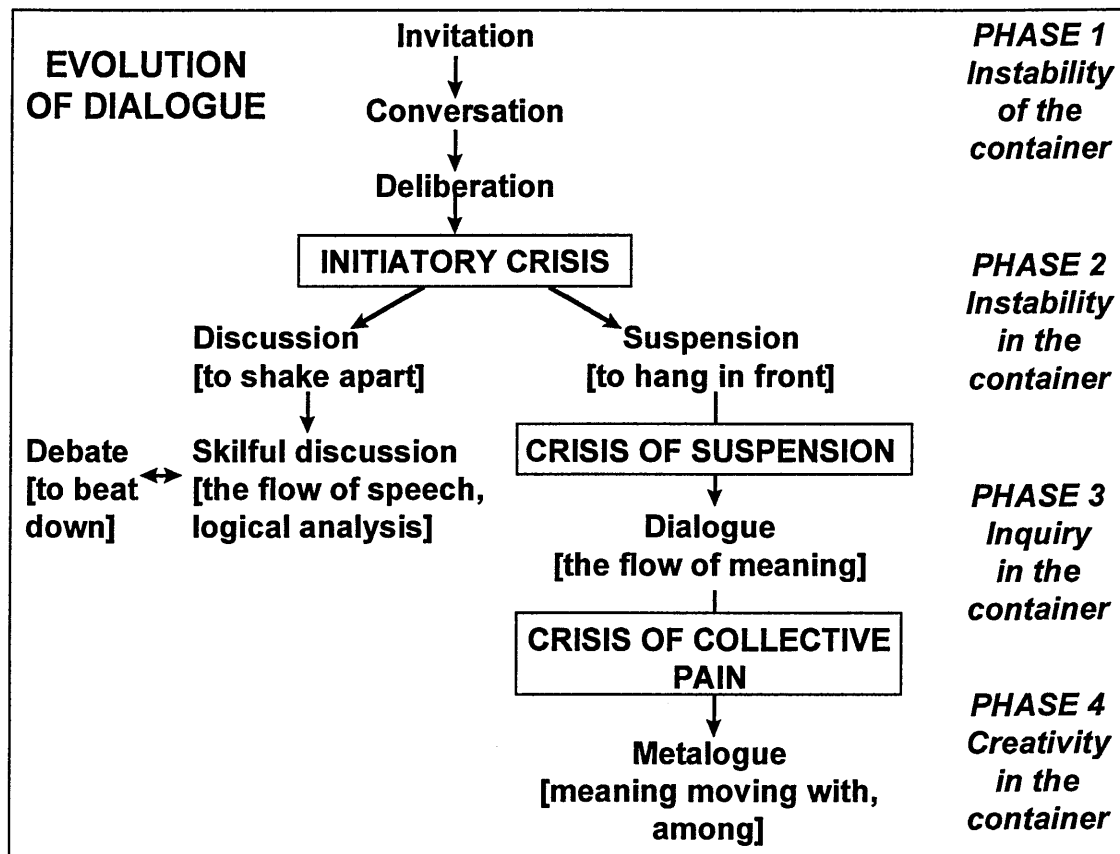
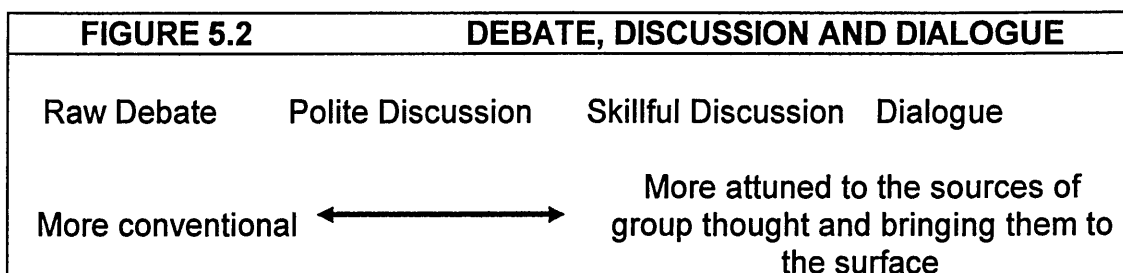


FIGURE 5.1

The third of these needs further consideration. Dialogue is concerned with exploration, discovery and insight. Its primary focus is not on decision making, reaching agreement or action planning. This has led Ross [in *ibid*:385-96] to propose 'skillful discussion', which he has placed on a continuum as shown in Figure 5.2. There are five 'protocols' to be followed in skillful discussion:

- Pay attention to my intentions: What do I want from this conversation? Am I willing to be influenced?
- Balance advocacy with inquiry: 'What led you to that view?' 'What do you mean by that view?'
- Build shared meaning: 'When we use the term -----, what are we really saying?'
- Use self-awareness as a resource: What am I thinking? What am I feeling? What do I want at this moment?
- Explore impasses: What do we agree on, and what do we disagree on?



The question arises whether there may be more rapid approaches to the problem of improving communication, helping people in both concept building and concept breaking in ways which prove constructive rather than destructive to those involved. Such an approach is suggested below.

COLOURFLOW DIALOGUE

Discussions of language, truth and logic can appear rather abstract and unrelated to the everyday problems of management and strategy. We can counter this by pre-empting some of the fieldwork developed within the context of this thesis, and considering a practical approach to organisation development which makes use of the ideas presented in this chapter. This approach is presented not as a prescriptive method: its use, in line with the discussion in Chapter One, is intended to be heuristic, helping those involved to develop thought and action in a partially structured environment, held at the [fuzzy] boundary between order and chaos. ColourFlow Dialogue is intended to integrate the many elements which we have explored in this chapter. It can operate with the same objectives as dialogue - not involving decision making - or it can operate with the objectives of skillful discussion, where decision making and action planning are important. Like both those practices, it involves techniques, but these are rapidly learnt, allowing participants to move quickly into practice. Like both practices, it helps to break established - and often unhelpful - patterns of communication which may be deeply set into the way groups work together.

Gerard and Teurfs [1195] identify four building blocks for Dialogue; these are equally important in the process being described here, with the provisos attached

- Suspension of judgement [proviso: this applies to some, but not all, of the colour modes]
- Identification of assumptions [proviso: this is the focal point of several of the colour modes; in others, it is not sought]
- Listening
- Inquiry and reflection

They outline also essential guidelines for dialogue, which again are important in the ColourFlow approach. People should listen and speak without judgement, acknowledging each speaker. There should be respect for differences, the avoidance of cross-talk, and role and status suspension. Overall the focus is on learning, balancing inquiry and advocacy, and seeking the next level of understanding.

Colour thinking uses the metaphor of colour to encourage people to adopt particular modes of thinking at different times in the course of discussion. Thus each colour suggests a lens through which to consider the issue or situation under discussion. By doing this, we seek some alignment of approach between people at each stage in group debate, without invalidating other approaches, which have their own designation [colour] and may well be used at other points in the discussion.

There have been at least three expositions of such an approach. The first, by Jeff Rhodes, identifies 25 Thunks, or ways of thinking, which are brought together in six groups, Hard and Soft Red, Blue and Green. This is primarily concerned with individual thinking, although Pacanowsky [and Rhodes] consider it appropriate to group work. These Thunks are summarised in Appendix 5.1, together with two diagrams which indicate their linkages. The second, from the Idon User Manual on 'Thinking with Hexagons', identifies ten modes of thinking, which again are seen as relevant to both individual and collective thinking. The third comes from the work of Edward de Bono, and involves 'Six Thinking Hats'. These are also summarised in Appendix 5.1.

The approach outlined below is based on six principles. The first is that there is a need when working with groups in organisations to encourage people to think in new ways - one of the problems that frequently exists in organisations is precisely their tendency to get fixed into particular ways of working, of thinking, and of meeting. Groupthink and sterile meeting patterns are just two of the consequences. Freeing people through novel approaches can help break out of this.

Second, this need is greatest in the 'holistic, synthetic' areas of thinking, as opposed to the more analytical. Yet most of the tools and techniques developed in strategic management and organisational development focus on the latter - tools of analysis, either conceptual or mathematical. To balance this, the approach here focuses more on the former.

Thirdly, the approach needs to be straightforward to grasp and use, since the setting may well be one in which there is very limited time for the whole work. At the same time, the opportunity should exist to deepen its use. For this reason, a two level approach is suggested here.

The fourth principle is that the first level should be one which can be introduced and applied rapidly. The second level focuses on themes which I consider of special importance: the need to deepen creativity, to stretch the mindset, to reveal and where appropriate unlearn personal and organisational routines, to discover novelty. Along side these, the second stage should give the opportunity to ensure rigour and use-value of the work undertaken.

Fifth, underpinning the need to stretch the mindset is the argument that much thinking in organisations is based on the tenets of the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm - the need for certainty, the use of crisp [two-valued] logic, the desire to be analytically correct, the search for quantitative underpinning to argument, the desire to predict the future. Two important consequences of all this are the separation of strategy formulation from strategy implementation, and the belief that the most important job of managers is to 'make the right decision'. Above all, this paradigm leads to the need to be - or at least be seen to be - rational, although research shows that this often manifests itself in post-hoc rationalisation, and in the construction of 'rational argument' after a decision has been taken to give it the required justification. The tools and techniques

outlined in textbooks on strategy and decision making reflect this: they are heavily analytical, and often mathematical.

Creativity is often recognised as important, but given little attention beyond the call for occasional 'brainstorming'. There seems to be a view that these 'right brain' ways of thinking are not amenable to a more systematic approach, and in effect require a freeing of the mind from the conventional constraints of analytical thought. While this is often important to achieve, it does not mean that the arena is anarchic, and tools and techniques exist, or can be developed, for this type of thinking.

But we are talking here about more than 'creativity'. The situations facing people in an organisation can be viewed as appearing somewhere along the spectrum from the tame to the wicked, discussed in the previous chapter. By situation is meant the interplay of organisation, environment and specific issue under consideration. Conventional, analytical, approaches to decision making and strategy development/implementation are appropriate to the Tame - but as we move along the spectrum toward the Wicked issues it is increasingly important to use other approaches. Both levels of the colour thinking approach outlined here are intended to help in this.

Finally, the approach should reflect some of the characteristics of Future Search Conferencing [to be considered further in Chapter Nine].

The twelve colour thinking modes used are given in Table 5.6. The first six of these are best explained by means of an example, and we therefore consider at this stage one of the case studies. ColourFlow Dialogue was used in work with a local authority, given here the appropriate pseudonym of Rainbow District Council. The focus of the work was a five hour seminar for Councillors and Chief Officers on partnership. The Council had recognised that they needed to become increasingly involved in joint working with other organisations across the whole range of their activity, but their tradition had been one of Direct Service Provision [this and other possible stances by local authorities are considered in Chapter Eight]. While some were keen to develop partnerships, others were much less convinced that this was the road to take in local government.

The seminar was therefore designed with several purposes in mind:

- To help participants recognise the range of partnerships in which they were already involved
- To give them the opportunity to think about why they should - or should not - be involved, recognising that political and practical factors are relevant
- To provide them with advice on how best to analyse potential partnerships, develop proposals, take decisions, and increase the likelihood of success

The seminar was run in three sessions, each lasting 75 - 100 minutes. Each session began with a talk, ranging in length from 20 - 55 minutes, and this was followed by group discussions. There were 32 participants, and for the discussions they were split into four groups [changing groups according to a predetermined random pattern for each discussion]. These groups were

deliberately held in the same room - this question of physical design of events is considered further in Chapter Nine.

TABLE 5.6 COLOUR THINKING MODES

WHITE	What?	The facts; the figures; Information
RED	How do I feel?	Values, Feelings, Intuitions
PURPLE	Why not ...	Problems and difficulties; What could go wrong; Devil's Advocate
YELLOW	What if?	Opportunities; Positive ideas
GREEN	What could be?	Creative thinking; radical alternatives
BLUE	How?	Structure; Overview
GREY	Assumption Challenge	What are the assumptions that underpin the way we think and act? Are they appropriate?
PINK	Paradox and Four Valued Logic	Thinking beyond two-valued logic, using paradox and 'the negation of the negation'
BLACK	Analytical/ Logical	Rigorous examination of the structure of arguments, testing for weaknesses
CYAN	Holistic	How does the situation under current examination interrelate with other situations? Use of systems thinking.
ORANGE	Metaphors	Employing metaphors to enrich understanding, and reveal new ways of viewing the situation
BROWN	Implementation	Ensuring that thought and action are not seen as separate activities

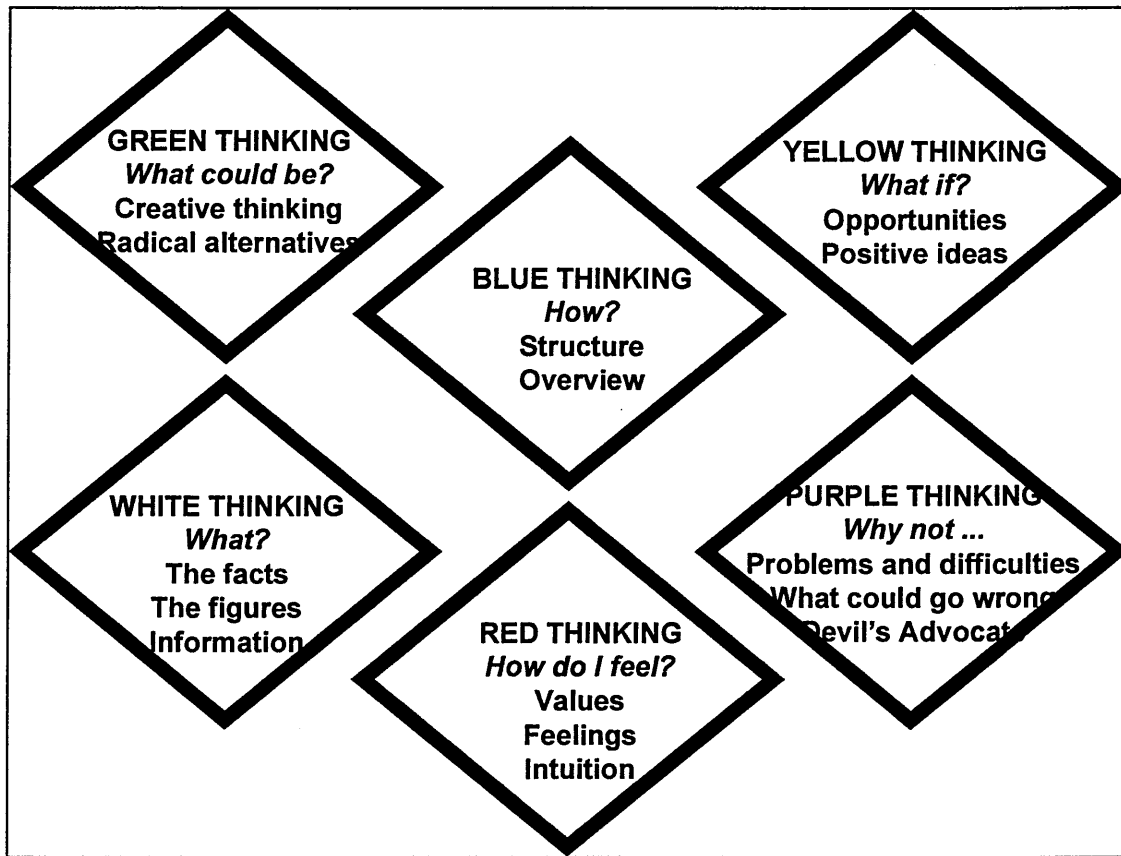
The talk in Session One looked at the development of partnerships in local government and elsewhere, provided a number of examples, and related the debate on partnership to the debate on the future of local government [see Chapter Eight]. The group discussion focused on the questions:

- What partnerships do we have? [White thinking]
- What are our objectives? [Red thinking]
- What do we feel about this move toward partnership? [Red thinking]

Immediately before the first discussion, I introduced colour thinking. This introduction was rather tentative - I had spent several weeks thinking it through as an approach, but remained extremely tentative, concerned that it would appear to be a gimmick, and had several times come near to abandoning it. However, I decided to try it, but outlined it simply as a possible approach to discussion, which participants might find helpful. It was therefore very encouraging to find groups putting 'Red Thinking' at the top of the flipchart sheet when discussing the second and third questions.

At the end of the first session, the sheets were put up on the wall so everyone could see the outcome - one immediate result, as has been anticipated, was that people recognised that they were not moving into new terrain - the list of

existing partnerships was extensive, but hadn't previously been pulled together in this way.



The talk for the second session introduced a decision framework for choosing strategic alliances, identified eleven ways in which partnerships can be vulnerable, and twelve principles for a successful partnership [the latter two based on Kanter's work]. The group discussions then considered:

- What have been the problems to date? [Purple thinking]
- What has been the positive experience? [Yellow thinking] For this, participants were encouraged to use the twelve principles as a template.

By this point, I was displaying the appropriate colour on the overhead projector, and half way through the group discussion it was a simple matter to tour the groups and ask them to 'move into yellow thinking'.

The final session began with a brief report back on key themes arising from each group discussion. The talk focused upon the Black Box - the need for organisations to think about what they are contributing to partnerships, and how they ensure that they do not become surplus to requirements. The final group discussions looked at:

- What new areas of partnership could we develop? [Green thinking]

- How do we ensure that all of this is taken forward, and the ideas and thinking of the day are further developed within the organisation? [Blue thinking]

A final plenary invited each group to indicate their major conclusions on these questions. It was encouraging to note that in these final groups almost every participant had their information pack open at the page on colour thinking - it had taken root, and the outcome of the second and third sessions, as well as the discussions, showed that people were using the framework as a basis for their input.

EXTENSION

The results of this first practical use of colour thinking were encouraging enough to allow speculation on how this approach could be deepened where the opportunity exists - for example, in a longer programme of work with a group of managers, or in a situation where people are clearly being held back by the organisation's existing routines and 'standard operating procedures'.

This extension involved the introduction of the six further modes of colour thinking, each of which is discussed below: As the case studies in Chapter Eleven will show, these additional colours have been incorporated into practical work, where colour thinking has been used in conjunction with other methods. The full range of twelve colours is viewed as a palette of possibilities - usually six are selected for a particular event.

BLACK THINKING: ANALYTICAL/ LOGICAL

This mode of thinking opens the door to the full menu of analytical tools and techniques developed in strategic management and decision making. White thinking identifies factual information - here we structure it, using PEST, SWOT, Five Force Analysis, Stakeholder Analysis, and so on.

Black thinking is also appropriate when testing the rigour of analysis - do our conclusions follow logically from the premises set? Here crisp [two valued] logic can be employed.

PINK THINKING: PARADOX AND NEGATION OF THE NEGATION

Pink thinking challenges crisp logic, and therefore uses the ideas of dialectic, four valued and fuzzy logics. If two apparently opposing themes have surfaced in the discussion, they could be asked to think of ways of combining them, or of rejecting both. If this has not happened, they might instead be given such a pair of themes and asked to approach them in this way - for example, centralisation and decentralisation.

ORANGE THINKING: METAPHORS

Orange thinking encourages creative use of language. One approach here might be to give participants a range of metaphors and invite them to use these to look at their organisation, or at the situation being considered.

Orange thinking could be based on a set of metaphors such as those suggested by Morgan [1993, 1997], or frameworks such as those of Bolman and Deal [1991]. Or participants can be encouraged to develop their own metaphors. Thus Grint [1997] describes the development by one team of four metaphors to represent the beneficial and disadvantageous elements of their organisation [elephant and lecturer], and the beneficial and disadvantageous aspects of the adaptive system [jazz instruments and butterfly]. We have seen elsewhere the use of other metaphors: the chessboard, the clockwork, the snake-pit. Marshak [1996] identifies a number of ways in which metaphors can be used to encourage rethinking, especially in contexts of second order change. Similarly, Broussine and Vince [1996] explore the use of metaphor to increase understanding about organisational change.

An important aspect of this mode, as of several others, is that our [western] tendency to move rapidly to critique and analysis should be suspended - these can return when thinking shifts to Black, Brown or Purple.

CYAN THINKING: HOLISTIC

Holistic thinking has been mentioned above, but it merits its own colour. Here we encourage people to think about the whole picture - to apply 'helicopter vision' [hence the choice of colour - sky blue]; to look at the forest, rather than the trees.

Systems thinking is appropriate here, inviting people to look at interconnections, to think about how proposals interrelate and impact on each other. A second tool is 'mindmapping' where the issue under debate is put at the centre, and people are then invited to identify linkages, and in turn further linkages. A third approach, frequently used in Search Conferencing, is to invite people to write a 'Future Past' story: an account of the organisation written from five years hence, in which they use their imagination to envision the organisation's future and its interconnections.

GREY THINKING: ASSUMPTION CHALLENGE

This thinking mode is based upon the approach discussed earlier. A related tool, which may be appropriate in Grey Thinking, is the search for the 'Unwritten Rules of the Game', advocated by Scott-Morgan. More generally, this mode of thinking is concerned with understanding patterns, procedures, routines in the organisation, and where necessary challenging their validity through dialectic analysis.

BROWN THINKING: IMPLEMENTATION

This is the thinking mode specifically concerned with implementation - with making sure that strategy is directly linked with action. In Future Search Conferences action planning is an important final phase, and the same applies in colour thinking. Thus the concern here is with:

- Ensuring that responsibilities are assigned against all agreed actions
- Suggested actions for self
- Suggested actions for each group/team
- Suggested actions for the whole organisation
- Before closing, it may be appropriate to ensure that volunteers are recruited to document the meeting, communicate to others, and carry forward next steps

The Critical Success Programme developed out of Hardaker and Ward's work [1987] is one framework that could be used for this [see also Chapter Nine].

INTERLINKING

The twelve thinking modes outlined here obviously interlink, and in any detailed group or organisation debate we would expect movement between them, and back and forth between levels. The approach outlined here can be compared to those given in the Appendices, indicating both similarities and differences, and this is done in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7 COMPARISON WITH OTHER COLOUR THINKING APPROACHES				
		Rhodes	Idon	De Bono
WHITE	What? Facts	Red	Grey	White
RED	How do I feel? Values	Soft Blue	Red	Red
PURPLE	Why not ... Problems	--	Black	Black
YELLOW	What if? Opportunities	Hard Green	Yellow	Yellow
GREEN	What could be? Creative thinking	Soft Green	Green	Green
BLUE	How? Structure	Blue	Blue	Blue
GREY	Assumption Challenge	--	--	--
PINK	Paradox and Four Valued Logic	--	--	--
BLACK	Analytical/ Logical	--	Brown	--
CYAN	Holistic	--	Blue	--
ORANGE	Metaphors	Hard Green	--	--
BROWN	Implementation	Soft Blue	--	--

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This Chapter began with an outline of fuzzy logic, comparing it with crisp logic and identifying its value in challenging stereotypes. Four valued logic was also considered, with its challenge to concept chopping, and to the notion of an 'objective world'.

This discussion of logic was then expanded in two directions. The first led to consideration of language and the role it plays in the enactment process. Schemata, prototypes and metaphors can lead to dichotomous thinking - but seen as fuzzy, they can be more creative, allowing new ways of thinking, new ways of framing.

The second expansion relates to paradox, a direct challenge to dichotomous thinking. This has been used in many cultures, including Asian and Native American. Here we began to consider some of the practical implications of the stream of thinking being developed in this Chapter, using Bateson's [1973] application of the theory of types to identify a multilevel approach to both learning and change. This willingness to challenge existing concepts was further developed by the introduction of assumption challenge, developed by Mitroff and Linstone [1993] into the Dialectic Inquiry System, in which opposite positions are deliberately contrasted and their assumptions examined.

Thus far the discussion in this Chapter had focused primarily on logic and language. The next stage was to consider their use in communication, using Bohm's idea of dialogue, and Ross's development of this into a continuum which stretches from Raw Debate through Polite Discussion to Skillful Discussion and finally to Dialogue.

Skillful discussion and dialogue are not easy to foster, not least because they can involve paradox. To this end a number of guiding principles and protocols were reviewed: these may be summarised in the following four guidelines:

- 1 Create a process which is 'safely dangerous', especially when the context is Wild or Wicked. This process needs to interweave the individual and the collective, and to allow the space for reflection and inquiry.
- 2 Balance advocacy with inquiry, which means that at times in the process there needs to be suspension of judgement
- 3 Build shared meaning, by identifying assumptions, listening, exploring impasses, and using self-awareness and reflection as a resource
- 4 Move towards action through agreement [it is this fourth point which particularly distinguishes skillful discussion, where it is present, from dialogue, where it may not be].

Much of the material in this Chapter is concerned to contribute toward delineating a new management mindset, which will be articulated more fully in

Chapter Eight. But an important part of the overall project is to consider the practical implementation of such a mindset. To this end ColourFlow Dialogue was introduced, as a method which would:

- Encourage people to think in new ways
- Balance synthetic and analytic areas of thinking
- Be straightforward to explain
- Be capable of rapid application
- Facilitate creativity [this will be extended in the next Chapter to the idea of Creative Intelligence]
- Reflect some of the characteristics of Future Search Conferencing [here we are prefiguring a method to be explored in Chapters Nine and Eleven, but it is worth saying that these characteristics resonate strongly with the four guidelines for dialogue and skillful discussion identified above]

This approach provides a framework which is both accessible and, dare I say, colourful. It has the advantage of being very easy to explain, which is useful where time is at a premium and the people involved want to 'get on with it'. It weaves together the conventional analytic tools of strategic management and organisational development with the tools, techniques and concepts which have been seen as particularly relevant to creativity.

ColourFlow Dialogue also embraces the elements developed earlier in this Chapter, including paradox, assumption challenge and metaphor. The 12 colours in the palette can be grouped into four clusters, based on two dimensions: whether the style is primarily analytical or creative, and whether the purpose is to build concepts, ideas and actions, or to seek a breakthrough into new ways of addressing issues. This is illustrated in Figure 5.3.

In the introduction I explained that the initial intent of this thesis was to focus upon the theoretical ideas which have been explored in this and the previous Chapter. As the work developed it became apparent that this would be an inadequate approach, in particular because it did not address the issue of power in organisations. It is to this that we now turn in Chapters Six and Seven.

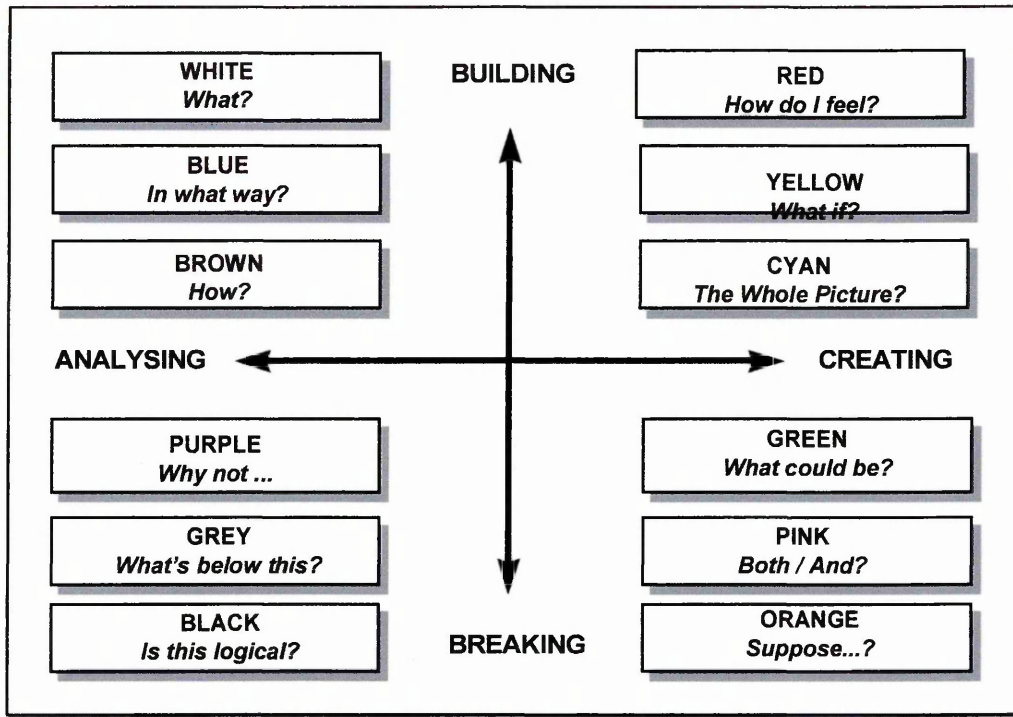
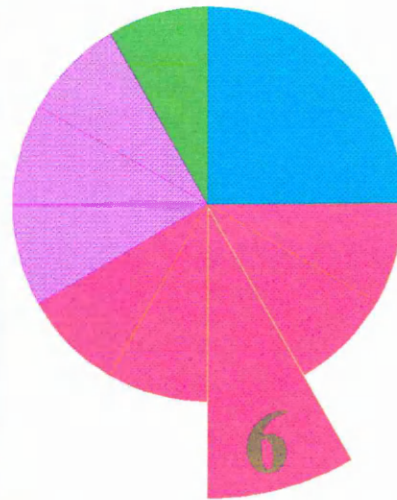
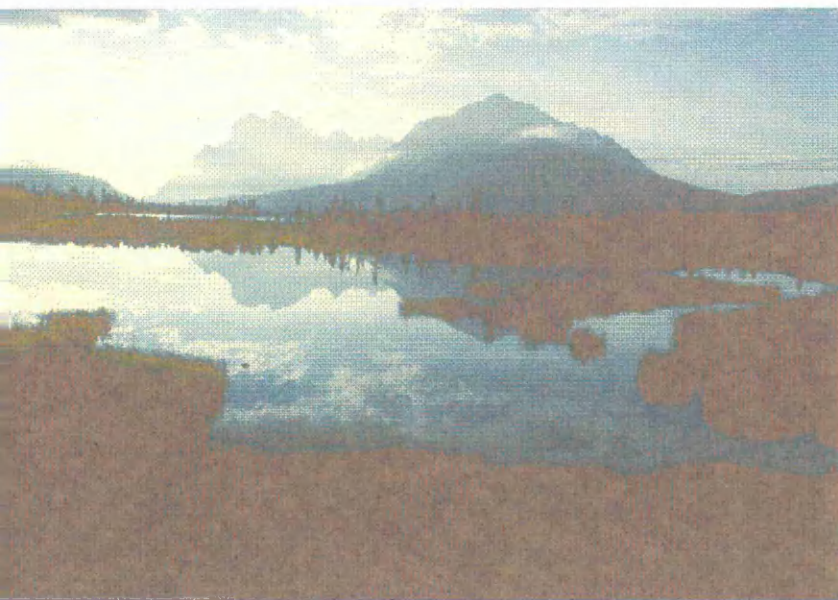


Figure 5.3 Some linkages between colour thinking modes



ARENAS OF POWER

Chapter Six considers the role of power in strategic management and organizational development. We begin with a brief review of texts, showing the inadequate treatment given to this subject. Four Arenas of Power are then identified, and their implications are considered, in part by comparison and contrast with other writers, and the nature of power itself is explored. Practical issues of the management of power are then considered, and this is done in part by extending the discussion of dialogue from the previous Chapter, considering also rhetoric, principles of argumentation, and fair process.

CHAPTER SIX

ARENAS OF POWER

"Power, like sex under the Victorians, has often been regarded as a subject not to be openly discussed but rather to be sought, thought about and used under the cover of darkness." [Gross, cited in Kakabadse and Parker 1984:16]

"Power is America's last dirty word. It is easier to talk about money - and much easier to talk about sex - than it is to talk about power." [Kanter 1983]

"Writers on organisations seldom have theorized political processes as endemic to organisation. Until recently, politics received very little attention at all." [Hosking and Morley 1991:135]

The reluctance to discuss power is problematic, given the central role which power and political activity plays in organisations. Indeed I share the view of Bacharach and Lawler that organisations may best be seen as *"politically negotiated orders."* [1980:1] As they argue, people in organisations are continually involved in bargaining, negotiation, and the exercise of power and influence: organisations are the arena for daily political action.

Why the reluctance to debate power? Partly because power is seen as unsavoury; Pfeffer [1992:14] cites a survey done by Gandz and Murray, in which 93% of the respondents said that the experience of workplace politics is common in most organisations, 89% said that successful executives must be good politicians, and 76% said that the higher one progresses in an organisation, the more political things become. But 59% of these same respondents believed that organisations free of politics are happier than those where there are a lot of politics, 55% said that politics were detrimental to efficiency, and almost half said that top management should try to get rid of politics within organisations [an echo here of the response by Schwartz's students to the 'snake pit'].

A further clue comes from James' comment [cited by McLean in Kakabadse and Parker 1984] that the concepts of power, influence and authority may be related to the concept of control: control is the end, power the means to this end. This supports Bacharach and Lawler's argument that *"Most conceptions of power are based on Weber's classic definition that power is the probability that a person can carry out his or her own will despite resistance."* [1980:12] On this, however, we should note what Giddens has to say about use, or misuse, of Weber's formulation, which he cites as *"the capacity of an individual to realize his will, even against the opposition of others"*. Giddens [1993] points to

the omission of the 'even' in some renderings of this definition, implying that power presupposes conflict.

What we have in this equation of power and control is the view of power which flows from the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm. In this Paradigm control - over nature, over the machine organisation, over the people in it - is very important, and it is not surprising that power and control become virtually synonymous, and power is seen as zero-sum.

This Chapter considers power as a relationship, between people and between groups. It is a relationship which in itself is neither good nor bad - it can lead to control, it can lead to enhanced capability. While power can be used coercively, and can prevent others from gaining what they want, it can also be used creatively. Indeed power itself can be created - it is not a zero-sum game. A good example of this comes from the comment of a local leader on a housing estate in Sheffield, who described the major gains achieved in that estate in the period since the City Council began to work with, rather than for, the residents - it was clear that much more had happened than a simple transfer of power: it was being created in an energised population.

This approach accords with that of Giddens. He identifies two senses of the concept of power. The general sense refers to the transformative capacity of human agency, which is *"the capability of the actor to intervene in a series of events so as to alter their course. ... 'Power' in the narrower, relational sense is a property of interaction, and may be defined as the capability to secure outcomes where the realization of these outcomes depends upon the agency of others. It is in this sense that some have power 'over' others: this is power as domination."* [1993:117-8]

Giddens emphasizes that in both senses power refers to capabilities. In addition, the relation between power and conflict is a contingent one, and it is the concept of 'interest' rather than power which relates directly to conflict and solidarity.

The purpose of this Chapter therefore is to identify a theory of power in organisations which:

- Relates to previous theoretical work on the subject
- Integrates with an approach to management, organisation and strategy consistent with the challenge to the recipes of the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm presented in this thesis
- Relates to practical experience
- Makes sense of 'political strategies' in organisations
- Recognises the growing importance of stakeholder approaches within and between organisations
- Recognises the ethical dimension of power, without seeking to be prescriptive about what is acceptable or legitimate behaviour
- Is relevant at both the intra-organisational and inter-organisational levels

This final point is worth emphasizing. Much of the discussion about power within organisations takes place separately to consideration of power at the inter-organisational level. Yet the differences between the two are diminishing, as networks develop in both public and private sectors. It therefore helps to integrate these dimensions.

The first section reviews the treatment of power in the literature on strategic management and organisational development. The second develops the central framework of this Chapter, by outlining four 'arenas of power', and the significance of each is considered in the third section. In the fourth section we consider the analysis of power in particular organisational contexts. Following a discussion of the roots of power, we then look at the power strategies available, setting them within the framework of the four arenas of power. Two more specific issues follow - the relationship between power and creative intelligence in organisations, and the implications for those practising organisational development. This Chapter presents the arguments within a contingency framework: a more evaluative approach will be developed in Chapter Seven.

POWER AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Power doesn't get a great press in the literature on strategic management. A review of recent texts demonstrates this. Power is not mentioned in the index of Grant [1995], Rowe et al [1994], Koch 1995], Garratt [1996]. In de Wit et al [1994] discussion is limited to a brief mention of the 'power-behavioural school of thought' [in a paper by Quinn]. Harrison and St John, who title their book "Strategic Management of Organisations and Stakeholders", might thereby be expected to give it much greater attention, but their discussion is limited to stakeholder analysis [strengths and weaknesses] and stakeholder management, which they see as an aspect of strategic control.

Bennett [1996] devotes a short section to Organisation Politics, in which he identifies six ways in which it can affect planning, six ways in which it can develop, and eight ways in which it can damage a company: the overriding flavour is negative. Rosen [1995] also covers power in two pages: here the discussion is limited to the question of decentralisation versus centralisation.

One of the few text books to cover power beyond stakeholder analysis is Johnson and Scholes [1997], who consider the role it plays in the management of change. However, this is done only within the context of the hierarchical structure¹. None

¹ *"It is likely that there will be a need for the reconfiguration of power structures in the organisation, especially if transformational change is required. This may well go hand in hand with the legitimising of dissent from those in the organisation who are questioning the existing ways of operating. In order to effect this reconfiguration of power it is likely that the momentum for change will need powerful advocacy within the organisation, typically from the chief executive, a powerful member of the board or an influential outsider."*

"However, political activity is not only relevant at the chief executive or senior executive level. Any manager faced with managing change needs to consider how it might be implemented from a political perspective. Managers also need to realise that analysis and planning may themselves take on political dimensions." [Johnson and Scholes 1997: 474]

of this should come as a great surprise. Strategy texts continue to be rooted in the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm, part of which is the separation between body and mind, translated in strategic planning into the split between worker and manager, thinker and doer., and hence the separation between strategic formulation and strategic implementation. Within the hierarchical structure the former is the unquestioned prerogative of the senior management; the latter is delegated through authority structures to middle management and the front line. It is not that power is absent - simply unquestioned. As Grint [1995] argues, most textbooks recognise the probability of conflict - but this is between managers and workers, and is concerned with action to take when this prerogative is challenged.

An important exception is Stacey's approach, not surprising given his critique of traditional approaches. Stacey recognises the role of politics in decision making, pointing for example to Hofstede's approach to control, in which political control is applied in conditions of ambiguity. For Stacey, however, political activity takes place primarily in the 'shadow system', and is covert. This partly echoes the argument of Farrell and Peterson that *"political behaviour resides in informal structures and relates to the promotion of self and group interests"* quoted in Hosking and Morley 1991:136]. While not denying the importance of covert activity, I wish here to integrate it with 'overt' political behaviour, which is of equal significance.

Turning to the literature on organisational behaviour, Thompson and McHugh [1990] make a similar comment. Power gets little better treatment in the Organisational Development literature: *"Those who write on approaches to the application of behavioural science knowledge in organisations seem to have generated an espoused philosophy of sharing, trust, and care for the others. Such a philosophy is most noticeable amongst the Organisation Development writers and practitioners, but by no means exclusive to them."* [Kakabadse, A. and Parker, C. 1984:ix] This view is supported by Bacharach and Lawler². The link to hierarchy emerges also in the OD literature, as illustrated in the comments of Schein³.

² "Even the more theoretical organizational psychologists, who set out to overcome some of the flaws inherent in the standard psychological approaches to organizations, fail to come to grips with the political reality of organizations. For example, in *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (1969), Weick focuses on the negotiation of order, yet he adheres to the implicit assumption that organizations are harmonious, cooperative systems. He places greater emphasis on the establishment of social order in a given environment than on the political conflict and negotiation intrinsic to a given order." [1981:5]

³ "Organization development (OD) can best be defined as a planned change process, managed from the top, taking into account both the technical and human sides of the organization and using inside or outside consultants in the planning and implementation of the changes to be made. Much of the work of organization development practitioners deals with knitting together diverse and sometimes warring subcultures, helping leaders, the dominant coalition, or the whole managerial subculture client figure out how to integrate constructively the multiple agendas of different groups. The managerial subculture usually becomes the agent of change and the initial target of change, but the ultimate client system is the organization as a whole in that the interests of all the stakeholders must be considered. Though the projects may be initiated by individual leaders, it is essential in OD projects that the client system be broadened

My argument is rather different. Power should be central to strategy; it is a crucial factor in every part of the Strategy IDEA [Investigate, Decide, Enable, Act]. Action is about the use of power, Enabling about fashioning the organisation and its resources in ways which will enhance its potential. Decision making involves the interplay between those involved, who thereby exercise power. And Investigation involves much more than stakeholder analysis. As Berger and Luckman have argued: *"Power in society includes the power to determine decisive socialisation processes, and therefore, the power to produce reality."* [1966:137]

In the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm reality is assumed to be objective, 'out there', waiting to be discovered. In the approach being developed here it is recognised that the organisation enacts its environment - and by 'organisation' we will frequently mean those dominant within it. Different belief systems will lead to different views of reality: thus power creates reality, and the clash between views of reality will in turn be an important consideration in the use of power.

THE FOUR ARENAS OF POWER

The basic framework used here is simple. We start with the approach adopted by Flood and Jackson "from the industrial relations literature" [1991:35]: this involves unitary, pluralist and coercive relationships between participants. Table 6.1 presents the characteristics of each as identified by them, with a number of changes. First, the word 'control' replaces 'coercive'; second, their framework is here extended by adding a fourth type of relationship, which will be called the political, and is also summarised in Table 6.1.

Coercion has been defined as *"To force to act or think in a certain way by use of pressure, threats, or intimidation; compel.; To dominate, restrain, or control forcibly: coerced the strikers into compliance.; To bring about by force or threat: efforts to coerce agreement."* [American Heritage Dictionary] Control is defined as *"To exercise authoritative or dominating influence over; direct. ; Authority or ability to manage or direct."* [ibid.] Thus control includes coercion, but in addition a number of other ways by which one individual or group can require others to do things which they may not otherwise choose to do; this is reflected in Table 6.1 where the original *"Some coerce others to accept decisions"* has been replaced by *"Some require others to accept decisions"*.

to at least the top-management subculture and preferably the other hierarchical subcultures as well." [Schein 1992:316]

TABLE 6.1: TYPES OF RELATIONSHIP

	UNITARY	CONTROL	PLURALIST	POLITICAL
Summary	We all agree what to do	This is what we will do	We do our best to agree what to do, and then stick with it	We need to get some agreement so that we can take action, but it will be provisional
Communality of interest	Share common interests	Do not share common interests	Basic compatibility of interest	Compatibility of interest may well be partial
Values and beliefs	Highly compatible	Likely to conflict	Diverge to some extent	Divergence may be significant, including some conflict
Ends and means	Largely agreed	Not agreed, and 'genuine' compromise is not possible	Do not necessarily agree, but compromise is possible	Compromise may be provisional - subject to change when the opportunity arises for one or more participants
Decision making	All participate	Some require others to accept decisions	All participate	All participate, although power differences mean some have more influence than others
Objectives	Act in accordance with agreed objectives	No agreement over objectives is possible given present systemic arrangements	Act in accordance with agreed objectives	Objectives may not be agreed, but action can be agreed by negotiation

We can now link these four types of relationship through the matrix presented in Table 6.2, where they are seen as four arenas of power. The vertical axis concerns the number of dominant belief and power system[s]; the horizontal axis concerns the potential for agreement or consensus between the participants. While shown as a simple matrix, we should recognise from the outset that both these axes are in practice a spectrum, and there is scope for considerable movement both within and between the four arenas - indeed this is often what management is about. In the language of fuzzy logic, the arenas are fuzzy sets, and any situation can have partial membership of more than one. These are Arenas may also be represented pictorially as shown in Figure 6.1.

TABLE 6.2: ARENAS OF POWER			
		Potential for Agreement	
		High ←	→ Low
Dominant belief and power system[s]	Single ↑	UNITARY	CONTROL
	↓ Multiple	PLURALIST	POLITICAL

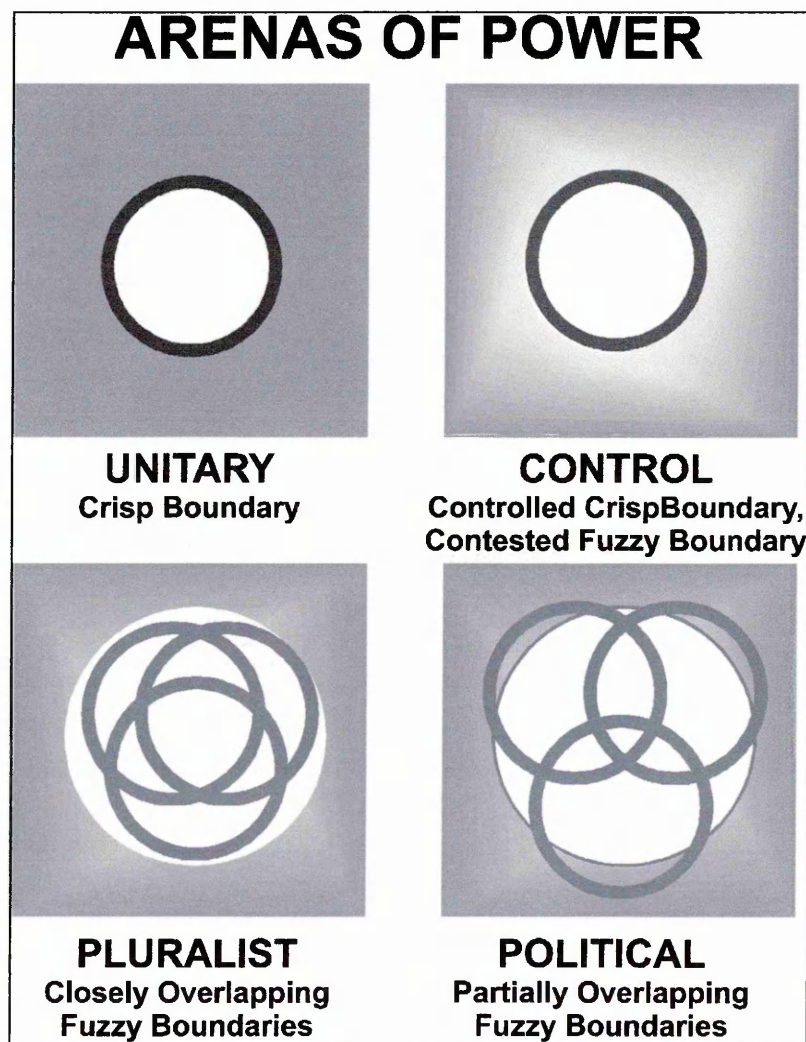


Figure 6.1

The approach taken here can be clarified by comparing it with other approaches taken in the literature. We can usefully begin with Burrell and

Morgan, who present three frames of reference [see Table A6.1, Appendix 6.1]. It is important to recognise that these are views - belief systems - rather than arenas of power relationships. The arena in which people find themselves may or may not be consistent with their view of the organisation. Let us attempt a rough characterisation of fit.

People who hold the unitary view will wish to operate in the Unitary arena. They are likely to view both the Control and Political arenas as undesirable or unacceptable, while the Pluralist arena will be at best a temporary phenomenon in times of change. The unitary view may well be advocated also by the dominant grouping in a Control arena [conflict seen as deviant].

People holding the pluralist view will be suspicious of a Unitary arena, either regarding it as a Control arena in disguise, or as an arena where the danger of complacency often exists [they will watch for Groupthink, or the Icarus Paradox [Miller 1990]]. Those holding the radical view will suspect both Unitary and Pluralist arenas. Both will be seen as in reality Control, distinguished primarily by the disguise mechanisms involved - here we begin to touch on Lukes' third level of power, an important disguise mechanism which will be explored later.

A second comparison is with Bate's [1994] identification of four approaches to culture change, summarised in Table A6.2, Appendix 6.1. Again we need to be clear about typology - Bate is concerned with approaches, not arenas, and with ways of changing culture, whereas the present debate is about power relationships; nevertheless, there are useful linkages. In broad terms, the aggressive approach is one likely to be adopted by dominant groupings in a Control arena, or by groups seeking to shift from a Political to a Control arena. The conciliative approach will be found in the Pluralist arena, while the indoctrinative approach is most likely in the Unitary arena [it may also be used by groups seeking to shift from a Control to a Unitary arena].

On this basis we might expect the corrosive approach to correspond to the Political arena, but there is an important caveat here. Bate argues that the corrosives are fundamentally pluralists - something they have in common with the conciliatives. They see the organisation in terms of the informal network of power rather than formal authority. In this network power is diffuse and multi-directional; it is shared and there is no dominant party, no single individual or group who can impose a solution or course of action on the rest.

"However, corrosives and conciliatives differ in the way they manage that pluralism. Whereas conciliatives are prepared to be open and accommodating in outlook, corrosives tend to be covert and devious, skillfully manipulating relationships in order to achieve their ends. There is a zero-sum game conception of life in which gains are made only at other people's expense. Sorokin puts it well when he says that people who hold to this frame of reference see the changing world as booty to be grabbed, and everyone within that world as a potential enemy rather than a brother." [1994:186-7]

What I find interesting here are the values being imposed on this approach - it is covert, devious, and manipulative. This is no doubt the normative position

that would be taken by those facing such an approach - indeed the basic objective of the corrosive approach, as summarised in Table A6.2, indicates that it as an approach to be used in a Control arena, by those in a subordinate position seeking to gain dominance.

The argument here is that strategies appropriate to the Political arena are much wider and deeper than the corrosive. Important to this is the question of legitimacy, which must always be seen as relative and multiple. In any context we can identify four types of legitimacy. At the first level, there is legal legitimacy - what is considered legitimate in the formal legal framework of the society within which the organisation is operating. At a second level, most commonly used in debates on power in organisations, there is the question of what is legitimate in the organisational context. In the Unitary and Control arenas strategies will be legitimate if they fit the dominant belief system. In the Pluralist and Political arenas different parties will have different views of legitimacy [although we can expect a greater convergence of view on this in the former, as compared to the latter]. Part of the working agreement [tacit or explicit] will be an understanding of what activity is considered to be legitimate.

At a third level there will be a view on legitimacy by the various participant groups. In a Unitary arena this will coincide with the second level. In a Control arena the non-dominant groups will each have their own view of legitimacy, and this will influence the stand they take in relation to control [including acceptance, resistance or subversion]. In the Pluralist and Political arenas group views on legitimacy will also vary, and relative influence will determine the extent to which they feed into legitimacy at the second level.

Finally, there will be individual views on legitimacy - what strategies an individual considers acceptable within their own ethical framework. At its simplest level, Christians or Jews who obey the Ten Commandments, or Buddhists who have taken the Ten Precepts, will have a somewhat different view of what is acceptable behaviour to those who have what Heirs [1986] has described as 'the Machiavellian mind', obsessed by internal politics and politicking.

It is useful to relate this to the different grounds for consenting or agreeing to something identified by Held [1987]: coercion, or following orders; tradition; apathy; pragmatic acquiescence; instrumental acceptance; normative agreement; and ideal normative agreement. He reserves the term legitimacy for the last two: thus legitimacy is taken to imply that people follow rules and laws because they actually think them right and worthy of respect. The distinctions made above suggest that different participants will have different perspectives on this. For example, a dominant group may consider that there is normative agreement ["in the circumstances before us, and with the information available to us at that moment, we conclude it is 'right' for us as an individual or member of a collectivity: it is what we genuinely should or ought to do" Held *ibid.*:182]; while another group accepts through apathy ["We cannot be bothered one way or another"]; a third group accepts through pragmatic acquiescence ["Although we do not like a situation, we cannot image things

being really different and so we accept what seems like fate”]; while yet another group accept through coercion [“There is no choice in the matter”].

This question of the acceptability, or legitimacy, of ‘political’ activity in organisations is a central one in the debate on power, and it is therefore worth considering briefly other treatments of the issue. Lee and Lawrence [1991:38-9] present several definitions [see Box 6.1] They note [39] that for the first two writers quoted organisational politics is clearly undesirable. By contrast, Burns, Pettigrew and Robbins make no assumptions about organisational goals and do not automatically accept the rights of any ‘dominant coalition’ to specify how people should behave. In their view this stance avoids questions such as Who says what the organisation’s goals should be? What if there is no agreement within this group? What if other groups disagree? Where does this group get the right to set goals? And What rights do other groups have?

While sympathetic to this perspective, it should be noted that here the questions above are not avoided - they are in practice important to anyone involved in power relationships in organisations. But no assumption is made here that one group has the automatic right to impose their answers to the above questions over others - although it will be the case in a particular setting [notably the Control arena] that such a right is claimed by a group, and this claim may well be accepted by others.

Box 6.1: Definitions of Power

‘Company politics is the by-play that occurs when people want to advance themselves or their ideas regardless of whether or not these ideas would help the company.’ E. Hegarty

‘Political manoeuvring refers to actions that are directed more toward self-aggrandisement than toward the good of the company as a whole. Playing politics connotes a degree of deception and dishonesty.’ A. Dubrin

‘Politics are the exploitation of resources, both physical and human, for the achievement of more control over others, and thus of safer, or more comfortable, or more satisfying terms of existence.’ T. Burns

‘Political behaviour is defined as behaviour by individuals, or, in collective terms, by sub-units, within an organisation that makes a claim against the resource-sharing system of the organisation.’ A. Pettigrew 28

‘Politics: any behaviour that is self-serving.’ S. Robbins

An alternative approach to power has been to identify it as ‘backstage activity’ - something undoubtedly done, but not having the same public legitimacy as the rationally considered and logically phased public performance. This is the basis of the approach to strategic change put forward by Boddy and Buchanan [1992].

My suggestion is that this relegation of ‘political’ approaches to power is increasingly inappropriate. It rests on the assumption that there is a single rationality, either universally accepted or imposed [this, after all, is part of the

belief system held by each party]. But in many contexts there are multiple rationalities at play, based on divergent views of objectives, means and ends, and differing views of what is considered legitimate. At its simplest level one has only to listen to protagonists from different political parties debate in public - whatever the subject of debate, they will diverge dramatically in their treatment of it. A statistic will be shown to demonstrate diametrically opposite things; an event will be a tremendous success to one, a stupendous failure to the other. Leaving aside the question of how far this may be posturing, some divergence is inevitable in political debate, and the same applies at the organisational level.

Crucial to the present argument is the assertion that 'political' strategies are neither more nor less legitimate than others, except in a relative context which depends on the relevant arena of power. This can be illustrated by considering the view of Mintzberg. In his major opus on power he defines power as the capacity to effect [or affect] organisational outcomes. *"We view politics as a subset of power, treating it as informal power, illegitimate in nature. Likewise we also treat authority as a subset of power, but in this case formal power, the power vested in office, the capacity to get things done by virtue of the position held."* [1983:5]

In his subsequent analysis Mintzberg [ibid.:172] identifies three 'legitimate' systems - authority, ideology and expertise - and one illegitimate - politics. In the context of the present argument, the legitimacy to which Mintzberg refers is that operating at the second - organisational - level, in the Unitary or Control arenas. In the Pluralist and Political arenas things are not so simple!

Our next comparison is with Pfeffer [1992b], who suggests that there are three ways of getting things done. The first is hierarchical authority - often a characteristic of the Control arena - but this he sees as badly out of fashion, as needing the cooperation of others who do not fall within one's direct chain of command, and overdependent on individuals.

The second is the creation of a strongly shared vision or organisational culture - here we are in the Unitary arena. This, Pfeffer argues, has been a highly fashionable approach in recent years, but it too faces several problems. It takes time and effort, is increasingly difficult in organisations composed of heterogeneous members, and it can lead to groupthink.

The third way of getting things done is through the use of power and influence, requiring that one defines goals and patterns of dependence and interdependence, and understands different points of view, and strategies appropriate to different power bases. This third way is likely to be found in both the Pluralist and the Political arenas, and the above are some of the many questions that need to be answered by participants in these arenas.

Finally, it is useful to relate the argument to political theory. Held [1987] identifies a number of contemporary models of democracy. The pluralist model includes among its key features:

- power is shared and bartered by numerous groups in society

- value consensus on political procedures, range of policy alternatives and legitimate scope of politics
- power non-hierarchically and competitively arranged
- no ultimate powerful decision making centre

As a characterization of Western politics, he sees this as 'extraordinarily naïve', failing for example to account adequately for power relations - not least the way in which power can be deployed to achieve a 'non-decision-making' process [the same charge of naïveté can be levelled against those advocating the position on organisational thinking]. He suggests that a number of pluralists, in particular Dahl, have recognized this, and developed a 'neo-pluralist' position, which recognizes that :

- power is contested by numerous groups
- poor resource base of many groups prevents full political participation
- distribution of socio-economic power provides opportunities for and limits to political options

The third model relevant to the present discussion is that of 'democratic autonomy', based on the principle of autonomy: *"Persons should enjoy equal rights [and, accordingly, equal obligations] in the framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them; that is, they should be free and equal in the determination of the conditions of their own lives, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others"* [Held 1991:228] This principle can provide part of the normative base for activity in the Political Arena.

SHIFTING SANDS

For all the talk about new forms of organisation, existing structures sustain. While there are undoubtedly shifts taking place, every arena is important.

The Unitary arena has been espoused, as we have seen, by OD writers for years. In the strategy literature the explosion of interest in organisational culture in the 1980s was in part an attempt to replace the faltering oxymoron known as strategic planning. For the 'excellence' theorists a strong culture produces electricity in the atmosphere, generating attachment to the organisation and commitment to top management's directions. Thus Williams, Dobson and Walters [1993:301] conclude their survey of culture change by commenting that strong organisational culture results when individuals internalize the values of the organisation, through common and shared experience, involvement and persuasion. They see the benefits of a strong organisational culture as including a commitment to the organisation, effort above minimum, behaviour that is self-reinforced, spontaneity, cooperation, proaction and initiative in the service of organisational values, even in the absence of prescribed rules, supervision and external rewards. Walton, in his advocacy of a shift "from control to commitment in the workplace" [1985] sees control and lateral coordination dependent on shared goals. And Clampitt [1991:54] argues that the challenge for the manager is to transform her or his

power into duty and the employee's conformity into desire. The culture thereby holds the organisation together in the absence of threats and rewards.

Another perspective on this is provided by Johnson and Gill [1993:108], who suggest that the main criticism of those who advocate cultural control is that it is not possible to manage and control cultures closely by their very nature and, further, that the more extreme and mechanistic prescriptions for managing cultures are, then, often the most manipulative, coercive and patronizing and these are likely to be counterproductive in the longer term.

As a final comment on the Unitary arena, Watson summarises the Peters and Waterman recipe of simultaneous loose-tight controls: *"in these [excellent] organisations, people do not wander away from serving the key purposes of the organisation's founders or leaders. The tightness of control comes from people choosing to do what is required of them because they wish to serve the values which they share with those in charge. These values, typically focusing on quality of service to customers, are transmitted and manifested in the organisation's culture."* [1994:16]

But for all this advocacy of common values, the Control arena persists - not surprisingly, given the central role control plays in the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm. There have been numerous variants over the course of the twentieth century - Taylorism, Fordism, technocracy, Stalinism, the command economy, Neo-Taylorism, and McDonalozation.

We can expect these two arenas to continue to be important, and there is an interplay between the two, highlighted in Hales' comments [Box 2, Appendix 6.1]. But the significant shift is the growing prominence of the other two arenas, and we can identify a number of factors underpinning this. First, there is the expanding terrain of inter-organisational activity. Strategic alliances, joint ventures, partnerships, networks and clusters of organisations - all these are now frequently found in both public and private sectors. Indeed, at a seminar of local authority chief executives on the theme of partnership, one of the conclusions was that it was difficult these day to find activities not involving partnership with other organisations. I am not alone in detecting this trend in my work: Burke [1995] states that 50% of his current consulting work involves inter-organisational relations.

Second, there is the developing debate about the need for organisations to address multiple stakeholders. This has been prominent in the strategy literature for a number of years; now it has firmly entered the political debate.

Third, there is the argument that people are finding traditional forms of organisation [in particular hierarchical ones] less acceptable. Thus research by Halal [1994] led him to argue that there is an overall trend toward greater democracy in organisations. He cited Bennis in support of his argument - the latter sees hierarchy as flawed because it is acutely disappointing as a moral organisation, and is out of kilter with its environment.

Fourth, there is the argument that cultural diversity in organisations is becoming more common, and, many would say, desirable [see Kakabadse and

Parker [1984] in particular the contributions by Parker, and by Harrison and Pitt].

Fifth, the debate on new forms of organisation include considerable discussion of the need to consider non-hierarchical forms of relationship and governance [Darwin 1992].

Finally, there is the argument that organisations are 'loosely coupled systems' [Weick 1985] in which rationality [and with it legitimacy] is applied retrospectively, and there is considerable segmentation.

To conclude, there are shifting sands. But there is no sea-change. All four arenas of power are important, and will continue to be so. Power strategies need to be understood within these very different contexts, and managers need to understand in which arena[s] they are working. It is to this that we now turn.

IDENTIFYING THE POWER ARENA

The conventional approach, as we have seen, identifies stakeholders and advocates attention to those with greatest power, interest and dynamism - the Key Players. There is therefore a straightforward relationship assumed - between the senior managers and the other Key Players. This involves understanding who they are, what is their level of interest and importance; their objectives, their sources of power and influence.

The approach taken here implies a more complex investigation of power, in which the above is only the first phase, with several more to follow. For ease of exposition, the following relates to a single organisation, but similar considerations apply in inter-organisational contexts.

The second phase is identification of the Power Arena which best characterises the organisation [remembering always the fuzzy boundaries!] How many predominant power groups are there? If there is only one, then this is most likely a Control or Unitary arena. If there are several, what are their relative positions, in terms of common interests, values and beliefs, ends and means, and objectives? Answers to these questions can help identify where the organisation lies along the horizontal axis of Table 6.2.

Gray's analysis of conditions facilitating interorganisational collaboration, based on a survey of existing research on the subject, provides a useful template for this purpose [See Box 3, Appendix 6.1] She identifies three phases of collaboration: problem setting, direction setting and structuring, and for each puts forward a number of propositions, which have two functions in the present context. First, they can help in identifying the current power arena. Second, they indicate some of the requirements for those who wish to move from the political to the pluralist arena.

Turning now to situations where a single organisation is under consideration, a cultural investigation may be of help. Assessing the organisation against

Harrison's typology, for example, will identify which of four characteristics are most significant. We can expect Power and Role cultures to be Control; Support cultures will tend toward the Unitary and the Pluralist arenas; while Achievement cultures will suggest a Pluralist or Political arena.

[In parenthesis, it is worth noting the outcome of a simple questionnaire frequently used to identify which of these cultures are significant in an organisation. Whenever it is done [and experience to date covers several hundred people, ranging from local authority officers to European bankers], the results are strikingly similar: people identify their organisations as Role/Power/Achievement, while their ideal organisation is Achievement/Support.]

The above provides the overall context. But the same analysis may well be needed in relation to the particular situation being faced - such as a major investment proposal, or a change programme. Any or all of the answers may be different in the particular. For example, while the organisation overall may fall within the Control Arena, it could well be that for a particular issue the context will be that of a Political Arena - as when new resources become available within a bureaucracy, and the various departments are vying with each other to get them [or, to put this in a public sector setting with which I have, sadly, all too much experience, when budget cuts are required, and department or section chiefs seek to minimise the impact on their own budget]. Thus the arenas of power need to be understood as holographic - they can appear within each other.

The final phase requires that, as an individual and within the appropriate group context[s], you consider your ethical standpoint in relation to the use of various power strategies. Referring again to questions of legitimacy, this requires each to consider:

- What are you/your group trying to achieve?
- In relation to this, which power strategies would be considered legitimate, and which illegitimate, given the dominant power group[s]?
- Which power strategies do you/your group consider to be legitimate?
- Where there is a clash between the above [you consider legitimate what the dominant group[s] consider to be illegitimate, how are you going to proceed?
- What does this imply in terms of overt/covert activity?

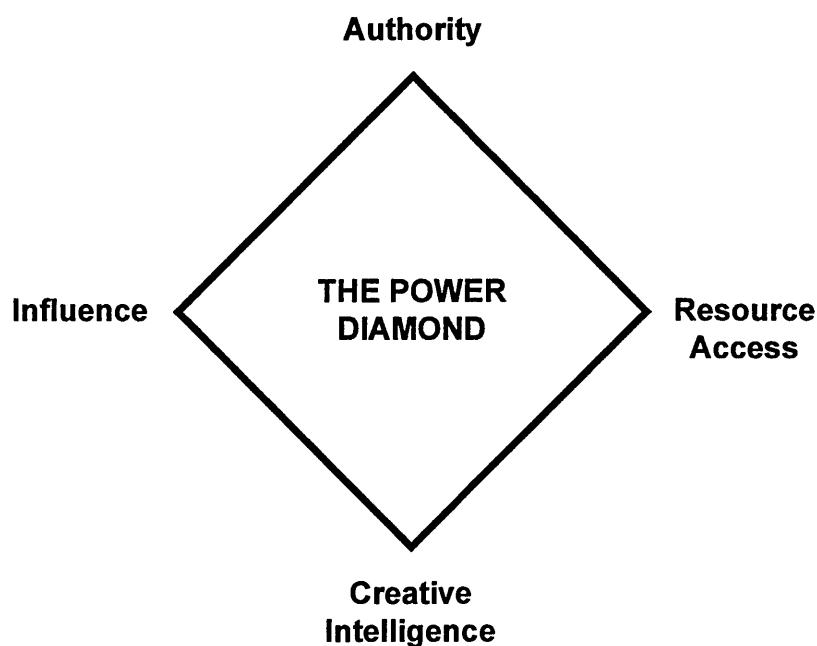
This phase will hopefully be enriched by the discussion in the next two sections, where we consider the roots of power and power strategies available. As a final comment, we should note that the boundaries of groups, like arenas, are fuzzy. At any one time manager will have full or partial membership of several groups - sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting. The situation can be complex - but that, of course, is part of what makes management interesting!

THE ROOTS OF POWER

We start with Etzioni's [1961] compliance structure, which identifies three power sources which ensure that people in an organisation do as the dominant group wish. The coercive involves threats of violence or restriction of personal liberty [in present day terms, we could extend this to involve the threat of job loss]; the utilitarian involves financial rewards or sanctions; the normative involves appeals to values and convictions. Etzioni relates these to organisations classified by goals, as shown in Table 6.3. In terms of the present discussion, a coercive compliance structure will feature in a Control arena - but the utilitarian may also appear here. A normative structure is likely to be seen in a Unitary arena [thus Etzioni cites as examples of organisations with culture goals churches, religious foundations, ideological political parties and educational organisations].

Table 6.3: Relationship between type of goal and compliance system [Etzioni]				
		Type of goal		
		Order	Economic	Culture
Type of compliance structure	Coercive	X		
	Utilitarian		X	
	Normative			X

I want to play loose and fast with this structure, by proposing that these three compliance structures can all be embraced under the heading of Authority, and that three further roots of power, which apply both within and between organisations, need to be added. We then have a power diamond:



Authority is here understood to be the basis of deciding what power strategies are legitimate. It varies between the arenas: Table 6.4 suggests the ways this may happen.

Table 6.4 : Authority base in the arenas of power	
Arena	Basis of Authority
Unitary	Shared norms and values
Control	Coercion, Hierarchy
Pluralist	Relational Contracting
Political	Transactional and Relational Contracting

By way of linkage with other approaches, Table 6.5 compares this with sources of power identified by French and Raven, by Kipnis et al [1984], and by Morgan [1985], within this framework.

Table 6.5 Roots of power compared			
	French and Raven	Kipnis et al	Morgan
Authority	Coercive Reward	Higher Authority Sanctions	Formal authority Use of organisational structures Control of decision processes Control of counter-organisations Structural factors
Resource access	Information Expert	Coalition	Control of scarce resources Control of boundaries Control of technology Interpersonal alliances Control of knowledge and information
Influence	Referent	Friendliness Bargaining Assertiveness Reason	Management of meaning Management of gender relationships
Intelligence			Ability to cope with uncertainty

The elements in Table 6.4 provide a picture of Resource Access and Influence. The former is concerned with access to the various tangible and intangible resources which affect a situation. 'Interpersonal alliances' are included here because they constitute an important resource, especially in inter-organisational settings where access to contacts by one party, if others do not have similar access, can be a valuable source of power. The actual 'networking' with other people, and other organisations, flows into the third power root, Influence - there is no crisp boundary here, and this is also true when we look at Authority and Influence. Thus appeals to reason will depend for their effectiveness in part on the legitimacy accorded to specific rationalities. Similarly the management of meaning will be more effective if there is an authority base from which to work.

While there are no sharp boundaries between these four roots of power, there is an important distinction to be made here, between the control of existing

knowledge and information, which involves power over resource access, and the ability to generate new knowledge and information - this is seen as creative intelligence.

This fourth root of power is perhaps the most radical implication of this framework. It might be seen as simpler to conflate this with influence. But I wish to propose through this approach - in keeping with Giddens' definition of power - an integration of creative power with the other aspects of power on which so much of the debate concentrates. If this appears unusual, this is perhaps due, once again, to the influence of the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm, with its focus on power as control. In the present context, this applies in particular to the treatment of expertise, knowledge and information. Thus Morgan refers to *"the key importance of knowledge and information as sources of power. By controlling these key resources a person can systematically influence the definition of organisational situations and can create patterns of dependency."* [1986:167]

French and Raven's 'expert power' has been defined in two textbooks thus: *"Valued knowledge or information gives an individual expert power over those who need such knowledge or information. The power of supervisors is enhanced because they know about work schedules and assignments before their subordinates do."* [Kreitner and Kinicki 1995:272] *"If one individual perceives another to have key knowledge or specialized technical skill, then the 'expert' will have a significantly more potent source of power."* [Wilson and Rosenfeld 1992:166]

The subtext is that power is exercised over and/or against others. The creative aspect of power is rarely considered in the management literature [as is true of creativity itself]. But once we break from the shackles of the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm we can begin to conceptualise power in organisations as a force - and indeed as a 'field' within organisations which can be strengthened or diminished.

Kanter's comments on the expansion of power are relevant here: *"Organisational power can grow, in part, by being shared. We do not know enough about new organisational forms to say whether productive power is infinitely expandable or where we reach the point of diminishing returns. But we do know that sharing power is different from giving or throwing it away. Delegation does not mean abdication."* [in Pugh 1990:259].

The addition of Creative Intelligence to the roots of power changes a zero-sum setting into a non-zero-sum setting, with the possibility [for it is always contingent] that participants can achieve more than a distributive effect.

I wish to return to Creative Intelligence below. But reverting now to the arenas of power, and supported by Kanter's comments above, I would like to suggest that Creative Intelligence is of increasing importance as we move from single to multiple power groups in and between organisations. Creative Intelligence is here required:

- To seek bases of communality
- To develop effective relationships
- To build and maintain trust
- To create 'win-win' situations - that is, to 'invent options for mutual gain'
- To manage diversity

Thus Hales [1993:44] argues that the solution to the problem of legitimacy may lie in a recognition that power in the sense of 'transformative capacity' or 'power to' resides in the interdependence which is characteristic of work organisation. If the effective achievement of goals is the outcome of cooperation, then managerial legitimacy must rest in the manager's role within that effort and upon shared goals and values. What is different here from earlier writers is the recognition that consensus cannot simply be assumed to exist, but must somehow be created out of disparities of power, conflicts of interest and potential dissensus.

By contrast, creativity may be limited in the Unitary arena through the lack of diversity, while in the Control arena, creativity may be positively discouraged - a point to which we return below. Finally, it is worth noting that we see in these roots of power, once again, the interlinking of Power, Belief and Knowledge [see also Pettigrew's comments in Box 4, Appendix 6.1].

POWER STRATEGIES

The arenas of power are the locations for the use of power strategies in and between organisations. Table 6.2 can be developed as shown in Figure 6.3. Often the exercise power takes place purely within a single arena, but there will be times, particularly in change management, when a shift between arenas is one of the objectives. We therefore need to consider strategies appropriate to work within and across boundaries.

Just as the boundaries between the arenas are fuzzy, so are the distinctions between strategies. Many writers have produced lists of power strategies over the years, and these can be relevant to several of the groups discussed below. Thus an approach which seeks to shift from one arena to another is likely to embrace tactics used in both. In the following discussion there is therefore the need for a fair amount of cross referencing.

In analysing what is happening, and what could happen, it is also necessary to consider intended shifts, unintended shifts, and shifts due to circumstances outside the volition or control of the participants.

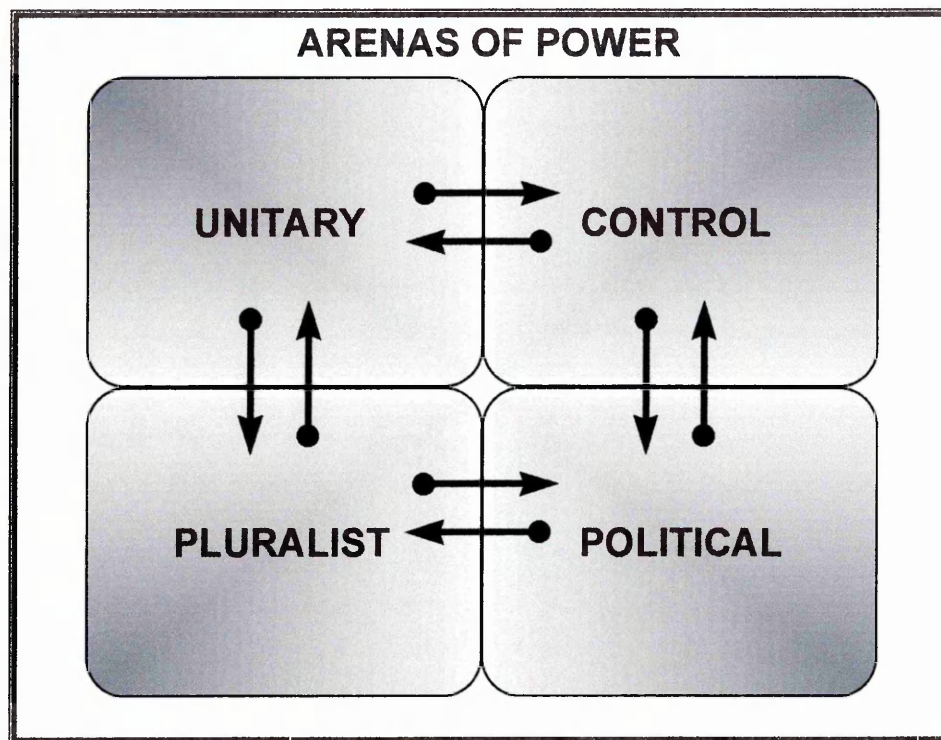


Figure 6.3

1 UNITARY

Here people share beliefs and objectives, and differences are settled by seeking consensus, or by reference to the uncontested views of the leader. Conflict is viewed as an aberration, and a manager's role will be to settle it as quickly as possible - the disturbance handler. Strategies of conflict resolution are therefore important.

In analysing such contexts it is important not to take the Unitary position at face value. In this discussion we are returning to an assumption underpinning Etzioni's analysis, in which the normative power structure, like the other two, ensures that people do as the organisation wish. As argued earlier, it is likely that those who take the pluralist or radical views of organisation will see the Unitary arena as Control in disguise. They will look for Lukes' third dimension of power - ways in which potential issues are suppressed by *"the supreme exercise of power"*, where you *"get another or others to have the desires you want them to have - that is to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires"* [1974:23]. This would be seen in agenda-setting and in *"the socially constructed and culturally patterned behaviour of groups and practices of institutions"* [ibid.:24].

But of course those within it will disagree - from their perspective it is Unitary. Here we face the criticism of Lukes' approach raised by Clegg, that it assumes people have 'real interests' which they do not express, because they are not even aware they have them. Lukes recognises the relativism of his position:

"Different conceptions of what interests are associated with different moral and political positions" [ibid:34]. He recognises also the difficulty of surfacing 'real interests'. But again, this will be a matter of perspective.

Pursuing this theme, does surface unity conceal a control context, perhaps through control of the agenda, which prevents any dissenting views surfacing [Lukes' second type of power]? Are dissenting voices self-censoring [an aspect of groupthink]? Or is the unitary position being maintained by gatekeepers - recruitment policies, for example, which ensure that only those willing to 'sing from the same songsheet' enter the organisation? Are people already there, who are not prepared to join the chorus, shown the door?

Many of the above concerns will feature in the thinking of those operating within the Unitary arena who reject its basis. Those who accept its basis - who share the group norms and values - will exercise power seen as legitimate within that value system. If the shared views are drawn from a leader, then change is likely to be led by that person. Bate's indoctrinative approach will be a feature of this arena.

2 CONTROL

Prime Minister: He's got to learn to cooperate

Bernard: What do you mean, cooperate?

Prime Minister: I mean obey my commands - that's what cooperate means when you're Prime Minister

From 'Yes Prime Minister' [BBC]

For all the advocacy of new organisations and new ways of working, the control arena probably remains the most common arena for organisations. Power strategies in this arena will vary according to one's relative position within an inequitable power structure. Those at the top seek to maintain their position. They define and control the structure of legitimacy, and use several of the levers of power described by French and Raven [the choice is partially dependent on the roots of the inequity - thus positional power will be important in the bureaucratic/ hierarchical structure]. When seeking change, they may adopt the Aggressive approach outlined by Bate. Resource Access will also be an important root of power in this Arena.

Those in control can define the agenda, limiting the scope of actual decision-making to "safe" issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths, and political institutions and procedures [Bacharach and Baratz]. As Lee and Lawrence [1992:137] comment, preventing issues from surfacing, or modifying the political agenda, can be a major use of power, not least because it may be hard to detect and counteract.

Those lower in the structure may accept, resist, subvert or seek to change the current power structure. If they do not accept it, then strategies developed in community action some years ago will be relevant, such as those of Alinsky [these will be considered further in Chapter Ten]. Buchanan and Boddy

[1982:78-9] identify useful advice by Keen on counter-implementation strategies, and counter-counter-implementation strategies [See Appendix 6.1, Box 5], and there are also the organisational political games identified by Mintzberg [1983:214-5] although it should be noted that within his analysis these are considered as 'illegitimate' [see Appendix 6.1, Table A6.3]. These power games have two primary roots of power: Resource Access and Influence.

3 PLURALIST

In this arena there are differences of view, and no single dominant belief and power system, but the drive is towards agreement. Power strategies involving conciliation, compromise and consensus are therefore encouraged. Conflict is accepted - even encouraged - in formative stages of strategy and decision making, but the assumption is that once a decision is taken, or a strategy set, there will be unity in executing it. The conciliative approach outlined by Bate will often be seen here.

Influence is an important root of power in this arena. Thus, effective participants need good negotiating skills. A personal anecdote is appropriate here. During my time as a local government officer in the late eighties I became increasingly involved in inter-organisational activity, as part of the City Council's efforts to develop a partnership approach to economic regeneration. It became clear to me that negotiating skills were important here, and that I would be a more effective participant if I improved my own. I therefore requested the Personnel Department to find a suitable course which I could take. In a search lasting several months they were unable to find anything other than the industrial relations courses - this was apparently seen as the only arena in which managers negotiated.

In practice, of course, managers are negotiating on issues large and small throughout their working day, and the need for skills in this area is increasingly recognised. A valuable approach to this subject is the Harvard Negotiation Method [Fisher and Brown [1989], Fisher and Ury [1987], and Ury [1991]] which takes as its starting point the contrast between soft and hard approaches to bargaining. Neither are satisfactory, and instead the Principled approach is advocated. Central to this is the problem-solving approach: don't bargain over positions. The method has four key elements: separate the people from the problem; focus on interests, not positions; invent options for mutual gain; and insist on independent criteria. Grint [1997] also provides a number of guidelines for effective negotiating, inspired in part by the implications of fuzzy logic.

Lacking the ability to impose their views on others, participants in this Arena need good influencing skills, such as those advocated by Cohen and Bradford. Strategies to achieve and maintain agreement are also important in the Pluralist arena. Kanter suggests 'Eight I's that create successful We's', which can help in this. Finally, ICL's 'Dos' for successful collaboration are relevant.

One of the themes underpinning these approaches is Creative Intelligence - partnerships develop become something can be achieved which is not possible through individual action. But there is an important caveat to this discussion. The trust required in the Pluralist arena is often difficult to build - but easy to fracture. We will discuss below shifts from the Pluralist to the Political arena, which may be the intentional direction of one participant, or be a consequence of factors outside the control of the participants. Participants need to bear these possibilities in mind, and an important aspect of this is what Lorange and Roos [1992] have called the 'Black Box', whose contents keep the organisation in a stronger bargaining position, or ensure that it will not be totally stranded if the partnership does not work. Table 6.6 gives the suggested contents of a Black Box for a Local Authority involved in partnerships with other bodies, identifying also the potential problems with each element.

TABLE 6.6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE BLACK BOX	
THEME	DANGERS
DEMOCRACY	
Democratic imperative	Seen as unnecessary or time consuming
Centrality	Loss of position
Prestige / Importance	Loss
Legislative requirement	Change of law
HUMAN RESOURCES	
People directly involved in partnership	Non-discretionary; Loyalty clashes
Specialist knowledge	Transfer to partnership or other partners
Information	Transfer to partnership or other partners
Networks / Contacts	Transfer to partnership or other partners
OTHER RESOURCES	
Financial	Non-discretionary; Reducing
Physical	Non-discretionary; Non-replaceable
Access to LA Services	Reducing; Moving out of LA
Access to non-LA Services [e.g. European finance]	Change of law

4 POLITICAL

This is the most volatile arena. There is no dominant powerbase, and participants come from very different standpoints, so there is considerable room for conflict and the exercise of power plays. Unlike the Pluralist arena, this is likely to continue into the implementation phase - agreement will be achieved through negotiation, but will often be provisional. Strategy therefore will be 'emergent', and participants will continue to seek maximum advantage from their perspective.

The provisional nature of agreement is not necessarily a matter of participants always looking to what suits them best. This arena is often the one where the wicked situations are played out, and in these situations circumstances

change, and each participant needs to recognise this and be able to respond. This can be seen on a day-to-day basis in two contemporary examples - Northern Ireland, and Palestine/Israel.

Large organisations involving 'baron fiefdoms' operate in the Political arena [as well as in the Control - the latter within the fiefdoms, the former between them]. Inter-organisational activity will often fall into this arena. Many of the strategies outlined under the Control arena are equally relevant here. An important difference will be that they are likely to have a greater acceptability. If there are a number of different power bases involved, each with different values and rationalities, then only the most naïve is likely to argue that political strategies are illegitimate. Negotiating strategies will also be important, as in the Pluralist arena. This again highlights the contrast with Bate's corrosive approach, in which the players are operating in a zero-sum game. A fundamental principle of the Harvard Negotiating Method is to seek options for mutual gain, which can exist even where the participants have different values [indeed it will on occasion be facilitated by this, since what is important to one because of their objectives and values may be far less important to another].

We now turn to shifts between arenas, which are summarised in Table 6.7. Here we can be briefer - not because they are less important, but because strategies will often involve combinations of those we have identified within the Arena.

This leaves diagonal shifts, involving a move along both axes. This combined move makes them much more difficult, and involves combinations of the strategies outlined above.

CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Creative Intelligence was earlier identified as the difference between zero-sum and non-zero-sum power. The link between power strategies and creativity emerges if we look at the opposite: the way in which people limit innovation and creativity in organisations. Thus Kanter [1983:101] describes *Rules For Stifling Innovation* [Appendix 6.1, Box 6]. My own favourites, honed over the years as I have witnessed, frequently fought against, [and on occasions, it must be said, used] are the 24 ways described in Box 6.2. By way of example, it became clear that a major change initiative in a large organisation with which I was involved was becoming bogged down in disagreement. As a supporter of the change, I prepared a short paper outlining a way forward which took account of some of the concerns [which had some justification]. This was presented for discussion at the key decision making committee involved. In the first discussion of the paper, six of the 24 Ways surfaced [3,4,5,9,11,13]. In the second meeting another four were used [12,16,17,19]. At the third meeting, the proposals were accepted, although subsequently they were subjected also to Ways 14,20,21 and 23. All this took place in a Political arena nested within a wider Control arena.

TABLE 6.7 CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES

FROM	TO	
Increased Potential for Agreement		
Control	Unitary	Here the indoctrinative approach outlined by Bate is likely, increasing the propensity to agreement, and hence reducing overt coercion [although the points made above about covert coercion still apply].
Political	Pluralist	One of the strongest features in the literature on strategic alliances is the emphasis on building and maintaining trust, and this is likely to be a key element of this strategy. The extended list of Kanter's I's presented above is therefore highly relevant.
Move to Multiple Dominant Power Groups		
Unitary	Pluralist	This move may be desired if it is felt that the organisation is becoming too narrowly focused - as with those that are victims of the Icarus Paradox. It will be necessary to create legitimacy for views other than the currently dominant one, whose primacy therefore needs to be challenged. In effect, there is an unfreezing job to be done here. The questioning of assumptions and the role of Devil's advocacy, may both be appropriate.
Control	Political	Here the groups lacking dominance are seeking to change the balance of power, and weaken the power of the currently dominant power. The strategies suggested by Alinsky and Mintzberg will be relevant, and more generally tactics of sabotage, subversion, revolt, open challenge. This may well be the first part of a double act - first creating a Political arena, and then reverting back to Control, but with a new dominant power group.
Decreasing Potential For Agreement		
Unitary	Control	This may be a combination effect. As long as there is unity, then there is little incentive for anyone to seek control dominance. But if a group breaks away from the current consensus, they may then seek to create dominance of their view - perhaps ultimately leading to a strategy where they then create, through indoctrination, consensus for their own viewpoint. Or it may be that a group seeks to break down consensus, and open up debate, while others react to this by seeking control power to retain dominance of the status quo.
Pluralist	Political	This shift occurs as the views of participants come to diverge, and agreement becomes less sure, less binding. It may be a deliberate move by one or more participants due to changing strategic priorities, or the result of factors beyond the control of the participants.
Move To Single Dominant Power Group		
Pluralist	Unitary	The desire here is for unity, but through 'winning hearts and minds' rather than through coercion. Appeals to rationality may be appropriate, as will Bate's conciliative approach.
Political	Control	Here one of the currently rival camps is seeking dominance - a scenario familiar in revolutions, as for example in the Bolshevik rise to supremacy, and the subsequent rise of Stalin.

It needs to be understood that this saga [whose equivalent I have experienced in varying forms on a number of occasions] does not suggest malice by the participants. These ways to kill an idea are often adopted as defence mechanisms, when faced with the new, or the challenging. This is partly demonstrated in the way that people can quickly work through them toward a more constructive approach [the above three meetings took place within one week]. Furthermore, challenges of this form can be important in testing an idea, and exploring weaknesses within it. Devil's Advocates should always keep this checklist close to them.

Shifting now to the positive, we can see the concept of Creative Intelligence in the contrast Lax and Sebenius [1986] make between Claiming and Creating value in negotiations: the former is zero-sum, the latter is not.

Woodman et al [1993:312-4] identify a number of hypotheses, based on existing work on organisational creativity. They argue that individual creative performance will be increased by group norms that support open sharing of information and risk taking, and will be decreased by group norms that create high conformity. Group creative performance will be increased by group diversity and the use of highly participative structures and cultures; it will be decreased by the use of autocratic styles of leadership. Finally, organisational creative performance will be increased by the availability of slack resources and the employment of organic organisational designs; it will be decreased by restrictions on information flows, information exchanges with the environment, and communication channels within the system.

One implication is that creativity will be restricted in many Control arenas [where there is an autocratic style of leadership] and in Unitary arenas [where there is high group cohesiveness]. It is also problematic in Political arenas, where there is low cohesiveness between groups.

This implies a focus on the Pluralist arena, and it is no surprise that much of the literature adopts values consistent with this arena - but frequently in an apolitical context, in which closer examination suggests a Control arena.

This is well brought out by Coopey [in Starkey 1996] in his discussion of the learning organisation. He identifies some of the writing on this as 'unashamedly elitist', while other material displays the same tendency as 'love and trust' Organisational Development, placing the Learning Organisation within a unitarist framework of relationships, a utopia to be ushered in through the pursuit of shared goals in a climate of collaborative high trust and a rational approach to the resolution of differences. Out of this, he sees the danger that the Learning Organisation, like the notion of Organisational Culture, might well be transformed from a helpful metaphor into a mechanism through which managerial control is improved under dramatically changed external circumstances.

Box 6.2 24 WAYS IN WHICH TO KILL AN IDEA

- 1 **Ignore it** : dead silence will intimidate all but the most enthusiastic proposers of ideas.
- 2 **See it coming and dodge**. You can recognise the imminent arrival of an idea by a growing unease and anxiety in the would-be originator. Change the subject, or - better still - end the meeting.
- 3 **Scorn it**. The gently lifted eyebrow and a softly spoken, "You aren't really serious, are you?" works wonders. In severe cases make the audible comment, "Utterly impracticable". Get your thrust home before the idea is fully explained, otherwise it might prove practicable after all.
- 4 **Laugh it off**. "Ha, ha - that's a good one, Chris. You must have sat up all night thinking it up!" If she has, this makes it even funnier.
- 5 **Praise it to death**. By the time you have expounded its merit for five minutes everyone else will hate it. The proposer will be wondering what is wrong with it himself.
- 6 **Mention that it has never been tried**. If it is new this will be true.
- 7 **Prove that it isn't new**. If you can make it look similar to a known idea, the fact that this one is better may not emerge.
- 8 **Observe that it doesn't fit with organisation policy**. Since nobody knows what the policy is you are probably right.
- 9 **Mention what it will cost**. The fact that the expected saving is six times as much will then pale into insignificance. That is imaginary money; what we spend is real. Beware of ideas that cost nothing though, and point out, "If it doesn't cost anything, it can't be worth anything".
- 10 **Oh, we've tried that before**. Particularly effective if the originator is a newcomer. It makes her realise what an outsider she is.
- 11 **Cast the right aspersion**. "Isn't it a bit too trendy ?", or "Do we want this clever academic stuff?", or "Let's be careful we don't outsmart ourselves". Such comments will draw ready applause and few ideas will survive collective disapproval.
- 12 **Find a competitive idea**. This is a dangerous one unless you are experienced. You might still get left with an idea.
- 13 **Produce twenty good reasons why it won't work**. The one good reason why it will work then gets lost.
- 14 **Modify it out of existence**. This is elegant. You seem to be helping the idea along, just changing it a little here and there. By the time the originator realises what is happening, the idea is dead.
- 15 **Encourage doubt about ownership**. "Didn't you suggest something like Chris is saying last year, Pat?" While everyone is wondering, the idea may wither and die quietly.
- 16 **Damn it by association of ideas**. Connect it with someone's pet hate. Remark casually to Al: "Why, that is just the sort of idea that Jo might have thought up". Al hates Jo. The originator doesn't, and will wonder for weeks what hit him.
- 17 **Try to chip bits off it**. If you fiddle with an idea long enough it may come to pieces.
- 18 **Make a personal attack on the originator**. By the time she has recovered, she will have forgotten that she had an idea.
- 19 **Score a technical knock-out**. For instance, refer to some obscure regulation it may infringe. Use technology as a weapon : "But if we do that we will need to provide everyone with networked software to replace their current packages, and they would resent having to learn new systems - you wouldn't want to put us all to that expense and trouble, would you?"
- 20 **Postpone it**. By the time it's been postponed a few times, it will look like a rather old idea.
- 21 **Let a committee sit on the idea**.
- 22 **Offer to take lead responsibility for developing the idea**. Establish a working party, and then simply avoid calling any meetings.
- 23 **Generalise**: suggest that this idea needs to be considered in a much wider context - so wide that it becomes impossible to handle.
- 24 **Encourage the author to look for a better idea**. Usually a discouraging quest. If he finds one, start him looking for a better job

An important aspect of this is the distinction drawn earlier between knowledge and information as resources and Creative Intelligence. The dangers Coopey identifies arise when learning contributes to the former, rather than the latter. *"Since knowledge is such an important resource in a learning organisation we might expect much political activity to be associated with how it is acquired and stored and how access to the collective data bank is controlled. Despite Pedler's protestations that information will be widely available in a learning organisation, limitations are inevitable. ... Existing symmetries of power are likely to be buttressed by the learning process, giving senior managers access to newly generated corporate knowledge and language, strengthening their hands in internal and external dealings."* [ibid:358, 362] It should be noted that this use of knowledge and information as a resource is by no means limited to top management: it is a familiar part of organisational activity within, for example, universities, where sharing of ideas is less than wholesale.

Important to Creative Intelligence is trust. The need for trust in collaborative activity is a theme which emerges frequently in discussions of partnership. We can see this theme also in some of the debates on intra-organisational activity. For example, Watson, in his conclusions to his search for management [Appendix 6.1, Box 7], identifies the role of trust, although it should be noted that his initial statement challenges one of the arguments developed here, that trust is possible between groups who do not share basic values.

Pursuing the theme of trust a little further, Barnes [1981:108-10] identifies three assumptions which, in combination, prevent trust from forming. A person holds the first assumption when either/or thinking dominates choices and decision making. The second assumption is the principle that hard is better than soft, which means that hard drives out soft, while that third holds that the world is a dangerous place requiring that a person adopt a position of pervasive mistrust to survive.

What is notable about these three assumptions, in terms of the present debate, is that they are rooted in the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm, with its emphasis on crisp [two valued] logic, quantitative approaches, and a competitive view of the world. A hypothesis that emerges is that trust may be easier to develop within the wider setting being developed here.

Such an approach is consistent with the thinking of Vaill, who argues that *"Change has become much more a matter of sheer survival than of 'development'. Contemporary change requires deep reorganisation of values and patterns of thought [casually called 'thinking outside the box'], not just the acquisition of new information and skills. Permanent white water means that change itself is changing. The implications for OD are profound though as yet not well understood or even recognised."* [1995:34]

In developing this line of thought, he contrasts institutional learning [IL] with continual learning [see Appendix 6.1, Box 8]. IL fits into the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm; continual learning requires a wider framework.

It is worth adding to this a parallel contrast made by Cummings. Taking the same line of argument as Beer, Eisenstat and Spector, he compares programmatic change with new change strategies. The former are a form of IL; the latter are more freeform - and hence, though this is not addressed by Cummings, more challenging to existing power structures [See Appendix 6.1, Box 9].

The debate about organisational learning, and about creativity in organisations, is important. The purpose of this section is to suggest that this must however be set within an understanding of organisational power. If an organisation advocates the 'learning approach', but remains a Control arena, then prospects for success may be limited. Enhancing legitimacy means reducing control, and this may require the exercise of power strategies far more than the espousal of values of lifelong learning.

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Exploring the literature on Organisational development, three options seem to emerge for the practitioner:

- Work within the Control arena
- Work to shift the organisation from Control to Unitary
- Work to shift the organisation from Control to Pluralist

Thus the Control arena is central, whether accepted or challenged. This may in part be because, as Reason [in Kakabadse and Parker 1984] argues, OD is primarily relevant to role cultures, especially those seeking to become more task oriented. They will challenge the negative aspects of the role culture, such as red tape, but will adopt rational change processes within an accepted cultural framework, taking for granted the basic distribution of power within that [Western] culture.

The first option, to work entirely within the Control arena, is seen by some, such as Katz and Marshak [1995], as increasingly unacceptable as we move toward empowered organisations and self-managed teams: working from 'top to bottom' may ignore important leverage points. But where then to go? The second option - working toward a shift into the Unitary arena - has been just as strongly challenged, for example by Kakabadse and Parker, who see this as reliant on a philosophy of care, trust and affection for the individual, ignoring the 'darker side of humanity', and seeing politics as unpleasant. The third option emerges from the literature as the most desirable for OD practitioners.

Yet as we have argued earlier, this shift, from Control to Pluralist arena, is one of the most difficult to achieve - requiring a move along both axes, with the opening of power to others by the dominant group, and an increase in the likelihood of agreement. This involves much more than management inviting comment and ideas - it implies negotiation, not just consultation. At the international level, one of the few examples of this has been the transformation in South Africa. In a fascinating book, written before the transformation

occurred, Sauber describes the results of scenario planning which took place among a large group of South Africans in the 1980s, and which led them to advocate the need for such change, on economic as much as social grounds. As part of this, they argued for “*a negotiated future involving all South Africans*” [Sauber 1990:96]

The contrast between consultation and negotiation, set out by Sauber, is summarised in Table 6.8. If we consider against this table the power strategies used in other ‘peace initiatives’ which have proved much less successful, such as Palestine/Israel, we perhaps get some clue as to one of the problems that exists.

TABLE 6.8 : NEGOTIATION AND CONSULTATION	
NEGOTIATION	CONSULTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It always costs you: be prepared for give-and-take • No one has complete control over the process, because everybody sitting around the table has equal status • The outcome is uncertain • When you sit down at the table, you want the people sitting opposite to be strong, and in a position to deliver on the agreement eventually negotiated when they report back to their people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It need not cost you: you can always go back to square one because the final decision is in your hands • You can control the process • The outcome is uncertain but only on your own terms • The strength of the other parties is not central to the process; you are looking for their wisdom, not so much for their ability to deliver on the settlement

What, then, does this mean for the OD practitioner? The power dimension in OD leads us to recognize the need for analysis by practitioners of the situation they face, along the lines advocated in earlier sections of this Chapter. Beyond this, they need to consider why they are being employed [see Appendix 6.1, Box 10 for a sobering analysis of this], and what stance they will take.

Pettigrew identified five potential power resources available to the internal consultant: each is here linked to the four roots of power discussed earlier:

- ♣ Expertise - singular possession of a valued area of technical competence [Intelligence]
- ♣ Control over information - internal consultants are “*potentially able to influence the resource allocation process in their organisation through a process of collecting, filtering and reformulating information.*” [197] [Resource access]
- ♣ Political access and sensitivity - “The amount of support a consultant achieves is likely to be conditional on the structure and nature of his [sic] direct and indirect interpersonal relationships.” [199] This also involves

being sensitive to the relative power of those in her network. [Influence and Resource Access]

- ♣ Assessed status - *"the process of developing positive feelings in the perceptions of relevant others"* [200] [Influence and Authority]
- ♣ Group support - given to the consultant by colleagues [Influence and Authority]

PRINCIPLES FOR DISCOURSE

We are moving from the Cartesian-Newtonian search for convincing arguments which require assent from all rationally thinking people to discourse in which persuasion and assent are central. In addition to dialogue and negotiating, already considered, we can draw on further interweaving strands, including rhetoric, principles of argumentation, and fair process.

Turning first to rhetoric, Shotter [1993] suggests that in recent times, this has suffered at the hands of logic; in a debased form, it has been seen (from within a Cartesian perspective) as just having to do with the emotional side of argumentation. Classically, however, rhetoric was seen as where a decision was needed and it was impossible to use methods of calculation aimed at absolute certainty. In such circumstances, because there are no agreed foundational truths, or universal methods of inquiry, all conclusions must be arrived at by the persuasion of others. And an argument is settled, not by the production of calculations, but by giving good reasons to one's audience, particular reasons why they should, in that situation, assent to one's claims - where good reasons are reasons which, at the time they are given, no one can think of a way of challenging or criticizing.

The 'argumentative turn' in policy and planning [Fischer and Forester 1993] provides further ideas. We may take the argument of Healey [1993:239] as illustrative. She suggests that *"We may shift our ideas, learn from each other, adapt to each other, and act in the world together. Systems of meaning or frames of reference shift and evolve in response to such encounters. But it can never be possible to construct a stable, fully inclusionary consensus, and the agreements we reach should be recognized as merely temporary accommodations of different, and differently adapting, perceptions"*. In this, she sees herself as parting company from Habermas, by recognizing the inherent localized specificity and untranslatability of systems of meaning. Shotter makes a similar comment: *"instead of the assumption that, given the appropriate background consensus, mutual understanding is normally obtained with ease and discourse about validity claims is only necessary during the breakdown of consensus, the assumption here is that understanding is always only partial and dispute about validity claims is an endemic part of everyday life activity"* [1993:176]

Healey identifies ten propositions which capture this approach in planning; these may be summarised as follows:

- Planning is an interactive and interpretive process, drawing on the multidimensionality of "lifeworlds"
- Such interaction assumes the pre-existence of individuals engaged with others in diverse, fluid, and overlapping "discourse communities," each with its own meaning systems and hence knowledge forms and ways of reasoning and valuing. Communicative action thus focuses on searching for achievable levels of mutual understanding.
- Intercommunicative planning involves respectful discussion within and between discursive communities, "respect" implying recognizing, valuing, listening to, and searching for translative possibilities between different discourse communities
- Planning involves invention not only through programs of action but in the construction of the arenas within which these programs are formulated and conflicts are identified and mediated. Such planning needs to be reflective about its own processes.
- Within the argumentation of these communicative processes, all dimensions of knowing, understanding, appreciating, experiencing, and judging may be brought into play.
- A reflexive and critical capacity should be kept alive in the processes of argumentation, using the Habermasian criteria of comprehensibility, integrity, legitimacy, and truth.
- This inbuilt critique, a morality for interaction, serves the project of democratic pluralism by according "voice", "ear", and "respect" to all those with an interest in the issues at stake.
- The literature on negotiation counsels us that apparently fixed preferences may be altered when individuals and groups are encouraged to articulate their interests together.
- Communicative planning is not only innovative, it has the potential to change, to transform material conditions and established power relations through the continuous effort to "critique" and "demystify"; through increasing understanding among participants and hence highlighting oppressions and "dominatory" forces; and through creating well-grounded arguments for alternative analyses and perceptions--through actively constructing new understandings.
- The purpose of intercommunicative planning is to help planners begin and proceed in mutually agreeable ways based on an effort at interdiscursive understanding, drawing on, critiquing, and reconstructing the understandings everyone brings to the discussion.

Our discussion is further enriched by considering the application of fair process to organisational theory, a subject which has been of growing interest in recent years, and has been linked to business relationships [Kumar 1996, Chan Kim and Mauborgne 1997], entrepreneur-investor relation [Sapienza and Korsgaard 1996], organisational justice [Schminke, Amrose and Noel 1997], and strategic decision making in multinationals [Chan Kim and Mauborgne 1995, 1996]

The crucial distinction to be made in discussions of fair process is between distributive and procedural justice. People experience distributive justice when they believe that they have received the compensation or the resources they deserve. Procedural justice builds trust and commitment, which produce

voluntary cooperation, which drives performance, leading people to go beyond the call of duty by sharing their knowledge and applying their creativity.

Sheppard and Tuchinsky [1996] consider the implications for Organisational Behaviour theory of the shift from hierarchy and market toward the network organisation. Their initial survey of the contrast between the form of behaviour which they see as appropriate to the former - hierarchical control - and that appropriate to networks - lateral trust - suggests that "little can be taken from Organisational Behaviour's existing conceptual and empirical infrastructure to help us understand how to manage in alternative organisational forms". But they conclude that "things are not so bleak". In particular, they suggest reformulation of research on justice to fit network relationships.

Brockner and Siegel [1996] pursue this further. They identify three major waves in the justice literature. The first wave focused on distributive justice, and was therefore concerned with fairness defined in terms of the outcomes of a resource allocation decision. The second wave turned to procedural fairness: the argument that people were concerned not only with the outcomes but also with the fairness of the process used to plan and implement the decision, which includes concern with the interpersonal behaviour of those involved.

The third wave of research on justice considers the interactive effects of distributive and procedural justice, and they summarise the results of twenty field studies which have identified this, ranging from legal procedures, through responses to layoffs or unemployment, to the introduction of new policies and rules in organisations. Their conclusion from these studies is that procedural justice modifies the impact of distributive justice on individuals' reactions to a decision. If procedures are unfair, then people respond more positively if distributive justice is relatively high. If procedures are fair, distributive justice has much less of an impact on people's reactions.

The thesis of Brockner and Siegel is that it is not procedural justice in itself, but rather the degree of trust engendered by procedural fairness that is important, and that interacts with distributive justice to influence reactions to a decision on resource allocation. They refer to the two main explanations of procedural justice effects - the self-interest theory and the group value model - and argue that both lead to this conclusion.

Chan Kim and Mauborgne identify three principles which are the 'bedrock elements' of fair process:

- Engagement: Involve individuals in the decisions that affect them, by asking for their input and allowing them to refute the merits of one another's ideas and assumptions
- Explanation: Everyone involved and affected should understand why final decisions are made as they are.
- Expectation: Once a decision is made managers should state clearly the new rules of the game

Chan Kim and Mauborgne go on to argue that very few companies practice fair process, and identify three reasons for this. The first is that managers confuse fair process with fair outcomes, failing to recognise that fairness of the process through which an outcome is produced can be as important to people as the outcome itself. Second, there is the issue of power: managers preserve their own position and discretion by leaving the rules for success vague, or sticking to formal communication mechanisms which keep employees at a distance. The third reason is an economic assumption: the belief that people are concerned only with what is best for themselves.

They conclude that both distributive and procedural justice are needed in organisations. The former draws on traditional management tools, including resource allocation, economic incentives and organisational structure, and will lead to performance expectations being met. The latter raises the level of cooperation; it draws upon the three principles identified above as elements of fair process, and can lead to performance expectations being exceeded.

The model developed above is consistent with arguments developed in other organisational contexts. In his analysis of trust within organisations Barnes [1981] argues organisations should avoid both excessive mistrust and excessive trust. The former results in people relying on either/or expectations and 'hard-drives-out soft' behaviour; the latter to prolonged ambiguity and 'soft-is-better-than hard' behaviour'. Similarly, the various works reporting the findings of the Harvard Negotiating Project argue for 'principled negotiation', a balance between soft and hard approaches.

Out of this discussion of theoretical contributions which have been made, we may propose the following simple framework: that procedural justice, distributive justice and trust are mutually interacting, each reinforcing the others. Sako [1992] distinguishes three types of trust. The first is 'contractual trust', which is to say trust in keeping promises made. The second is 'goodwill trust', which is to say, trust in mutual open commitment to the relationship, including the expectation that you will not be taken advantage of by the other partner[s]. The third, competence trust, is concerned with the degree to which the purchaser trusts the supplier to deliver the quality of product.

We can see that the first, contractual trust, is about trust in process - it flows from confidence in procedural justice. As Burchell and Wilkinson have argued: *"the most important element of trust in business relationships is simply that trading partners will do what they say they will do"* [1996]. The second, competence trust, is about trust in outcome: it flows from confidence in distributive justice. The third, goodwill trust, is about both: the willingness to become interdependent flows from confidence in both forms of justice.

The approach outlined here allows us to escape the technocratic dichotomy, summarized by Fischer: "Nothing is more irrational to technocratic theorists than the disjointed, incremental forms of decision making [typically described as 'muddling through'] that result from a political commitment to democratic bargaining and compromise. ... Technocratic writers see [these features] as a nightmare of irrationality." [1990:22]. The technocrat sees the alternative to

the Modern /Cartesian Newtonian approach of order and regulation to be irrationality and chaos, which at best leads to muddling through. What is proposed here is activity at the boundary - 'debate at the edge', embracing dialogue, rhetoric, argument and fair process. In Part Three we consider methodologies consistent with these, and argue, like Healey [1993], that these do not have to lead to "Lindblomian marginal adjustments to the present", but are concerned with seeking, and thus inventing, the future.

Drawing on the various strands, we can approach this by extending the discussion of dialogue in Chapter Five to provide a fuller picture of discourse in the Pluralist and Political Arenas. The ideas developed in this and previous chapters suggest the following, which we shall call Protocols for Discourse:

- There will be no certainty or absolute truth
- Self, environment and knowledge are mutually constructed, have fuzzy boundaries, and are in a state of becoming
- Space needs to be created to allow self-organisation and emergence
- Argument and methods of inquiry will usually be based on 'local', provisionally agreed premises
- There will be multiple perspectives and multiple rationalities, and there is no expectation that these can be reduced to one
- The search is for achievable levels of mutual understanding
- Respectful, skilled discussion or dialogue is sought through
 - ⇒ Creating a process which is 'safely dangerous', especially when the context is Wild or Wicked. This process needs to interweave the individual and the collective, and to allow the space for reflection and inquiry.
 - ⇒ Balancing advocacy with inquiry, which means that at times in the process there needs to be suspension of judgement
 - ⇒ Building shared meaning, by identifying assumptions, listening, exploring impasses, and using self-awareness and reflection as a resource
 - ⇒ Moving towards action through agreement
- A reflexive and critical capacity should be maintained
- The use of creative intelligence should be encouraged
- Unanimity is not a requirement
- Dissensus is as likely as consensus
- Agreement will usually be provisional
- Fairness is important, and both distributive and procedural justice are needed

These contrast sharply to the style of thought and mode of inquiry which flow from the Cartesian-Newtonian Paradigm; the latter have been summarised by Shotter [1993] as follows:

- True knowledge begins in doubt and distrust
- Reality is studied as atomic matter in lawful mechanical motion
- The world is treated as an "external", physical world, devoid of any mental content

- Proper knowledge, that is scientifically respectable knowledge, consists in beliefs which have been methodically proved to be true
- Knowledge is a 'possession' and we are in an ownership relation to it
- As true knowledge is a unified system of propositions, disagreement must be a sign of error

Indeed the twelve principles above are consistent with, and are reinforced by, those identified by Shotter as an alternative to the Cartesian:

- science does not start in doubt but with assent to a story or possessing a degree of rhetorical force
- the social world is best seen as a continuous flux or flow of mental activity containing regions of self-reproducing order, reproduced at their boundaries, surrounded by 'chaos'
- such activity can only be studied from a position of involvement 'within' it, instead of as an 'outsider', studying it as merely 'physical' activity
- primarily, knowledge is practical-moral knowledge, and as such does not depend upon justification or proof for its practical efficacy
- we are not in an 'ownership' relation to such knowledge, but we embody it as a part of who and what we are, and to try to give it up would be like trying to give up our bodies, who we 'are' - for we are dealing just as much with matters of ontology as epistemology
- practical-moral knowledge is not a unified system, but constituted in large part argumentatively, that is, within traditions of argumentation structured in terms of commonplaces, whose discursive formulations are 'essentially contested'

EXERCISING POWER AND INFLUENCE

I have argued throughout this Chapter that political behaviour in organisations, in itself, is neither good nor bad - but it is ubiquitous. The relative lack of attention to this can be ascribed in large part to two interrelated factors. The first is the equation of power and control - and since the latter is seen to be one of the key activities of management, power in its 'legitimate' form need not be explicitly discussed - it is taken for granted. Where political behaviour takes place, it is therefore undesirable and illegitimate, because it is challenging either the status quo or the second factor - rationality. This involves the belief that organisational behaviour should be constructed [if necessary post hoc] as rational.

Knights and Murray [1994] have argued that one reason for obscuring the political character of organisational life is that acknowledging it would intensify the existential and organisational insecurity prevalent in all organisations. The myth of orderly and rational decision-making serves to hide the inherent uncertainty of management and its potential to generate unintended and sometimes uncontrollable consequences. Similarly, Mumby [1988] argues that the very notion of managers as individuals motivated by rational decision making is in itself a political position, and is intrinsically tied up with issues of power. The myth of rationality perpetuates a view of organisations principally

as sites where technical issues are the main concern-questions of efficiency, productivity, resource allocation, expertise, and so forth.

Rationality is more often seen these days as relative. At the same time, changes occurring within organisations, and the growth of inter-organisational activity, requires a different perspective on the whole subject of power, hopefully illustrated here. Managers can expect to operate in several - perhaps all - of all four Arenas of Power, and they need the relevant skills to do so. Each will have their own preference. Mine no doubt has already emerged: I prefer the two arenas where there is no single dominant power group, and I prefer non-zero-sum approaches. Nevertheless, I have frequently worked in the other arenas, and in situations where zero-sum approaches are all that is possible.

As a concluding note of optimism to this Chapter, I want to refer to the debate on gender. Writing on the use of language, Tannen [1991] suggests that men engage the world as individuals in a hierarchical social order in which they are either one-up or one-down. *"In this world, conversations are negotiations in which people try to achieve and maintain the upper hand if they can, and protect themselves from others attempts to put them down and push them around. Life is a contest, a struggle to preserve independence and avoid failure."* By contrast, women approach the world as individuals in a network of connections. *"In this world, conversations are negotiations for closeness in which people try to seek and give confirmation and support, and to reach consensus. Life is a community, a struggle to preserve intimacy and avoid isolation."*

I would like to suggest that, while these are undoubtedly gender related themes, they are not gender specific. Both the above point to skills important in the exercise of power, and wider that the conventional focus on 'one-upmanship' [the sexist language is here deliberate!]

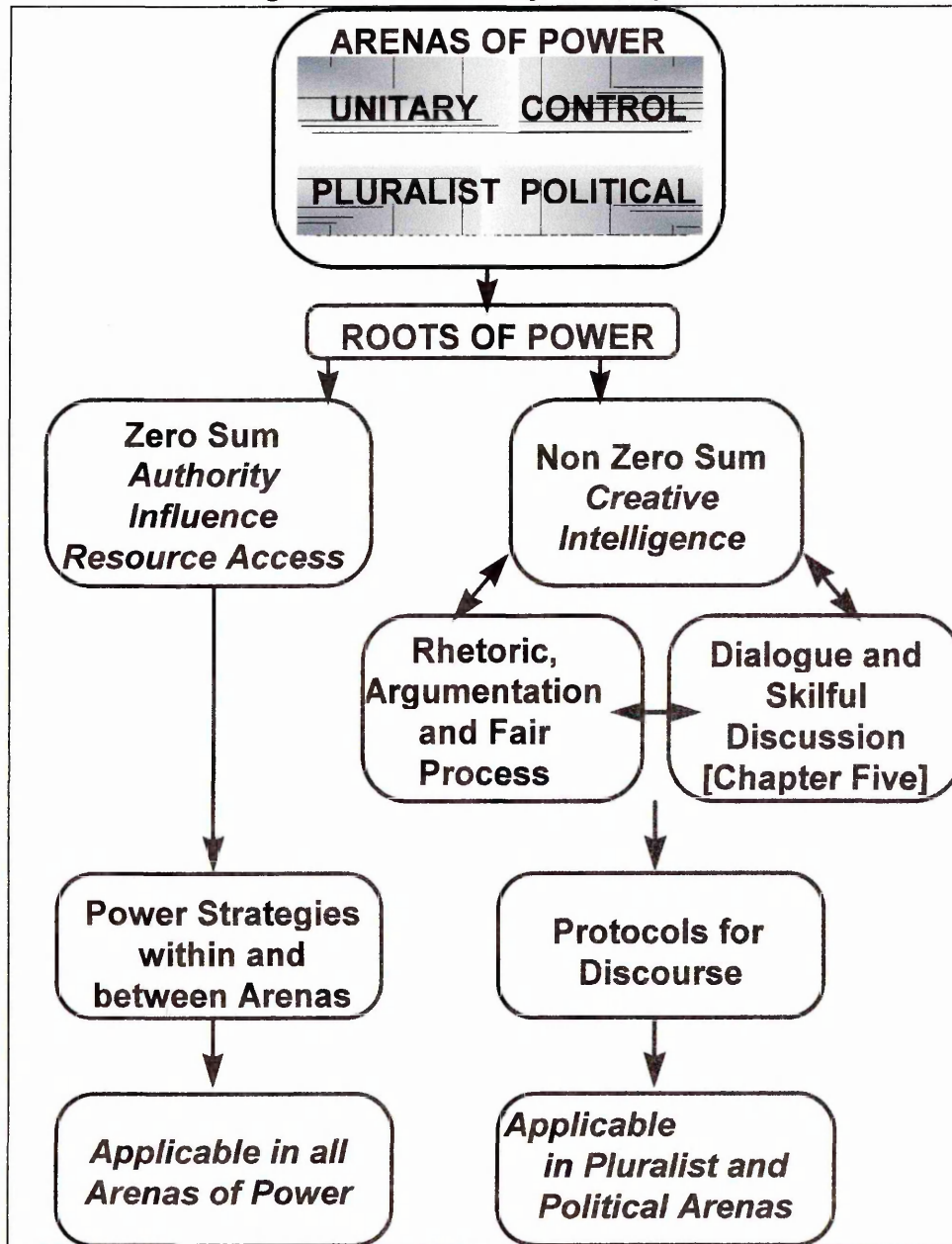
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Two concepts have been central to the argument of this Chapter, both presented as extensions to previous treatments of the subject. The first concerns Arenas of Power, the second the Roots of Power. Figure 6.4 summarises the connections between these and other concepts developed in this Chapter, and links them also to the debate on Dialogue and Skillful Discussion from Chapter Five.

The Arenas of Power, it should again be emphasized, are not discrete with crisp boundaries: they are a heuristic device to allow discussion of the characteristics and implications of the two spectra which form the axes for Table 6.2. that said, and allowing for all the reservations about 'concept chopping' raised in Chapter 4, they do allow a richer debate about power strategies, showing their relative and contested nature. Many writers have identified such strategies, and part of the purpose of this Chapter has been to locate this contribution within the wider pattern here being woven.

Similar considerations apply to the Roots of Power. Again contributions from other writers were summarised and integrated into a framework identifying four key roots: Authority, Influence, Resource Access and Creative Intelligence. Again this had a wider purpose: to tease out the distinction between zero-sum and non-zero sum approaches to power. The term 'creative intelligence' was introduced for the latter, as it helps to link this to other strands of the argument, not least the connection between creating and constructing.

Figure 6.4: Summary of Chapter Six



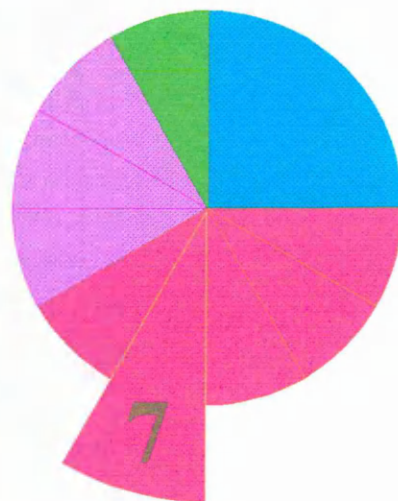
Creative Intelligence was then linked to three further ideas: rhetoric, argumentation and fair process. Here the search was for ideas and approaches which could help foster climates where creative intelligence can exist. For it must be recognised that there is no guarantee that either the

Pluralist or the Political Arena will lead to non-zero sum activity - only that these are the arenas where it is most likely to happen.

Furthermore, removal of the certainties offered by the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis and the Modern Paradigm mean that there is no absolute basis for discourse: the search therefor is for protocols which can win at least provisional agreement as the bases for taking debate, agreement and action further.

These four ideas - creative intelligence, rhetoric, argumentation and fair process - in turn interlink with dialogue and skillful discussion, which were introduced in the previous Chapter. Prefiguring the argument to be developed in Chapter Eight, a number of principles for discourse were identified.

We conclude where we began, with a critique of the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm. A shift from the approach to power rooted in this paradigm allows us to envisage this wider conception. It involves an expanded framework of legitimacy, beyond control mechanisms, and a challenge to the dominance of conventional approaches to rationality. It involves in particular the incorporation of Creative Intelligence as the fourth root of power. Life outside the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm is less secure for managers, and a lot less certain.



CRITICAL THEORY

Chapter Seven looks at Critical Theory, and explores its contribution to strategic management. This is linked with the discussion of power in the previous Chapter, and it is argued that this linking allows for a richer view of power in organizations. It provides a conceptual framework which helps to integrate the ideas developed in the previous three chapters, in particular through the identification of three 'categories of inquiry' - the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory. Critical theory also enhances the link between theory and practice, and points toward the methodological approaches employed in Part Three.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CRITICAL THEORY

"Since there exists no one, true, certain, or absolutely valid perspective in which one could ground social theory today, a critical social theory must be open to new theoretical discourses and perspectives, eschewing dogmatism and closed theories." [Best and Kellner 1991: 266]

"The project of modernity, formulated in the 18th century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic. At the same time, this project intended to release the cognitive potentials of each of these domains from their esoteric forms. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilise this accumulation of specialized culture for the enrichment of everyday life - that is to say, for the rational organisation of everyday social life." [Habermas 1981:9]

INTRODUCTION

This chapter has a modest purpose. It does not pretend to cover Critical Theory in depth: rather the intention is to draw from it a number of ideas and conceptual frameworks which can help develop the overall argument of the thesis, and help provide integration of this argument.

We begin with Habermas' inaugural lecture, published as an Appendix to 'Knowledge and Human Interests'. Here he argues that *"There are three categories of processes of inquiry for which a specific connection between logical-methodological rules and knowledge-constitutive interests can be demonstrated. This demonstration is the task of a critical philosophy of science that escapes the snares of positivism. The approach of the empirical-analytic sciences incorporates a technical cognitive interest; that of the historical-hermeneutic sciences incorporates a practical one; and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates the emancipatory cognitive interest that, as we saw, was at the root of traditional theories."* [1972:308]

The subsequent discussion suggests that Habermas sees the first of these categories within the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm¹. Nonetheless I wish to

¹ *"In the empirical-analytic sciences the frame of reference that prejudges the meaning of possible statements establishes rules both for the construction of theories and for their critical testing. Theories comprise hypothetico-deductive connections of propositions, which permit the deduction of law-like hypotheses with empirical content. The latter can be interpreted as statements about the covariance of observable events; given a set of initial conditions, they make predictions possible. Empirical-analytic knowledge is thus possible predictive knowledge. However, the meaning of such predictions, that is their technical exploitability, is established only by the rules according to which we apply theories to reality."* [ibid.]

argue that Habermas' framework can be used to integrate the ideas developed in the three previous chapters, and that management theory should be concerned with all three knowledge-constitutive interests, which can be summarised as shown in Table 7.1. This is because the approach to the empirical-analytical sciences suggested here is based on complexity theory.

The hermeneutic approach being argued here emphasizes the role of language, and within that logical categories and forms of thinking - leading through this to considerations of paradox, metaphor and the role of rhetoric in management [This is not to suggest that such considerations exhaust the contribution of the historical-hermeneutic sciences - but simply that these are the focus of the present work]. The emancipatory interest is represented by a focus on power which seeks greater democracy in the workplace and in organisations more generally. It is therefore one which moves forward from the contingency approach of the last Chapter, seeing the Pluralist Arena of power as preferable to the Unitary Arena, the Political as preferable to the Control, and the Political as a 'normal' and acceptable state of affairs. [Foreshadowing an important divergence from Critical Theory, it also sees power as both positive and negative, as discussed in the previous Chapter.]

Table 7.1 The Categories of Inquiry

Interest	Knowledge	Medium	Science	Fundamental Interest
Technical	Instrumental [causal explanation]	Work	Empirical- analytic or natural sciences	Controlling the environment through rule- following action based upon empirically grounded laws
Practical	Practical [understanding]	Language	Hermeneutic or 'interpretive' sciences	Understanding the environment through interaction based upon a consensual interpretation of meaning
Emancipatory	Emancipatory [reflection]	Power	Critical sciences	Emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arising out of authentic, critical insights into the social construction of human society
Source: Based on Carr and Kemmis [1986] and Grundy [1987]				

Levin [1994:27] refers to Greenberg's analysis of participation, in which he identifies four positions on participation:

- The management position holds that participation improves and organisation's performance
- Humanistic psychology thinking argues for participation because it enhances mental health
- Democratic theory argues for participation as a means to the realization of democratic society
- The participatory left argues for participation as the road to societal change

We can link this back to the contrast between consultation and negotiation developed in the previous chapter [Table 6.14], and argue that the first two above are likely to involve consultation, while the second two involve negotiation. Our particular interest here is with the implications of these latter two positions. As we shall see in the next Chapter, the argument from democratic theory has become a prominent feature of debates on the future of local government, and it can be interwoven with the change focus of Critical Theory: *"The systematic sciences of social action, that is economics, sociology, and political science, have the goal, as do the empirical-analytic sciences, of producing nomological knowledge. A critical social science, however, will not remain satisfied with this. It is concerned with going beyond this goal to determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed."* [Habermas op.cit.:310]

In Chapter One a form of 'triple lens' was proposed, based on the work of Allison, and subsequent developments. Critical Theory allows a richer form of triple lens: *"Orientation toward technical control, toward mutual understanding in the conduct of life, and toward emancipation from seemingly "natural" constraint establish the specific viewpoints from which we can apprehend reality as such in any way whatsoever."* [ibid:311]

CRITICAL THEORY AND MANAGEMENT

A number of authors have been prominent in considering the contribution which Critical Theory can make to the study of management and related areas. Here we consider the ideas of Alvesson and Willmott, and interweave contributions which have been made primarily to the discussion of Critical Theory's relevance for education, notably by Carr and Kemmis, and by Grundy. These, it will be argued, have a wider relevance, and are also helpful in linking the debate to the more practical considerations of Part Three.

The central themes of Alvesson and Willmott are as follows:

- Management is a social practice.
- Mainstream management theory represents its practices as objective/ impartial/ scientific, and thereby mystifies the power relations that shape the formation and organisation of management.
- Tensions exist between the lived reality of management as a politically-charged process and its 'official' representation as a set of impartial, scientific techniques for directing and coordinating human and material

resources and critical studies of management recognize and examine the tensions.

- Critical studies are themselves a product of prevailing relations of power. They seek to illuminate and transform power relations despite their embeddedness in these relations. They provide alternative frame-works for interpreting the practices of management.
- Critical Theory (CT) is guided by an emancipatory intent, and understands modern forms of domination to be sustained by the power of ideas (e.g. fascism, monetarism, science).
- Received wisdom (e.g. about management) may be simply reconstructed by critical analysis, in which case it provides an alternative body of knowledge without being accompanied by a change either in the person who adopts this analysis or in their practical actions (e.g. as a manager). Reconstruction becomes critique only when it inspires and guides a process of personal and social transformation.
- Emancipatory transformation occurs as people seek to change, personally or collectively, habits and institutions that impede the development of autonomy and responsibility.

It will be seen that a number of these echo arguments developed in earlier chapters: the rejection of management as 'objective', the rejection of apolitical approaches to management, the need to illuminate power relations. Others will be reflected in subsequent chapters, as we move from 'reconstruction' to 'critique', and focus upon change strategies.

Alvesson & Willmott see critically reflective knowledge as motivated by an emancipatory interest. It is concerned with the relationship between the exercise of power and the construction and representation of reality. The distinguishing feature is a concern to expose forms of domination and exploitation that can, in principle, be transformed. The focus of critical science is upon the role of power in institutionalizing and sustaining needless forms of oppression, confusion and suffering. When this concern to expose forms of domination goes beyond a purely abstract, academic orientation, it takes the form of critique. Critical science is concerned to understand how the practices and institutions of management are developed and legitimized within relations of power and domination (e.g. capitalism, patriarchy) that, potentially, are capable of transformation.

Carr and Kemmis approach Critical Theory by first critiquing the 'natural scientific' view of educational theory and practice, as well as the interpretive view. They equate the former with positivism, and thus with a focus on prediction and control. This is important to note, because ultimately their argument is that 'Critical Educational Science' is preferable to both the others. This has led one commentator to a somewhat acid criticism: *"Some, but not all, critical theorists have become obsessed with the use and development of grand theory as a principal goal ... the 'becoming critical' model of Carr and Kemmis is an attempt to 'hijack' the action research movement in order to take theoretical control ... it is a form of 'academic imperialism'"* [McKernan 1996:259-60]

This imperialism is difficult to trace in their work, but it is the case that, by equating the natural scientific view with positivism, they reject the former by consequence of rejecting the latter. By contrast, the intention here is to argue that by refocusing the 'natural scientific' view as developed in Chapter Four, we can retain and use a 'triple lens' approach.

The same applies to the interpretive view. Here their criticism originates in the insistence that *"the task of establishing correct interpretations of the intentions and meanings of social action does not exhaust the purpose of the social sciences."* [94] Explanation is also important. Further, while accepting that social reality is constructed and maintained through the interactions of individuals, they argue that the range of possible interpretations of reality that are open to individuals is constrained by the society in which they live. Social structure is both the product of the meanings and actions of individuals, and itself produces particular meanings, ensures their continuing existence, and thereby limits the kind of actions that it is reasonable for individuals to perform.

The second criticism they cite is that the interpretive approach neglects the intended consequences of social actions, which may be 'functional' in that *"they serve to maintain certain aspects of the wider social system by reinforcing the action and interpretations of other social groups"*. [96] The third objection is that the interpretive approach insists that any explanation of social action which is incompatible with the actors' own accounts is inadmissible; for example, this denies the exploration of ways in which certain social mechanisms may operate to bind people to irrational and distorted ideas about their social reality.

They conclude that, because the interpretive approach does not explain the relationship between people's interpretations of reality and the social conditions under which these interpretations occur, it offers an inadequate account of how theory relates to practice. Conceptual changes do not occur simply because one interpretation is more rational or correct than any other. An individual's ideas and beliefs are not merely a set of true or false statements that have been adopted on the basis of purely rational considerations. Rather, they are intimately related to the individual's way of life, and, as such, they provide the sort of ideas and beliefs about oneself and others that are appropriate to the way one lives; as a result, any alternative interpretation of what he or she is doing will invariably be resisted. Finally, they argue that the interpretive view of the theory-practice relationship is also unsound because it incorporates conservative assumptions about the relationship of social conflict to social change. This is so because it tends to assume that social conflicts are always the result of different social groups having conflicting interpretations of reality rather than contradictions in that reality itself.

Their critique has import in relation to the kind of interpretive approach which they outline; but again, I would wish to argue that if the approach to meaning follows the lines of Chapter Five, then there is no need to reject it.

Accepting, therefore, that the purpose here is to be inclusive, by recasting two of the three lenses, we can return to their line of argument, and consider

Critical Science. First, they argue that the relationship of theory and practice is not one where theory 'implies' or is 'derived' from practice. They then develop five formal requirements which any approach to educational theory needs to accept. These can be reworked at a more general level; the argument therefor is that theory must

- reject positivist notions of rationality, objectivity and truth.
- accept the need to employ the interpretive categories of those involved
- provide ways of distinguishing ideologically distorted interpretations from those that are not
- be concerned to identify and expose those aspects of the existing social order which frustrate the pursuit of rational goals and be able to offer theoretical accounts which make those involved aware of how they may be eliminated or overcome
- be practical, in the sense that the question of its status will be determined by the ways in which it relates to practice

They argue that Critical Theory incorporates these five requirements. Firstly, a critical social scientific approach rejects the positivistic notion of rationality, objectivity and truth, seeing truth as historically and socially embedded. Secondly, critical social science depends upon the meanings and interpretations of practitioners: the terms in critical theorems must be grounded in the language and experience of a self-reflective community and meet the criteria of authenticity and communicability. Thirdly, social science institutes critical processes of self-reflection (the organisation of enlightenment) whose purpose is to distinguish ideas and interpretations which are ideological or systematically distorted from those which are not, and distorted self-understandings from those which are undistorted. Fourthly, critical social science employs the method of critique to identify and expose those aspects of the social order over which participants have no control and which frustrate rational change, and both its critical theorems and its strategic organisation of action are directed at eliminating, or overcoming, constraints on rational change. And finally, critical social science is practical, being directed towards helping practitioners inform themselves about the actions they need to take to overcome their problems and eliminate their frustrations.

In particular, they point [144-5] to the idea of a critical social science developed by Habermas, and intended to overcome the limitation to critical theories which transform ways of viewing the world without necessarily changing practice. A critical social science is, for Habermas, requires an integration of theory and practice as reflective and practical moments in a dialectical process of reflection, enlightenment and political struggle carried out by groups for the purpose of their own emancipation. They quote Habermas: *"The mediation of theory and praxis can only be clarified if to begin with we distinguish three functions, which are measured in terms of different criteria: the formation and extension of critical theorems, which can stand up to scientific discourse; the organisation of processes of enlightenment, in which such theorems are applied and can be tested in a unique manner by the initiation of processes of reflection carried on within certain groups toward which these processes have been directed; and the selection of appropriate strategies, the solution of tactical*

questions, and the conduct of political struggle. On the first level, the aim is true statements, on the second, authentic insights, and on the third, prudent decisions." [Theory and Practice 44] These three functions are developed in Box 7.1: we will return to them in Chapter Nine.

Grundy [1987:114-6] relates the emancipatory interest to praxis as developed by Freire. She draws from his work five principles:

- The constitutive elements of praxis are action and reflection
- Praxis takes place in the real, not the hypothetical, world
- Praxis operates in the world of interaction, the social and cultural world
- The world of praxis is the constructed, not the natural, world
- Praxis assumes a process of meaning-making which recognises meaning as a social construction

Again, we can see the resonance of these with the arguments of earlier chapters, in particular the emphasis on interaction and construction.

Before concluding this chapter, we should consider some of the criticisms which have been laid at the door of Critical Theory, and relate them to the arguments developed here. Alvesson and Willmott [1996:82-7] divide these into 'external' critiques, which challenge the basis assumptions of CT, and those basically sympathetic, but identifying difficulties. They point to defences which Habermas have made against the former [in which Critical Theory is criticized as 'leftist propaganda' or 'the work of a disgruntled group of intellectuals'], but recognise that this defence has little impact on those who so fundamentally reject the tenets of Critical Theory.

They then consider two 'internal criticisms'. The first, which they largely accept, is the critique of radical feminists, on which they comment: *"If Critical Theory acknowledges its relative gender-blindness, and radical feminism is prepared to learn from Critical Theory, there are possibilities for integrating their respective insights and concerns"*. [86] They also accept the second criticism, that *"Critical Theory [thought] and emancipatory praxis [action] are rather loosely coupled"* [86]. In Part Three it will be argued that Critical Theory can nevertheless provide the basis of an effective programme of action, and evidence will be presented to support this claim.

Alvesson and Willmott also refer [155-6] to Tsoukas' critique of Critical Systems Thinking, and through this of Critical Theory. There are two elements of his critique which are particularly relevant to the present study. First, Tsoukas [1992:639] points to two possible interpretations of the word 'critical'. One is identical to critical attitude, awareness of hidden presuppositions, and disclosure of assumptions. This is, in effect, the 'assumption surfacing' discussed in Chapter Six, where it was seen as a necessary, but not sufficient, element in a wider framework of inquiry. The second interpretation *"denies the purely instrumental rationality of positivist science, in favour of the emancipatory rationality of critical science."*

Box 7.1 The Three Functions of Critical Social Science

The first function of critical social science is the *formation and extension of critical theorems* which can stand up to scientific discourse. Critical theorems are propositions about the character and conduct of social life; for example, 'learning requires the active participation of the learner in constructing and controlling the language and activities of his or her learning', or 'cooperative teaching can only develop under conditions of continuing negotiation of the content and classroom practices through which the curriculum is expressed'. Here, the criterion is that the statements must be *true*; that is, critical theorems must be analytically coherent and stand up to examination in the light of evidence collected in relevant contexts. The examination of the truth of such propositions can only be carried out under the condition of *freedom of discourse*.

The second function is the *organisation of processes of enlightenment* in which critical theorems are applied and can be tested in a unique manner by the initiation of processes of reflection carried on within the groups involved in the action and reflection on it. The organisation of enlightenment is the organisation of the learning processes of the group; in fact, it is a systematic learning process aimed at the development of knowledge about the practices being considered and the conditions under which they take place. The organisation of enlightenment is a human, social and political activity; here, the criterion is that insights achieved must be *authentic* for the individuals involved and *communicable* within the group (that is, that they are mutually comprehensible). Processes for the organisation of enlightenment require that those involved *commit themselves wholly to appropriate precautions and assure scope for unconstrained communication* on the psychoanalytic model of therapeutic discourse. That is, they must aim at understanding achieved by practitioners on their own behalf (without illegitimate persuasion or coercion) and give everyone involved the opportunity to raise, question, affirm and deny validity claims (about comprehensibility, truth, sincerity and appropriateness) and test their own point of view in self-reflective discussion.

The third function is the *organisation of action* (or, as Habermas puts it, 'the conduct of the political struggle'). This involves the selection of appropriate strategies, the solution of tactical questions, and the conduct of the practice itself. It is the 'doing' which will be reflected upon in retrospect and which is prospectively guided by the fruits of previous reflection. The criterion by which the organisation of action may be judged is that *the decisions must be prudent*; that is, that the decisions are such as to ensure that those involved can carry out the activity without exposing themselves to unnecessary risks. This requires that those involved in the action are involved in the practical discourse and decision-making process which lead to the action, and that they participate on the basis of their *free commitment* to the action. "...here too, and especially here," writes Habermas, 'there is no privileged access to truth'.

It is evident from these three functions of critical social science that its epistemology is constructivist, seeing knowledge as developing by a process of active construction and reconstruction of theory and practice by those involved; that it involves a theory of symmetrical communication (a process of rational discussion which actively seeks to overcome coercion on the one hand and self-deception on the other), and that it involves a democratic theory of political action based on free commitment to social action and consensus about what needs to be and should be done. In short, it is not only a theory about knowledge, but also about how knowledge relates to practice.

It is also clear that critical social science is about social praxis (informed doing, or strategic action) and that it is a form of social science to be carried out by self-reflective groups concerned to organize their own practice in the light of their organized self-reflection. It is, perhaps, in this last feature that we see the clearest distinction between critical social science and positivist or interpretive social science. Critical social science is a process of reflection which requires the participation of the researcher in the social action being studied, or rather, that participants become researchers.

Part of his critique of the latter is its 'sociological inadequacy', and this brings us to the second element, his comments on the Critical Systems Perspective's [CSP] treatment of power. Tsoukas comments: *"CSP consistently overlooks the enabling nature of power. A more comprehensive view of power would view the latter as a property of particular relationships which reside in concrete social structures. The latter comprise sets of simultaneously constraining and enabling rules and resources which are implemented in human interaction. These rules shape interaction while at the same time being reproduced in this very process of interaction²."* [1992:649] Furthermore, *"CSP advocates have not only refrained from conceptualizing the nature of power relationships in different organisational contexts, they have also conceived of organisational actors in apolitical terms. This is really strange since CSP has persistently highlighted the political natures of organisations and scientific discourse alike."* [ibid.:651]

These are valid concerns, and it is to be hoped that the setting of Critical Theory within the present study, and its integration with the theoretical and practical themes discussed elsewhere in the thesis, go some way toward addressing them. Thus the Arenas of Power are intended to explore power relationships in different organisational contexts, while the concept of Creative Intelligence is intended to develop the enabling view of power.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this Chapter was to introduce Habermas' framework of three categories of inquiry, and to recast this in the light of discussion in Chapters 4-6 as follows:

- 'natural scientific' inquiry, based on complexity theory
- interpretive inquiry, based on fuzzy logic, dialogue and discourse
- emancipatory inquiry

This Chapter has also reviewed some existing applications of critical theory to management, and adapted several which have applied it to education. What emerges from this brief discussion are a number of themes which connect well to the debate in earlier Chapters:

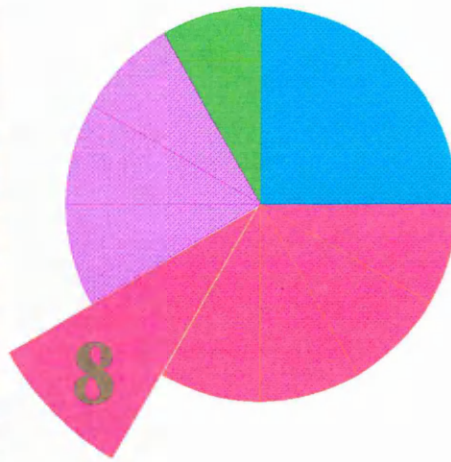
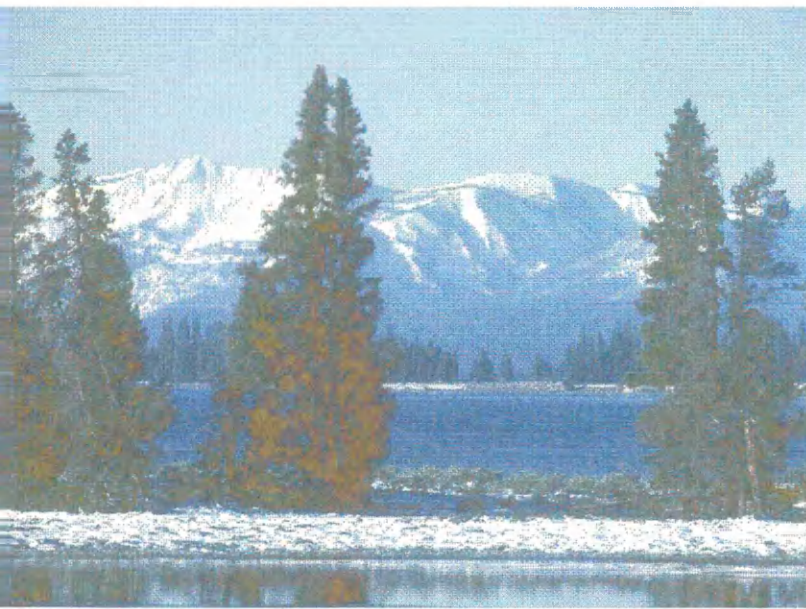
- management is a social and political practice
- positivist theories of rationality, objectivity and truth are not appropriate
- it is recognized that the 'world' and meaning are socially constructed
- action and reflected are interwoven, and theory should seek to be practical
- we should take seriously the different meanings and interpretation of practitioners
- we should seek to expose factors which frustrate the pursuit of rational goals [while accepting that for different agents what is rational will be different]

² A reference to Giddens' theory of structuration

- critical social science has a constructivist epistemology, seeking the formation and extension of critical theories, the application and testing thereof, and the organisation of action

Thus thought and action are brought together - a stark contrast to the body-mind split of the Modern Paradigm. There is also here no suggestion of 'value-free' theory or action: the emancipatory values are explicit. This emancipatory stance reinforces the concerns raised in Chapter Six about the limiting features of the Unitary and Control Arenas, and supports the protocols for discourse identified for the Pluralist and Political Arenas.

Critical theory is to be used further in Chapter Nine, as the basis for developing a critical approach to action research and action learning, but first we take the integrative work somewhat further in Chapter Eight.



INTEGRATION AND CONTEXT

Chapter Eight has two purposes. First it reviews briefly the ideas of the previous four chapters, identifying a number of principles which are taken forward into Part Three.

Second, it outlines the context for several of the case studies in Part Three: the recent history of, and present situation in, local government.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THEORY INTEGRATION AND CONTEXT SETTING

"What is the pattern which connects the crab to the lobster and the orchid to the primrose, and all of them to me and me to you?"
Gregory Bateson

This Chapter has two purposes. The first is to review the implications of the theoretical approaches considered in the previous four chapters, and integrate these into an overall argument, which will lead to a number of principles for method. The second purpose is to set the context within which many of the case studies to be considered in Part Three takes place - local government.

INTEGRATION

There have been two conflicting forces - almost elements of a paradox! - running through them. One has been to question foundations, structure and 'certainties', to argue that there is no 'one best way' and that the imposition of such should be challenged - an argument, overall, for dissensus. The other has been to seek ways of bringing together ideas, of providing frameworks in which people can meet and resolve differences - an argument, overall, for consensus.

The dynamic tension between these two forces is central to this thesis. They relate, of course, to the paradoxes of dialogue, considered in Chapter Five. They can be seen as the contending forces of chaos and order - thus the argument here is for work on the edge between the two.

The intention of this integration is both to examine and clarify connections, and to set the scene for the methods and case studies to be considered in Part Three. The overall pattern was introduced in Chapter One, as three levels of thinking. The first level is that of philosophy, logic, epistemology, ontology and scientific method. The second level is a theory of management, while the third concerns the practice of management and strategy. This notion of 'levels' fits well with the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis, in particular the 'building' metaphor for knowledge [frameworks, foundations, building blocks, interlocking parts], and was related in Chapter Two to approaches to culture and 'organisational paradigms' as found in the literature [for example, Johnson and Scholes 1997].

We distinguished there between the overall approach to management, strategy and organisation considered legitimate by theorists and practitioners [the 'second level'], and the general set of beliefs, theories of knowledge and attitudes toward power on which that management approach is based [the 'first level']. Both of these have been called paradigms - indeed the term has gained such widespread use that it has perhaps achieved the distinction of excess

fuzziness. Here therefore we shall use the term 'management mindset' to refer to the overall approach to management, and 'worldview' to refer to the general set of belief and theories. To these we need to add the third level, management practice. The approach considered in Part One of this thesis can then be summarised as in Figure 8.1.

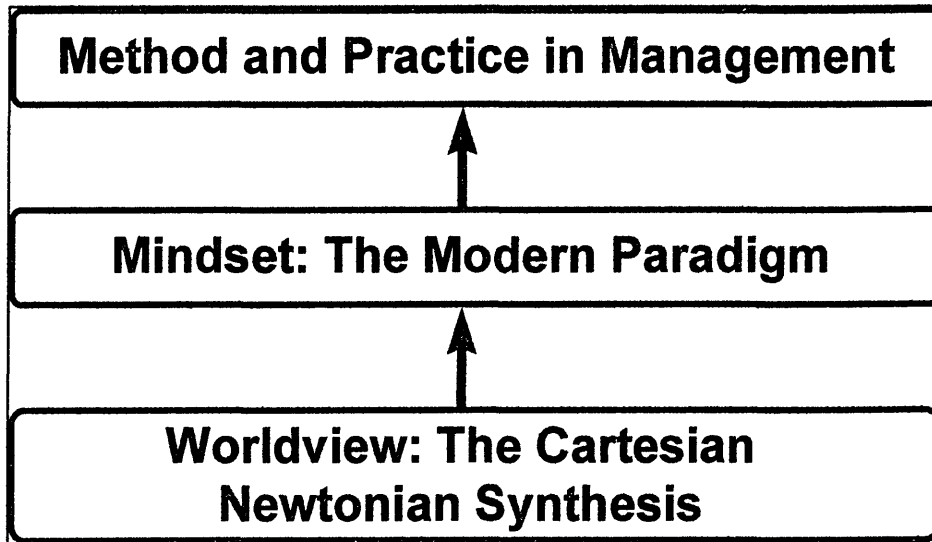


Figure 8.1

When we shift to the approach developed in Part Two, the first significant change is the removal of 'levels', recasting the scheme as a 'pattern which connects', not privileging any part as 'foundation', nor seeing the parts as discrete. Thus we have Figure 8.2.

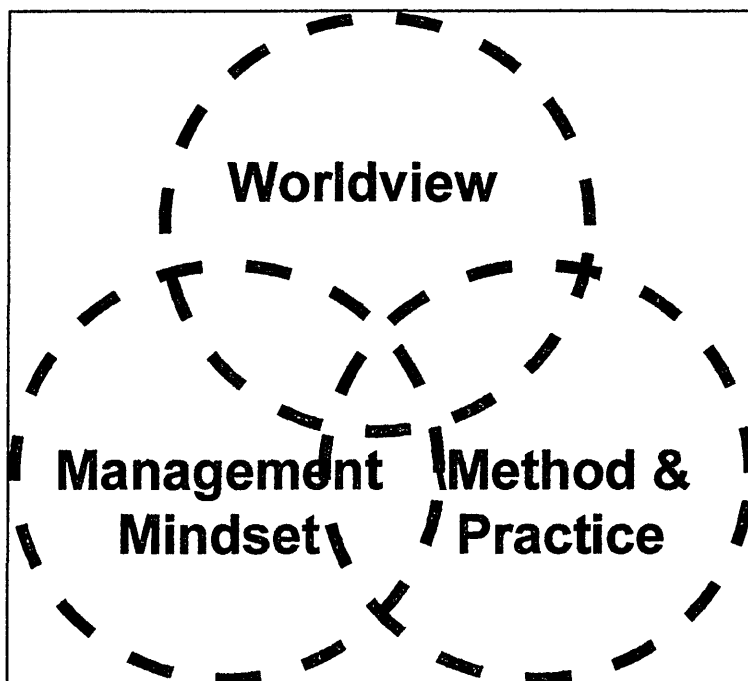


Figure 8.2

The central themes of Chapters Four to Seven are summarised in Figure 8.3. Here Chapter Seven has a different status to the others, since part of its work was to integrate three categories of inquiry, and to argue that all have a relevance, when recast in the light of the earlier arguments, forming an extension to the 'Knowledge, Belief, Power' trilogy outlined in Chapter One.

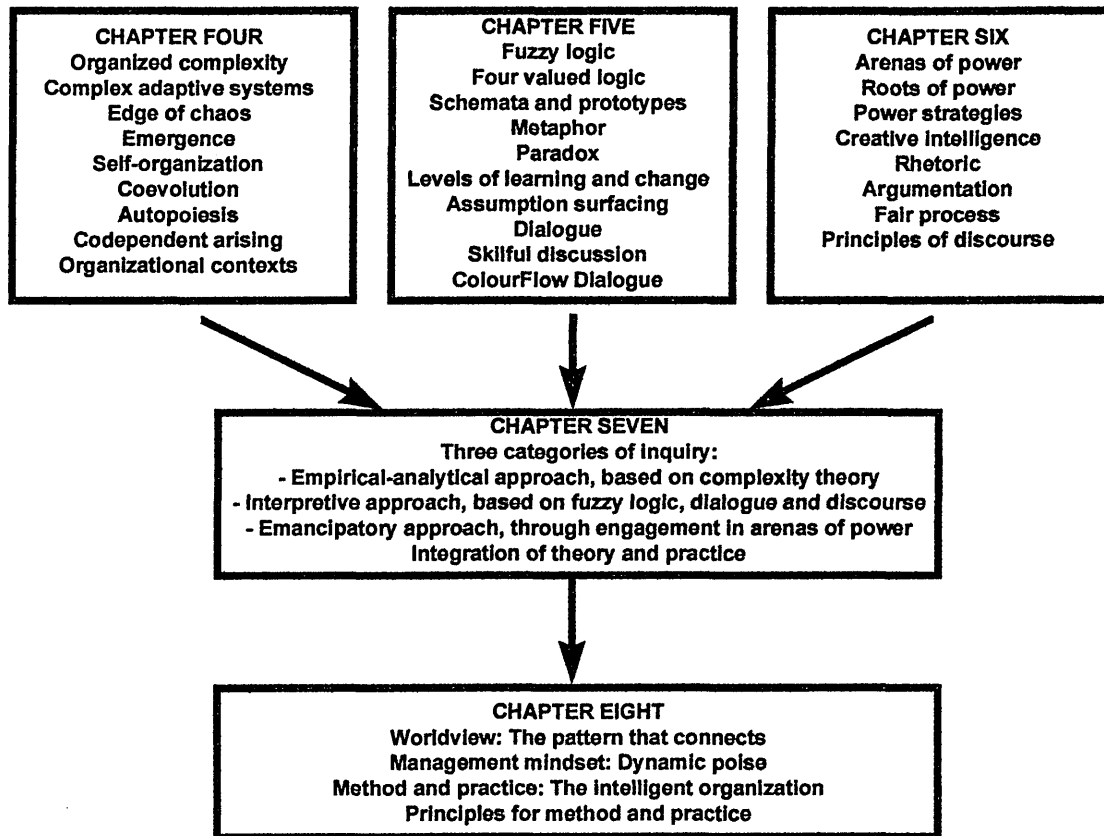


Figure 8.3

As Figure 8.3 indicates, the integrating process in this Chapter is developed in relation to the three interlocking circles of Figure 8.2, looking first at the Worldview, then the Management Mindset, including the implications for organisations, and finally the principles for method and practice which will be used to support the methods introduced in Chapter Nine.

WORLDVIEW: THE PATTERN THAT CONNECTS

We begin this discussion by considering the seven characteristics of 'scientific person' given in Chapter Two, and identifying what the equivalent scientific person's stance will be in the light of the arguments of the last four Chapters.

First, crisp 'either/or' logic is superseded by fuzzy and four valued logics. Second, in place of linear thinking we have thinking that recognizes interconnections, feedback loops and multiple causation. Third, quantification has its value, but it is not the case the 'what counts is what can be counted'.

Fourth, cause-effect linkages are recognized to be complex. At 'the edge' it may be impossible to conclude what causes what: instead the need is to

understand and work with the pattern that connects. Fifth, instead of reductionism there is the acceptance of emergence, which again can involve the unpredicted and unexpected. Sixth, the split between thinking and doing is challenged, both through autopoiesis and the integration of theory and practice. And finally, the desire for control is questioned, and seen as frequently counterproductive.

There are three further themes in this Worldview to be delineated here. First, in Chapter Five the Madhyamika School 's approach to logic was outlined. From this School of Buddhist philosophy comes a second idea, that of codependent arising, discussed briefly in Chapter Four when considering the theory of autopoiesis. Again, we can turn to Varela for a useful summary: *"This insistence on the codetermination or mutual specification of organism and environment should not be confused with the more commonplace view that different perceiving organisms simply have different perspectives on the world. This view continues to treat the world as pregiven; it simply allows that this pregiven world can be viewed from a variety of vantage points. The point we are making, however, is fundamentally different. We are claiming that organism and environment are mutually enfolded in multiple ways, and so what constitutes the world of a given organism is enacted by that organism's history of structural coupling. Furthermore, such histories of coupling proceed not through optimal adaptation but rather through evolution as natural drift."* [Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1993:202]

This can be related to the work of Weick, who pointed to enactment in organisations, the way in which members participate in the creation of organisational realities: *"The environment that the organisation worries about is put there by the organisation."* [1979] Weick argued on the basis of this that acting should precede planning because it is only through action and implementation that we create the environment. Until we put the environment in place, how can we formulate our thoughts and plans? In strategic planning, we act as though we are responding to a demand from the environment; but in fact, Weick argued, we create the environment through our own strong intentions. Strategies should be *"just in time ..., supported by more investment in general knowledge, a large skill repertoire, the ability to do a quick study, trust in intuitions, and sophistication in cutting losses."* [1979:223.229] However, the debate here goes further, for enactment is a two-way process, summarised in the concept of codependent arising: the environment is enacted/created by the organisation, and the organisation is enacted/created by the environment.

It is not the intention here to pursue in depth connections between Buddhist philosophy and management [although examples do exist, such as Low 1976]. But again, in the spirit of finding a 'pattern which connects', a further link may be noted. This relates to the work of Bohm, the physicist whose ideas on dialogue were considered in Chapter Five. As part of his project to challenge mechanistic views of science, and to consider the implications of quantum theory, Bohm developed his theory of the 'implicate order', whereby everything is internally related to everything, and only in the explicate order are things

separate and relatively independent. In a conversation with the Danish artist Louwrien Wijers toward the end of his life, Bohm comments:

"The point about the Buddhist philosophy is that they have the notion of mutually dependent origination: everything originates together, mutually dependent. I think this is very close to the implicate order, which says that everything comes out of a ground and everything is interrelated, and that underlying it there is no substance that can be defined". [Bohm 1998:108]

The second additional themes is that knowledge itself can be seen as socially constructed, with language influencing this social construction, as we have seen in the role of schemata and prototypes, concept chopping, metaphor, paradox and logic. And third, emancipatory strategies are considered to be worth pursuing in the various arenas of power, through discourse based on creative intelligence, dialogue, skillful discussion, rhetoric, argumentation and fair process.

MANAGEMENT MINDSET: DYNAMIC POISE

"In the beginner's mind there are many opportunities; in the expert's mind there are few. ...The most difficult thing is always to keep your beginner's mind." [Suzuki 1970:21-2]

In this section we consider the implications of the argument for the manager, by exploring what it suggests for the 'Management Mindset'. My suggestion is that managers should be seeking to operate in a state of 'Dynamic Poise'. This begins with the recognition that the Modern Paradigm, while frequently serviceable and usable, is a paradigm which works effectively in restricted circumstances. A major problem in strategic management in the past has been the attempt to impose a single model in all circumstances, based on the belief that it is the correct way to manage. Where it could not operate, practitioners frequently resorted to post-hoc rationalisation, dressing up decisions and actions not based on analysis and strategic formulation in good linear strategic planning clothes.

The approach outlined here suggests we recognise that many decisions and actions can continue to be addressed through the Modern Paradigm, to a greater or lesser extent, for this is a fuzzy subset of the overall set of such decisions and actions. Those outside this subset, or in its fuzzy boundary, will require varied combinations of action, particularly as we move toward the Wild and Wicked contexts.

As with so much else in this thesis, we do not start with a tabula rasa. Ideas about management have moved a long way from the directive stance of Taylor, as we have seen in Part One. A stream - a torrent - of new ideas continues to pour forth [albeit much of it recycled]. It is most appropriate here to begin by delineating some of the characteristics of 'management style' which have been

advocated, and then indicate how this is extended on the basis of the discussion thus far. The delineation is based on four contributions.

The first is Reich [1991], who has identified four basic skills which he sees as necessary in the formal education of an incipient 'symbolic analyst', a term he uses to signify one of the three major emerging categories of occupation today [the others are routine production service workers and in-person service workers]. There is a similarity between this group and professionals [a category in which I would include managers], although Reich emphasizes that not all symbolic analysts are professionals, nor are all professionals symbolic analysts. He makes this distinction on the basis that in the new economy - full of unidentified problems, unknown solutions, and untried means of putting them together - mastery of old domains of knowledge is neither necessary nor sufficient. He suggests that a professional education which has emphasised such knowledge over original thought may retard such capacity in later life. Reich argues that there are three related skills that drive the high-value enterprise - problem solving, problem identifying, and strategic broking - and the people with these skills are the symbolic analysts. The four basic skills which symbolic analysts need are abstraction, system thinking, experimentation and collaboration.

The second writer is Senge [1990, 1994], who has identified five key disciplines required by managers in learning organisations. The third source is Morgan [1988], who has described nine emerging competencies for managers 'riding on the waves of change'. The final source is the work of Boddy and Buchanan [1992] on the expertise of the change agent. Linking these diverse authors together, and no doubt taking some liberties in categorisation, we arrive at the seven capabilities given in Table 8.1.

Thus we have seven capabilities: personal capability, creativity, systems thinking, leadership and vision, managing complexity, teamworking, and networking. These all link well to the arguments developed in the last four chapters. Thus communication and negotiating skills [personal capability] are essential to the manager working in the pluralist or political arenas, while tolerance of ambiguity [managing complexity] is enhanced by an understanding of fuzzy logic. Systems thinking is valuable when operating in conditions of organized complexity, and creativity is an asset when moving from zero-sum to non-zero-sum power strategies.

We can further enrich this picture of the management mindset by recognising the need for the following abilities, which flow from the arguments of Part Two.

- To accept unpredictability and the likelihood of emergence. This is more than a tolerance of ambiguity: it is a recognition that there is no certainty, yet within this uncertain terrain new ideas and opportunities for action can emerge.
- To search for and discover patterns beneath complexity. Apparent chaos can have beneath it organized complexity: it may be impossible to capture this precisely, but the pattern can connect ideas and action.

Table 8.1 MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES COMPARED

	REICH	SENGE	MORGAN	BODDY AND BUCHANAN
PERSONAL CAPABILITY	Abstraction	Personal Mastery	Proactive Management	Personal Enthusiasm; Political Awareness; Communication Skills; Negotiating
CREATIVITY	Experimentation	Mental Models	Promoting Creativity, Learning and Innovation	
SYSTEMS THINKING	Systems Thinking	Systems Thinking	Reading the Environment; Skills of Remote Management	Helicopter Perspective
LEADERSHIP AND VISION		Building Shared Vision	Leadership and Vision	Specifying Goals; Stimulating Motivation and Commitment
MANAGING COMPLEXITY			Managing complexity	Flexibility; Tolerance of Ambiguity
TEAMWORKING	Collaboration	Team Learning	Human Resource Management	Team Building; Selling ideas to others; Influencing Skills
NETWORKING			Using IT; Developing Contextual Competencies	Networking

- To accept fuzziness [and distinguish it fuzzy thinking from sloppy thinking!]. Again, this is a more positive view of ambiguity than 'tolerance', recognizing the creative opportunities that can arise from being 'at the edge'.
- To identify and use both positive and negative feedback. Complexity argues for the importance of positive feedback, where there is an accelerating, rather than a dampening, impact. As argued in earlier Chapters, intangible resources - and in particular those concerned with knowledge acquisition and use - are more and more the critical resources which define strategic capability. Because these are often non zero sum they are more likely to have this effect than the traditional 'zero-sum' tangible resources [land, labour and capital].
- To adopt the 'reflective practice' of Critical Action Research and Learning in their work: here we prefigure the arguments of Chapter Nine, but the value of a critical stance has already been argued in the previous Chapter.

- To encourage the use of creative intelligence
- To use the Protocols for Discourse wherever applicable, and encourage their use by other participants
- To give due weight to the capacity for self-organisation, and the freedom that must be given to facilitate this.
- To address the implications of autopoiesis, including
 - the need to develop the organisation's intelligence and ability to generate knowledge
 - codependent arising: the mutually interactive creation of the organisation and its environment
 - the need for disruptive action
- To exercise what the poet John Keats called Negative Capability: the ability to be "*in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts*", which he considered the key to the artist's creative power ¹. Again, ambiguity is linked to creative potential.
- To employ the triple lens of Knowledge, Belief and Power
- To recognise that strategy in complex contexts [the Wild and Wicked contexts] will almost always be action-driven
- To recognise that we are talking here about the strategy of Becoming: of flux, change and transformation

On this final point, Prigogine and Stengers point to the implications of new scientific thinking for "*the central problem of Western ontology: the relation between Being and Becoming.*" They suggest that "*initial conditions, as summarised in a state of the system, are associated with Being; in contrast, the laws involving temporal changes are associated with Becoming. In our view, Being and Becoming are not to be opposed one to the other: they express two related aspects of reality.*" [1984:310]

The pressures to fall back into the [apparently] safe territory of the Modern Paradigm are strong, and Dynamic Poise therefore implies a constant vigilance to identify and address these pressures. Much of this is to do with a wider frame of thinking, and therefore relates back to the Worldview. One of the themes of this thesis has been the value of non-western philosophy. Although there are many different seams of such thinking, they do have a number of related properties which contrast sharply with those found in western philosophy, as Tables 8.2 and 8.3 illustrate. The point to emphasise here is that we should not get trapped in a belief that only the 'western approach' is valid; if other ways of thinking help enrich our theory and practice, why not use them ?!

¹ Cited in Briggs 1992:27

Table 8.2 African/Asian approaches to being in the world compared to European

European	African/Asian
Either/or	Both/and
Reductionist	Holistic
Striving for constant growth	Striving for balance
Control over	Accepting, live with
Goals achieved through the acquisition of external material things	Life's purpose as being about acquiring wisdom and inner peace
Greater value put on left-brain operations	Greater valuing of right-brain operations
Mind body split, dualism	The human organism is a totality
Individualism, 'me' oriented	Individuality within a group context
Learn facts, computational	Learn to be wise. The ability to operate effectively in the world
A need for certainty. All things are knowable, plannable	Accepting of uncertainty
Function	Style
Linear	Circular, rhythmic
Detachment, objectivity	Involvement, engagement
<i>Eden Charles [1994]</i>	

Table 8.3 Comparison of Western and Indigenous [Native American] Science

Western Science			
Experimentation	Instrumentation	Observation	Transformation
Prediction	Mathematics	Representation	Truth
Control	Objectivity	Distancing	Authority
Freedom of external social values	Progress	Uniformity	Explanation
Models	Causality	Technology	Fragmentation
Indigenous [Native American] Science			
Spirituality	Location	Observation	Sacred mathematics
Initiation	Cosmology	Causality	Sacred space
Role of humanity	Harmony	Ceremony	Representation
Elders	Artefact	Practice	Technology
Spirit	Dreams	Visions	Sanction
History	Maps	Symbols	Transformation
Subjectivity	Relatedness	Understanding	Path
<i>F. David Peat [1995]</i>			

THE INTELLIGENT ORGANISATION

What of the organisation in which this management takes place? There are two integrating themes which prove helpful here. The first centres on autopoiesis, and allows us to relate the present argument to debates on 'learning organisations', creativity and capability, while the second links complex adaptive systems to political arenas.

In Chapter Six we considered the idea of Creative Intelligence. In an organisation which seeks to maximise its creative intelligence there will be a bias toward action learning and action research. The terms 'learning organisation' and 'knowledge based industry' are now widely used. The first attraction of using the concept of intelligence instead is that it incorporates both thinking and doing, both formulation and implementation, both learning and application. The second is that it allows us to articulate one of the implications of autopoiesis. In the words of one of the creators of this latter concept, *"we move away from the idea of the world as independent and extrinsic to the idea of a world as inseparable from the structure of these processes of self-modification. This change ... reflects the necessity of understanding cognitive systems not on the basis of their input and output relationships but by their operational closure. A system that has operational closure is one in which the results of its processes are those processes themselves. ... The key point is that such systems do not operate by representation. Instead of representing an independent world, they enact a world as a domain of distinctions that is inseparable from the structure embodied by the cognitive system."* [Varela et al 1993]

This concept is used in Figure 8.4 to provide an 'input-output' model rather different to that usually presented in organisational thinking. As this Figure illustrates, the organisation does not receive information from the environment: it receives sense data from which it creates information, and this creative act is done on the basis of existing information, knowledge and activity. The arrows show the interlinkages between the various elements: autopoiesis implies that there is no arrow pointing from sense data direct to knowledge.

Figure 8.4 also embraces the idea of codependent arising. For it recognises that the environment is 'enacted' or created by the organisation, and at the same time the organisation is enacted by its environment. There is no priority here: they exist contemporaneously and neither exists independently of the other. Thus the boundaries within the circle in Figure 8.4 should be understood to be very fuzzy!

We can relate this argument to the trilogy of Knowledge, Belief and Power. As theories of strategy which relate it to culture or power have recognised, the mindset acts as a lens which determines what information will be sought, accepted or rejected. But here the argument goes further: the mindset is active in creating that information from the sense data received. Consequently, the mindsets of those involved in an organisation determine what is legitimate, and what is illegitimate, across the full range of thought and action, as we have seen in Chapter Three.

We can extend this argument by considering self-similarity. The 'organisation' does not exist independently of its members [or more widely, its stakeholders], any more than it exists independently of its environment. Here again there is codependent arising, and this occurs at different levels within the organisation. The notion of the 'organisational mindset' is a necessary simplification. Its full articulation needs to include discussion of the transfer of knowledge between individuals and groups, and learning processes within the organisation. But

again, these are inadequate if they do not embrace the picture presented in Figure 8.4, which holds for the individual as much as for the group. Thus organisational intelligence must be understood as an emergent concept involving in dynamic interaction individual mindsets, group mindsets, and in particular the senior management 'mindset'.

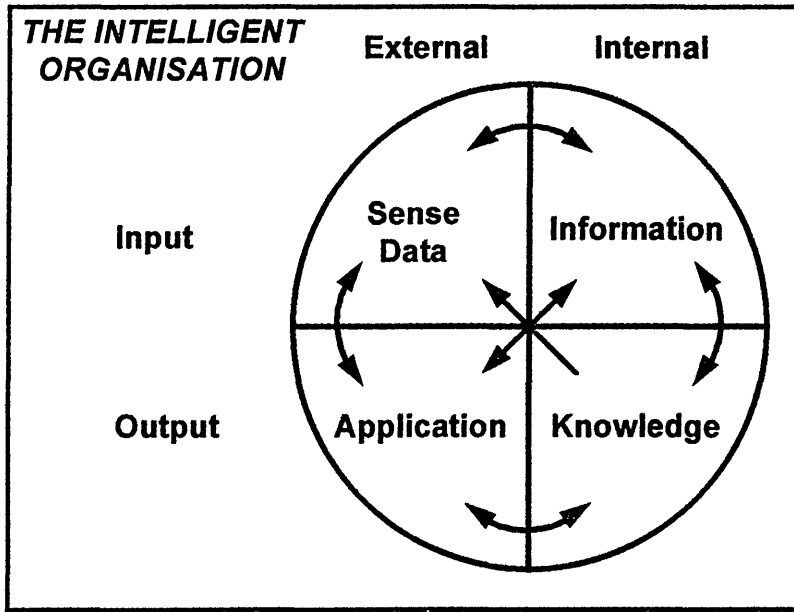


Figure 8.4: The Intelligent Organisation

Dynamic capability is sometimes presented as the linkage of core competencies, which in turn are crafted from the organisation's resource base. It will be now be apparent that we are not here taking this reductionist approach: organisational intelligence is an emergent property, which draws on resources and competencies, but cannot be reduced to them.

The more we move toward knowledge-intensive industries, and knowledge-based organisations, the more intelligence becomes the core capability. As Blackler's [1994] characterisation of organisations and knowledge-types implies, in such industries the types of issue which have been considered throughout this thesis - such as collaboration and power - are of central importance [see Table 8.4].

This means that the crucial questions are concerned with 'constraints on legitimacy'. Broadly, the greater is the compass of legitimacy in the organisation, the greater is its intelligence. This has long been recognised in discussions of strategy. Janis's 'groupthink' characterises groups where legitimacy is narrow: there are strong internal constraints on what can be said, perceived and done. Miller's 'Icarus Paradox' characterises organisations where legitimacy narrows as a result of success with existing strategies. The calls for 'both-and' thinking can also be seen as pleas to widen the compass of legitimacy in organisations. More generally, the Modern Paradigm is a constrained version of the wider approach here advocated, and an inevitable consequence is that management within the framework of the former involves a narrower compass of legitimacy.

TABLE 8.4 ORGANISATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE TYPES		
KNOWLEDGE ROUTINIZED ORGANISATIONS	KNOWLEDGE-WORKER-DEPENDENT	COMMUNICATION-INTENSIVE-ORGANISATIONS
Emphasis on knowing embedded in formal rules and procedures	More emphasis on the embrained and embodied knowing of particular members	More emphasis on encultured knowing
Typically, capital, technology or labour intensive	Knowledge workers subsumed within broader activity system	Communication and collaboration the key processes
Hierarchical division and control	Status and power from specialised expertise	Empowerment through integration
Low skill requirements	Knowledge a strategic input	Expertise is pervasive
Example: 'Machine bureaucracy', such as a traditional factory	Example: 'Professional bureaucracy', such as a hospital	Examples: 'Adhocracies', such as a consultancy addressing complex, unfamiliar problems

Relating this to the 'competition versus capability' debate, it should be stressed that nothing said here suggests that environmental analysis, or the exploration of competition and cooperation, are illegitimate. But it does imply a rejection of the notion that the environment is 'out there' waiting to be discovered, or that organisations in competition or alliance have an independent existence and can be examined objectively. The environment being analysed is itself created by the organisation, and the competitors and allies are those created by the organisational mindset, through the triple lens of knowledge, belief and power.

We can relate this also to Nonaka and Takeuchi's discussion [1995] of the creation of knowledge in organisations. Once again we can see a fourfold model akin to the Strategy IDEA [Table 8.5]. Investigation has its parallel in 'building a field of interaction', which facilitates the sharing of members' experiences and mental models. Deciding equates to 'dialogue or collective reflection', and enabling to 'networking' newly created and existing knowledge from other parts of the organisation. Finally, 'learning by doing' equates to action.

Table 8.5: The Strategy IDEA related to Nonaka and Takeuchi's 'Knowledge Spiral'	
INVESTIGATE Building a field of interaction	DECIDE Dialogue or collective reflection
ACT Learning by doing	ENABLE Networking

Nonaka and Takeuchi envisage a spiral of knowledge creation, and identify five enabling conditions which again link well with the arguments in this thesis:

- Intention - developing the organisational capability to acquire, create, accumulate and exploit knowledge
- Autonomy - allowing all members of an organisation to act autonomously as far as possible
- Fluctuation and creative chaos - encouraging a 'breakdown' of routines, habits, and cognitive frameworks
- Redundancy - the existence of information that goes beyond the immediate operational requirements of organisational members
- Requisite variety - internal diversity at least matching the variety and complexity of the environment

The second integrating theme brings together the central concepts of Chapters Four and Six: complex adaptive systems and arenas of power. Table 8.6 considers Political Arenas as complex adaptive systems, drawing in part on the outline of the various Arenas given in Table 6.1. This is not to suggest that all Political Arenas are complex adaptive systems - as the Table suggests, this will only be the case if Creative Intelligence is present. Thus this is not a proposal of equivalence, but rather an argument that organisations operating as [or in] political arenas will be [in] complex adaptive systems if there are real opportunities for the exercise of creative intelligence, thus allowing them to move from zero sum situations.

What of the other arenas? In the control arena there is a concentration of power, so that control is not dispersed, and there will be limited [if any] possibilities for cooperation, coevolution and emergence. In the unitary arena the network of many agents act as one, and competition is discouraged. Pluralist Arenas could be seen as complex adaptive systems, but the pressure to binding commitment may limit the opportunities for constant revision, and make it less likely that the system remains at the boundary between order and disorder.

It should be emphasized once again that this is not an attempt to 'prove' that the political arena is the place to be. Rather it is to suggest that this can be a productive arena in which to operate, and the characteristics of both complex adaptive systems and political arenas therefore provide guiding heuristics to managers wishing to work with 'dynamic poise'.

TABLE 8.6 POLITICAL ARENAS AS COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS	
COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS	POLITICAL ARENAS
A network of many 'agents'	A Political Arena is 'a network of many 'agents' acting in parallel'
"Adaptively intelligent"	The summary position of the Political Arena [6.1] is that 'We need to get some agreement so that we can take action, but it will be provisional' It is recognised that action requires some agreement, but through Creative Intelligence new ideas can emerge, to be tested, acted upon, perhaps discarded.
Control dispersed.	'All participate, although power differences mean some have more influence than others' [6.1]
Competition and cooperation	'Competition can produce a very strong incentive for cooperation, and they are closely interrelated' 'Divergence may be significant, including some conflict' [6.1] 'Objectives may not be agreed, but action can be agreed by negotiation' [6.1]
Coevolution, emergence and self-organisation	If power and influence are dispersed, then development in the Political Arena will only take place through self-organisation. As the agents involved develop a partial understanding of each other - coevolution - there is the possibility of emergence and self-organisation
Many levels of organisation	In a Political Arena there are not only different levels of organisation [especially in a multi-organisational or multi-divisional setting] but often there are also different Arenas at play [that is to say, one or more other Arenas may be nested within it]
Constant revision and rearrangement	'Compromise may be provisional - subject to change when the opportunity arises for one or more participants' [6.1]
Anticipates the future	Where Creative Intelligence is exercised, those involved in the Political Arena have the possibility of anticipating the future, building models and developing implicit predictions.
Always unfolding	The provisional nature of agreement in Political Arenas means that they are always unfolding [anticipating the next Chapter, a method based on action research and action learning is therefore appropriate].
Between order and disorder	A Political Arena is unstable, as power, influence and interest shift.
Interaction with the environment	The agents in a Political Arena 'acquire information about their environment and their own interaction with that environment, identifying regularities in that information, condensing those regularities into a kind of 'schema' or model, and acting in the real world on the basis of that schema'.

PRINCIPLES FOR METHOD AND PRACTICE

We turn now to the third circle in Figure 8.2: the implications for method and practice. Eight principles and concepts emerge from the varied theoretical debates that have been reviewed: these are set out and explained below.

1 ENCOURAGE DEMOCRACY - RECOGNISING THAT THIS MAY WELL BE A CONTESTED ARENA

The first principle focuses on control. In Chapters Six and Seven we moved toward commitment to emancipation and greater democracy in organisations. This implies a preference for the pluralist and political arenas of power, rather than unitary or control. This is equally implied by complexity theory. Complex adaptive systems need to be far from equilibrium - the characteristic of unitary and control arenas, by contrast, is stability [whether voluntary or enforced]. New forms of organisation consistent with the thinking of complexity theory are, as we have seen, now widely espoused, but they are likely to fall foul of entrenched power interests which they threaten. One of the advantages of the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis for those in power is that it helps legitimate their position - it is an argument for control, which is seen as both possible and desirable. 'Mastery of nature' translates into management control and control of the environment.

Logic and language control in other ways. Crisp, two valued, logic facilitates a rigid perspective - the crisp boundary between organisation and environment, the neat categorization of events and circumstances. It encourages groupthink - you are either with us or against us - and hence acts as a driver toward a unitary or control arena. If there can be only right or wrong, then the notion of multiple perspectives becomes questionable - there are at most two perspectives, and one of these is invalid.

At the same time, the political arena is a contested arena, for different perspectives relate not only to intent, but also to values and beliefs - not least, the value of discourse, and the way in which it is conducted. This issue has been approached in earlier Chapters from several directions, not in the belief that a definitive solution could be found, but on the basis that these different approaches offer mutual support. Out of them it is possible to develop protocols for discourse which will never be absolute, but can prove helpful in progressing it.

2 FACILITATE MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

The value of multiple perspectives is the second principle to emerge, and this relates to individuals as well as to groups. The three lenses through which we have looked in Chapters Four, Five and Six intertwine, and the argument of the last chapter is that this interlinking is further enriched through the ideas of Critical Theory. Hopefully therefore this will be seen as more than a 'supermarket approach' to thinking and to action.

3 RECOGNIZE FUZZY BOUNDARIES

Third, we have seen the importance of fuzzy boundaries. They make life more difficult, and the pressures toward 'concept chopping' are understandable. But this can deny us a richness of perspective. Thus the arenas of power are not distinct, although for the sake of exposition it was necessary to set them out in this way. The axes are not either/or - each is a continuum, and organisations

shift along them. They are also holographic - within an organisation that is primarily a control arena there will be pockets of pluralist or political behaviour, or people seeking the opportunity to shift in such directions. And equally within pluralist or political arenas there will be pressure toward the dominance of a single perspective, shifting upward on that axis.

4 KEEP THINKING AND ACTION IN DYNAMIC TENSION

Shifting, far from equilibrium - in these ideas we have a fourth linking theme, that of dynamic tension, or dynamic poise as outlined above. Dynamic tension is absent in the unitary arena, and suppressed in the control arena. It is ever present where democracy is taken seriously. We shall consider shortly the primary organisational context within which the case studies have been done - local government - but it is worth saying here that major problems arising in local government frequently stem from their failure to take democracy seriously. Thus the complacency of councils who did things for rather than with people made them easy targets for the critiques of the 1970s and 1980s. Equally, as this is written a number of scandals across Britain are being ascribed to the corrosive effect of 'one party states', where a single party has little or no opposition to face. Multiple perspectives, democracy and participation are closely linked, and an important issue therefore is to consider methods that facilitate these, and barriers that hinder them. A number of these have been outlined in Chapters Five and Six, leading to the Protocols for Discourse.

Dynamic tension is about being at 'the edge', and it is worth noting that this concept arose in both Chapter Four and Five. In the former, the edge was between order and chaos, and a number of writers, including Pascale [1991] and Miller [1990] have identified the value of the tension this can create [including 'constructive conflict']. In Chapter Five it was the boundary between two 'mutually exclusive' groups, described there as 'a very high tension zone'.

5 VALUE PROCESS, AND PUT TRUST IN PROCESS

Fifth, we see the importance of process - strategy is about becoming, not being. But the insights of complexity theory allow us to take this further. Self-organisation is a direct challenge to control, and of course control mechanisms have frequently been used by management against it, as the history of trade unionism, as well as technocracy, Taylorism and Fordism, demonstrate [this will be considered further in Chapter Ten]. Self-organisation may be considered unnecessary, undesirable, or something to be feared. Or it may be seen as desirable, but unpredictable, in danger of running 'out of control' - another form of fear [and another example of dichotomous thinking - control or chaos].

Complexity theory suggests that organisations should have 'trust in process'. We shall see later the implications of such an approach, which is undoubtedly one of the most difficult for managers to embrace. Consultation is safer than negotiation; involvement is safer than participation. 'Empowerment', whereby power is "bestowed upon employees by progressive, enlightened managers" [Alvesson & Willmott 1996:162], has within it the recognition that power can be

taken back if the consequences prove undesirable. And a closer look at empowerment, as we shall see, sometimes indicates that it is a devolution only of responsibility, not power.

6 ALLOW FOR AND ENCOURAGE PROACTIVE EMERGENCE

Linked to 'trust in process' is a sixth theme, that of proactive emergence. In contrast to the reductive approach of traditional strategic planning, complexity theory takes emergence seriously. The approach to logic and language presented in Chapter Five, and the approach to dialogue and discourse developed there and in Chapter Six, are intended to facilitate emergence, and again the pluralist and political arenas will be those in which this is most likely to happen, since multiple perspectives can provide the catalyst for new thinking.

7 FACILITATE LEARNING

The seventh linking theme concerns learning. Complex adaptive systems are learning systems, and methods such as ColourFlow Dialogue are intended to facilitate this. Again, it may be argued that learning is more likely in pluralist and political arenas - this will be addressed in Part Three.

In Chapter Five Bateson's treatment of learning was introduced, in particular the idea that there are levels of learning, different in type. It was argued that levels of change relate closely to this, but that there should be some caution about treating the levels as entirely distinct - the example of Copernicus was given. Where, for example, does 'first order' incremental change end and 'second order' discontinuous change begin. This is not to argue for blurring, but to stress again the value of thinking about the 'edge' - the fuzzy boundary between the two may itself offer potential for learning, as again the experience of the Copernican Revolution shows.

8 ACCEPT [INDEED EMBRACE] THE ABSENCE OF CERTAINTY AND FOUNDATIONS

The eighth, and final, theme is one that has underpinned the entire discussion: there is no certainty, there are no foundations, there are no absolutes. For those imbued with the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis [which in the western world at least means pretty well everyone] this is not easy. On a personal note, it has been a matter of some amusement how frequently the building metaphor of knowledge has crept into the argument [as the first sentence above shows].

The search therefore is for methodologies which take their rationale from these eight principles; that is to say, methods which

- encourage democracy - recognising that this may well be a contested arena
- facilitate multiple perspectives
- recognize fuzzy boundaries
- keep thinking and action in dynamic tension

- value process, and put trust in process
- allow for and encourage proactive emergence
- facilitate learning
- accept [indeed embrace] the absence of certainty and foundations

We have already consider one such method - ColourFlow Dialogue. Further methodologies will be introduced in the next Chapter, in particular Critical Action Research and Learning, and Whole Systems Interventions. It will be the contention of Part Three that these provide ways of putting the ideas developed in Part Two into practice, and examples will be given in Chapters Ten and Eleven to illustrate this claim.

However, before moving to this more practical stage of the thesis, we turn to the second task of this Chapter, which is to outline the wider context within which much of the case study material is set - the recent history, and current position, of local government in Britain.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It was in the mid-1970s that the then Labour government announced to the public sector that 'the party has to stop'. The steady post-war rise of public spending came under increasing attack. Thus a book [Bacon and Eltis 1976] arguing that public spending produced no value added, and was paid for from the 'real wealth' generated by the private sector, was serialised in the Sunday Times and provoked an extensive debate, most of which supported the thesis. The debate about the merits of public spending, and public services, was underway, and has persisted to this day.

But the change to a Conservative government in 1979 also changed the terms of the debate. Previously it centered on the argument that a nation could not afford the continual growth of the proportion of Gross Domestic Product 'consumed' by the public sector. Henceforth the central argument would be that the public sector should not be involved in many areas where it had traditionally had a role. For almost two decades as stream of legislation would play through the subtext 'private sector good, public sector bad.' Thus by 1987 Gunn was able to argue that *"No country has been more affected [than Britain] by 'cut-back management' or more stridently exhorted (by the Thatcher governments since 1979) to adopt the criteria and methods of the business world. Businessmen in Britain are invited to run nationalised industries and other public agencies, or to pronounce upon the problems of organisations as diverse as the health services and the universities."*

This was not a carefully designed strategy. Jones [1992] commented that at the start there was no clear blueprint, and there never has been one: strategy seemed to be formed after the events take place: indeed to be formed by those events. The transformation of local government was not foreseen in 1979: instead there was an unfolding of policy, beginning with the desire to curb local government expenditure, weaken the hold of local government over housing

and open up its direct labour departments to competition. What gave consistency was the common political beliefs and instincts about the way public administration should develop.

In many parts of local government something akin to a 'siege mentality' developed. By way of illustration, a workshop of local government chief officers was presented in 1996 with Mintzberg's five 'P's' of strategy - Plan, Position, Pattern, Ploy, Perspective - together with four further ways of characterising strategy: Power, Pleasing, Potential, and Purpose. They were asked to consider which of these best characterised strategy in their Councils. The overwhelming response was to identify another P: strategy as Pragmatism. This was not in the passive sense of "we do what seems practical within the existing constraints". Rather, it was that "we do the best we can within the circumstances that prevail, and try to respond flexibly and effectively as these change". Underpinning this was the view that strategies are largely 'enforced' - mostly by government legislation, but also by constraints imposed by other bodies such as the European Union - and that diminishing resources meant that there was very little opportunity to do anything new - it was more about the constant search for cheaper ways to do things, and about decisions on what *not* to do henceforth.

Fenwick [1995:4] has identified three key changes affecting local government:

- First, long- or even medium-term financial planning has been undermined by changes to the rules by which central government funds local government and by which local councils are allowed to fund themselves, in addition to the continuing effects of the change from the rating system to the poll tax and then to the council tax.
- Secondly, an ever-increasing proportion of local council services has been subject to compulsory competitive tender with private companies, thus transferring services from public to private sector without naming the process one of privatization.
- Thirdly, local councils have found their duties and powers being transferred to non-elected bodies, publicly funded but based on appointees rather than elected representatives.

Overall, the effect has been fragmentation, with the creation of new bodies such as Urban Development Corporations, urban action task forces, housing action trusts, training and enterprise councils, grant-maintained schools, city technology colleges, governing boards of local authority schools, City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget, hospital trusts in the National Health Service, and in metropolitan areas separate bodies for police, fire and civil defence. By 1993 the Financial Times found that QUANGOs were spending more than local authorities, and accounted for nearly a fifth of total public expenditure [cited in Davis and Stewart [1993:6].

The subtext 'private sector good, public sector bad' was important not only in influencing what Councils do [or do not do], but also in influencing what managers in local government do, how they behave and how they are treated. Thus Pollitt has identified the rise of managerialism in the public sector, which he sees as a form of neo-Taylorism. In a subsequent update to his analysis,

Pollitt discusses a second wave of reforms, which he and others have characterised as the New Public Management, re-packaged but essentially continued by the Major Administration from 1990 :

- A much bolder and larger scale use of market-like mechanisms for those parts of the public sector that could not be transferred directly into private ownership [quasi-markets]
- Intensified organisational and spatial decentralisation of the management and production of services
- A constant rhetorical emphasis on the need to improve service 'quality'
- An equally relentless insistence that greater attention had to be given to the wishes of the individual service user / 'consumer'

Examples of the new market-like mechanisms included the idea that schools and institutions of higher education would compete for students and be financed mainly according to their success or failure in doing this. The NHS was divided into providers and purchasers, the latter to buy those services they deemed their communities to need, using formal contracts to ensure that they obtained the best 'value for money' from among the competing providers. In community care, LA Social Services Departments became the purchasers of services from a multiplicity of (public and private) providers.

As Pollitt has argued, these are highly managed markets. First, because the purchasers are not the final users of these services but public bodies, hence agreements and contracts are between two sets of managers. Second, they are entirely artificial constructions run according to sets of rules, definitions and formulae invented largely by senior officials in Whitehall.

He identified contrasts between NPM and neo-Taylorism :

- Generalised public servant bashing all but ceased.
- The drive for quality became central
- The presentation of many public services was being transformed, and both paternalistic professionalism and bureaucratic immobilism were (almost) everywhere in retreat

And there was also an important continuity: the drive for efficiency and the overall pressure on budgets.

Similarly, Jones [1992] has identified nine characteristics of the New Public Management:

- Fragmentation of units
- Regulation rather than provision
- Competition or 'marketisation'
- Hands-on management
- Explicit standards and measures of performance
- Emphasis of output controls
- Private-sector styles of personnel management
- Parsimony in resource use
- Serve the customer

He concluded that these nine precepts of the new public management could be summarized into four, fragmentation, marketisation, contractorisation and customerisation. Jones also noted the role of management consultants, whose ethos was mainly private sector. They were trained on management courses at business schools which usually ignored the problems of the public sector or treated it as if it were the same as the private sector, and they tended to apply in the public sector approaches and techniques they had recommended for business.

THE RESPONSE

The counter-argument to the New Public Management has centred on concepts such as the Public Service Orientation, developed in particular by John Stewart and his colleagues. Like others sympathetic to local government, Stewart has recognised that the critique of the public sector was powerful because, in part at least, it was justified [it has been commonplace in discussions in local authority circles to recognise, for example, that compulsory competitive tendering has brought necessary changes, and these should have been wrought by Councils anyway].

Thus Stewart and Walsh [1992:509-10] summarized 'organisational assumptions' which have come to be challenged throughout the public services: those of 'self-sufficiency', of 'direct control', of 'uniformity', of 'accountability upwards', and of 'standardized establishment procedures'. The Public Service Orientation [Clarke and Stewart 1986] puts forward different organisational assumptions: that a local authority's activities exist to provide service for the public; that it will be judged by the quality of service provided within the resources available; that the service provided is only of real value if it is of value to those for whom it is provided, that those for whom services are provided are customers demanding high quality service; and that the quality of service demands closeness to the customer.

As will be apparent, the emphasis on the customer is one shared by advocates and critics of local government. Fenwick [1995] comments that the relationship between the local authority and the public is changing, with a rapid growth of interest in the public as consumers or customers. This consumer 'perspective' in local government has been variously known as a public-service orientation (PSO), a concern with the 'customer', a process of 'listening to the public', or an emphasis upon the user of public services: in short, a 'closeness' to the public. He argues that the attractions of a consumer orientation are self-evident include its apparent simplicity; local authorities are being asked to identify the 'customers' for the services which they provide and communicate with those customers in order to provide services which are of value to them. The terms of debate are imprecise and - attractive for that very reason.

In this debate, the terminology is important. Thus the 'customer' is not the same as the 'participating user'. Debate on participation reveals understandings of the term which stretch across the spectrum from consultation

to negotiation [as discussed in Chapter Six, Table 6.8]. As Stewart and Clarke argue *"the public are not just customer, they are citizens"* [1996:3].

The response of local government to the pressures exerted on it has been varied. Elcock [1996:67-8] has identified four variations, seeing little evidence of strategy in the third or fourth:

- Proactive/outward-looking organisations, which carry out market research, are sensitive to community needs, develop strategic plans and develop the Public Service Orientation.
- Reactive/outward-looking organisations, which are reactive "in part at least because of the nature of the demands made upon them".
- Proactive but inward-looking organisations, which often respond to problems by reorganizing themselves, and are concerned with protecting their staff and activities
- Reactive inward-looking organisations, which are mainly concerned with containing their budgets and activities within the limits of externally set budgetary and other constraints.

The Local Government Management Board has sought to encourage a more proactive stance by Councils. Again this has been both at the level of organisation and at the level of management. Looking first at the former, in 1993 they argued that there are three major strategic choices which each local authority must make in thinking about its role and function: the extent to which it wishes to exercise a wider role of local governance; the degree to which it wants to introduce market mechanisms in its operations; and the relative importance it puts on service to individuals and service to communities, and the meaning it gives to community.

To illustrate the implications of these choices, they identified four 'cameos' [Table 8.7], while recognising that *"A wide range of hybrid approaches is possible, involving combinations of choices and emphasis. The important point is not that an authority must adopt a clear dominant role, but that it should determine its choices and emphasis before undertaking the process of organisational design."* [1993:14]

Certainly the pure form of several of these is most unlikely to be seen. Direct Service Provision was always more an attitude than a practical manifestation: in practice Councils have long had significant interplay with other organisations. 'Partnership' is much in vogue these days: in truth, it has been practiced for years. Thus a Workshop on partnership facilitated in 1996, and involving twelve Chief Executives, concluded that partnership was a feature of almost everything with which they, and their Councils, were involved. We have already seen the interest in this when considering the Rainbow Council case study in Chapter Five.

Table 8.7 Possible Approaches for Local Government

	DIRECT SERVICE PROVISION	COMMERCIAL APPROACH	COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE	THE NEIGHBOURHOOD APPROACH
Role of the market	Very limited. Direct public provision preferred	Very wide: market mechanisms should be used wherever possible	Neutral: Judge role of market on its capacity to contribute to wider objectives	Limited. More emphasis on voluntary sector and community initiative
Interpretation of governance	Strong in relation to service provision. More limited in relation to 'wider issues'	Limited to specification of need and service client 'role', plus some wider issues	Strong: local authority is there to respond to full range of community needs	Strong at neighbourhood level. Less emphasis at authority-wide level
Community vs. Individual	Emphasis on individual as customer or service client	Strong emphasis on individual as consumer	Strong emphasis on community in authority-wide terms, not local	Strong emphasis on local communities, less so authority-wide
Other key values	Command and Hierarchy; Professional; Bureaucracy	Business values; Choice [Exit capacity]; Competition	Citizenship [city-wide]; Networking; Representative Democracy	Citizenship [local]; Participative Democracy; Community
Source: Fitness for Purpose, LGMB 1993				

The Commercial Approach was the ideal type most favoured by the Conservative Government of 1979-97: it was portrayed by Nicholas Ridley as an organisation which did nothing directly, contracting all its services from other organisations. One local authority, Rutland, sought to pioneer such an approach - but in 1997 it began a serious reevaluation, recognizing that in some cases at least the cost of contracting was greater than the cost of direct provision.

The Neighbourhood Approach, involving extensive devolution of powers to 'mini town halls', was brought into serious question when Tower Hamlets faced the real possibility that part of the area would come under the control of the National Front. Community Governance is perhaps the closest of these ideal types to developments in a number of local authorities.

Recognizing that the specific requirements and context of each local authority is different, a paper was prepared for debate in Wimbledon DC² which argued for a fifth approach: City Governance, as summarized in Table 8.8. This will be considered further in the context of the case study in Chapter Eleven. One of the reasons for developing this specific approach was the need to spell out more clearly the implications of working across fuzzy boundaries, and the nature of work with other organisations in this approach is contrasted with those suggested by LGMB in Table 8.9.

² Pseudonym for one of the case studies discussed in Chapter Eleven.

Table 8.8 City Governance	
Role of the market	Direct public provision of priority services and key support services where possible, or use of trusts. Neutral view on provision of other services
Interpretation of governance	Strong: local authority is there to respond to full range of community needs
Community vs. Individual	Strong emphasis on community in authority-wide terms, but with a local emphasis especially in outlying areas
Other key values	Citizenship [city-wide]; Networking; Representative Democracy; Self-management; Influence, not control
Source: Darwin: Models for Local Democracy [unpublished]	

Table 8.9 Working With Other Organisations	
Direct Service Provision	Formal links to mainstream organisations. Assumed dominance of local authority. Seek benefits for local authority. Hierarchical relationships.
Commercial Approach	Extensive relationships with outside organisations. Dominance of contractual relations. Local authority as monitor of contracts with other organisations.
Community Governance	Strong external orientation. Variety of relationships, including contract partnership. Use of influence in informal relationships. Seeks gain for area. Opportunistic.
Neighbourhood Approach	Local links - vary between areas. Partnership with community organisations in service provision. Contracting to solve economy-of-scale problems. Informal networks.
City Governance	Strong external orientation, based on view of Council as focus of democratic accountability. Service provision based on agreed priorities, involving direct provision, indirect [including trusts] and organisations in public, voluntary, community and private sectors. Variety of relationships, including contract partnership. Use of influence and informal relationships. Seek gain for area from all organisations, including those established by central government.
Source: as Table 8.8	

Besides working with others organisations, the implication of this approach is that there be much closer working with local residents. This too has been a theme of growing interest in local government. Thus Stewart and Clarke [1996] point to a series of innovations in democratic practice underway around the country, including:

- Citizens' juries and deliberative opinion polls
- Community forums
- New forms of public meetings
- Mediation groups
- Referenda
- Teledemocracy
- Citizen monitoring of services

The methods to be developed and considered in Part Three extend this range of opportunity.

At the management level, the Local Government Management Board has sought to develop an understanding of strategic management with the sector. Thus in one of their publications Clarke and Stewart [1991] identified twelve 'common mistakes in strategic management' and 'twelve steps towards strategic management' [See Appendix 8.1].

This advocacy of strategic management has been important because the chequered history of strategic planning has had an important effect in the sector. Elcock [1996] argues that *"strategic policy planning suffered a major loss of support and credibility which resulted in its eclipse for much of the 1980s"*. Thus one of the reasons given by the Department of the Environment for the abolition of the Greater London Council and the six metropolitan county councils was because their establishment in 1972 had reflected 'a certain fashion for strategic planning, the confidence in which now appears exaggerated' [quoted in Elcock op. cit. 59].

There were good reasons for this attack. First, it took too long to prepare strategic plans, and they were often outdated by the time they were ready. For example, In the late 1980s I was asked by my local authority to coordinate the preparation of an economic strategy for one part of the city. At the time, a local plan had been under preparation for the same area for over two years. The economic strategy was prepared in three months: the local plan took another two years, by which time the Council had lost its planning powers in the area concerned to a QUANGO.

Elcock comments that delays in preparing strategic plans, together with often publicised disputes over their content among the various agencies involved in their preparation, caused increasing disillusionment. As a result the public increasingly supported the New Right policies of the Conservative Party, which concentrated on limiting the role of the state. Both as a matter of ideological conviction and one of personal predilection, the Thatcher governments heavily discounted attempts at long-term planning in the public services as indicated by their early reduction of the PES planning horizon from five years to three.

Second, planners, and planning, were seen to pursue planning ideologies unsympathetic to the views and aspirations of their local communities. Disillusion with planning was only an extreme case of a more general public disenchantment with the paternalistic profession.

Third, because strategic planning needed to be corporate, it challenged established professional interests. Fourth, *"uncertainty was in any case greatly and sometimes deliberately increased by Conservative governments after 1979"* [ibid:61]. And finally, plans became excessively long and detailed.

Much of this critique echoes the criticisms of strategic planning developed by Mintzberg [1994]. But the recognition that strategic planning is best seen as the servant of strategic thinking is still to be fully integrated into the local

government mindset. Thus, in the feedback session following a seminar on strategic management, held for the chief officer team of one local authority in 1996, one of the points raised was that it had been particularly valuable to see the distinction between the two - several of the participants had assumed them to be the same.³

SUMMARY

Leach, Stewart and Walsh [1994:260] have usefully summarised the implications of the changes being discussed here for management [Table 8.10]

Table 8.10 Old and New Approaches to Management Compared	
Old Approach	New Approach
Traditional, static	Change-oriented
Insular	Open, communicating
Centre-focused	Customer-focused
Incremental sort-term	Business oriented, planned
Rule-driven	Flexible
Passive employment policies	Active employment policies
No recognised corporate culture	Corporate culture geared to management style and purpose
Finance/treasury driven	More policy driven
Source: Leach, Stewart and Walsh [1994]	

An additional debate, given new impetus by the change of government in 1997, has concerned the role of local - and regional - government more generally [see for example Darwin 1990]. This has argued for a more proactive approach, for example in economic regeneration, building in part on the experience of local authorities who developed this aspect of their work in the 1980s [although several of the most prominent were the metropolitan councils, including Greater London, who were abolished in the same period]. The Labour government in 1997 committed itself to a regional framework, commencing with Scotland and Wales, and also argued for a closer and more positive partnership with local government generally. Ascherson [1994] has suggested that *"The 21st century will be a period not only of fuzzy logic but of fuzzy democracy"*. He points to the discussion of regionalism in Europe, and the fact that nobody can neatly define a region.

Out of these developments, and the debates which have surrounded them, we can identify a number of themes germane to the present discussion:

- Local authorities now operate within a network of organisations, including other public sector bodies, QUANGOs, the private sector and voluntary organisations
- As a result, partnerships have become ever more important, as has the need for managers [often schooled in the traditional hierarchical concept of

³ Another example appeared in the official minutes reporting a Search Conference I had undertaken for a local authority: the minute was headed 'strategic planning', despite my careful avoidance of the term throughout.

management⁴] to adopt new ways of working, across increasingly fuzzy boundaries between and within organisations

- Negatively, this can be seen as undesirable fragmentation; positively, as the opportunity to explore new ways of governance and service delivery
- Democracy is now seen as more than the ability to exercise a vote annually, and the people affected by local government as more than passive recipients. The possibilities of more direct involvement are still in their infancy, but the third of Greenberg's four positions on democracy [outlined in Chapter Seven] is undoubtedly of major import to the future of local government. Stewart and Jones argue: *"The development of active citizenship is seen by some as a challenge to representative democracy,. We do not accept that. Rather representative democracy is strengthened by the active involvement of citizens."* [1996:3]
- Local authorities are having to rethink their role and purpose - in part as the consequence of the continued negative impact of two decades of change, in part as a proactive response to new needs and opportunities
- There is a growing interest in the 'wicked issues', in part because they persist despite years of action, and in part because they reinforce the need to break down 'crisp' boundaries and hierarchical patterns of behaviour
- There has been growing interest in strategic management, and a recognition that this is not the same as strategic planning
- Local government is, and will remain, in a state of flux and uncertainty [to the extent that some of the things argued here may already appear outdated by the time they are read!] As Elcock argues: *"Local authorities must continue to develop the capacity to cope with uncertainty and manage their responses to change"* [1996:198].

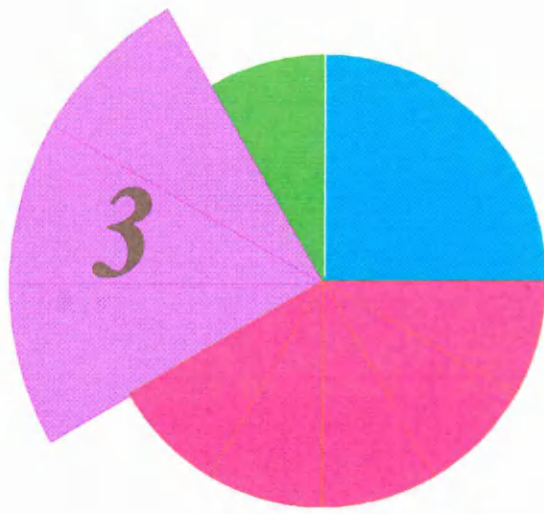
As this is written the uncertainty is compounded by the questioning of practices and philosophies developed by the Conservative government. One outcome could be a cyclic process, as described by Jones: *"For a few years more the new public managerialism which treats public sector management as little different from management of a private firms will continue its hold as the dominant paradigm of the government's approach. But in the longer term it will be challenged, perhaps by a 'neo-new public management', and eventually unseated. If one universal panacea is not then to be substituted for another, what is needed is careful analysis of where in the public sector the new managerialism is most appropriate and where it is not."* [1992:37-8]

It has been the search for ways of approaching these themes which are more than a simplistic panacea that has partially underpinned the work to be discussed in Chapters Ten and Eleven. These fit well with a more positive scenario, which comes out of the proposals of the Labour Government elected in 1997. In their consultation paper [1998] on local democracy, partnership is

⁴ A small story may illustrate this old pattern. During my time as a community worker in the 1970s in Newcastle [considered more in Chapter Ten] I had several meetings with a teacher in the school round the corner from our office, on a possible collaborative activity. I then received a memo from the chief officer formally responsible for the project, saying that if I wished to communicate with the teacher, I should first write a memo to him [the chief officer] who would then write to the Chief Education officer, who would write to the head teacher, who would discuss with the teacher, and the paper trail would then reverse back to me.

embraced, with local authorities providing a lead role, and new approaches to the involvement of local communities are proposed.

First, however, it is appropriate to consider the methodological implications of the theoretical debate, and it is to this that we first turn in Part Three.

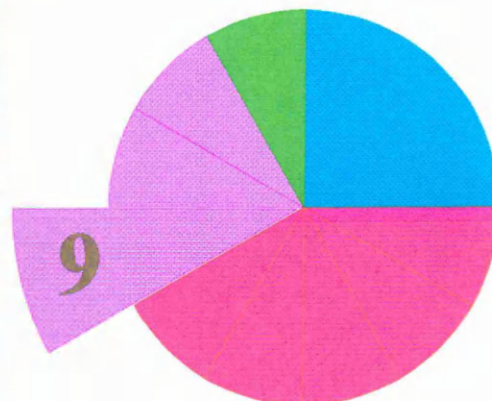
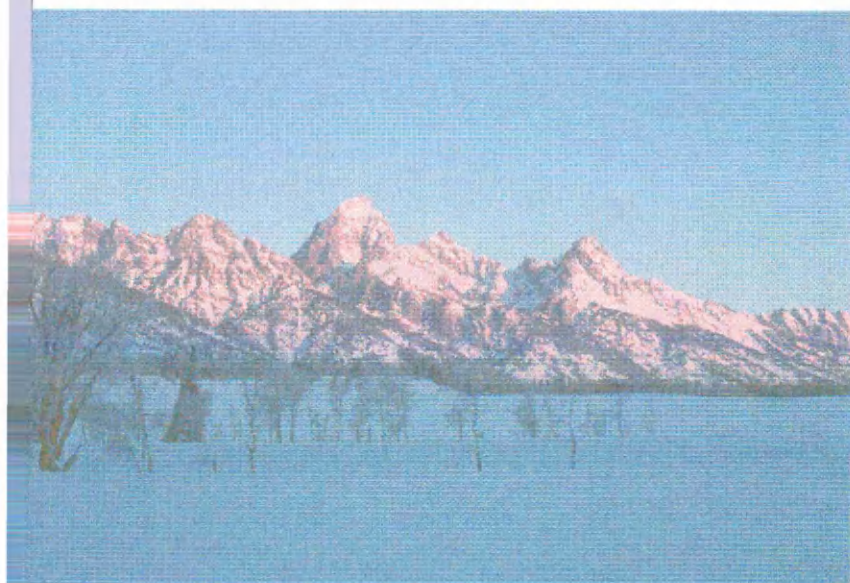


METHOD AND CASE STUDIES

We had the experience but missed the meaning,
And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form, beyond any meaning
We can assign to happiness

T.S. Eliot The Dry Salvages

Part Three begins with a discussion of method, and identifies those methodologies which have been used in the thesis, explaining their link back to the theoretical concerns. The next Chapter focuses on Critical Action Research, while the third Chapter looks at Whole Systems Interventions.



METHOD

Chapter Nine discusses methodology. Three methodologies are considered: action research, action learning, and whole systems interventions.

These are related to Critical Theory, and it is argued that this provides the basis for a methodology in keeping with the concepts and principles developed in Part Two.

CHAPTER NINE

METHODOLOGY: ACTION RESEARCH, ACTION LEARNING AND WHOLE SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to identify methods of management activity consistent with the principles established in Part Two. Three broad groupings are considered; first, Action Research, then Action Learning, and finally Whole Systems Interventions. The primary focus is on the first and third of these, which are explored in practice in the following two chapters. Action Learning is introduced because part of the argument being developed here is that there are benefits in seeking an integration between this and Action Research.

The literature on the first two subjects is already voluminous, while that on Whole Systems Interventions is growing rapidly. It would be pointless to seek a neat summary of this material: the intention rather is to explore their relationship to the arguments of the previous three chapters, and in particular to draw out the different ways in which these methods have been developed and used, and the extent to which a critical stance is possible within them. A brief history of Action Research is given in Appendix 9.1, while Appendix 9.2 develops some additional arguments in relation to Action Learning.

ACTION RESEARCH: WHAT IS IT?

McKernan has brought together several definitions of Action Research. Rapoport states 'action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework.' Halsey defined action research as a 'small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world. . . and the close examination of the effects of such interventions'. On the basis of these and other definitions McKernan suggests the following as a 'minimal definition of action research', which he sees as stressing two essential points: first, action research is rigorous, systematic inquiry through scientific procedures; and second, participants have critical-reflective ownership of the process and the results.

"Action research is the reflective process whereby in a given problem area, where one wishes to improve practice or personal understanding, inquiry is carried out by the practitioner - first, to clearly define the problem; secondly, to specify a plan of action -including the testing of hypotheses by application of action to the problem. Evaluation is then undertaken to monitor and establish the effectiveness of the action taken. Finally , participants reflect upon, explain developments, and communicate these results to the community of action researchers. Action research is systematic self-reflective scientific inquiry by practitioners to improve practice." [1996:4-5]

Action Research has been identified by Gill and Johnson as *"a valuable variant of the quasi-experimental approach"* [1991:57]; their contrast of the approach with 'pure' research, and with consultancy, is given in Table 9.1.

This immediately identifies the more active role of the 'client' [although we shall later recognise that in practice there is a much wider range of possible levels of involvement than is suggested here]. It also sets action research apart from the classical experimental approach, replete with 'ceteris paribus' clauses. Instead we have an iterative method in which research feeds back into further action [see Figure 9.1].

TABLE 9.1: ACTION RESEARCH COMPARED

STAGES	ACTION RESEARCH	CONSULTANCY	'PURE' RESEARCH
Entry	Client or researcher presents problem. Mutually agreed goals.	Client presents problems and defines problems.	Researcher presents problems and defines goals.
Contracting	Business and psychological contracting. Mutual control.	Business contract. Consultant controls client.	Researcher controls as expert. Keeps client happy. Minimal contracting.
Diagnosis	Joint diagnosis. Client data/ researcher's concepts.	Consultant diagnosis. Often minimal. Sells package.	Researcher carries out expert diagnosis. Client provides data.
Action	Feedback. Dissonance. Joint action plan. Client action with support. Published.	Consultant prescribes action. Not published.	Report often designed to impress client with how much researcher has learned and how competent s/he is. Published.
Evaluation	New problems emerge. Recycles. Generalizations emerge.	Rarely undertaken by neutrals.	Rarely undertaken.
Withdrawal	Client self-supporting	Client dependent.	Client dependent.

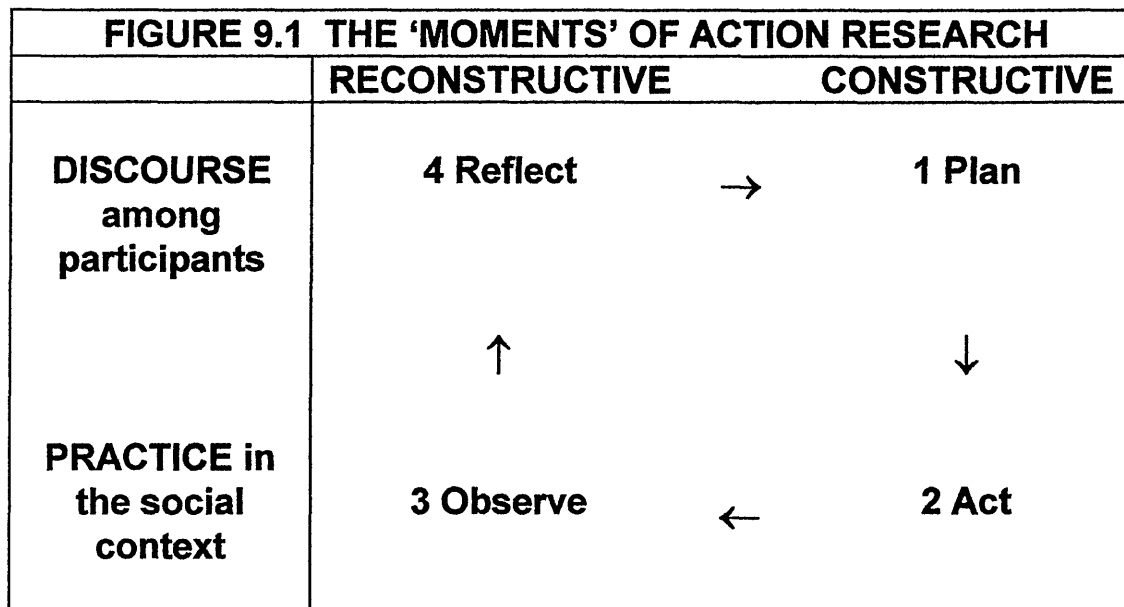
Gill and Johnson

Two points may be made about this. First, the cycle shown in Figure 9.1 bears a striking resemblance to the cycle of the 'Strategy IDEA' introduced in Chapter One:

Investigate	=	Observe
Decide	=	Reflect
Enable	=	Plan
Act	=	Act

Thus the approach to strategic management which is developed in this thesis may be seen as Action Research based, in preference to the linear model: we return to this in Chapter Twelve.

Second, the timing of cycles can vary. Some Action Research projects have long cycles in which the action and research phases are relatively distinct; others interweave the two very closely. We shall see this contrast when we explore one Action Research project in some detail in the next Chapter.



Source: Carr and Kemmis 1986:186

The literature suggests that action research has achieved much greater recognition in the fields of education and community work than it has in relation to organisations. Thus Maruyama [1996:93] identifies four factors in the field of education which transformed action research from a set of approaches driven by university researchers to research initiated and conducted by practitioners. The first has been consideration of power and status issues; the second a response to what are seen as egocentric and ethnocentric perspectives of researchers, the third factor has been a grass roots orientation that argues that those best able to change a situation are those involved in it and who understand it best; and finally there have been arguments that the best way to get individuals in applied settings to commit themselves to change is to make them the initiators of the change.

One element of the argument here is that action research merits greater consideration in organisational activity than has to date been the case, not least because the above factors can easily be translated into the field of strategic management, where there has been a growing focus on the need to involve practitioners, to obtain commitment through participation in strategy formation as well as implementation, and to address issues of power.

TYPES OF ACTION RESEARCH

Thus far we have considered action research in broad terms: it is now appropriate to recognise the differences which exist, as hinted earlier. A number of authors have identified three major approaches to action research: Scientific-technical or positivist; Practical-deliberative, mutual collaborative or interpretivist; Critical-emancipatory or enhancement. This distinction has its

inspiration in the work of Habermas, discussed in Chapter Seven. Table 9.2 is developed from Table 7.1 to summarise the three categories, and to indicate the types of action research which flow from each. These are outlined in greater detail in Appendix 9.1: here we focus on the third, action research reflecting the critical emancipatory perspective.

Table 9.2 The Categories of Inquiry				
Interest	Knowledge	Medium	Science	Action Research
Technical	Instrumental [causal explanation]	Work	Empirical- analytic or natural sciences	Scientific-technical or positivist action research
Practical	Practical [understanding]	Language	Hermeneutic or 'interpretive' sciences	Practical-deliberative, mutual collaborative or interpretivist action research
Emancipatory	Emancipatory [reflection]	Power	Critical sciences	Critical-emancipatory or enhancement action research
Source: Based on Carr and Kemmis [1986] and Grundy [1987]				

THE CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY APPROACH TO ACTION RESEARCH

Carr and Kemmis provide a definition of Action Research rooted in critical-emancipatory terms: *"Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out."* [1986:162]

They develop this by arguing [ibid. 165-6] that there are three minimal requirements for action research, which are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for action research to be said to exist. The first is that the project takes as its subject-matter a social practice, regarding it as a form of strategic action susceptible of improvement. Secondly, the project proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated. Finally, the project involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in the project gradually to include others affected by the practice, and maintaining collaborative control of the process. On this basis, they argue, action research fulfils the five requirements for a coherent critical social science [see Chapter Seven].

The approach to Action Research that emerges from these considerations is illustrated in Table 9.3, which is based on work by Grundy [who collaborated with Carr and Kemmis in exploring the implications for Action Research of the criteria above, and by Hart and Bond [their typologies are given in Appendix 9.1]. Grundy also develops the linkage between Critical Theory and Action Research, as shown in Table 9.4.

Table 9.3 Types of Action Research

	Technical / Experimental	Mutual-Collaboration	Critical / Emancipatory
Philosophical Base	Cartesian Newtonian	Historical-hermeneutic	Critical Sciences
Arenas of Power	Unitary, Control	Pluralist	Control [by those not in control] Political
The nature of reality	Measurable, Reductive	Multiple, constructed, holistic	Multiple and constructed, rooted in social, economic, and political
Problem focus	Defined in advance. Relevant to social science / management interests, or most powerful group. Success defined in their terms.	Interpreted in situation by participant experience. Different interpretations of success	Emergent from members' experience and negotiated in the situation based on values. Competing definitions of success.
Relationship between the Knower and Known	Separate	Interrelated	Interrelated, embedded in society
Focus of collaboration theory	Technical validation, deduction	Mutual understanding, new theory, inductive	Mutual emancipation, validation, new theory, inductive, deductive
The nature of understanding	Cause-effect	Interpretive	Interpretive within socio-political framework
Purpose of research	Discovery of laws underlying reality	Understand what occurs and the meaning people make of phenomena	Understand, challenge, and change to greater equity
Educative base	Education based on identifying causal relationship and/or overcoming resistance to change	Reflective practice	Consciousness raising and empowerment
Individuals in Groups	Researcher/manager formed. Closed group with fixed / selected membership	Practitioner formed. Negotiated boundaries with shifting membership	Natural or negotiated boundaries with fluid membership
Change Intervention	Top-down to test / generate theory. Problem to be solved in terms of research / management aims	Predefined, Process led. Problem to be resolved in the interests of research based practice	Problem to be explored as part of process of change, developing an understanding of meanings of issues in terms of problem and solution
Cyclic Processes	Identifies causal processes that can be generalised	Identifies causal processes that are specific to problem and/or can be generalised	Recognises multiple influences on change
Research Relationship	Action and research distinct, with differentiated roles	Action and research merged	Action and research integrated, with shared roles

Source: developed from Grundy [1987] and Hart and Bond [1995]

Table 9.4 The Mediation of Theory and Practice in Emancipatory Action Research

<i>Critical Theory</i>	<i>Action Research</i>
The formation and extension of critical theorems	Action research does not use theory to justify practice or regard practice as applied theory. Rather there is a reciprocal relationship whereby theory and practice inform each other and are mutually interdependent.
The organisation of enlightenment in which critical theorems are applied or can be tested in a unique manner by the initiation of processes of reflection carried out within certain groups towards which these processes are directed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research employs group processes of reflection in communities of common interest. • Enlightenment takes the form of authentic insights into both theory and practice for the practitioner. • A facilitator may assist in the organisation of enlightenment, but the power to determine truth resides with the practitioners who are the final arbiters of the authenticity of insights gained.
The organisation of action: the selection of appropriate strategies, the solutions of tactical questions, and the conduct of the political struggle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research has as its core strategic action, recognizing the inevitable political nature of social action. • Action research recognizes the value and the risk of action and that the only true involvement in action is that of the actors themselves. • Action research recognizes the power of collaborative action in initiating social change.
Grundy 1987	

This critical emancipatory approach, as we have seen, has developed primarily in the field of education. At the same time in the fields of economic development and community development [in large part in Scandinavia and Latin America] participatory action research [PAR] has emerged as an important strand. The two have much in common.

We can see this by considering Maguire's analysis of PAR [1987]. She identifies three types of change sought in participatory research: the development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants; the improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process; and the transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships.

She links the emergence of participatory research to three trends. The first are radical and reformist reconceptualizations of international economic development assistance. The second is the reframing of adult education as an empowering alternative to traditional educational approaches. Finally, there is an ongoing debate within the social sciences, challenging the dominant social science paradigm.

Fals-Borda and Rahman [1991] comment that PAR does not exclude 'orthodox' methods such as interviews, surveys and observation, but what is critical to the approach is that it includes four techniques: collective research, critical recovery of history, valuing and applying folk culture, and the production and diffusion of new knowledge.

As will be apparent, these relate to the full involvement of participants, and the legitimacy accorded to their viewpoint. This can be expanded through the work of Gustavsen [quoted in Elden and Levin 1991], who builds partly on Habermas to postulate nine criteria for evaluating the degree of democracy in a dialogue in PAR aimed at democratising work:

- The dialogue is a process of exchange: points and arguments move to and fro between the participants
- All concerned must have the possibility to participate
- Possibilities for participation are, however, not enough: everybody should also be active in the discourse
- As a point of departure, all participants are equal
- Work experience is the foundation for participation
- At least some of the experience which each participant has when he or she enters the dialogue must be considered legitimate
- It must be possible for everybody to develop an understanding of the issue at stake
- All arguments which pertain to issues under discussion are - as a point of departure - legitimate
- The dialogue must continuously produce agreements which can provide a platform for investigation and practical action

There is little distinction to be made between PAR and Critical action research. While they have arisen in different areas of inquiry, the literature on each cites common sources, while the aims and aspiration of each are the same. Thus Deshler and Ewert [1995], like a number of writers on PAR, cite similar movements to those identified earlier in this paper. They also identify as major assumptions of PAR the following, all of which apply equally to critical action research:

- Common Values, including the democratization of knowledge production and use; ethical fairness in the benefits of the knowledge generation process; an ecological stance toward society and nature; appreciation of the capacity of humans to reflect, learn, and change; and a commitment to non-violent social change.
The community's interests are identified and defined as a starting point rather than beginning with the interests of external researchers.
- Commitment to Action
Active involvement by participants
- The External Researcher's Role as with and alongside the community, not outside as an objective observer or external consultant.
- The research process allows and encourages the community to learn about research methods and knowledge generation
- The research process allows for flexibility or change in research methods and focus, as necessary.
- Research outcomes are intended to benefit the community.
- Differences between researchers and community participants regarding research processes, interpretation of results, ownership of research products, or dissemination of results are to be acknowledged, negotiated at

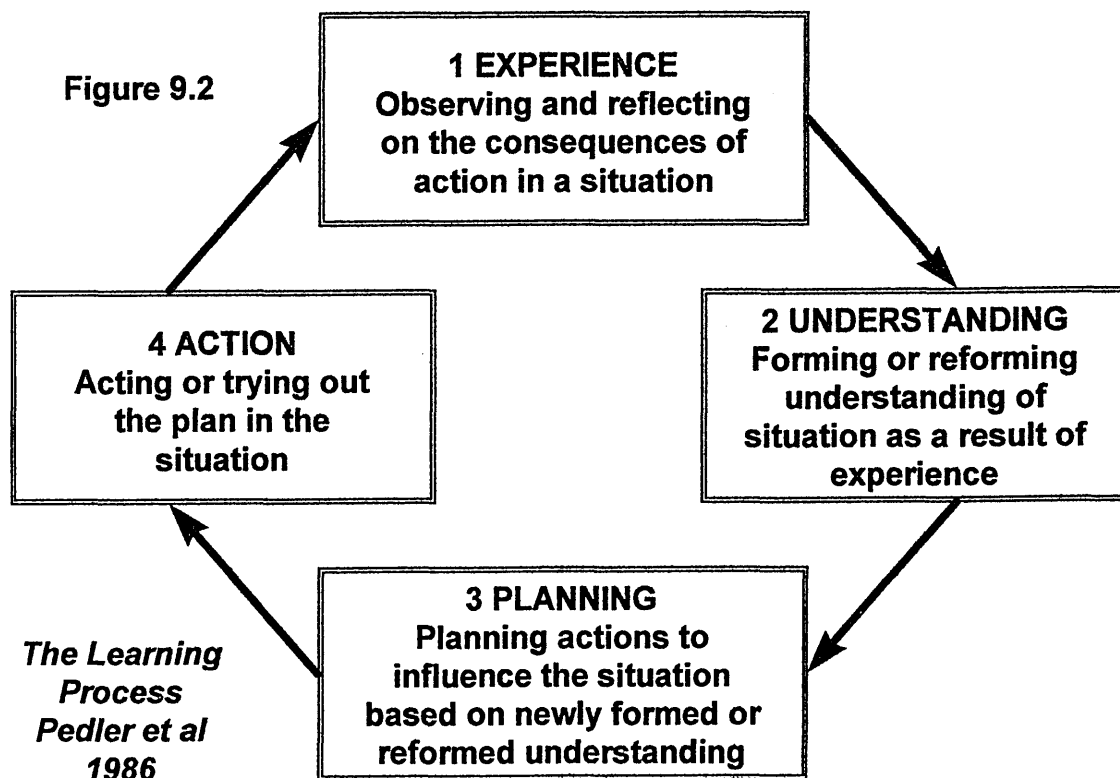
the outset, or resolved through a fair and open process.

It is therefore fair to see these two streams of thinking as mutually enriching, and they are woven together in the remainder of this paper. Action Research does not follow the strict experimental scientific method espoused within the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm. However, the developments considered in previous chapters allow us to recontextualise it, and see it as a method very appropriate to conditions of uncertainty and change, particularly when action and research are fully integrated.

Nevertheless, guidelines by which to assess the research aspects of Action Research are of value, and Eden and Huxham [1996a, 1996b] have usefully provided fifteen. These are considered further in the next Chapter [and may be found there in Table 10.2].

ACTION LEARNING

We turn now to Action Learning, which has different parentage to Action Research: the founding father is generally agreed to be Reg Revans [see Appendix 9.2]. Yet there is much in common. Thus the cycle of Action Learning has been described by Pedler et al as shown in Figure 9.2, based on Kolb's cycle of experiential learning.



We can now extend and complete the developing comparison with the Strategy IDEA and the Knowledge Spiral, as shown in Table 9.5.

Table 9.5 The 'Moments' of Strategy, Action Research and Action Learning			
Strategy IDEA	Action Research	Action Learning	Knowledge Spiral
Investigate	Observe	Experience	Building a field of interaction
Decide	Reflect	Understanding	Dialogue or collective reflection
Enable	Plan	Planning	Networking
Act	Act	Action	Learning by doing

This Table is represented more fully in Figure 9.3, using the template of Figure 9.1 to capture the two dimensions. As will be evident, this does not constitute isomorphism: in most cases, each of the four perspectives on each of the four 'moments' says something different. But once again we have a 'pattern that connects', as these differences enrich the overall picture.

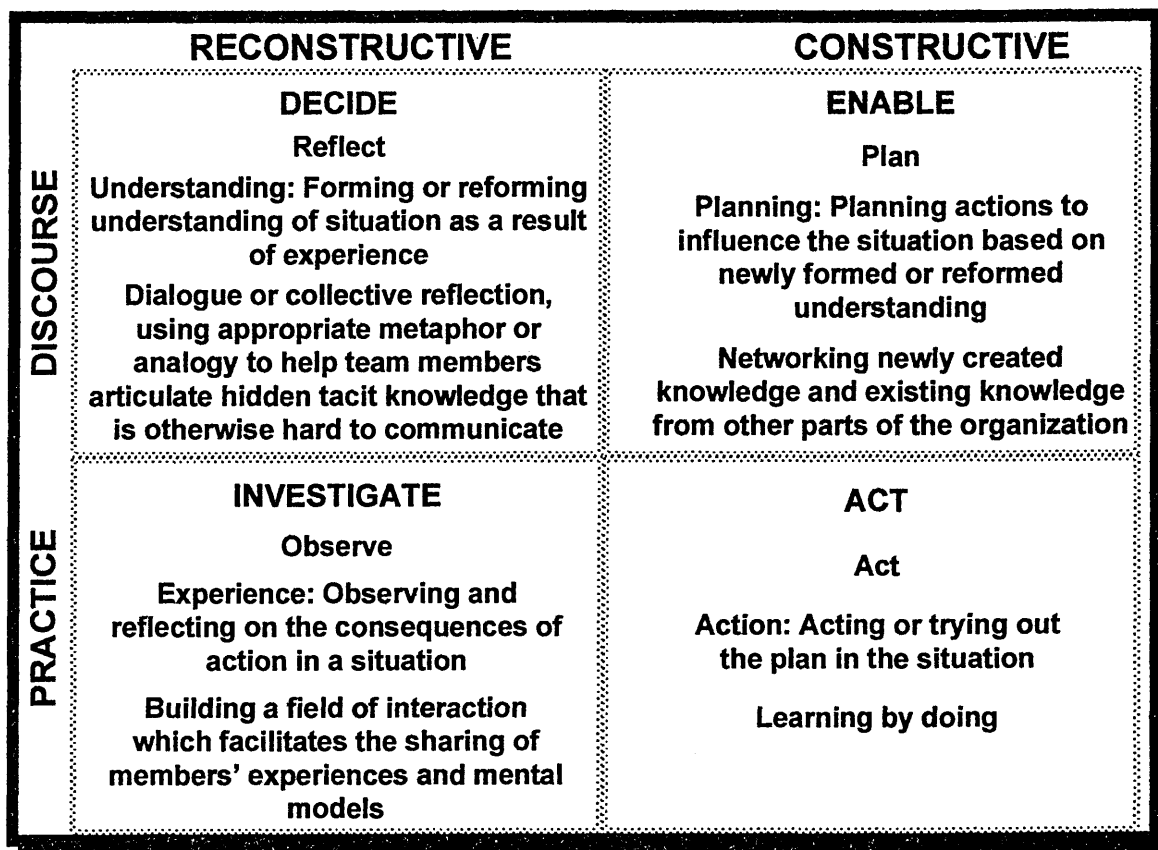


Figure 9.3: The Strategy IDEA, Action Research and Learning, and the Knowledge Spiral

Action Learning has been much more popular than Action Research in management circles, and the link with the fashionable idea of the 'learning organisation' does much to explain this. As with Action Research, several

approaches have been identified. Alvesson and Willmott have built upon earlier work by McLaughlin and Thorpe to produce the characterization of Critical Action Learning given in Table 9.6. However, this typology appears much rarer in discussions of Action Learning than it does when Action Research is considered. Books advocating Action Learning to organisations present only one approach, akin to the middle column of Table 9.6 [see for example Pedler et al 1996, McGill and Beaty 1995]. In keeping with this consensual bias, they also say very little about power in the organisation.

Table 9.6 Approaches to management education
(adapted from McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993 by Alvesson and Willmott 1996)

	Traditional management education	Action Learning	Critical Action Learning
World-view	The world is something to learn about	The world is somewhere to act and change	The world is somewhere to act and change
	Self-development is somewhat important]	Self-development is very important	Self-development and social development are interdependent
	Some notion of correct management practice, established by research, defines the curriculum	Curriculum defined by the manager or organisation	The interdependence of beings means that no individual or group can gain monopoly control of the curricula
	Managers should learn theories or models derived from research	Managers should be facilitated by a tutor to solve problems	Managers are potentially receptive to, and be facilitated by, the concerns of other groups, in addition to individual tutors, when identifying and addressing problems
Modus operandi	Experts decide on what should be learnt, when and how much	Experts are viewed with caution	Received wisdom, including that of experts, is subject to critical scrutiny through a fusion of reflection and insights drawn from critical social theory
	Models, concepts, ideas are provided to offer tools for thinking and action	Models, concepts, ideas are developed in response to problems	Models, concepts and ideas are developed through an interplay of reflection upon practice and an application of ideas drawn from critical traditions

The relationship between Action Research and Action Learning is not often discussed. One exception is Morgan and Ramirez [1983]. They link action learning to self-organisation, and seeing the former as holographic in that it simultaneously attempts to combine within itself a number of dimensions that are often regarded as separate - including theory and practice, subject and object, knowledge and action. They identify minimum critical conditions for action learning: it strives to be democratic and heterarchical, pluralistic, proactive and empowering. It should link individual and social transformation, and integrate different kinds and levels of understanding. It should create conditions that are always evolving and open-ended, and demonstrate its worth

in terms of the capacities it creates for intelligent action rather than terms of its contribution to formal knowledge. They suggest a number of approaches and techniques relevant to the design of action-learning projects, including Revans' approach, the techniques of action research, and search conference methodology.

McLaughlin and Thorpe [1993] see action learning as a derivation of action research, while McGill and Beaty [1995] recognise that they are based on the same learning cycle, but see Action Research as a method which seeks to question the traditional research paradigms copied from the natural sciences. On this basis, action researchers reject experimental design with its control groups and the external impartial scientific observer in favour of bringing research and the application of findings from research into one process. Thus for McGill and Beaty the action researcher is committed to learning from investigation, to making decisions about necessary change, and to applying these and then evaluating the consequences. The researcher is usually an active participant within the application as well as in the investigative and evaluation phases.

They view Action Learning as a more general approach to learning, in which research is not the primary aim and the project may not involve any formal research at all. The individual is undertaking learning through the process of reflection in the set and therefore the process is essentially a group process. Thus action learning may involve some research in the action phase, but it is not essentially a research-oriented venture. They suggest that the research undertaken in AL *"may use techniques quite different from those advocated by action research"*, although it is difficult to envisage such techniques, since Action Research is not restrictive in its approach [arguably even strict experimental techniques could be employed within a wider canvass].

McGill and Beaty conclude that an action researcher could use an action learning set to help learn from the action research project but does not necessarily do so. There are therefore many action researchers who do not have action learning sets and there are many action learning sets that do not use action research. Nevertheless, they see action learning and action research as sharing the same learning cycle, and sharing many of the same values.

There is undoubtedly a distinction: the Action Research project considered in the next Chapter was not an Action Learning project, and many of the Action Learning projects described in the literature have little in the way of a research component. Even so, there is an advantage in considering the two together, and indeed seeking some integration. The requirement of Action Research for output aimed at a wider audience helps to prevent an inward looking focus. The danger of the latter has been identified by Weick: *"Continuous updating of what is known within the firm, coupled with continuous monitoring to determine if updating is necessary, is expensive, not to mention susceptible to political manipulation. Consequently, assessment is short-circuited, learning is superstitious and misleading, and what appears to be knowledge creation in fact becomes the enlargement of ignorance."* [1996:310]

McGill and Beaty argue that the Action Learning is for the people within it. *"The focus of the action learning process is on individually based learning from action, which leads to development for the individual, and for their organisation, through the project."* [1995:27] They then qualify this by arguing that work through action learning sets can have influence beyond the people immediately involved: it should have an effect, for example, on those who work closely with the set members will surely notice the difference in their demeanour and their ability to get things done. They suggest that action learning sets involve many people in an organisation, then the organisation itself may change. This in itself however may not address the concern expressed above. More generally, the external focus required of Action Research can be an antidote to the dangers of the Icarus Paradox [Miller 1990].

At the same time, the Action Learning process can insure that Action Research remains intimately tied to the needs of the individuals involved, and retains its necessary action focus. Support for this argument for integration comes also from the work of Morgan, who speaks of *"action-learning approaches to research ... as a research methodology, 'action learning' is closely linked with what others describe as 'action research' and 'action science'."* [1993:296-7] The relationship between the views of Morgan and Revans on Action Learning and the characteristics of Action Research are suggested in Table 9.7. These are themes to which we will return in the final chapter.

STAGES	ACTION RESEARCH	ACTION LEARNING [Revans]	ACTION LEARNING [Morgan]
Entry	Client or researcher presents problem. Mutually agreed goals.	Problems defined by learning set	Common problems
Contracting	Business and psychological contracting. Mutual control.	Mutual learning contract	Learning setting created
Diagnosis	Joint diagnosis. Client data/ researcher's concepts.	Joint diagnosis	Participatory action research. People develop personal insights and theories.
Action	Feedback. Dissonance. Joint action plan. Client action with support. Published.	Action and learning inseparable. Learning by doing.	Better understanding to initiate appropriate actions.
Evaluation	New problems emerge. Recycles. Generalizations emerge	Outcomes tested in real world of real responsibility by real people.	Generalizable insights, strategies and tactics. Resonance.
Withdrawal	Client self-supporting	Client self-supporting	Client self supporting.

Table 9.7 Action Research and Action Learning Compared

WHOLE SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS

Whole System Interventions (WSI) have been developed to address what are seen as issues of growing concern to present day organisations. These include the need for constant internal change in response to external pressures; the need to reappraise purpose and direction; the need to involve people in the development and implementation of strategy, and thereby gain their commitment and ownership of activity. While a variety of Interventions have been developed, they are based on certain common characteristics, including participation, information-sharing, finding common ground, developing action plans, and implementing rapid change in organisational processes.

The roots of WSI can be found in the Organisational Development field, in particular the work of Fred Emery, Eric Trist, the Tavistock Institute, and coal miners in South Yorkshire. In some cases a WSI can involve meetings without agendas, no limit on participants, and no real guest list. At the other extreme, there are settings that involve intensive preparation, agendas, exercises, and lots of up-front planning. Some can be used for everything from visioning to designing a new organisation, whereas others might tackle only one aspect of a production problem. And some have limits on how many people can or should participate; other approaches may involve thousands of people in a single event. A flavour of what is involved can be gained by summarising six variations [see Box 9.1]. Two of these will be considered in more detail, as they provide the basis for the approaches used in a number of the case studies discussed in Chapter Eleven.

Future Search Conferences

Future Search Conferences are intended to *"excite, engage, produce new insights, and build a sense of common values and purpose. They have been especially attractive to organisations faced with significant change: markets, mergers, reorganisations, new technologies, new leadership, the wish for a coherent culture and corporate philosophy"*. [Weisbord 1987:285]

Weisbord, the main inspiration for this particular form of WSI, has described it as *"the purest example of action research that we know. We do not strive to reduce complexity to a few manageable issues, to resolve disagreements, or to solve long-standing problems. We do not give people a management model for organizing their diverse perceptions. Instead, participants engage in a series of open dialogues on where they've been, where they are, and what they want to work toward."* [Weisbord and Janoff 1996:71] Two sources of inspiration are identified: one is work of Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt in large scale community futures conferences; the other the work of Trist and Emery in developing the Search Conference. *"Both sets have a common ancestor who is also ours - Kurt Lewin. His field theory and action research underlie their work as well as our own."* [ibid. 72]

Box 9.1: Examples of Whole Systems Interventions

Future Search Conferences (FSC). The goal in these meetings is to help the organisation to find an ideal future and aim for it. The event is typically scheduled for 16 hours over three days. The ideal size is 64 people. Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff have been pioneers of this method. It closely resembles the search conference invented by Eric Trist and Fred Emery.

Conference Model. This comprehensive system involves up to four separate two- or three-day events. It is used to accomplish a top-to-bottom redesign of an organisation and includes a customer/supplier conference, a vision conference (sometimes using future-search methodology), a technical conference, and a design conference. Dick Axelrod created this system.

Large-Scale Interactive Process. Kathleen Dannemiller uses this method to implement organisation-wide changes. This intervention, like many others, involves mix-and-match table groups of eight to 10 people and usually lasts three days. Dannemiller recommends using it with groups of up to 600 participants, although she has used it with much larger groups.

Real-Time Strategic Change (RTSC). This approach grew out of Dannemiller's work in large-group interventions and is like-wise used to implement organisation-wide change. It was developed by Robert "Jake" Jacobs. The event follows a similar trajectory as the Dannemiller intervention, but Jacob stresses that this is an approach to work, rather than just an event. The event, he says, is just the beginning of a process that changes the way an organisation works.

Open Space Meetings. This is the least structured event. Its creator, Harrison Owen, calls it a technique for holding better meetings, not just large-group events. The group gathers, a blank page on the wall constitutes the agenda, and participants are encouraged to sponsor their own discussion by writing the title of their "session" on one of the many flip charts in the room. People then gravitate to the topic of their choice. The strengths of this method lie in the safety and openness of the space created for the discussion, says its creator. The bane of open space: someone who tries to control the meeting or take it to a predetermined outcome.

They are based on three assumptions:

- Change is so rapid that we need more, not less, face-to-face discussion to make intelligent strategic decisions.
- Successful strategies - for quality goods and services, lower costs, more satisfying ways of working - come from envisioning preferred futures.
- People will commit to plans they have helped to develop.

This is an immediate challenge to a central aspect of hierarchical organisations: they *"positively discourage subordinate intervention in superordinate decision making"* [Grint 1995:83]. Weisbord and his colleagues have identified nine things which Future Search Conferences can achieve:

- Encourage collective learning about the external environment, the *"system"* of the problem or concern and its history;
- Stimulate creative thinking and visioning by participants;
- Acknowledge and respect all views or beliefs regardless of background or expertise level of their holder;
- Build a shared terrain of ideas and values;
- Increase cooperation and mutual support;

- Build commitment to, and a sense of responsibility for, action on the issue;
- Produce a concrete and precise statement of goals, strategies and actions;
- Lead to the prompt follow-up action;
- Be time efficient.

Minimum Critical Specifications

The typical Future Search conference brings together thirty to sixty people for two to three days. [In recent work Weisbord has centred on the number 64, which helps in the design of the overall event.] Together they do a series of structured tasks, looking at the organisation's past, present and preferred future. Tasks are cumulative. Each session builds on previous ones. The last event involves everybody in action planning for the future. There are a number of minimum requirements, set out below, which can be seen to flow from a number of core values [see Box 9.2].

Box 9.2: Future Search Conferences: Core Values

- 1 The first value is a matter of epistemology. We believe the real world is knowable to ordinary people and their knowledge can be collectively and meaningfully organised. In fact, ordinary people are an extraordinary source of information about the real world.
- 2 Thus, we believe people can create their own future.
- 3 People want opportunities to engage their heads and hearts as well as hands. They want to and are able to join the creative processes of organisation rather than that being the sole domain of the organisation's elite.
- 4 Egalitarian participation. Everyone is equal.
- 5 Given the chance, people are much more likely to cooperate than fight. The consultant's task is to structure opportunities to cooperate.
- 6 The process should empower people to feel more knowledgeable about and in control of the future.
- 7 Diversity should be appreciated and valued.

- 1 Get the whole system in the room, the broadest temporary planning community feasible for the task at hand. This means maximum variety and diversity of interdependent people. Invite a much broader cross section of stakeholders than is usual, widely diverse people who affect each other but rarely or never meet.
- 2 Ask people to be task-focused and to self-manage as much of their work as they are ready, willing and able to do. That means reducing dependency, conflict, and task avoidance. Have them self-manage tasks of discovery, dialogue, learning and planning.
- 3 Have the whole conference community look at itself in a global context, and explore the entire open system - events, trends, relations, within and between the wider world and the focal institution/issue, in the past, present and future. That means the broadest feasible data base and common ideals before zeroing in on what to do about the issue being searched.

- 4 All participants need to agree and act upon a number of ground rules:
- This is not a problem solving conference. It is an exercise in learning, awareness, understanding and mutual support.
 - Every idea and comment is valid. People need not agree.
 - It is a task-focused meeting. Every task has output, and all output is recorded and discussed.
 - We stick to time, and groups are responsible for completing tasks on schedule.
 - The consultants manage time and structure tasks. Participants generate and analyze information, derive meanings, propose action steps, take responsibility for output.

The Process

What follows is an adaptation of the model developed by Weisbord. While it follows that model fairly closely, several changes have been introduced to link it to more conventional approaches to strategic thinking, by identifying the points at which strategic tools and techniques can effectively be used in the whole process. These changes are shown in italics. The overall structure of a typical Future Search Conference is shown in Table 9.8 [taken from Weisbord and Janoff 1995:16]

TABLE 9.8 TYPICAL FUTURE SEARCH AGENDA

Day1 Afternoon

- Focus on the Past
- Focus on Present, External Trends

Day 2 Morning

- Continued - Trends
- Focus on Present, *Owning our Actions*

Day 2 Afternoon

- Ideal Future Scenarios
- Identify Common Ground

Day 3 Morning

- Continue - Confirm Common Ground
- Action Planning

Preliminary

- Participants should be encouraged to do some preparatory work:
- Thinking through the present position and how it could have been better
- Talking with colleagues and friends about the present and future
- Bring articles from papers, or other things illustrating something that will influence their future situation

- *There are several self-organised questionnaires which can also help participants to begin thinking about the organisation's purpose, values, culture and structure.*

People usually sit at tables of six to eight. In each section of the conference itself participants are invited to: [1] Build a data base [2] Look at it together [3] Interpret what they find [4] Draw conclusions for action.

Step One: The past

- 1 *Examine the collective past from three [or four] perspectives: Individual, [Group], Organisation, Society.*

This task begins with each participant working on their own, making notes on significant events, milestones, highlights or activities they recall during each time period. These are then transferred to the appropriate sheets on the wall.

- 2 Each group then analyses one theme across the whole time period, looking for patterns and meanings.

Step Two: The Present

- 1 **External perspective:** events, trends and developments shaping the future now.

STEEP Investigation [Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political]

Stakeholder Investigation

- 2 **Internal perspective**

Prouds and Sorries: people are asked to generate lists of 'prouds' and 'sorries', the things going on at the moment within the organisation about which they feel good and bad. People cast votes for the most important ones, and the results are displayed and discussed.

It can also be useful to investigate the organisation's culture, the use of power and influence, its current structure, and the current and potential resources, competencies and capabilities. If the questionnaires have been used in the preparatory stage then the results can be shared and discussed - the different perspectives about, for example, the nature and expectations of key stakeholders can be very revealing.

Step three: The Future

- 1 At this stage the existing, or newly formed, groups are given one or two hours to create a rough draft 'preferred future' scenario [for five years hence] - the most desirable, attainable future. They are encouraged to be as imaginative as possible: as Grint has argued, "*utopian thought can serve as a valuable heuristic mechanism through which the status quo can be considered in a much more reflective way*" [1995:122].

2 Critical Success Programme

It is possible at this stage to develop a more structured approach to the generation of future activity by preparing a Critical Success Programme, as described in the previous section. This would therefore involve the following stages:

- *Identify Critical Success Factors*
- *Identify Activities*
- *Identify Key Tasks*
- *Prepare Performance Measure Scorecard*

3 Action Planning

If a critical success programme has been prepared, then much of the following will flow out of it. In any case, it needs to be done before the conclusion of the conference.

- Suggested actions for self
- Suggested actions for their group/team
- Suggested actions for the whole organisation
- Before closing, volunteers are recruited to document the meeting, communicate to others, and carry forward next steps

To conclude this section, words of caution are appropriate. Weisbord and Janoff [1996] identify three things that cannot be done with a Future Search Conference. It cannot make up for weak leadership; it will not work with sceptics or people paralyzed by worry about losing control, and it will not reconcile intractable value differences.

These reservations are reinforced by Jacobs [1994] in his discussion of Real Time Strategic Change, a methodology which shares the assumptions outlined above, but uses slightly different techniques, some of which are incorporated into the template considered below. He suggests that the approach would be inappropriate where minor or incremental changes are the goal. A second case would be if an organisation's leaders were not fully committed to creating "an empowered, interdependent, organisation-wide team". Third, it is unlikely to work if the necessary commitment cannot be secured from other key stakeholders. And finally, it is pointless when the required resources are not committed up front by an organisation's leaders.

Technology of Participation

This approach, ironically called a strategic planning process, involves five stages, following identification of the Focus Question [Spencer 1989]. Each addresses a specific question:

- Mapping out the Practical Vision: What will our organisation look like five years from now
- Analyzing the Underlying Contradictions: What stands in the way of the realization of our vision?
- Setting the Strategic Directions: What arenas of activity will resolve the contradiction and release the practical vision to come into being?

- Designing the Systematic Actions: What specific actions will implement the Strategic Directions?
- Drawing up the Implementation Timeline: What steps are required to implement this action? How will they get done? Where? By whom? By when?

A particular process is involved. At each stage, people begin work as individuals, identifying their answers to the question. These are then shared in the group [like all these approaches, people are sitting in groups of 6-10 around tables], and each table is asked to identify about six responses. These are written on cards, which are then collected, using a variety of techniques, by the facilitators, who place them on a wall, clustered according to common themes. Each cluster is then named, and these named clusters [typically 6-8] form the basis of the next stage.

This interplay between individual and group activity is an important feature of the process. Its efficacy is supported by evidence from other team activities. Thus Hosking and Morley [1991:183] bring together research findings which suggest that creative work is best achieved where individuals generate ideas alone before joining decision making groups, rather than working just in 'brainstorming' groups, which research shows to be outperformed by 'nominal' groups [formed by taking the output from a number of individuals working alone and combining it to form a single product].

The case studies introduced in Chapter Ten use a variety of methods based upon the three approaches described above. Some consider this inappropriate - it is argued that each approach has its own integrity, and they should not be arbitrarily changed or mixed. However, each organisation, and each conference, is unique, and requires its own design. Furthermore, the principles underlying the three approaches are common, and are not therefore lost through creative design.

Experience suggests that the considerations which inform choice of approach are the following:

- Where there is no existing strategy, FSC and ToP are appropriate. Where a strategy already exists, RTSC is effective.
- RTSC is more suitable where numbers go above 64.
- The ToP structure

TEMPLATE

The 'template' now to be described is the broad model which has been used in the majority of the case studies discussed in Chapter Eleven. It is flexible, allowing a unique variation for each organisation, depending on their nature and the specific requirements of the task. It is centred on the Technology of Participation model, but with a number of adaptations, drawing from Future Search conferences and from Real Time Strategic Change.

The template is summarized in Figure 9.4. This adds one stage to the ToP model - 'Consider the Present'. A preparation stage, involving some of the key internal people, is a valuable first step. This serves a several purposes:

- It clarifies what the organisation wants from the work
- It engages these people directly in its design
- It allows discussion of the role of these people in during the event. As these tend to be the most powerful and influential members of the 'community of concern', they can be briefed on the need to act as enablers at their tables during the event, and to help avoid the situation where a few dominate the discussions. Thus their influence should be on the process rather than the product, where they are to engage as equal partners
- It offers the opportunity to discuss with them their responsibility after the event in seeing through the programme of activity generated

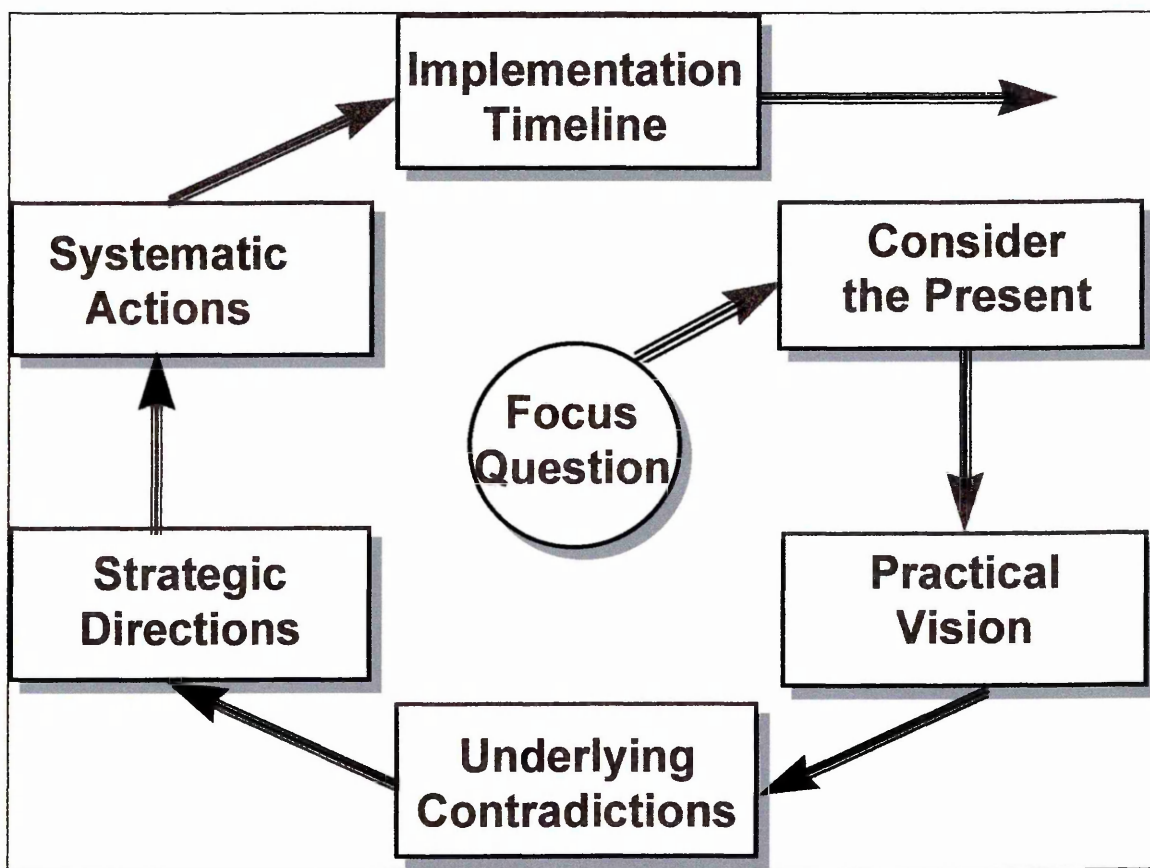


FIGURE 9.4 A PARTICIPATORY SEARCH CONFERENCE

There may even be a step before the preparation meeting, where individuals are asked to prepare material using conventional strategic tools, such as PEST, five force analysis and stakeholder mapping. This material can then be the basis of the initial discussion at the preparation meeting, which might use a technique such as ColourFlow Dialogue to guide its progress.

The outcome of this preparation stage needs to include clarity on the Focus Question, and on the ways in which it will be tackled in the main event.

Background material generated at this stage can be circulated to help give all participants in the main event some shared information - especially useful for external stakeholders, who might otherwise feel at a disadvantage in the discussions.

An alternative approach, drawing from real time strategic change, involves the preparation in advance of strategic proposals, perhaps through an initial event, which are then tested at the full event. This is the approach adopted in one of the case studies in Chapter Eleven [Sheffield City Hall].

Physical location and logistics are important factors in the Conference. Practitioners emphasize the value of a light and airy room. Traditionally, when people at a large event break into smaller groups, each goes to a different room. Here they stay together, working at tables in the one room. This creates a 'buzz' as well as a feeling that all are working together on a common project.

Table membership needs careful consideration. Each participant is given their own 'route map' for the event, indicating which table they will be at for each session. In Weisbord's ideal model, there are eight groups of stakeholders each with eight members. In some sessions stakeholders sit together, while for others they are distributed across all the tables. Such perfect numbering is rarely achievable, but 'clusters' of people with some communality [such as the management team, or in local authorities the Councillors] should be given route maps so that they spend much of their time apart from each other, working with other people at their table.

The first session, 'Consider the Present', is similar in concept to Stage Two of Weisbord's method described above. Participants are invited to generate at each table a list of Prouds and Sorries, which are then stuck to the wall¹. They are invited to read these and 'vote' for the ones generated by other tables with which they particularly agree [or disagree]². Again, this process has an additional purpose - by encouraging people to move around, they are breaking away from the pattern of sitting for long periods in a formal meeting - especially important in local government circles, where such formalities are deeply entrenched.

The next stages follow the pattern of ToP, with ideas being generated by each table, brought together in a plenary discussion, and common themes identified³. Gradually the focus shifts from generation of ideas to generation of action, and final stages become increasingly practical, with detailed listings of activity over the coming year [the usual timeframe]. Depending on the participants, a light-hearted conclusion may be appropriate; if not, some other form of closure is important which recognizes what people have achieved, but reinforces the point that this is by no means the end of the story.

¹ This emphasis on the use of walls is worth noting. Over the period of the Conference, output builds up around the walls of the room, providing a visible demonstration of what is being achieved, as well as making it easy for people to see what has been said. This material is usually written up afterwards and provided to all participants,

² This voting is done by putting coloured stars or dots on the statements

³ This will be illustrated in Chapter Eleven

An important consideration in encouraging people to try this approach is to identify and address some of their concerns. Box 9.3 was designed to help in this, and has been used with groups in the preparation of events, not least to encourage them to 'let go', and accept that the outcome of such events cannot be predicted in advance. "Trusting the process" is required from participants in whole systems interventions. As Jacobs [1994] argues, many people in organisations are accustomed to a certain level of personal control over their work and the results they achieve. Predictability, certainty, and having everything go according to plan becomes a goal, even if an unconscious one. Control is exercised by deciding who is going to do what in the plan, and then monitoring things to make sure that they happen in the prescribed manner.

In place of control by a few, whole systems interventions value participation and involvement of many: they assume that participation begets participation [Grint 1995]. This implies the building of a common understanding throughout an organisation by free and open sharing of strategic information, as well as allowing decisions to be made by those most affected. There is no place in this formula for establishing and reinforcing a small group's privilege and power. Controlling information and making decisions for others runs counter to the basic premises these approaches. In fact it most often leads not only to uninformed decisions being made, but also to people who lack motivation and a belief that they can make a difference in their organisational lives.

CONCLUSION

A number of methodologies have been considered in this Chapter, and to these we can add ColourFlow Dialogue discussed in Chapter Five. They are not distinct - indeed they have overlapping histories, and it is part of the argument here that an integrated approach reflecting all of them is an appropriate response to the issues raised in Part Two.

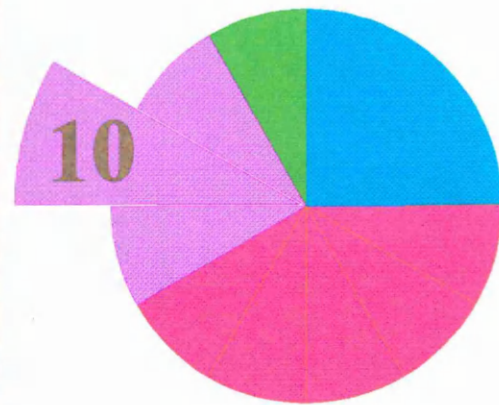
Chapter Ten considers the contribution which action research can make by examining an extended piece of such work with which I was involved some years ago. Chapter Eleven then turns the spotlight on Whole Systems Intervention. Discussion of the implications of this fieldwork, linking back to the theoretical contributions, is the focus of Chapter Twelve.

Box 9.3**Is It Safe?!**

Engaging in a Future Search Conference means taking risks. There isn't the safety of the conventional meetings, with its rules and procedures, or of the conventional conference with its speakers and breaks [when, people often say, most of the real value is found]. It is worth reviewing a few of the likely objectives, with comments from people who have run Future Search Conferences. The spirit of the approach is well summarised in the comment of Alan Davies, who has managed 100 search conferences, many of which, he says, *"failed to meet their primary organisational objectives ... but had one consolation in that they have been rich learning experiences for all involved."*

- *We have done it all before.* It is unlikely that anything has been done in this form before. Furthermore, the initial stage of a Future Search Conference, reviewing the past, allows those who have been in the organisation some time to review what has and hasn't happened or worked before, and give those who arrived more recently the chance to learn from this and avoid re-inventing the square wheel. *"Those who forget the past are condemned to relive it."* [John F Kennedy]
- *We have no experience of this.* Rather more likely! But there is a rich experience and expertise which every organisation does have, and if anything the problem is more about unlearning than learning.
- *There are too many constraints on our future.* One of the purposes of strategic thinking is to understand constraints, and seek to maximise opportunities given that understanding. The process incorporates the chance to do this. This attitude is also negative: undoubtedly constraints are great, but if potential capabilities are not also great then what is the organisation doing here? *"Some aspects of a desirable future were beyond the powers of those attending. But other goals could be achieved by people operating in collaboration with a clearer sense of their mutual objectives."* [Schwass]
- *It is no good forcing people to take part.* Just so: participation should be entirely voluntary, involving people who want to try something new. If it works, then subsequent activity will hopefully bring on board others - the process should be non-exclusive and non-hierarchical throughout.
- *It won't work if key people are missing.* This will undoubtedly diminish the value of the event, although it does not negate it. The important thing is to **do something**, and to ensure that this harnesses the abilities of all.
- *Nothing will come out of it.* The worst that can happen is that a group of people with a common commitment and concern spend some time together learning from each other, and go away with a better appreciation of the issues. This assumes nothing is achieved in terms of follow-up action. That in itself would say a great deal about the organisation. However, one of the principles of complexity theory, a developing approach to scientific enquiry which is in harmony with Future Search Conferencing is that new ideas and practices emerge from the maelstrom. *"Whatever their long term outcomes, search conferences tend to create intense environments for learning and socialising. people with common interests, but often widely differing perspectives, explore the concerns that they share, and appreciate more clearly those they do not. They also come to discover jointly the areas that are not normally considered - particularly as they relate to the future. All of this promotes scepticism and uncertainty, questioning and discovery, excitement and disagreement, and hope and disillusionment too."* [Morley and Trist]
- *There will be plenty of talk, but little commitment to action.* This indeed would be disappointing. But concerns about the 'implementation gap' are common in many organisations. before. The event gives the chance to explore why it happens. *"The discovery of a shared vision and the number of volunteers for action task groups exceeded many peoples' expectations. It created an atmosphere of hope and encouragement at the close of the conference. Anecdotal feedback afterwards indicated that there is considerable energy to carry this spirit forward."* [Rehm, Schweitz and Granata]

[References in this box are taken from Weisbord et al 1995]



CRITICAL ACTION RESEARCH

Chapter Ten is an examination of action research in practice, based primarily upon two case studies. The first concerns work with which I was involved some years ago. This was an action research programme which led to the rehousing of 2000 people who were living in 'Slums on the Drawing Board'.

The second is a European project linking Universities and Trade Unions. The work is assessed, and its implications for management are then considered.

CHAPTER TEN

CRITICAL ACTION RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

By the standards of action research, the National Community Development Project which ran through the 1970s was a fairly ambitious programme. In the launching Press Release the Home Office described it as a major experiment in improving the social services for those most in need' announced the press release on the Community Development Project. It continued: *This will be a neighbourhood-based experiment aimed at finding new ways of meeting the needs of people living in areas of high social deprivation; by bringing together the work of all the social services under the leadership of a special project team and also by tapping resources of self help and mutual help which may exist among the people in the neighbourhoods.*" [Home Office Press Release 16.7.69]

Twelve Community Development Projects were established, each with an action team and a research team, first in Coventry, Liverpool, Southwark and Glyncorrwg and then in Batley, Birmingham, Canning Town, Cumbria, Newcastle, Oldham, Paisley and Tynemouth. The projects were to operate for five years, and cost an estimated £5m in all. There was a strong emphasis on the partnership between government and local authorities, and the Home Office (or Scottish Office in Paisley's case) contributed 75% of the money to the local authorities 25%. The action teams were to be employed by the local authority and be responsible to a council management committee on which the Home Office was also represented while the research teams were to be 100% financed by the Home Office and based in universities and polytechnics. Their job was to provide a 'diagnosis' of local problems, help generate policy recommendations and evaluate the work of the action team. Thus while action research was the underlying principle, it was envisaged at this early stage as involving a clear separation of the two elements: one group of people did the action, while a distinct group undertook the research. Thus the model at this point did not involve the integration of the two which has been seen to encompass the usual conception of action research.

A prime mover behind CDP was a civil servant, Derek Morrell, who worked in the Children's Department at the Home Office. This report of his contribution to a meeting held in Coventry in 1969 gives an indication of his perspective: *"The whole project is aimed against fragmentation ... The starting point of the project is that ours is a fragmented, disintegrating society. But the project aims at evolutionary changes, not revolution. Depersonalisation is another problem. The technical juggernaut is taking over and we are no longer the masters. The most difficult step will be how to discover how to perform the crucial task of raising the people of Hillfields from a fatalistic dependence on 'the council' to self-sufficiency and independence."* Minutes, 14.7.69 [quoted in CDP 1977: 12]

CDP was soon to move from this philosophy ¹. By the time the Projects came to publish their first Inter-Project Report, in 1975, thinking about the purpose of the whole programme, and the nature of action-research, had developed substantially. Nine possible models of social change were identified in this report, summarised in Figure 10.1. Each of these was briefly described.

Figure 10.1: Models of Social Change and Strategies on Three Levels of Operation

Level			
National	SOCIAL PLANNING	NATIONAL LOBBY	NATIONAL PRESSURE
Local	ORGANISATION AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT	LOCAL LOBBY	LOCAL PRESSURE
Grass-Roots	'TRADITIONAL' COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	COMMUNITY ACTION
	Consensus	Pluralism	Structural Conflict
	Basic Assumptions		

1. *Social planning* sought changes in policy by planning as comprehensively as possible. Problems in this model are defined primarily as technical, rather than political, and conflicts of interest are reconcilable if they are treated within a more total system. Commitment to the comprehensive

¹ Hart and Bond comment: "By 1972 a range of pressures and difficulties had created the conditions for greater local autonomy of CDP teams as government bureaucrats at the centre made a tactical withdrawal. This left local teams vulnerable to failure since they had little central support and had to 'go it alone', but it also freed up such teams to identify and work around major issues in their communities, such as redevelopment, planning and the clearing of demolition sites. Mayo (1975) concludes that the tactics adopted by the local teams showed the failure of the original reformist approach to poverty and that, as a consequence, the CDPs took on the characteristics of traditional pressure groups. The approach to poverty that emerged from the project teams was critical of the 'victim blaming' which, it was argued, underlay the Home Office view, and focused instead on poverty as a consequence of fundamental inequalities in the present political and economic system (Green and Chapman 1991)." [1995:26]

social plan is sought first from senior professionals and the role of the politician is seen as one of ratification for a rational solution to an agreed problem.

2. The concern of *Organisational development and service-delivery* was to bring about changes in organisational practices, by managerial and administrative rearrangements. In this model, re-groupings between various parts are made to achieve better communications, both between themselves and with the outside environment.
3. The third of the three models emphasising consensus was "*Traditional Community Development*", seeking changes in the functioning of individuals, groups, and "communities" by facilitating their integration into more coherent wholes. The "community", is here assumed to be homogenous in its needs and where conflicts of interest are found, these are reconcilable through better communication and inter-group relations.

The Report noted that these three strategies assume a basic consensus of purpose between CDP, the client-population and the relevant agencies. The solutions were to be sought through better co-ordination and communication. The authors argue that the original CDP design was based on a simple combination of the second and third strategies, but the experience of at least two of the pilot phase projects (Coventry and Southwark) led to a questioning of the relevance of those assumptions and strategies at least to problems like redevelopment.

The second group of models are based on pluralist assumptions. Strategies 4 and 5 [*National and Local Lobbying*] assumed a state of competition and bargaining between different interest-groups within a plural system. The arenas for bargaining over policies and the allocation of resources are assumed to be those of the formal governmental process, so strategies are pitched at politicians, Councillors, parties and pressure groups. Support is lobbied on the basis of reasoned evidence, and the expressed needs of constituents.

The sixth model - *Community organisation* - was seen in the Report as the closest description of much of the neighbourhood work then going on in local projects. "*The powerlessness of residents to control their own life situations, or to influence the decisions which affect their areas, is seen to be related partly to their lack of information, access to relevant expertise and advocacy, and poor organisation. ... However, much of this has been limited to very here-and-now issues, and has been in reaction to agency programmes, rather than any real claiming of initiative for change. The question is how far alliances can be formed between these different action groups, and momentum kept up to sustain the necessary long term processes of improvement and change.*" [1974:26]

Later experience of most of the CDPs moved their strategies towards the third group of models, based on structural conflict [*National Pressure, Local Pressure, and Community Action*]. These assumed a longer term historical

analysis, and aimed to relate selectively to the local community, forging links between its more active members and groups, and organised sections of the working class. *"The intention is to sharpen local consciousness of the underlying problems, and relate action and pressure to the activities of the wider labour movement. The question that remains is whether a clear enough awareness of the underlying issues can be developed to stimulate a powerful movement for change from a local base."* [1974:26] The answer to this final question was to be largely negative - indeed as the project became more radical, it also became marginalised at both national and local levels. Nevertheless, the experience may have something more lasting to say, and this is the purpose of the case study described here, which employed an approach toward action research more in keeping with the principles described earlier.

SLUMS ON THE DRAWING BOARD²

The geographical boundaries of CDP areas were chosen for a variety of reasons, including pragmatism, convenience and politics. It was decided at an early stage that the Benwell CDP should include within its area twenty blocks of Council flats which had been built in the 1950s. There were two groups: Noble Street was the larger, with 15 blocks, while Norwich Place had five blocks. They were respectively at the south-east and south-west tips of the designated area. To the north the bank of the Tyne rose steeply, built up with a variety of Council and private property which constituted the remainder of the Project area [the total population was around 20,000: it fell in the early stages through slum clearance, and then rose again as new housing replaced the old]. To the South was Scotswood Road [made famous in the song 'Blaydon Races'], with major engineering works on the other side of the road, and then the River Tyne itself. Noble Street and Norwich Place, together housing up to two thousand people, had come to be seen as among the worst areas of the city, characterised by high numbers of one parent families, high unemployment, and incessant property damage.

The language of social science, as applied to such areas, included two key concepts: the problem family and the culture of poverty. An extract from 'Slums' explains these:

"The term 'problem family' is part of accepted parlance. It is also widely used in academic texts: here is one definition:

"Such families were characterised by sets of beliefs and values at variance with the established culture; it therefore seemed important to understand such families as constituting a group with a cultural life different from that of the rest of society, that is a separate subculture." [Baldamus and Timms: The Problem Family: a Sociological Approach]

² To give a fuller picture of this case study, the publication on which the following discussion is based is reproduced as Appendix 10.1.

This notion of 'culture of poverty' is important: indeed it was one of the principles underlying the War on Poverty in America, and the official view of the Community Development Programme in Britain: *"The whole conception of the War on Poverty rests upon a definition of poverty as a way of life- The intellectual climate in which it was nurtured was created by studies of the culture of poverty, notably those of Oscar Lewis - - These studies provided the basis for programs at the national level designed very explicitly to correct the social, occupational and psychological deficits of people born and raised in a life of poverty."* [T. Gladwin: *Poverty USA 1967*] [43]

Noble Street and Norwich Place appeared as classic examples - estates filled with problem families, trapped in the cycle of poverty. The action research programme undertaken here was to challenge such stereotypes.

The first stage was to set up the 'Beaumont Street Information Centre'. Information Centres were a common characteristic of CDPs. They gave a visible face to the projects, and provided a service which local residents found valuable - helping them in their struggles with a variety of public bureaucracies, including Housing and Social Security. Benwell CDP had such a centre, but it was a mile up a steep hill from Noble Street. An empty flat on the estate was therefore used as a basis for an Information Centre opening 2-3 times a week. This proved a valuable entry point, allowing the three community workers involved the opportunity to meet people on their terms. The nature of the multiple deprivation and discrimination they faced quickly became clear [See Appendix pp 14-5].

An initial report to Council, written in 1974, spelt out these problems, and also indicated the path that the wider programme was to follow: *"There is a long history of failed attempts at community work and varieties of community initiatives on these estates. Although Benwell Community Project and other agencies are currently undertaking activities on both estates, these cannot be seen as anything other than stop gap measures to provide a temporary improvement."* The final report comments:

"That quotation is from our first report on Noble Street and Norwich Place, written four years ago. We were convinced that community action could only be effective if it was firmly rooted in the real needs and demands of residents. And it was very clear what those were: they wanted out. Any campaign which was not based on this would fail". [21]

Previous attempts to work with the residents focused on participation and adjustment [Appendix pp 21-4]. Our conclusion at an early stage was that such an approach was doomed to failure. From the contacts made through the Information Centre, we helped establish the 'Noble News Group', whose story is chronicled in the Appendix [pp24-32]. A programme which overall lasted five years culminated in the rehousing of all the tenants, and the demolition of these purpose built slums.

EMPOWERMENT AND EMANCIPATION

Relevant to the present argument are two themes which run throughout the story. The first is empowerment and emancipation.

"Our second reason for writing this report is more optimistic. It is to show that at a community level something can be done about this. The overall problem is not solved - the limitations to this action are very clear - but that does not mean that community action is irrelevant."

"The concerted efforts of residents in these flats has brought many of them a better life. There are similar stories to be found in other parts of the county, and indeed on many Council estates in Tyneside. Action groups in Scotswood, Cowgate, St. Cuthberts - all these are struggling to improve their housing. What we hope to do here is show why these struggles have to be put in a wider context: why -the future of Council housing as a whole needs to be a critical part of these struggles." [2]

"It was clear from the early stages that if a successful campaign was to be waged for tenant transfer and fiat-demolition the tenants themselves would have to believe in their ability to effect changes of this scale. Whilst there had been half-hearted Council attempts to set up consultation (on repairs, improvements etc.) in the past, and some local Labour Councillors had always showed concern and interest in the flats, there was a huge gulf between the Council machine and its tenants in Noble Street." [27]

Here was a direct challenge to the image of 'problem families' without control over their lives. As the Noble News Group gained in confidence, the residents began to exercise some measure of control over their lives.

"This step and the formulation in April of a Kestrel Youth Project Committee with a majority of tenant representatives and strong funding from Urban Aid marked one of the high points of tenant confidence and strength. Both long-term goals and interim activities in the flats looked hopeful and positive. The grind of rehousing, the battles over who got what, when and where, the struggle to demolish all the flats were still to come. But the Group had a solid core of activists, the Council agencies on the ground were co-operating and the constructive developments on Glue Terrace Play Group, Grainger Park Troupers and Kestrel Youth Project were gaining increasingly good city wide publicity and a new credence for the view that tenants in Noble Street could, after all, be satisfactorily rehoused." [28]

They were even able to face their critics with vigour:

"But, externally, Noble News had one of its final boosts. The Evening Chronicle printed an article on 12 March 1976 which stated that children on the estate "play tiggy with hatchets". The paper again described Noble Street as "notorious". The Group demanded an apology and "a full report of the good constructive things going on in Noble Street - like Glue Terrace Playgroup, The Kestrel Project. And Noble News". A 200-name petition was handed in at the

newspaper offices under the watching eye of Tyne Tees Television. The Group "put the record straight" and gained considerable publicity for their activities with children and residents. The paper got the message and it was a hopeful and helpful one for the future: "The Residents claim they have picked up a false reputation as trouble-makers. They don't want their neighbours to be prejudiced against them as they take up new lives and homes in different parts of the city". [31-2]

These developments were possible because the community workers involved never 'took over', although at a number of points we took active, even leading, roles. We were not facilitators - there was a level of commitment that went beyond this. But we were not 'in charge', but rather using our skills and positions within other organisations [Local Authority and University] to help the programme develop and succeed³.

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH

This leads to the second theme - the role of research. Table 10.1 indicates the range of research activities undertaken as part of the programme - some were by the community workers alone, others had the active involvement of residents.

Table 10.1 The Role of Research in Noble Street and Norwich Place	
Research Method	Purpose
Historical record analysis	To demonstrate the factors underpinning the building of the estates
Record analysis by random sample	To understand the allocation policy used by the Council Housing Department
Interviews of residents	To investigate living conditions
Physical surveys	To investigate living conditions
Document analysis	To understand previous community activity
Information centre records	To understand the relationship between residents and the bureaucracies
Surveys	Seeking resident views
Repairs follow up survey [by residents]	To expose weaknesses in bureaucratic response

Research was used to build up and support the central case - that residents should be rehoused. It was used to maintain momentum or rejuvenate the campaign at moments when it was flagging - through surveys of people's views, or of current living conditions, or of the bureaucratic response.

"The Group decided it was necessary to keep up pressure on the Council to maintain existing services and properties even though by September 1975 rehousing of individuals was underway. They therefore carried out an intensive follow-up survey on the problem of repairs and maintenance. This survey,

³ *"From our experience tenants do not need much encouragement to begin organising on such demands - what they do need, like any community organization, are the basic resources which enable them to communicate within the estate and with the authorities."* [45]

published in September, had the additional goal of persuading councillors that things had become so rotten in the flats and such a continuing drain on Council resources that only overall rehousing and demolition was viable. The Noble News headline was "REPAIRS SCANDAL". It was a saga of drains blocked or missing; lights broken or missing; rubbish shutes ineffective; walls, cracked and windows broken. Little or no cleansing appeared to take place on the estate." [30]

Research was also used to underpin the basic argument. Perhaps the most significant work here was the analysis of how the flats were created, as this substantively undermined the argument that the flats were in their current state because of some 'cycle of poverty' [See Appendix pp 6-11]. The brief from which the City Architect worked [Appendix p 10] demonstrated the way in which these buildings had been 'slums on the drawing board'. It provides an eloquent demonstration of a fundamental principle of Critical Theory - that the ends are as important as the means:

"Critical Theory starts from the understanding that whatever is deemed to be objective knowledge, whether by scientists or lay persons, is conditioned by power relations in which competing ideas, methods and findings are developed and sanctioned as authoritative forms of knowledge. CT urges that human reason be mobilized to interrogate and challenge the rationality of this knowledge, and not merely to investigate or to perfect its generation. In other words, contra Weber, CT directly presupposes and champions the possibility of a critical science that addresses and strives to promote the rationality of ends as well as the rationality of means. The Weberian conception of science is preoccupied with the refinement of 'methodology' for discovering the 'truth' about some portion of 'reality'. CT, in contrast, is concerned to show how representations of Reality and Truth are conditioned and coloured by the social relations through which truth claims are articulated and accepted. Only by transforming these relations, CT argues, is it possible to develop less partial or dogmatic representations of their reality - a shift in understanding that can itself create important conditions for social change." [Alvesson & Willmott 1996:49]

The story of Noble Street demonstrates that technical rationality can be grossly irrational in its consequences - in this case, not only to the residents, but also for the Council which faced an ever increasing repairs bill to ameliorate the worst consequences of initial policy decisions. They also faced the prospect of paying the debt on the buildings for another 40 years even if they were pulled down [Council housing debt is repaid over a sixty year period]. As the report pithily stated: *"It was a crazy system that Newcastle City Council found themselves locked into."* [31]

ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE

The integration of action and research which was a feature of this programme fits well the characterisation of four 'moments' of action research given by Carr and Kemmis - although it is only fair to say that the community workers involved did not develop the programme consciously within such a framework - this is post-hoc rationalisation. While I had formal training in social research

methods, this was primarily concerned with statistical techniques, including survey and questionnaire methods. These were used in a number of the research activities summarised above, but the overall 'action research' context was emergent - it is probably fair to say that none of us had heard of Kurt Lewin, or other progenitors of Action Research.

It is therefore worth assessing the articulation of action research considered in the previous chapter against this experience, and using this to draw out considerations about the nature and potential of critical action research. First, we can take the fifteen standards for action research to be justified as 'quality research' given by Eden and Huxham. Table 10.2 assesses the Noble Street / Norwich Place action research programme within this framework. It 'scores' 14.5 out of 15 - or a full house if the following definition of 'knowledge' is accepted as the basis for the assessment against their third standard.

"Knowledge means understandings about events and things and processes; it includes descriptions, explanations, interpretations, value orientations, as well as knowledge of how these can be arrived at; in other words it includes knowledge that something is the case and knowledge how to do something; it includes theory-in-the-literature as well as the personal theory of individuals which has not been articulated in writing." [Bassey, quoted in McNiff et al 1996:10] Note that this assessment relates only to its research status - as Eden and Huxham recognise, there are other important criteria, notably that "the research output results from an involvement with members of an organisation over a matter which is of genuine concern to them" [1996a:75] - a criterion which this programme fulfils.

Table 10.2 Standards for Action Research as Research		
Standard		Assessment
1	Action research demands an integral involvement by the researcher in an intent to change the organisation. This intent may not succeed - no change may take place as a result of the intervention - and the change may not be as intended.	The intent to change is demonstrable in the project as developed in the report.
2	Action research must have <i>some implications beyond those required for action or generation of knowledge in the domain of the project</i> . It must be possible to envisage talking about the theories developed in relation to other situations. Thus it must be clear that the results <i>could</i> inform other contexts, at least in the sense of suggesting areas for consideration.	This was an explicit objective of the published report - see pp 32-4, 39-47
3	As well as being usable in everyday life action research demands <i>valuing theory</i> , with theory elaboration and development as an explicit concern of the research process	The 'theory' of the programme concerned wider issues of the role of Council housing. That this was successfully 'translated into circumstances that can be envisaged by others' [1996:79] is evidenced by the fact that a television programme was made for the BBC based directly on the report

Table 10.2 Standards for Action Research as Research

Standard	Assessment
<p>4 If the generality drawn out of action research is to be expressed through the design of tools, techniques, models and method then this, alone, is not enough. The basis for their design must be explicit and shown to be related to the theories which inform the design and which, in turn, are supported or developed through action research</p>	<p>E&H explain this by saying that "action research demands that research output explains the link between the specific experience of the intervention and the design of the tool". The discussion above has hopefully demonstrated the link. Although no claim is made that this individual programme led to advances in methodology, it was an important part of a wider project whose influence on action research has been cited elsewhere in this thesis</p>
<p>5 Action research will be concerned with a system of <i>emergent theory</i>, in which the theory develops from a synthesis of that which emerges from the data and that which emerges from the use in practice of the body of theory which informed the intervention and research intent</p>	<p>While the central basis of action emerged early in the programme, the theory emerged throughout, and part of it - the consideration of the scope for community action in such conditions - is drawn from the overall experience</p>
<p>6 Theory building, as a result of action research, will be incremental, moving through a cycle of developing theory to action to reflection to developing theory, from the particular to the general in small steps</p>	<p>The report demonstrates the incremental nature of work over a five year period</p>
<p>7 What is important for action research is not a (false) dichotomy between prescription and description, but a recognition that description will be prescription, even if implicitly so. Thus presenters of action research should be clear about what they expect the consumer to take from it and present with a form and style appropriate to this aim</p>	<p>Prescription and description are interwoven throughout the report</p>
<p>8 For high quality action research a high degree of method and orderliness is required in reflecting about, and holding on to, the emerging research data and the emergent theoretical outcomes of each episode or cycle of involvement in the organisation.</p>	<p>The overall design of the national CDP experiment meant that this element was present: there was from the start and expectation and intention to reflect on the outcome of the Project ['Slums'] is one of nine reports produced by the ten-person team at the end of the project; there were also a number of inter-project reports produced</p>
<p>9 For action research, the process of exploration of the data - rather than collection of the data - in the detecting of emergent theories, must be either replicable, or, at least, capable of being explained to others</p>	<p>Table 10.1 has indicated the variety of research methods used, and the data exploration involved in these</p>

Table 10.2 Standards for Action Research as Research

Standard		Assessment
10	The full process of action research involves a series of interconnected cycles, where writing about research outcomes at the latter stages of an action research project is an important aspect of theory exploration and development, combining the processes of explicating pre-understanding and methodological reflection to explore and develop theory formally	The preparation of 'Slums on the Drawing Board' was a deliberate attempt to explore theory and develop the wider implications of the work, both for housing policy and for community development
11	Adhering to characteristics 1 to 10 is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the validity of action research.	This is simply a summing statement
12	It is difficult to justify the use of action research when the same aims can be satisfied using approaches [such as controlled experimentation or surveys] that can demonstrate the link between data and outcomes more transparently. Thus in action research, the reflection and data collection process - and hence the emergent theories - are most valuably focused on the aspects that cannot be captured easily by other approaches.	Eden and Huxham argue that "inevitably some people will feel that they will be disadvantaged by the proposed changes and it is unlikely that the consultant will gain full trust from all parties. The politics of organisational change are thus a force acting against getting fully reliable data from all concerned" [1996a:82] In the early stages of the programme access to data was good, and it is difficult to envisage the findings of this programme emerging except through action research [especially is this would have compromised the action component]. But it has to be said that alternatives were not considered as the foundation of the overall activity: nevertheless, a number of the approaches alluded to by Eden and Huxham were used in the programme, as has been discussed earlier, and it would be a mistake to polarise this debate into a false dichotomy between action research and other approaches.
13	In action research, the opportunities for triangulation that do not offer themselves with other methods should be exploited fully and reported. They should be used as a dialectical device which powerfully facilitates the incremental development of theory.	It is fair to say that the programme used triangulation - multiple methods were adopted, particularly to demonstrate the weakness of the argument that the problems of the estates were the consequences only of the people living there
14	The history and context for the intervention must be taken as critical to the interpretation of the likely range of validity and applicability of the results of action research	The history and context are articulated in the report
15	Action research requires that the theory development which is of general value is disseminated in such a way as to be of interest to an audience wider than those integrally involved with the action and/or with the research	The report 'Slums on the Drawing Board' was of course designed to achieve this. In fact dissemination to a wider audience went further: BBC North commissioned a 30 minute documentary based on the report which was televised shortly after the report's publication
Based on Eden and Huxham [1996a, 1996b]		

If we now turn to the typology developed in Chapter Nine, then the account thus far should be enough to demonstrate that the programme fits well: this is argued in Table 10.3, with the reservation that the work was not consciously based on Critical Sciences. However the link to Critical Theory is strong, and is illustrated in Table 10.4, where the relationship between Critical Theory and Action Research developed by Grundy is applied to the case study.

Table 10.3 Analysis of Project, based on Critical Emancipatory Approach to Action Research		
	Critical / Emancipatory	Project Analysis
Philosophical Base	Critical Sciences	Concern for equity and empowerment
Arenas of Power	Control [by those not in control] Political	Control: objective to shift into Political
The nature of reality	Multiple and constructed, rooted in social, economic, and political	Multiple [e.g. differing views of tenants] Constructed through language, e.g. 'problem families'
Problem focus	Emergent from members' experience and negotiated in the situation based on values. Competing definitions of success.	Emerged in situation: shifted from 'coping' to rehousing. Success as defined by tenants probably different to success as would have been defined by bureaucrats
Relationship between the Knower and Known	Interrelated, embedded in society	Interrelated and embedded in socio-economic factors
Focus of collaboration theory	Mutual emancipation, validation, new theory, inductive, deductive	Emancipation and empowerment key. New theory developed through a number of methods
The nature of understanding	Interpretive within socio-political framework	Interpreted within understanding of power dynamics
Purpose of research	Understand, challenge, and change to greater equity	To understand the roots of the problems, and change the situation toward greater equity
Educative base	Consciousness raising and empowerment	Helping people to become aware of what is happening, and to have confidence in their abilities to change this
Individuals in Groups	Natural or negotiated boundaries with fluid membership	Natural boundaries, based on residency. Active membership [of Noble News Group] fluid
Change Intervention	Problem to be explored as part of process of change, developing an understanding of meanings of issues in terms of problem and solution	Determined in practice. The problem was explored within the action framework.
Cyclic Processes	Recognises multiple influences on change	Multiple influences and agents
Research Relationship	Action and research integrated, with shared roles	Collaborative, and integrated within action research team, but differentiated between community workers and residents

Table 10.4 Critical Theory and the Case Study

<i>Critical Theory</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
The formation and extension of <i>critical</i> theorems	Theory and practice were mutually interdependent throughout the programme. Research informed the action, and learnt from it. Interim reports were used not only to present research findings but also to use these to further the case for rehousing, and subsequently for demolition.
The <i>organisation of enlightenment</i> in which critical theorems are applied or can be tested in a unique manner by the initiation of processes of reflection carried out within certain groups towards which these processes are directed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The groups most affected by the issues were intimately involved in the action, and took part in 'group processes of reflection' through the Noble News Group. They were not actively involved in much of the research, but were party to its findings, and took part in some of it. • There were many 'authentic insights' in both theory and practice • The community workers were involved as 'committed facilitators', but it was the residents who took the key decisions as the programme developed
The <i>organisation of action</i> : the selection of appropriate strategies, the solutions of tactical questions, and the conduct of the political struggle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic action was at the core of the programme: its primary purpose was to improve the situation of the residents, and the political nature of social action was apparent throughout • The actors [residents and community workers] were fully involved in this action • Collaborative action was an integral part of the programme
Based on Grundy 1987 [see also Table 9.4]	

LESSONS OF THIS CASE STUDY

It is reasonable to argue therefore that the Noble Street programme provides an example of Critical Action Research. What then are the lessons to be drawn from this case study for the wider concerns of this work, for both management and local government?

First, it is possible even for those at the butt-end of bureaucracy to gain some control over their lives. Second, action research can be a slow and often difficult process - the roller-coaster of exhilaration and despair applies here as much as it does in Whole Systems Interventions.

Third, a 'master plan' is unnecessary, but purpose is very important - the future is envisioned. Despite all the differences between the people involved, the overriding desire to see everyone rehoused provided a unifying purpose which managed to hold the programme together. This argument, directed at top management, has more recently been echoed in the Harvard Business Review [Bartlett and Ghoshal 1994].

Fourth, the action which residents took was made easier by the fact that they had little or nothing to lose - they were already almost at the bottom of the housing ladder [only homelessness came lower]. The community workers had made a deliberate decision to work with, not for, the residents. This made them unpopular with the local bureaucracies, but again they had relatively little to lose since they were on short term contracts in a project which always had a

finite life. Thus, beholden to no one, they were able to seek empowerment and 'micro-emancipation'. It is fair to say that power was won, not granted in the manner proposed in many current approaches to the subject. The negative reaction to several of their activities [for example, see the report pp 30 and 32] shows that this was not popular to the existing power structures. Micro-emancipation followed, in that the residents recognised that they could take action which would improve their lot - and got rehoused.

The final comparison with themes developed earlier in the thesis concerns complex adaptive systems. In Table 10.5 the Noble Street 'system' is analysed against the eleven dimensions developed in Chapter Four: it will be seen that it can with some justice be seen as a complex adaptive system.

TABLE 10.5 NOBLE STREET AS A COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEM	
COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEM	NOBLE STREET
A network of many 'agents'	The system was multiple, involving many individuals and agencies and groupings, both formal and informal
"Adaptively intelligent"- always evolving and learning	The case study shows the learning that took place in the system, and the evolution of that system
Control dispersed.	It was when this happened - when new area of power opened - that movement forward became possible
Competition and cooperation	As the case study has shown, there was both competition and cooperation, within and between organisations
Coevolution, emergence and self-organisation	Groups changed, developed and adapted over the period
Many levels of organisation	The levels included individuals, groups, [shifting] alliances of groups, and the 'whole world' of the system
Constant revision and rearrangement	Alliances changed, cooperation within groups changed. Even the groupings of those opposed to change changed over time
Anticipates the future	This was increasingly important to all groups as the status quo became unviable. A picture of the future, involving rehousing and clearance, became central to the story, long before there was an 'plan' to realize it
Always unfolding	This was evident in the shifting sands about what the problem was [The people? The population structure? The buildings? Repairs? The lack of community spirit?] , and what the solution might be
Between order and disorder	It was the emergence of the Noble News Group, and the activity of community workers, which added 'constructive' disorder to a situation where before there had been a mixture of control and [reactive] destructive disorder
Interaction with that environment	The schemata through which people viewed the situation were very different. The reports of the community workers over the period show in part the changing nature of these schemata, and were themselves 'structured accounts' of the situation

A WIDER CONTEXT: THE SUNREG PROJECT

For those working within organisations, the context is different: there are strong pressures to 'keep your head down', and there are structural constraints. This may be considered at two levels: non-management and management. Lessons from the SUNREG project⁴ are relevant to the first. This project was designed to develop the theme of collaborative action research involving Universities and Trade Unions, funded by the European Commission under the Targeted Socio-economic Research Programme. Out of 38 projects supported in this Programme, this is the only one not exclusively run by academics and/or researchers.

SUNREG was structured to cover four regions, two in Britain [Yorkshire and Humberside and South-East England] plus Brabant in Holland, and Catalonia in Spain. In each case a university was twinned with the regional trade union organisation. The contrasting experience of Barcelona and the British partners in establishing action research groups within workplaces has been stark, and can usefully be set within the wider context of industrial relations.

Hyman and Mason draw out a helpful distinction between employee involvement and employee participation [see Table 10.6]. They identify three types of employee involvement - downward communication flow, for example through team briefings and house newsletters; upward communication flow, as with the use of quality circles; and job restructuring, for example through quality of working life initiatives, or job enrichment.

Table 10.6 Employee involvement and participation compared	
Employee Involvement	Employee Participation
Management inspired and controlled	Government or workforce inspired; some control delegated to workforce
Geared to stimulating individual employee contributions under strong market conditions	Aims to harness collective employee inputs through market regulation
Directed to responsibilities of individual employees	Collective representation
Management structures flatter, but hierarchies undisturbed	Management hierarchy chain broken
Employees often passive recipients	Employee representatives actively involved
Tends to be task based	Decision-making at higher organisational levels
Assumes common interests between employer and employees	Plurality of interests recognized and machinery for their resolution provided
Aims to concentrate strategic influence among management	Aims to distribute strategic influence beyond management
<i>Hyman and Mason 1995:27</i>	

They show that these are increasingly being used in mainland Europe, in the United States and especially in the United Kingdom. By contrast, there has

⁴ See Appendix 10.2 for a fuller explanation of this project

been a decline in employee participation in the UK. Thus the participative framework proposed by the Bullock Committee was frustrated in part by *"the concerted opposition of employers and Conservative politicians toward the threatened erosion of managerial decision making and hierarchical prerogatives"* [Hyman and Mason 1995:29] - and in part, as they say, by internal divisions within the union movement. The Conservative government elected in 1979 had a very different agenda, considering it *"important to curb trade union influences and to support the managerial autonomy of employers"* [Knudsen 1995:54]. Knudsen concludes: *"it still seems to be the fear of trouble rather than the chance of success that stimulates employers into accepting the participation of employees in decision making. There is no strong evidence of employers deliberately using participation in an active way in order to develop human resources and improve productivity."* [ibid.:64]

Hyman and Mason see a continued decline in employee participation, but a growing interest in employee involvement, in particular an approach we considered briefly in Chapter Eight - empowerment. On this they comment: *"Its main feature appears to involve job ownership by employees ... a look at case studies reveals a rather different picture. These indicate that empowerment tends to be introduced in companies which have removed layers of supervisory management and is used to cover existing tasks with fewer staff, with any 'reward' being intrinsic to the added responsibilities associated with the 'empowered' jobs."* [1995:191]

The Spanish context is different. Knudsen summarises it as 'participation within an adversarial setting'. He identifies in Spain *"the detailed and legally guaranteed rights and their character as a genuine legal counter-power to management prerogatives - a counter-power that may be used in cooperation as well as in conflict with the interests of the employer."* [1995:79]

This contrast was sharply in evidence as the SUNREG project developed. Crucially, it took the two Spanish partners a few weeks to establish their three research circles. In Britain it took up to a year [somewhat problematic in a project which has only a two year life]. This involved meetings with management, clarificatory papers, references up and down management hierarchies, and occasional revisits to the entire concept. Even when research circles were established, they proved difficult to maintain.

At the time of writing [1998] there are some signs of optimism. The wider concerns of European legislation, including the Social Chapter with its provisions for rights to information, consultation and participation in decision making, may help shift the British system toward that practiced elsewhere in Europe [although not analyzed above, the Dutch experience has been much closer to that of Spain]. If it is to achieve its full potential, then collaborative action research needs freedom - and in the industrial context, legislation appears an essential underpinning to this. The fundamental weakness of 'empowerment' is that those who give it can also remove it, leaving such an approach always vulnerable.

These reflections can be developed by considering the SUNREG project against the criteria of action research, and its claims to be critical/emancipatory action research. First therefore we take the fifteen criteria proposed by Eden and Huxham, and assess the project against each of these. This assessment [in Table 10.7] is based on the experience of SUNREG collaborators in the different regions across Europe.

Table 10.7 SUNREG Assessed as Action Research

1 Involvement of researcher	The very nature of SUNREG makes this a complex matter. There is no single organisation to consider: in addition to the eight collaborating organisations, there have been more than a dozen worksites involved, as well as the relevant trade unions in each. There is also the European Union, for whom policy recommendations are important. Nevertheless, the intent to change has been a feature throughout the project, with the possibility identified at several levels - within the organisations where Research Circles have been used, within the partner organisations, and within the European.
2 Wider implications	<p>This follows from the above. The specific domain has been the research circles, but the intention throughout has been to draw wider implications at both a practical and a theoretical level. These implications relate both to the use of research circles and to the potential for action research involving trade unions and universities.</p> <p>Ideas are generated in the circles that are capable of generalisation and ideas from outside the circle are introduced. It has been important to make explicit to participants that the research circles are not working in a vacuum, but can learn from and inform others.</p> <p>In addition, the project has led to the production of socio-economic reports which have been the basis of wider discussion in each region. The regular meetings between partners, held successively in each region, have provided the opportunity to link the immediate work to other contexts, including industrial training and regionalism.</p> <p>Action research not reaching out into the field of research (that is: to theory, to other researchers, to research education) does not make full use of the fact that it is a form of research, and connected with the world of research and knowledge. It has been a basic proposition of SUNREG that trade unions should be interested in results of action research outside the direct trade union situation or setting. Similarly, the European Union, and employers, should not be able to put these results aside only because they come from the unions. The (action) research part should so to say enlarge the power of knowledge the trade unions are developing in this partnership.</p> <p>Thus an integral issue in action research is the question of "output" or influence in the world of research and education. Without this, the unions could as well do their own research or action research, without any link to the academic sector.</p>

<p>3 Valuing theory</p>	<p>An explicit concern of the research process has been to gain greater understanding of the use and potential of research circles. This aspect is further developed in the companion paper, but it is worth saying here that there is a tension between the two levels of action research - the level of the whole project, and the level of the individual research circles. The participants in the latter are naturally focused on their own situations and have not shown a great interest in the wider development or implications of theory on the whole. These have been for the researcher to sort out and keep quite separate; while there may be some interest among the participants, they have tended to view it as being at a different level of concern, not having much impact on their individual situation. Over a longer period of time this is likely to change as individuals develop and begin to consider issues in a different way. For the researcher it is of course of importance, both in terms of justifying or assessing the methodology and in terms of developing ideas with broad applications.</p>
<p>4 Explicit design</p>	<p>This, as discussed above, we have set within the wider framework of critical/participatory action research, as the basis for drawing lessons applicable to the development of this method.</p>
<p>5 Emergent theory</p>	<p>The learning from the project should be evident from the discussion in this paper, and is also to be found in other papers produced for the project, not least the output of the meetings and conferences held throughout its duration. The evidence gained through the project has been used to examine, and in some cases challenge, existing theory. For example the argument that technology allows more flexible working and the workforce becomes multi-skilled is strongly questioned by the evidence, particularly in the financial services/banking sector.</p>
<p>6 Incremental theory building</p>	<p>The cycle of action research followed in the project has been described earlier - it has been a fundamental, and at times problematic, element of the programme. This cycle may be illustrated from the experience in Barcelona, where it went:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from theory to particular (SUNREG) practice • to theory via reflection/discussion (between ourselves + with Research Circles + with other SUNREG partners) • to (hopeful) practice (ie: the attempt to generalise the Research Circle experience to other areas of trade union work). <p>Here we also need to recognise an important tension between the dynamics of action research and the requirements of a funded collaborative project. As the project has developed it has become apparent that several aspects of the original design required modification.</p> <p>Thus the original concept envisaged four phases, each lasting six months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and sectoral socio-economic analyses • Technology Assessments and explorations • Research Circles and product/service developments • Union-University collaborations-the enhancement of co-operative networking across EU Regions. <p>While the first phase was relatively unproblematic, it became obvious to the partners that phases two and three could not operate in this simple sequence: technology assessment in each of the worksites was only feasible once the research circles were up and running. This meant that an important 'deliverable', the reports on technology assessment, could not be prepared in the timescale originally proposed. But this clashed with the requirements of the funding agreement, a matter that was never satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>7 Description involves prescription</p>	<p>The project is 'engaged' in the sense implied by this statement. There has never been any notion of 'value free' activity. But again there are tensions raised by the nature of the project. The 'form and style appropriate' to the requirements of the funding body differ from those appropriate to local trade unions. This is the case with language, with approach, and with the relationship with organisations outside the project. There is only a limited possibility of multi-use of outputs.</p>

8 Method and orderliness	<p>The overall structure of the project has facilitated this. The regular meetings between partners have given us the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon emerging findings, and to consider the interplay between the themes identified at the outset of the project.</p> <p>In the operation of the research circles this has also been important. Sessions have been taped so that important information is not missed and a true record is produced. These records have been considered before each subsequent meeting to ensure that they are a true reflection and to spark off further discussion. Reflections are made about thoughts, hopes, and strategies before each meeting; after each meeting about what happened during the meeting and also any observations about what happened, and the process itself, having had some time to develop thoughts. This has not been an easy process, but it does have the advantage of capturing some useful insights that may otherwise be lost.</p>
9 Replicable or explainable	<p>The production of Working Papers and Research Papers during the project, as well as overall reflective papers such as the present one, have been the basis for explaining the link between data exploration and emergent themes. A crucial difference between action research and circles and other methodologies lies in the fact that the researchers do not just collect data; they also explore and examine it with those who generate it.</p>
10 Interconnected cycles	<p>As explained above, the project has proceeded through interconnected cycles, with the periodic meetings providing both the opportunity for reflection and the opportunity to plan ahead.</p>
11 Necessary not sufficient	<p>This is a summation statement. We can however add some comments generated by the discussion thus far. While the overall project fits well into the characteristics defined thus far, the experience of the research circles fits less well. This relates not to the methodology itself, but to the way in which, in a project like this, certain parameters are predefined by the overall research programme, and by the need to maintain comparability across the regions. This limits the scope for participants within the individual research circles to take a full guiding role in their purpose and objectives. We consider this further below.</p>
12 Other approaches feasible?	<p>It is difficult to envisage any approach other than action research which would address the objectives of this programme, in particular in providing a momentum for change. Nevertheless, within this overall method, other approaches have been used - for example, surveys, statistical analysis of regions, and comparative work on the research circles</p>
13 Triangulation	<p>Triangulation has occurred in several ways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the exploration in four diverse regions • the use of several research circles in each region, based in different economic sectors • the use of secondary material • the exploration of findings in conjunction with a wider group of participants invited to each conference. These brought different perspectives and different areas of expertise which helped in the development of understanding and interpretation
14 History and context	<p>Both history and context have been critical. The initial work of the partners sought to delineate the specific regional contexts within which the work was taking place. The timing of the project has proved critical, coming as it does at a time when both the European Union, and the United Kingdom [where four of the eight partners are located] are experiencing major changes and rethinking of policy, both in relation to social partnerships and in relation to regions.</p>
15 Dissemination	<p>Dissemination to a wider audience has been a major consideration throughout the project, and was of course one of the primary motivations in establishing it</p>

We may conclude that SUNREG has operated effectively as an action research project, although there have been limitations which are perhaps inevitably given the multi-organisational nature of the project. What of its claims to be critical-emancipatory in approach? Here the message is more mixed. The research circle, as Hårnsten [1994] notes, “*has many similarities with the field of research known as participatory action research*”, in particular those versions advocated by Fals-Borda and Rahman [1991] and Maguire [1987], although she also points to the specifically Scandinavian factors which helped bring the method into existence.

Certainly, the objectives of SUNREG fit well with the types of change which Maguire identifies with participatory research. We can illustrate this by quoting from the original paper which set out the remit of the Project:

Development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants

“A critical analysis of the partner organisations themselves - as research institutions and trade union collectives - on the ways in which they relate to all the issues. The self-awareness involved in developing ongoing critical analyses of our own partner organisations' approaches to new technological developments - including how they affect our operations and policy goals, our working methods and our relations with other organisations and social partners - will, we hope, be of interest to fellow researchers and trade unionists across Europe. ... The action-researchers will wish to explore directly with affected workers and their collective representatives - utilising technology assessment principles and research circle methods - the changes in labour processes and shifts in working cultures engendered by specific scientific and new technological developments.”

Improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process

“In particular, it will be important to focus on especially disadvantaged communities and extremely hard-pressed labour markets within each region and to open up access to new technological processes (and the related training and education) to the poorest and most marginalised working people.”

Transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships

“Taking targeted socio-economic research to regions, sectors, workplaces and communities well beyond the ambit of both the originating programme partners and the normal academic range of EU-sponsored programmes, and thereby enhancing European social cohesion and helping to combat exclusion in the RTD sphere. An important objective in the SUNREG thematic network will be to undertake objective comparisons of more and less favoured Regions and to ensure that, wherever possible, the benefits of RTD are utilised beyond specific sectors or geographical areas.”

However these objectives have been achieved with only limited success. In retrospect, they were too ambitious, and underestimated some of the organisational problems that would be encountered in attempting to run an action research project across multiple organisations, as discussed above. To give one example, it would have been highly desirable to bring together representatives of the various research circles at each of the project meetings.

But finance made this impossible: in practice we were only able to involve them in the meetings which took place in their own region. Thus while there has been considerable learning between the partners, this has been much less possible for other participants.

Maguire's second and third objectives are longer term: the full impact of both the research circles and the overall project will only become apparent over time.

Turning to the arguments of Fals-Borda and Rahman [1991], it is fair to conclude that the project has sought to employ the four specific techniques they advocate. The research has been collective; the research circles have given the opportunity for participants to explore their context, and to work within their culture; and the outcome has been the production and diffusion of new knowledge. Again, we must add the caveat that inter-organisational learning on these matters has been limited.

Finally, we can consider the criteria given in Table 10.3. The Project has been premised on the view of reality as "multiple and constructed, rooted in social, economic, and political"; nevertheless, we must recognise that the perspective on reality given in the original outline for the project has been a dominating factor; there is an inequity in power between researchers and participants as a result of this. Similarly, the question of problem focus has been more difficult: the focus was set by the original proposal for the project, severely limiting the opportunity for it to emerge from members' experience and to be negotiated in the situation based on values. Thus there was a strong emphasis in the original proposal on technology. In practice many of the research circles found this to be a secondary consideration compared to issues of work organisation.

We can respond more positively to the next criteria: the relationship between the knower and known has been interrelated, and embedded in society. The focus of collaboration theory has been mutual emancipation and validation, seeking new theory through both inductive and deductive means. The nature of understanding has been interpretive within a socio-political framework. The purpose of research has been to understand, challenge, and change to greater equity. The educative base has been consciousness raising and empowerment.

The individuals in groups have had natural or negotiated boundaries with fluid membership. Change intervention has been a problem to be explored as part of the process of change, developing an understanding of meanings of issues in terms of problem and solution. As we have seen, the project has involved cyclic processes, recognising multiple influences on change. And finally, the research relationship has been one where action and research have been integrated, with shared roles within the collaborating partners - although again an important caveat must be given about the limited extent to which other participants have been able to be involved.

ACTION RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

At the management level many of the issues we have considered above also apply, as illustrated in a case described by Schein: *"A new product development team in a large auto company worked with the MIT Organisational Learning Center to develop a capacity for learning. By using various techniques derived from 'action science', systems dynamics, and organisation development, the team created high levels of openness between hierarchical levels and increased communication and trust among its members. ... However, the pileup of early problems caused upper-level managers to make a false attribution. They considered the team to 'out of control' and ordered it to get itself back under control. ... The team was able to complete the design well ahead of schedule ... higher managers gave themselves credit for having gotten the team 'under control'. They did not consider the team to be particularly innovative and disbanded it."* [1996:9-10]

Arguably managers have some greater degree of control over their work than those on the shopfloor. This means that they may have greater opportunity to carve out the space needed for action research, although the pressures to be lean and mean militate against this. These pressures have been noticeable in the public sector: in local government two decades of expenditure constraint have mean a constant search for 'slack' which can be squeezed out of the system [training budgets, for example, are often the first to be hit, since they comprise discretionary expenditure].

However the lessons of community action have appeared in a different way in management discussion - they have been incorporated into its rhetoric. This is well illustrated in a Harvard Business Review article by Hamel on 'Strategy as Revolution' [the principles of which are listed in Table 10.8]. Here people in organisations are encouraged to take action in much the way we have considered above in relation to Noble Street and Norwich Place. He even quotes approvingly the views of Alinsky on the output of top-down, elitist planning: *"It is not a democratic program but a monumental testament to lack of faith in the ability and intelligence of the masses of people to think their way through to the successful solution of their problems ... the people will have little to do with it."* [1996:78]

Hamel talks of three types of companies: the rule makers, the rule takers, and the rule breakers. His article is an exhortation to be a rule breaker. But what becomes clear is that this is revolution engineered from the top. Much as culture became something to be changed and controlled by management in the 1980s, so here we have proposals for 'revolutionary' behaviour to be treated in the same way. Thus: *"To help revolutionary strategies emerge, senior managers must supplement the hierarchy of experience with a hierarchy of imagination. This can be done by dramatically extending the strategy franchise. ... although the revolution doesn't need to start at the top, it must ultimately be understood and endorsed by the top."* [76,80] This is not a discussion of emancipation: it is about effective powerplay within an overall structure which remains unchallenged.

Table 10.8: Strategy as Revolution	
1	Strategic planning isn't strategic
2	Strategy making must be subversive
3	The bottleneck is at the top of the bottle
4	Revolutionaries exist in every company
5	Change is not the problem; engagement is
6	Strategy making must be democratic
7	Anyone can be a strategy activist
8	Perspective is worth 50 IQ points
9	Top-down and bottom-up are not the alternatives
10	You can't see the end from the beginning
Source: Hamel 1996	

This appropriation of language and ideas is nothing new: Fischer [1990] has argued that collaborative research techniques have mainly been adapted for use in the bureaucratic context of managerial and organisational research, and that it is now a technique and ideology advanced by management consultants, with scarcely a mention of the word 'democracy'.

What was different in Noble Street, and in the collaborative methods adopted there, was a genuine move toward realignment of power. The people primarily concerned began as 'have-nots'; over a period of time they came to recognise their ability to wield some power, and this had its effect. We can see this by considering the work in these flats in relation to the 'Rules for Radicals' as summarised by Alinsky [1972:127-30].

- *Power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have*
The 'enemy' did not expect the residents to exercise power - these, after all, were problems families with all the dysfunctional behaviour that this was meant to imply. This made it difficult for the former to appraise the power that the tenants had.
- *Never go outside the experience of your people. The result is confusion, fear and retreat*
Action took place over several years, and developed as the confidence of both residents and community workers grew. It kept within the bounds of their experience.
- *Wherever possible, go outside the experience of the enemy - to cause confusion, fear and retreat*
The experience of the 'enemy' was of tenants who were largely passive and unorganized - especially tenants such as those in Noble Street and Norwich Place. In the face of an organised response, they retreated - step by step.
- *Make the enemy live up to their own book of rules*
As the analysis of housing allocation policy shows, Council officials 'stretched' their rules, and were therefore vulnerable when challenged, but they were ultimately tied to them. They also had rules of procedure - the committee

system, and a formal commitment to tenant involvement. When tenants began to use these rules, they could not ignore them.

- *Ridicule is the most potent weapon*

Ridicule was used rarely. Perhaps the most memorable was when tenants became exasperated at the failure to tackle widespread rodent infestation [the open roof passages and rubbish tips made the flats fertile ground for rats]. A sack of rats was collected, and they were dumped on the steps of the Civic Centre [with, of course, the press present to witness and photograph the event]. The problem was soon tackled.

- *A good tactic is one that your people enjoy*

It would be wrong to claim that highly imaginative tactics were used, but they did relate to people's experience, and responded to their enthusiasm for group action. Meetings, for example, took place in surrounding which kept them from becoming too formal [the Cushy Butterfield pub!]

- *A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag*

As we have seen, many different tactics were used during the years of action. Probably the most difficult to sustain was the work relating formally to the bureaucracy - involvement in Committee meetings which were of course outside the experience of the tenants, and it is fair to say that this was never a comfortable experience.

- *The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself*

Overt threats were rarely used. Perhaps the most potent threat was of the consequences if the demands of the tenants were not met - of continually increasing repairs and maintenance costs in an area populated by highly disaffected residents.

- *The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition*

Constant pressure was important. Hence a variety of tactics were used, combining different types of action and research as seemed appropriate.

- *If you push a negative hard and deep enough, it will break through into its counterside*

Every positive has its negative - as with the development of passive resistance by Gandhi. Perhaps the key negative in Noble Street was the image - of a ghetto of the 'underclass' [to use a currently fashionable term]. Its manifest contradiction in the development of a group who could sustain a concerted programme of action over several years was undoubtedly important in unnerving the opposition.

- *The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative*

Fortunately there was always a constructive alternative, however unpalatable to those faced with deciding on the future of uninhabitable buildings for which they faced debt charges for a further 40 years.

- *Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it*

The opposition was clear and polarized. In part, of course, this was unfair - those faced with the responsibility of resolving the problem were not necessarily those responsible for creating the situation in the first place [though some were]. But to accept that the damage had been done by others, and leave it at that, would have been to do a gross disservice to the tenants. It was important to identify those originally responsible, because this challenged the prevailing notion that the problems were created by the tenants. But the target for immediate action was polarized and maintained.

Thus far we have focused upon micro-emancipation: there was little in the way of wider emancipation⁵. CDPs were progressively marginalised as their arguments and actions became more radical. The prescriptions were largely ignored: there was for example no generalized scheme to rehouse people from purpose built slums [this was still being done in Sheffield in the 1990s]. CDPs had greater impact through their analyses of industry and the economy: *"The fundamental importance of economic opportunities in depressed urban areas was the main lesson of the Community Development Project of the 1970s and the government's Inner Areas Studies which led to the White Paper of 1977 and subsequent legislation."* [Clapham and Kintrea in Donnison and Middleton 1987:93]

A number of local authorities developed in the 1980s programmes of economic development partly inspired by CDP work [and in some cases, as in Sheffield, involving former CDP staff directly in this]. The argument for local activity within a wider national - even international [Darwin & Green 1978] setting has become common currency.

One of the problems in extending Action Research to a wider emancipatory role is that the nature of the work at a larger level may revert to the type of separation between action and research characteristic of the initial conception of the National CDP. This is illustrated in the evaluation of the European Union's antipoverty programme in the 1980s [Room 1993]. The evaluation team identified major obstacles to their work. First, they had an ambiguous role as the envoys of the European Commission [EC]. Second, the EC's recognition that the evaluation must involve active dialogue with the projects clashed with its view that the evaluators, engaged on a country-by-country basis, should not appear to be actively intervening at this national level. Finally, the organisational boundaries between the evaluation team and the rest of the Animation and Dissemination Service meant that the evaluators had fewer opportunities to feed the results of their work back to the projects, collectively, than would have been desirable. This reduced the opportunity for promoting collective 'learning by doing'; it also meant that the evaluators were always at risk of appearing to the projects as imposing demands and requests but giving little in return.

⁵ Hart and Bond comment: *"A number of related matters of relevance to action research as a problem-focused approach to change are raised by a consideration of the CDPs. A major issue is to what extent it is possible through local initiatives to promote the kind of fundamental socio-economic change at national level that might be necessary to overcome such problems."* [1995:29]

The evaluators refer back to the work of Marris and Rein, who looked at the American War on Poverty. Like Marris and Rein, the evaluation team found themselves working with three sets of actors with quite different cultures and interests. First, the action projects working in - and in general loyal to - disadvantaged local communities were slow to lose their suspicions of the evaluators as servants of the political bureaucracies at national and EC. Second, the political bureaucracies themselves, both national and EC, were drawn together in a coalition to support this particular Programme, but competed in their jurisdictions as far as the wider social and economic policies are concerned which affect the map of poverty. Third, the evaluation team also sought to carry out a programme of work acceptable to the academic community and to maintain some professional self-respect. They conclude: "Faced with these pressures, it was hardly surprising that the team did not wholly succeed in consolidating its role" [1993:44].

CRITICAL ACTION RESEARCH: AN ASSESSMENT AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

In this Chapter we have considered two extended pieces of action research, and appraised them against a number of criteria, in each case with the intention of learning more about the process and its potential:

- as action research per se, and in particular as projects which conform to standards required for research
- as critical action research
- in one instance, as a complex adaptive system
- as activities meeting the principles for method developed in Chapter Eight

Although the conclusion has been drawn that the Noble Street experience had many of the characteristics of critical action research, those involved did not conceive it in this way. The question therefore arises: how might it have been done differently if the ideas developed in Chapters One to Nine had been available at the time? Although this reflection can only be speculative, it is likely that greater risks would have been taken, in particular by myself. One of my enduring memories of the period is of acting as a brake to the more 'chaotic', as I then saw it, approach of my primary colleague in the process.

Thus on one occasion he prepared a report based on evidence about the way in which residents of Noble Street were being treated by authorities, most notably the Department of Health and Social Security. Fearing that publication of this might lead to 'unpredictable consequences', I watered it down. Viewing the saga now as the unfolding of a complex adaptive system [Table 10.5] I see this as being fear about loss of control. While the situation was often at the edge, and was uncomfortable for that, the concept of the complex adaptive system would have allowed greater trust in the process, and less concern to 'manage' it.

The greater understanding of networks would also have helped, in particular the fuzzy boundaries between allies and opponents - in contrast to the tendency [seen also in Alinsky's Rules cited earlier] to polarize the two.

Turning to SUNREG, we have again a project that fits the credentials of action research, but in this case only partially fits the more stringent requirements of critical action research. This was primarily due to the geographical constraints which limited the extent of learning across the whole community, which could never be brought wholly together. Furthermore, flexibility was limited by the 'straitjacket' imposed by the original brief, and the requirement that this be strictly followed [in particular, that all the 'deliverables' be delivered, however inappropriate one or two came to seem - the very word 'deliverable' became one to say with curled lips].

Nevertheless the project helped to enrich the understanding of action research as a process in the economic sphere, and to identify ways in which this could be taken further - most notably through a negotiated framework. That is to say, critical action research is possible within the pluralist and political arenas, but very difficult to achieve within the control arena.

We can conclude this reflection by assessing the experience of the two case studies against the eight principles set out in Chapter Eight.

Encourage Democracy - Recognising That This May Well Be A Contested Arena

This is met in both the theory and the practice. Although the level of democratic involvement by all participants can vary within CAR, just as it can more generally in action research, the experience in both Noble Street and the SUNREG project demonstrates the possibility of involving a wider range of people, and in more than a consultative role.

The contested nature of the arena in Noble Street is clear, leading frequently to confrontation, but also, as one would expect with a complex adaptive system, showing opportunities for alliance and cooperation. The overall process increased 'micro-democracy' and 'micro-emancipation'. The lesson from SUNREG is more cautionary, for the experience threw up the constraints to democracy which exist in primarily control arenas.

Facilitate Multiple Perspectives

This again is illustrated in both cases. We have seen for example the wide range of views about Noble Street and its residents, views which were never reconciled; to the end, some thought of them as 'problem families', and some never accepted the need for demolition. The method works with multiple perspectives, and does not require consensus.

Once more the experience of SUNREG is less positive, at least in the British cases. In Spain however a genuine dialogue developed which persisted

beyond the formal closure of the project, with underpinning legislative rights making genuine participation possible.

Recognize Fuzzy Boundaries

Both cases involve multiple organisations, and in the first in particular the boundaries between them were fuzzy. Where for example should the community workers be located? They were employed by the local authority and the university, and this at times served to the advantage of the work, but they saw themselves as accountable primarily to the residents, a view unpopular amongst officials and politicians who saw the situation in terms of crisp boundaries, and hence crisp lines of accountability.

But as discussed above, there was also a strong temptation to polarize, something found frequently in community action. The subtleties of opportunity presented when the context is viewed as a complex adaptive system were not seen.

In SUNREG the multiple organisations remained largely distinct. The 'community' was never a complex adaptive system - there was never the opportunity to 'bring the whole system into the room', which was unfortunate as the project could have benefited greatly from a Whole Systems Intervention as some point in its development. Without considerably enhanced resources it is difficult to see how this could ever be achieved in such a project. [The only possibility would be through the use of teleconferencing. To my knowledge this has not yet been tried in WSI, and the physical restrictions make such a development questionable - how, for example, would you shift between groups? But perhaps this is a matter of time.]

Keep Thinking And Action In Dynamic Tension

This is a requirement which correlates well with the method of CAR, based as it is on the inseparability of action and research. In both case studies the interaction brought a number of modifications to each, and in this sense were examples of the action research process. Once again, the theory which has been discussed in earlier Chapters would have made it possible to take this further, particularly in the case of Noble Street. There was no attempt, for example, to understand the context through the different lenses of knowledge belief and power.

Value Process, And Put Trust In Process

It would be fair to say that the first case study shows this as a feature of CAR rather better than the second. It would have been easy at several stages in the five year period to despair of progress, and abandon the effort. Trust, both in the process and in the people, was essential, although, with the benefit of hindsight, and in the light of the ideas developed here, it could have been greater. In the case of SUNREG the contractual requirements imposed a more structured programme than would have been ideal. The need to work through

in full the exploration of research circles limited the possibility of trying alternatives.

Allow For And Encourage Proactive Emergence

Again, it is the community experience that better demonstrates this. Perhaps the most significant 'emergence' was the Noble News Group itself - the previous efforts at community development in the area suggested that such a proactive group of residents was most unlikely to appear. The final outcome - although envisaged at an early stage by the residents, was also emergent [especially to the many officials who most certainly did not envisage it at the outset, and sought many alternatives before finally accepting it].

Facilitate Learning

This is met in both studies, and has hopefully been shown in the exploration of each, although there are caveats in the case of SUNREG, as discussed above.

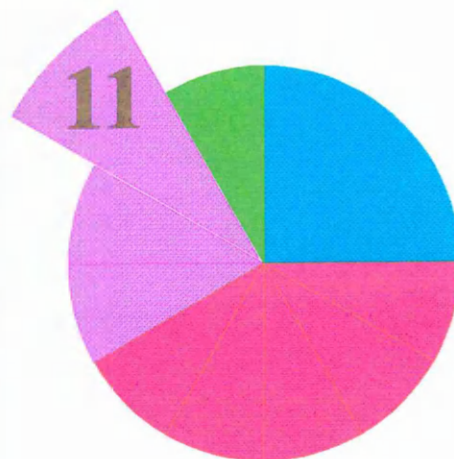
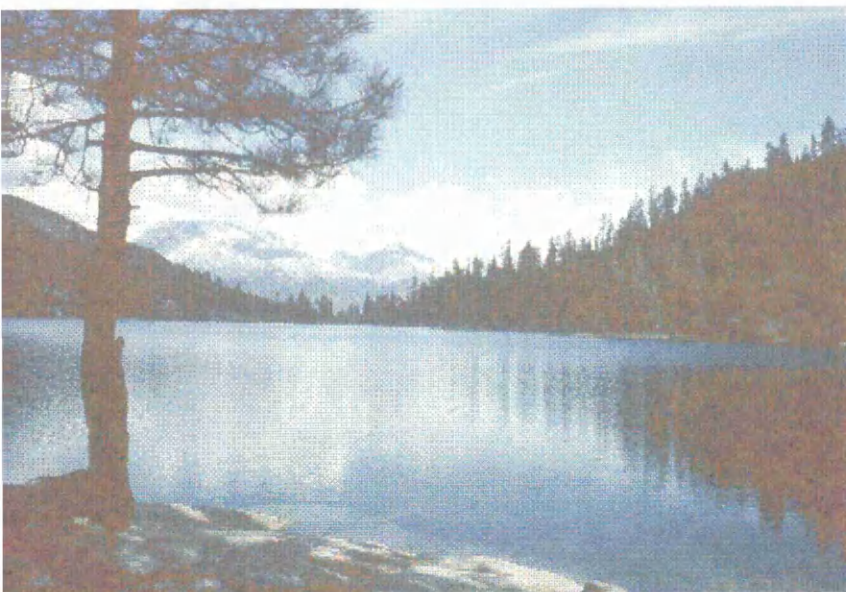
Accept [Indeed Embrace] The Absence Of Certainty And Foundations

This final principle is integral to CAR, stressing as it does the need for constant questioning of assumptions, and for flexibility in approach. Again, the rigid framework contractually imposed upon SUNREG meant that it was restricted in this.

Conclusion

Both cases therefore offer learning about the potential of critical action research in meeting the principles for method and practice identified, in part through what happened, in part through a through experiment envisaging how the first might have varied in the light of these principles.

But this Chapter has also shown the constraints in translating this experience fully into the domain of management. As we have seen, it is easy to appropriate the language of community action into what remains a 'top down' approach to strategy. 'Strategy as revolution', 'liberation management' - these phrases have an appealing ring to them. The argument here is that this ring remains very hollow if such management remains rooted in the Control Arena. The key shift in the case of Noble Street was from this arena to the Political Arena, as residents gained self-confidence and became partners in negotiation, rather than being seen simply as 'the problem'. Similarly, the experience of SUNREG included cases where research circles took place on the basis of more than managerial sufferance, and it was these that had greatest impact. We may fairly conclude that the link between the Political Arena and the complex adaptive system is an important one.



WHOLE SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS

Chapter Eleven discusses six case studies, each of which has used a variant of Whole Systems Intervention. It explores the lessons to be learnt from these interventions, and the extent to which they meet the principles identified in Part Two. Five case studies are presented in which Search Conferences and/or ColourFlow Dialogue have been used.

Reflecting the original remit of the thesis, these case studies have a common link in local government. Two involve local authorities directly; one concerns local government politicians and their political party, and one involves an area of local authority activity being moved into independent Trust status. The fifth has a more tenuous link with local government: it is a voluntary body which receives significant funding from Councils, but is otherwise independent. It is included because it was the first such exercise undertaken, and brought with it significant personal learning

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WHOLE SYSTEMS INTERVENTION

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is best seen as the unfolding of an action research programme which has run throughout the preparation of this thesis. Initial reflection about the implications of complexity theory led to the adoption of Whole Systems Intervention [WSI] as an appropriate methodology, although the detailed application has varied and [hopefully] become more refined over time.

In part this choice was also a reaction to exposure to the theory and [attempted] practice of conventional strategic management, with its emphasis on top down approaches. For example, not long after becoming an academic I was asked to teach a short course for the senior management of a public sector body, which I did in conjunction with a colleague, based upon the material we were using in teaching MBAs. But my concern even at the time was that we were working only with the senior people, and that the ideas would not take root in the wider organisation. Subsequent inquiry revealed that, while the programme had proved useful, the intended change programme had been limited in large part because of this - the programme was always seen as owned by top management, not the whole organisation.

From another direction, discussion with managers doing MBAs has revealed their frustration that they are learning ideas and methods which they can rarely use in their organisation, because of lack of interest from 'the top'. One conclusion is that strategic management practices which embrace all perspectives in the organisation are rather more likely to have effect.

Early use of the methodologies led back to the literature - in particular through a growing interest in the question of power - how does the power system within an organisation affect the success or otherwise of WSI? The need to identify ways of working which would challenge conventional practices and modes of behaviour - especially important when working with organisations whose life span has extended over 150 years or more¹, and which therefore have practices deeply embedded within them - led to the design of ColourFlow Dialogue as a complementary technique. Experience in using this in turn led to further reflection on modes of thinking, and the role of logic and language in organisational behaviour.

If we refer once more to Lakatos' characterization [1978] of a scientific research programme, the negative heuristic here related to the eight principles identified in Chapter Eight. The positive heuristic involved a willingness to be flexible in the search for appropriate methods, and in the design of each implementation thereof, not accepting any methodology as sacrosanct [a view not necessarily shared by all exponents of WSI].

¹ The entrance hall to one organization with which I have worked lists Lord Mayors dating back over 700 years

At the time of writing this action research programme continues - to the extent that several of the case studies considered below are unfinished. WSI can be one off events - and several of the case studies approximate to this model. But part of the learning articulated here has been the recognition of the need to set them wherever possible in a wider organisational context, if their effects are to be maximised and sustained. Hence the interest in programmes incorporating these approaches within a longer term organisational development context.

Six case studies are considered: although these have been distinct, they have all directly involved me as facilitator and/or active participant. The overall picture is given in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Case Studies				
	EVENT	LEAD ORGANISATION	NUMBER INVOLVED	DURATION
1	ToP Search Conference	Voluntary arts organisation [Rioja]	24	1 day
2	ToP Search Conference	Local Authority Department	54	2 days
3	Colour Flow Dialogue Conference [CFD]	Local Authority Councillors and Chief Officers	36	1 day
4	Activity and strategy development, including two Search Conferences and several CFD events	Local Authority Councillors and Political Party	100+ overall; up to 80 in each CFD, 50 in first Search Conference, 70 in second Search Conference	15 months [CFD events between two and five hours; first Search Conference two days; second Search Conference half day]*
5	Strategy development, including two Search Conferences and Decision Conference	Trust	Up to 60 at Search Conferences	18 months [first Search Conference half day; second Search Conference one day]*
6	Participant Observation	Local Authority	N/A.	Four years*
* Still active				

RIOJA ARTS GROUP

The first event involved the Rioja Arts Group², a long established voluntary organisation whose primary objective is to help people in working class communities become actively involved in arts programmes [for example, as writers or painters]. The introduction of the National Lottery had changed the environment of this organisation, as it had for many other voluntary bodies. Here was an opportunity to obtain major new funding - but this made it necessary to review and clarify where the organisation was, and where it wished to go. Hence the proposal for a Search Conference, which involved 24 people, comprising the organisation's workforce and management committee.

The Conference followed the modified ToP model outlined in Chapter Nine, although more emphasis was put on exploration of the past and present, since it was considered important to reflect on these when thinking about possible changes of direction. Thus, in line with FSC, participants were encouraged to bring artefacts [for example publications or news cuttings] which were important to their view of the organisation's history and current position. These were reviewed, and the group discussions began with 'Prouds' and 'Sorries'. The procedure then flowed from individual to group to plenary discussion and back again, with people moving between groups for each cycle of activity.

The output, as recorded and posted on the walls over the duration of the event, is given in Appendix 11.1 [amended only to preserve anonymity]. It illustrates the flow of ideas, and the emergence of substantive themes, leading ultimately to a relatively detailed programme of action.

Ultimately, the event did not lead to the original objective³. Although a number of ideas were pursued, changing criteria for the lottery created new opportunities which proved more fruitful - Rioja subsequently made a successful bid for lottery funding, with more to follow.

The event did however have two effects which indirectly assisted this process, as well as leading to other results. The first emerged from a particular situation which arose during the day. Toward the end of the morning session [while examining 'Underlying Contradictions'] there was a deepening sense of depression in the group as they unearthed more and more internal problems. Such low points are not unusual in Search Conferences: Weisbord and Janoff [1995] have used the metaphor of 'Riding the Roller Coaster' [Figure 11.1] to capture the ups and downs of these events. After participants establish their common world and connectedness, *"they face a complex mess that seems out of their control. They may plunge towards denial, fear, gloom, challenge, hopelessness, even impotence. The dominant mood becomes 'It's a mess'."* [ibid. : 22]

² A pseudonym

³ It is worth recalling Davies comment, given in Chapter Nine, that many Search Conferences which he had facilitated *"failed to meet their primary organisational objectives ... but had one consolation in that they have been rich learning experiences for all involved."*

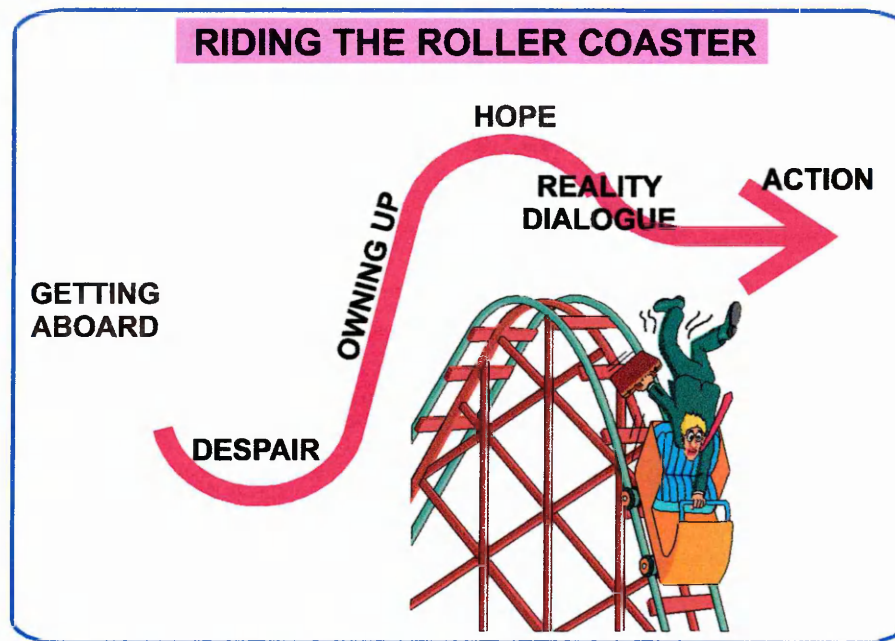


FIGURE 11.1

As far as possible it is important to allow participants themselves to resolve these tensions. However in this case it was apparent that the inward focus was becoming detrimental to the further development of the whole event, and I therefore took the decision, after discussing my interpretation of the situation with several of those taking part, to step out of the role of facilitator and act, for a short period, as an organisational development consultant.

This involved surfacing what I had identified as an increasingly introspective attitude among those present - the tendency 'to examine their own navels'. This can be seen in the output on Underlying Contradictions [Appendix 11.1], where the emerging themes included 'Where are we going', 'Restricted attitude', 'Inappropriate management', 'Individual vs organisation', 'Innovative ideas not matured'.

This critique was accepted by the participants, as is evident in the output from the next session, where an outward focus returned, and from the feedback given in Box 11.1. This recognition that Rioja had a tendency to become inwardly focused had a lasting impression on it.

The second significant effect was to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on where they were and where they were going in an innovative environment.

Box 11.1 Feedback on the First Search Conference

I thought the setup of the day was ingenious and worked very well. It was good to always be working in different groups, hearing different people's points of view and drawing on their individual interests and experience. The day signaled that there are still internal problems to be solved in communication. Members of staff were denying the existence of schemes and systems that have been in place for years which is irritating but we can only blame ourselves.

It was a key moment for me when John pointed out the lack of verbs in people's statements! This summed up a major problem in the organisation which is the gap between people's expectations and the responsibility they are prepared to bear for making things happen. The co-ordinators have been discussing this and are going to deal with it. (Honest!)

Another key moment was when John pointed out that we seemed to be very inward-looking. That is certainly true and, again, co-ordinators have stated their intention to address this and move the organisation towards seeing less bureaucracy and more action. I understand that John's role as facilitator was not to judge or give opinions but having that outside perspective was very illuminating and helped cut through the bullshit.

I don't think that the day was quite what we intended, which was to signal a clear direction for the future and to give a starting point around which to build a lottery application. It did, however, perform the more important function of showing us that there is a lot to do before we can even begin to worry about whether to apply for two million or three! **Some of the things we were discussing, I didn't particularly understand too well, but I found the day interesting. Especially learning the views and opinions of others and the ideas which were circulating. I found the message a little disturbing. By the end of the day, with all of the bits of paper on the wall, I was slightly confused by them, and would have preferred that bit to have been done differently.**

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Overall day well structured and well organised. The changing of tables for each section worked well - gave variety. The first section on present was excellent - made you feel good about Rioja - good uplifting start. The first three sections all interwove well, using data from one section flowed into the next section naturally. The last three sections did not interweave as well for Rioja as it would have done in commercial organisations. Song/story/symbol was excellent at Rioja - probably much better than would be elsewhere.

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When you said "I'll stop being a facilitator for a moment and become a consultant" - for me that was the point when everybody stopped and really listened - not just to you - but to each other. The momentary pause at that juncture spoke volumes.

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The feedback from the people participating has been very positive. We feel that the day was very smoothly run and provided the structure we needed to give our input direction.

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The success came because of the tight structure. We were never still long enough to question where the rhetoric ended and action could begin. I have in such groups seen courtesy go to the wall and invective take over - especially as the day wears on.

For this and subsequent events, it is useful to reflect on the implications of the event itself, and the learning that arose from it. This is done in each case in tabular form [for the present case, see Table 11.2]. This Table is based on the integration of the Strategy IDEA, Action Research and Learning, and the Knowledge Spiral, as presented in Figure 9.3.

TABLE 11.2 REFLECTIONS ON WSI IN RIOJA		
	RECONSTRUCTIVE	CONSTRUCTIVE
D I S C O U R S E	<p>DECIDE</p> <p>Dialogue is central to all WSI. As the first event run, this demonstrated the robust nature of the process adopted, while also pointing to potential improvements, including the need to signpost explicitly the 'rollercoaster' nature of the process.</p>	<p>ENABLE</p> <p>Perhaps the most important enabling function arising from this event came out of the 'OD consulting' phase. The inward focus was exacerbated by the design of the event, which included very few external stakeholders. The lesson is that their participation is helpful in encouraging a wider focus, and wherever possible this approach has been followed in subsequent events [it is of course a basic idea of WSI espoused in the prescription 'Get the whole world in the room']. In a number of events run since then it has not been possible, usually for reasons of confidentiality, to involve 'outsiders', and where this has been the case other steps have been taken - for example, the facilitator deliberately acting as a Devil's Advocate to question organisational beliefs and behaviour. [In ColourFlow dialogue this involves the facilitator adopting Purple thinking, while the other participants are asked to hold to one of the other colours, such as White or Grey. It has parallels with Kets de Vries' proposal for the revival of the Fool in organisations, discussed in Chapter Five.]</p>
P R A C T I C E	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>This event demonstrated the importance of understanding the context of the organisation. In subsequent events more initial work was done, on occasions using conventional strategic tools such as SWOT, Five Force Analysis, and Stakeholder Analysis. Presenting these at the start of events has proved helpful in 'building a field of interaction'. In the present case this was partially achieved by inviting participants to bring artefacts [e.g. press cuttings] which represented to them some important aspect of the organisation and its history.</p>	<p>ACT</p> <p>A WSI is intended to lead up to firm proposals for action, in the form of 'systematic actions' [see Appendix 11.1 for examples from the present case] and an implementation timetable.</p> <p>While feedback on the event itself was obtained, I was not involved in consequent activity. In subsequent events this was increasingly addressed by arranging longer term feedback, or integrating the WSI into a more extensive process.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

This second event was closer in format to the 'classic' approach. It ran over the two days recommended by Weisbord and Janoff [1995], and involved a good mix of internal and external stakeholders. The focus was on a local authority Department of Culture which wished to address its future, taking into account the many constraints, financial and otherwise, which have been discussed in Chapter Eight. The Department employed over 150 people, and it was therefore considered inappropriate to involve everyone; a cross-section of people was chosen by the Department Management Team [DMT], including officers from all major service areas and all levels of the hierarchy. Approximately one third of the participants were external, drawn from organisations which provided funding to the Department, or which it funded, supported, or worked with in other ways.

The output of the Conference is given in Appendix 11.2, which is taken from the report which subsequently went to the Council Committee responsible for this Department⁴. The event ran smoothly, although again a 'trough' was in evidence towards the middle, as the number of problems and constraints facing the organisation continued to grow; however, this was overcome as the event moved on. Another important feature came in the Action Planning phase, when one person outside the DMT questioned the idea that self-selected teams at the Conference should take subsequent responsibility for moving forward the outcomes of the final sessions, on the grounds that this was a management responsibility.

TABLE 11.3 REFLECTIONS ON WSI IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE		
	RECONSTRUCTIVE	CONSTRUCTIVE
D I S C O U R S E	<p>DECIDE</p> <p>The 'rollercoaster' was again in evidence. But the event also brought into sharp relief the issue of power, and the dissonance which can exist between the democratic nature of the WSI and the hierarchical structure of the organisation.</p>	<p>ENABLE</p> <p>The event demonstrated the way in which this process can help an organisation generate a strategic vision and pull together disparate views [see Appendix 11.2]. This has been a familiar feature of events run since then.</p>
P R A C T I C E	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>This event illustrated the balance required between order [careful preplanning] and chaos [deliberate suspension of control]. The preplanning identified who would be involved [ensuring a cross-section of the whole Department and external stakeholders] and the role of senior management [acting as group facilitators where necessary].</p>	<p>ACT</p> <p>One of the gratifying features of this event was its long term impact. The output was still being used as the basis for the organisation's strategy two years after the event.</p>

In the event, this did not deter others from becoming involved in the discussions, and agreeing to participate in the action teams. It does however

⁴ This is only a brief summary: the full output report ran to 38 pages.

raise a wider issue which has tended to surface in several areas of work with local authorities when any form of 'empowerment' is considered. The hierarchical structure of local government remains strong, despite a number of moves to 'delayer' the bureaucracy, and this inevitably raises the question of accountability: 'empowered' people are rarely given regradings or pay rises. We return to this theme later.

Several weeks after the event the DMT were invited to give their reflections: notes taken of this meeting are given in Box 11.2 [see also the Conclusions to Appendix 11.1].

Box 11.2 Feedback On Future Search Conference From The Department Of Culture

- 1 It needed more time. There was a feeling of being rushed, which led to some frustration. It also meant that the report backs were not as good as they could have been.
- 2 It felt particularly rushed at the end of the first day, when seeking to identify problems, and during the action planning.
- 3 The summaries were good and provided useful syntheses.
- 4 At times the five year focus was lost. This was especially true in the last part, when developing the 100 day objectives. There is a need to ensure that longer term focus is present then.
- 5 The implementation programmes developed need to be reported back to the whole group.
- 6 It would have been useful to agree in advance that there would be a follow up day, after about six weeks. This would have given the action planning more focus.
- 7 They have had a number of awaydays - this had been a very most positive outcome.
- 8 The problem of timing - coming as it did just after the failure of the redetermination bid, and the domination of the political considerations that followed. This led them to the view that the process might best suit an organisation in control of its own destiny, as opposed to theirs which is so influenced by the wider council. I suggested that at the appropriate point it might be useful to put into the programme an opportunity to identify those potential developments over which the people at the FSC have control; those where they have influence; and those outside their influence and control. The event could then focus on the first two groups, while acknowledging the third. They thought this might help.
- 9 I asked whether the Weisbord format, bringing together stakeholder groups at tables at various points, would have helped. They thought not - they found the movement sequence used good, and indeed would have liked this to continue into the action planning phase. The one exception was that they felt it would have been useful at some point for the external stakeholder groups to meet.
- 10 One thing they found particularly positive in the process was the way everybody was treated as equal.
- 11 Finally, they found the pattern followed in four stages - individual, group, plenary - to be rather repetitive, and would have liked some variation.
- 12 Overall, they were very positive about the experience.

RAINBOW COUNCIL

This case study has already been discussed in Chapter Five, when ColourFlow Dialogue was considered. Since then the technique has mostly been used in conjunction with WSI methods, as the next case study will show. It is worth adding that experience has suggested that the use of six colours works well for these events, although the choice of colours has varied with each.

TABLE 11.4 REFLECTIONS ON WSI IN THE RAINBOW COUNCIL

	RECONSTRUCTIVE	CONSTRUCTIVE
D I S C O U R S E	DECIDE This was the first testing of the ColourFlow Dialogue approach, and it was gratifying in showing how easily it was adopted by participants, and how effective it was in providing an overall structure for the event.	ENABLE The term 'flow' in the name of this approach is deliberate. The intention was to find a way of moving relatively seamlessly from one phase to the next. In Search Conferencing this is achieved in the way described in Chapter Nine. With ColourFlow Dialogue it occurs through the output of each phase being used as the input to the next. This event demonstrated the efficacy of this approach.
P R A C T I C E	INVESTIGATE As a relatively concentrated event, it was important to develop rapidly a 'shared field of interaction'. This was done by inviting participants to identify existing partnerships - the extensive range came as something of a surprise to them. This approach - generating an early sharing of participants' experience - has been a frequent feature of subsequent events [including a number not discussed here]. On occasions, as with this one, it has involved 'white thinking', on others the use of SWOT analysis, or an initial stakeholder mapping. The output of this plenary session is then used as input into subsequent phases.	ACT This event generated many new ideas for the organisation, and participants found it valuable. However, as with the Rioja Arts Group, it was not appropriate to be involved in detailed follow up. In light of the developing understanding of the potential and limits of these events, this was the last occasion on which one was run on this basis.

WIMBLEDON DISTRICT COUNCIL AND LABOUR PARTY⁵

This event marked a change of gear in the case studies: Search Conferencing and ColourFlow Dialogue became part of longer term programmes. This was in part a desire to be a witness to [as well as being involved in] the wider picture, including the consequences of the individual events, and in part a concern that the events should not be treated in isolation by the organisations, if the lessons of self-organisation and emergence were to take root. Although, as we have seen, the events do tend to have a lasting effect, it was felt that this would be greater if it were not 'left to chance'⁶.

The initiating factor to this work was a district wide election result which had come as a considerable surprise and disappointment. Two years earlier the result had been poor, but this had been explained as the result of a combination of local factors which were unlikely to repeat themselves. The following year seemed to justify this analysis, as the results were more in line with national figures. But the pendulum swung back once again - and unexpectedly - with a result worse than that experienced by the Party in other districts. The purpose of the event was to analyse this, and discuss what action needed to be taken.

This first event involved 80 people, comprising delegates to the Wimbledon District Labour Party, candidates at the district elections, and their agents. The tradition in the Labour Party is one of debate around motions which ascribe blame and responsibility. This usually involves set piece speeches by the more vociferous, while the majority stay silent. The Party meets monthly, and this was a normal scheduled date. However the convention of a formal agenda was jettisoned. It was felt that an alternative approach - more embracing, less confrontational, and hopefully more positive in outcome - was required.

In his discussion of dialogue and organisational learning, Schein [1995:42] argues that in a discussion or debate, the people involved may see a factual disagreement as a personal attack or affront. *"This causes a defensive response that further interferes with communication and task accomplishment. To avoid such possibilities, we often formalize debate around common rules such as Robert's Rules of Order, sacrificing communication and understanding to the preservation of face."* In the Labour Party the relevant rules are Citrine's ABC of Chairmanship [Cannell and Citrine 1982], combined with the standing orders of the organisation. These do not necessarily sacrifice communication

⁵ As one of the characters in David Hare's play *Skylight* is quick to comment, there is no such Council. Wimbledon is covered by the London Borough of Merton - not the subject of this study. The name has been chosen in honour of the football team I have followed from their amateur days to their current prominence as a Premier League team and former cup-holders. I trust supporters of other teams will show more respect than has usually been the case toward this fine, but much maligned, team.

⁶ It is interesting to reflect on this, since it contains elements of paradox. Self-organization would suggest that the consequences are not 'left to chance'. This desire to see the wider picture can equally be seen as a reluctance to lose influence on the situation. While conscious of this danger, trying therefore not to become a 'control freak', it is for the reader to judge whether I have been successful in the case studies which follow!

and understanding - under the guidance of a skilled chairperson, meaningful debate is possible. But there is a strong tendency to polarization in debate, making complex issues difficult to consider adequately.

The two hour event was therefore structured along the principles of ColourFlow Dialogue. For this purpose, six colours were chosen, as shown in Figure 11.2. For the first session the meeting was divided by constituencies [six tables]. People were randomly allocated from these to tables for the second session. Each table had a facilitator who had been briefed in advance on the use of colour thinking, and who took responsibility for guiding the group and preparing flipchart sheets, two for each session. Between the two sessions there was a 15 minute break during which people were encouraged to read the results of the first session, which had been fixed to one of the walls. After the second session each facilitator was asked to report the key conclusions and action proposals for their group - thus ending the meeting with over 30 positive proposals, which could be fed in to the overall planning process.

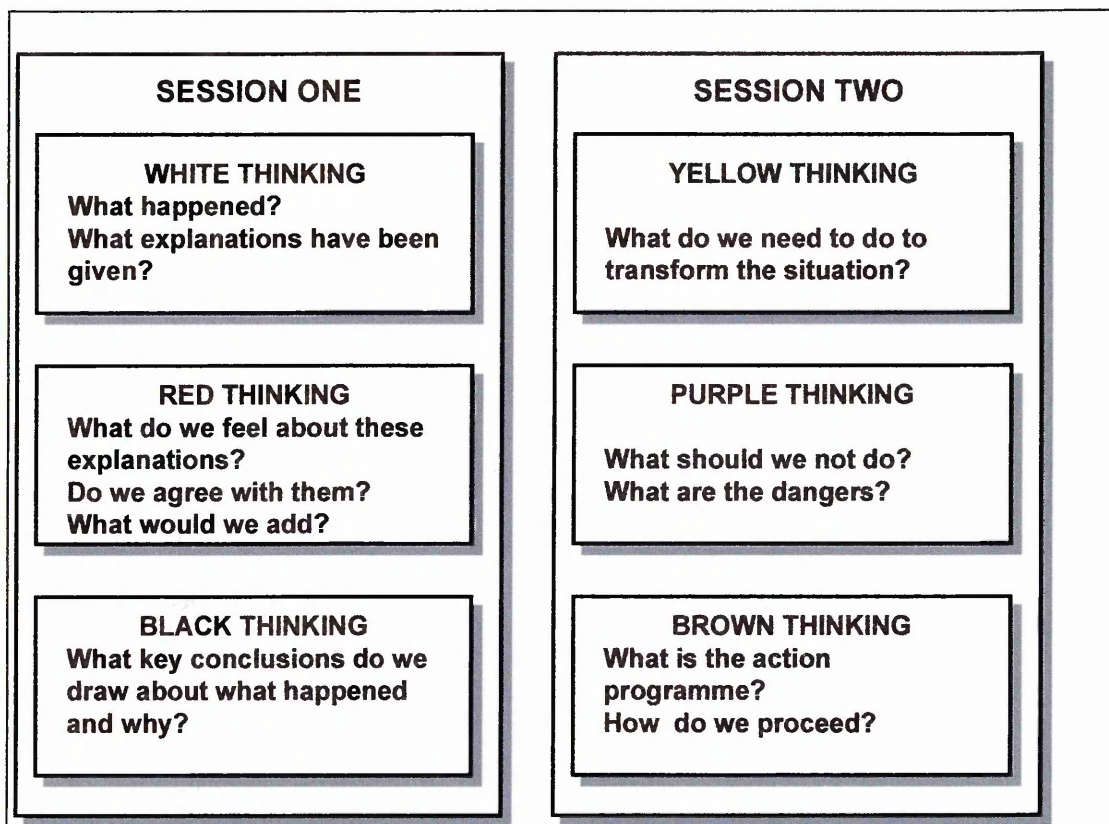


Figure 11.2 Six Thinking Modes: Party ColourFlow Dialogue

The immediate impact of the event was indicated by some of the comments made at the end:

"This is by the best Labour Party meeting I have ever attended."

"I was amazed at the degree of consensus we were able to achieve in such a short time."

"We should do this sort of thing much more often."

*"At the start of the event it was clear that several people were quite annoyed at the format, as they had come along ready with their speeches. But it meant that many people who do not normally say a word got their points in."*⁷

The initial intention was to pull together the proposals and progress from there. However the Labour Group [this comprises all the Labour Councillors in the District] asked if a similar event could be facilitated for them: this raised the opportunity of bringing together the findings from both events into an integrated programme.

This was a longer event [four hours] involving 40 of the 55 Councillors, and it was therefore possible to explore several issues in greater depth. In particular, a long standing concern had been the tendency for Councillors to intermingle Council and Party concerns, and these were therefore discussed in separate sessions. The ColourFlow chart [Figure 11.3] shows how this worked.

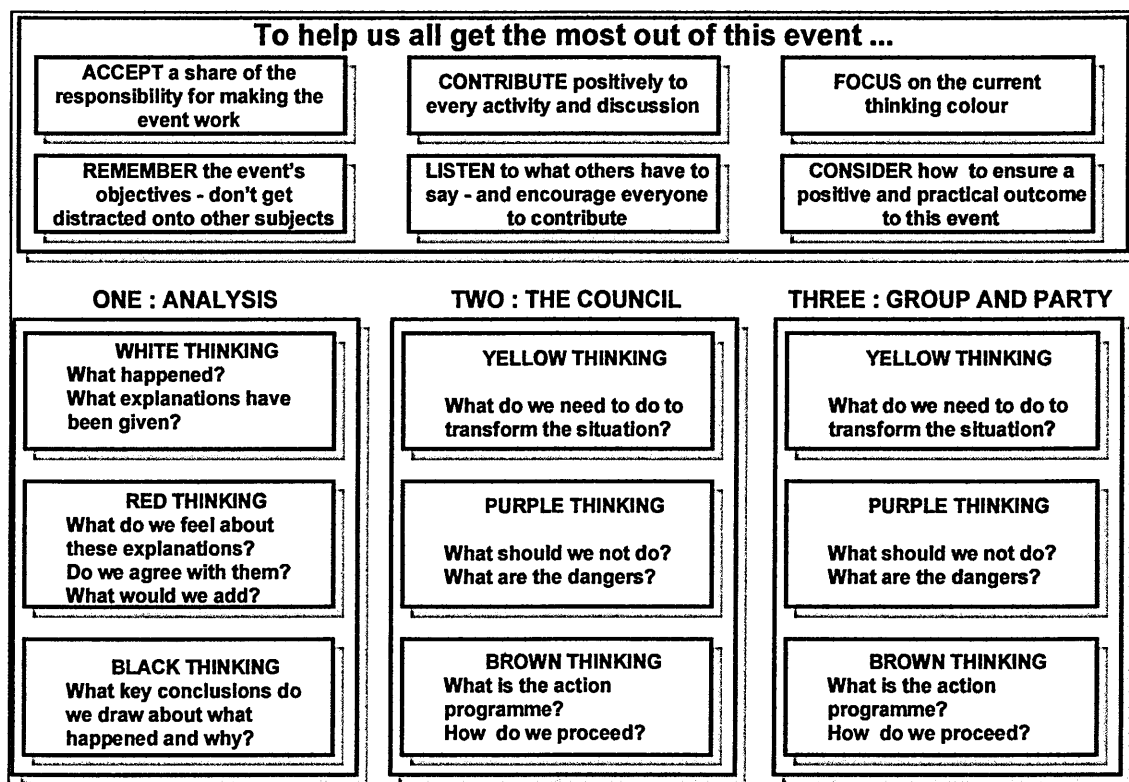


Figure 11.3 Six Thinking Modes: Group ColourFlow Dialogue

A task force comprising officers from Group and Party then met, and working groups examined each of the three areas - the Party, the Group and the Council - collating the output from the two events into programmes of action. The end results were mixed. These two events had deliberately focused on immediate and short term action [see Appendix 11.3 for an example of the

⁷ This annoyance spilt over the next formal meeting, when several of the delegates concerned asked by what authority the officers had changed the format. Again, the consensus of others was that this had been a legitimate thing to do, and the outcome well worthwhile.

output]. The impact within the Council was limited. Group procedures were revised and improved, but Council practices were little affected. The intention had been to hold a full day discussion on how these matters would be progressed, but this was first postponed until after the summer - and then never actually took place.

By contrast, the proposals generated for action by the Party were seen as only the starting point for a much longer programme of work. The next stage was a two day Search Conference to determine longer term strategy and action. As the Party itself has several thousand members, it was necessary to be selective in deciding who would attend. There are two traditional approaches in such a situation; in one, the officers of the various constituent bodies⁸ are brought together; in the second, delegates are elected to the event. In this case a quite different approach was adopted: several people not directly involved in the organisation of the event were asked to select and invite a cross cutting group of people, including officers and 'rank and file', long standing and relatively new members, active and non-active members. The outcome was a group of fifty people many of whom had not previously come together in any formal setting. The event followed the ToP model, and led to a broad consensus on what was required, coupled with a detailed action programme covering six broad themes, within a twelve month timeframe.

These results now had to be married with the formal decision making processes of the Party, since they had no formal status. The next stage therefore was for the Party Executive to prepare a Consultation Document based on the Conference, for wider consideration in the Party's constituent bodies [See Appendix 11.4]. This process of consultation took several months⁹. During this time, the dynamic interplay between the formal systems and the deliberately informal nature of the Search Conference procedure had further interesting fallout. First, despite several written statements emphasizing the origin of the Consultation Document, it was frequently treated as an official [formal] set of proposals issued by the Executive - and their authority to make such proposals was questioned. Second, a 'glaring gap' was exposed in the Document: it made no reference to the role of Trade Unions in the Party. This was certainly a notable finding - that fifty members could discuss the Party's future for two days without recording any proposed role for Unions. It suggested, and invited, amendment to the proposals to strengthen them along these lines. However, it was interpreted by some as deliberate - an attempt to sideline Union involvement [and in turn this was linked to perceived moves to do the same at the national level]. A 'model resolution' rejecting the proposals on this basis was circulated, but did not receive support. However, the combined effect of these two factors led a number of organisations to question

⁸ For those not familiar with Labour Party structures, it is worth expanding on this. The District Party consists of delegates from a number Constituency Parties [usually between four and eight]. These in turn are representative bodies chosen by Branches, of which there are typically four to six in each Constituency, covering the Wards which elect Councillors. Both DLP and CLPs also have delegates from affiliated Trade Union Branches and other organizations. Thus the 'constituent bodies' of the DLP can number over one hundred.

⁹ The timing was complicated by the presence of the General Election in the middle of it.

several of the proposals, while others were questioned or rejected on different grounds.

The overall outcome was gratifying, in that there was a wide debate, and a variety of responses which made it possible to develop and improve the original proposals. On the basis of these, a revised document was formally tabled by the Executive, and overwhelmingly endorsed by the District Party.

This in turn had a further implication for process. One of the proposals to find favour was for a radical change in the way that Party policy was formulated each year in the preparation of the manifesto for local elections. Previously this had involved a number of small Working Groups each focusing on a particular area of Council activity. In keeping with the desire to adopt a more integrated approach to Council practices, a new model was adopted, whereby constituent bodies were again asked to discuss and submit proposals - but also to consult with outside organisations. The overall framework adopted is shown in Figure 11.4: it will be seen that this deliberately integrates Search Conference methods within a formal decision making format.

This marriage between the traditional democratic methods of the organisation and the different approach adopted through Search Conferencing was an important innovation. During the formal debates on whether this overall approach should be used, a number of delegates raised concerns about the possibility of Party policy being decided outside the proper channels. The Party nevertheless agreed to proceed.

Invitations to contribute went out to all affiliated organisations, and to many others in the district, including community groups, housing groups, business and special interests. To help structure the responses, each was asked to indicate up to five comments on each of the following three questions:

- Are there things we should be doing better?
- Is there anything you would like changed or stopped?
- Are there new things you would like done?

Over 50 responses were received. The Manifesto Working Group [six people elected by the District Party] identified from these 13 themes for discussion at the Search Conference [see Table 11.5]. These in themselves provide an interesting example of the phenomenon of emergence. The Party's work had for several years focused upon six areas of activity:

- A Clean, Safe And Attractive City
- Decent Housing For All
- An Education Service That Opens Up Opportunities For All Our Children
- Support For The Most Vulnerable In Our Community
- A Better Quality Of Life Through Access To Leisure Activities
- The Right Environment For Business And Industry To Create Jobs

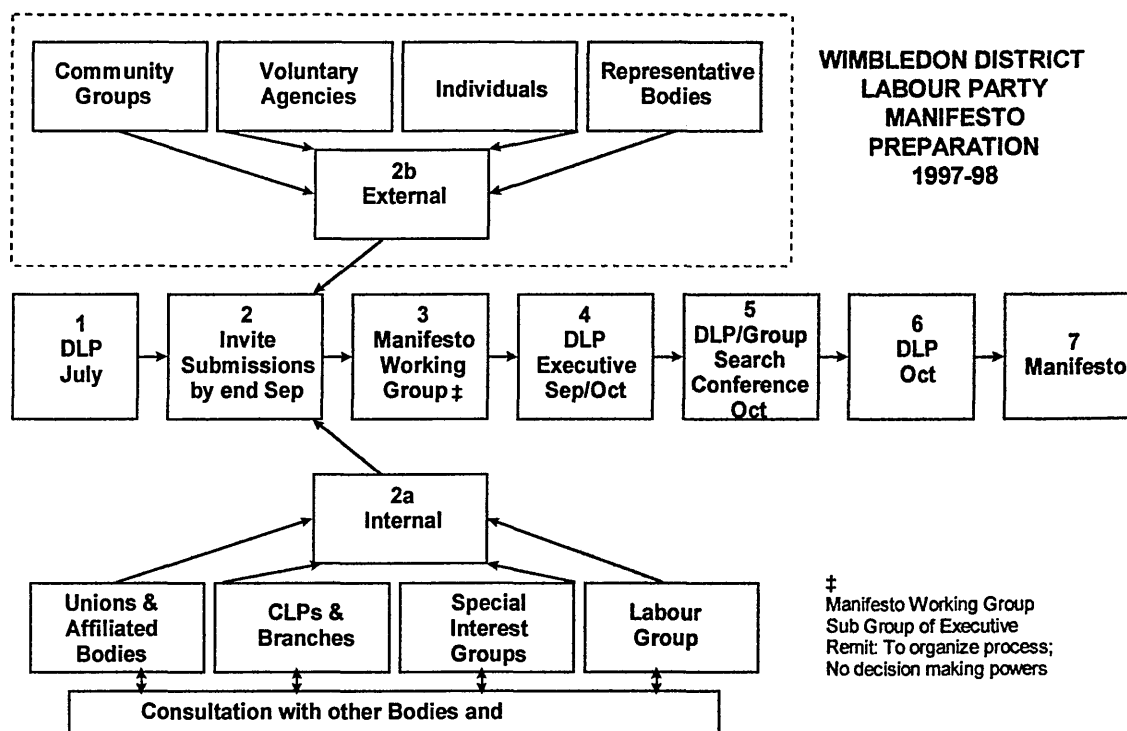


Figure 11.4

The consultation exercise revealed considerable interest in lifelong learning and in transport as areas of activity; it also showed a high level of concern about the way in which services were delivered, as well as the services themselves. To reflect these findings, the people attending the Search Conference were asked to choose two areas of discussion, the first on a service area, the second on broader themes of delivery. Seventy people attended this event, all members of the Party. Each table had before it the relevant responses from the consultation exercise, and each was asked to produce a number of proposals for the Manifesto.

TABLE 11.5: THEMES EMERGING FROM CONSULTATION

FIRST SESSION

- Housing
- Social services
- Education [Schools]
- Education [Lifelong Learning]
- Regeneration and Development
- Social Environment
- Community Safety
- Transport
- Leisure

SECOND SESSION

- Participation and consultation
- Publicity and public relations
- User focus
- Reducing bureaucracy

The results of this Conference were then put to the formal meeting of the District Party one week later, and were approved with a number of minor amendments. However, because it was essential that the Manifesto be consistent with budgetary considerations within the Council, and because these were still unclear¹⁰, two further stages were added to the process. First, all Committee Chairs were asked to check the feasibility of proposals relevant to their areas of responsibility, and the outcome of this exercise was the circulated to Party delegates. Second, the Conference results, which at the formal meeting were still in 'raw' form, were turned into a Manifesto, which was then circulated and put in its entirety to another formal meeting. In addition to reflecting the newer themes [it covered lifelong learning and transport, for example, much more fully than previous Manifestos] it placed much greater emphasis on service delivery, reflected in the following comment which appeared in the introduction:

"Our policies for the coming years are based on sound principles:

- a responsive council working in partnership with the community to meet the needs and aspirations of Wimbledon*
- partnership between local and central government*
- the provision of services which Wimbledon requires*
- Council Departments which work together to provide the best possible service*
- the creation of a vibrant city centre, as well as healthy local communities"*

Again minor amendments were made, but the substantive document was approved without dissent.

The above saga may well read as a somewhat convoluted exercise, yet it had several successful outcomes:

- Wide consultation beyond the 'traditional structures'
- The creation of a Manifesto which involved over 100 Party members [previous editions had been the work of very small groups]
- Overwhelming agreement to the final product, which therefore carries strong weight in terms of policy implementation
- A high degree of satisfaction with the process itself [a small but gratifying example came when the people who had formally questioned the very first Search Conference described in this section said that they thought the process had been a very good one]

Crucial to this has been the attempt throughout to integrate Whole Systems Intervention with an existing decision making structure which is democratic but cumbersome and bureaucratic.

¹⁰ This was primarily because the overall Council budget was dependent upon the SSA [Standard Spending Assessment], which is allocated each year to local authorities by Central Government.

TABLE 11.6 REFLECTIONS ON WSI IN WIMBLEDON PARTY

	RECONSTRUCTIVE	CONSTRUCTIVE
D I S C O U R S E	<p>DECIDE</p> <p>Several different events, each with different purposes and timescales, were involved here. In some cases the output of one provided the input to another. This multiphase approach has since been used in a number of contexts, allowing a deeper level of intervention. The other important learning in relation to structure has to do with the interplay between different types of democracy. Again, the pattern developed here has since been repeated, with Conferencing events used to explore and generate proposals, while the more conventional structures provide the arena in which final decisions are taken.</p>	<p>ENABLE</p> <p>This event demonstrated both strengths and weaknesses when operating in a multi-organisational context. The strengths included greater understanding between the groups concerned, and the generation of new ideas [emergence in action]. The weaknesses are considered below.</p>
P R A C T I C E	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>This long term event involved activity as an 'internal consultant', with all the advantages and disadvantages that this entails. ColourFlow Dialogue was used on occasions to facilitate shared understanding in a context where polarization can all too easily occur, and this had some impact.</p>	<p>ACT</p> <p>Considerable activity flowed from these events, but it is also important to note what did not. The situation was complex, involving three distinct but overlapping organisations [Party, Group, and Council] with different processes, structures, and arenas of power. In some aspects the dilemma of control was not resolved - where action was left to others it did not always happen, and at times this proved critical.</p>

SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

We have seen already that local government has been forced to rethink in a radical manner its traditional approach to service provision. One response is to abandon services altogether; alternatively, they may be reduced in scope [in quantity, quality, or both]. However, a third option which has attracted growing attention is the externalisation of services.

Like the term 'enabling authority', 'service externalisation' has almost as many meanings as there are authorities. One requirement imposed on local government, which has led to the externalisation of many services, has been compulsory competitive tendering. But there have been a number of other factors in operation leading toward this third option. A variety of approaches have developed over the past fifteen years whereby services are undertaken by an outside agency, often one created specifically for this purpose. Thus public-private partnership bodies have been created to work in economic development, in tourism, in housing, in social services, and in leisure.

One such is the subject of this case study. Sheffield City Hall was built in 1932, and represents one of the earliest examples of municipal intervention to address unemployment. A booklet written shortly after its construction commented: *"The building of the City Hall was a splendid contribution to Sheffield's civic life. The development of this scheme was subjected to the fiercest criticism by our opponents. Who were apparently unable to appreciate what its completion would mean to the city. There has, however, been a general chorus of praise for this magnificent building. As a cultural centre and as a provision for the entertainment and amusement of the citizens and as a place for festivals and conferences it has filled a long standing requirement. As a public building with the nearby Public Library, two very fine additions are made to the amenities and prestige of the city. Incidentally its building created 120,000 'man days' of work for men who otherwise would have been in receipt of unemployment benefit or public assistance relief."*¹¹

The City Hall consists of three distinct elements: the Oval Hall, the Memorial Hall, and the Ballroom or Central Suite. The Oval Hall is a concert hall seating 2,346 persons; the range of events which takes place in the Oval Hall is very wide, and extends from symphony to major rock concerts, and from amateur dramatic performances to university degree ceremonies. As the largest public assembly space in the city there has always been demand for the use of the Hall. An important characteristic of the City Hall at the time of transfer to trust status was that the Hall did not directly promote any of these events: it has always offered itself for hire to independent promoting organisations, a practice known as 'four-walling'. This was to be a major issue as future strategy was developed.

The Memorial Hall was added to the original plans for the City Hall as a response to those anxious to commemorate the citizens of Sheffield who died in the Great War. It is dedicated to the memory of these soldiers. It is a 522 seat lecture theatre suitable for small-scale conferences, meetings, musical and comedy cabaret performances. It is situated at the rear of the main City Hall building. Above it is potentially valuable development space.

The Ballroom and Central Suite are situated in the basement of the building. The Ballroom is a 'state-of-the-art' 1930s ballroom, with an independently sprung wooden dance floor. Adjacent to the Ballroom are three public areas: the North and South Bars and Arches Bar. The Ballroom is licensed for maximum usage by 850 persons. This area has been used in recent times predominantly for two, not wholly compatible, functions: during the daytime for ballroom dancing, and during the night-time for nightclubs. The latter have proved extremely popular, but have stimulated accelerated physical degradation of the Ballroom and surrounding spaces.

¹¹ Extract from 'Six Years of Labour Rule in Sheffield 1926-32 [Published by E.G. Rowlinson, reprinted by Sheffield Women's Printing Co-op, 1982]

The City Hall is a Grade II listed building due to its outstanding architecture externally, and its unique period design internally. It thus cannot be demolished or altered internally without the agreement of the relevant authorities.

By the early 1980s, the building was showing its age. In part this was due to the deterioration of the fabric - exacerbated as the decade wore on, since it was usually [and understandably] a lower priority for capital investment than, say, schools. But it was also in part due to the very design of the building - there were major acoustical problems, for example, both within and between the three major performance areas in the building. These may not have been a big issue in the 1930s, but in the age of sophisticated musical equipment - and of audience tastes and expectations shaped by their possession of quality home music equipment - they were now a matter of some substance.

There was no sign that the financial position would improve. The Council had very little capital budget available, and this would continue to go to other service areas. Finance raised externally would count against the Council's capital allocation, so this too would not help.

There were also organisational problems, echoing the writings on bureaucracy over the past two decades. The parent organisation - the City Council - was seen as inflexible in its policies, and of course this was a minor activity for an organisation whose annual turnover approached one billion pounds. The idea of a single-purpose, dedicated and focused organisation which could restore the fortunes of the City Hall seemed increasingly attractive to its supporters.

Overall therefore a combination of many negative factors, and a few positive ones [summarized in Table 11.7], led toward the proposal for the creation of a Trust to take over management and development of the City Hall. Reference back to the concept of 'City Governance' introduced in Chapter Eight will show that this fits well within that overall strategy, although it must be emphasized that this is to some extent post-hoc rationalisation - the development was not as proactive as this might imply.

This idea of a Trust had been discussed for a number of years within the City Council, without getting any further, but a critical stimulus came with the National Lottery. This offered the prospect of raising the substantial capital [in excess of £10 million] required to transform the building into an arts and entertainment complex which could hold its own against the growing external competition. But an essential requirement for any successful bid was the existence of a viable and demonstrable business strategy. It was therefore essential to become much more proactive, and much more than a building for others to book [a policy known as the 'four walls approach'].

Table 11.7 Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of Trusts**Advantages**

- More focused activity - trustees/directors of a charitable trust can give undivided attention to the project.
- Management autonomy - independence of trust gives management the freedom to operate outside other constraints.
- Financial autonomy - whilst trusts often rely on local authorities for grant aid, it is not their only source of funding.
- Tax relief i.e. covenanting gifts, etc.
- Rate relief - charitable trusts receive mandatory rate relief of 80% on premises occupied by them and used wholly or mainly for charitable purposes - local authorities' discretionary powers to grant rate relief on all or part of the remaining 20%.
- A new beginning - a new organisation with trustees/directors only concentrating on the management of a service/facility presents a new challenge and an impetus for renewed enthusiasm.

Disadvantages

- Not possible to control by a local authority and this may lead to decisions which have financial implications.
- Fragmentation of corporate policies break up of structures.
- Few sanctions for non-performance other than perhaps through the grant aid route.
- Funding from local authorities generally only committed one year in advance.
- Long term commitment may be uncertain and dependent on a few individuals and when they move management can suffer.
- The transfer from local authority structures to an independent organisation may not be straightforward.

Source: Sheffield City Council document

The Council consequently decided to create a Shadow Board of eight people¹², with the intention that this form the nucleus of a Management Board to take control of the City Hall and steer it through the regeneration programme.

This has been the context for a programme of work designed to develop a strategy for the City Hall which would be inclusive of the many interests relating to the building. One of its most important assets is that it is seen by many in Sheffield as 'our Hall', and it was seen as vital to tap into the goodwill and commitment that flowed from this. At the same time, this programme provided the opportunity for Board members to work together [important as they were drawn from a variety of backgrounds]. Finally, it kept the long term requirements high on the agenda - an important consideration, as the procedure for transfer of such an asset is inevitably very complicated, involving detailed and extensive negotiation and legal and financial documentation, which can easily 'take over'.

¹² I am a member of this, which is now a formal Company Board

The programme put to the Board, and agreed by it, involved three stages. First, preparatory work was done by a small number of people drawn from the Council and the Board. As well as programming, this involved the use of conventional strategic tools, including SWOT, PEST, Five Force and Stakeholder analysis. The results of this work were presented to the Board as part of the second stage, which was a 'mini search conference', following the ToP format. Central to the outcome of this event was agreement on overall purpose and Critical Success Factors: these are given in Table 11.8.

TABLE 11.8: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

Our purpose can be simply stated: it is to be the region's top arts and entertainment venue. We believe that the following are the eight Critical Success Factors in achieving this:

- We need to win the lottery bid and achieve financial investment. *The lottery funding will allow for the complete redesign and renovation of City Hall into a superb building with fine facilities, including high tech possibilities*
- There must be a total customer focus. *This involves a positive total customer experience, exceeding their expectations, and leading to repeat business. We will also need a strong marketing policy.*
- We require financial viability
- The City Hall should be at the cutting edge - continually developing and open to change. *This involves a high quality classical programme, with City Hall as a regional centre for symphonic music through residencies and international artists. It also involves creative outreach and education programme taking City Hall out to Sheffield's communities*
- We require clearly defined and accepted strategies. *Success will come through: Clear vision; Cohesive efforts; Sustained purpose. It also requires staff support in the company structure, and clear strategic management*
- The City Hall requires freedom and independence. *Entrepreneurial freedom leading to programme variety and encouraging new business*
- There must be leadership at Board and management level
- We must have positive links with external stakeholders

Based on the outcome of these first two stages a booklet was prepared identifying a series of ideas and issues [see Appendix 11.5], and four key themes were set: Purpose and strategy; Activity and programmes; Building and facilities; and Working together.

The main search conference involved sixty people, of whom 50% were external stakeholders. This did not involve the ToP format, but rather used the search conference process to facilitate discussion of the four themes. The outcome of this stage is given in Appendix 11.6. In addition, members of the public were

invited to contribute their views, by means of a questionnaire which was included in an article about the City Hall's future, featured in the main local newspaper. Over 300 people responded to this invitation.

The overall results of this process then fed into the Feasibility Study being undertaken, with Lottery support, in preparation for a full Lottery bid. The Purpose \statement and Critical Success Factors identified by the Board, together with the comments from the wider Search Conference, have provided the basis for the work undertaken by the consultants, not least in giving a clear steer from the reactive 'four walls' policy to a much more proactive approach based upon an artistic and educational strategy. Thus the Conferences, as in the previous case study, fit within a wider context, which is summarised in Figure 11.5.

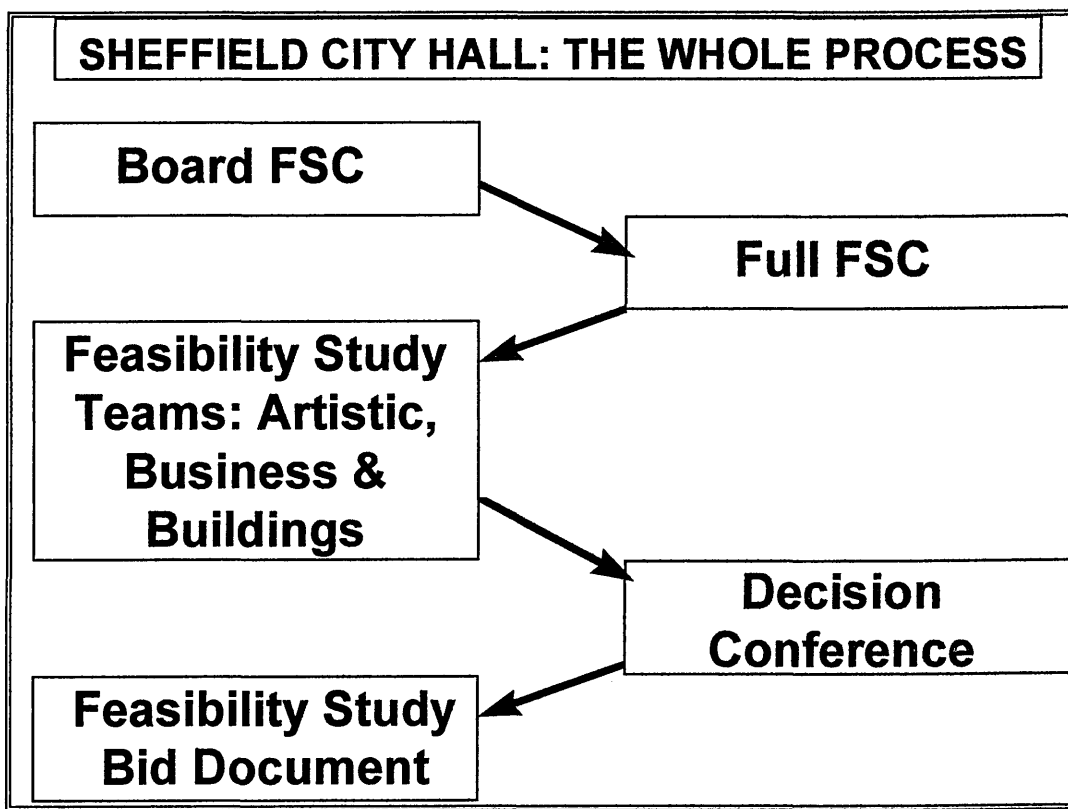


FIGURE 11.5

TABLE 11.9 REFLECTIONS ON WSI IN SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

	RECONSTRUCTIVE	CONSTRUCTIVE
D	DECIDE	ENABLE
I	The events ran smoothly, and it is fair to say that an increasingly 'light hand' was applied, as personal confidence in the process grew.	This is an organisation in substantial transition. Not only is it moving from being part of a large bureaucracy into a free-standing status. It also needs to change from a reactive to a proactive organisation. The process has proved helpful in driving this forward, taking advantage of both positive and negative features in the wider context: external financial constraint, the lottery, changes in perception of the role of public bodies.
S	This was the first event to make use of the feature adapted from Real Time Strategic Change, whereby the full Conferencing event was used to test out a pre-developed draft strategy [generated by the earlier Board event] rather than seeking to generate the strategy itself.	
C	This proved effective in opening up the debate to a wide constituency, while at the same time allowing the newly established Board to have the opportunity to develop a strategy which had common ownership.	
O		
U		
R		
S		
E		
	INVESTIGATE	ACT
P	As with the previous event, this one has involved participant observation. But many of those involved were working together for the first time, and a variety of strategic tools were used to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experience.	There are several outcomes to this process, still being developed at the time of writing, including the lottery bid, the development of the Board, refocusing the organisation, and the development of a new relationship between the City Hall and other stakeholders [not least the Council]. The process has played its part in facilitating all of these [indeed a number of those involved have requested a further Conference to build upon the work to date]
R	The event again demonstrated the value of this integration of existing and new techniques.	
A		
C		
T		
I		
C		
E		

WIMBLEDON DISTRICT COUNCIL: AN EARLIER EXPERIENCE

This case study provides a contrast with the earlier ones. It looks at a number of attempts to pursue change within the organisation considered earlier, often intended to move it toward the principles identified in Part Two, but using 'conventional' approaches to achieve the change. It is a record largely of failure and frustration. The setting is therefore a District Council beset by the problems and constraints identified in Chapter Eight. The approach taken is that of a 'reflective practitioner', as identified by Schön. This is an approach in which action is uppermost: the primary concern is to achieve change, not to investigate or hypothesize. But the approach to change is premised on

hypothesis: in the present case, that a move toward organisational practice in keeping with the seven principles will lead to a more 'intelligent' organisation [this concept will be discussed further in Chapter Twelve].

Overall, this has been a programme of action in operation for four years: the present case study focuses on three interlinked episodes within that programme. These are best located within an overall timetable, which is given in Table 11.10.

**TABLE 11. 10 WIMBLEDON DISTRICT COUNCIL TOP MANAGEMENT
1990-96**

1990	Current Corporate Management Team structure adopted
1993	Current structure implemented
Oct 93	Paper proposes Empowerment, Culture change, "a more holistic approach to quality throughout the authority", "inverting the pyramid", Change Programme
1994	Organisation and Management [O&M] Review Group
May 94	District Labour Party [DLP] paper proposing review of where Council wishes to go, and management implications
July 94	Service Improvement [SI] Seminars
Sep 94	SI Groups commence work
Nov 94	O&M Review
Jan 95	Paper by Chief Executive on new structure proposed for implementation in April 1995
	Paper of DLP on Corporate and Strategic Management of the Authority
Apr 95	Paper to Group Executive proposing "Thorough review of the Council's structures for reporting and implementation by October 1995
July 95	Paper proposing Strategic Board
Sept 95	Officer paper reporting that "much needs to be done to refine the ideas"
Oct 95	Timetable produced proposing advertising Strategic Board posts in January 1996
Nov 95	Member Seminar on proposals
Dec 95	No action proposed until further implementation paper received
Dec 95	DLP paper agreed ' "Proposals to be developed for implementation not later than May 1996"
Jan 96	Paper agreed calling for implementation of service review and restructuring by April 1996

The first 'episode' was the attempt to change the top management structure of the Council, which was seen by many to be ineffective, and failing to address the issues raised in Chapter Eight. As a number of people commented this Corporate Management Team did not act corporately, did not provide Council-wide management, and was not a team. Thus the DLP paper of May 1994 drew upon the work of the LGMB and other reports, to call for a Strategy Review which would consider:

- What is broad shape of the Council which we want to develop over the next three years? [The paper advocated the City Governance model, outlined in Chapter Eight]
- What are the core political objectives?
- What are the implications for the management of the authority?

Similarly, the DLP paper of January 1995 examined the current needs of the Council and concluded: *"None of this, in our view, requires a permanent group such as the Corporate Management Team, and we note in particular the comment of the Chief Executive in §3.3 that 80% of its agenda items concern operational rather than strategic matters we would be interested in seeing the statistical analysis which has produced this finding]. We note also the comment in §3.4 concerning the inability of CMT to put forward corporate advice on budgetary priorities - a matter on which we have frequently commented with concern during past budgetary debates. We would add to this our disappointment at the lack of significant progress in relation to a number of key corporate requirements, such as the revision of the Industrial Relations Framework, and the Organisation and Management Review."*

Despite many such papers, and a number of working parties established to identify detailed proposals, nothing happened: the required commitment at the top of the organisation was lacking¹³. Indeed when a new Chief Executive was appointed subsequent to this saga she identified the 'challenges' she faced as:

- No effective corporate officer leadership
- Management of finance is 'hand to mouth'
- Stalled change programme
- Absence of clear plan of action and targets
- Ineffective external/internal communications

The third of these refers to the Change Programme which had been agreed for implementation four years earlier. The comments of a number of officers about this Programme again reveal the lack of senior management commitment, leading to distrust and cynicism [Box 11.3]

Two other initiatives are mentioned in the Timetable. The first was the O&M Review Group. This was a small group of Councillors, serviced by senior Council officers, and established to address a wide range of organisational issues, including opportunities for delayering, restructuring, reviewing management methods and financial savings. It met a number of times over a period of almost a year, and the review was credited in one report as having identified almost £6 million in savings. However, the fundamental management issues were not

¹³ The same paper commented on this problem. *"It is essential that wide ranging change in process, organisation and management be a sustained programme which is both top-down and bottom-up and which has real energy injected into it. There is a danger that the term "Change Programme" becomes no more than a throwaway line without underlying substance. Experience elsewhere indicates that for programmes like this to be effective there must be top-management commitment, coherence and continuity - a sustained activity which everyone knows to have the highest priority from all concerned. Only in this way can we ensure that structures make the fullest use of the human resources of the Council."*

tackled, and like other initiatives it petered out as energy and commitment were lost.

The Service Improvement Groups had a different remit. Six of these, covering the major areas of Council activity, were established with the remit:

- To review what we are currently doing in each area
- To assess this against the priorities set out in the Manifesto, and the overall approach being adopted
- To examine ways in which services could be delivered with greater efficiency and effectiveness
- To address the issue of quality service provision, and how we ensure a user-focused service strategy
- To consider how far the objectives of the Change Programme can be developed
- To make recommendations on changes in resource allocations

These groups were intended to be cross-cutting - not addressing the work of individual Departments, but looking at the activities corporately: in effect, they were looking at the 'wicked issues'. They were also intended to adopt innovative ways of working. The fate of the latter objective was perhaps best summarised in the following exchange which took place between the author [B] and a chief officer [A] during a preparatory meeting:

A What can we expect to get out of these meetings?

B I have no idea

A But shouldn't we be clear what we expect?

B The whole point is to let new ideas emerge

[signs of considerable nervousness around the table]

What happened was that the meetings immediately fell into a 'local authority' culture: they each appointed a Chair and a Secretary, took place around a table, recorded their discussions in formal minutes, and received a series of conventional officer reports. A number of useful initiatives were identified and taken forward, but the original objectives were lost. People began to ask what the difference was between these groups and other mechanisms within the Council - they were seen as duplication, and by this time such a concern was difficult to refute. Once again they lost impetus and died.

Only the briefest account has been given here of these initiatives - it is intended to illustrate the difficulties of achieving change through conventional methods. It was not that commitment was lacking - many people shared the frustrations, and wanted change to happen. But the scope for 'disruptive action' was not there, with disappointing results.

It is of course no more than speculation to consider what might have happened if the strategies discussed elsewhere in this thesis had been possible. This is not a story of 'what if', but a contrast to the other case studies presented in this Chapter.

BOX 11.3 CHANGE PROGRAMME

Level of awareness

- Hear the phrase but nothing else.
- Heard it mentioned in Newsletters but little time to read about it.
- Difficult to understand what it's meant to be about. Heard the phrase. If you just go once to a meeting you tend to forget about it.
- Heard of it. Bosses went to away day.

What's in it for us

- It's one big swan for those upstairs; not affected me one iota
- The Council wants to get something for nothing out of us. Suspicious of it even though it might make our job more interesting.
- It's patronising to expect this extra from us when there's no incentive.
- Flatter structure removes incentives.
- Will this mean that those who shout loudest continue to get most attention.
- Feels like the idea's being imposed on us. We applied for our jobs as they were.

Will it last / are they serious

- In one department improvement groups are working. The good thing is people of all grades contribute equally
- Talk of quality is a joke without the money
- Think that Agenda for Change is something that will peter out in a couple of years

Bureaucratic problems

- Fear of spending money leads to the habit of endless inspections and checking
- Too many theorists/planners; not enough people doing it
- Not in people's interests to find more efficient ways of doing things
- Disproportionate attention given to spending on small items

Devolution of decision making

- What would managers be left to do if we were making all the decisions? It's impractical. We'd need to know everything.
- Impression that devolution of power is going to happen everywhere but surely it depends on the type of job and its complexity.
- All senior managers cover their own backs, that's all they do
- Someone's still got to be responsible for decisions of magnitude / implications
- When money is tight power is often taken away and given to a higher level

People's attitudes

- Cynicism
- Naïve false optimism
- People don't focus on successes
- People do not understand the knock on effects of their actions

Empowerment

- is related to legitimate authority
- requires knowledge of rights and systems
- should not mean anarchy but formal delegation
- Everyone's power can be increased
- Getting it wrong should incur a penalty or recognisable consequence

WHOLE SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS: AN ASSESSMENT

As in the previous Chapter, we conclude first by considering WSI as a complex adaptive system. As Table 11.11 shows, the fit is good. WSIs can also be seen as political arenas, in which provisional agreement is sought at several points in the process, leading to an overall outcome which is actionable. The process is designed to facilitate the application of Creative Intelligence, with people encouraged to look for ways to develop collaborative working which will move them toward their envisioned future. Thus the experience outlined in this Chapter lends support to the argument that Political Arenas in which creative intelligence is present can be understood as complex adaptive systems.

Second, we consider the eight principles developed in Chapter Eight.

Encourage Democracy - Recognising That This May Well Be A Contested Arena

WSI is a democratic process, allowing the involvement of a range of participants. As we saw in the fourth case study, this is a form of democracy different to the conventional approach, but it is possible to integrate the two together, thus allowing both forms of participation.

Facilitate Multiple Perspectives

WSI takes as given the existence of multiple perspectives - indeed the process would become somewhat futile in their absence. It therefore takes place within the Pluralist and Political Arenas. At times a broad consensus emerges, as happened in the Search Conference in case study four, or in the ColourFlow Dialogue meetings discussed there; in such cases, we are in a Pluralist Arena. But Search Conferences can also work successfully in a Political Arena. Indeed two of their strongest advocates, Weisbord and Janoff [1995], argue that they should not seek unanimity, seeing the stance toward conflict as being a radical aspect of the future search conference. They argue that if the right people show up, there will almost always be unresolved disagreements, frequently as an outcome of the information generated. The task then is to encourage all viewpoints, yet discourage conferees from "working through" (trying to resolve) their differences. Instead, the focus should be on identifying the widest common that all can stand on, resisting compromise so that a shared perception of genuine common ground can emerge.

This was evident in case study two, where differences existed on the relationship between the democratic approach implied by the search conference and the hierarchical structure of the Department. Such differences were not resolved by the conference, but neither did they invalidate it, or prevent an action programme from emerging.

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TABLE 11.11 WHOLE SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS AS COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS	
COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS	WHOLE SYSTEMS INTERVENTION
A network of many 'agents'	WSI seeks to "get the whole system in the room, the broadest temporary planning community feasible for the task at hand"
"Adaptively intelligent"	Learning is central to WSI, and as noted even events which failed to meet their primary organisational objectives proved to be rich learning experiences for all involved.
Control dispersed.	There should be egalitarian participation, in which everyone's is equal and is valued
Competition and cooperation	This is recognised in two core values. First, that "given the chance, people are much more likely to cooperate than fight". Second, that "diversity should be appreciated and valued". The process is such that competition between ideas is encouraged, and different views are raised. Attempts to create a total consensus are likely to result in 'lowest common denominator' results, of doubtful value. But agreement is possible, while recognising dissent: <i>"Competition can produce a very strong incentive for cooperation"</i>
Coevolution, emergence and self-organisation	It is impossible to say in advance what ideas will emerge, and what the outcome will be. Within the overall structure there is considerable scope for self-organisation: indeed, if groupings did not self-organize, the event would fail.
Many levels of organisation	The process deliberately operates at individual, group and plenary levels, and moves between these a number of times, with each level serving as the building block for a higher level.
Constant revision and rearrangement	The structure is such that groupings are rearranged a number of times, to encourage cross-fertilization of ideas
Anticipates the future	An important element of the process is "Mapping out the Practical Vision: What will our organisation look like five years from now"
Always unfolding	The process itself is dynamic. By the end there is an action programme, but this does not mark an equilibrium: it is a stage in an unfolding process. As has been clear from the case studies, WSI need to be seen as part of a wider process
Between order and disorder	This is critical to WSI. The structure is intended to provide order - but what happens within that is unpredictable. This inevitably creates some discomfort, leading to the 'Rollercoaster' effect
Interaction with the environment	Advance preparation can provide many thoughts on the organisation and its interaction with the environment. But also important is the premise that "ordinary people are an extraordinary source of information". A further advantage of the process is that bringing people together from diverse backgrounds and interests can lead to recognition that there are multiple perspectives on issues, involving different schemata, and that both the organisation and the environment are enacted. Finally, the structure of the event, with a variety of stakeholders involved, emphasizes the fuzzy boundaries of the organisation[s].

Case study four sets this within a different context. In a democratic structure there are agreed procedures for resolving differences: ultimately the majority prevail. The Search Conferences did not seek to replace this with consensus, but rather to allow a more consultative, less confrontational, and less dualistic, process to take place. The final decisions were taken within the existing democratic framework, but the climate of 'fair process' was perhaps best reflected in the fact that the final document, which contained individual elements with which various delegates disagreed, was nevertheless approved without dissent.

Recognize Fuzzy Boundaries

WSI allows for fuzzy boundaries - indeed the 'whole world' brought together in the room can be seen as a fuzzy set in relation to the organizing body. Each participant is there because s/he has an interest in that organisation, but the degree of interest varies.

Keep Thinking And Action In Dynamic Tension

We can see that the flow of a search conference begins and ends in action. The Part/Present phases focus on what the organisation is or has been doing; the final phases focus on action planning for the future. In between come phases where thinking about the future is dominant, but overall there is a continuous interplay between the two - and crucially, they are not seen as being done by separate groups of people.

Value Process, And Put Trust In Process

Valuing process is a consideration uppermost in the minds of those organising search conferences [see for example Weisbord and Janoff, 1995; Wheatley, 1992]. Trust in self-organisation could be seen as matter of belief, but the tenets of complexity theory and autopoiesis allow us to make a stronger claim - that this is an identifiable tendency which can emerge in many situations. As the sixth case study shows, this is also easy to suppress, often out of fear that we will 'lose control'. There is a strong temptation to go for 'tried and trusted' techniques - which often means perpetuating customs and practices which reinforce 'theory-in-use'.

Search conferences, by contrast, use techniques which deliberately disrupt custom and practice. They are therefore risky, and the facilitator in particular has to trust the process and resist the temptation to fall back on a 'safer' option. Here again we have a paradox: the free-flowing movement and opportunities that search conferencing offers have to be protected by a 'process guardian' who imposes a particular structure to allow this¹⁴.

Allow For And Encourage Proactive Emergence

¹⁴ It should be noted that there are some forms of WSI, such as Open Space, where no such structure is offered. These have not been used as part of the work for this thesis, and therefore no comment is offered on their efficacy.

The first part of the report is a general overview of the work done during the year. It covers the main areas of research and development, and the progress made in each of these areas. The second part of the report is a detailed account of the work done in each of the main areas of research and development. This part of the report is divided into sections for each of the main areas of research and development, and each section contains a detailed account of the work done in that area. The third part of the report is a summary of the work done during the year, and a list of the publications and reports produced during the year.

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'Proactive emergence' features strongly in search conferencing: indeed the whole ToP approach adopted in several of these studies is only possible through emergence. At each stage the plenary group identify common themes from the work just done which become the basis of the next stage: these common themes cannot be predicted in advance. A good example came in the work with Wimbledon Labour Party, where a very the work identified a new order of priorities for policy, one not anticipated when the programme began.

Facilitate Learning

And alongside this comes learning. As the Appendices to this Chapter demonstrate, the output from a search conference can be considerable, even where preparatory work was not done. This output is achieved by the participants learning from each other, and integrating their experience, knowledge, ideas and aspirations.

Accept [Indeed Embrace] The Absence Of Certainty And Foundations

Finally, WSI accepts - indeed is premised on - uncertainty and the lack of foundations. It is impossible to say at the outset what will be achieved, and practitioners have identified the uncertainty involved, even to the point where the WSI fails to achieved its initial goals, but nevertheless provides rich learning in the process.

Conclusion

This 'action research programme' is not concluded. As we have seen, several of the case studies continue to unfold, while new ones are in process. There will be further lessons to learn.

Overall, WSI offers a viable approach to pursuing the kind of action implied by the theoretical considerations of earlier Chapters. While it uses many tools and techniques drawn from conventional strategic management, it differs in certain critical respects. First, it is not 'top down' in the way that so much strategic planning is; nor is it simply consultative in the way that logical incrementalism can be. The methods used are deliberately chosen as ones which can be rapidly assimilated and implemented - there is no requirement here to first attend a course in strategy. In this way participation from a wide range of people is possible.

Second, the link between thinking and doing is emphasized throughout, and this is reinforced in WSI by the compressed timescale uses, as compared with other approaches to strategic management.

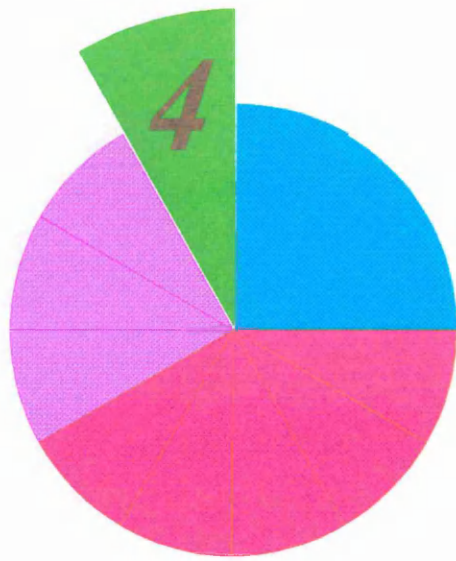
Third, as far as possible existing power structures are 'suspended'. There are of course limitations to this, particularly where the event occurs within a wider Control Arena. But effective facilitation [including the cooption of the most powerful in the organisation into collaborative facilitating roles] can help to create a complex adaptive system.

Fourth, there is the challenge to control. In WSI the structure provides an order within which there is chaos: what happens within the process, and what the final outcome will be, are neither controlled nor predicted. Increasing confidence in the process, and in the Worldview and Management Mindset associated with it in this thesis, have made it possible to change this balance, reducing the level of control. This has been illustrated in the developing action research project which this Chapter constitutes; it can be further illustrated by reference to two events not described in detail here. Each involved the major players in a local authority, and were concerned with developing the overall strategy of each organisation. In one, the overall structure prepared [by myself, in conjunction with the client] was changed by the latter at a very late stage, so that I was only aware of this minutes before the event began. It proved possible to improvise, drawing on several of the approaches and tools considered here, and even to shift more toward Conferencing methods as the event unfolded. For example, the event began with all [30] participants in serried ranks along a formal table; it ended with people in a plenary scattered around several small round tables.

In the second, I was asked to facilitate at a very late stage [the original intention had been to do without a facilitator]. The Council leader commented afterward that he had been very pleased with the productivity of the event, not least because he had had very little time to prepare and think about what wanted from the event, and had been concerned about this 'lack of control' [his words]. My explanation of the philosophy underlying the approach adopted came therefore as something of a surprise. Again, the event involved improvisation to take account of the developing pattern.

This 'lightness of control' must however be placed in context. Whole systems interventions operate as complex adaptive system, but they also operate within a wider context which, as we have seen, can water down the potential impact of the event. What has become increasingly important therefore is to introduce not only the method and practice, but also the Worldview and Management Mindset, to participants, and this has become a feature of more recent use.

To conclude, it is fair to argue that whole systems interventions have a valuable role to play in extending the remit of strategic management and reflecting the principles which have been developed in this thesis.



CONCLUSIONS

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time

T.S. Eliot Little Gidding

Part Four reviews the findings of the thesis, considers their implications, and draws conclusions.

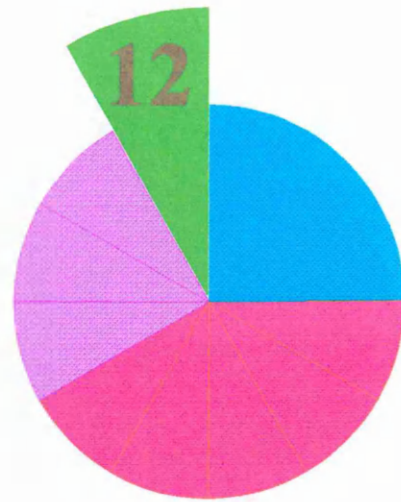
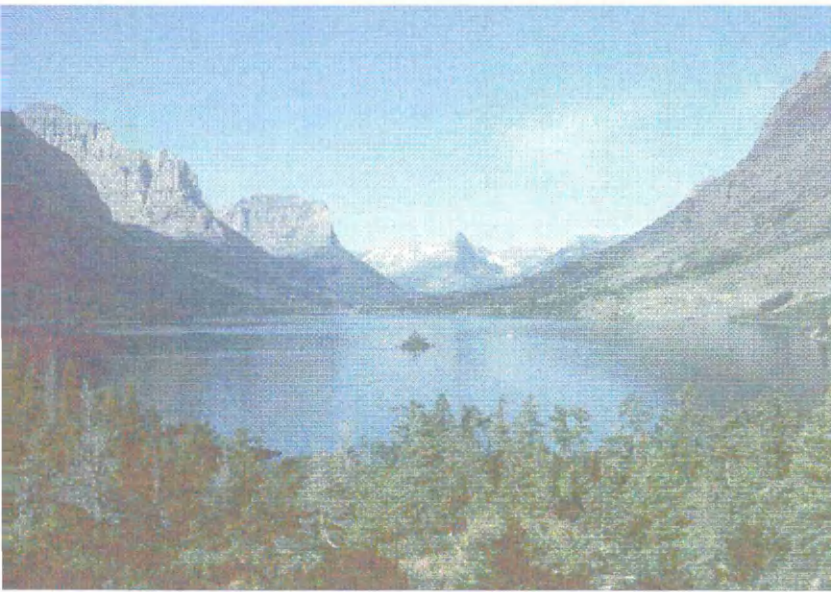


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CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter Twelve briefly reviews the findings of the thesis, and relates them to organisations, to individual managers, and to management education.

It then looks at the limitations to the present work, and draws some conclusions. Overall, it is argued that this thesis contributes toward the development of an approach to strategic management and organizational development which is richer than those premised on the Modern Paradigm, and that this is more than a set of interesting or provocative ideas - it is an approach which can be put into practice.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

The major objective of this thesis has been to develop a pattern that connects, and to argue that this can provide an integrated approach to strategic management which eschews foundations, but has sufficient richness to merit serious consideration. The colours in this pattern are many, drawn from a number of sources, including current management thinking, complexity theory, logic, critical theory and considerations of power. The weave links theory and practice, showing that this approach is doable as well as thinkable.

The first part of this thesis was inevitably critical. The purpose was to identify problems in the way that existing strategic management is conceptualised. This centred on notions of rational management and strategic planning, which are themselves underpinned by aspirations to have a 'scientific approach'. Seven elements of this approach were identified - logic, linear thinking, quantification, cause and effect, reductionism, the split between thinking and doing, and the concern for control. These were traced in Chapter Three to the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis, which was summarised by bringing together the ideas of five key thinkers, but identifying also the way in which it influenced several areas of human inquiry - notably evolutionary theory and neo-classical economics - which in turn have influenced management thinking and practice. Thus the impact of the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis on management has been both direct and indirect.

In Chapter Three 'cracks' in the Synthesis were also reviewed, leading to the argument that it has limitations which have been recognised in current scientific inquiry, but less so in management, where the seven characteristics cited above continue to be found in contemporary approaches such as 'neo-taylorist managerialism', McDonaldization and technocracy.

This is not to say that alternatives have not been articulated, at least from the time of Mary Parker Follett, but a number of arguments were put forward to explain why 'new thinking' has rarely manifested itself in 'new practice'. In particular, it was argued that this 'new thinking' has rarely addressed the overall power and influence of the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis upon Western thinking, in appearing to provide the basis of sound knowledge, a belief system which managers can adopt, and a view of power which centres upon control. Here a simple form of 'triple analysis' was introduced - Knowledge, Belief and Power - later to be developed and enriched by considering the three categories of inquiry prominent in critical theory.

Thus Part One of the thesis concluded that, whatever the flaws and counter-arguments which can be adduced in relation to both the Modern Paradigm and the Cartesian Newtonian Synthesis, alternative approaches are unlikely to make much headway unless they can be shown to have a related method and logic. This is difficult to achieve, for at least two reasons. First, as Argyris

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[1992] argues, methods of reasoning and action which emphasise rationality and control are learned through socialisation - they are deep in our thinking.

Second, the Synthesis 'underpins' the Modern Paradigm in a way that is not available within the context of the present argument. The 'building' approach can be maintained, leading to the argument that if there are no foundations then 'anything goes' [Feyerabend 1975]. But a different line of argument is developed here, in which it is replaced by the attempt to weave a 'pattern that connects' - interrelating ideas and theoretical contributions, and showing the way that they can mutually support each other, without ever suggesting that some provide the 'foundations'. This can never therefore be an argument for certainty; rather the line of argument is to identify this connected pattern and suggest that in turn it connects with a different style of management thinking and practice.

This pattern-weaving was the central concern of Part Two. In Chapter One the suggestion was made that management theory could benefit from an injection of ideas from other domains, and that the thesis originated in a drive to consider the contribution which could come from two - complexity theory and fuzzy logic. These were the focal points, respectively, of Chapters Four and Five.

The discussion of complexity centred on complex adaptive systems, as a helpful integrating concept. For logic, the integrating framework was of a rather different nature, ColourFlow Dialogue being both a heuristic and a practical idea. The extension of debate into the realm of power also brought with it integrating frameworks: in Chapter Six, the Arenas of Power, and in Chapter Seven the Categories of Inquiry originally delineated by Habermas. This exploration of power also allowed us to develop the themes of Chapter Five by extending the debate about dialogue, leading to the Protocols for Discourse.

In Chapter Eight this pattern was woven together, using the three connected domains of the Worldview, the Management Mindset, and Method. The first two of these were developed further in that Chapter: it was the task of Part Three to pursue the implications for method, beginning with an outline of methodology itself, and then illustrating this by considering first critical action research and then whole systems interventions.

At various points in this unfolding narrative interconnections have been identified: for example, between complex adaptive systems and political arenas, between complex adaptive systems and whole systems intervention, between principles of discourse and forms of intervention. None of these have sought isomorphism, or attempted to conflate ideas into a single grand melange. Nor have any been identified as 'foundations'. Nor, finally, has it been argued that any of the various themes and concepts cannot have value in their own right. Thus the Worldview is not a prerequisite for holding the Management Mindset [dynamic poise]. Equally it is possible to undertake whole systems interventions without an appreciation of critical theory, or to undertake critical action research without knowing about the Worldview developed here [as Chapter Ten has sought to illustrate].

Rather, the argument here is that each can reinforce and support each other. Thus the retrospective analysis of community action in Chapter Ten identified ways in which this work might have been enhanced if this wider pattern had been available to those involved at the time. Similarly, while it may have been possible to run some of the whole systems interventions discussed in Chapter Eleven without this [developing] pattern, it gave support and provided - for the author at least - a degree of security when leaping into the unknown: specifically trust in process which meant that it was not necessary to think carefully in advance about desired outcomes.

Similarly, the learning experience benefited from the theoretical ideas outlined earlier. This may be illustrated by considering the action research project which constituted Chapter Eleven: learning about, applying, reviewing and developing Whole Systems Interventions. The personal learning, and that which occurred in organisations, is summarised in Figure 12.1, using Bateson's Categories of Learning introduced in Chapter Five.

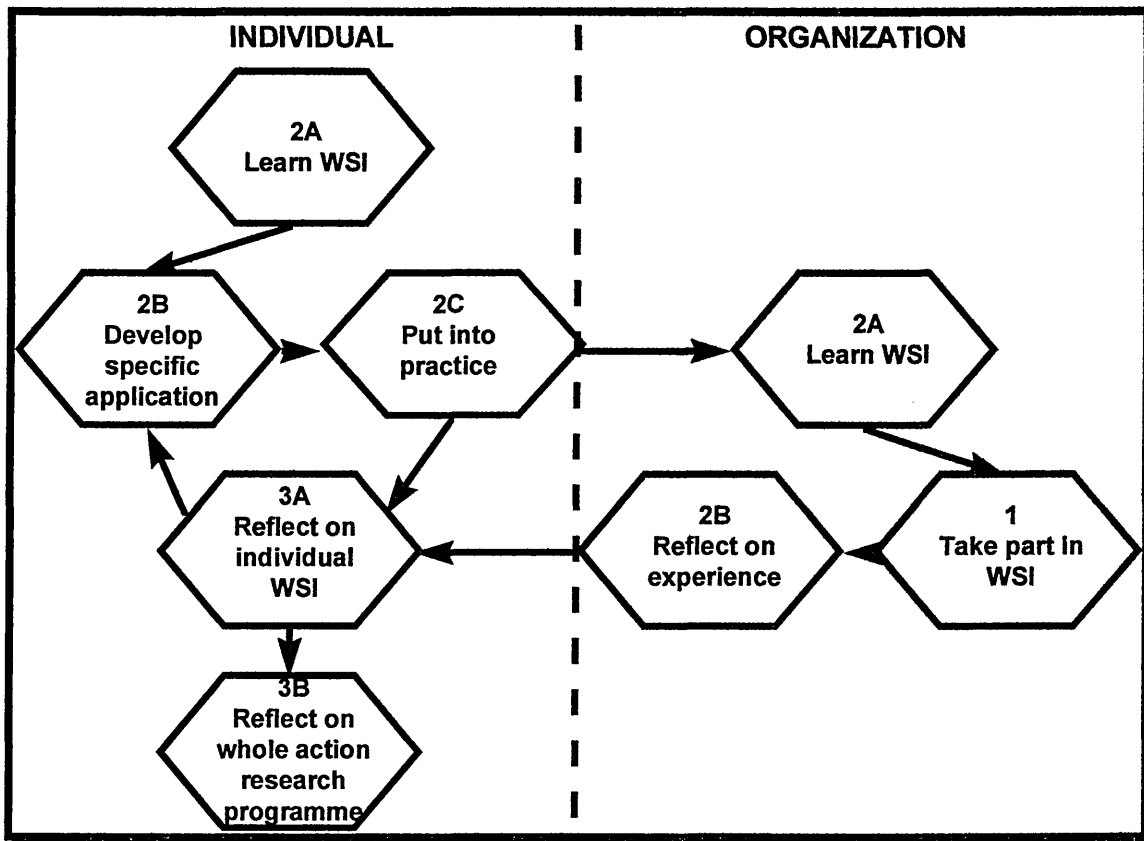


Figure 12.1 Levels of Learning about Whole Systems Intervention

mathematical model of the system, the model is used to predict the system's behavior under various conditions. The model is then compared to the actual system's behavior, and the results are used to refine the model and improve the system's performance.

In more detail, individual learning included the following:

- 2A Learning about colour thinking, and a variety of Whole Systems Interventions, including Future Search Conferences, Real Time Strategic Change and the Technology of Participation.
- 2B This involved first developing an overall approach to WSI, and then preparing an individual approach for each application, drawing from all three methods [FSC, RTSC, ToP]. It involved also developing an overall approach to colour thinking: ColourFlow Dialogue.
- 2C These were the practical applications discussed in Chapter Eleven
- 3A Each application brought new learning about how people learn, and how they learn to learn. Examples include:
 - I. Improvements to the guidance participants are given, such as being explicit about the potential 'rollercoaster' effect
 - II. Increasing appreciation of the role of power
 - III. Growing confidence in the process, reducing the need for extensive forward planning, and making it possible to improvise more, thus moving the balance to reduced order and increased 'chaos'
 - IV. A developing understanding about which process works best in which circumstances, for example when it is appropriate to use an existing strategy as the basis of the event, and when it is preferable to keep a more 'open sheet'
 - V. Understanding how best to ensure that the event is both outward and inward looking [through the role of external stakeholders, or on occasion through my own role]
 - VI. Identifying the role which traditional strategic tools can play, either before or during the event, in particular to help build a 'shared field of interaction'
 - VII. Developing the integration between WSI and the organisation's existing decision making structure
- 3B More generally, developing a feel for the ways in which a WSI can run as a political arena and complex adaptive system, and how within that creative intelligence can be encouraged, for example by making [implicit] use of the Protocols for Discourse. At the same time developing an understanding of the application of the ideas developed in Part Two, as reflected in Part Three of this thesis.

In these concluding reflections it may be helpful to consider a little further what has been learnt, by exploring the implications of the arguments in this thesis for strategic management and for management education, as well as identifying at least a few of the many limitations to the present work.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

The primary purpose of this thesis has been to explore alternatives to 'conventional' strategic management and organisational development. As we have seen, this approach is somewhat at variance with that offered in textbooks, and it is therefore little surprise that the themes which have been given prominence here receive little attention there. Thus, working our way through Part Two, we find that complexity theory rarely features in the texts: it will not be found in textbooks by Johnson and Scholes [1997]¹, Genus [1995], Lynch [1997]², Hussey [1994], Hill and Jones [1995], or Ellis and Williams [1995]. The exceptions, cited earlier, are Stacey [1996] and Morgan [1997].

Language, truth and logic are 'background' issues - by and large, the Cartesian Newtonian perspective is taken for granted: there is an objective environment out there, to be analysed through PEST and Five Force Analysis. Similarly, the organisation is an entity to be explored for its resources and capabilities. And crisp logic is an implicit part of the overall method adopted.

We have seen in Chapter Six their view on power, and finally critical theory has rarely been considered in formal texts [although, as we have seen, important contributions have been made in other management writing].

Despite such a vote of 'No interest', there is a case to be made for an approach developed from these themes, and this might best be done by comparing and contrasting with alternatives.

If we consider first strategic planning, then the contrast is sharp: accepted in full here is the critique offered by Mintzberg [1994]. Thinking and acting are seen as inseparable - the circles of action research, action learning, and the Strategy IDEA intertwine the two, and as we have seen, whole systems interventions require their integration. Similarly, the 'top down' orientation of conventional strategic management is rejected in favour of a participatory approach at all stages.

A popular alternative to strategic planning is logical incrementalism, closely linked to the notions of 'emergent strategy' and 'strategy as pattern' advocated by Mintzberg [ibid.]. These are certainly closer in spirit to the present discussion - indeed, to some extent they have formed a backcloth to the investigation, as mentioned in Chapter One, and challenge in particular the reductive tendencies of strategic planning. My discovery of these some years ago came as a revelation after considering the theoretical elegance, but practical futility, of strategic planning.

There are however differences in the present approach. First, time is of the essence. Logical incrementalism can be a slow process, sometimes leading to

¹ This does however contain a single reference to 'chaos theorists'

² Here, a single reference to 'chaotic systems'

YOUNG, J. C. 1963. 6431-101-12

Source: *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 1997, 92, 1037-1047.

[illegible]

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971) using a Shimadzu 1601 UV-Visible Spectrophotometer. The concentration of chlorophylls was expressed in $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$.

strategic drift. This is linked to a second difference. One of the reasons for timelags is that logical incrementalism is orchestrated by senior managers who 'sense' the contribution and responses of others [Quinn 1980]. They may also develop a network including 'deviant thinking' to ensure that alternative views are available. But in both cases these are orchestrated from the top, whereas using WSI gives this wider group of people a much more direct and overt involvement. It can, through this, compress the timescale.

Third, there is the perspective on the future. Logical incrementalism can easily lead to 'muddling through', and has been advocated as such by some of its proponents. The very term 'incrementalism' is problematic, especially in the public sector, where strategy has often been finance-driven, so that the coming year's programme has consisted of this year's programme with minor incremental changes [or more frequently, in my experience, decremental changes].

Strategic planning sees the future in terms of prediction and control; incrementalism can see the future as a minor variation on the present. As we have seen, both in the exploration of complex adaptive systems and of WSI, the perspective here is one of envisioning and enacting the future.

The final difference is in the treatment of power, which is the same in logical incrementalism as in conventional strategic management³. The question of Arenas of Power, and the challenge of Critical Theory, are never addressed: it remains a 'top-down' approach to strategy.

We can also compare the approach developed in this thesis with change management strategies. Linear approaches such as Lewin's classic 'Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze' are of course antithetical to that outlined here. Of greater relevance is the 'Critical Path To Corporate Renewal' set out by Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector [1990].

Their basic argument is that there is a fundamental flaw in most change programmes, which start from the belief that the place to begin is with the knowledge and attitudes of individuals: change is like a conversion experience. They argue that his theory gets the change process backward, because individual behaviour is powerfully shaped by the organisational roles that people play. The most effective way to change behaviour, therefore, is to put people into a new organisational context, which imposes new roles, responsibilities and relationships on them.

³ *"Barring a major crisis, a frontal attack on the old strategy could easily be interpreted as an attack on those who espoused it and brought the enterprise to its present levels of success. ... To bring the full force of the enterprise behind a new strategy, successful change managers carefully assessed and dealt with the most important centres of potential support or opposition to new thrusts. They tried to get key people behind their concepts whenever possible, coopt or neutralise serious opposition if necessary, or find zones of indifference where the proposition would not be disastrously opposed. Best of all, they sought no-lose situations that would activate all important players positively in their own self-interest."*

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The contrasting assumptions are illustrated in Table 12.1. While their ideas have much to offer, we see here again the dominance of crisp two-valued thinking: either change beliefs, or change behaviour. Action research, action learning, whole systems intervention and ColourFlow Dialogue target both. Thus WSI, as we have seen, disrupts the accepted practice of meetings, and challenges hierarchical presumptions. At the same time, it invites people to work together, sharing their views and listening to others. Similarly, ColourFlow Dialogue seeks to change people's normal behaviour patterns⁴, while several of the colours deliberately require them to suspend or inquire into their beliefs. The approach developed here incorporates a challenge to linear conceptions of cause and effect, seeing it instead as a circular process, as shown in Figure 12.2.

TABLE 12.1 CONTRASTING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CHANGE	
PROGRAMMATIC CHANGE	TASK ALIGNMENT
Problems in behaviour are a function of individual knowledge, attitudes and beliefs	Individual knowledge, attitudes and beliefs are shaped by recurring patterns of behavioural interactions
The primary target of renewal should be the content of attitudes and ideas; actual behaviour should be secondary	The primary target of renewal should be behaviour; attitudes and ideas should be secondary
Behaviour can be isolated and changed individually	Problems in behaviour come from a circular pattern, but the effects of the organisational system on the individual are greater than those of the individual on the system
The target for renewal should be at the individual level	The target for renewal should be at the level of roles, responsibilities and relationships
Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector [1990].	

Finally, we can draw some comparisons with a number of writers who have advocated 'new paradigms'. Trist, for example, has not been silent since his early work. In a contribution with Ketchum [1992] he develops the ideas first emerging in his study with Emery of coalface work. They see this as a new paradigm for organisational effectiveness, as shown in Table 12.2. It will be seen that the spirit of their approach, not surprisingly given Trist's work on WSI, is very much in keeping with that of this thesis: what is missing is a detailed consideration of the power relationships which detract from this shift. There is also, of course, the danger in any 'contrast' table of polarising the debate: reverting to crisp logic. Thus in the present approach competition is not replaced by cooperation: in practice both will be present. Similarly, the public accountability requirements in local government and other public services [and increasingly perhaps in the private sector as ethical and

⁴ As an example, one group who had just been taught the method were doing a two stage session beginning with White thinking, then moving to Red. One person began to express their opinions in the first stage, whereupon another asked whether they were in danger of moving prematurely into Red thinking. The former agreed and stuck to White. Thus the normal intermingling of the two was disrupted [there is of course the danger of this being seen as an argument for 'value-free' fact; in practice, both red thinking and grey thinking can explore the value assumptions underlying supposed 'facts']

environmental considerations grow in importance] mean that external controls are required as well as, not instead of, internal controls.

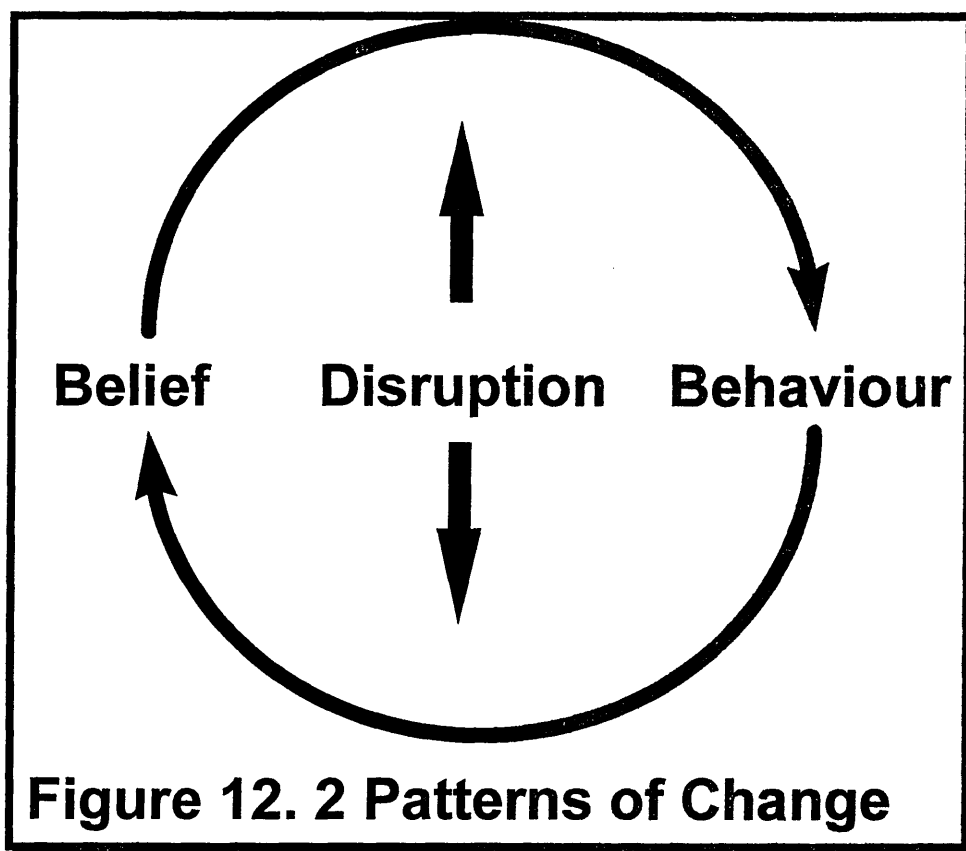


TABLE 12.2 EFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONS	
OLD PARADIGM [Early 20th century]	NEW PARADIGM [Late 20th century]
The technological imperative	Joint optimization of the technical and social systems
People as an extension of the machine	People as complementary to the machine
People as expendable spare parts	People as a resource to be developed
Maximum task breakdown, simple narrow skills	Optimum task grouping, multiple broad skills
External control [supervisors, specialist staffs, procedures]	Internal controls [self regulating subsystems]
Tall organisation chart, autocratic style	Flat organisation chart, participative style
Competition, gamesmanship	Collaboration, collegiality
Organisation's purposes only	Members' and society's purposes also
Alienation: 'It's only a job'	Commitment: 'It's <i>my</i> job'
Low risk-taking	Innovation
Ketchum and Trist 1992	

MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

As we have seen, the four phase cycle is common to Critical Action Research and Learning, and to the Strategy IDEA. This suggests a framework for a strategic management development programme which incorporates the ideas developed in this thesis. Within an overall approach using action learning, there would be an integrated action research activity, beginning with the identification of issues of concern within the organisation[s]. Over the period of the management development programme, participants would be actively involved in thinking through these issues, and applying their ideas to them. The issues chosen, while relevant to the organisation, would be such that they had a wider applicability - thus the learning involved would be transferable to other organisations. If this is part of a wider programme, such as a postgraduate degree, then they also need to embrace a number of management 'disciplines' - a narrow focus, for example on human resource management - would not achieve the wider educational objectives.

The strategic management literature would be introduced within this framework. We need to bear in mind the implications of information technology, which reduces the need for input by lecture of the basic ideas, since these can be provided through, for example, CD-ROMS. At the time of writing I am aware of only one such CD-ROM on business strategy [MBE 1996]. In format this is disappointing - it is little more than a series of screens which replace pages, with limited cross referencing or interactive opportunities. In effect, it is a book on a disk. However, the imagination shown in other CD-ROM's indicates their full potential in setting out material in accessible ways, and it is fair to assume that this imagination will find its way into educational material.

Lectures, therefore, need not be informational - they should instead be inspirational, providing the stimulus to students to investigate the literature⁵. Overall, a programme for an in-house activity within a single organisation would integrate WSI, action research and learning, and more formal education, providing a workshop based approach which can relate closely to the current strategic needs of the organization. Through the various concepts and frameworks discussed in this thesis, it would explore the need for self-awareness, the nature of multiple perspectives, and the value alternative thinking.

Turning to a more conventional course, one for corporate strategy within a formal degree [for example, and MBA], Table 12.3 indicates the content for such a programme recommended by a textbook on the subject - it is not difficult to find others.

Such courses are high on information provision, high on analysis. They present a top-down approach to finding the 'best way' to strategy in a positivist,

⁵ I have in mind here the effect which Feyerabend had on me as an undergraduate - persuading me as a result of one lecture to investigate Newton's Optics, not the most exciting book in the world.

objective environment. Change plays a minor role: the emphasis is on the preparation of, not the implementation of, strategy.

Table 12.3 A Course in Corporate Strategy

1	Corporate strategy
2	A review of theory and practice
3	Analysing the environment
4	Analysing the market
5	Analysing competitors
6	Analysing customers
7	Analysing resources
8	Analysing human resources
9	Analysing financial resources
10	Analysing operations resources
11	Background issues - the purpose of the organisation
12	Mission and objectives
13	Resource-based strategic options
14	Market-based strategic options
15-16	Strategy evaluation and selection
17	Finding the strategic route forward
18	Strategy, structure and style
19	Resource allocation, strategic planning and control
20	Organisational structure and people issues
21	Managing strategic change
22	Building a cohesive corporate strategy
	Lynch 1997

A course following the philosophy developed in this thesis would be more tentative - and more challenging. It could have the approach which is first summarised in Table 12.4, and then outlined in more detail below.

Table 12.4 A Different Approach to Strategic Management

	PERSPECTIVES ON STRATEGY
1	The Integration Of All Managers Into Strategy Making And Implementation, And The Importance Of Process
2	The Integration Of Strategy Creation And Change Management
3	The Resource Based Approach
4	Control And Power
5	Embedding Strategy
	EMERGENT THEMES
6	Globalization
7	Partnership Strategy
8	Ecology And Ethics
9	New Organisational Forms
	EXTERNAL INFLUENCES
10	Postmodernism And Late Modernity
11	Complexity Theory And Fuzzy Logic
12	Critical Theory
	MAKING IT HAPPEN
13	Whole Systems Intervention
14	The Pattern That Connects

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PERSPECTIVES ON STRATEGY

1 The Integration Of All Managers Into Strategy Making And Implementation, And The Importance Of Process The introductory theme is that 'top-down' perspective on strategy is no longer appropriate [if indeed it ever was]. Strategy is now seen as a process [continuously in the making] which involves all managers. This is varyingly described as the 'grass roots model' [Mintzberg 1994] and 'middle-up-down management' [Nonaka 1995]. It is a distinct move from the perspective which identifies corporate strategy as the preserve of top management, with middle/ front line managers confined to operational strategy, although equally there is no pretence that 'all are equal' in the process [see for example Bartlett and Ghoshal 1994, 1998].

This change in emphasis makes strategy more relevant to those involved, for it implies that strategy is something with which they should be actively concerned, whatever their current or potential job. There are therefore several implications for the teaching of strategy, challenging people to consider their role at all levels of management. The conflict of this approach with the reality faced by many managers [whose superiors are perhaps still rooted in the classical approach] is itself an important basis for discussion and development of the theme.

2 The Integration Of Strategy Creation And Change Management Here we take issue with the linear perspective on strategy [formulation - implementation] rooted in the Taylorist conception of scientific management. Change management is not something separate to strategy. This again raises interesting questions for the teaching of strategic management, since any unit taught over a number of sessions must to some extent follow a linear path. Textbooks face the same problem, providing a step-by-step framework which equips students with a number of valuable strategic tools and techniques - but in so doing provides them also with a view of strategy itself as a series of relatively discrete, sequential activities. It is necessary therefore to confront this.

3 The Resource Based Approach As one book characterizes it, this is *"an approach which has a long provenance, but has only recently come into prominence in strategic thinking as the dominant strategy paradigm of the 1990s"* [Segal-Horn 1998:177]. While questioning her view that it is now dominant, there is no doubt that this approach has brought into sharper focus strategic questions concerning resource acquisition and use, and the integration of resources to create capabilities and core competences.

Closely related to this has been the growing emphasis on resources which go beyond the traditional three [land, labour and capital]. In particular, information, knowledge [Nonaka 1995] and other intangible resources are identified - and of course they do not have the same zero-sum characteristics as the former three. In turn, this links to the debate on learning in organisations [Senge 1990, 1994] and the implications for strategy, as we have seen throughout this thesis.

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This is an area in which neat analytical tools are less in evidence, compared with traditional competitive analysis. It therefore provides different challenges in teaching, encouraging participants to move away from the static 2x2 grids for which strategy has become infamous.

4 Control And Power In the preface to the revised edition of his book on corporate strategy Ansoff commented that *"the past thirty years of experience have shown that strategic planning works poorly, if it works at all, when it is confined to analytic decision-making, without recognition of the enormous influence which the firm's leadership, power structure, and organisational dynamics exert on both decisions and implementations."* [1987:13]

Discussion of the relationship between power and strategy has become more prominent in the past decade, and its importance has been highlighted in this thesis. There are several conflicting themes here. On the one hand it is argued that power-differentials in organisations must be reduced, freeing them from the dead hand of bureaucracy. Creativity and innovation are seen as essential features of any organisation which is to survive and prosper, and the conditions that foster these are seen to include a liberated workforce. Equally, it is argued that managers should use influence rather than control, as we move from vertical to lateral structures, both within and between organisations.

On the other hand, power differentials are increasing in many organisations, and control is reinforced. We see this in the McDonaldization of society [not least in higher education, with the pressures for standardised provision], and in new forms of work practice such as call centres. Again, these complexities provide the basis for teaching, drawing also upon the role of constructive conflict.

5 Embedding Strategy It is not only the role of power within strategy that is important: strategy is itself a matter of power, and does not operate in neutral terrain. Thus Knights and Morgan [quoted in Segal-Horn 1998:418] suggest seven reasons why the discourse of corporate strategy became dominant:

- It provides managers with a rationalization of their successes and failures
- It sustains and enhances the prerogatives of management and negates alternative perspectives on organisations
- It generates a sense of personal and organisational security for managers
- It reflects and sustains a strong sense of gendered masculinity for male management
- It demonstrates managerial 'rationality' to colleagues, customers, competitors, government and other significant people in the environment, who are likely to be looking for such signals
- It facilitates and legitimizes the exercise of power
- It creates a language and practice which enables organisational members to construct an identity for themselves.

Thus discussion about strategy needs to be embedded in this wider debate about its role in management - and the role of management and managers.

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This links to the critique of strategic planning developed by Mintzberg [1994], and to the debate on the role of language in management [Tannen 1991; Eccles and Nohria 1992].

EMERGENT THEMES

Identified here are four themes in strategy which have become more prominent in recent years - and are likely to be even more so in the future.

6 Globalization It is now well established that strategy cannot be considered from a 'one country' perspective, and this has reinforced concerns about the traditional approach to corporate strategy which is seen to be based primarily on an Anglo-Saxon perspective. Multiple perspectives on strategic thinking and their implications for managers, as well as multiple perspectives on the nature and extent of globalization itself, provide another basis for debate.

7 Partnership Strategy The strong focus on competition which was a feature of strategy in the 1980s has yielded to the recognition of a more complex pattern involving interaction between competition and cooperation, with the rapid development of strategic alliances and joint ventures in the private sector, internal markets and externalization in the public sector, and partnerships straddling the two [is there any field of activity today which the government does not consider ripe for partnership?!]. This is of course linked to theme 4, for in such contexts influence and relational contracting become central.

8 Ecology and Ethics Look up the word 'environment' in a strategy text and the chances are that you will find a discussion of industrial sectors, competitive forces and PEST analysis. Rarely is there discussion of what most people understand to be the environment - ecological issues. These can no longer be ignored, and they need to be considered in relationship to the wider ethical issues facing strategic management.

9 New Organisational Forms This theme flows from all the above. Looking back 15 years to Mintzberg's 'structures in five's', we can see that many current developments go beyond these - for example, networks, clusters, the virtual organisation, new managerial theory [Bartlett and Ghoshal 1998]. This discussion needs to be integrated into strategic debate.

There is a related dimension here. The simple distinction between public and private sectors has been replaced by a world of fuzzy boundaries and the profusion of organisations which fit neatly into neither category - QUANGOs, Housing Associations, Colleges and Universities, Charities, Trusts, and other not-for-profit ventures. While much of strategic management is generic, the specific requirements of managers working in these arenas needs to be considered [as does the role in strategic management of the growing number of people who act as directors of organisations where requirements of public service and profit are interwoven].

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

The debate on all aspects of management has been enriched in recent years by streams of social, political, scientific and philosophical theory. These have already become prominent in teaching of strategic management, but this can be taken further.

10 Postmodernism and Late Modernity The debate about postmodernism is not one of 'either/or', although participants sometimes see it that way. It is important to outline the implications for strategic management of a variety of views taken, ranging from the most thoroughgoing postmodernists to those who argue that we still in a period of late modernity.

11 Complexity Theory and Fuzzy Logic Complexity theory has on occasion been put forward as the alternative to the rational approach. Once again, this dichotomous approach is unhelpful. Complexity theory can enrich understanding of both strategic thinking and strategic action, but it is neither a panacea, nor the new 'right way' to do strategy. Fuzzy logic, with its general challenge to two-valued thinking, likewise extends the viewpoint from which strategic management can be assessed.

12 Critical Theory And Constructivism Critical theory is a recent influence on strategic management, but one whose relevance is likely to increase, not least because of the interlinking it can offer with a critical stance to both action learning and action research. In relation to constructivism, Weick in particular has developed a number of implications over the past two decades, with his discussions of enactment and sensemaking in organisations.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

13 Whole Systems Interventions This would review the types of approach developed in Chapters Nine and Eleven of the thesis, considering the extent to which the entire relevant community can be involved in the development, as well as the implementation, of strategy, and the limits to this approach.

14 The Pattern That Connects The final session would provide an opportunity to review the various strands, and consider the extent to which there is here a pattern that connects.

LIMITATIONS

There is an old adage that the more we know, the more we know we don't know. Here it has been a case of "the more I inquire, the more I know I want to inquire". The limitations of the present work have become ever more obvious as it has proceeded.

Thus the treatment of Critical Theory has been confined to Habermas' early work and its later expansion by other thinkers and practitioners. This means that there is very little on his treatment of language - which potentially links to the ideas which Maturana has developed as he explored the implications of autopoiesis.

The treatment of epistemology and ontology has been cursory - there is much more to be said about the 'enactive' approach and the implications of thinking living and being without foundations. Despite the focus on power, Foucault's work has not figured, nor has much been said on postmodernism.

The iteration between theory and practice has meant that some ideas remain speculative. For example, the question of how best to embed WSI within existing organisational practices has been addressed, and a number of ideas developed in the previous Chapter; but this has not been fully resolved. Similarly, the use of critical action research and action learning, especially in inter-organisational settings, has been explored, but there is clearly further work to do in developing its use in management.

In addition to these limitations in what there is in the thesis, there are also potentially rich seams of exploration which are not present. Two examples may be given. First, the discussion of power has focused on its operation within and between organisations, but it may be that the approach developed here could also make a contribution toward current thinking on politics more generally. This is illustrated in Table 12.5, where Giddens' [1994] six point framework for a reconstituted radical politics is compared with ideas developed in this thesis.

The second example concerns the environment - not the very limited view of this used in strategic thinking, but the wider ecosystem. As Shrivastava [1994] has argued, this limited view is CASTRATED - that is to say, it is characterised by Competition, Abstraction, Shallowness, Theoretical immaturity, Reductionism, Anthropocentrism, Time independent (ahistorical), Exploitable and Denaturalized. We can see in this acronym many of the characteristics of the Cartesian Newtonian Paradigm. The approach developed here rejects such an exploitative perspective, emphasizing instead coevolution, and integration of the various levels of complex adaptive systems, of which the ecosystem is, for practical purposes, the most embracing one in which organisations exist. There is an encouraging growth of interest in the interplay between organisations and the ecosystem [see for example Schmidheiny [1992], Stead and Stead [1992], Welford [1995], Welford and Starkey [1996]], to which the ideas developed in this thesis might contribute.

The only defence in relation to the above criticisms and limitations is that the boundaries had to be drawn somewhere, and ultimately, in the choice of what is covered and what is not, they had to be crisp!

from the beginning of the 19th century, the first of which was the 'Great Exhibition' of 1851. This was a major event in the history of the world, and it was the first time that a large number of people from different parts of the world had gathered together in one place. The exhibition was held in the Crystal Palace, a large glass and iron structure that was built specifically for the occasion. It was a great success, and it showed the world that it was possible to bring people from different parts of the world together in one place.

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Table 12.5 A Framework for Politics

Giddens' Framework	Themes in this Thesis
There must be concern to repair damaged solidarities, by reconciling autonomy and interdependence in the various spheres of social life, including the economic domain. Enhanced solidarity depends on what might be termed active trust, which has to be won.	An important aspect of WSI is community building, both the immediate 'whole world in the room' of the event, and the wider outcome from the experience. However, the individual perspective is valued as much as the collective. The development of trust is also important in these approaches.
Emancipatory politics is a politics of life chances and hence is central to the creation of autonomy of action	Emancipatory politics has been central to the argument for critical action research and learning
In conjunction with the generalizing of social reflexivity, active trust implies a conception of generative politics, which seeks to allow individuals and groups to make things happen, rather than have things happen to them, in the context of overall social concerns and goals	All the methodologies explored here are intended to help people make things happen in and between organisations, rather than merely implementing strategy determined elsewhere
The shortcomings of liberal democracy in a globalizing, reflexive social order suggest the need to further more radical forms of democratization. The deliberative approach accepts that there are many questions either which have no single correct answer or where solutions are thoroughly contested	Dialogue has been one of the approaches used here, for example in ColourFlow Dialogue. Richer forms of discourse are important in both action research and WSI, as is the recognition that there is not necessarily a correct solution, especially when different perspectives are involved
We should be prepared to rethink the welfare state in a fundamental way - and in relation to wider issues of global poverty	There is no correspondence to this, although it is worth noting that many applications of WSI have been in the community sphere, while critical action research, as we have seen, has roots in struggles against global poverty
A programme of radical politics must be prepared to confront the role of violence in human affairs. In any social circumstances there are only a limited number of ways in which a clash of values can be dealt with - geographical segregation, exit, dialogue, or the use of force or violence	Many of the approaches considered here are intended to embrace dissensus as much as consensus. For example, the thinking behind fair process is that if people feel they have had a fair say, then they are more likely to accept decisions with which they do not agree, thereby reducing the likelihood of resistance, sabotage or violence

CONCLUSIONS

As the above comments imply, the work presented here is within the spirit of a Scientific Research Programme as outlined by Lakatos - and they are never complete. But it has at least raised the possibility that a participatory approach to strategic management is viable and worth pursuing. It has been something of an irony that this thesis has been written up at a time when the organisation for which I work has displayed all the classic patterns of an exclusionary organisation, creating new layers of hierarchy and new systems of accountability within a Control Arena. As we have seen, there are some positive signs that democracy is gaining favour in the workplace - but the tendencies toward McDonaldization are also very strong.

Perhaps, therefore, it is best to end on a cautionary note, by turning to Harvey's analysis of the film *Blade Runner*. *"The signs of third world systems of labour organisation and informal labour practices are everywhere ... indicating intricate relations of sub-contracting between highly disaggregated firms as well as with the Tyrell Corporation itself. The sense of the city at street level is chaotic in every respect. ... The chaos of signs, of competing significations and messages, suggests a condition fragmentation and uncertainty at street level that emphasized many facets of postmodern aesthetics. The aesthetic of Blade Runner, says Bruno, is the result 'of recycling, fusion of levels, discontinuous signifiers, explosion of boundaries, and erosion.'* Yet there is also an overwhelming sense of some hidden organising power - the Tyrell Corporation, the authorities who commission Deckard to his task without offering any choice, the rapid descent of the powers of law an order when necessary to establish street control. The chaos is tolerated, precisely because it seems so unthreatening to overall control." [Harvey 1989: 311]

This vision - of chaos within control - is a salutary comment for those who consider possible a simple integration into management of the lessons of complexity theory, without taking account of the nature of power.

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APPENDICES

The Appendices have two purposes. Those for Chapters 4-9 provide additional theoretical material, drawn from other authors. Those for Chapters 10 and 11 provide additional background to the case studies, and the output of several events which were run as part of those case studies. The latter illustrate the type of material which emerges from such events.

APPENDICES TO PART TWO

- 4.1 The Language of Complexity
- 4.2 Stacey on CAS
- 5.1 Colour thinking
- 6.1 Material on Power
- 8.1 Strategic Management in Local Government

APPENDICES TO PART THREE

- 9.1 Action Research
- 9.2 Action Learning
- 10.1 Slums on the Drawing Board
- 10.2 SUNREG
- 11.1 Summary of Future Search: Rioja Arts Group
- 11.2 Summary of Future Search: Department of Culture
- 11.3 Outputs from ColourFlow Dialogue meetings: Wimbledon
- 11.4 Summary of Future Search: District Labour Party
- 11.5 Sheffield City Hall: Looking to the Future
- 11.6 Summary of Future Search: City Hall

	Where we have been	Where we might be going
cus of meaning	We acquire meaning in terms of our skin-bounded self	We acquire meaning in terms of the relationships we establish with others
ture of reality	Social reality exists independent of particular people	Social reality is an artifact of particular people which they are continuously constructing
ople and culture	We are products of our experience	Our experiences are our products
sponse to ange	Rapid social change is a transient phenomenon	Rapid social change is a permanent phenomenon
icacy criterion	The problem is basically one of reform	The problem is basically one of institutionalising change procedures
ganisational cus	Manage the inside of an organisation well, and it will be possible to have effective external relations	Manage the boundary transactions of an organisation well, and it will be possible to have effective internal relations
anning strategy	Plan before you act	Act as a way of planning
ganisational mmas	Making stable programmes, organisations and policies flexible and adaptive is the critical issue. Assuring responsive performances for the <i>unique</i> is the problem	Making the flux represented by programmes, organisations and policies stable is the critical issue. Assuring responsive performances for the <i>average</i> is the problem
tural state	Organisations are inherently stable	Organisations are inherently changing
ange strategy	It is easiest to produce change by focusing on the parts or components	It is easiest to produce change by focusing on the interdependencies between parts or components
ntralisation and centralisation	Centralise or decentralise large organisations on the basis of which is least costly	Centralise and decentralise large organisations simultaneously
nflict expression	Avoid and suppress the expression of conflict [Maintenance oriented]	Cultivate and facilitate the expression of conflict [Adaption oriented]
nsensus and frontation	Consensus is necessary, and confrontation is tolerable [as long as it is transient]	Confrontation is necessary, and consensus is tolerable [as long as great premium is not placed upon it]
Biller: Knowledge into action 1969		

APPENDIX 4.1

THE LANGUAGE OF COMPLEXITY

CHAOS

Chaos theory has proved an exciting development to many seeking a new approach, with its startling discoveries on the relationship between simple, apparently deterministic, laws and unpredictable behaviour - within which predictable patterns can emerge. As discussion of the nature of chaos theory is already available in the management literature, it is not necessary to do that here. Instead I concentrate on the theory of complexity, which has been linked with chaos theory as follows : *"Complexity means something more subtle than complicated and messy. It means 'complicated but organised'. ... Complexity is in many ways the opposite of chaos. Chaos theory shows that simple rules can sometimes produce disorganised behaviour; complexity describes how complicated rules can sometimes produce organised behaviour. Both are part of one grand picture - the relation between laws of nature and patterns of behaviour."* [Stewart]

MUTUALISM AND COEVOLUTION

The final strand of new thinking to be explored here concerns the interplay between competition and cooperation. This issue is becoming much more important with the development of new forms of organisation and styles of working, yet such strands of thinking have been restricted in management thinking by the dominant role of competitive strategy. Complexity theory reinforces the need to think more widely. Thus Capra argues that *"Detailed studies of ecosystems over the past decades has shown quite clearly that most relationships between living organisms are essentially cooperative ones, characterised by coexistence and interdependence, and symbiotic in various degrees. Although there is competition, it usually takes place within a wider context of cooperation, so that the larger system is kept in balance. Even predator-prey relationships that are destructive for the immediate prey are generally beneficent for both species. This insight is in sharp contrast to the views of the Social Darwinists, who saw life exclusively in terms of competition, struggle and destruction. Their view of nature has helped create a philosophy that legitimated exploitation and the disastrous impact of our technology on the natural environment. But such a view has no scientific justification, because it fails to perceive the integrative and cooperative principles that are essential aspects of the ways in which living systems organise themselves at all levels."* [302]

The contrast to new-Darwinian theory goes further: *"The classical theory sees evolution as moving toward an equilibrium state, with organisms adapting themselves ever more perfectly to their environment. According to the systems view, evolution operates far from equilibrium and unfolds through an interplay of adaptation and creation. Moreover, the systems theory takes into account that the environment is, itself, a living system capable of adaptation and evolution. Thus the focus shifts from the evolution of an organism to the coevolution of organism plus environment."* [311]

As with autopoiesis, we can use this to view the interrelationship between resource analysis and environmental analysis through a new lens: they are not distinct, but coevolve.

COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS

As this concept has been explored in the main text, it suffices here to add a few further thoughts. Kauffman and others have proposed that organisms change how strongly they interact with others in such a way that they reach the boundary between order and randomness, thereby maximising the average fitness of the organisms. *"It turns out that in a wide variety of coupled systems the highest mean fitness is at the phase transition between order and chaos."* [3]

Langton argues that : *"You should look at systems in terms of how they behave instead of how they're made. When you do, what you find are the two extremes of order and chaos. In between the two extremes, at a kind of abstract phase transition called 'the edge of chaos', you also find complexity: a class of behaviours in which the components of the system never quite lock into place, yet never quite dissolve into turbulence, either. These are the systems that are both stable enough to store information, and yet evanescent enough to transmit. These are the systems that can be organised to perform complex computation, to react to the world, to be spontaneous, adaptive, and alive."*

And Farmer suggests that : *"Healthy economies and healthy societies alike have to keep order and chaos in balance - and not just a wishy-washy, average, middle of the road kind of balance, either. Like a living cell, they have to regulate themselves with a dense web of feedbacks and regulation, at the same time that they leave plenty of room for creativity, change and response to new conditions. Evolution thrives in systems with a bottom-up organization, which gives rise to flexibility. But at the same time, evolution has to channel the bottom-up approach in a way that doesn't destroy the organization. There has to be a hierarchy of control - with information flowing from the bottom up as well as from the top down. The dynamics of complexity at the edge of chaos seems to be ideal for this kind of behaviour."*

COMPLEXITY

Chaos theory was one of the first ideas from recent scientific theory to capture the imagination of some managers - the title was no doubt a major reason for this! But beyond chaos is complexity, and a major theme emerging is that of the boundary between order and chaos - the region where there is complexity. Complexity theory focuses upon the whole system, seeing it as a network of interacting components.

Systems which are poised between the two extremes of a clockwork universe and chaotic motion behave in a way that is complicated, but which shows hints of pattern. As Stewart comments: *"These systems seem to be at the transition between order and chaos. A central tenet of complexity theory is that selection or learning drives systems towards this edge of chaos. Systems that are too simple do not survive in a competitive environment because more sophisticated systems can outwit them by exploiting their regularities. But systems that are too random do not survive either. It pays in survival terms to be as complicated as possible, without becoming totally structureless."*

As is clear from this description, such systems function 'far from equilibrium'. Capra argues that living organisms are open systems that continually operate far from equilibrium, and this characteristic is essential for self-organisation.

Stewart provides a useful explanation of complexity. He first reminds us that the traditional scientific approach to any system - simple, complicated or complex - is reductionism. *"Take the system to pieces, try to understand all the bits, and work out how they fit together and influence one another. But for complex systems, this leaves many questions unanswered. In particular, it misses many of the most interesting-scale patterns."* Complexity theory focuses upon the whole system, seeing it as a network of interacting components, without attention to the finer detail.

While there is no fully articulated mathematical theory of complexity as yet, there are a number of emerging general patterns. The complex adaptive systems involved possess many similar, interacting subunits, while the adaptation involves learning or competitive selection, and they are therefore in a state of evolution. Stewart cites both rainforests and economies as example: in each, self-organising behaviour is an important feature.

One of the implications of this approach is a healthier attitude toward quantification, which is no longer seen as the *sine qua non* of scientific endeavour. Thus Gell-Mann refers to a lecture he once gave to the students of the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, when he explained that *"mathematics would be useful to them defensively, so that they would not be snowed by studies in which relatively trivial matters had been quantified and carefully analysed, while dominant values were set to zero for convenience. We need a balanced and humane use of mathematics in these cases, and people who have not been trained in defensive mathematics will have difficulty defending their sound qualitative judgements against the onslaught of pseudo-quantitative studies."* [in Pines 1987]

DISSIPATIVE STRUCTURES

The term 'dissipative structure' was introduced by Ilya Prigogine to describe physical-chemical reaction systems which maintain energy and matter penetration by way of exchange with the environment and which give rise to the self-organisation of globally stable structures over extended periods of time [Jantsch]. These structures show two different types of behaviour. When they are near their equilibrium, order is destroyed, but when far from equilibrium order is maintained or emerges. They import free energy and new reaction participants, and export [dissipate] entropy and reaction end products. Thus *"a dissipative structure continuously renews itself and maintains a particular dynamic regime, a globally stable space-time structure. It seems to be interested solely in its own integrity and self-renewal."* [Jantsch 1980:31]

Wheatley describes dissipation as part of the process by which the system lets go of its present form so that it can re-emerge in a form better suited to the demands of the present environment. Thus disturbances in the environment play a crucial role in creating new forms of order. *"As the environment becomes more complex, generating new and different information, it provokes the system into a response. New information enters the system as a small fluctuation that varies from the norm. If the system pays attention to the fluctuation, the information grows in strength as it interacts with the system and is fed back on itself [a process of autocatalysis]. Finally, the information grows to such a level of disturbance that the system can no longer ignore it. At this point, jarred by so much internal disturbance and far from equilibrium, the system in its current form falls apart. But this disintegration does not signal the death of the system. In most cases the system can reconfigure itself at a higher level of complexity, one better able to deal with the new environment."* [Wheatley 19-20]

Jantsch provides the following table to contrast three classes of systems, corresponding to three levels of inquiry which Prigogine has characterised as Classical or Newtonian dynamics, thermodynamics, and dissipative structures.

Characteristic system aspect	Structure-preserving systems		Evolving systems
Total system dynamics	Static [no dynamics]	Conservative self-organisation	Dissipative self-organisation [evolution]
Structure	Equilibrium structure, permanent	Devolution toward equilibrium structure	Dissipative structure [far from equilibrium], evolving
Function	No function or allopoiesis	Reference to equilibrium state	Autopoiesis [self-reference]
Logical organisation	Statistical oscillations in reversible processes	Irreversible processes in direction of equilibrium state	Cyclical [hypercyclical] irreversible sense of cycle rotation
Internal state	Equilibrium	Near equilibrium	Non-equilibrium
Relationship with environment	Isolated or open [growth possible]		Open [continuous balanced exchange]

FAR FROM EQUILIBRIUM: AT THE EDGE OF CHAOS

Complexity is much concerned with the "edge of chaos". In the classic Mandelbrot set the area of greatest interest is the boundary between numbers whose iteration in the equation leads to infinity, and those which lead to a fixed value. This boundary area is infinitely complex because however close we look there is equally rich detail. Systems can be viewed in an analogous way, and those which are poised between the two extremes of a clockwork universe and chaotic motion behave in a way that is complicated, but which shows hints of pattern. As Stewart comments: *"These systems seem to be at the transition between order and chaos. A central tenet of complexity theory is that selection or learning drives systems towards this edge of chaos. Systems that are too simple do not survive in a competitive environment because more sophisticated systems can outwit them by exploiting their regularities. But systems that are too random do not survive either. It pays in survival terms to be as complicated as possible, without becoming totally structureless."* [Stewart]

As is clear from this description, such systems function 'far from equilibrium'. Capra argues that living organisms are open systems that continually operate far from equilibrium, and this characteristic is essential for self-organisation. But he points to an important linguistic problem here: *"At the same time these self-organising systems have a high degree of stability, and this is where we run into difficulties with conventional language. ... The stability of self-organising systems is utterly dynamic and must not be confused with equilibrium. It consists in maintaining the same overall structure in spite of ongoing changes and replacements of its components."* [291-2]

FEEDBACK LOOPS AND INCREASING RETURNS

Feedback loops are nothing new, but the focus in the past has been on negative, or dampening, feedback loops, in which the impact of a stimulus gradually dissipates.

Thus the principle decreasing returns has been an important component of neo-classical economics. It is not that economists were unaware of increasing returns, rather that they could not cope with the challenge, and therefore employed negative heuristic. Arthur comments: *"Marshall thought very deeply on increasing returns. But he didn't have the mathematical tools to do much with it in an analytical way. In particular, Marshall recognised even then that increasing returns could lead to multiple possible outcomes in the economy, which meant that the fundamental problem for economists was to understand precisely how one solution rather than another came to be selected."* [Arthur] Without a theory to explain this, economists were unable to incorporate increasing returns. Yet many of the phenomena most obvious to those practising economic development are manifest examples of increasing returns. The relative success of the economies of Baden-Wurttemberg, Silicon Valley, Route 128 and the M4 corridor are all examples of the creation of self-reinforcing critical mass through positive returns [See Darwin 1990 for an extensive discussion of this !]

Arthur links this to an important issue related to capability theory. Intangible resources - and in particular those concerned with knowledge acquisition and use - are more and more the critical resources which define strategic capability. It is precisely these, Arthur argues, which are subject to increasing returns. *"Increasing-returns economics has strong parallels with modern nonlinear physics [instead of the pre-20th century physical models that underlie conventional economics]. The parts of the economy that are resource-based [agriculture, bulk-goods productions, mining] are still for the most part subject to diminishing returns. Here conventional economics rightly holds sway. The parts of the market that are knowledge-based, on the other hand, are solely subject to increasing returns. Products such as computers, pharmaceuticals, missiles, aircraft, automobiles, software, telecommunications equipment or fibre optics are complicated to design and to manufacture. They require large initial investments in research, development and tooling, but once sales begin, incremental production is relatively cheap."*

"Not only do the costs of producing high-technology products fall as a company makes more of them, but the benefits of using them increase. Many items such as computers or telecommunications equipment work in networks that require compatibility; when one brand gains a significant market share, people have a strong incentive to buy more of the same product so as to be able to exchange information with those using it already."

The development of economic clusters in particular locations is an example of this. One or two firms in a new industry choose a location, and this influences others to do the same, leading to a process of concentration through positive feedback and self-reinforcement. The implications for industrial policy include joint ventures and strategic alliances.

"Policies that are appropriate to success in high-tech production and international trade would encourage industries to be aggressive in seeking out product and process improvements. They would strengthen the national research base on which high-tech advantages are built. They would encourage firms in a single industry to pool their resources in joint ventures that share up-front costs, marketing networks, technical knowledge and standards. They might even foster strategic alliances, enabling companies in several countries to enter a complex industry that none could tackle alone." [Arthur]

Capra relates the concepts of negative and positive feedback to the distinction between conservative and innovative change outlined earlier. Negative feedback

mechanisms tend to reduce any deviation from the balanced state, but positive feedback amplifies certain deviations, and this plays a crucial role in the process of development, learning and evolution. He identifies three kinds of adaptation by living organisms to environmental change:

- Those which are swiftly reversible
- Somatic change, involving complex physiological changes among the more stable components of the system to absorb the environment impact and restore flexibility
- Adaptation of the species in the process of evolution, through mutation.

PUNCTUATED EVOLUTION AND THE PARADIGM HIERARCHY

The arguments being developed here find parallels in the theory of punctuated evolution, with its notions of 'phase change' between evolution and revolution. Gersick has pointed to the way in which this pattern of explanation has emerged over recent years in fields as diverse as organisations, scientific fields, biological species and 'grand theory'. The theory may be summarised as follows:

- 1 Systems evolve through alternate periods of evolution, when the dominant paradigm permits only incremental change, and periods of revolution, in which the paradigm is fundamentally challenged and replaced by a new one.
- 2 The paradigm is an integrated network of shared beliefs and values, axioms and theories, rules and practices.
- 3 During periods of evolution, systems develop incrementally, making changes which preserve the paradigm against internal and external perturbations. This may result in behaviour which appears turbulent on the surface.
- 4 Evidence challenging the dominant paradigm will be ignored, misinterpreted, rejected or refuted. Moves to replace the paradigm will be treated the same way.
- 5 The new paradigm progresses by establishing a number of footholds, and linking or integrating them. The aim is to reach 'critical mass'.
- 6 Revolutions are relatively brief periods, involving the full emergence of the new paradigm, and disintegration of the old.

At this point it is useful to consider more closely the varied uses of the term 'paradigm'. I suggest that there are three layers of 'paradigm' discussed in the literature, and it is important to distinguish between these. They were illustrated in the diagram in the Introduction. Level One is the most deep-seated paradigm - the 'totality of thoughts, perceptions, and values that forms a particular vision of reality' [Capra]. Only two are identified here: the Cartesian-Newtonian Wisdom, and the Wisdom Paradigm. Level Two comprises the management paradigm which may be derived from this. Finally, Level Three concerns the use of 'paradigm' at the individual organisational level, or relating to specific process changes.

Much of the talk about paradigm shifting in management is actually about Level Three. Thus Thornton argues that *"Paradigm shifts usually occur when there is a fundamental change in technology or when it is just impossible to solve problems using existing models. Whichever, all require new ways of thinking."* As examples, he cites Just in Time, the introduction of Compact Discs, or electronic cash registers.

This type of 'paradigm shift' should not be confused with the more fundamental levels with which we are concerned in this thesis.

SELF-ORGANISED CRITICALITY

Central to complexity theory is the idea of self-organised criticality, which fundamentally challenges the neo-classical economics approach based on static or dynamic equilibrium. A useful account of this is given by Per Bak and Kan Chen, who argue that *"large interactive systems perpetually organize themselves to a critical state in which a minor event starts a chain reaction that can lead to a catastrophe."* Chain reactions of all sizes are an integral part of the dynamics of such systems, which never reach equilibrium; rather, they evolve through minor events and catastrophes from one metastable state to another.

Kaufmann makes a similar point: *"Networks on the boundary between order and chaos may have the flexibility to adapt rapidly and successfully through the accumulation of useful variations. In such poised systems, most mutations have small consequences because of the systems' homeostatic nature. A few mutations, however, cause larger cascades of change. Poised systems will therefore typically adapt to a changing environment gradually, but if necessary, they can occasionally change rapidly. These properties are observed in organisms."*

A phrase frequently used to capture this is 'sensitive dependence on initial conditions'.

APPENDIX 4.2

COMPARISON OF KEY FEATURES OF A HUMAN SYSTEM AND A COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEM

<i>Key Features of a Human System</i>	<i>Key Features of a Complex Adaptive System</i>
A human system:	A complex adaptive system:
Has a basic purpose of performing tasks and surviving -	Has a basic purpose of performing tasks and surviving
Consists of networks of large numbers of interacting agents	Consists of network-s of large numbers of interacting agents
Interacts with an environment consisting primarily of other human systems and therefore coevolves	Interacts with an environment consisting of other complex adaptive systems and therefore coevolves
Interacts in an iterative, nonlinear manner	Interacts in an iterative, nonlinear manner
Discovers, that is, acquires information about the systems constituting its environment and information about the consequences of its own interaction with those systems by employing feedback	Discovers, that is, acquires information about the systems constituting its environment and information about the consequences of its own interaction with those systems by employing feedback
Chooses, that is, exercises an element of free will to identify and select regularities in the feedback information it acquires and then condenses those regularities into a schema or model of its world, in effect selecting one of a number of competing models that might "explain" the regularities and yield effective rules of behaviour for coping with that world	Chooses, that is, exercises a kind of free will to identify and select regularities in the feedback information it acquires and then condenses those regularities into a schema or model of its world, in effect selecting one of a number of competing models that might "explain" the regularities and yield effective rules of behaviour for coping with that world
Acts according to its schema rules in relation to the systems that are its environment	Acts according to its schema rules in relation to the systems that are its environment
Discovers the responses its action provokes, as well as the consequences of those responses	Discovers the responses its action provokes, as well as the consequences of those responses
Uses this information to adapt its behaviour, that is, to perform simple or single-loop learning	Uses this information to adapt its behaviour, that is, to perform simple or single loop-learning
Revises its schema so as better to adapt, that is, to perform complex or double-loop learning	Revises its schema so as better to adapt, that is, to perform complex or double-loop learning

The key to the whole process lies in the schemas, as follows:	The key to the whole process lies in the schemas. as follows:
Agents have unique individual schemas.	Agents may have unique individual schemas
Agent behaviour is also conditioned by common culture, a schema shared with all or some other agents.	Agent behaviour may also be conditioned by common shared schemas.
Schemas consist of simple reaction rules, more complex rules requiring formation of expectations and taking anticipatory action, performance evaluation rules, and rules for evaluating schema rules themselves.	Schemas may consist of simple reaction rules, more complex rules requiring formation of expectations and taking anticipatory action, performance evaluation rules, and rules for evaluating schema rules themselves.
Agent's internal structure is as follows:	Agent's internal structure is as follows:
Agents and groups of agents get caught up in sequences of responses driven by emotion and aspiration, inspiration and anxiety, compassion and avarice, honesty and deception, imagination and curiosity.	<i>None</i>
Agents share a common purpose but also develop their own individual mental purposes, leading to tension between conformity and individualism.	
Some agents are, or become, more able and/or more powerful than others and apply force and persuasion, whereas others follow.	
Agents are conscious and self-aware, that is, they can adopt the role of observer and think systemically.	

Source: Stacey 1996b: 108-9

APPENDIX 5.1

COLOUR THINKING

Three approaches to colour thinking are summarised here, as far as possible in the words of their advocates.

1 THE THUNKS [Extract from Jerry Rhodes' book]

The Hard Thunks

When teaching I often refer to these Thunks as 'hard thinking tools'. Hard is not meant in its literal sense and neither does it mean difficult. It is a metaphor for describing a characteristic which these Thunks all have in common. As tools they deal with the more tangible side of thinking. They help you, the user, to be more objective than subjective with your thinking. They require you to think explicitly and quantitatively about a problem rather than implicitly and qualitatively. In general they lead you to define your thinking clearly and somewhat absolutely. They help you put boundaries around constructs, place information in watertight categories, make use of solid realities even if it is to violate them, and apply absolute logic. Between them, these three groups of hard Thunks provide the means for constructing all the tools needed for objective operation. Thus they are used to build not only the concrete structures through which we organize all life in the world, but also the concrete structures of the inner world of our own minds. If we took the design of the human body as analogous, we could speak of the hard Thunks as more like bones than muscles.

Hard Blue

When a task needs logic to see it successfully through, then the Thunks to use will be found in the hard area of judgement. You will Compare certain facts against others; Distinguish the pattern that may be hidden within those facts; Test the soundness of the conclusion you will have drawn from the pattern.

Hard Red

A task needing facts requires Thunks from the hard area of Information. You will Specify the information required, using very accurate and systematic questioning that covers every angle, You will secure the most complete account possible, by Looking Inside the matter and Outside it with equal energy, even turning the whole thing inside out in your diligent search, And you will Categorise all findings in the most orderly and efficient way, so that full and proper use can be made of them by your judgement when the time comes.

Hard Green

If the task needs a new approach, to go beyond the obvious information or conclusions likely to be used by everyone (else), then the easiest Thunks to use might be in the hard area of Ideas. You will Challenge the hidden assumptions in your mind that would otherwise constrain your freedom. You will Escape from the merely rational, finding the fun in seeking the hidden paradox which will justify sailing into the wind. You will muster all the ingenuity you have so as to Redescribe what You can see in as many ways as possible so as to violate your natural perceptions. And you will Pursue and persist with the new lines of thought you are developing, continuing to look for something else beyond your first thoughts, relying on the number and variety of your attempts to achieve a few really good solutions.

Thinking about a problem is done to improve your chances of getting wherever you want to go. You must come out of automatic pilot and start consciously thinking. The

hard Thunks may often be the first we grab hold of consciously, because they have more of a tangible feel to them, and seem to be very explicit in their association with the thinking that goes on above -the surface, on the table, objectively upfront. There are many books published about thinking where these hard mental operations occupy almost the entire ground. There is a directness about operations that require no-nonsense absoluteness, specific accuracy of description, firmness, consistency and reliability. This is why some people loved mathematics at school because at least until you go to more advanced levels of beauty in the field, you can actually get all the sums right and score 100 per cent. Logic seems to work and is easily defensible. Even the green Thunks, when they are hard, work because they are making explicit and tangible challenges to existing information and judgements. They are using what exists or is known, and purposefully violating the current interpretations of the facts, to offer the chance of a new resourcefulness about them. The person who exploits his perceptions with lateral stratagems is so obviously making a direct assault, that it is easy even for the most hard-headed and rational person to appreciate what he is doing.

The Soft Thunks

I have separated the description of the soft Thunks from the hard to emphasize the qualitative difference between them. Choosing between the Super-Thunks is the first level of selection that a conceptual manager has to make when problem-solving: 'Do I need to tackle this from a blue, red or green angle first? Which is most appropriate with these people now? Should I be encouraging them to be having ideas (green) or do we need to close down and come to judgement (blue) because of time pressures?' The next choice is whether to move to a hard or soft aspect: 'when do I go into hard or soft blue, red, green to sort this out? I've got to get the details first (hard red), or have I? Maybe I can hold on that and establish a clearer sense of our criteria (soft blue). Two of the team are pushing to widen our perspectives (soft green) so maybe I should start there.' With such vivid images from the colours he can make use of Think tools while 'on the hoof'.

Soft Blue

When a task requires a person to give full scope to his subjective, personal feelings, then the Thunks to use will be found in the soft area of judgement. What You Value will ultimately rule your thinking. You will Interpret the situation surrounding you as if your perceptions were more than bare, unconnected pieces of reality. You will be willing to go beyond the indications and extrapolations of the facts when you Predict what you believe will happen. And you will Commit to a decision with the finality that ensures action.

Soft Red

If the task needs you to draw on your experience to gain a fuller picture of truth, then you will find the Thunks for this in the soft area of Describe. You will tune in and amplify all your senses so as to Observe whatever is there. You will select and use the most appropriate Code or instrument or medium with which to receive or convey the information needed. And you will Set the Level of enquiry or communication so that reality will not be lost from being out of focus or on the wrong scale.

Soft Green

When the task needs new realms of imagination, you will pick the Thunks in the soft area of Realise. This really means letting the universe into your mind, as distinct from the 'hard' approach of going out and changing what you know. Yet, like listening and welcoming and being alert, it is not passive but active on a subtle level. You are deliberate when you Unform your mind, consciously causing the categories to soften

their iron boundaries, and allowing your constructs to become as malleable as wet clay or copper. You will Pretend that something might be so, playing roles and creating hypotheses and scenarios of (im)possible futures, entirely without commitment. You will lay yourself wide open to all the Conceivable associations between the ideas in your head when you Symbolise. And allow yourself to listen in to the weakest signals of intuition, that is what You are able to Feel, even where there is no apparent evidence.

2 THE IDON APPROACH [The following is extracted from Hexagons for Systems Thinking, by Anthony M Hodgson of Idon Ltd., posted on the Internet]

Codification is a crucial process in any effective thinking. The simplest scheme is a binary code such as accept/reject (green : red) or opportune/dangerous (yellow : black). By introducing a judgmental framework and colour coding it, we can then assign colours to ideas and read a further layer of significance into our cognitive map. This also provokes a deeper layer of interchange in the working group.

One powerful application of colour coding is to show working groups their style of thinking. There appears to be some correlation between the quality and effectiveness of strategic thinking and the extent to which a range of cognitive styles is invoked by the thinker. This is reflected, for instance, in Russo and Schoemaker's decision traps (Russo and Schoemaker, 1990). The failure to exercise a cognitive mode may lead one into a trap.

In dealing with unknown situations we need, as well as flexibility, ways of directing mental energy to fruitful areas. This is where the cognitive pairs fulfil a role. We recognise that in assessing situations we find these pairings expressing themselves. The advantage of colour-coding is that it gives a non-verbal signalling system which empowers the thinking of the team using it. Frequently, the propensities of people in a team will bias the range of considerations going into a decision process. For example, over-focus on threats and tactics with neglect of externalities. The 'colour balance' of contributions will reveal these biases and enable the facilitator to carry out balance activities.

A scheme for colour-coding cognition of models		
lateral thinking	yellow	opportunity spotting
critical thinking	black	problem solving
imaginative thinking	green	innovation
judgmental thinking	brown	quality appraisal
holistic thinking	blue	environmental scanning
systems thinking	orange	designing
metacognition	white	thinking about thinking
chaotic thinking	grey	ambiguity
strategic thinking	purple	directing
decision thinking	red	action

Although developed pragmatically, evidence is accumulating that senior managers do indeed draw on a variety of cognitive capabilities - their mental portfolio - when making decisions and judgements (Isenberg, 1987); some other practitioners have explored the use of colour coding as the basis for practical methods of identifying and switching mental modes (Rhodes and Thame, 1988; de Bono, 1986). The five pairs of cognitive styles also reflect the way the mind, in decision making, is a 'dilemma

resolution system' (Hampden-Turner, 1990). The attribution of colour code to these modes has some basis in colour psychology.

The following table presents a somewhat different typology, and is taken from the IDON guidebook.

IDON THINKING IN COLOURS	
White	The Learning Process: How we learn and think; Increasing our own skills and abilities, Increasing our general knowledge and understanding
Grey	Factual information
Yellow	Recognising opportunities: Opportunity; Areas to expand or grow; What is right; What is promising
Black	Problem Diagnostics: Sceptical, Critical, Analytical, Identifying problems, Defence, Resisting change
Green	Creativity and Non-linear thinking: Innovation, Imagination, Brainstorming, Nonlinear thinking
Brown	Logic and Practical Judgement: Logical conclusions based on objective facts, diagnosis of problems, and what we consider from our own experience to plausible. Rational thinking, the cognitive function of management
Blue	Holistic thinking and Strategic planning: Overarching issues that range beyond our immediate control; Seeing the whole of what is going on. Environmental and social forces. Laws and principles which enable us to appreciate or comprehend something in more than one form.
Orange	Identifications and Elaborations: Throw light on a situation and bring out specific details. Molecular thinking; the thinking of the specialist. Specifically recognising and identifying [not categorising]. Mapping and creating patterns of representation for mental modelling
Violet	Aims, Objectives and Decision Making: Will, desires, wishes, choices, objectives, aims and sense of direction. Asserting command or authority. Plausibility reasoning: the logic of intention
Red	Opinions and Assertive thinking: Emotional viewpoints, opinions and arguments

3 THE SIX THINKING HATS METHOD [Extracts from Edward De Bono's book]

The purpose of the six thinking hats is to unscramble thinking so that a thinker is able to use one thinking mode at a time - instead of trying to do everything at once. The best analogy is that of colour printing. Each colour is printed separately and in the end they all come together.

The six thinking hats method is designed to switch thinking away from the normal argument style to a mapmaking style. This makes thinking a two-stage process. The first stage is to make the map. The second stage is to choose a route on the map. If the map is good enough, the best route will often become obvious. As in the colour printing analogy, each of the six hats puts one type of thinking on to the map.

It is the very artificiality of the hats which is their greatest value. They provide a formality and a convenience for requesting a certain type of thinking either of oneself or of others. They establish rules for the game of thinking. Anyone playing the game will be aware of these rules.

SIX THINKING HATS

The more the hats are used, the more they will become part of the thinking culture. Everyone in an organization should learn the basic idiom so that it can become part of the culture. This makes focused thinking much more powerful. Instead of wasting time in argument or drifting discussion, there will be a brisk and disciplined approach.

At first people might feel a little awkward about using the different hats, but this awkwardness soon passes as the convenience of the system becomes apparent. The first use of the hats will be in the form of an occasional request to use one hat or to switch from the black hat to another. The great value of the hats is that they provide thinking roles. A thinker can take pride in playacting each of these roles. Without the formality of the hats, some thinkers would remain permanently stuck in one mode (usually the black hat mode).

- **White Hat** virgin white, pure facts, figures and information.
- **Red Hat** seeing red, emotions and feelings, also hunch and intuition.
- **Black Hat** devil's advocate, negative judgement, why it will not work.
- **Yellow Hat** sunshine, brightness and optimism, positive, constructive, opportunity.
- **Green Hat** fertile, creative, plants springing from seeds, movement, provocation.
- **Blue Hat** cool and control, orchestra conductor, thinking about thinking.

Within any organization the more people who learn the idiom the more usable it becomes. The truth is that we do not have a simple language as a control system for our thinking. If we feel that we are intelligent enough to do without such a system, then we should consider that such a system would make that intelligence of which we are so proud even more effective. A person with natural running talent will benefit even more than others from discipline.

SUMMARY OF WHITE HAT THINKING

Imagine a computer that gives the facts and figures for which it is asked. The computer is neutral and objective. It does not offer interpretations or opinions. When wearing the white thinking hat, the thinker should imitate the computer. The person requesting the information should use focusing questions in order to obtain information or information gaps. In practice there is a two-tier system of information. The first tier contains checked and proven facts: first class facts. The second tier contains facts that are believed to be true but have not yet been fully checked: second class facts.

There is a spectrum of "likelihood" ranging from always true to never true. In between there are usable levels such as "by and large", "sometimes", and "occasional". Information of this sort can be put out under the white hat - provided the appropriate "frame" is used to indicate the likelihood. White hat thinking is a discipline and a direction. The thinker strives to be more neutral and more objective in the presentation of information. You can be asked to put on the white thinking hat or you can ask someone to put it on. You can also choose to put it on - or to take it off. The white (absence of colour) indicates neutrality.

SUMMARY OF RED HAT THINKING

Wearing the red hat allows the thinker to say: "This is how I feel about the matter." The red hat legitimises emotions and feelings as an important part of thinking. The red hat makes feelings visible so that they can become part of the thinking "map" and

also part of the value system that chooses the route on the map. The red hat provides a convenient method for a thinker to switch in and out of the "feeling" mode in a way that is not possible without such a device. The red hat allows a thinker to explore the feelings of others by asking for a "red hat view". When a thinker is using the red hat there should never be any attempt to justify the feelings or to provide a logical basis for them.

The red hat covers two broad types of feeling. Firstly, there are the ordinary emotions as we know them: ranging from the strong emotions such as fear and dislike to the more subtle ones such as suspicion. Secondly, there are the complex judgements that go into such types of "feeling" as hunch, intuition, sense, taste, aesthetic feeling and other not-visibly-justified types of feeling. Where an opinion has a large measure of this type of feeling it can also fit under the red hat.

SUMMARY OF BLACK HAT THINKING

Black hat thinking is specifically concerned with negative assessment. The black hat thinker points out what is wrong, incorrect and in error. The black hat thinker points out how something does not fit experience or accepted knowledge. The black hat thinker points out why something will not work. The black hat thinker points out risks and dangers. The black hat thinker points out faults in a design.

Black hat thinking is not argument and should never be seen as such. It is an objective attempt to put the negative elements onto the map. Black hat thinking may point out the errors in the thinking procedure and method itself. Black hat thinking may judge an idea against the past to see how well it fits what is known.

Black hat thinking may project an idea into the future to see what might fail or go wrong. Black hat thinking can ask "negative questions." Black hat thinking should not be used to cover negative indulgence or negative feelings which should make use of the red hat. Positive assessment is left for the yellow hat. In the case of new ideas the yellow hat should always be used before the black hat.

SUMMARY OF YELLOW HAT THINKING

Yellow hat thinking is positive and constructive. The yellow colour symbolises sunshine, brightness and optimism. Yellow hat thinking is concerned with positive assessment just as black hat thinking is concerned with negative assessment. Yellow hat thinking covers a positive spectrum that ranges from the logical and practical at one end to dreams, visions and hopes at the other end.

Yellow hat thinking probes and explores for value and benefit. Yellow hat thinking then strives to find logical support for this value and benefit. Yellow hat thinking seeks to put forward soundly based optimism but is not restricted to this - provided other types of optimism are appropriately labelled.

Yellow hat thinking is constructive and generative. It is from yellow hat thinking that come concrete proposals and suggestions. Yellow hat thinking is concerned with operacy and with "making things happen." Effectiveness is the aim of yellow hat constructive thinking.

Yellow hat thinking can be speculative and opportunity seeking. Yellow hat thinking also permits visions and dreams. Yellow hat thinking is not concerned with mere positive euphoria (red hat) nor directly with creating new ideas (green hat).

SUMMARY OF GREEN HAT THINKING

The green hat is for creative thinking. The person who puts on the green hat is going to use the idioms of creative thinking. Those around are required to treat the output as a creative output. Ideally both thinker and listener should be wearing green hats.

The green colour symbolises fertility, growth and the value of seeds. The search for alternatives is a fundamental aspect of green hat thinking. There is a need to go beyond the known and the obvious and the satisfactory. With the creative pause the green hat thinker pauses at any point to consider whether there might be alternative ideas at that point. There need be no reason for this pause.

In green hat thinking the idiom of movement replaces that of judgement. The thinker seeks to move forward from an idea in order to reach a new idea. Provocation is an important part of green hat thinking and is symbolised by the word po. A provocation is used to take us out of our usual patterns of thinking. There are many ways of setting up provocations including the random word method.

Lateral thinking is a set of attitudes, idioms and techniques (including movement, provocation and po) for cutting across patterns in a self-organizing asymmetric patterning system. It is used to generate new concepts and perceptions.

SUMMARY OF BLUE HAT THINKING

The blue hat is the "control" hat. The blue hat thinker organises the thinking itself. Blue hat thinking is "thinking about the thinking needed to explore the subject." The blue hat thinker is like the conductor of the orchestra. The blue hat thinker calls for the use of the other hats.

The blue hat thinker defines the subjects towards which the thinking is to be directed. Blue hat thinker sets the focus. Blue hat thinking defines the problems and shapes the questions. Blue hat thinking determines the thinking tasks that are to be carried through.

Blue hat thinking is responsible for summaries, over-views and conclusions. These can take place from time to time in the course of the thinking, and also at the end. Blue hat thinking monitors the thinking and ensures that the rules of the game are observed. Blue hat thinking stops argument and insists on the "map" type of thinking. Blue hat thinking enforces the discipline.

Blue hat thinking may be used for occasional interjections which request one or other hat. Blue hat thinking may also be used to set up a step by step sequence of thinking operations which are to be followed just as a dance follows the choreography.

Even when the specific blue hat thinking role is assigned to one person, it is still open to anyone to offer blue hat comments and suggestions.

APPENDIX 6.1

AUTHORITIES ON POWER

Box 1

Power and Strategy

"Power is stable in most organizations most of the time," claims Jeffrey Pfeffer. And Henry Mintzberg says that "there is a natural propensity of the power system to seek equilibrium and remain there." But why? First, power is self-perpetuating-it gives powerholders advantages in any political struggle that allow them to get more resources, hire or promote like-minded individuals, and buy off resisters. Powerholders may even set standards of performance that ensure that they will look good. Second, the way in which power is distributed in an organization is a product of many implicit agreements, compromises, and even contracts among many different parties. To alter these would be cumbersome and expensive. Third, powerful managers tend to surround themselves with the daunting trappings of position and achievement, especially when they have been successful. Any challenge to their lofty authority would take lots of courage and appear to be breaking the rules.

"Organizational strategies are closely linked to the distribution of power. First, *power shapes strategy*. If marketers dominate an organization, as was true of our Salesmen, the core strategy will revolve around marketing. Where engineers rule, the strategy is more likely to centre on quality design or efficient production, as in our Craftsmen. Second, *strategy can affect power*. Successful strategies give the parties who developed them considerable power, recognition, and professional satisfaction. Our Escapists, for example, revered and empowered their R&D teams. And obviously these powerful groups will resist any changes to strategy that might imperil their rewards.

"In short, because goals, strategies, and power are so tightly interwoven, an inertial power structure will prevent major reorientations from taking place. It may, however, impart momentum to *existing* orientations: powerful managers have an incentive to extend the strategies that reward them, to reinforce the goals that they believe in, and to refine the structures that consolidate their power." [Miller 1990:184]

Table A6.1: The unitary, pluralist and radical views of organization

	Unitary	Pluralist	Radical
Interests	Places emphasis on the achievement of common objectives. The organization is viewed as being united under the umbrella of common goals and striving towards their achievement in the manner of a well-integrated team.	Places emphasis on the diversity of individual and group interests. The organization is regarded as a loose coalition which has just a passing interest in the formal goals of the organization.	Places emphasis on the oppositional nature of contradictory 'class' interests. Organization is viewed as a battleground where rival forces [e.g. management and unions] strive for the achievement of largely incompatible ends.
Conflict	Regards conflict as a rare and transient phenomenon that can be removed through appropriate managerial action. Where it does arise it is usually attributed to the activities of deviants and troublemakers.	Regards conflict as an inherent and ineradicable characteristic of organizational affairs and stresses its potentially positive or functional aspects.	Regards organizational conflict as inevitable and as part of a wider class conflict that will eventually change the whole structure of society. It is recognised that conflict may be suppressed and thus often exists as a latent rather than manifest characteristic of both organizations and society.
Power	Largely ignores the role of power in organizational life. Concepts such as authority, leadership, and control tend to be preferred means of describing the managerial prerogative of guiding the organization towards the achievement of common interests	Regards power as a crucial variable. Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are alleviated and resolved. The organization is viewed as a plurality of power holders drawing their power from a plurality of sources.	Regards power as a key feature of organization, but a phenomenon that is unequally distributed and follows class divisions. Power relations in organizations are viewed as reflections of power relations in society at large, and as closely linked to wider processes of social control, e.g. control of economic power, the legal system, and education

Source: Morgan 1986: 188-9 [based on Burrell and Morgan]

Table A6.2: Approaches to Culture Change [Bate]

	Aggressive	Conciliative	Corrosive	Indoctrinative
Objective	Establish a strong integrated culture in which there exists a single source of authority and a single focus of loyalty	Achieve change by processes of convergence, not divergence, conformity not deviance, order not rebellion	Effect a major change in the locus and distribution of power and authority within the corporate hierarchy	Change through planned and programmed learning
Conventional terms used	Power-coercive; conflict-centred; non-collaborative; win-lose; imposed; the 'decree approach'; unilateral	Group problem-solving; win-win; collaborative; emergent; integrative; the 'joint approach'	Political; coalitional; unplanned; evolutionary; networking; the 'informal approach'	Normative-reeducative; the 'training approach'
Characteristics and Methods	Cultural vandalism, or leadership with a machine gun; Militaristic metaphors; Invalidation and de-legitimisation of past practices; Rewrite history; Use of fear, witchhunts, sackings, demotion; Squeeze people into the scheme with little regard for their feelings or preferences; Change by dictat	Change achieved by non-dramatic gradual and routine means; Peaceful metaphors [e.g. cricket, water, gardening]; Logical incrementalism; Be reasonable; Use of language to emphasis novelty; Increase acceptability; Mutuality is key principle	Culture change is an essentially political process; Erosion rather than eradication - progressively undermining the power base of rival groups; Covert and devious; Skilful manipulation of relationships in order to achieve ends; Zero sum game conception of life	Participants are taught the new culture; Socialisation - get person to fit into someone else's previously formulated definition of the situation; Cultural policing - evaluation audits; Use of rites
Rationale	Survival; Speed; Need to seize the initiative; Need for action; Need to impose order on chaos; Revolutionary	Perceived lack of power Conflict avoidance Continuity Simultaneous construction / deconstruction	Performance-led culture change - get on and do things; Use of networks	Attempts to change the underlying frames of meanings and values
Dangers	Creates a battlefield; Risk of being outmanoeuvred; Enhances counter-culture	Paradigm bound - never progress beyond initial conforming stage; Lose sight of radical objectives; Is it possible to achieve revolution by evolution?	Networks can become order directed rather than change directed - e.g. Old Boys Networks	Little depth to socialisation; Training programmes only communicate - they do not indoctrinate;

Box 2 The Control and the Unitary Arenas

Certainly the most pervasive and enduring approaches to organisation, both at the level of ideas and, more especially, at the level of practice, are those which employ centralised control and formal regulation to coordinate an intentionally (and, often, extremely) fragmented division of both managerial and nonmanagerial labour. Bureaucracy and rationalised work, in their different guises, have long endured and are not dead yet. The supposedly 'unavoidable' need for order, predictability and system efficiency underpins a continued preoccupation with unambiguous planning and decision-making, tight control and detailed regulation, even in the face of inflexible work systems, poor morale and lack of individual responsibility and initiative. In effect, an over-emphasis on 'management' as planning and control leads to the creation of forms of organisation in which management as motivation is neglected: an obsession with regulating how work is to take place spawns an inattention to ensuring that it takes place at all. Tolerance of these difficulties in the singular pursuit of order and control is fortified by the undoubted capacity of bureaucracy and rationalised work to preserve the interests of the organisationally powerful.

The reluctance of the organisationally powerful to relinquish the means by which their power is sustained, a reluctance born either of political and material interest or of a mistrust of subordinates, explains why, hitherto, decentralisation and despecialiation have taken the form of limited, cautious and often short-lived organisational experiments. Even the recent waves of interest in more adhocratic, decentralised forms of administration and flexible, despecialised operational work are more the result of a forced response to greater environmental uncertainty than of a positive desire to grant greater managerial and employee autonomy. Indeed, there is more than a suspicion that these are opportunistic reactions to 'enacted' environmental uncertainties where the real aim is a new form of rationalised work. Thus, 'flexibility' is a way of securing higher levels of productivity in the guise of meeting more variegated consumer demand which is itself largely the creation of the marketing strategies of large organisations. Equally, 'decentralisation' in pursuit of 'leaner', 'fitter' and more adaptable management is a relatively thin disguise for rationalising administration through a wholesale winnowing of middle management layers. Even so, the constant tension between the need for responsibility, initiative and problem-solving at lower levels of management and on the shop-floor, and the need to ensure that this autonomy is exercised in pursuit of centrally defined goals, means that a swing back to more centralised control and regulation is likely in the future. Autonomy for lower-level managers and employees will only continue if some other mechanism is in place for ensuring their 'responsibility' and justifying the 'trust' of senior managers.

One such mechanism is a strong, pervasive organisational culture, focused on 'quality' or 'service', and reinforced by highly selective recruitment, normative training and indoctrination and the symbolic quality of managerial behaviour, organisational ceremonies and myths. [Hales 239-40]

Box 3 The Phases of Collaboration

Gray identifies three phases of collaboration [1985:916-31]. First there is problem setting, concerned with identification of the stakeholders within a domain and mutual acknowledgement of the issue which joins them. Here there are five propositions:

- 1 The stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the problem under consideration if collaboration is to occur.
- 2 Problem-setting efforts are enhanced when stakeholders expect that the benefits of collaborating will outweigh the costs and when prevailing norms support collaboration. If positive expectations are not present, incentives to induce participation will be necessary.
- 3 The greater the degree of recognized interdependence among stakeholders, the greater the likelihood of initiating collaboration.
- 4 Shared perceptions of legitimacy are necessary to initiative problem setting. Perceptions of legitimacy will be shaped by historical relations and by the existing power distribution among stakeholders.
- 5 Collaboration will be enhanced by convenors who possess legitimate authority and appreciative skills and who can serve as reticulists to rally other stakeholders to participate.

The second phase is direction setting, where stakeholders articulate the values which guide their individual pursuits and begin to identify and appreciate a sense of common purpose. Two propositions follow:

- 6 Direction setting is greatly facilitated by coincidence in values among stakeholders. Joint information search by stakeholders contributes to the emergence of coincident values and mutually agreeable directions for the domain.
- 7 Collaboration will be enhanced when power is dispersed among several rather than among just a few stakeholders. An equal power distribution is not necessary and may prove undesirable since it can provoke stalemate and inaction. However, a sufficient distribution of power is necessary to insure that all stakeholders can influence direction setting.

The final phase is structuring, the need for long-term structures to support their collective appreciation and problem solving activities. Here Gray makes five propositions.

- 8 Structuring will occur when stakeholders percieve that continued dependence upon each other is necessary to implement their desired directions for the domain.
- 9 Mandate alone will not generate conditions conducive to collaboration. However, coupled with other conditions [e.g. recognition of interdependence and balance of power], mandate can provide a structural framework for ongoing regulation of the domain.
- 10 Effective structuring involves negotiation among all stakeholders about how to regulate the domain, including negotiations about the implementation of actions and the power distribution necessary to do so. One outcome of structuring is an agreed upon allocation of power within the domain.
- 11 Geographic proximity facilitates structuring. Local level initiatives can best capture the advantages associated with geography.
- 12 Successful implementation of collaborative agreements is contingent upon the stakeholders' collective ability to positively manage changes in their contextual environment. This involves monitoring changes and building relationships with actors outside the domain to insure that domain level agreements are carried out.

Box 4

"The acts and processes associated with politics as the management of meaning represent conceptually the overlap between a concern with the political and cultural analyses of organizations. A central concept linking political and cultural analyses essential to the understanding of continuity and change is legitimacy. The management of meaning refers to a process of symbol construction and value-use designed to create legitimacy for one's own ideas, actions and demands and to delegitimize the demands of one's opponents. If one sees major change processes at least partially as a contest about ideas and rationalities between individuals and groups, then the mechanisms used to legitimate and delegitimize particular ideas or broader ideologies are crucial. Equally, the resolution of such contests about ideas needs to be sensitive to questions of power and control in the organization. Structures, cultures and strategies are not just neutral, functional, constructs connectable to some system need such as efficiency or adaptability; those constructs are viewed as capable of protecting the interests of dominant groups. As Normann has so aptly put it, 'the only way to bring about lasting change and to foster an ability to deal with new situations is by influencing the conditions that determine the interpretation of situations and the regulation of ideas' (1977, p. 161)" [Pettigrew 1992:8-9]

Box 5 Counter implementation strategies

- *Divert resources* Split the budget across other projects., have key staff given other priorities and allocate them to other assignments; arrange for equipment to be moved or shared.
- *Exploit inertia* Suggest that everyone wait until a key player has taken action, or read the report, or made an appropriate response; suggest that the results from some other project should be monitored and assessed first.
- *Keep goals vague and complex* It is harder to initiate appropriate action in pursuit of aims that are multi-dimensional and that are specified in generalised, grandiose or abstract terms.
- *Encourage and exploit lack of organizational awareness* Insist that 'we can deal with the people issues later', knowing that these will delay or kill the project.
- *'Great idea - let's do it properly'* And let's bring in representatives from this function and that section, until we have so many different views and conflicting interests that it will take forever to sort them out.
- *Dissipate energies* Have people conduct surveys, collect data, prepare analyses, write reports, make overseas trips, hold special meetings ...
- *Reduce the champion's influence and credibility* Spread damaging rumours, particularly among the champion's friends and supporters.
- *Keep a low profile* It is not effective openly to declare resistance to change because that gives those driving change a clear target to aim for.

Counter-counter implementation strategies

- *Establish clear direction and objectives* Goal clarity enables action to proceed more effectively than ambiguity and complexity which can slow down action.
- *Establish simple, phased programming* For the same reasons as having clear goals.
- *Adopt a fixer - facilitator - negotiator role* Resistance to change can rarely be overcome by reason alone and the exercise of these interpersonal skills is required.
- *Seek and respond to resistance* It can be more effective to take a proactive approach to resistance in order to overcome, mitigate or block it.
- *Rely on face to face* Personal influence and persuasion are usually more effective in winning and sustaining support than the impersonal memo or report.
- *Create a prior felt need* If people want change because they have had the reasons explained to them, then resistance is likely to be minimal.
- *Build personal credibility* By sustaining a professional image and integrity, by displaying expertise and credibility.
- *Co-opt support early.*
- *Exploit a crisis, which may be part of creating the felt need* People will often respond more positively to a crisis which they understand fine collectively than to personal attempts to change their behaviour.
- *The meaningful steering committee; or task force or project team* It should include in its membership key players in the organization who carry 'weight', and authority and respect.

'EIGHT I'S THAT CREATE SUCCESSFUL WE'S'

- **Individual Excellence.** Both partners are strong and have something of value to contribute to the relationship.
- **Importance.** The relationship fits major strategic objectives of the partners, and therefore gets adequate resources, management attention, and sponsorship
- **Investment.** There is an agreement for longer-term investment in each other, by which the partners demonstrate their respective stakes in the relationship and each other.
- **Interdependence.** The partners need each other, and this helps to keep power balanced
- **Integration.** The partners develop linkages and shared ways of operating so they can work together smoothly. They build broad connections between many people at many organizational levels.
- **Information.** Communication is reasonably open. Partners share information required to make the relationship work.
- **Institutionalisation.** The relationship is given a formal status, bolstered by a framework of supporting mechanisms, from legal requirements to social ties to shared values, all of which in fact make trust possible.
- **Integrity.** The partners behave toward each other in honourable ways that justify and enhance mutual trust. They do not abuse the information they gain, nor do they undermine each other.

Keeping the spirit of her approach, we can extend this list with the following:

- **Initial Vision** If the partners can come to a common vision of what they wish to achieve from the partnership, this will ease progress and help when problems arise
- **Innovative Capacity** The partners recognise that the nature and operation of the partnership will change over time, and are willing to allow, even encourage, this to happen.
- **Influence both Ways** Each partner has their own beliefs and objectives, and will seek to influence those of the other partners. If they are open to influence from their partners as well - open, that is, to mutual learning - then the partnership is more likely to stay in the Pluralist, rather than the Political arena.
- **Impact** Experience of partnerships and alliances shows that they are strengthened by demonstrable success and impact - if it works, the partners have a greater incentive to stay in and develop it.

ICL'S 'DO'S' FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

- 1 Treat the collaboration as a personal commitment. It is people that make partnerships work.
- 2 Anticipate that it will take up management time. If you cannot spare the time, don't start it.
- 3 Mutual respect and trust are essential. If you don't trust the people you are negotiating with, forget it.
- 4 Remember that both partners must get something out of it [money, eventually]. Mutual benefit is vital. This will probably mean you have got to give something up. Recognise this from the outset.
- 5 Make sure you tie up a tight legal contract. Don't put off resolving unpleasant or contentious issues until 'later'. However, once signed, the contract should be put away. If you refer to it, something is wrong with the relationship.
- 6 Recognise that during the course of a collaboration, circumstances and markets change. Recognise your partner's problems and be flexible.
- 7 Make sure you and your partner have mutual expectations of the collaboration and its time scale. One happy and one unhappy partner is a formula for failure.
- 8 Get to know your opposite numbers at all levels socially. Friends take longer to fall out.
- 9 Appreciate that cultures - both geographic and corporate - are different. Don't expect a partner to act or respond identically to you. Find out the true reason for a particular response.
- 10 Recognise your partner's interests and independence.
- 11 Even if the arrangement is tactical in your eyes, make sure you have corporate approval. Your tactical activity may be a key piece in an overall strategic jigsaw puzzle. With corporate commitment to the partnership, you can act with the positive authority needed in these relationships.
- 12 Celebrate achievement together. It's a shared elation, and you'll have earned it !

Postscript : Two further things to bear in mind.

- 1 If you are negotiating a product deal with an original equipment manufacturer look for a quid pro quo. Remember that another product may offer more in return.
- 2 Joint development agreements must include joint marketing arrangements. You need the largest market possible to recover development costs and to get volume/margin benefits.

Box 6 Rules For Stifling Innovation

- Regard any new idea from below with suspicion - because it's new, and because it's from below.
- Insist that people who need your approval to act first go through several other levels of management to get their signatures.
- Ask departments or individuals to challenge and criticize each other's proposals.
- Express your criticisms freely, and withhold your praise. Let them know they can be fired at any time.
- Treat identifications of problems as signs of failure, to discourage people from letting you know when something in their area isn't working.
- Control everything carefully. Make sure people count anything that can be counted, frequently.
- Make decisions to reorganize or change policies in secret, and spring them on people unexpectedly.
- Make sure that requests for information are fully justified, and make sure that it is not given out to managers freely.
- Assign to lower-level managers, in the name of delegation and participation, responsibility for figuring out how to cut back, lay off, move people around, or otherwise implement threatening decisions you have made. And get them to do it quickly.
- Above all, never forget that you, the higher-ups, already know everything important about this business.

Box 7 Trust within the Organization

The achieving of a high level of trust between the members of any group or organization requires commitment to a shared set of values relating to their shared activities. This means a need for the organisation to function, as Peter Anthony argues, as a moral community.. Such a view is supported by evidence other than my own. As Anthony, writing with Michael Reed, puts it: "Accumulating evidence shows that managers (real managers, below the level of corporate manipulation . . .) depend for their effectiveness upon norms of reciprocity, upon trust, obligation and the maintenance of defensible social relationships ... Reality, both social and economic, resides in the production and exchange of goods and services and that depends on the dialectics of control and cooperation, on leadership and community and, finally, upon authority, which is essentially moral."

John Roberts draws on his own research among managers to argue that managers and management writers are mistaken if they believe that their work is a morally neutral activity which involves applying control techniques to achieve effective performance. Drawing, like Peter Anthony, on the writing of the philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre, Roberts argues that manipulative techniques cannot work because of the endemic unpredictability of social life and, hence, the inadequacy of the social science knowledge upon which they are based. Technical managerial competence can achieve little real control. [t]he only effective control that can be achieved is moral control: "Such moral forms of control will not be realized merely by insisting that staff recognize that their interests are bound up with the survival of the company as a whole', whilst in their immediate practice, through coercion or manipulation, managers seek to deny or avoid this interdependence. Instead what is required is a form of practice in which there is a mutual recognition of one another as interdependent subjects; each recognizing his or her dependence on others' actions, whilst at the same time acknowledging the freedom of action of others." [Watson 1994:211]

Box 8 Two Forms of Learning

Institutional learning [IL] involves clear goals, set by the provider. Learning is the practice of predetermined methods for reaching the goals, with 'right answers' and grading of learners in relation to each other. It treats learners as individuals, not team members, and standardizes content and modes of presentation so that learners all experience the same learning. It requires a stable environment within which to practice its principles and goes to great lengths to keep the 'real world' from contaminating the educational process as IL conceives it. *"IL is clearly more a system for indoctrination and control than it is for learning."*

Continual learning in permanent white water involves 'learning as a way of being', which means:

- 1 Learning best practices has to be consciously self-directed.
- 2 Learning best practices is a creative, imaginative process of seeing how the way someone else does something might teach us something.
- 3 The way in which a best practice is truly a 'best practice' cannot be fully learned without performing it oneself.
- 4 Learning best practices occurs at a feeling level as well as a cognitive level.
- 5 Learning best practices should occur in as operational an environment as possible.
- 6 Learning best practices is a continual process. The potential of the best practice is a matter of ongoing discovery and refinement.
- 7 As the first six qualities are practised, learning best practices becomes a powerful process of learning about learning best practices. Learning, in other words, is reflexive, It acts back on itself.

Box 9 Two Approaches to Change

"Programmed change is led by managers or administrators who have responsibility for solving problems and improving the organization. Because they are held accountable for the consequences of change, managers seek to maximize control over the change process. They apply formal methods to analyze problems and to select relevant solutions. ... The rationality and control inherent in programmed change result in innovations that are well defined with clear costs and expected results. ... In order to assure consistency of application, the changes are generally rolled out in the organization along formal lines of authority with limited opportunities for adjustments or modifications." [22-3]

"Programmed change is unlikely to lead to high levels of commitment to change. ... Because employees and other relevant stakeholders, such as customers and suppliers, are not actively involved in the analysis and design phases of the change process, the changes may not take into account their needs and interests. Consequently, these stakeholders may not support the changes and may even resist or sabotage them." [22]

Cummings contrasts this programmatic approach with new change strategies, which *"treat organizational change as an on-going process of continuous improvement and innovation. They involve multiple stakeholders in the change process and empower them to participate actively in all phases of innovation, from diagnosis and design to implementation and assessment. The strategies treat organizational change as a learning process where participants learn through their actions how to improve the organization and the learning process itself."* [Cummings 1995:24]

Box 10: Using the Consultant - a Power Strategy

"A few other dimensions of the relationships between consultants and managers are worth mentioning. The consultant encounters particular difficulties when he becomes aware that the "real issues" facing him are the political and social structures of a corporation rather than the problem defined for him. Of course, in such cases one may assume that executives are fully aware of the real issues. Most likely, executives are using the consultant to: legitimate already desired unpleasant changes, such as reorganizations; throw rival networks of executives off the track of one's real strategy by diverting resources to marginal programs; undercut consultants employed by other executive groups by establishing what might be called counter-plausibility; or advance, as already suggested, a personal or organizational image of being up-to-date, with-it, and avant-garde. The consultant who perceives such discrepancies has to devise his own strategies for handling them. Some of these include: rejecting the assignment altogether; accepting the problem as defined and confining oneself to it for the sake of future contracts even though one knows that any action will be inefficacious; or accepting the assignment but trying to persuade the client to address the underlying social and political issues, that is, redefining the problem. The consultant's own strategy is limited by the constraint that he present his findings according to a certain etiquette, one that has deep roots in the history of the profession-that is, as a rational, objective, scientific judgement that will improve the organization. The consultant's claim to expertise and legitimacy rests on this. As it happens, even if the consultant sees that the real issues are political and social ones and is willing to address them, this emphasis on a pragmatic rational objectivity often produces a somewhat stultifying relocation of abstract concepts rather than a detailed explanation of the intricacies of political networks that might lay bare the actual troubles of an organization. But then, managers need and desire the mask of objectivity to cover the capriciousness and arbitrariness of corporate life; consultants want to maintain their occupational self-image as experts. Each group fuels the other's needs and self-images in an occupational drama where the needs of organizations get subordinated to the maintenance of professional identities."

Jackall 1988:144

6 To assume a grand design is possible

A grand design assumes that an end-state can be reached when a local authority has achieved its objectives. But a local authority can never achieve its objectives, because the world does not stand still. Objectives change with a changing world. Strategic management is not about achieving a grand design but about learning, adapting and developing.

7 To presume certainty

A strategy or a set of objectives can appear to impose certainty, but there can be no certainty in local government. Needs change, aspirations grow, the political process challenges, opportunities arise. Strategic management is about coping with uncertainty - learning, adapting and development.

8 To seek the comprehensive approach

If strategic management covers everything it has failed to identify the strategic. Selectivity is at the heart of strategic management - the identification of the key changes, which existing organisation is incapable of undertaking. Strategic management is defined by its own distinctive contribution - if it is everything it is nothing.

9 Not to realise strategic management must let go

Issues will become the concern of strategic management, but they should not remain its concern. It is the task of strategic management to work out what is required and to effect the organisational changes needed to carry this out. If, after that, strategic management is still required, then it has failed - because it has not built an organisational capacity that can itself carry forward the matter.

10 To limit resource consideration to financial issues

Strategic management should involve strengthening organisational capacity and realising organisational potential. That involves the full use of all the resources of the authority's staff, information, powers, property and equipment. Strategic management is not merely about the full use of those resources, but also about their development.

11 To restrict strategic management to the organisational boundaries

Operational management focuses on the activities of the authority. It is necessarily restricted to the boundaries set by those activities. Strategic management can look beyond those boundaries to problems not faced and to community resources not realised.

12 To restrict strategic management to a strategic unit

Strategic management requires protection in the working of the authority. That may require the creation of a special unit to provide a focus for strategic management. The danger is to mistake such a necessary focus for the whole of strategic management. Strategic management isolated in such a unit may produce a strategy, but it will not change an organisation or influence action.

TWELVE STEPS TOWARDS STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

1 Strategic review provides a starting point

An authority can undertake the process of strategic review without the need for a commitment to a fully developed process of strategic management. Strategic review is a stocktaking of the position faced by the authority, of public and political aspiration and of organisational strengths and weaknesses. It therefore provides a means of identifying the need for strategic change and thus for strategic management. Strategic review provides the authority with a means of testing the need for strategic management.

2 Strategic review must encompass an assessment of organisational capacity

The identification of organisational strengths and weaknesses is the critical element of strategic review. It highlights the need for organisational change, which is at the heart of strategic review; yet it is often the neglected part of the process of strategic review. The issue which the consideration of organisational capacity focuses on is whether the organisation is capable of responding to the need for change.

3 Strategic review needs organisational time and space to develop

Strategic review does not just happen. It needs organisational protection from the pressures of operational management. It cannot be dealt with as just another item of a committee agenda. Strategic review requires consideration in depth by councillors and should involve awaydays and/or seminars and meetings. Organisational time and space needs to be allowed for officers to prepare.

4 Strategic management must be selective and focus on choice

Strategic management involves choice. If everything is strategic, nothing is strategic. Strategic review must lead to the identification of those issues that are of such importance that they require significant organisational change, whether in structure, processes, culture or resources that require redistribution. Ways need to be found of prioritising issues for choice and members need the time, space and right environment to consider and make choices,

5 Once strategic issues are identified they must be explored

The approach to be adopted on strategic issues does not spring automatically from strategic review. There is a need for issues to be explored, ideas to be tested and experiments to be undertaken. Strategy should be formed out of that experience, not predetermined in advance.

6 The outcome of strategic management is organisational change

The issue on which attention has in the end to be focused is organisational change. Strategic management is about changing the organisation to deal with the strategic issue. The acid test is whether organisational change is planned and actually happens.

7 Strategic management requires commitment to organisational development

Because strategic management is concerned with organisational change, it requires the use of processes of organisational development to enable those changes to take place. Organisational development can involve training, communication and personnel policies, undertaken not in isolation but in relation to other facets of strategic management. Just as strategic management requires organisational development, so organisational development requires strategic management.

8 Strategic management calls upon a diversity of skills and experience

Strategic management calls not for particular skills but for a diversity. It needs to be supported by multi-disciplinary teams, involving the different professions of local government. There is also a need to have access to harder analytical skills, organisational understanding, political sensitivity and a capacity to appreciate the movement of opinion.

9 Strategic statements are useful if their purpose is clear

A statement of strategic issues or a strategic plan is not an end in itself but an instrument to be used in strategic management. The test is therefore the purpose. Such documents can be a means of communication. They can be a guideline for action but they should not be too detailed. The question is whether they fulfil that purpose successfully.

10 Strategic management requires organisational protection

Organisational time and space requires organisational protection. Without this the urgencies of operational management will drive out the time and space required for strategic management. Units or teams focusing on strategic management can give protection. A change in committee cycle, away from the series of regular meetings to a differentiated cycle, that allows a focus on strategy is another form of organisational protection.

11 Strategic management must be prepared to let go

The aim of strategic management is to enable the organisation to deal with an issue.

This happens through organisational change achieved through organisational development. Once achieved strategic management has fulfilled its objective. There is, then, a need for strategic management to let go and to change its focus.

12 Organisational learning is at the heart of strategic management

The process of strategic management does not stop when one strategic issue is resolved. Strategic management is about a continuing process of the authority responding to environmental change and public and political aspiration; for that, a continuing process of organisational learning is required, beyond that provided by operational management.

From:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT BOARD: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

THE HISTORY OF ACTION RESEARCH

tion research has developed from a number of scientific and social sources. Lewin is seen as the 'founding father' through his work in the Group Dynamics. McKernan however argues that it can be traced back to 'scientific method' in the Science in Education movement of the late nineteenth century.

McKernan(1991:8) also states that there is evidence of the use of action research by a number of social reformists prior to Lewin. Thus Collier used the idea and terminology prior to Lewin, and as US Commissioner on Indian Affairs (1933-1945) wrote:

...the findings of research must be carried into effect by the administrator and the man, and must be criticized by them through their experience, the administrator and layman must themselves participate creatively in the research impelled as it is from their own area of need. (Collier cited in McKernan 1996)

McKernan concludes that action research is in a transient stage of redevelopment. Taggart (1992:2) cites work by Gestettner and Altricher which has Moreno using group participation in 1913 in a community development initiative with prostitutes in Vienna. Freideres (1992:3-4) asserts that the concept of participatory research emerged in the 1930s from development work in low income countries and mentions names such as Fals-Borda and Freideres.

In spite of the clouded origins of action research, Kurt Lewin, in the mid 1940s constructed a theory of action research, which described action research as "proceeding in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, action and the evaluation of the result of action" (Kemmis and McTaggart 1990:8). Lewin argued that in order to "understand and change certain social practices, social scientists have to include practitioners from the real social world in all phases of inquiry" (McKernan 1991:10). This construction of action research theory by Lewin made action research a method of acceptable inquiry. (McKernan 1991:9)

There appear to have been five movements which have made a particular impact on Action Research.

First, the Science in Education movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Second, the Experimentalist and Progressive educational work, especially of John Dewey, who applied the inductive scientific method of problem solving as a logic for the solution of problems in such fields as aesthetics, philosophy, psychology and education" (McKernan 1996). McKernan points for example to the Southern Study (Jenkins et al., 1991), which adopted an action research programme by having practitioners identify and solve problems of curriculum design and materials production through curriculum teams and workshops where the scientific method was rigorously employed as the work ethic.

Third, the Group Dynamics movement in social psychology and human relations training. McKernan sees this as a 'full circle' in research on social problems, from the qualitative social inquiry in the nineteenth century into problems of poverty, housing and urban life, to the social science response to the impact in the 1940s of war, problems of intergroup relations, social reconstruction, prejudice, and various other social. Out of this need to

understand and solve social problems, practitioner inquiry was once again rediscovered and action research was seen as a credible response.

In the mid-1940s, Kurt Lewin discussed action research as a form of experimental inquiry based upon the study of groups experiencing problems. Lewin argued that social problems should serve as the locus of social science research. Basic to Lewin's model is a view of research composed of action cycles including analysis, fact-finding, conceptualization, planning, implementation and evaluation of action (Lewin, 1947a; 1947b). Lewin was interested above all else in group dynamics and the concept of action in group settings. In his native Germany, the concept of action had been pivotal in the social sciences, but this was not the case in the USA before the war.

Lewin's contribution is important because, although not the first to use and write about action research, he did construct an elaborate theory and made action research a 'respectable' inquiry for social scientists. Action research began to be hailed as an innovation in social inquiry. Lewin believed that science should have this social-help orientation and he stated, 'research that produces nothing but books will not suffice.' (Lewin, 1948:203).

Action research was also used in the study of and developed a committed following in the USA at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and its Research Center for Group Dynamics, and through links with the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London. Many action research projects have been described in the journal of the Tavistock Institute, *Human Relations*. Wallace argues that action research as promoted by the Tavistock approach paved the way for the 'external intervention' style of collaborative action research currently enjoying widespread usage; a style that highlights the concerns of the target group rather than the professional researchers. It is vital to acknowledge Lewin's idea that in order to understand and change certain social practices, social scientists have to include practitioners from the real social world in all phases of inquiry. The Commission on Community Interrelations sponsored many action research projects during the 1940s and 1950s.

The fourth movement was the post-war Reconstructionist Curriculum Development activity. Action research in education was utilised in this era as "a general strategy for designing curricula and attacking complex problems, such as intergroup relations and prejudice through large curriculum development projects (McKernan 1991:10). Generally, research was carried out by outside researchers with the cooperation of teachers and schools (McKernan 1991:10). Noted researchers of this era were Corey (1953), Taba (1959) and Brady and Robinson (1952) (McKernan 1991:10). However by the end of the 1950s action research was in decline and under attack (McKernan 1991:10). Sanford (1970), as cited in McKernan 1991:10) suggested that the decline was directly related to the split between science and practice which was supported by the movement, and to a shift towards the establishment of expert educational research and development laboratories. This shift highlighted the separation of theory and practice. Professional researchers were insulated from the teaching ranks and were prevented from studying problems in the field (McKernan 1991:11).

Towards the end of the 1950s action research was in decline and was the subject of increased attack (Hodgkinson, 1957). In a telling title, 'Whatever happened to action research?', Sanford (Sanford, 1970) suggested that the decline was directly related to the

split between science and practice which was supported by the movement, and to the shift towards the establishment of expert educational research and development laboratories. This highlighted the separation of theory and practice, and was manifested through the top-down development strategy of the research, development, and dissemination (RD&D) model which insulated professional researchers from the teaching ranks. This separation has had the negative consequence of preventing researchers from studying problems in the field, particularly innovative practices.

Finally, the War on Poverty in America in the 1960s, and the subsequent impact of this in Britain, brought the wider use of Action Research in tackling social problems, as discussed in Chapter 10.

ACTION RESEARCH: WHAT IS IT?

Grundy and Kemmis (1981 as cited in Grundy 1988:353) state that there are three minimal requirements for action research. "These requirements incorporate the goals of movement and involvement which characterise any action research project. The conditions which are set out there as individually necessary and jointly sufficient for action research to exist are:

1. The project takes as its subject-matter a social practice, regarding it as a strategic action susceptible to improvement;

2. The project proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically complemented and interrelated; and

3. The project involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in the project gradually to include others affected by the practice and maintaining collaborative control of the process (Grundy and Kemmis 1981 as cited in Grundy 1988:).

MODES OF ACTION RESEARCH

A number of authors have identified three modes of action research:

- 1. Scientific-technical or positivist
- 2. Practical-deliberative, mutual collaborative or interpretivist
- 3. Political-emancipatory or enhancement

SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL OR POSITIVIST

Advocates of action research such as Lippitt and Radke in 1946, Lewin in 1947, Kegan in 1953, and Taba and Noel in 1957 put forward a scientific method of problem solving. (McKernan 1991:16) The underlying goal of the researcher in this approach is to identify a particular intervention based on a pre-specified theoretical framework, the nature of collaboration between the researcher and the practitioner is technical and facilitatory. The researcher identifies the problem and a specific intervention, then the practitioner is consulted and they agree to facilitate with the implementation of the intervention. (Holter and Schwartz-Barcott 1993:301). The communication flow within this type of research is

primarily between the facilitator and the group, so that the ideas may be communicated to the group (Grundy 1982:360).

A project guided by technical action research will have the following characteristics: the project would be instigated by a particular person or group of people who because of their greater experience or qualifications would be regarded as experts or authority figures. Technical action research promotes more efficient and effective practice. It is product oriented but promotes personal participation by practitioners in the process of improvement. "It fosters the disposition characteristic of the artisan within the participating practitioners" (Grundy 1987:154). This approach to action research results in the accumulation of predictive knowledge, the major thrust is on validation and refinement of existing theories and is essentially deductive (Holter et al 1993:301).

What is the approach which has kept closest to the legacy of Lewin. Carr and Kemmis argue that Lewin presaged three important characteristics of modern Action Research: its participatory character, its democratic impulse, and its simultaneous contribution to social science and social change. However they believe that in each of these three areas contemporary action researchers would take exception to Lewin's approach:

First, they would regard group decision-making as important as a matter of principle, rather than as a matter of technique; that is, not merely as an effective means of facilitating and maintaining social change, but also as essential for authentic commitment to social action. Second, contemporary exponents of action research would object to the notion that participants should, or could, be 'led' to more democratic forms of life through action research. Action research should not be seen as a recipe or technique for bringing about democracy, but rather as an embodiment of democratic principles in research, enabling participants to influence, if not determine, the conditions of their own lives and work, and collaboratively to develop critiques of social conditions which sustain dependence, inequality or exploitation. Third, contemporary action researchers would object to the language in which Lewin describes the theoretical aims and methods of social science ('developing deeper insights into the laws that govern social life through mathematical conceptual analysis and laboratory and field experiments'). This language would now be described as positivistic and incompatible with the aims and methods of any adequate social or educational science. (Carr and Kemmis 1986:164)

CRITICAL-DELIBERATIVE, MUTUAL COLLABORATIVE OR INTERPRETIVIST

In this type of action research project the researcher and the practitioners come together to identify potential problems, their underlying causes and possible interventions (Holter et al 1993:301). The problem is defined after dialogue with the researcher and the practitioner and a mutual understanding is reached. "Practical action research seeks to improve practice through the application of the personal wisdom of the participants" (Grundy, 1982: 357).

The design of action research allows for a more flexible approach, not available in the positivist paradigm. "Indicative of this flexibility is the frequent use of 'interpretive' as an umbrella term that comfortably accommodates interactive and phenomenological perspectives" (McCutcheon and Jung 1990:146).

McKernan (1991:20) feels that the practical model of action research trades off some measurement and control for human interpretation, interactive communication, liberation, negotiation and detailed description. "The goal of practical action researchers is understanding practice and solving immediate problems" (McKernan 1991:20). The practitioners involved in the mutual collaborative approach to action research gain a new understanding of their practice, the changes implemented tend to have a more lasting character. However the changes tend to be connected to the individuals directly involved in the change process, and therefore the interventions tend to be short lived when these individuals leave the system or there is an influx of new people (Oliver et al 1993:301).

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Practical action research fosters the development of professionalism by emphasising the part played by personal judgement in decisions to act for the good of the client" (Grundy 1987:154). This mode of action research "promotes autonomous, deliberative action - praxis" (Grundy 1987:154). Grundy's (1982:357) model for this type of action research is detailed below.

Grundy (1982:356) discusses three types of knowing. The first is *techne* or knowing-how, the source of skilful action. The second is *episteme*, the source of scientific action or knowing that. The third type of knowing is *phronesis*, the knowing-why, the source of practical action which is often called practical judgement. *Techne*, as occurs in the first type of action research results in a making action, it is product related. While *phronesis* results in doing-action or *praxis*, and is therefore product centred. The 'Idea' in the interaction is personal, subjective and never fully formed, rather it is constantly being formed and being influenced by the situation (Grundy 1992:357).

EMANCIPATORY OR ENHANCEMENT

Emancipatory action research "promotes emancipatory praxis in the participating practitioners; that is, it promotes a critical consciousness which exhibits itself in political action as practical action to promote change." (Grundy 1987:154) There are two goals for a researcher using this approach, one is to increase the closeness between the actual problems encountered by practitioners in a specific setting and the theory used to explain and resolve the problem. The second goal, which goes beyond the other two approaches, is to assist practitioners in identifying and making explicit fundamental problems by raising collective consciousness.

Marx has been an important influence on this approach. Thus Grundy argues that the intent is not "the intention to be rigorously discriminating only with regard to one's practice. It has a social consciousness as well in that it is a disposition toward the critical assessment of the extent to which the social milieu impedes the fostering of the good" (Grundy 1982:358). This mode of emancipatory action research does not begin with theory and end with practice, but it is informed by theory and often it is confrontation with theory that provides the initiative to undertake the practice (Grundy 1982:358). The dialectic relationship between theory and practice in emancipatory action research entails the expansion of both theory and practice during the project.

When a person reflects upon theory in the light of praxis or practical judgement, the form of knowledge that results is personal or tacit knowledge. This tacit knowledge can be clarified through the process of reflection. The interaction of theory and practical

gement through the process of reflection, with the input from critical intent leads to critical theorems (Grundy 1982:359).

The second function which Habermas distinguishes in the mediation of theory and practice is the organisation of the process of enlightenment in which critical theorems are applied and tested in a unique manner by the initiation of processes of reflection carried out within certain groups towards which these processes have been directed. These group processes of reflection will give rise to enlightenment in the form of authentic insights (Habermas 1972 as cited in Grundy 1982:360). The facilitator must not attempt to direct the outcome of the deliberative process by attempting to thrust enlightenment on participants, but must allow symmetrical communication to occur from which enlightenment will flow (Grundy 1982:360).

The third function which Habermas distinguishes is the organisation of action. The organisation of enlightenment has its focus upon the past while the organisation of action is future orientated (Grundy 1982:361). The form of strategic action resulting from enlightenment is a form of praxis. "Whereas action which resulted from phronesis was not a form of praxis, the development of 'critical theorems' and the process of enlightenment result in the true praxis for it is action which is freed from the dominating constraints of the environment" (Grundy 1982:361). Grundy (1982:363) provides a grammatic representation [see Table A9.1].

It is not in the methodologies that the three modes of action research differ, but rather in the underlying assumptions and world views of the participants that cause the variations in the application of the methodology (Grundy 1982:363). "The differences in the relationship between the participants and the source and scope of the guiding 'idea' can be traced to a question of power. In technical action research it is the 'idea' which is the source of power for action and since the 'idea' often resides with the facilitator, it is the facilitator who controls power in the project. In practical action research power is shared between a group of equal participants, but the emphasis is upon individual power for action. Power in emancipatory action research resides wholly within the group, not with the facilitator and not with the individuals within the group. It is often the change in power relationships within a group that causes a shift from one mode to another (Grundy 1982:363).

Grundy and Bond provide another typology [Table A9.2], which they do not present as prescriptive, recognising that this means it is open to different interpretations. A position at the far left of the typology would treat action research as a technique, involving discrete steps under the control of the action researcher. A position towards the far right of the typology would involve a more conscious and integrated process-led approach, rooted in dialogic philosophy which would underpin every aspect of the project, including especially the notion of action research as being highly participative and undertaken 'with' people. They suggest that there is a third position which may be taken up in interpreting the typology. "*Advocates of the type of 'participatory action research' (PAR) associated with Cornell University recognize that during the life of a project it may encompass both quantitative and qualitative approaches for which participatory action research forms a central work (Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice 1993). Thus a 'PAR' approach may be one component of a larger project, such as a comparative study, that incorporate components that are, for instance, less responsive to purely local context as the project moves towards national policy formulation.*" [1996:48]

Table A9.1 Types of Action Research			
	Technical Action Research	Mutual-Collaboration Action Research	Participatory Action Research
Philosophical Base	Natural Sciences	Historical-hermeneutic	Critical Sciences
the nature of reality	Single, measurable, fragmentable	Multiple, constructed, holistic	Social, economic. Exists with problems of equity and hegemony
Problem	Defined in advance	Defined in situation	Defined in the situation based on values clarification
Relationship between the Power and Known	Separate	Interrelated, dialogic	Interrelated, embedded in society
Focus of Collaboration theory	Technical validation, refinement, deduction	Mutual understanding, new theory, inductive	Mutual emancipation, validation, refinement, new theory, inductive, deductive
Scope of knowledge produced	Predictive	Descriptive	Predictive, descriptive
Time duration	Short lived	Longer lasting, dependent on individuals	Social change, emancipation
the nature of understanding	Events explained in terms of real causes and simultaneous effects	Events are understood through active mental work, interactions with external context, transactions between one's mental work and external context	Events are understood in terms of social and economic hindrances to true equity
role of value in research	Value free	Value bounded	Related to values of equity
Use of research	Discovery of laws underlying reality	Understand what occurs and the meaning people make of phenomena	Uncover and understand what constrains equity and supports hegemony to free oneself of false consciousness and change practice toward more equity
S. Grundy [taken from the Internet]			

It will be seen that the right hand columns of Tables A9.1 and A9.2 are compatible, and either form the basis of the type of Action Research being considered here, as shown in Table 10.2.

Table A9.2 Action research typology

Table A9.2 Action research typology				
	Consensus model of society Rational social management		Conflict model of society Structural change	
on research	Experimental	Organizational	Professionalizing	Empowering
Distinguishing criteria				
educative se	Re-education	Re-education/training	Reflective practice	Consciousness- raising
	Enhancing social science/administrative control and social change towards consensus	Enhancing managerial control and organizational change towards consensus	Enhancing professional control and individual's ability to control work situation	Enhancing user-control and shifting balance of power; structural change towards pluralism
	Inferring relationship between behaviour and output; identifying causal factors in group dynamics	Overcoming resistance to change/restructuring balance of power between managers and workers	Empowering professional groups; advocacy on behalf of patients/clients	Empowering oppressed
	Social scientific bias/researcher focused	Managerial bias/client focused	Practitioner focused	User/practitioner focused
ividuals in ps	Closed group, controlled, selection made by researcher for purposes of measurement/ inferring relationship between cause and effect	Work groups and/or mixed groups of managers and workers	Professional(s) and/or(interdisciplinary) professional group/negotiated team boundaries	Fluid groupings, self selecting or natural boundary or open/closed by negotiation
	Fixed membership	Selected membership	Shifting membership	Fluid membership
problem s	Problem emerges from the interaction of social science theory and social problems	Problem defined by most powerful group; some negotiation with workers	Problem defined by professional group; some negotiation with users	Emerging and negotiated definition of problem by less powerful group(s)
	Problem relevant for social science/ management interests	Problem relevant for management/social science interests	Problem emerges from professional practice/experience	Problem emerges from members' practice/experience
	Success defined in terms of social science	Success defined by sponsors	Contested, professionally determined definitions of success	Competing definitions of success accepted and expected
ange ention	Social science, experimental intervention to test theory and/or generate theory	Top-down, directed change towards predetermined aims	Professionally led predefined, process-led,	Bottom-up, undetermined, process-led
	Problem to be solved in terms of research aims	Problem to be solved in terms of management aims	Problem to be resolved in the interests of research-based practice and professionalization	Problem to be explored as part of process of change, developing an understanding of meanings of issues in terms of problem and solution
rovement nvovement	Towards controlled outcome and consensual definition of improvement	Towards tangible outcome and consensual definition of improvement	Towards improvement in practice defined by professionals and on behalf of users	Towards negotiated outcomes and pluralist definitions of improvement: account taken of vested interests
lic ses	Research components dominant	Action and research components in tension; action dominated	Research and action components in tension; research dominated	Action components dominant
	Identifies causal processes that can be generalized	Identifies causal processes that are specific to problem context and/or can be generalized	Identifies causal processes that are specific to problem and/or can be generalized	Change course of events; recognition of multiple influences upon change
	Time limited, task focused	Discrete cycle, rationalist, sequential	Spiral of cycles, opportunistic, dynamic	Open-ended, process driven
rch nship, of ration	Experimenter/ respondents	Consultant/researcher, respondent/ participants	Practitioner or researcher/collaborators	Practitioner researcher/co-researchers/ co-change agents
	Outside researcher as expert/research funding	Client pays an outside consultant - 'they who pay the piper call the tune'	Outside resources and/or internally generated	Outside resources and/or internally generated
	Differentiated roles	Differentiated roles	Merged roles	Shared roles

Source: Hart and Bond 1995

APPENDIX 8.1

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TWELVE COMMON MISTAKES IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

1 To reduce strategic management to a routine or to confuse it with operational management

If strategic management becomes a routine set of procedures to be carried out each year, it becomes so much a part of the normal way of working that it loses its capacity to add value. Strategic management must have a different rhythm from the normal way of working. It should be developed in an organisational pause, not in the rhythm of organisational continuity. The rhythm of continuity and the normal way of working are the stuff of operational management; they are crucial to the livelihood of any organisation. But operational management is different from strategic management.

2 To mistake a strategic plan for strategic management

A strategic plan may be a useful instrument in strategic management, recording the need for change and communicating a sense of direction, but it is not itself strategic management. Strategic management is about organisational change. It takes place not in a plan, but in change itself.

3 To assume that a set of objectives itself provides an adequate basis for a strategy for change

A set of objectives may be useful in the management of an authority in showing direction, but a set of objectives is not by itself a basis for a strategy. The real issues for organizational change lie not in objectives but in the interrelationships between them. Strategic management cannot take objectives as setting a strategy. Strategy lies in the balance between objectives.

4 To confuse strategic management with its separate parts.

A local authority may need objectives, performance requirements, programmes of action, management targets and performance review. These should be part of its normal way of working. They are basic management requirements but they should not be mistaken for strategic management. However, strategic management may use these things for organisational change as it will use other organisational instruments. Equally, change in organisational structure, change in processes, changing culture, defining values, writing mission statements and so on may be important parts of an approach to strategic management. Each may also be carried out on its own for other reasons. By themselves, they should not be confused with strategic management.

5 To ignore organisational development

This is the commonest, but also the most fundamental mistake. It assumes that strategic change, that is change in activities or way of working, can be carried out by an organisation that has up to now failed to make the change. A strategy unrelated to organisational development will be frustrated by organisational inertia.

APPENDIX 9.2 ACTION LEARNING

The purpose of this Appendix is not to provide a detailed history of Action Learning, since such accounts are readily available [for example, Pedler et al 1996]. Rather it is to argue that the thinking of Revans deserves greater emphasis in the discussion of Action Learning, not least because his arguments lend weight to the case put forward in Chapter Nine that Action Learning and Action Research should be integrated wherever possible.

The following extracts from his work illustrate this.

"We may structure our argument from the outset by identifying the acquisition of programmed knowledge as P, and of questioning insight as Q, so writing the learning equation as $L=P+Q$. In this, our principle interest is in Q, the idea of action learning. We do NOT reject P; it is the stuff of traditional instruction. ...

"Traditional instruction [P] prepares for the treatment of puzzles ... action learning, on the other hand, deals with the resolution of problems [and the acceptance of opportunities] about which no single course of action is to be justified by any code of programmed knowledge. ... this demands exploratory insight [Q]." [1983: 9]

This contrast is drawn out in the following table [1982:764-5].

Learning = Programmed + Questioned Changes

P	Q
Is the field of experts, skilled at answering the questions of other persons	Is the field of leaders, responsible for posing the questions essential to further progress
Is exhibited by scholars and persons with encyclopaedic memories	Is the preoccupation of the wise person more concerned with what they cannot understand in their field of observation
Is the stock in trade of the teaching institution, where transfer of P is to be verified by rigorous examination	Is acquired by freedom from all such constraints and derives from successful conjecture about the previously unknown
Is to resolve puzzles to which a solution may be said to exist, even if it is difficult to find and calls for expert skill	Helps to find acceptable courses of action away from problems
Is typified by complementary schismogenesis, or interactions between persons generating dominance-submission, dependence-nurturance	Is symmetric schismogenesis, or interactions that are to be described in terms of rivalry, competition and mutual emulation
Is characteristic of incremental improvement in performance	Is the essence of radical inventiveness based on total changes of method

"Managerial learning implies an ability to carry out the solution of the problem as well as to specify that solution ... in learning such new behaviour, persons must attack real problems, preferably ill-defined, or fertile opportunities, howsoever remote, in such manners as to remain continuously aware of their progress and of the influences determining the progress.

"Managers readily learn to accept and to discharge their real-life responsibilities by contrived exchanges with other managers during the prosecution of real life activities; they learn both to give to and to accept from other managers the criticism, advice and support needful to develop their own managerial powers, all in the course of identifying and treating their own personal tasks; this is the argument for the centrality of the 'set' that is the cutting edge of every action learning programme ... it is particularly important that the set is kept mainly to the reporting, analysis and planning of real-time action continually being taken by the participants in their operation backgrounds.

"The structure of the approach to experimental investigation known as the *scientific method* - as distinct from dialectic and sophistry - identifies five successive stages (observation, provisional hypothesis, trial, audit and review) and is identical to those of (a) the *rational decision* (survey, first decision, pilot run, evaluation and final decision); (b) the *learning sequence* (awareness of ignorance, new idea, taking a chance, watching effect, remembering for next time); and (c) the *advisory argument*, either given or received (admission of need, choice of counsel, test of confidence by action, estimate of outcome, confirmation - or rejection - of counsel); the deliberated diagnosis, prescription and therapy associated with action learning thus makes (a) *deciding*, (b) *earning*, and (c) *advising* all three aspects of the same essential and logical process -the application of the scientific method to changing real systems managed by real people; this simple analysis suggests that the distinctions drawn by academics between research, action, learning and communication are highly artificial, if not knowingly misconceived; there can be no action without learning, and no learning without action;

"Action learning *necessarily* has three major objectives, and it is idle to design programmes intended to concentrate on one of them; none can be accomplished unless its two counterparts are also encouraged; they are

- (a) to make useful progress upon the treatment of some problem or opportunity in the real world;
- (b) to give nominated managers (and many others within the operational fields of the' problems or opportunities on which they will work) sufficient scope, variable but sustained, to learn for themselves, and in the company of colleagues, how best to approach ill-structured challenges to which nobody can, at the outset, suggest any satisfactory response; and
- (c) to encourage teachers and others in 'management development' to perceive their missions afresh; they should no longer try to teach managers anything about how to manage, but should see themselves as having to contrive, with senior managements, the conditions in which all managers, including those at the top, learn with and from each other in the pursuit of their common and everyday duties.

These three objectives are to action learning what the three sides are to a triangle, essential to its character and incompatible with the suggestion that any one of them can be greater than the sum of the other two.

[Revans 1983:10-17]

Of interest also are links with the arguments on complexity and self-organization. Thus Revans comments on self-autonomy:

"A management that interprets the employment of its staff as a continuous opportunity for their self-development does not, by setting aside the mythologies of 'scientific management' about commanding, coordinating and controlling, thereby resign to the

understrappers all responsibility for running the enterprise. It merely acknowledges that the enterprise is the setting in which the staff spend most of their active lives, and that the total contract between it and its employees is wider than an agreement about who is to be paid for doing what.

"This wider bargain, even if not explicit, has deep implications for personal development and personal autonomy: outstanding persons should be encouraged to develop themselves to the limits of their capacities and ought not to be restricted entirely by ingenious mechanistic programmes devised by quickwitted experts trained not to ask questions outside their own fields. Indeed, the present relation between those who perform and those who plan calls often to be stood upon its head; it is for the individual worker, as a member of a wealth-creating group, to suggest his [sic] optimum conditions of work and to set his personal standards of achievement, and for the expert to solve (with the help of the group) whatever problems the worker may introduce." [1982:285-6]

Finally, the philosophical underpinning to Action Learning suggested by Revans is noteworthy:

"We may now ask whether the ideas that inform action learning can be traced as more than casual references in the writings of antiquity and of the Christian patriarchs. The answer is Yes: they form the logical support to the teachings of the Buddha ... what can be called the discovery of the Buddha is just these four [Noble] Truths:

"And what is it, And what is it, monks, that I have declared? This is suffering-this have I declared. This is the arising of suffering-this have I declared. This is the cessation of suffering-this have I declared. This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering-this have I declared. And why, monks, have I declared these truths? They are indeed useful, are essential to the life of purity, they lead to disgust, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquillity, to full understanding, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. That is why, monks, they are declared by me." Thus spoke the Buddha.

We may interpret the four truths in the light of action learning theory as this has been presented in the modern literature. The first: "This is suffering - this have I declared"; it is the first principle of action learning that men [sic] learn only of their own volition, and not at the will of others.

The second truth: "This is the arising of suffering-this have I declared." Our first task, having become aware of our suffering, is to identify its cause. Without diagnosis, without being able to recognise the arising of the problem, we cannot cure it; we cannot start our therapy, except at random, and there are sufferings enough in the world already that would be aggravated by random treatment. The force of the Buddha's second truth is well known to the student of practical action: nothing in human experience is more terrifying than the wrong diagnosis efficiently treated. ...

The third noble truth set forth by the Buddha: "This is the cessation of suffering-this have I declared", has its counterpart in action learning: the proposed solution to the problem that is the source of embarrassment, the arising of the suffering. The nature of the desired solution, the cessation of the suffering, will be subjective, depending upon the value system of him who has the trouble. In the jargon of modern scientific method (the paradigms of which are also those of action learning), the cessation of the suffering would be the successful application of a sound hypothesis or strategy; it is cardinal to intelligent action that the scientist, or the problem solver, should know

from what point he starts, the arising, and to what point he wishes to move, the cessation. ...

"It is, perhaps, the fourth truth enunciated by the Buddha that awakens the greatest interest in the student of action learning: "This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering-this have I declared." It was he who, probably for the first time in the history of mankind, taught that salvation - or at least deliverance from adversity - must be achieved by each individual by his own actions. Self-responsibility forbids that the burden of one's troubles should be shifted to some external agency-a god, or saviour, a professor of economics, some or other management expert, competing foreign aid programmes and so forth; the Buddha constantly warns his disciples to develop their own inner forces and qualities. In the action learning programmes with which I have been concerned, alike in Europe and India, this accent has been slightly shifted: the managers are to help one another reorganise the knowledge each already has stored in his consciousness. They learn, with and from each other as they work together upon their common problems, to reinterpret their perceptions of their remembered experience and, thereby, to recall and employ that which is most appropriate, even if it had been forgotten.

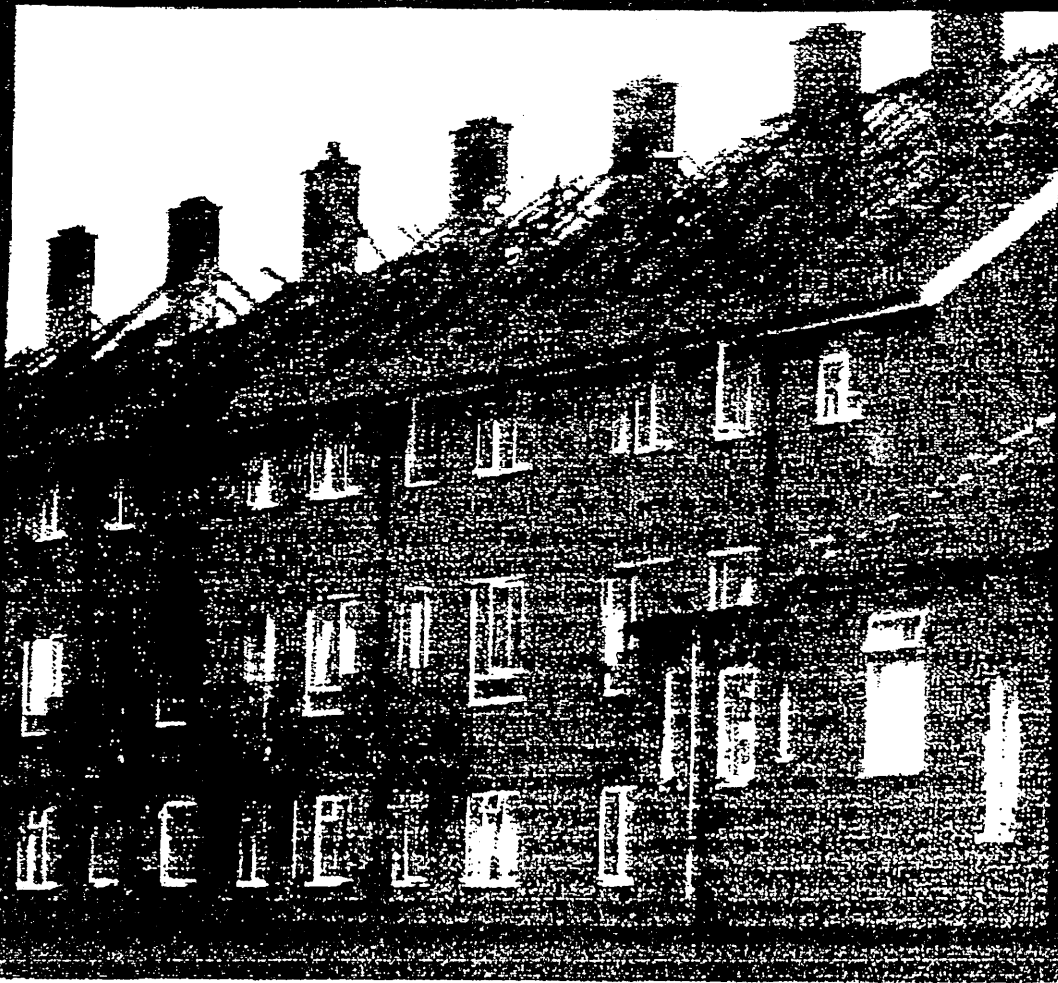
[1982:536-8]

A commentator notes: "Two things, finally, stick out in my mind when recalling my own conversations with Revans. The first was his saying that action learning and Buddhism were one and the same thing. The second was his thanking me for spending half an hour of my time to listen to him. The philosophy is the man." [Lessem, quoted in McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993]

The latter authors make a further comment, which should not be overlooked: "Many authors make clear that the action learning approach is holistic in its approach: it seeks to provide self-development opportunities both at a personal and managerial level, whilst holding out the promise to the organization of higher productivity and effectiveness. It is also fairly simplistic in its messages. ... It also has a spiritual appeal, as previously noted: it has been compared to Buddhism, is liberally sprinkled with biblical quotes, and is suggestive of a way of life on a higher plain, just out of reach: 'the day action learning becomes explicable in words long will be the day to abandon the practice of it' [Revans]" [McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993]

APPENDIX 10.1

SLUMS ON THE DRAWING BOARD



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PREFACE

IT IS EASY to say, looking back after a few years, that a block of flats, or a whole housing estate, should never have been built. The signs of physical decay, the irrelevance of environmental improvement, the repeatedly expressed anguish of the residents – frequently seen out on the housing itself – all these make it clear that the buildings were a disaster. Not that this is much comfort to the residents – it confirms their own opinion, but they still have to live there.

In the case of Noble Street and Norwich Place things were slightly different: they were condemned even before the residents moved in. Five years after they were finished a councillor said:

"Anyone who has been around these – particularly the five point blocks – would soon realise what an eyesore they really are . . . weekly, almost nightly, I am inundated with requests from people to see if they can be rehoused anywhere else. I understand that when they were first built Councillor Dix expressed the opinion that they were slums before people even moved into them."

A belated effort was made to remedy the situation – the last few blocks were built in three storeys instead of five – but the damage was done. This is the first indictment of the housing system – that places like these could be built. The second is that even though these flats were considered as from the moment they were

built, it took 20 years to get them emptied. That is a long time for people to suffer. And with up to 2,000 people living in the flats at any one time, that is a lot of people suffering.

The story of these flats is important in itself. But we have written this report primarily because there are two issues of wider significance for which this story has lessons.

First, as we shall see, disasters like this are not accidental. Noble Street was not a mistake: it was consciously and deliberately designed to conform with a very widely held view of Council housing: that it should be economical – which is to say, cheap. Much that followed was the consequence of this.

Such a view is as common today as it was 20 years ago. However much it is hidden or dressed up in other language, this view – which has long been the policy of the Right – is rapidly becoming accepted by all major parties. The strong commitment of Conservative and Labour Governments alike to owner occupation means that Council housing is to be 'residual' in the future, in the same way as public housing has been for years in America.

The most recent official statement on the future of housing came in the Green Paper on Housing Policy published by the Government in 1977. In this the Government's view was shown to be very close to the one Conservatives have held for years: that most people want to be owner

occupiers, and everything should be done to increase the number who are. This view has not gone unchallenged. Many have agreed that a strong commitment to building large numbers of high quality housing is needed. But our case here is that reforms to the present system will not achieve such a goal, because as long as owner occupation is put forward as the desirable tenure, any alternative, including council housing, will be second rate. And, as we shall see, the structure of the owner occupation market ensures such changes will not occur. Noble Street and Norwich Place were always 'residual' housing: in this sense they are a warning of things to come.

Our second reason for writing this report is more optimistic. It is to show that at a community level something can be done about this. The overall problem is not solved – the limitations to this action are very clear – but that does not mean that community action is irrelevant.

The concerted efforts of residents in these flats has brought many of them a better life. There are similar stories to be found in other parts of the country, and indeed on many Council estates in Tyneside. Action groups in Scotswood, Cowgate, St. Cuthberts – all these are struggling to improve their housing. What we hope to do here is show why these struggles have to be put in a wider context: why the future of Council housing as a whole needs to be a critical part of these struggles.

The Benwell CDP, one of 12 experimental schemes, was set up by the Home Office in conjunction with Newcastle Council and Durham University to examine the nature and causes of urban poverty. This report is one of a series of 11 which describe the experience and work of the team over the last six years. Further copies of all the reports as well as many other national and local CDP reports can be obtained from Benwell CDP Publi-

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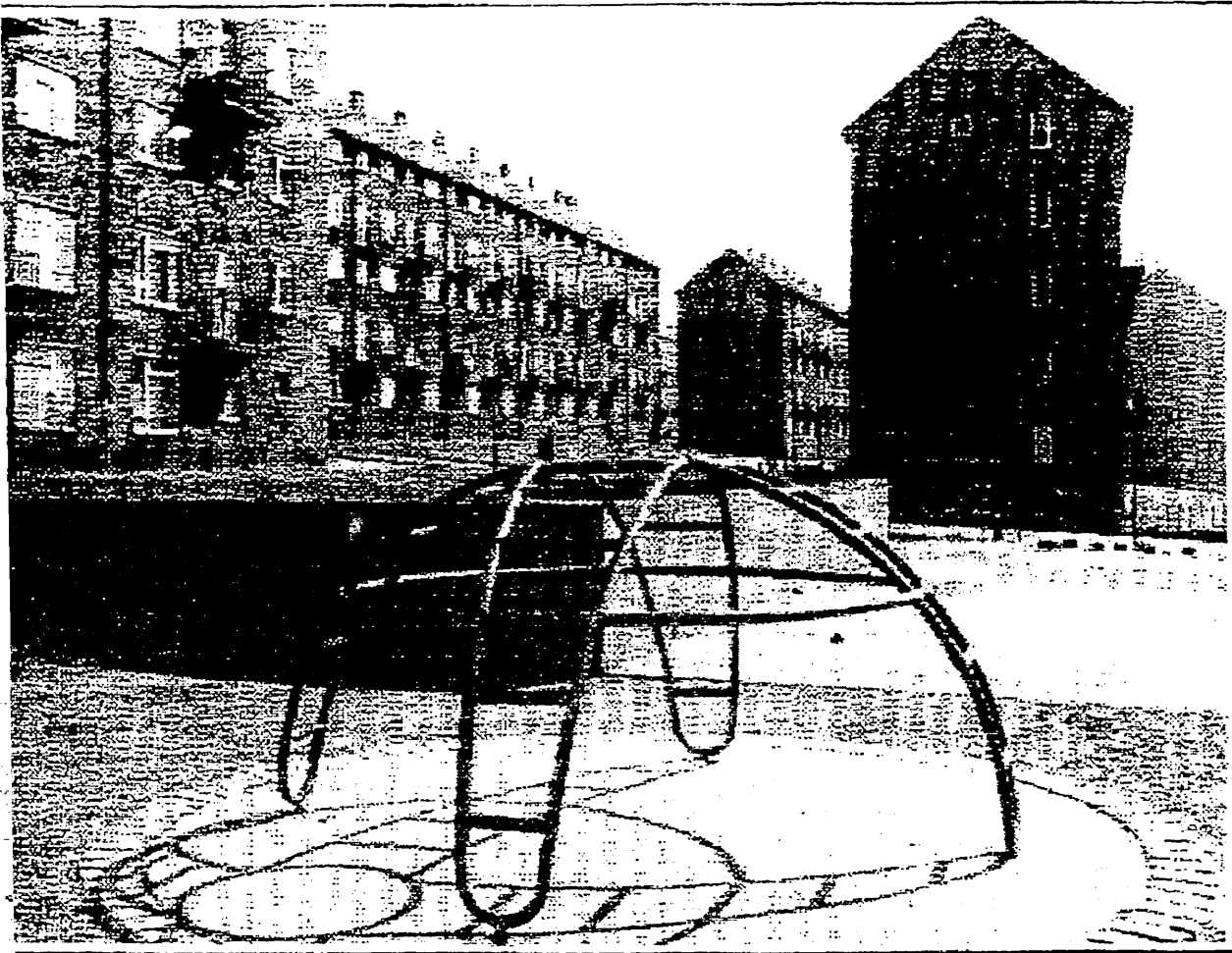
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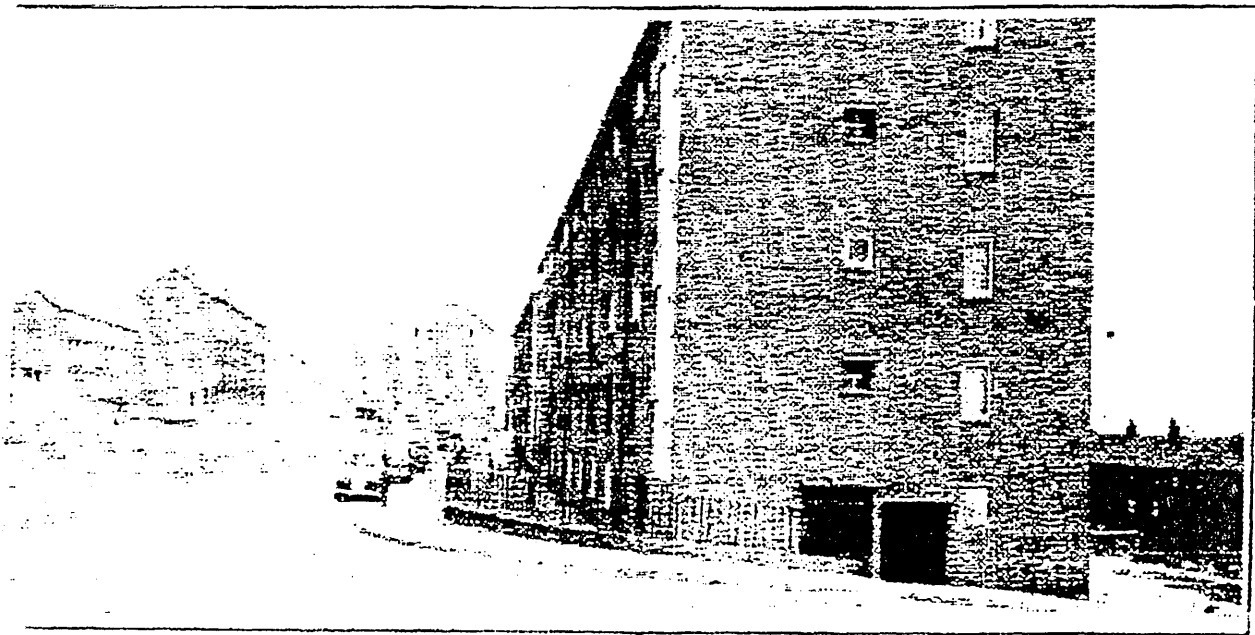
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LE STREET ESTATE: "Fifteen blocks of big, ugly, appallingly-designed tenement flats. It was a slum before the tenants moved in." (Labour Weekly 19.1.73).



PRISONS for the POOR

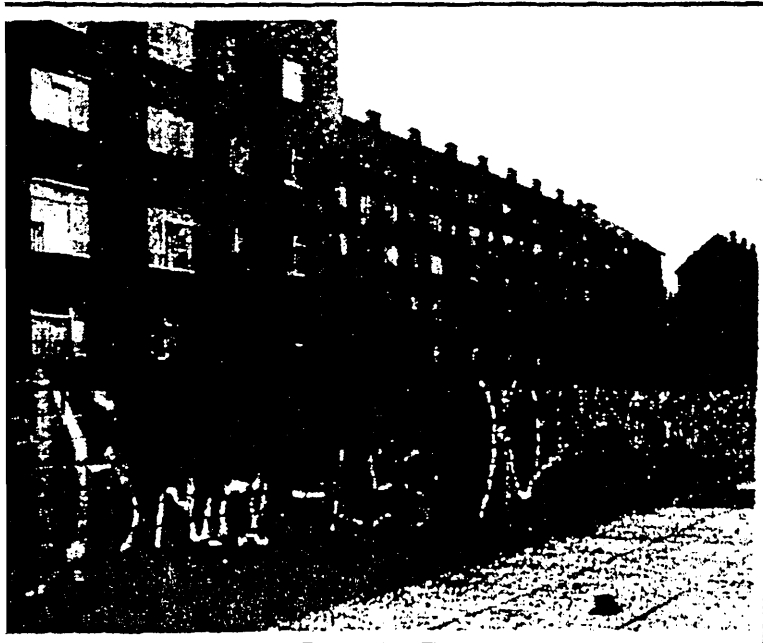
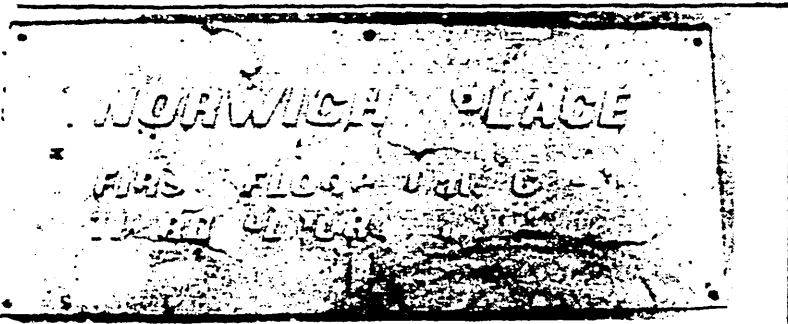
THE flats and maisonettes at Noble Street and Norwich Place were built between 1956 and 1960. There were 19 blocks of three and five storey height in Noble Street and five five-storey blocks at Norwich Place. The two estates are about a mile apart, both next to Scotswood Road and therefore beside the Vickers factories which still line several miles of the Tyne.

Noble Street has been described as "a modern housing complex which looks exactly what it is — a slum. Fifteen blocks of big, ugly, appallingly-designed tenement flats. It was a slum before the first tenants moved in. Slums start on the drawing board".¹

The blocks were built to minimum standards to enable the highest population density possible at the cheapest possible cost. They were appallingly badly designed. The tallest blocks were five storeys high. This was the highest permitted building height before lifts must be included. The layout of the site was monotonous and there was a general disregard of scale. The blocks had pitched roofs. They were too tall for pitched roofs to look attractive, but pitched roofs were the cheapest form of roofing, and so the Noble Street/Norwich Place blocks had them. The blocks were crowded close together on the site and were built on an East-West axis. As a result, a deep shadow was cast between the rows of blocks and the north-facing entrances were always in semi-darkness. A frequently-used description of the two estates as "prison-like" was very apt, especially during recent years when redevelopment to much higher standards, surrounded the Noble Street estate on three sides.

The entrance way to each block could hardly have been worse. Always in semi-darkness, they had the appearance — and smell — of public lavatories.

This impression was heightened by the fact that pools of stagnant water often spread along the frontages of the blocks with no apparent means of draining away. At night the entrances and the aerial walkways which connected the maisonettes on the second



1. *Labour Weekly* 19.1.1973.

d fourth floors, were often in complete darkness. Light fittings, even when intact, frequently did not function and street lighting on the estate was always completely inadequate.

The exterior appearance of the blocks was grim. Built of dirty brick and unrelieved by any visually interesting features, the blocks loomed over the passerby. Rubbish and pools of stagnant water were everywhere. The so-called "play structures" of dull, imaginative concrete, were the only ornament at landscaping. Long-abandoned posts for clothes lines stuck at intervals out of the paving. Interiors of broken glass were strewn around liberally. The blank boards of apparently empty flats were all around. In October/November 1973 workers

Beaumont Street Information Centre did two surveys of the five-storey blocks in Noble Street. The results were a numerical count of defects apparent on a walk round the blocks. The results were as follows:

Defect	1st survey	2nd survey
Windows holed or shattered	200	237
Windows boarded	403	376
Doors unusable	11	13
empty	45	37
Door frames unsound	17	17
Door leaks	4	5
Excreta	58	35
Steps missing	63	80
Steps blocked or broken	12	49

A horrific indictment of the estate.

The rubbish disposal system was inadequate. Each five-storey block had a rubbish chute at each end with access into the chute via chute rooms on each landing. The volume of rubbish each chute would take was inadequate for the numbers of people living in the block, and so they were almost permanently blocked. Rubbish piled up in the chute rooms and was smelly, unsightly and a health hazard. Emptying the bins at bottom of the blocks was not easy and rubbish would be constantly strewn around the surrounding area.

Not only were the chutes unhygienic and inadequate, they were also a fire hazard. In 1973 the Fire Brigade had to deal with 13 chute fires.

The flats were all designed originally with open coal fires and the disposal of hot ashes was the major source of fire risk. Also, of course, coal had to be carried up flights of narrow steps and coal merchants could not be

persuaded to deliver fuel to the top floors.

The narrow walkways on the second and fourth floors of the five-storey blocks allowed little privacy to the individual family as the kitchen window looked onto it. Keeping the landing clean was a joint responsibility and often a completely hopeless task. Drainage from the landings was often defective and pools of water would collect, unable to run away because the very narrow drainage pipes were blocked. Most tenants felt insecure without a dog (although technically they were not allowed) and the dogs' by-products were all too evident on the landings and staircases.

The design of the individual flats also left much to be desired. There was one entrance only — the front door. The kitchen was on the left of the front door, and as it faced onto the landing, many tenants gave up the struggle to keep glass in the window and had it boarded up. Fire was a greatly feared hazard. The highest fire risk rooms in a dwelling are the kitchen and living room. In the five-storey blocks these two rooms surrounded the only exit and tenants could be trapped in the bedrooms. Each flat was provided with a fire escape hatch, situated in the upstairs landing which gave an exit onto the exterior landing. These hatches were ideal entrances for burglars and most tenants kept them screwed down to prevent break-ins. They were scarcely ideal for elderly or infirm tenants trying to escape from fire. In 1973 the Fire Brigade attended 31 fires in Noble Street and in 1975 one block of Norwich Place was completely destroyed by fire spreading along the roof space. Miraculously, no one was hurt.

**PRISONS
for the
POOR**

1 HOW A SLUM IS BUILT



The old Noble Street slums — the bare minimum in the way of shelter.

NEWCASTLE'S recently retired director of Environmental Health began work as a Public Health Inspector in the city in the early 1950s. He remembers vividly his first morning: he was sent out to the old tenements in Ramshawe Street and Noble Street, along the Scotswood Road. Before coming here he had worked in Cardiff's Tiger Bay, and in the East End of London. But he says: "The buildings which the new Noble Street flats replaced were the worst slums I have ever seen".

Perhaps that isn't too surprising: the tenements had been condemned as unfit for human habitation before the Second World War. They had been amongst the first to be built during

the ferocious westward expansion of Newcastle as its heavy industrial complex boomed during the 19th century. They were never intended to be decent houses: they were just the bare minimum in the way of shelter, all that the unskilled — and often unemployed — working class could afford. Situated at the bottom of the Tyne banks, right beside the massive Armstrong works, they had the most unpleasant environment man could imagine — and create.¹

A contemporary account gives a graphic picture of the times:

"The Elswick workshops and workers' houses bear witness to a completely systematical 'saving of

unnecessary expense'. Wherever one turns on the stark slopes with their uniform rows of workers' houses or in the black ill-kempt factory-streets along the river, one gets the same leaden, disconsolately grey impression of a world which strives and toils all day long, but has no other goal for its dirty work than a stupid and eternal perpetuation of itself.

The inhabitants of the area bear the mark of their environment's worthless and aimless existence. One does not even meet shabbier

1. For full details of the development of Newcastle in the 19th century see 'Private Housing and the Working Class' Benwell Community Project 1978.

men, more ragged women, dirtier crowds of children nor less inviting homes even in London's dock areas.

Even the bakeries and grocer's shops show the marks of the people's lack of self-respect. Among their contents – wretched culinary stimulants, which for the most part are surrogates, and as cheap as they are loathsome – none are lacking whole cupboards of small penny bottles of – castor oil. One buys poison and antidote at the same place without spoiling the appetite."

There were of course many other areas of tenemented slums in the city. They contributed to frequent outbreaks of cholera, and one particularly infamous area – Pandon – was cleared in the last century. But clearance programmes as such did not develop on any scale until after the First World War, and they were then concentrated very much in the city centre. This had distinct advantages: it released land for more profitable use. Councillors had this very much to mind, as was shown in 1923 when the first clearance scheme – Liverpool Street – came before Council:

"The Committee felt that these areas were a menace to the community, that they should be demolished under the Act, and that there should be no housing there at all . . . The land should be reserved for the business and commercial development of the city. The Committee believed that that land was too central and too valuable to be used for housing purposes."

Thirteen years later a Councillor made a similar point while debating another clearance area:

"It would be an advantage to the city to retain the land for commercial purposes, and it may be to the advantage of the people from the health point of view if they were rehoused elsewhere on a cheaper site."

The Noble Street area, of course, had no such value: it was well outside city centre.

The war brought slum clearance programmes to a halt. It had the same effect on new housebuilding, and by

1945 Newcastle recognised with the rest of the country, the need for a massive building programme to make up for the lost six years. Slum clearance could hardly be seen as a priority: there had been enough housing loss from war damage.

The Labour Party had gained control of Newcastle for the first time in 1945. They shared the commitment of national government to council housing as the best solution to the problem. Plans were made to build 15,000 council houses in the next decade: in fact only 8,000 were completed.

Housing at the time was an intense political issue, and there was a clear divide between the Labour Party and the Progressives (who were basically an anti-socialist coalition of Conservatives, Liberals and Independents). At the end of 1946 housing progress was reviewed in Council, and the Progressives put forward their objections to existing policy.

First, they wanted houses to be built for sale, because, they argued, everyone wanted to own their own house. This was most forcibly put by a Progressive in a subsequent debate, when he said: "By denying man the opportunity of owning his own home you are unwittingly playing the Communist game".² The Housing Chairman, Councillor McCutcheon, replied by quoting the Labour Party manifesto: "We desire a complete municipal housing service, whereby all citizens who need accommodation can be satisfied". He added that *after* present housing needs were satisfied, it would then be necessary "to consider the question of allowing houses to be built for sale".

Second, the Progressives wanted more of the contracts for Council housebuilding to go to private builders. By "more" they actually meant "all": they wanted the abolition of the direct labour force. A Labour Councillor pointed out that private enterprise was already doing quite well out of the city: "Eight private builders obtained contracts at terms more favourable

than they would ever get if they were to sell at the controlled price to individuals".

Third, the Progressives wanted Council housing to be built more cheaply, and they wanted it in the centre of town, rather than outside the city boundaries, so that workers would be nearer industry. There was very little land available in the centre at the time, and they suggested building flats to overcome this problem. Councillor McCutcheon replied: "I know it is essential in some ways, but I would not be a party to having blocks of flats in the centre of the city, and preventing people from enjoying having a house of their own and amenities in the outside part of the city".

The issues raised in this debate about Council housing have remained important to the present day. On one side there is the desire to give private enterprise a free hand, and leave Council housing to fill in the gaps. On the other there is the commitment to giving Council housing priority, and ensuring that it is of good quality. It is quite clear that no one needs to spell out the lesson that housing should not be badly or cheaply built: there have always been people around to give that warning. What, instead, we shall consider later is why such warnings are so often ignored.

Labour's idealism and ambitious programme were soon halted. The programme had been slow in starting because of long negotiations in buying land, and the need to provide main drains and other basic services on that land. By the end of 1946 only 28 houses had been completed. Then in 1947 national economic crisis brought with it public spending cuts. Bevan, Minister of Health, was able to resist the full demands for cutbacks that were made, but he was also forced into the choice between reducing standards, or reducing the number of new houses to be built.

He chose the latter – which meant the Council houses of this period would remain among the best houses ever built, but also that the original building plans would not be realised.

The Ministry of Health was now forced to ration new housing. New-

2. *This and subsequent quotations are taken from Proceedings of Newcastle City Council.*

castle was told in 1947 that it could build only 2,305 houses over the two year period 1946-7, and although after a long struggle the city got this quota increased by 360, it still meant a significant cutback on their plans. In 1948 and 1949 they were squeezed even more, and allocated only 800 a year.

Such numbers are significant, because about this time a new facet of the "quality versus quantity" argument emerged at both local and national level. This was the Numbers Game. It is much easier, of course, to argue about the number of houses built, rather than about the overall quality: the extent to which houses are providing real satisfaction to their users. Debates in Newcastle Council from this point on are frequently about who had built the most – a difficult question to answer, because there were many houses that had been started while one party was in power, and completed when the other had taken over. Naturally, both claimed these houses for their own. At a national level, housing targets were set out in Party manifestoes. And when a target of 300,000 a year is proclaimed, it is far easier to achieve it by building houses – or better still, flats – that are as cheap as possible. Because in this debate a purpose-built slum is worth as much as a well-designed semi-detached.

In 1949 the Progressives gained control in Newcastle. Their first act was to dismantle the Direct Labour Organisation. Then they set out plans to build 10,000 homes in the next five years. Fundamental to this was the proposal to put up multi-storey flats Longbenton (outside the city boundaries) which were to be used as decanting centre. One Progressive expressed "Great gratification that, at long last, a policy which I have reached year in and year out has now secured, at any rate, official or quasi-official blessing". His only disappointment was that these flats were going to appear outside the city, instead of the centre. His disappointment was soon ended.

A new Conservative Government came to power in 1951, committed to building 300,000 houses a year – which would be 100,000 more than

was being achieved by Labour. Private enterprise was rapidly given a much greater role: restrictions on the number of houses that could be built for sale were steadily reduced, until in 1954 they were abolished altogether.

Meanwhile the number of council houses being built was also increased: 1953 and 1954 are the only years since the war when more than 250,000 Council houses have been put up. This was done, primarily, by reducing standards.

"In 1951, local authorities were encouraged to abandon the minimum requirement of 900 square feet for a three bedroom house, 'provided that the sizes of the individual rooms and the total amount of living space do not fall' (passage ways, larders, storerooms and coal bunkers were not classed as 'living space'). Next year they were asked to economise 'not merely in the design of the house but also in the services and equipment to be installed in them . . .' The circular pointed out that 'a significant reduction in the cost of the house – and consequently in the rent at which it can be let – can be made if the essential is distinguished from the unessential. The authority . . . should have due regard to the requirements of those to whom the house will be let'.³

Slum clearance was becoming an issue again. In 1952 a petition was presented to Newcastle Council by 458 people, who "being residents of dilapidated and insanitary property situated in various parts of the city, hereby protest in the strongest of terms at the complete failure of the Housing Committee to deal adequately with the city's housing needs, and at their entirely negative attitude with regard to slum clearance".

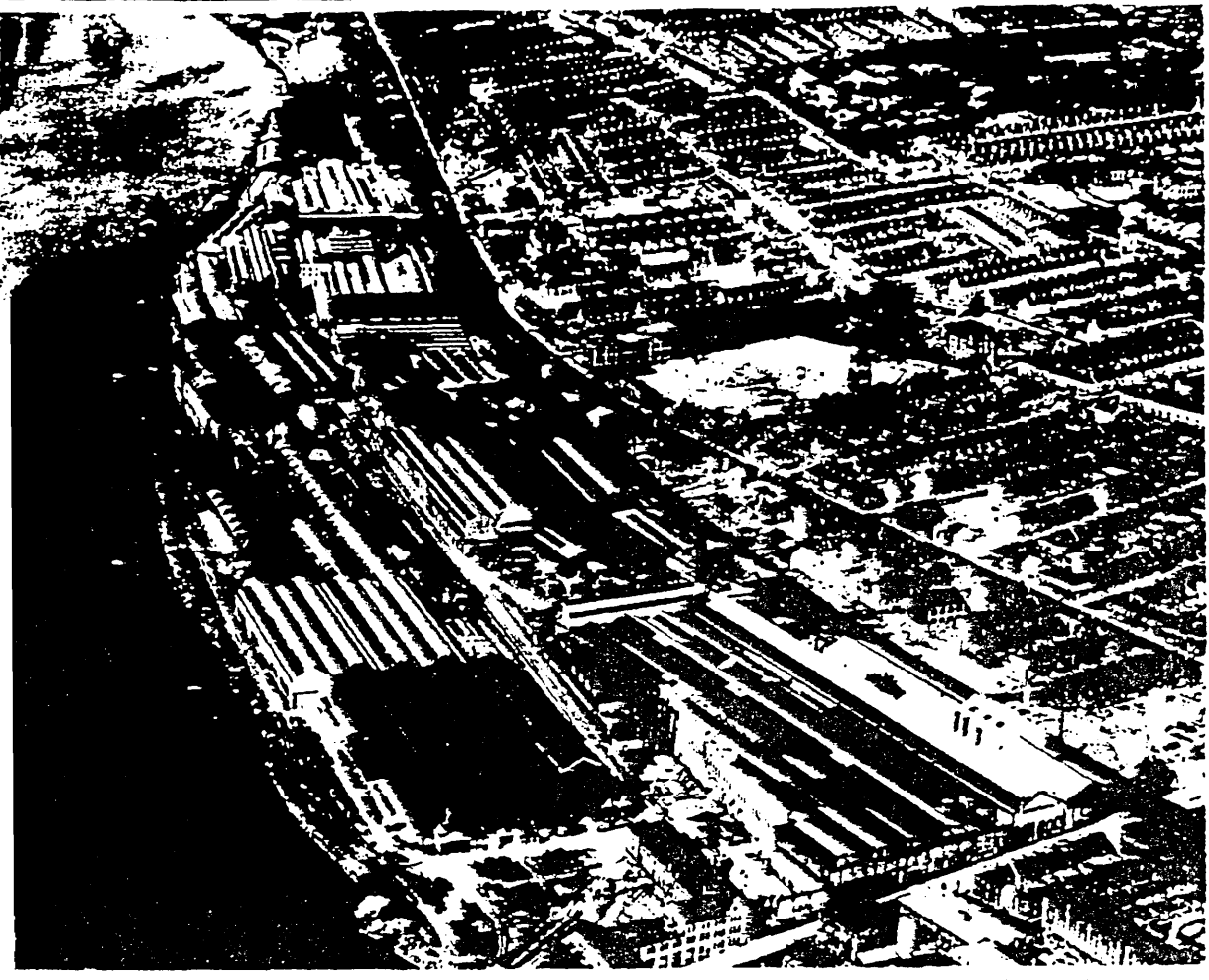
In the debate which followed one Progressive said the Council should follow the example of the first ever slum clearance scheme (Shoreditch in the 1890s) by building five-storey flats. Next year the new slum clearance programme was set out, but the first clearance area – Noble Street – was not presented for confirmation until 1955.

However, the idea of following the pioneer example of Shoreditch was taken up. Five-storey blocks were built at two vacant sites – Elswick Street and Hill Street. One Labour Councillor stated when the plans for Elswick Street were presented: "Those flats look very much like a barracks". Hill Street is next to the Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, and there had been some controversy surrounding the fact that some of the land on this site was claimed by Scottish and Newcastle, and they planned a 70-foot building on it. Agreement was reached with the firm whereby they got what they wanted. One Progressive pointed out how valuable it would be for them to have workers on the doorstep.

These two sites were designated to rehouse people from the first stage of Noble Street clearance. In subsequent stages people would be transferred to the new blocks on site.

After this the Progressive concentrated on building flats, including five-storey blocks, throughout the city. Labour Councillors complained, but the developments continued. During a debate in 1958 on some flats of more than five storeys which had just been completed at Hindhaugh Street, (now known as Queens Court), the Housing Committee Chairman, Councillor Kirkup, summarised the existing philosophy: "These flats are a very costly proposition – there is no doubt about that. With regard to the expensive Garchey system of garbage disposal, laundry and central heating, these three problems are common to multi-storey flats over, say, five storeys. In the case of the Noble Street five-storey maisonettes we do without this expensive system of refuse disposal, we do without lifts and we do without a laundry. We also do without the very expensive steel frame. By keeping these to five storeys, I am informed that maisonettes can be provided at around £1,600, which is a considerable difference from the average cost of £2,800 per flat. When you come to areas such as Noble Street there is little to be gained by building higher than five storeys, because otherwise you must push the blocks apart to give adequate breathing space, green belt, and the rest of it".

3. D. Donnison: *The Government of Housing* (1967) - 117.



castle in 1940 — factories to the left of Scotswood Road, and closely-packed houses built on the bank to the right.

Even before the residents moved in, Noble Street and Norwich Place had a bad reputation. They had been slums on the drawing board, and now 2,000 people were to pay the price of the progressives' policy. So bad were the flats that they became almost immediately a new political football in council debates. From 1959 onwards it was as unusual if a debate on housing did not include reference to Noble Street. This was perhaps the only way in which the numbers game was modified to include some reference to the quality of housing built, as well as the quantity. Some of the comments made in Council over the years are worth repeating:

"I don't think these flats they (the Housing Committee) are building have any shape or anything else, and

none of us can be particularly proud of the kind of flats erected on the new estates." — Councillor T. Dan Smith, 1956.

"Nine out of ten people who get a flat are dissatisfied. They did not like them in the first place and made no bones about it. I did not like the houses from the start and said so in no uncertain terms. What annoys me is that there are a lot of good tenants in Noble Street, and yet they are blacklisted for life." — (Councillor Henderson, Chairman, Housing Management when NS built).

"Noble Street, that monumental monstrosity of housing development, where the committee purchased special vehicles for refuse disposal but the flats were so designed that the special vehicles

were worthless because they could not be used." — Alderman Bob Brown, 1959.

"... the Noble Street flats. Quite frankly I don't know what we can do with them. The Town Clerk says we cannot put a Clearance Order on them ... I cannot suggest much that can be done to improve it." — Councillor T. Dan Smith, 1959.

"I made a promise to the people in Kenton that we would move them out of these maisonettes. The people living in maisonettes in Kenton were very annoyed, of course, they are only concerned about their own conditions, but I am told that the people in Noble Street and elsewhere are in the same position. These are horrible

houses that they are inhabiting. We will have to consider moving the people who live there in five years." — Councillor Johnston, 1962.

"The city architect's staff had to design the houses as high as was humanly possible without lifts. That was how Noble Street was built, and others. Do not let us run away from it. They were built at the briefest possible cost, without any amenities, and as high as you could possibly go without lifts." — Councillor T. Dan Smith, 1960.

"A maisonette, to me, is a very attractive looking word, and I would hope that the building bearing such a name would be attractive. But anyone who has been around these, particularly the five-point blocks would soon realise what an eyesore they really are. I well remember the first time I ever went into one. It was on a dark winter's night. I stumbled up a passage without any light and knocked on the door — I couldn't find the knob or bell or anything. Then a gruff voice, a not very polite voice, asked what I was doing there; I found I was groping on the coal-house door." — Councillor Pitcher, 1964.

"Well I say this, that whoever was responsible for erecting and building them should be made to live in them and suffer some of the troubles that there are in the place." — Councillor Pitcher, 1964.

Significantly, the Progressives did not react by reference to economic ringency. In 1956 they countered: "Members of the Housing Committee are quite satisfied that the standard of housing is being maintained. After reading some Press reports about Wick Street flats, I am beginning to wonder whether the standard isn't too high". (Loud cries of "hear hear") and "I am not at all sure that the standards we have been setting are not too high for some people in the city". In later years they countered by saying that the residents had not complained when they were moved into the flats, and that Labour councillors on the Housing Committee had not objected when the Noble Street plans were first

presented. Ultimately they just kept silent.

The exact brief from which the City Architect had to work was spelt out by him in the Housing Committee in 1961:

"With regard to the matter of Noble Street flats, this development was in strict conformity with my Terms of Reference in respect of these flats as instructed by the Housing Committee under the Chairmanship of Councillor Kirkup.

"The Housing Committee policy at this time, which also included the development of Longbenton, was to produce the maximum number of dwellings at the minimum cost.

"With regard to the flats at Noble Street, their intention was to produce the maximum number of flats whereby the use of lifts could be obviated. Whilst the standard of accommodation naturally conformed to the Ministry requirements, the internal finishes and external treatment were dictated by the fact that these flats were to be erected in the most economical manner possible. In order to obtain the maximum density under the limitations of economy imposed, the most advantageous type of development which could be produced was a five-storey block comprising one bedroom on the ground floor with two maisonettes above, giving a maximum public staircase travel for tenants of three floors.

"To achieve the maximum density desired, namely 44 dwellings per acre, it was necessary to keep the distance between blocks to a minimum of 80 feet, resulting in a cramped form of development, which, in the opinion of the Architect, has been detrimental to their amenity value. The elevational treatment correspondingly has been sacrificed in the interests of economy, lacking better material finishes and features which could otherwise have been incorporated."

The minutes note: "View accepted". Although Noble Street was the worst — partly because of its location,

mostly because of its sheet density — similar monstrosities were erected throughout Newcastle. This was to be a major concern when the Council finally came — 20 years later — to consider action in Noble Street. An Officer's Report in 1974 noted:

"There are many other blocks in Newcastle similar to those in Noble Street, though these blocks are not quite as discredited nor as massed together. It would become increasingly difficult to justify their use for families if the Noble Street blocks were declared 'unsuitable' for families."

This was a point we emphasised in our first report on Noble Street and Norwich Place, and have stressed ever since. We wrote then that a general housing review should be made, which would include "An assessment of the situation in other estates in Newcastle similar to that provided in the present report for Noble Street and Norwich Place". It is all too easy to take the worst estate and treat it as an isolated exception: to remove that one and then declare, as one report of the Housing Department in 1977 did: "Noble Street/Norwich Place: A Problem Resolved". But the solution of this one problem must be seen in its proper perspective — a point to which we shall later return.

In the last 20 years residents have paid a heavy price for the political decisions made in the 50s. So have the Council, in strictly financial terms. Attempts to make the flats a bit less intolerable, and basic repair work, have been increasingly costly. Noble Street and Norwich Place and similar medium rise estates became the most expensive Council dwellings in the city.

Various things were tried: the following list was circulated to tenants in 1970 by the Director of Housing, in response to a petition signed by 396 people who complained about the lack of cleanliness of chute rooms and stairs, blocked drains, refuse bins, lack of facilities for dumping large items of rubbish, and street sweeping. The Director wrote:

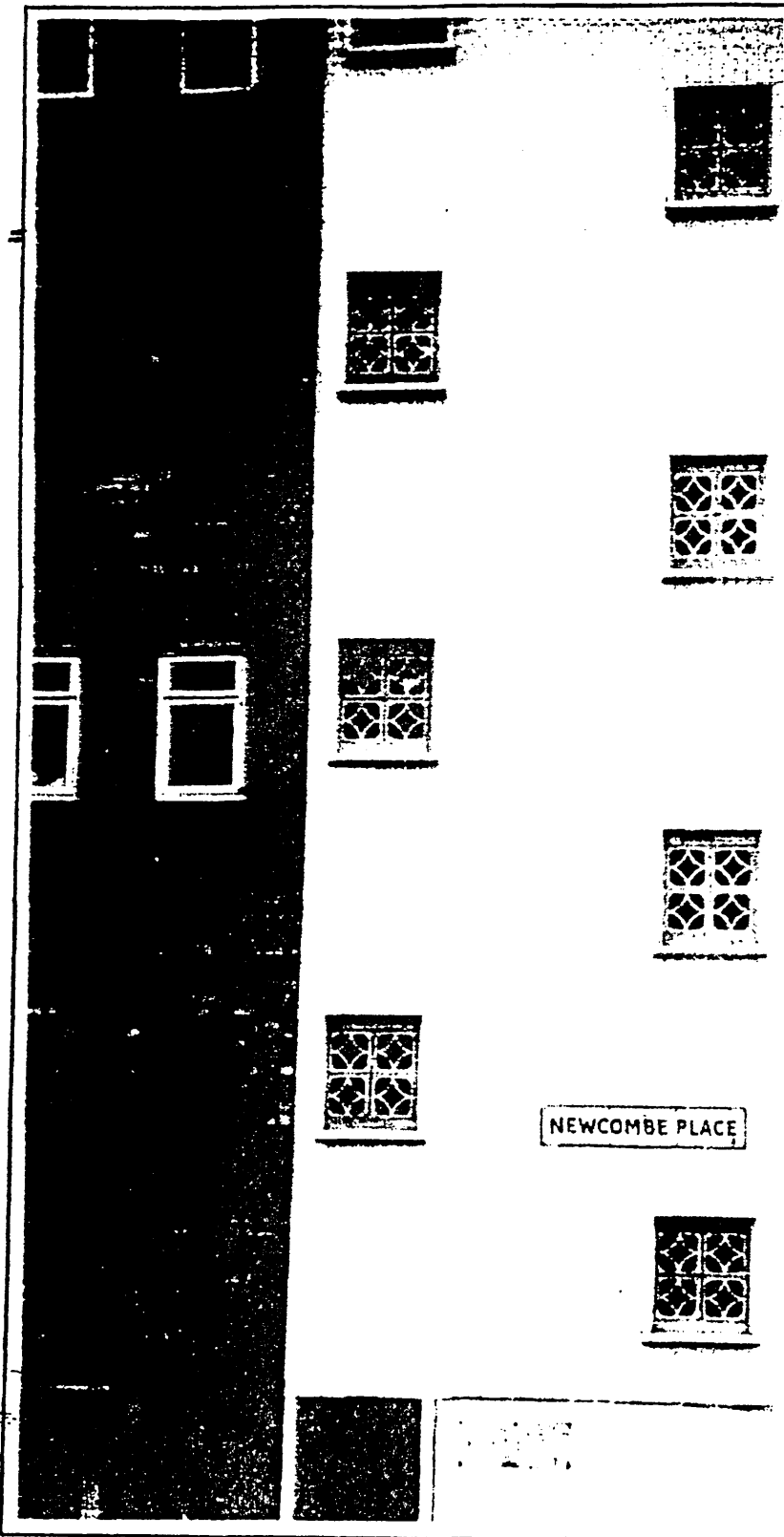
"The following improvements have already been carried out:-

a. 8 upper maisonettes have been

converted into 16 single bedroom flats -- this is intended to be a continuing programme, and it is estimated that in total it will cost over £100,000.

- b. All pram sheds and drying rooms which were a constant source of nuisance because they were being misused have either been completely bricked up or converted into extra living space for tenants. This cost approximately £30,000.
- c. Balcony railings have been increased in height in answer to a request from tenants on the grounds of safety -- this work is just being completed and has cost approximately £5,000.
- d. A hard surfaced children's kick-around play area has been constructed at a cost of approximately £2,000.
- e. All staircase windows which were completely open and an eyesore because it is impossible to keep them glazed due to vandalism, have been filled with decorative californian blocks, at a cost of approximately £3,000.
- f. On a once only basis, hundreds of panes of broken glass have been replaced throughout the estate free of charge to tenants.
- g. By the end of the month the work of rebuilding bin stores so that they accommodate two bins instead of one as at present will have been completed at a cost of approximately £3,200.
- h. All refuse hoppers throughout the estate have either been repaired or replaced.
- i. The whole estate has been externally redecorated, including special coloured panels over entrance ways in order to improve the external appearance."

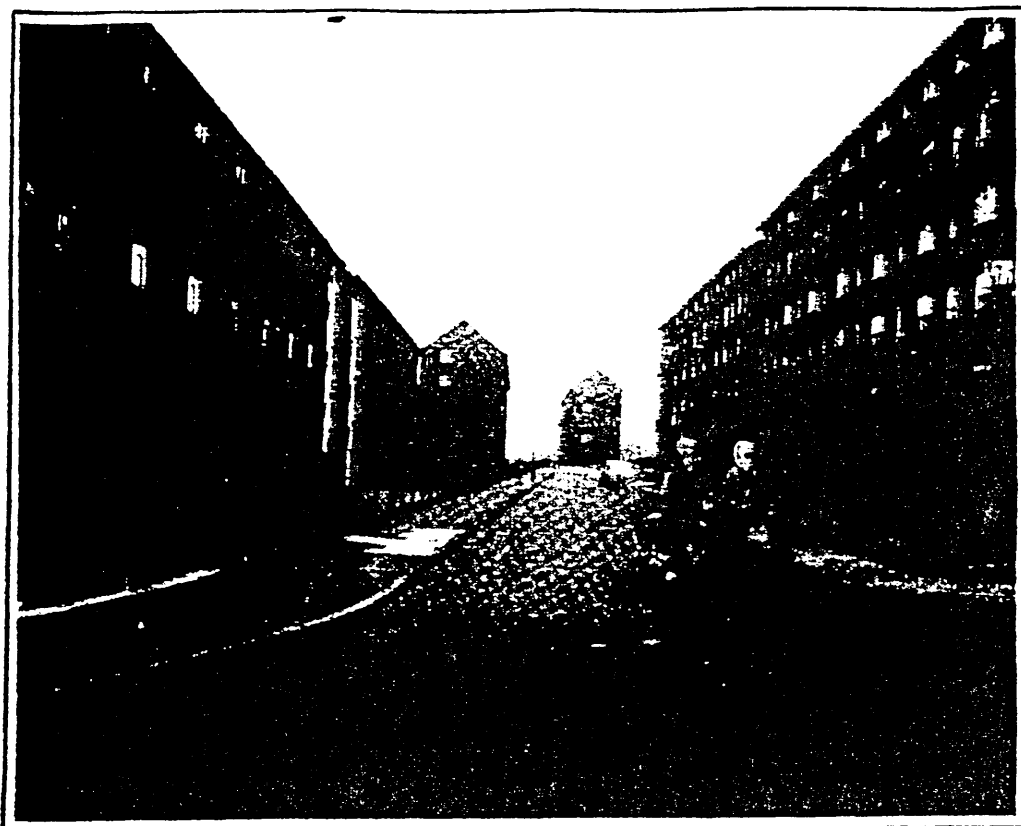
But nothing made any real difference. By 1974 the flats were costing £73,000 a year to repair and maintain. That meant £140 a flat -- twice the average cost for the city. And despite this massive bill, the Housing Centre which we opened in 1974 was inundated with requests for action on repairs -- many of which had been outstanding for a year or more.



New windows -- one of many attempts to improve the appearance of the flats which were costing the council £73,000 a year to maintain in 1974.

2

THE PEOPLE



Noble Street: half of the people living there were children.

A BASIC fact about people living in Noble Street and Norwich Place is that they went there because they could get nowhere else to live, and they stayed there because they couldn't get out. They were single people and families without the resources to buy a house, and without the time to wait for a decent Council house. They died somewhere urgently: all they could get was a flat in one of these blocks.

The neat and simplistic retort, of course, is that they were 'problem families' — that catch-all term used to describe anyone who doesn't fit. We could make it clear from the outset that we were always totally opposed to such attitudes. Everything we

learnt about Noble Street, and every contact we made with people living there, confirmed our view. We shall have more to say about this question later, when we have painted this overall picture. For the moment, we want to concentrate on who lived in Noble Street, and why.

Noble Street and Norwich Place housed 2,000 people in all. Almost half of these were children. That is a dramatic statistic: its full impact is seen in Table 2.1. The ratio of adults to children in the last line can be expressed as follows:

- In Newcastle there were about six adults to every two children.
- In Norwich Place there were less

than three adults to every two children.

- In Noble Street there were two adults to every two children.

This extreme concentration of children occurred in an environment about which everyone said the same thing: that it was totally and disastrously unsuited to children. It is a concentration, furthermore, which existed throughout the history of the flats: Census information for 1961, 1966 and 1971 shows in each case that more than half the residents of Noble Street were under 20.

In part, this high proportion of children was due to a significant number of one-parent families, which meant that in many cases the family

ad no 'breadwinner'. But the problem extended throughout the flats: the employment level in Norwich Place was twice the city average: in Noble Street it was four times as high — which meant more than a third of men wanting to work, and more than a fifth of women, couldn't get a job.

The low number of wage earners in the flats inevitably meant that incomes were low. For some this had become worse since moving to the flats: they had lost their job and couldn't get another. But for many others this was one of the key factors which had brought them to Noble Street and Norwich Place in the first place. Their income level, or lack of secure job, meant they had no chance of buying a house, and had severe problems in dealing with a private landlord as well.

Privately rented properties have been getting harder to find each year. In any case, they would be competing with students or other single people who, by clubbing together, could raise more to pay rent than such a family could afford. Added to that is the difficulty of getting a flat to rent when you have children: many landlords prefer childfree tenants.

So, for many who want a home, a council tenancy is the only reasonable prospect. But who ends up in the worst Council housing? Our belief is that, added to the problems of income and unemployment, would be the urgent need for a house — that people went to these flats because they had to.

There are two aspects to this: the move out of one home into another. Why do they move out, and do they go to a particular new one? For the fortunate, both of these questions can be answered in terms of choice they made. But for others there is no choice: they are forced to move from their existing home, and are forced to accept, however unwillingly, a different one. Diagram 2.1 etches out these possibilities.

To find out more about these reasons, we looked at a 50 per cent sample of the files kept by the Housing Department, which gave some information about the situation tenants were in when they first moved into flats.

TABLE 2.1
CHILDREN AND ADULTS: NEWCASTLE, NOBLE STREET AND NORWICH PLACE (PER CENT)

Age	Newcastle	Noble Street	Norwich Place
0-4	7	14	13
5-14	15	29	22
15-17	4	7	6
Total 0-17	26	50	41
Adult/Child rates	2.81	1.02	1.43

TABLE 2.2
HOUSEHOLD SIZE (PER CENT)

Household Size	Newcastle	Noble Street	Norwich Place
1	24	24	21
2-3	49	23	42
4-5	21	30	21
6+	6	23	16

Source: 1971 Census

TABLE 2.3
HOUSEHOLD DENSITY (PER CENT)

Persons per room	Newcastle	Noble Street	Norwich Place
Over 1½	2.7	13.6	15.0
1-1½	7.5	19.9	17.6

Source: 1971 Census

DIAGRAM 2.1
CHOICE AND CONSTRAINT IN HOUSING CAREERS

Aspect of Move	
Leaving present home	Choosing new home
Choice	
1. Desire better house	1. Can afford to buy
2. Desire better neighbourhood	2. Can afford high rent
3. Moving to better/new job	3. Considered suitable for good council dwelling
4. Wishes to buy instead of rent	
5. Desire bigger/smaller house	
6. Improved income	
Constraint	
1. Home in clearance area	1. Offered no alternative by Council
2. Evicted through rent arrears	2. Cannot afford higher rent
3. Ejected from in-laws' house	3. Cannot afford to buy
4. Unable to afford present rent	4. Cannot find suitable private accommodation
5. Marital break up	
6. Very bad housing conditions	
7. Overcrowded	

WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO LIVE THERE



A first-floor landing photographed in mid afternoon - "They've all got mice on this corridor."



The view: Dunston Power Station.

DURING the time we worked in Noble Street and Norwich Place the residents made it very clear to us just what it was like to live in purpose-built slums. Here are a few of their comments:

The blocks

- They ought to pull 'em down. But it'll be ten years before they do. Bloody poor architects who did 'em. (Pointed out a loft door outside his front door which goes straight to his upper storey). We should have another door right on the landing.
- I would not stay here for another minute if I could get another place. It's like a prison. Wherever you look it's filthy and smells. It's horrible.
- They should have knocked them down. I've been here nine months. We had cockroaches but the Health Inspector cured most of them.
- The only good things I can say about the flats is that we have nice people on this landing.
- They are not fit for animals to live in.
- The noise from the factories at night and the area is appalling.
- The place is a disgrace and nothing is being done to improve it. It is disgraceful the way these places are being neglected.

The flats

- The place is so cold and damp, we have always got colds.
- This house has been full of fleas since we moved in. We have bronchitis.
- Vermin cannot be got rid of and there are too many break-ins.
- The house is damp and I cannot use the big bedroom.
- The bedroom of my flat is so damp it's unbelievable. The floors and walls run with water.
- I think they should come down. Been here fourteen years - overrun with mice from old houses they are knocking down. They've all got mice on this corridor.

The effects

- My wife is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. The cause is the place we live in.
- I am sick and tired of trying to keep the place tidy. I am frightened as I'm a widow and live on my own.
- We have had nothing but trouble since we arrived.
- I am under the doctor for my nerves and the stairs are getting me down.
- I've been applying for a transfer for seven years.
- I tell people I live off Scotswood Road, in the lower Beaulieu area. (Cited many problems in trying to get hire purchase). It's exactly the same problem when you go for a job.
- I've been here eight years. Are you happy here then? No, but you have to be, don't you? There's no way of getting out, is there?
- They say the flats are full of problem families - but we're sure of having problems when they move us here.

Children

- Can't get any peace at night - and I don't think it's fair on the children.
- There are no play facilities because we are at the top of the block.
- I have rats and also mice. They go in every room in the house and also in my child's pram and cot. I also have earwigs.
- I can't get the children into the nursery and they can't go out to play.
- My children have to live with their grandparents. The Social Services won't allow them back into the flats.

The overall situation

The previous statements have been short comments from a number of residents. The following statement by a resident shows in graphic detail the many problems a single family must face, and the way in which Noble Street made these problems so much worse:

"We have a big problem with housing, living in a third floor maisonette. I share this with an unmarried friend of mine who has suffered with epilepsy for 19 years. She is on Disability Pension of £9.20p. I am on Social Security receiving £9.70p and 90p family allowance. This would normally be enough for two adults and two children to live on. But the house is crawling with mice (regardless of a cat) flies, and until a few weeks ago bed-bugs, which my eldest son was bitten alive with.

"The health people were contacted over 10 weeks ago and still haven't been to inspect the house. I can't put our clothes or the children's in the airing cupboard because the mice chewed bedding and a lot of the baby's clothing of which I had very little to start off with. I can't use the larder because of mice, the kitchen cupboard fell off the wall with black mould leaving a big hole in the wall through which mice come out of. They even ran round in broad daylight. The mice are also under the floorboards in the bedrooms and as soon as we light a fire they run wild and you can hear them upstairs and downstairs. I did not receive any Maternity grant or benefit for my second son as I hadn't been able to work because of having epilepsy.

"The rubbish chute nearly on our doorstep is always shut and rubbish piled

up outside. Dogs motion outside our doorways and tom cats wet up the door itself. My eldest son has a place in nursery school which he attends due to illness, and when he's at home he never goes out to play because he can't manage stairs very well on his own, and the landing is filthy. We have been living here for seven months and in that time Liam has gone from being a happy outgoing child to a very unhappy child who is always crying, sicking and generally lethargic. His health isn't what it should be. He always has croup, bronchitis, has had dysentery - so has the baby. There hasn't been one week go by since we've been here that the emergency doctor, ambulance or own doctor has been at least twice for one or other of us.

"The housework is virtually impossible because of the soot and dirt in the air, nowhere to dry washing outside because the air is dirty and the laundrette is too expensive. I have to stand out on the window ledge of our third floor maisonette to clean a big picture window, because no window cleaners come round. We can't afford to buy the bags of coal at 27p a bag not when we use seven bags a week and it's no good ordering in bulk and paying the bill weekly because the coal company will only deliver it to the first floor which means we would have to carry four or five hundredweight up four or more flights on our own. Apparently the coal companies don't have insurance to protect the coalman from falling on the stairs above the first floor and with the stairs up to our landing being slimy and dirty they won't even consider it. We can't even get HP because of the name this area has."



NO H.P. -THE FINAL INSULT

For families on a low income it is often difficult or impossible to save, so that when furniture or some other expensive item is needed, they want hire purchase. Many people, both residents and others, with knowledge of the flats, mentioned that hire purchase is unobtainable if you lived in Noble Street or Norwich Place.

Similar claims have been made by people seeking work: when they mentioned their address, the vacancy they wished to fill had suddenly been taken. Where this form of discrimination occurs it is clearly the final insult to residents: conclusive evidence that they are stigmatised by other people. It also compounds their material deprivation. Here are some examples.

1. A suit was ordered from a firm (made to measure), and a deposit of £7 was put on the order. Then a letter was received by the customer returning the deposit and saying that hire purchase was not possible.
2. A TV rental company told a resident that they were not providing any more televisions in that area.
3. A furniture store stated that it would not give hire purchase to residents of the flats.
4. A resident stated that if the electricity was cut off in a flat, it became almost impossible for the tenant to obtain hire purchase.
5. A mail order firm would not accept orders from Norwich Place (but this was occasionally overcome by putting the name of the block on the form, and not mentioning Norwich Place).
6. A store would not sell carpets on hire purchase to Noble Street.
7. A coal delivery firm would not provide coal unless the tenant could produce someone to vouch for them.
8. Two tenants found great difficulty in paying their life insurance. The collector often did not call, and when the insurance company were contacted they said it was very difficult to find collectors willing to go to Norwich Place, in view of its "image". Thus tenants who wanted to save and safeguard their future were unable to do so in a satisfactory way.

The following points emerged:

1. More than half the tenants had lived there less than three years, and more than a quarter less than one year. This is a very high vacancy rate, reflecting the desire by many to get out as soon as possible. But in few cases were they moving to better Council accommodation: those who were on the transfer list reported long delays.

By contrast an eighth of the tenants had been there at least 13 years, and the great majority of these were families who moved in when the estates were first occupied — often from the Noble Street Clearance Areas.

2. More than half the residents were unemployed at the time they moved into the flats. Unemployment amongst more recent new tenants was even higher.

3. Many of the residents who had been in the flats longest moved from clearance areas — and for the majority this was their first move in a number of years. More recent tenants had frequently had an unsettled background — some with several moves in a single year.

Not surprisingly, then, people were not happy living in Noble Street. The full extent of this became clear when we undertook a survey, with the Noble News Group, of 300 tenants in 1975. Nine out of every ten said they wanted out. This was as true of long-term tenants as of recent ones. (The prison analogy is deliberate: residents frequently compared the blocks to a prison, and said: "Once you're in here you never get out. It's a life sentence.")

Half the tenants had put in an application for transfer. Many others said they would have applied, but:

"Other people have got medical notes and all sorts in but they can't get out — so what chance have we got? It's just not worth bothering."

or:

"We went up to the Housing and they told us 'no chance — you haven't been down there long enough'! It is never clear how long

TABLE 2.4
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY (PER CENT)

	Newcastle	Noble Street	Norwich Place
Men			
Working	88.6	58.4	76.8
Seeking work	9.3	35.1	19.9
Sick	2.1	6.5	3.3
Women			
Working	93.9	70.7	83.4
Seeking work	4.7	22.1	6.9
Sick	1.4	7.1	5.7

Source: 1971 Census

TABLE 2.6
EMPLOYMENT STATUS ON COMMENCING TENANCY, BY LENGTH OF TENANCY (PER CENT)

	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	Three years or more	Total
In Employment	27	44	50	43
Unemployed	60	46	26	40
Sick	13	10	24	17
Total	100	100	100	100

TABLE 2.7
LENGTH OF PRESENT TENANCY BY LENGTH OF PREVIOUS TENANCY (PER CENT)

Previous Tenancy	Present Tenancy				Total
	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-9 years	10+	
Less than 1 year	76	62	21	8	44
1-2 yrs	14	19	25	16	18
3-9 yrs	8	17	33	33	22
10 years +	2	2	21	43	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 2.5
LENGTH OF TENANCY (PER CENT)

	Per cent
Less than one year	28
1-2 years	27
3-4 years	13
5-9 years	11
10-12 years	7
13 years or more	12

'long enough' is so many tenants — assumed they'd get no chance of a move."

or:

"We were told this was temporary rehousing four years ago — so we've just been waiting for a move from the Council."

3

ALLOCATION POLICY



More than 900 young people lived in Noble Street and Norwich Place.

I HAVE seen what these flats looked like, and we have seen who had to live there. The question now is how the tenants came to be there. Certainly they didn't choose the flats themselves, most were forced into this situation. It was no game of chance, for it was possible to identify the reasons why this happened.

There are always more people applying for council houses than there are houses available — recent figures show that there are more than one million people on council waiting lists in England and Wales. To decide who gets what (and who doesn't get anything) councils operate some form of allocation policy. Such a policy may be drawn up with definite intentions

in mind about the distribution of tenants between estates. Or it may be much less definite in its aims, and be considered an entirely neutral administrative device — but it will still have a pronounced effect on the life chances of those seeking to become council tenants. These policies vary between local authorities, but a single authority may itself change its policy several times either in response to changes in the supply and demand for their houses, or because of political considerations and attitudes about the role and function of council housing.

Whatever the policy, both in its official form and in its interpretation by housing officials, it is a crucial factor in the housing each applicant is

offered, and the house they finally take. Equally, over the years a policy will have a profound effect on each council estate, as it 'creates' the community who live there.

The allocation policy used in Newcastle during most of the period Noble Street and Norwich Place have existed has been described by James Tucker and it is worth quoting him at some length, as this provides insight into the development of these estates.

"A spokesman for Newcastle Housing Department made a distinction: 'This housing authority has no method of grading tenants socially as it is felt that their private lives should be interfered with as little as possible by their landlords.

In common with many other housing authorities in the country, however, previsiting is carried out and a classification is given to each family before they are allocated. In general the tenants of Newcastle upon Tyne Corporation are also unofficially classified, but no other action is taken unless a tenant applies for a transfer'. He gave me one of the blank Investigator's Report cards used in Newcastle. It contained questions on conditions of house, appearance of occupants, condition of furniture, state of property. At the bottom was a line for the investigator to write in his classification of the family. The classification ranges from A plus to C minus. It is not the policy of the department to let post war properties to lower classification than B.

"It is true to say that many Councils made a steady and elaborate effort to avoid mixing their graded tenants. Mr F.J. Horton, Chief Assistant in the Newcastle Housing Department said: 'A policy of indiscriminate letting was followed in Newcastle for a year but found to be impractical. It has now been abandoned. We have some estates where only tenants graded A, or perhaps down to B plus, may go'. High Heaton estate was an example. The council were in a slight difficulty because they were building so many high quality houses that they had run out of top class takers and had therefore been obliged to make their requirements a little less exacting. 'We might come down to B minus' he admitted. Mr Horton pointed out what officials in several other authorities also said — that the circumstances in which a family were living were taken into account before they were classified. A family who lived in a very poor area but who were obviously trying very hard would be given an A, even though they might fall short of absolute A qualities."¹

Noble Street and Norwich Place were not among the most desirable

estates — quite the opposite. These were the estates which families who did not make the grade were allocated. This became clear in a small random sample of housing files that we analysed. Of 15 applications from families who had applied in 1970 or earlier, four had been classified B, one B minus, one B/C, two C plus, and seven C.

Comments by the housing visitors included references to poorly decorated rooms, untidy condition of rooms, and smelly rooms. One applicant was described as schizophrenic, although it was unclear whether this diagnosis had been made by a psychiatrist. By contrast, a similar analysis of 15 randomly selected files from another estate — Cambridge Street — showed two families graded A, four B+, two B/B+, and six B. (One file was not obtainable). No family had been classified below B.

Thus, a policy of selective allocation to certain estates existed in Newcastle until 1970, and this meant that the least advantaged families received the least favourable housing.

In 1969 the Housing Management Sub-committee at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government published its report *Council Houses, Procedures and Priorities* (commonly known as the Cullingworth Report). This report took as a basic principle that "Local authorities must take a wider responsibility for people who at one time would have been housed in the private sector". (para 14). It came out strongly against a formal system of grading all council housing applicants, saying that "Emphasis should now be much more on what prospective tenants want rather than what a housing management department thinks they ought to have. In our view the majority of applicants are 'suitable' for a new house and 'grading' is justified for only a very small proportion". (para 91).

Newcastle Council accepted the spirit of the Cullingworth Report and ceased to grade applications using the system described earlier. Since that time a system based on the single division into 'S' (satisfactory) or 'U/S' (unsatisfactory) has been used.

Some idea of the way this system operates can be drawn from remarks

made by a local housing official in 1973. He was responding in the Press to comments made by Tom Wooley, of Glasgow Environmental Improvement Department, who had said that some councils deliberately allowed certain housing estates to decay. After denying that Newcastle followed this practice, the official went on to say that officials tried to assess where prospective tenants would be best suited — where, for example, they would be able to afford the rent.

"We have some estates which are very nice, but expensive, and some people would not fit in there. I cannot deny that we try to assess people's ability to live in certain areas."

To find out more, we took another random sample, this time of 15 families in Noble Street and Norwich Place who had applied for council housing after the change of policy. Seven were classified 'S', two classified 'US/S', and six had no classification. However, it is clear that in practice the basic dual classification is extended by the qualitative assessment of the housing official concerned. In several cases the classification 'S' has been qualified in the following way: "Satisfactory for Noble Street", or "Only for Noble Street, pre-war or additional accommodation". There were comments also on the applicants' personal appearance, and whether they were considered "capable of improvement" or otherwise. Thus the revised system continues to allow a fair degree of classification, although perhaps with less rigidity than before.

So far we have been talking of the grading system which decides what sort of offer prospective tenants will get. There is another, equally important, aspect of allocation policy — the question of who gets an offer at all.

The waiting list itself may be ordered by a points system, designed to weight different factors such as overcrowding, and length of time on the list. Newcastle hasn't used such a system for some years, mainly because since the clearance programme restarted 20 years ago this has been the priority. The local authority has a duty to re-

1. J. Tucker: *Honourable Estates* (1966)

house all families affected by clearance, and these families therefore have priority over those on the waiting list. Few were prepared to accept Noble Street or Norwich Place, with the result that there were always vacancies there, while vacancies in other, more desirable estates, are few in number and tend to go first to families from clearance areas.

This meant that Noble Street and Norwich Place increasingly assumed major role as emergency accommodation, taken by families and individuals whose desperation for a home exceeded their distaste for the one offered. The shift to greater employment and shorter previous tenancies outlined in the previous section is an illustration of this, and it is worth examining in greater detail. To this end, an analysis has been made of those families within the original 10 per cent sample who had taken a tenancy within the last 12 months.

Tables 3.1-3.3 show in a dramatic form the way in which more recent tenants are much less likely to have come from a previous long tenancy and much more likely to be unemployed. In some cases the previous tenancy comprised a floor or spare room with parents-in-law, or furnished flats. Eleven tenants who had come to the last 12 months were previously in emergency housing, including Lancelotti House and the Salvation Army hostel, or "No fixed abode". These included three Ugandan Asian families, who were among those accepted by the city during the forced resettlement of all Ugandan Asian families in 1972. Forty of the 50 homes made available at this time were in the Noble Street area. *The Journal* commented: "None of the houses being made available are needed for priority cases on the city's waiting list, most are in an area to which tenants are not keen to go".

In the last chapter we saw how high the concentration of children was in the flats. Despite the widespread recognition that it was an appalling environment for children, recent tenancies showed exactly the same concentration. Of 254 people who had come to live in the flats in the previous year, 121 - almost half -

TABLE 3.1

Length of present tenancy	Length of Previous Tenancy		Total
	Less than 3 years	Three years or more	
Less than 3 years	95	16	111
3 years or more	34	63	97
Total	129	79	208

TABLE 3.2

Length of present tenancy	Length of Previous Tenancy		Total
	Less than 1 year	More than 1 year	
Less than one year	45	14	59
More than one year	46	103	149
Total	91	117	208

TABLE 3.3

ANALYSIS OF HOUSEHOLDS RESIDENT LESS THAN ONE YEAR

Length of previous tenancy	Head of Household		One Parent Family	Total
	In work	Unemployed		
Less than one year	12	11	12	35
One or two years	2	6	-	8
Three years or more	1	4	2	7
Unknown	2	10	4	16
Total	17	31	18	66

Note: Three Ugandan Asian families excluded from this analysis.

Source: Housing Files

TABLE 3.4

FAMILY STRUCTURE OF HOUSEHOLDS RESIDENT LESS THAN ONE YEAR

Family Type	Number of families	Adults	Children	Total Persons
Single man	12	12	-	12
Couple	10	20	-	20
Couple with 1 child	16	33	15	48
Couple with 2 children	13	26	26	52
Couple with 3 children	4	8	12	20
Couple with 4 children	6	12	24	36
Couple with 5 children	1	2	5	7
One parent with 1 child	7	8	6	14
One parent with 2 children	5	6	9	15
One parent with 3 children	4	4	12	16
One parent with 6 children	2	2	12	14
Total	80	133	121	254

Note: "Child" means under the age of 18 on date tenancy commenced. A son or daughter over the age of 18 is recorded as an adult.

Source: Housing files

were under the age of 18. In fact, the proportions noted in Chapter Three for Noble Street and Norwich Place separately have remained remarkably constant. In 1971 41 per cent of residents in Norwich Place were aged

under 18; of the 76 people moving in the year 1972-73, 32, (42 per cent) were under 18.

Similarly in 1971, 50 per cent of residents in Noble Street were under 18, while the analysis of most recent

tenants showed that 50 per cent of new residents (89 out of 178) were aged under 18.

The home in which the family lives will have a critical effect on the family's welfare and life style, and it is therefore desirable that they be given as much say as possible in choosing it.

Inevitably, conditions rarely allow a free choice to people, and this is far more the case for low income families. Prevailing market conditions make it almost impossible for them to buy a house, and they must therefore look for rented accommodation. The continued decline of the private landlord means that this increasingly involves seeking a council tenancy.

The growing importance of council housing is vividly illustrated in Table 3.5. Between 1961 and 1971 council housing became the major type of housing available for rent. This trend will continue in the near future, and by 1981 the council will own almost half the total housing stock within the city boundaries, while less than one fifth will be available for rent in the private sector.

Thus the comments made by the Cullingworth Report apply particularly to Newcastle. Clearance and redevelopment have "the effect of reducing the alternatives for those ineligible for council housing. There is thus a severely practical reason why local authorities should be paying particular attention to the needs of those who face acute social problems". (para 97).

Allocation policy, therefore, is important not only to each individual household seeking council housing, but more generally to all those unable to afford owner occupation.

With all this in mind, it is surprising to find that allocation policy remains poorly understood in its effect upon households. The decisions of Social Security officers are subject to scrutiny, in that claimants can ask for a decision in writing, and they have the right to appeal against this decision to an independent tribunal. Housing officials also make decisions in assessing applicants' claims to housing - decisions of far greater importance in their effect upon the applicants' future - yet these decisions are

TABLE 3.5
THE GROWTH OF COUNCIL HOUSING IN NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
(PER CENT)

	1961	1971	1975
Owner-occupied	30	32	36
Local authority	29	41	43
Private rented	38	26	21

Source: Urban Trends 1975

not explicitly communicated to the applicant, nor does he have the right of appeal against them. The applicant may refuse the house he is offered, but in the case of an applicant on the waiting list this may mean he receives no further offer, while in the case of households in clearance areas - whom the council is obliged to rehouse - a process of bargaining ensures whose outcome is uncertain.

Whichever allocation policy was in use, the effect on these flats was to ensure that they were increasingly used to house people in emergency conditions. It is difficult to imagine that it could be otherwise. Who would accept poor housing if they could avoid it?

Although, therefore, allocation policy is important, it does not provide the total explanation of 'ghettos'. That, we have already seen, is rooted in much wider factors. We shall return to this point in Chapter Six. But we wish first to turn to the one optimistic part of this report: the fight back by the tenants.

4

COMMUNITY ACTION

NOBLE NEWS



January 1975

LET US OUT AND YOU LIVE HERE

This is the New Year Message to Councillors coming loud and clear from almost 300 tenants in our flats.

The Survey recently carried out by NOBLE NEWS GROUP with the help of Beaumont Street Information Centre found out what you tenants really want for a Happy New Year.

'Noble News', January 1975: a survey showed that only 28 of 296 tenants interviewed wanted to stay in the flats.

ERE is a long history of failed attempts at community work and initiatives of community initiatives on estates. Although Benwell Community Project and other agencies are currently undertaking activities on estates, these cannot be seen as anything other than stop gap measures to provide a temporary improvement." At quotation is from our first report on Noble Street and Norwich, written four years ago. We were convinced that community action could only be effective if it was firmly based in the real needs and demands of tenants. And it was very clear that those were: they wanted out. The campaign which was not based on this would fail.

We believe that events have borne this out. The Noble News Group was far more effective – and far more successful – than any previous community group on these estates. Residents were involved in many 'conventional' activities: a community newsletter, a playgroup, a play scheme for older children. But behind them all was the basic demand and campaign for total rehousing. It was this that kept everything alive. In this chapter we want to illustrate what set the Noble News Group apart from all that came before. We do this by looking at two previous ventures – The Tenant Liaison Committee and the Noble Street Community Campaign – and then at the Noble News Group itself.

Tenants' Liaison Committee – a history

In November 1968, the Chairman of the Housing Management Working Group, Alderman Donald Gilbert, and several members of the group attended a general meeting of tenants in the Noble Street area to discuss with them the problems of setting up a Liaison Committee.

The Housing Director was able to write a year later: "This Liaison

Committee comprising of tenants and representatives of my Department and Ward Councillors has been meeting regularly and certain improvements have been effected as a result of recommendations from the Committee".

Improvements included:

1. Provision of a Playground;
2. Improvement to staircase windows;
3. Conversion to end maisonettes in Norwich Place (this was a joint Liaison Committee attempting to cover estates a mile and a half apart);
4. Improvement to the Refuse Bin Rooms.

A Housing Assistant had been appointed in the Autumn of 1968 and the Director of Housing was able to say after a year: "The close contact that he has had with the tenants has had quite an effect". Yet he had added: "No one is more aware than I that a lot of work remains to be done to uplift the Noble Street area. The oddest work (done so far) together with the fact that an attempt is being made to improve the STANDARD of tenement by not putting poor families in the area, when vacancies occur, is a move in the right direction". John Dixon, November 1969.

The Tenants' Liaison Committee is parallel to a Noble Street Community Campaign which developed slightly later and lasted slightly longer. For simplicity we will treat them as separate developments — though the inter-relationships between them were early crucial to the failure of both. There were nine recorded Tenant Liaison Committee (TLC) meetings from 10 November 1969 to 21 January 1971. This is a history of them:-

10 November 1969:

6 Noble Street tenants and 7 Norwich Place tenants met officials. From this meeting 3 NS tenants and 4 NP tenants were elected to TLC. (So it started with 7 tenants).
Matters raised:
Bad street lighting.
No phones.
Need for youth clubs and play centres.
Problems of elderly.

11 December, 1969:

4 tenants plus 1 official.

Matters raised:

1. Refusal of coal deliveries to upper storey.
2. Rents.
3. Dogs.

8 January, 1970:

Matters raised:

1. Phones vandalised.
2. Youth club. Claim that NS kids were barred from Grainger Park. Youth leader invited to next meeting, St. Michael's YC had gone. Suggestion to use empty Vickers premises.

16 March, 1970:

6 tenants (representing NS/NP), 5 tenants from new Community Campaign, 4 Councillors, 5 officials.

Matters raised

1. Youth Facilities . . . no hope of financial aid at present. But youth leader says no bar on Grainger Park — in fact CC use it for Play Group.
2. Need for Flat as Community Meeting Place.
3. The elderly . . . 33 alarms in NS and 11 in NP.
4. Street lights — 16 out of action.
5. Fuel-Companies agree to upper floor deliveries at 6d extra.
6. Rents — going up throughout the country.
7. Waste Pipes in Beaumont Street improperly fitted — waste running over.

The TLC then looked at the CC and suggested only Chairman and Secretary from Community Campaign should attend TLC meetings, "because of overcrowding". CC presented a petition on Repairs and Upkeep.

A Social workers comments at this period on the future of the Tenant Liaison Committee. "This body seemed weak and based on small representation. It seemed even to be viewed with suspicion by some tenants who saw it as part of the establishment. The majority appeared not to have heard of it".

As a result of the decision at the

meeting of the TLC on 16th March to cut representation of the community campaign "it could never be an active Tenants' Association. It had never been designed for this purpose. It remains a formal structure whereby a small number of representatives meet LA officials and Councillors face to face to bargain".

27 April, 1970:

7 tenants, 5 Councillors, 4 Officials.

Matters raised:

1. Adventure Playground.
2. Phone at Beaumont Street/West View.
3. Drains. 200 replacement drain grills — 50 missing in 3 weeks — also 30 verandah drain covers missing.
4. CC representative said a meeting of 32 people had been held in his flat — they needed a Community Room to meet. Councillor Hepple ridiculed this suggestion — pointing out that even the Rent Office was crowded and there were only 16 persons present.
5. "Heated Discussion on Community Campaign". Councillors stressed improvements had been carried out at the suggestion of the TLC and said the CC was merely duplicating effort.
6. Chairman of the TLC Mr Harvey of Egerton Street had been elected Chairman on 11th December, 1969. Yet Mr Haswell from Housing Management had chaired all the meetings since . . . because "of complexity of some of the matters being discussed". Haswell remained in the chair.

23 June, 1970:

4 tenants, 3 Councillors, 5 Officials.

Matters raised:

1. Adventure Playground designated.
2. NP tenants want their own committee.
3. Coal. Now an extra charge for upper floor is 1/- per bag.
4. Cllr. Stabler criticised general conditions of blocks and surrounding derelict areas.
5. Fire Doors in Norwich Place were continually hanging off . . . and the handles removed.

9 September, 1970:

1 tenant, 5 Officials.

Matters raised:

1. Play Area - no organised activities took place there this summer.
2. Norwich Place now had independent Liaison Committee.
3. Mrs Meilak (the sole remaining tenant) could find no one interested in being a member of the TLC.

18 November, 1970:

1 tenant, 4 Officials. Deputation from CC 3 tenants.

Matters raised:

1. Cllr. Hepple against the CC Petition. Pointed out the Council had spent a considerable amount of money on the area and every effort had been made to improve it.
2. Suggested that the CC should nominate some members to TLC!

21 January, 1971:

1 tenant, 4 Officials.

Matters raised:

1. Wind up TLC.
2. CC had boycotted TLC - using conflict approach to achieve its demands - commented local social worker.

It is easy to write off the Tenants' Liaison Committee without comment. But most of the commentary is contained within the bald history outlined above. It had no powers: it did not represent tenants in any meaningful sense: it was outnumbered by officials: it had much less vocal backing than the new and more radical Noble Street Community Campaign. What then did that achieve through conflict?

Noble St Community Campaign

The Community Campaign first met on 25 February 1970. We have

records of its second meeting on 11 March 1970. A dozen tenants attended it.

Matters raised:

1. Petition to clean up area . . . three quarters of tenants signed it. At this stage the CC had some members on TLC so was linked informally.
2. Play Group. Run in Grainger Boys Club. Summer Play through Young Volunteer Force.
3. OAPs. Survey to be done to get them more services.

Soon after this on 16 March the CC hit the Press. It threatened to dump the NS rubbish in the Civic Centre. 396 Tenants signed its petition. "We, the undersigned tenants of Noble Street, are sick and tired of living amid filth". The drains overflow and the area outside the old people's flats is flooded. "There are no lights left working on the estate".

A social worker commented on the Community Campaign at this stage: "They are becoming very active and possibly militant. I very much see myself applying my individual case-work to the wider group; i.e. making people aware, sustaining them; setting goals and above all enabling them to try and help themselves even to the extent (dare I say it) of doing ourselves out of a job".

22 April

8 tenants present . . . 2 from the TLC.

Matters raised:

Drains, refuse collection, caretakers, lights; PLUS general complaint about the apathy of the majority of the tenants. Finances were bad - play group was suffering through lack of funds. In July 1970, the CC through Averill Curry intervened again. In a leaflet they asked "Efforts to have rubbish shutes altered are always blocked by the argument that the cost would be too expensive for the Council. Do tenants think it would be a good idea to get our own expert to work out the real cost?"

Community Campaign Meeting 8 July 1970

3 tenants . . . plus 3 outsiders.

Matters raised:

1. Bus Trip.
2. Adventure Playground Summer Scheme.
3. Cleaning area up; things running down again.
4. Tenant apathy - all had been circularised - Only 3 present.

In October 1970 The Newcastle Child Poverty Action Group intervened (as YVF and others had done before). At a meeting on the 26 October, they discussed the Welfare Rights Centre being run at Averill Curry's flat in Sanderson Street.

They mentioned that the Summer Adventure Play had been "rather a disaster". They suggested that perhaps University Young Socialists might be interested in tackling Noble Street.

After this time it is difficult to trace progress of the Community Campaign. It is known they had a strong hand in parental run play schemes - particularly at the now discontinued Mary Trevelyan Summer Schemes. The Play Group appears to have folded. But certain environmental improvements were made - shutes were improved; clothes lines installed; lamps kept up (for a time). Along with the short-lived Welfare Rights Centre a disco for teenagers was run and a survey of the elderly successfully carried out.

The difficulty was establishing roots for it against all these odds - and when key people moved so the CC foundered. The last mention was under a typically campaigning banner headline in June 1971. "The Street blacklisted for life . . . problem in living". (The street actually photographed and the flat most clearly illustrated is Glue Terrace, No. 49, and the irony was not lost on those at that time working on Glue Terrace Playgroup). At this time the CC was negotiating with Housing Department to turn a flat into a community centre . . . and so it goes . . .

Many of the issues and problems raised by the Tenants' Liaison Committee and the Community Campaign were to be raised again by the Noble News Group. The problems of bad drainage, lack of play facilities and so on were after all always present in the flats. The Glue Terrace Playgroup, for

children under school age, and the strel Youth Project, which was to employ two play leaders to work with der children, were both set up with active involvement of Noble News group members. But they always saw se as short-term projects, to make e better until rehousing took place. ithout that prospect on the horizon, se activities would probably have undered just as so many did before.

Noble News

While many families suffered appalling housing and environmental conditions over the decades in Noble Street few of them ever suffered in nce. There was consistent and widespread pressure over the years for usfers, and for repairs while the usfers were awaited.

What was crucial about the "vic-ry" in Noble Street, however — the "ctory" of total transfer followed by olition of the flats themselves — s that individual families did not ay isolated in their demands. People Noble Street had a history of getting ether to campaign for change, ly because of — and partly in spite — the appalling conditions, which e allied to mass unemployment and e poverty wages of many unskilled rkers.

There is little doubt that the architecture of the flats — with their long blic landings and their lack of rivate" space — combined with ple who had been mainly rehoused i slum tenements on and around e Scotswood Road encouraged the velopment of a fighting community it in the early days.

As the flats became the transit p for Newcastle housing needs — picture shifted slightly, and new-ers and old hands began to divide. t throughout their lifetime the flats, what could or should be done them, were a common focus — a yfying point for discussion and on — among their inhabitants.

The development of the Noble ws Group in August 1974 therefore e after a whole range of campaigns the improvement of the flats, on airs internally and externally, on

provision of amenities, had floated in and out of people's hands and minds.

The Council — along with other agencies and voluntary organisations — had provided forums and helped set up groupings at earlier stages. The experiences of those initiatives — and what they led local people to expect from the new Noble News Group of 1974 — obviously varied enormously.

But the Group did not start from scratch. If anything the overall, though not absolute, failure of earlier attempts at community organisation/council consultation prepared the ground for the most radical proposals of all — empty the flats then pull them down.

The growth of the Noble News Group and its allied, interim, activities crucially relied on this stark, consistent long-term goal. The end of the road had to be visible for the people fighting all the way along it. And it is undeniable that there had to be a committed group of "outside" supporters who were prepared to see the fight through to the end and aid tenants in the necessary business of winning interim victories on the way. The workers of the local Information

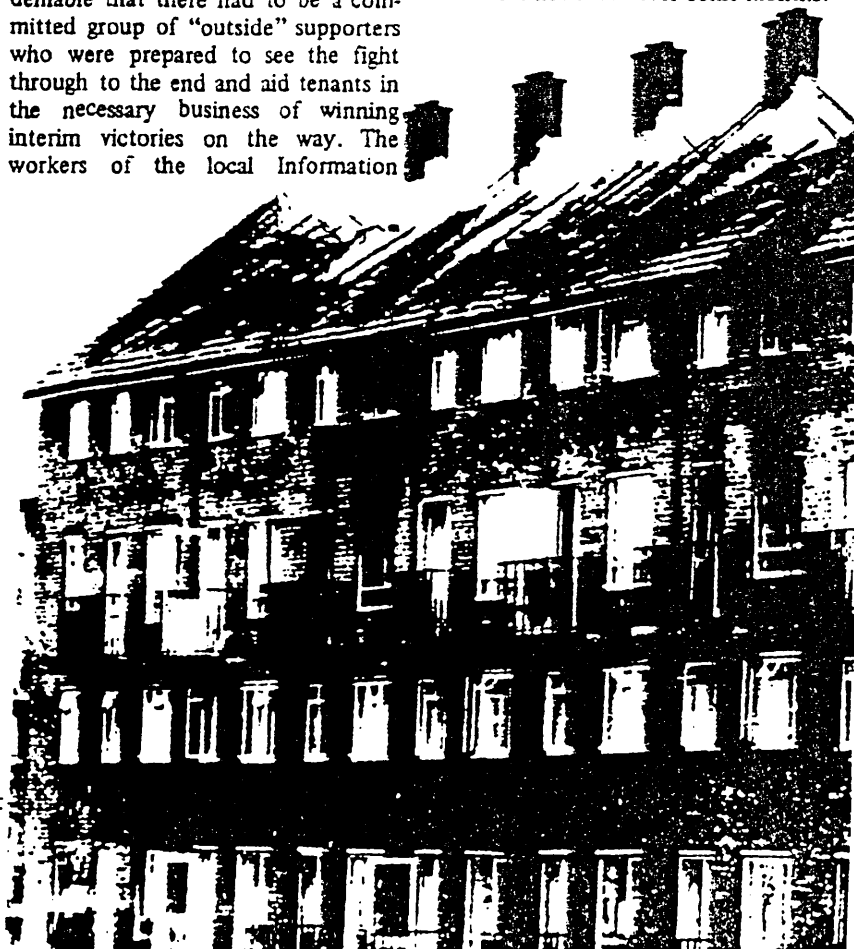
Centre in a converted flat saw this as their role — allied to other persons working professionally or voluntarily in the neighbourhood.

But first, and last, the campaign depended on the people of the flats.

The first edition

Reactions to the first Noble News of August 1974 — headlined "NOBLE NEWS IS YOURS" varied considerably. It was very much an experimental newsheet. The editorial promised a six-month run — "and whether it goes on longer, depends entirely on you". But it was not an alien plant dispatched without thought to the 450 families in the area.

Meetings in the local play-group premises in Glue Terrace and in the Cushy Butterfield pub had floated the idea of a newsheet over some months.



Involvement with the local jazz band – The Granger Park Troupers – added another community-base from the early days of the newsheet.

The Glue Terrace Play Group – while involving a larger number of outside helpers than local mothers and fathers – was perhaps a central factor in the early success of the Noble News and the group that was built upon it, because the early play-group committee had shown that local people with outside aid could develop a large-scale venture against considerable odds. The play-group – in a converted flat – started in October 1973 and was thriving by the time Noble News was launched. It was an experience that gave the local residents the initial encouraging boost. They could see

the play-group had taken long-term roots, had got a group of parents actively involved in a venture requiring large sums of money, employing workers and equipping premises. If this was not only possible but successful then a solid core of residents could see even greater developments on the horizon. Those who set up the Information Centre in Beaumont Street used this example very widely in the early stages of the Noble News.

The Information Centre was given much publicity in the first newsheet – but the centre became less important than workers had perhaps expected.

Once residents had the bit between their teeth – and long-term demands formulated – the role of an Information and Advice Centre (particularly in fairly limited and unwelcoming premises) as the patch-up merchant in the middle of struggles between individual tenants and elements of bureaucracy became less relevant.

Apart from anything else, the workers simply weren't in the Information Centre often enough for it to have an impact. Twice or three times a week was negligible when the issues were so long and compounded, and the numbers of people involved were so great. Indeed, the key members of Noble News Group themselves became the most direct resource points for tenants' individual or joint grievances. They were there all the time.



Counter Publicity – Strength in Yourselves

Much of what Noble News said in its first edition concentrated on long-standing concerns of local residents. First, there were the overwhelming difficulties of funding activities for children – of large numbers and wide age-ranges in the barren areas of the flats. The pre-school playgroups, the jazz band, and the later development of the Kestrel Youth project were interim attempts to gain involvement by parents in immediate concerns, while stressing the long-term need for radical changes. Constructive developments, and activities which could be constructively publicised to wider audiences outside the flats, were seen as vital by many residents.

The media view of the flats was uniformly hostile, ill-informed and thoughtless. No story could be printed about the flats without attaching the label "notorious" to Noble Street. This publicity rankled bitterly with local people. It also had more serious political effects in that for years local politicians would steer well clear of the Noble Street flats – their decline

and neglect — as an issue too controversial to tackle. Again, any hint of rehousing tenants from the flats would bring the possible wrath of groups in other parts of the city down upon their councillors — for fear of the “contamination-effect” which superficial and insensitive journalism had promoted as the realistic prospect.

Thus, Noble News was a direct counter-blast — it could be seen by some of the more political tenants as a much needed strengthening of their voice. It provided their one right of reply in the early days of August 1974 — even in its small, duplicated format. It was consistently coming out (and consistently and widely read — as a later survey showed) and it spoke strongly in favour of the ordinary people who happened to live in Noble Street flats.

The second edition



New Hope? — or Old Dreams

The second edition of Noble News printed in full the *Journal* newspaper article on Council plans for Noble Street. A report prepared by Beaumont Street Information workers in advance of their regular involvement in the flats a report which was the predecessor of this one — had stirred up interest among one or two local Labour councillors, especially Walter Wilson who had been a long-term proponent of demolition. A special Council Working Party suggested rehousing over a five-year period and re-use of the flats for old people's sheltered accommodation and student bed-sits! But it was very much the first step in a continuing saga of delay and indecision. Indeed, tenants at this time had little faith in Working Party



June 23, 1970: Tenants' Liaison Committee reported that an adventure playground had been designated — it never appeared.

recommendations — some remembered Labour Councillors, in opposition in 1972, proposing that all residents should be rehoused within three years.

The fact that the Council was now at least, officially discussing both what to do with the tenants (in these terms!) and what then to do with the flats did, however, provide a real focus for Noble News. Month by month through the rest of 1974 it was possible to pick up Council reports and respond to them and to promote continuing discussion in the flats. Later as the

Noble News Group formed and enlarged, tenants' leaders themselves took part in Council Working Parties and planning, although the Council always tried to force upon tenants' leaders the unreal distinction between their future as individual tenants and the future of the flats. While that ploy was attempted, the danger, of course, was always present that Council rehousing could take care of Noble News Group activists and then longer-term plans could be put safely to sleep.

Tenants and the Council Machine

It was clear from the early stages that if a successful campaign was to be waged for tenant transfer and flat-demolition the tenants themselves would have to believe in their ability to effect changes of this scale. Whilst there had been half-hearted Council attempts to set up consultation (on repairs, improvements etc.) in the past, and some local Labour Councillors had always showed concern and interest in the flats, there was a huge gulf between the Council machine and its tenants in Noble Street.

At the butt end of the Council housing provision — isolated in what had become a virtual ghetto — many tenants understandably reacted with either deep apathy or bitter criticism to involvement with any Council plans or planners. But effective change involved the need to develop a coherent voice for tenants — not simply in Council corridors but in meetings on the ground with Council representatives. Noble News was the beginning of that voice. In its first edition it listed Councillors for the area and urged residents to use their elected representatives. Later it successfully called for public meetings and tenant participation in Working Party discussions.

To its credit, the Council also responded positively by setting up a local agency specifically to deal with rehousing based in the flats. The need for an "alternative" Beaumont Street Information Centre declined, as the positive effects of the Council's own initiative on the ground took root. Undoubtedly, the early experience of the Information Centre, which showed a overwhelming demand for rehousing and repairs, helped prompt the Council's own intervention.

Meeting Residents — Residents Meeting

The November 1974 issue was adlined "WE WON'T WAIT". In-

NOBLE NEWS



NOBLE NEWS IS YOURS

AUGUST 1974

This is the First Edition of NOBLE NEWS. We are bringing it out to let you know some of the things happening in the area. In particular this First Edition tells you about the new Beaumont Street Information Centre which will be opening on Tuesday 27th August.



WE WON'T WAIT

NOVEMBER 1974

WE WON'T WAIT

Noble News recently interviewed residents in the flats.

'Noble News': (top) from the front page of the first issue, and the headline from the November 1974 issue.

formation Centre workers designed a simple survey to go to every tenant in order to strengthen local links and prepare for a local group. The survey was an attempt to bring tenant views together in response to Working Party proposals — "The Council is talking about your home and your family's future". And people in the flats certainly wanted to express their views. One caretaker said: "Seen from the air they are like a prison camp. They should pull them down now". Residents remembered past promises, but now, rather than shrug their shoulders, they saw a purpose in meeting together and in formulating their demands.

They came together formally on November 25 1974 — determined to campaign for better conditions in the flats and help plan for the time when all families can move out of the flats". Meetings were to be held fortnightly and all tenants were

invited. A newsheet distribution network of residents in each block of flats was inaugurated, and any tenant who took the trouble to come to Group meetings was listed in the newsheet.

The newsheet was increasingly widely read (both in the flats and among the interested agencies to whom it was circulated) — Noble News Group became a body strong enough to surmount the inevitable changes of tenant personnel over the period — November 1974-March 1976. A key meeting which proved local muscle took place on 14 January 1975 and in effect demonstrated to local councillors and officials that the Group had to be reckoned with and involved in future planning. Between 20 and 30 tenants had turned up to early Group meetings. Only 28 of the 296 tenants personally contacted in the survey wanted to stay in the flats. The demand was clear as one tenant put it — "Let us out and you live here". The question was —

would tenants themselves come to a public meeting to tell their Councillors this crucial fact? We heard the answer on 14 January when more than 100 tenants turned out to the Cushy Butterfield.

Soon after, four tenant representatives were invited on to the Council Working Party and Councillor Wilson could write: "I welcome the local initiatives". At this stage, however, it was obvious that Council officials did not share Councillor Wilson's view. Neither the Housing Architects nor the Housing Department were prepared to send representatives to that first big public meeting. Nervousness about any form of commitment in policy towards Noble Street flats was deeply engrained in Council officials' circles.

Rehousing promised

The January meeting had provoked a positive commitment by Labour Councillors to a rehousing programme in the period 1977-80. The questions central to the Group's subsequent meetings became: (i) why do we have to wait to 1977; (ii) will new tenancies be halted now? (iii) where will we be offered; (iv) why not pull the flats down?

It was not until April 1975 when four Noble News Group representatives met the Director of Housing and his colleagues that the ground rules for rehousing-promises became clearer. As John Gray, the Director put it: "We are aware that everyone has been involved so far except the tenants. But you are now putting your views and all credit to you for this". Officials agreed they could start rehousing earlier - though it would be spread over a long period. They also popped in the Council Project on the ground - to ascertain rehousing needs as soon as possible. This positive declaration of Council involvement - putting people, money and offices in the flats was seen partly as a ploy to delay rehousing but also as a hopeful sign that, at last, rehousing was on the horizon. In the event, the workers in the Council project proved a great

asset in speeding up the rehousing process.

This step and the formulation in April of a Kestrel Youth Project Committee with a majority of tenant representatives and strong funding from Urban Aid marked one of the high points of tenant confidence and strength. Both long-term goals and interim activities in the flats looked hopeful and positive. The grind of rehousing, the battles over who got what, when and where, the struggle to demolish all the flats were still to come. But the Group had a solid core of activists, the Council agencies on the ground were co-operating and the constructive developments on Glue Terrace Play Group, Grainger Park Troupers and Kestrel Youth Project were gaining increasingly good city-wide publicity and a new credence for the view that tenants in Noble Street could, after all, be satisfactorily rehoused.

Links with Norwich Place

From February 1975 onwards the Noble News Group began to forge links with tenants in Norwich Place - the five blocks of flats a mile or so further out on Scotswood Road. The Norwich Group sent delegates to the Council's Working Party and from time to time attended both Noble News Group meetings and social gatherings. Feelings in Norwich Place for rehousing never ran quite so high as in Noble Street. Partly, this was because of the smaller number of blocks involved. They were also, generally, kept in much better condition externally. Norwich Place also had the advantage of the adjacent Hodgkin Park and plenty of green-field space. But the disaster of June 30 in Brandon House, Norwich Place, certainly deepened concern.

Noble News Group had met the Fire Prevention Officer in March to discuss the serious worry of fires in the badly designed rubbish chutes. No one at that stage conceived the dangers

above their heads in the lofts of these disgusting blocks. On June 30 one block in Norwich Place was set on fire. "It was terrible - the fire swept along the roof like a streak of lightning. It was a miracle they all escaped", said the caretaker. The fire left 103 people homeless. The Group called a meeting with Norwich Group leaders for 8 July. It was an emotional meeting. The Housing Department had moved swiftly to help and tenants' main concern was that if fire could start in one block then it could easily spread throughout several in the close confines of Noble Street. The Council decided to demolish the remains of Brandon House ("ONE DOWN - NINETEEN TO GO" said August 1975 edition of Noble News). And after pressure for fire reports they also carried out £10,000 safety work to render lofts less hazardous.

A point to note, however, was the prescience of the Group themselves when back in March they had warned of fire - and received little response from the Authority. A subsequent point was that the fire again showed just how much work would have to be done to render such badly built, ill-equipped blocks habitable. In the long term demolition was the stark alternative.

The links with tenants there and, gradually, through Newcastle Tenants' Charter Group meetings, with Tenants' Associations around the city, gave Noble News Group an increasing sense of identity and solidarity. Tenants' leaders, who had felt fairly isolated in their own patch in the flats, could find increasing confidence through working with others on common problems of repairs, environmental decay, play facilities and so on.

No Relets

By June 1975 tenants were increasingly anxious that the Council should be seen positively to be moving on the rehousing question. Promises for working parties were not enough. As Noble News said it - "RELETS - THE BIG ISSUE - One thing will prove to all tenants in the flats that the Council really means it when it says: "We are going to rehouse you

103 homeless after flats blaze

By PETER YOUNG

EVEN FLATS were gutted and 103 people made homeless in a fire disaster at Benwell, Newcastle, by this morning.

Police evacuated an entire block of 31 five-storey flats as men fought the blaze.

Eye-witness Mr. Jim Tobin said: "It was terrible—the fire swept the roof like a streak of lightning. It was a miracle they all escaped as windows exploded in the heat."



That one thing is an end to all tenancies. The Council must stop letting flats when they become tenancy in Noble Street".

The Area Housing Manager responded: "I am as keen as anyone to get this situation settled once and for all but you will all agree that to let property to remain empty is a crime. It would create worse conditions than there is now". Group members found that comment particularly unhappy. It was clear to tenants that blocks would be quickly in the natural turn-over of tenancies and if the Council acted quickly enough each empty block could be secured once and for all by locking up the doors and windows. In the long-term this, in fact, occurred it was possible — particularly in Benwell Place — to seal off complete blocks which was a far tidier solution than the past state of decline and disrepair. A discussion between tenants and the Council's Project leader raised a number of these relet issues in late May. He said: "Noble Street has been used as an emergency rehousing for a long time. You know there are always problems in Noble Street. There's also a need for them. It is difficult reletting just like that". The tenants' leader responded: "That's

the trouble — people who come to Noble Street haven't got any other choice. You are still using it as a dumping ground. You are giving us the crumbs again. We come to your meetings and you say no more relets except in emergency — then you go on doing it. They'll board up a few more after the next Working Party — a few more crumbs — But it's about time they gave us the cake".

Rents Blow-up

There were inevitable dangers of division whenever the question of rehousing arose. An early decision — which certainly caused ructions on the fringes of the Group (and among tenants not actively involved in the Group) — was on the question of who got rehoused first. The Council attempted a block by block proposal — which while neat could clearly be seen to divide the estate. The Group accepted the proposal but also believed it would be possible to ascertain all tenants requirements — then give a clear, and updated picture of how long those requirements (size of house, amenities, estate in the city etc.) would

take to be met. But then a new policy was suggested by the Council. A supposedly confidential report to the Working Party (copies of which were taken back from tenants leaders at the end of the meeting) was leaked to the Press. The headlines were: "A CLEAN RENT BOOK IS THE PRICE OF A MOVE". Clearly in the flats (where rent arrears, side-by-side with poverty and unemployment, as well as a deep unwillingness to pay rent on such rubbishy property were common) the demand for a clean rent book posed a critical question to Noble News Group. First, they were angry that a demand which was not even Council policy could be leaked. As one said: "We were told the meeting was confidential then the next day we were blown up all over the papers".

Second the kinds of differences brought out on all estates between those considered "good" or "bad" tenants again came to the surface in the group. The value judgements so often used by Housing Officials in placing people in the flats or in releasing them to better housing appeared in group discussions. Rather in the same way that the fragile unity of the Clearance Area groupings of residents — adjacent to the Noble Street flats — began to break up as

the individual rush for a new home developed, the Noble News Group felt its greatest stresses and strains when issues such as these arose. Overall, however, the central theme of rehousing for all kept the group on the rails.

Survey Follow-up

The Group decided it was necessary to keep up pressure on the Council to maintain existing services and properties even though by September 1975 rehousing of individuals was underway. They therefore carried out an intensive follow-up survey on the problem of repairs and maintenance. This survey, published in September, had the additional goal of persuading councillors that things had become so rotten in the flats – and such a continuing drain on Council resources – that only overall rehousing and emolition was viable. The Noble News headline was “REPAIRS SCANDAL”. It was a saga of drains blocked or seeping; lights broken or missing; rubbish shutes ineffective; walls cracked and windows broken. Little or no cleansing appeared to take place on the estate.

The Council moved in response – top officials toured the area and workers were sent in. But the main response was to place the blame on vandalism – as the Council Project officer wrote: “Many of the complaints are a direct result of vandalism on the estate”. He added: “I trust you will appreciate that the cost of repairs and maintenance on the Noble Street estate is proportionately much higher than in any other estate in the Cruddasburgh area”.

Of course, as so often, in the long-awoken struggles in Noble Street questions – why vandalism? why rent arrears? why high repairs costs? – were not asked, or were dodged. So long as such estates are allowed to exist – so long as working people are conveniently dropped into such abysses – so these basic questions will be avoided by anxious officials who find it easier to focus on superficial

appearance.

October 1975 – 149 Empty Flats

By the end of October real gaps were obvious in the blocks. Some complete landings were empty. The debate on precisely who got out when continued – though with an increasing sense of unreality.

For a start – as Noble News pointed out – the Council had adopted two logically incompatible policies. First it had said – with the general agreement of the Group – the flats will be emptied block by block to cut problems. Then it brandished its new policy of “Clean Rent Books” move first. As one tenants’ leader put it: “It’s up to the Council how they spend their money. They can agree to shift people out with the Rent Arrears or leave blocks empty for vandals to wreck”.

Also, of course, housing planning and allocation will not fit into neat categories. Given the desire to rehouse – then there would be inevitable delays as residents waited for their first choice homes. Divisions on length of residency in the flats became a sore point as long-standing tenants in blocks “down the queue” or waiting for a specific area – saw ‘newcomers’ (anything up to five years) moving out to other estates.

Modernisation

As part of the continuing battle to improve conditions in the short-term and ensure total evacuation of the flats in the long-term, the Group took up the question of modernisation of the flats at the end of 1975.

Since the Council had long seemed unwilling to grasp the nettle of demolishing – and pussy-footed with elaborate architectural schemes for ‘improving’ the blocks – the Noble News Group decided to show what an earlier so-called improvement scheme had meant to tenants who then had to live in the ‘improved’ accommodation. The ‘modernisation’ was a relatively simple process. The end sets of maisonettes on the first and second landings were divided into single-storey flatlets. The main point about

this was to cut the number of families with children in the flats, and allow more single people or childless couples to use the accommodation. As one tenant wrote to the Noble News: “Since I moved in three years ago my front bedroom walls and ceilings have been covered with damp. I put a report into the Council and got some warmer, foam wallpaper. But after six months the wallpaper fell off. I got on to the Council again. This time they told me it was condensation and to scrub the walls with Domestos. I was told to put a heater in the room and leave the window open. I was also told it was the tenant’s responsibility and not the Council’s”. Such comments would be funny if they were not so common.

Tenants in the worse type of council housing are given the meanest treatment, the most limited services and are then persuaded (though thankfully, increasing numbers of them are not persuaded) that it is their fault.

The disaster of ‘improvement’ of end-flats was a significant point in Council decision-making. Had they been able to show that tenants could be found who could satisfactorily live in these ‘new’ developments then the case for converting the rest of Noble Street and Norwich Place’s stacked up maisonettes into single-homeless accommodation, elderly sheltered housing or student flats would have been immeasurably strengthened.

Unreal hopes

But that failure did not stop some Council officers, and even a few councillors from clinging to unrealistic expectations of what could be done with the flats. Fortunately, their attitudes and indecisiveness spread over the four years from 1974-78 did not interfere with or delay, the plans for rehousing tenants. It would be unfair, however to place blame on one or two local government figures. The truth of the Noble Street disaster – and the central cause at its inception and throughout its tragic, chequered history – rests somewhere in central government policies over a 30-year

Demolition of 'disaster flats' urged

A BLOCK of "disaster flats" should be pulled down instead of modernised, it was claimed yesterday.

The flats — at Kirkley Close, Gosforth — could never be satisfactory, even if a planned £325,000 improvement scheme was carried out, Coun. Bert Moore told Newcastle housing committee.

"These flats stick out like sore thumbs — let's not waste money on them," he said.

"They have appalling entrances — the whole place is a disaster. The answer must be to pull them down

and then perhaps we can look at building something worth living in."

The committee was considering revised proposals to improve the 47 post-war flats at a cost of £325,000.

Coun. Miss Iris Steedman thought the flats might be suitable for small families with grown-up children.

Coun. Cuthbert Stephenson said: "We must make these inhuman places more homely and modernise them to as high a standard as we can afford."

The committee agreed that a report should be put to its next meeting on the likely amounts of grant available from the Department of the Environment if the flats were demolished or modernised.

City's slums on drawing board

NEWCASTLE "faulty towers" are pinpointed today in an investigation carried out by a leading building magazine.

The authority is one of 40 singled out for a survey by Building Design which shows that millions of pounds are being spent by local authorities on repairing badly-built council houses.

In Newcastle, flats in Noble Street and Norwich Place come in for a pounding.

The section devoted to Newcastle—the only North-East authority mentioned—reads:

"Noble Street and Norwich Place were described as 'slums on the drawing board' when they were built and are now 20 years later being emptied by the Council.

Backfired

"The estate consists of 24 three and five-storey blocks. There are no lifts to the fifth floor. There is an inadequate refuse disposal system. Balconies are too small. Staircases are in

darkness and landscaping is poor.

"Money saved on the original cost of building soon backfired when maintenance costs rose to almost twice the average. The Council decided to evacuate the block and 200 dwellings out of 580 are now empty.

"The block may be converted for accommodation for students or demolished.

"McCutcheon Court Estate and Elswick Street in Newcastle are similarly deteriorating.

"Newcastle also has a programme for repairing spalling concrete on 26 blocks. It spent £40,000 last year and expects to spend £100,000 per year for the next two years.

"Sills are slipping on the seven-year-old Cruddas Park Estate. The cost of repairs on one block: £70,000."

A Newcastle City Architect's department official said: "So far as Noble Street is concerned, we cannot deny this. But one must emphasise that a lot of authorities up and down the country were doing that then. At the time the pressures were different."

He pointed out that the policy for the area had not yet been determined and was still under discussion.

ABOVE: A report from 'The Journal' (10.1.75).

RIGHT: The 'Evening Chronicle' of March 26, 1976.

the group. Only 18 out of 92 could be found who expressed opposition to the newsheet or simple disinterest.

Help and support was offered by at least 30. But by March the indications were that the tide of enthusiasm was turning. Many of the original leaders of the group had been rehoused. Two returned to the Group's Annual Meeting with other representatives from their newly-formed tenants' associations on other estates. Those who were left were increasingly

desperate to get out. They saw Noble News as important because of the re-housing information it gave them. But, externally, Noble News had one of its final boosts. The *Evening Chronicle* printed an article on 12 March 1976 which stated that children on the estate "play tiggy with hatchets". The paper again described Noble Street as "notorious". The Group demanded an apology and "a full report of the good constructive things going on in Noble Street — like Glue Terrace Playgroup, The Kestrel Project, and

riod. Those issues are taken up in other sections of this report but it is worth pointing out that City Council comes to 'save' Noble Street by developing the flats as student accommodation (February 1976) were largely ended by the Council's concern to avoid the albatross of long-term interest payments on properties which 'ideally' should be demolished. They are put up on the cheap under government restrictions of the time (mid-50s) now the fear was that they would cost a great deal more to pull down. It was a crazy system that Newcastle City Council found themselves locked into.

Noble News inside & out

March 1976 Noble News Group members did a very brief survey of tenants for their views on the newsheet. This was primarily a publicity recruiting exercise — designed to involve more residents on the work of

Noble News". A 200-name petition was handed in at the newspaper offices under the watching eye of Tyne Tees television. The Group "put the record straight" and gained considerable publicity for their activities with children and residents. The paper got a message and it was a hopeful and helpful one for the future: "The residents claim they have picked up a false reputation as trouble-makers. They don't want their neighbours to be prejudiced against them as they take up new lives and homes in different parts of the city".

Interestingly, the paper printed a supporting letter for the Group's petition from the Area Housing Manager, Councillor Stabler and local lay-group and Council Project leaders. This was one of the final public initiatives of the Group and one of the most successful and constructive.

The Crunch

The April 1976 edition of Noble News brought the Group to a point of no-return with the Council. A year of delay on the part of the Council over plans for the blocks left remaining brought group members angry and anxious to have a final go. The aim, as always, was the demolition of the flats. With the help of Benwell Law Project, the Group commissioned a building surveyor's report on the flats which revealed: "There's a very serious mediate problem of health risk from the refuse chutes and also fire hazards attached to these chutes" The surveyor continued: "A programme of repair could prove to be uneconomical and demolition or complete redesigning may be necessary".

John Gray, Director of Housing, took great exception to this independent step by the group: "I was somewhat surprised and disappointed that you had gone to the expense of employing a firm of surveyors. I hope at the Noble News Group feels able to join with the Council in solving the problems of Noble Street rather than for the Group to act independently!" When such comments were irrelevant. The Working Party had last met on February 16 and it was now the end of

April. Tenants' leaders had been told so often that the future of the blocks was not their concern they had begun to believe it. The Working Party itself was becoming a dead-duck — future policies would be made by Housing Management (and no tenants sit on that committee).

BROADER POLICY

Before ending this section we would be doing a great disservice to the people of the flats who fought so well for rehousing and demolition if we didn't take a look at two areas of broader policy which they always stressed as part of their campaign. First, the Noble News Group emphasised that rehousing, once won as a policy, should be carried through with maximum concentration on tenants' wishes and requirements. Related to this the Group was anxious to ensure that ghetto-policies did not develop in other areas of the Council's housing stock. There were, and still remain, other crisis areas of sub-standard council housing, and it was a continuing concern of Noble Street tenant leaders that many tenants might find themselves rehoused "from the frying pan into the fire".

The second issue, already touched on above, was what policies would be developed for the use of the buildings or, preferably, the empty site, once tenants were moved out? Later we look at the kind of suggestions put forward at official level over the years. But it is fair to say that members of the Noble News Group were aware of the importance (for general Council policy-making) of getting the right decisions on the future of the site. The repercussions of this issue — as with the wider questions of rehousing and halting the development of "Noble Street" crisis-areas elsewhere — still reverberate in Newcastle as in many other housing authorities throughout the country.

In January 1974 a local councillor and academic said: "We are told the number of homeless is increasing. If Noble Street is no longer to be used as

'temporary' accommodation for them either because it has been demolished or filled with students, of whatever, then where are we to put the next lot of homeless?"

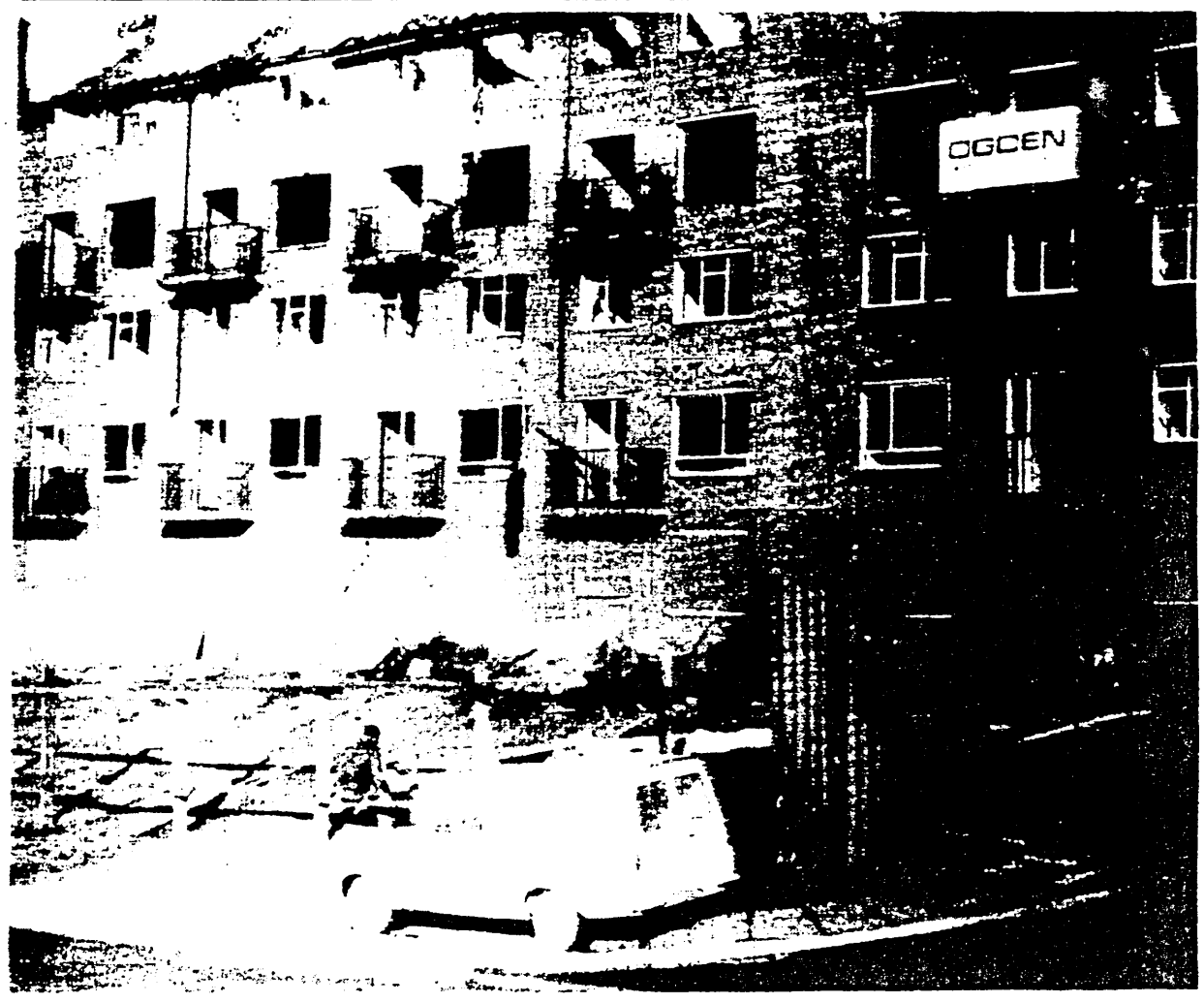
Taking the description of 'homeless' in its widest context as meaning all those families and individuals seeking a home, and remembering the specifically desperate and critical nature of the 'homeless' who were offered Noble Street council slum-housing, the councillor's question remained central throughout the following four years.

In July 1974 it was pointed out to the Council's Noble Street and Norwich Place Sub-committee that if tenants' demands for rehousing were to be met three major questions would need to be looked at by the Council on its general housing and allocation policies:-

1. How have past decisions been made?
2. How could the present situation be remedied?
3. How could alternative policies be worked out for the future so that such crisis situations are not allowed to occur again?

Even the question of sub-standard, unpopular estates elsewhere in the city — in North Kenton and McCutcheon's Court — were being directly related to the Noble Street issue. Yet the questions were, in part, left unanswered, in a concern to focus attention and activity on what appeared to be far and away the worst estate at that particular moment. Events and campaigns by McCutcheon's Court tenants in the more recent past have demonstrated how easily trouble can be stored up elsewhere.

To a certain extent, tenants' leaders in Noble Street acted as others have also done — in a desperate situation the central demand was rehousing. And although there was a vague and continuing unease on the questions of "where to?" and "at what costs?" the main point was to be out of the flats. Even then, however, the broader issues were not totally neglected. The Noble News Group stressed again and again the unpopularity of the three-storey flats in Sanderson Street and on Edgware Road adjoining Noble Street. The Council dodged — and is still



olition work starts on the burnt-out block at Norwich Place.

ging – that thorny issue on the
sis that if those were also seen as,
d agreed to be substandard, the
ercussions in similar estates and
cks throughout the city would be
ormous. Yet, quite simply, in many
ys those three-storey blocks are sub-
ndard – they are at the bottom of
pile in terms of decent housing
ovision. It would not take a fortune-
er to predict that this form of
ommodation will be a growing
m in the Council's side. Noble
et tenants did not view themselves
in any way different from other
rking class people living in council
sing. A little poorer than average,
; more likely to be out-of-work,
tainly; suffering from atrocious
sing and environmental conditions,

no doubt; but working class and
requiring decent homes just as every
other family. But it was a measure of
the notoriety which a system (that can
both produce slum housing and then
force the poor, the handicapped and
the desperate to live in it) can create.
that when rehousing was discussed
in September 1974 by concerned
Labour Councillors, one could say:

“When we do rehouse these people
they will be received with some
trepidation by neighbours. Our
Social Work and Community back
up must take seriously the problems
of the areas getting these people.”

This is a dangerous attitude, accep-
ting without question as it does the
notion of a distinctive subculture. It is

a view of a group of people – definable
as ‘different’ because they lived in
Noble Street – settling in another area
and causing serious problems. Now, if
other council estates are in such a
delicate balance that the introduction
of new neighbours can tip the scales
towards decline and run-down, the
answers will surely not be found in
labelling the tenants of one area. That
labelling was something Noble News
Group fought throughout its existence
– yet it was the kind of superficial
analysis which afflicted not only the
media but certain councillors and
officers. No wonder similar problems
of disrepair, of rent arrears and com-
munity disharmony, bubble in crisis
estates around Tyneside when policy
makers continue to ignore the real

Noble Street may now be flattened

By PETER MORRIS, Municipal Reporter

NOBLE STREET flats, one of Tyneside's most infamous housing ghettos, may be demolished.

That is the solution being recommended to City councillors this afternoon.

Newcastle's director of housing, Mr. John Gray, says in a report to the Housing Management Committee that, in his view, demolition is the only conclusion possible.

Norwich Place flats, the smaller estate next to Noble Street, may also be knocked down unless a housing association takes it over for students or other young people.

If councillors agree to the demolition of the 434 homes in Noble Street it will come only 20 years after they were built.

The city's rate and rent payers will be paying for the flats for another 40 years.

Full details of the cost of demolition were not available today, but the council would lose £50,000-a-year Government subsidy for the next 40 years.

The demolition contract, it is estimated, would cost £100,000 — money that would be borrowed over 80 years and repaid at the rate of £11,300 per year.

Today's report to the Housing Management Com-

mittee comes at the end of three years of discussion by a special working party of councillors and officials set up to decide the future of the flats.

The 15 Noble Street blocks were built between 1936 and 1938 at a time when councils were being pressed to build houses in the cheapest possible manner.

The population density of 170 persons per acre was similar to that of the Scotswood Road slums that Noble Street replaced, according to Mr. Gray's report.

Norwich Place, with 146 homes in five blocks, was built to the same design. One of the blocks was demolished in 1975 after a fire.

Mr. Gray says that the design of the blocks played a large part in their unpopularity, and large sums of money have been spent in attempts to improve them.

'Evening Chronicle' front page, Monday June 30, 1975 — the battle was nearly over.

ues (lack of housing finance and k of political will in providing decent council housing for all) in our of the easy scape-goat and the ple 'problem family' categorisation. Certainly, plans for Social Services d Housing to co-ordinate what one ouncilor described as 'reception ms' for tenants rehoused from the ats had a positive element included. ewcastle people are no different om others in that they grow used to d fond of a particular area in their ty. Rehousing to new areas, often on e outskirts, causes problems of dis- ation of family and friendship twos — the loss of clubs, pubs and bitual amenities. Whether or not the ception team' idea ever got past the licy stage can only be honestly swered by the departments con- rmed. The lack of information rnished on these matters by Social ices and Housing when the News oup requested progress reports on using suggested that for hard- essed area offices this idea remained ly locked in the pipe-line.

Tenants all too often had to make ir new lives in new homes as best y could — and given that some of housing and much of the economic nvironmental situations in which ere placed were little more than next step up the ladder, there must

be serious doubts as to further positive progress in the future. The City Council recognised this issue in the report of September 1974 cited earlier.

The comment is worth repeating:

"There are many other blocks in Newcastle similar to those in Noble Street, though these other blocks are not quite as discredited nor as massed together. (But) it would become increasingly difficult to justify their use for families if the Noble Street blocks were declared 'unsuitable' for families."

Great problems are envisaged because — as with families rehoused from clearance areas in the city — Noble Street tenants would seek first choice of decent, possibly new, Council units. That this did not occur in Noble Street's rehousing programme (in fact it went through much more swiftly than anyone expected) must be due partly to the high level of natural turn-over in the flats, but also to the anxiety of flat-dwellers to take anything rather than stay in Noble Street. If it would be valuable to find out how those tenants now feel — and in what estates and areas they have a continuing concern about their housing conditions and amenities.

We wrote in November 1974, and would strongly re-iterate now: "A

solution to the problems of Noble Street and Norwich Place, attained in isolation from an assessment of the situation in other estates, would ignore the major issues involved". It is hoped that through the Tenants Federation on the one hand and through local councillors on the other, Council tenants will continue to urge decision-makers to consider the major issues of decent homes for all working people.

WHERE DID PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE?

Figures produced by the Council in November 1974 showed that of 205 Noble Street and Norwich Place tenants with active transfer applications, only 68 wished to move to areas other than Benwell and Elswick (their own patch). New estates were being built in these areas but in large part — and certainly in their first phases — they were designed to accommodate families from slum clearance areas. So if Noble Street tenants wanted out, they often had to look

rather afield and this at a time when one local councillor put it:

"We have other poor areas you know — much smaller perhaps but equally bad. We cannot afford to neglect these other areas. It would be quite unfair to let other areas deteriorate even further."

Presumably, Housing officials continue to grasp that nettle in areas of laval, Scotswood, Cowgate, Kenton, Blakelaw, Walker and so on. Presumably, also, large numbers of tenants (some of them from the flats) view their homes in the same way as do the people of Noble Street and Norwich Place. But the money to halt deterioration most certainly has not been flowing in Newcastle in the last four years since the councillor pressed that concern.

Another councillor, at the same time, put the demands of tenants in a nutshell:

"We can't even get one block emptied now for the Homeless because of people being choosy about what they will take. They want the best Local Authority Accommodation."

With unconscious irony a Housing official added, for the councillor's information:

"When we emptied Beech Grove Road and Westmorland Road (adjacent to the flats) — which were full of down and outs — we had to rehouse them. But they wouldn't take Noble Street and now even the Lancefield House Homeless families won't take Noble Street either."

The vision of choosy tenants, housing officials and desperate homeless people, all locked in a vicious circle contained by the rubbish-end of council house provision, is one which still haunts all those responsible for the deplorable state of affairs.

There were new council housing developments in the area and possibly the type which flat-tenants might choose, at St. Paul's Estate and on Middle Road for example. But others were priorities for these houses as housing areas demands grew in 1975-6. Other houses empty in the area — some 700 units reported by the

Director of Housing in March 1975 — were in large part allocated to the demands of an increasing revitalisation programme. The areas of choice for Noble Street tenants were restricted throughout.

When the Noble News Group did its own survey of rehousing desires in the report "End of the Road for Noble Street" it found one in five would be prepared to go anywhere to get out of the flats. But almost half wanted to stay in the adjacent areas.

The Council's own survey of April 1975 showed small numbers prepared to go out to Scotswood (4); Pendower (9); Kenton (11); Blakelaw (14); Walker (16); Cowgate (7); and Fawdon (4). Most tenants wished to stay in the inner-West End of the city.

Many tenants justifiably viewed a move to some of these estates as in no way an improvement on their existing situation. In this they were backed — albeit for very different reasons — by Council officials themselves. A report of July 1975 stated:-

"There are estates within the city where social and management problems preclude the possibility of a large influx of families with multiple social problems and indeed certain small districts or even streets in all areas are in this situation."

The labelling referred to above re-occurs throughout the story of Noble Street. It precludes a tackling of real problems, as in the report quoted above, where on the one hand the Council attaches the labels and on the other hand denies their validity (e.g. "The stigma attached to Noble Street and Norwich Place residents, although unobserved in the large majority of cases, is nevertheless very real in the minds of many city tenants".) We have warnings of being swamped by "large influxes of multi-problem families" raised in much the same way as the current numbers game of black immigration. This may seem a harsh com-

Right: an indication of the way Noble Street had been given an unsavouring image by the media. In this report from 'The Journal' a student leader declines the Council's offer of flats in the area, in spite of the fact that 40 students were sleeping in the Polytechnic gymnasium.

Students spurn flats plan

By Journal Reporter

A PLAN to let students rent council homes in a city's most notorious housing area got the cold shoulder from a student leader last night.

In response to an appeal to help students at Newcastle Polytechnic, who are hit by a severe accommodation shortage, the city council has made available 40 homes, including maisonettes in the Noble Street flats complex off Scotswood, Newcastle.

But Mr. Eddie Cullen, president of the polytechnic students' union, said: "Although I haven't been told about the plan, I would be against it because of the bad reputation that the Noble Street area has."

The housing management working group heard yesterday that the college's 3,700 full-time and 7,000 part-time students will be boosted by a further 750 by 1975.

But the accommodation shortage is now so critical that 40 men are sleeping in camp beds in the gymnasium and women students have to "double up" in the halls of residence.

Says a report: "Many of the students are having to board in areas of up to 15 miles from the city, and are consequently unable to take part in the extra-study activities which take place in the evenings."

"Others are in quite unsuitable lodgings, which under normal circumstances would not be considered as being up to a reasonable standard."

The Noble Street maisonettes, which, despite its long waiting list, the council has had difficulty in letting, would be let to the students at the same rents and conditions that would apply to any other tenant.

The committee chairman Ald. Mrs. Madge Graham, commented: "It's better than sleeping on the gymnasium floor. This is a short term measure to help get the students out of their jam."

arison, but the language is so similar that it has to be made. People are condemned because they are different. The factors which underly this may vary, but the discrimination is the same.

What officials failed to do was to get down to identifying the real needs of all their sub-standard, slum-built council estates, and analysing costs of improvement versus redevelopment in crisis areas which were distinct from Noble Street and Norwich place only their less widely-held "notoriety".

By January 1976 the local Housing Manager was about to provide the bare statistics on rehousing for the Noble Street tenants. They showed, at that stage, that of 66 families rehoused, all but 15 had been found homes in the Cruddas Park and Benwell areas. What this did not make clear — and what the Group demanded to know — was precisely which estates people were moving to and what types of housing. At later meetings this was never clarified and there was a continuing suspicion that the only choice was, in a large number of cases, restricted to older properties — the least desirable estates of the West End.

Throughout the rehousing process, sympathetic official noises were made regarding new homes suited to tenant requirement and sensitive co-ordination of service to ensure maximum success of the rehousing programme.

At a Noble Street-Norwich Place Working Party in February 1976 the Project Leader for the area was given the following advice by a range of local councillors:-

"We must make sure we are putting in the services they require — give them every support to settle in."

"The long-term aim must be for officers in their new areas to absorb them and support them."

But the precise nature of those services and support was never clearly defined, and precisely because many of the housing areas to which tenants were rehoused were already substandard, already under similar pressures to the Noble Street Estate, it is unlikely that any Council concern was turned into any large-scale action.

The Housing Director recognised a

central problem — then as now:

"A lot of areas are saying 'Do for us what you do for Noble Street'. The McCutcheon's people were asking for a Working Party."

It was this global picture of the city's stress estates which both tenants and outside workers considered a vital component of the Noble Street programme. A local councillor made a similar point:

"I don't want this (Noble Street programme) going forward in isolation. We don't want to make a rod for our own backs. Look what's coming up at the back of us. We've got people asking — where do we figure?"

It is a major purpose of this report to raise again the questions: "What's coming up behind us?" and "Where do other sub-standard council housing areas figure?" These are not just questions for Newcastle tenants and Council but for many authorities around Tyneside. All too often there is a desperation about the public housing operation, a frantic and well-meaning effort to solve the vast crisis, the vast slum conditions, but little recognition that for most Council tenants the overall picture gets worse with every year that passes.

Bare figures on rehousing from Norwich Place provided by the Housing Manager in March 1976 showed 14 tenants rehoused in Scotswood; ten to Fergusons Lane, nine to Delaval, 17 to the new Buddle Road Estate, one to Pendower and one to additional accommodation in Benwell. Many of these estates suffer in some degree the same conditions of housing and environmental stress, the same pressures of poverty and low wages, from which Noble Street and Norwich Place tenants desperately sought to escape. No one should ignore the possibility of future crises occurring in such areas, unless large amounts of resources and finance can be pumped into them quickly.

A Working Party meeting in February 1977 marked the official end of the rehousing discussion in a sad, though somehow fitting, way. The Social Services Committee were asked

to report on the extent of their follow-up of the families rehoused from Noble Street and Norwich Place. We have been unable to trace this follow-up report.

For some reason, the Police Authority were asked for their comments as to whether rehousing had made any significant change in the problems affecting the area. The stigmatisation of Noble Street families went with them. We do not know the police response. Finally, area housing managers were asked to report on *problems arising in their areas attributable to rehousing tenants from Noble Street and Norwich Place*. We have not seen copies of these reports — if made — but from the start to finish some officers and councillors clearly remained convinced that ordinary working class council tenants were the problem — "these people" as they so often put it.

Rehousing has taken place. One particularly "notorious" example of slum council housing has been dealt with. But the question remains to be answered — have the real issues which continue to cause such slum public property been adequately dealt with by those who claim to have solved the problem?

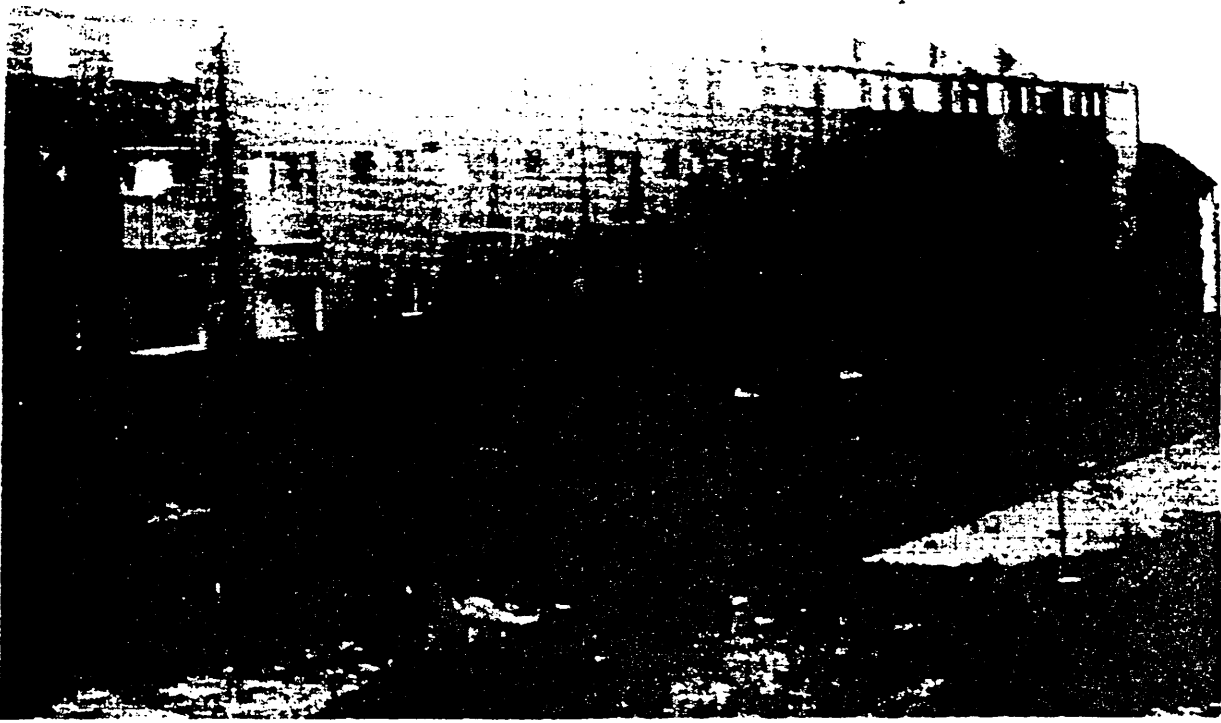
WHAT FUTURE FOR THE SITE?

The debate on the future use of these slums makes depressing, bewildering reading. A variety of policies were repeatedly raised, abandoned, and then brought back for discussion. Demolition was always one, but the prospect of continuing to pay for the flats for 40 years after they had been pulled down deterred many from pursuing it.

Commenting on an earlier Benwell Community Project report, a local Councillor said in January 1974:

"The comments on secondary schools seems sensible. Do we therefore need a small, local school specifically for this area?"

The debate on the need for an inner-



burnt-out block at Norwich Place. The question now remains — what to do with the site?

ity comprehensive school continues this day — with an active group of al people formed to campaign for 's development. While this proposal more social validity than just out any other that had been mooted r the flats' area — the question of ance always blocked its path.

In any event, other departmental terests were at work. Some genuinely lieve the flats can be 'upgraded' r single persons or designated pecifically" for homeless families. ficers and councillors in Social rvices and Housing can be forgiven r seeing this area's development as solution to some of their most ractable problems.

For many years, too, there has been 'student connection'. Student ommodation was, and is, a major blem in the city and advanced tings and negotiations went on with authorities along these lines. tically it never looked a pos- ty that such monsters could be

transformed for student flatlets — but it was a measure of official desperation that this policy was one of those most frequently raised by those who though demolition too drastic.

An indication of the long-drawn out delays in deciding what to do with the area came in a Council report of November 1974:

"In relation to the area itself, is a reduction in density of housing and improvement of the environ- ment better or worse in principle than replacement with new housing or a completely different use for the existing property? In such a complex situation it is not possible to separate fully all the interlinked issues, but it is felt important that the attempt be made, even if —final answers are not immediately available."

We would not deny the considerable problems confronting an authority which, for good and socially conscious

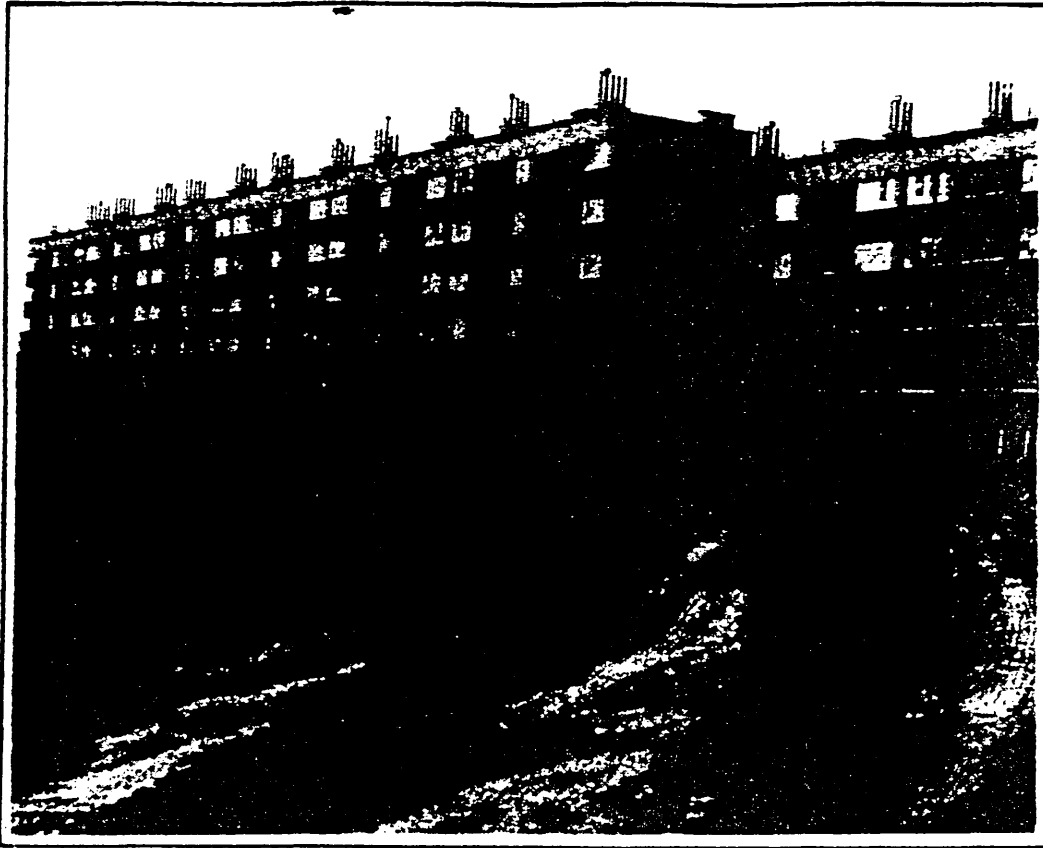
reasons, seeks to remedy a desperate housing situation such as that created by ill-thought-out past policies in Noble Street. Financial concerns were central and largely governed by a national system of housing finance which is totally distanced from, and unrelated to, many of the housing needs and issues occurring at grass- roots.

A councillor in February 1976 at a Noble Street-Norwich Place Working Party said:

"I'm worried about the future of these blocks. You only have to look at the cost of new council houses, or even modernising houses. We can't afford to knock these down."

It is, therefore, not surprising that many councillors and officials, hedged in by restrictions on spending and weighed down by interest and debt charges, should look for more economical solutions — in the same way that Noble Street was originally

5 THE LESSONS



Quarry Hill, Leeds: one of many slums on the drawing board around the country now heading for demolition.

AT are the lessons to be learnt from the story of these flats? As we have already said, there has long been opposition to the attitude that council housing is for the poor, and that the standards can be skimped. But apart from short periods just after each world war, this opposition has had little effect. The signs are that things are getting worse in the future: this can be seen by putting council housing in the context of the whole housing problem.

It is also the case with community housing: this too must be placed within a wider context. In the past it has usually been very limited in its scope. This has often led to failure, and has also made it that much easier for

the political and official attitudes which denigrate council housing to hold sway.

COUNCIL HOUSING: THE FUTURE

In 1977 the Government's Green Paper on Housing Policy was published. Despite what some critics called its "studied vagueness", a clear attitude about the future of council housing did emerge. It is an attitude which is

now shared by all the major parties when in Government.¹ Baldly, it is that "For most people owning one's own home is a basic and natural desire".

At present more than half the homes in Britain are owner occupied; policy in the future will try to push this up to at least 70 per cent. New types of financial help will be offered to those wanting to buy, and for those

1. Michael Heseltine, Conservative spokesman, said of the Green Paper: "A half of it is a package which abandons the more doctrinal obsessions of the Left wing of the Labour Party - and the other half embodies the policies of the Conservative Party as set out in 'The Right Approach' (Hansard 27.6.77).

who still can't afford the full costs of purchasing, 'intermediate' forms of tenure are proposed.

With everyone being encouraged to buy their own house, where does that leave council housing? Although it is never spelt out, the implication can only be that council housing becomes housing for the rest – it means an enforced slide away from the provision of housing for general needs for ever.

Councils will provide the safety net for those without decent incomes – the low paid, the sick or unemployed worker, the elderly. Between 1968 and 1975 the proportion of households in council housing where the head of household is not working – through sickness, unemployment or retirement grew from 25 per cent to 35 per cent. In the same period the number of council households comprising men with dependent children and living on Supplementary Benefit, almost tripled. The Green Paper comments: "In the very broadest sense, local authorities have been taking over from private landlords the caring of the poor".²

At the same time the overall quality of council housing will deteriorate. It will happen in a number of ways. First, the Labour Government has persuaded the Conservatives in arguing that council housing may be sold into private occupation. The Conservative Party, of course, intend it to be the full right of every council tenant to buy their house. The Government's Green Paper is more cautious. They say that:

"There is a fear that the most desirable stock will be sold, that is houses with gardens, leaving the authority with the properties that are more difficult to let."³

But there is no attempt to answer or allay this fear; instead we find only generalisation:

The Government see no reason to object where the improving local circumstances are such that sales on reasonable terms would not impair the authority's ability to offer

accommodation to rent to those in housing need or the quality of their stock."⁴

The implication is that it is somehow possible to sell council houses without impairing the quality of the remaining stock, yet this is nowhere justified, and all the evidence available points to precisely the opposite. A one-in-five sample of 1,626 dwellings sold in Newcastle between 1968 and 1975 showed that 82 per cent were built under the Housing Acts of 1924 and 1946 – the two periods when there was a Labour Government in power committed to building high quality council housing. In contrast, only two per cent of sales were flats. It is the same story in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Cardiff, Liverpool and Nottingham.

Second, the quality of existing council houses will suffer. Public spending on council house improvements is being cut by 30 per cent in real terms between 1974-5 and 1978-9.⁵ This threatens even high quality housing estates. One is Pendower, not far from Norwich Place. Built in the 1920s, it is now in urgent need of major modernisation, at a cost of £4,500 per dwelling.⁶ The Council have agreed to do this when finance permits. But when will that be, and in the meantime what further deterioration will take place?

For low quality estates, and for those with serious defects, the implications are much more serious. Government subsidy to the private sector is not being limited in this way. A large part of it is channelled to owner occupiers through tax relief on mortgages, and this will escalate as house prices rise. Increased repair grants to home owners will also be necessary – the Green Paper shows that outstanding repairs have now reached a frightening total of £7,000 million. All this means a massive rise in public subsidy to private housing – nowhere spelt out in the Green Paper. But we have argued elsewhere that the real bill will be far higher than has ever

yet been conceded.⁷ A fundamental flaw in the private housing market – and the Green Paper – is that nothing is said about housing obsolescence.

Houses last a long time, but not for ever, and while owner occupiers are encouraged to believe that their home will increase in value year by year, the actual quality of a house begins to deteriorate as it reaches the end of its useful life. Young couples are encouraged to buy older houses as the first step on the owner occupation ladder. They are assured that the house, when they come to sell it, will have increased in value. But at the point where the gap between this increasing price and the deteriorating quality of the house becomes too great, what will happen?

What will become necessary in the future is much greater compensation provision for owner-occupiers in housing which no longer has value. And this means that more of the available public funds for housing will have to go to private housing – and therefore less will be available for council housing.

The third point of significance is that the quality of new council housing is under threat. Again, the Green Paper is vague:

"The Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office will consult local authority representatives about the scope for introducing greater flexibility into public sector ('Parker Morris') housing standards."⁸

To see what this "greater flexibility" might mean we need only look at Sefton (Liverpool) where the Council is building 200 sub-standard houses, or at Sheffield, where 500 houses are being built at 20 per cent below the required standard. Sheffield Council were given permission by the Secretary of State at the time, Tony Crosland, to build these for rent after they had

7. The comments here are a very brief – and necessarily limited – summary of some of the arguments in "Private Housing and the Working Class" (Benwell Community Project, 1978). The full evidence to support these arguments is given in that report.

8. Green Paper p.128.

4. Green Paper p.107.

5. Public Expenditure Paper Comn. 6721.

6. See "Pendower – Homes Fit for Heroes" (Benwell Community Project).

SLUMS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

Noble Street was atrociously designed – a slum on the drawing board. It was also cheaply built. In both respects it is not all that unusual. Around the country there are many similar examples of post-War council houses that have been sub-standard from the day they were built. They can be sub-standard in different ways. Some were badly built so that tenants are plagued by defects – such as damp or flooding. Others, many thousands, are high-rise flats which, however well-built and adequate in themselves, are in an environment which or many tenants becomes intolerable. They all share though, the basic characteristic that people don't want to move to them, and when they are in they don't want to stay.

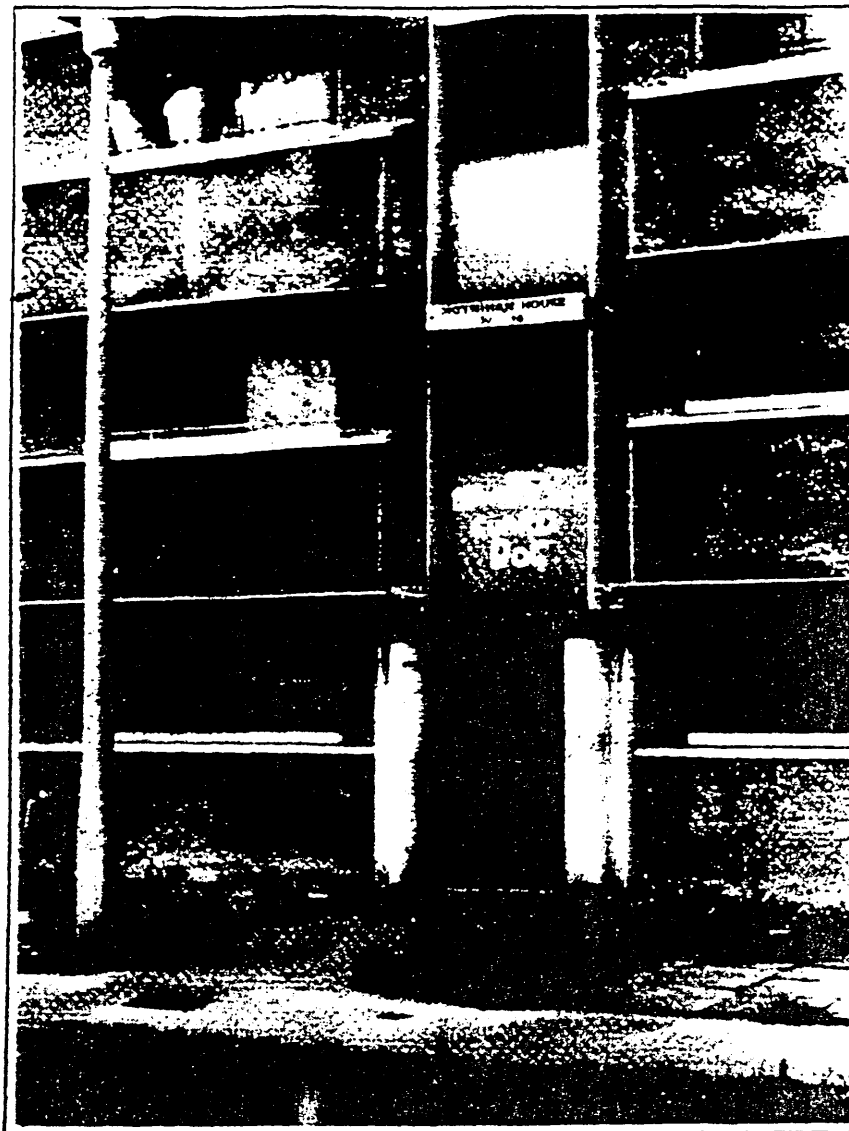
● The GLC Housing Management Chairman said last year that many of London's tower blocks should be demolished. Many had been badly built as well as being an "environmental nightmare" with problems of condensation and water seepage that were becoming daily more costly without a permanent cure in sight. Despite the enormous cost of demolishing them – and there are more than 300 in London – it was rapidly reaching the point where "the annual cost of patching them up is nearly equalling the original cost of the building."

Leeds Council is doing repairs to falling brickwork in about 20 high rise blocks – each costing up to £70,000 to repair.

In Newton Aycliffe two estates of 290 houses in all were built in the last ten years. Repairs to defects have already cost £40,000, and another £90,000 will have to be spent.

A medium-rise estate in Portsmouth need £250,000 remedial work, because of damp, before it was even completed.

Four post-War estates in Manchester are being demolished because their condition has deteriorated beyond repair. Government cutbacks in house improvement spending have made large scale improvements impossible.



Quarry Hill, Leeds: heading for demolition.

successfully sold 90 which were built for owner-occupation. Their Housing Chairman reminded Tony Crosland that he had previously expressed doubts whether, in periods of severe financial constraint, Parker Morris was the right standard for council dwellings. The Chairman added that the Council were interested in cost savings which would make it possible to build at least six houses for the price of five. It is the same old story – sacrificing quality for quantity.

All this means that the shrinking public sector will have poorer housing and poorer tenants. And the worst housing will go to the most desperate tenants.

None of this will enhance the image

of council housing. A number of schemes are being proposed to improve the position of tenants, through charters of rights. While welcome in themselves, they will mean little if they amount to no more than greater rights over poorer housing. The undesirability of being a council tenant is therefore likely to increase, and a vicious spiral thus develops in which more and more people try to escape from a less and less desirable form of tenure.

Is there any way of avoiding this vicious spiral? The answer must be 'no' while the present ideology surrounding owner occupation holds sway. Owning a house is put forward first, as the natural desire of everyone,

Tyneside's 'worst homes' to go

MORE than 50 houses, branded "the worst council homes in North Tyneside", are to come down.

Coun. Harry Rutherford, the man who gave the homes in River View, North Shields, their infamous title told members of the Housing Committee his hopes of what the site could become.

The 56 houses, with a majestic view over the Tyne will be demolished and in their place a set of prestige dwellings will go up.

The scheme is not entirely popular, however. Many of the residents want their homes to be modernised, instead of demolished.

£1½m. cost

Coun. George Bilclough said they feared their community might be split up, and called for a consultant's report into the feasibility of modernisation.

"As the houses are, they will stand for another 40 years.

"It will cost half a million pounds to replace them with 50 homes, but if they were modernised, the cost would go down to £100,000."

Coun. Rutherford said the tenants in the 47-year-old homes have been assured they will get first choice on whether they want to move back to River View after the development.

"If we revitalise, the flats will be cut to 27 houses and that will be no place to bring children up in," he said.

"If we completely rebuild, then I think we will end up with one of the best sites in the North of England."

and second as the most secure investment available. For most home buyers it is indeed the biggest purchase they ever make, and is their major form of wealth. The open-ended subsidy schemes, and the increased provision of grants and compensation to shore up the bottom end of the market, mean that this can continue — at immense public expense. Ever since the War the Conservative Party, and Labour Governments, have agreed that people want to be owner occupiers. And if any government were to try and reverse this process, there would be an immense outcry — not least from those who profit from the owner-occupation market — in particular the exchange professionals (valuers, solicitors, and estate agents, who together collect 10 per cent of the market price every time a house is sold).

In such circumstances, who will be a council tenant in preference to an owner-occupier? In most cases, those who cannot afford otherwise. And the poorer the image of council housing, the more this will be the case. The vicious spiral will continue.

ALLOCATION POLICY

The distinction between grading and overall allocation policy is important. Grading of any form is impossible to justify. It amounts to no more than the subjective opinion of one person about another, and will therefore depend on the prejudices of that person. The tendency is for anything unconventional to be counted against the prospective tenant. Since the tenant will not know what opinion and grade has been passed on him, he has no means of redress and no way to remedy what may be a totally unfair judgement. It is recognised now that people refused credit have the right to know why; people graded by housing officials should clearly have the same right. But in a situation where decisions are made on judgement rather than fact, the position would still be absurd — far better to discard the entire system.

What, however, of an 'objective overall allocation policy? The most

TABLE 5.1
TENURE OF HOUSEHOLDS
RECEIVING SUPPLEMENTARY
BENEFIT, GREAT BRITAIN
(PER CENT)

	1967	1975
Owner occupiers	17	17
Council Tenants	45	57
Private Tenants	38	25

Source: Green Paper Table II.33

TABLE 5.2
MEDIAN LA HOUSEHOLD INCOME
AS PER CENT OF MEDIAN OWNER
OCCUPIER (WITH MORTGAGE)
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Date	%
1953	83
1963	77
1973	64

Source: NIESR Study

common method by which councils attempt to obtain objectivity is through a points system. There is no clear, simple method of establishing such a system, and the weighting given to overcrowding, sharing of facilities and the like varies considerably between schemes currently in operation. But once in operation, they do provide applicants with the knowledge of why they are in a certain position on the waiting list and what prospect they have of a tenancy.

The critical factor however is not what allocation policy is in use, but why it is in use at all. The simple answer is scarcity — the large imbalance which exists between supply and demand throughout the country, belying the continual claims in the Green Paper and elsewhere that the housing crisis is over. Allocation of houses, in terms of who does and who does not get one, is necessary because of

decisions made about allocation of resources.

Within this overall problem of scarcity, there is the problem of even greater scarcity of good council housing. Newcastle's Housing Investment Programme listed 4,000 hard-to-let properties not including Noble Street. Different housing policies over the years have brought considerable variation in the quality and type of housing which makes up the council's rental stock.

It is not therefore a simple matter of waiting till you reach the head of the waiting list and then getting the house of your choice. It may not be possible. Do you then accept second choice, or wait longer?

These are, in less extreme form, the questions which tenants offered Noble Street had to answer. They agreed to let the flats because they could not let, and they were in no position to bargain for a better deal. As long as there is a wide variation in the quality of council houses, and as long as there are people in urgent need, such a process will recur. It may not be done in any other sense. In response to our first report on Noble Street, a Director of Housing, who had been a Newcastle Housing Inspector when the flats were first let up, wrote to us:

"Without doubt, with hindsight I would have said that it would have been wiser to have radically under-occupied the three and four-bedroomed maisonettes; again, however, at this time there was a considerable over-provision of three-bedroom, two-bedroomed flats, and consequently family dwellings were at a premium; it would have been difficult, therefore, to have made large families wait even longer at a time when childless couples and small families were getting rehoused within half the waiting period. You have quoted the Cullingworth report in your report as suggesting that the Council should allocate housing to those in greatest need — but, in fact, I would strongly defend the Housing Department in this instance, as this was precisely what they were doing, and this proved to be their undoing."

TABLE 5.3
TENURE BY INCOME OF HOH AND WIFE, WHERE HOH IS
ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE (PER CENT)

Income	Owner-Occupiers	LA Tenants	Private Unfurnished Tenants
Under £2,000	7.7	16.1	24.4
£2,000	16.5	26.6	25.7
£3,000	25.7	28.6	23.4
£4,000	33.8	26.0	23.1
£6,000	16.3	2.6	3.4

This is the dilemma that may easily recur: if those in urgent need are allocated what is available, they will receive the worst housing. If not, they are left homeless. As the private rented sector shrinks the problem may increase.

In the private sector — owner occupation — the problem of scarcity is resolved on the basis of ability to pay. In the public sector that method is rightly rejected, but this does not mean that the result will be 'a decent house for all'. Allocation policy is ultimately irrelevant to this, for the simple fact is that you can only give everyone a decent house if you first have enough decent houses.

"PROBLEM FAMILIES"

The easiest way to see the problems of 'ghetto estates' is to dismiss them as the people's fault. One City councillor responded to our first report by asking why we had not considered the common belief that the residents of Noble Street and Norwich Place were 'problem families'.

We were not ignorant of this belief. It was not uncommon to have people coming in to our Information Centre in Benwell to say they had heard rumours that families from Noble Street were to be moved into empty houses in their streets. Was it true? What could we do about it?

The term 'problem family' is part of accepted parlance. It is also widely used in academic texts: here is one definition:

"Such families were characterised by sets of beliefs and values at variance with the established culture; it therefore seemed important to understand such families as constituting a group with a cultural life different from that of the rest of society, that is a separate sub-culture."⁹

This notion of 'culture of poverty' is important: indeed it was one of the principles underlying the War on Poverty in America, and the official view of the Community Development Programme in Britain:

"The whole conception of the War on Poverty rests upon a definition of poverty as a way of life. The intellectual climate in which it was nurtured was created by studies of the culture of poverty, notably those of Oscar Lewis . . . These studies provided the basis for programs at the national level designed very explicitly to correct the social, occupational and psychological deficits of people born and raised in a life of poverty."¹⁰

An early Home Office brief for CDP expresses similar notions:

"CDP is based on the recognition that although the social services cater reasonably well for the majority, they are less effective for a minority who are caught up in a chain reaction of related social problems . . . ill health, financial

9. Baldamus and Timms: *The Problem Family: A Sociological Approach*; summarised in Heraud: *Sociology and Social Work*.

10. T. Gladwin: *Poverty USA* (1967).

difficulties — children suffering from deprivation — consequent delinquency — inability of the children to adjust to adult life — unstable marriages — emotional problems — ill health and the cycle begins again."¹¹

CDP reports have repeatedly rejected such assumptions, and shown that in areas like Benwell the critical factors are industrial change, employment opportunity and housing. Is this the case also in 'ghettos', where all the signs of deprivation are at their most extreme, or can we here indulge the popular pastime of 'blaming the victim'?¹²

We do not propose a general debate here; what we will do is make points which stem directly from our experience in Noble Street.

First, any suggestion that the residents were themselves responsible for the creation of these slums flies in the face of reason. These slums were purpose-built, created by political and official will.

Second, the familiar signs of fatalism which abounded in Noble Street cannot be seen as evidence of a 'culture of poverty'. The graffiti on the side of a block was often the most attractive feature of that tenement. The high incidence of damage to paving, windows and the like was the inevitable consequence of putting a very high concentration of children into an environment without any facilities for them. Those who consider such damage as evidence of 'maladjustment' should compare this with the havoc caused regularly at Oxford and Cambridge Universities by undergraduates 'celebrating' some sporting triumph. Or at the damage done by the people who designed and built multi-story flats — and of course Noble Street.

Third, the belief that bad housing, poverty and other 'symptoms' of deprivation are naturally associated is not to be absurd. Residents did not choose Noble Street — they were forced into it.

Fourth, the corollary of this is equally absurd. Economic deprivation is not the natural relation to poor housing. It is associated because the lack of an adequate income makes it impossible for a family to make voluntary choices about their house. They must accept, in the end, what they are given. And Noble Street is what they are given.

Fifth, the entire notion of a 'sub-culture' is based on the assumption that those involved share a collective, deviant, life style. In fact one of the major problems in these flats was that the exceptionally high density forced people with different life styles on top of each other and thereby produced a great deal of friction. For the family in a detached house the problem of noise from neighbours is minimal. For the family in a middle floor flat there are neighbours up, down and on either side. There is a balcony in front of them which everyone must use, and another balcony above them. Is it any surprise that disputes broke out?

Sixth, 'problem families' are assumed to be disorganised. Here is a classic description:

"The term 'multi problem family' denotes a family with disorganised social functioning of an order that adversely affects the following sets of behaviour: 1. relationships inside the family; 2. relationships outside the family group particularly neighbourhood and community relationships; and 3. the performance of tasks such as those concerned with health and with economic and household practices that are

designed to maintain the family as a physical unit."¹³

The evidence of the last chapter belies this idea that organisation — especially at a community level — is impossible. Despite the total lack of any 'community' at all, it was possible for a strong organisation to develop which showed no more of the internal problems and conflicts than have existed in any other organisation of which we have had experience.

We do not, of course, deny that people in Noble Street and Norwich Place had problems. Living there was their major one. Those on Social Security were faced with the constant hassle which that involves; we experienced this at close quarters in the Information Centre we ran, where considerable time was taken in just getting people their undeniable rights — let alone getting the small 'discretionary' extras that were sometimes available. Surviving on, and with, Social Security requires a high level of ability.

A small number of residents were mentally ill. They had severe problems. The worst thing that could be done for them was to put them in such appalling housing. There are schemes of sheltered housing in Newcastle, and the development of this policy is quite clearly the best one to take.

The indictment of Noble Street and Norwich Place cannot be laid on the residents. To take part in scapegoating — blaming the victim — is to take the easy and cheap escape route, for it avoids the fundamental questions.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Community action has never reached its potential. Indeed, outside direct struggles at the workplace, the story is similar for most organisations: campaigns against public spending cuts, for example, have had the same limitations.

The organisations involved lack the permanence of trade unions and political parties; they emerge on specific issues, and once these are resolved — successfully or otherwise — they tend to die away, or at best go

into 'suspended animation'. Anyone who has been involved with a Tenants' Association is all too familiar with this problem of trying to prevent disintegration or collapse.

It is true that many important matters on housing estates are not earth-shattering, nor even controversial. Where the houses are of good

Home Office Press Release 16.7.69.

See W. Ryan 'Blaming the Victim' for a full account of this.

13. L. Geismar and M. La Sorte: *'Understanding the Multi-Problem Family' (1964).*

APPENDIX 10.2
SUNSHINE REGIONS OR SUNSET REGIONS?
THE SUNREG PROGRAMME

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Co-ordinating Research Centre for this Thematic Network is the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS) based in Sheffield, UK. The Centre has a 20-year track record, initiated by Lucas Aerospace Workers' Alternative Plans for Socially-Useful Production, in action-research which explores the socio-economic impact of new technological developments through close co-operation between workers' organisations and research institutions.

More recently, CAITS has been closely involved with the EGF and national print trade unions (along with colleagues in FAST in Berlin and SOMO in Amsterdam) in the preparation for, and progressive development of, European Works Councils in print, paper and packaging multinationals across the EU. CAITS has also undertaken action-research (in conjunction with the Multinationals Unit of the British TUC) on parallel EWC developments in the financial services sector internationally.

Through SUNREG, CAITS and its partners intend to build upon this wealth of practical experience and academic expertise and to develop a Thematic Network which allows Trade Union and Research institutions at European Regional levels to monitor, analyse and prepare constructive proposals around, a range of new technological projects and programmes.

A number of the partners in SUNREG were represented at a European Workshop organised by the Hans Bockler Foundation in co-operation with the Economics Ministry of the Land of Baden-Wurttemberg which took place in Brussels in September 1994.

The theme of this workshop was "Technology Assessment-Trade Union prospects for socio-economic research under the 4th framework programme of the EU". There was a clear determination apparent among participants at this event to forward some concrete proposals to the EU which would more solidly locate the interests and concerns of trade unions inside EU research and policy-making processes at all levels of the Community.

CAITS stressed the need to allow time for full and democratic consideration of action-research plans by Trade Union representatives themselves back in the various member states and regions. This process was especially important, in CAITS' view, if any EU-backed action-research was to be genuinely 'owned-by', and actively supported through, the officials and members of partner Trade Unions.

The proposal initially developed was advanced by the convening of the EU/ETUC Workshop on Co-operation between Trade Unions and Universities in Brussels in January 1995 which provided an opportunity to explore the interests of other potential partners. The CAITS report of this workshop emphasised the importance of ongoing, more practical and EU-funded, ties between Unions and Universities. It has subsequently been widely circulated among interested European institutions.

Sunshine Regions or Sunset Regions (SUNREG) also arises out of two earlier CAITS concerns. First, in February 1994, following a CAITS survey of MEPs and their views on the Social Chapter, EWCs and social cohesion programmes in the EU more generally, CAITS proposed the initiation of WIRES - or Workers Information and Research for a Social Europe.

The WIRES initiative sought to develop a consortium of regional action-research Centres through which Universities would be twinned with regional Trade Union bodies (in the UK this would involve a number of Regional TUCs) along with relevant MEPs and their research teams in order both to monitor the impact of EU provisions and programmes and to provide feedback to the EU from workplaces and communities themselves.

The second strand comprising the Sunshine Regions or Sunset Regions (SUNREG) proposal arose from the Hans Bockler Workshop in September 1994 in Brussels. After these discussions we were especially concerned to advance the involvement of trade unionists at workplace and regional level in the rapidly developing world of NT/IT.

The proposal then floated for the establishment of a European Science and Technology Network for Trade Unionists could mesh well with a range of already existing networks involved in discussing and disseminating NT/IT developments at EU and business and academic levels; as well as linking with some of the initiatives already being undertaken by Trade Unions nationally and internationally. It could then fruitfully feed into the major EU/EC developments around ETAN.

CAITS fully understood, however, that both these projects would involve considerable resources and expenditure, demand open and democratic discussion over an extended period, and require the most careful integration with existing initiatives at national, EU and international levels.

In the meantime, therefore, and almost as a test-bed for these larger, long-term, goals, the Sunshine Regions or Sunset Regions (SUNREG) thematic network will allow careful analysis of the very processes involved in setting up and running such a programme could contribute substantially to the successful implementation of the broader and more ambitious WIRES and ESTNETTU schemes.

Indeed, one of the most concrete outcomes or benefits which the SUNREG partners would envisage arising from our work over the period 1996-1998 would be precisely the opportunity to lay the potential bases for broader EU developments at the level of Regional Trade Union and University Thematic networks and possible Technology Action-Research Observatories.

The partners in this programme are:

- Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems [CAITS]
- The Business School, Sheffield Hallam University,
- Regional Trades Union Council [TUC], Yorkshire and Humberside
- Centre for Trade Union Studies, University of the South Bank
- South East Region TUC
- University of Barcelona
- CONC, Barcelona
- University of Amsterdam
- FNV Amsterdam

2 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Three primary objectives have been identified for the SUNREG programme, in keeping with its innovative structure embracing academic and trade union institutions. Each of these is outlined below, and the overall work programme is then explained.

2.1 Objective One: To develop a Thematic Network involving innovative action-research links between trade union bodies and relevant Universities across a range of European regions which will facilitate the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge and

material resources between universities, research centres, workers' organisations and other 'end users'.

An initial seminar in 1995 confirmed the view of the SUNREG partners that action-research links between trade unions and universities require considerable strengthening. Innovative socio-economic research was most likely when transfers of scientific and technical knowledge combined with the practical knowledge and life-time experiences of workers and their representatives, in open 'two-way' communications, co-operative information exchanges and rigorous joint analyses.

The EU emphasis on 'bottom-up' involvement in its programmes and policy development - along with the growing stress on a Europe of all the Regions in which socio-economic inequalities can be more effectively addressed - could be most fruitfully tackled through Thematic Networks such as SUNREG.

2.2 Objective Two: To explore ways in which these constructive, co-operative, linkages can be opened up more widely and transparently to maximise their utilisation by workplace and community bodies, beyond the ambit of the originating programme partners, thereby enhancing European social cohesion and helping to combat exclusion.

Recent EU reports on developments at the Regional level have stressed the dangers of some peripheral areas being left behind in the rapid development of scientific and technological processes through what is now commonly characterised as 'The New Industrial Revolution'. At the same time, some Regions - or more precisely, some industrial sectors and geographical areas within particular Regions - have been well-endowed in the race for new technologies. Such favoured areas are described as 'islands of innovation'.

An important objective in the SUNREG thematic network will be to undertake objective comparisons of more and less favoured Regions and to ensure that, wherever possible, the benefits of RTD are utilised beyond specific sectors or geographical areas. In particular, it will be important to focus on especially disadvantaged communities and extremely hard-pressed labour markets within each region and to open up access to new technological processes (and the related training and education) to the poorest and most marginalised working people. In this way SUNREG may contribute to the continuing development of social cohesion in Europe.

2.3 Objective Three: To outline a range of socially-useful and environmentally sustainable Science and Technology programmes and projects - intimately linked with employment creation and life-time learning and vocational education and training - based upon a closer understanding of the expressed needs and social knowledge of working people themselves.

The historical experiences of SUNREG partners, and of other research Centres across Europe, in the development of socially useful alternative products and services through the shared knowledge and expertise of both academics and workers - has demonstrated the valuable role which targeted action-research around technological projects and programmes can undoubtedly play.

Through Case-Studies, Technology Assessments, Research Circles and other scientific action-research methodologies we will be able to offer interested organisations, within the EU and beyond, a far closer understanding of both the needs and potentials within working people and their representative organisations.

In the process we shall illuminate concerns, and offer constructive proposals, on new technological processes and products, life-time learning, and progressive methods of combating social exclusion and socio-economic marginalisation. The socially-useful and environmentally sustainable goals at the heart of the Agenda 21 project offer an inspiring context within which the SUNREG thematic network will work on these concrete objectives.

3 THE WORK CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME

While much of the work content of the SUNREG network outlined below will be immediately recognisable in terms of scientific social reporting, it is important to re-emphasise our concern that workers, trade unionists, local communities and elected representatives are themselves intimately involved at every stage in the development of this work.

Such involvement may then stretch the boundaries of mainstream academic methodologies and may not, in every single case, be immediately reducible to accepted scientific statements and analyses.

The Content of the programme will, therefore, include;-

3.1 Analysis of the socio-economic impact of a number of key technological developments in three crucial sectors of employment - manufacturing , financial services and local government - in each of the four regions covered by the programme partners. The SUNREG partners are currently identifying appropriate developments in their regions. It is proposed that:

- in the manufacturing sector a major Regional employer utilising CAD-CAM processes will be explored.
- in the financial services sector, the network will want to analyse the growing impact of the new technologies for mass data handling.
- in the local government area, SUNREG will wish to review the uses to which information technologies are being put, both in relation to the enhancement of social services and the strengthening of local democratic processes.

3.2 Use of Technology Assessment methods and networks to explore the effects of such new technologies on various participants and audiences -

- Employers/Management
- Workers/Trade Union organisations
- Consumers/Customers
- The local economy/community
- The Regional economy.

Some aspects of the assessment methodology - on-site meetings, discussions and participant observation - at the employer/ worker and customer/community levels, may well be most appropriately undertaken-or at least co-ordinated -by the researchers from workers' organisations. Yet their University-based colleagues should, nonetheless, be actively involved.

Similarly, some of the wider reviews of the literature, data-base searches at the levels of local and Regional economies, and scientific analyses of new technological developments, may need to be primarily undertaken within the academic institutions. Yet, again, the SUNREG network would ensure that - through regular workshops and informal meetings and seminars - the trade union researchers were fully informed and consulted.

3.3 Development of Research Circles at appropriate levels among the relevant sectors and participants, in workplaces, communities and beyond, along with other action-research methods. These will be asked to:-

- Analyse the extent to which responsive and effective training in the new technological applications is being made available to workers .
- Assess the extent to which new technological developments within each case study sector are being generalised and operationalised beyond these specific sectoral boundaries. In these ways it should be possible to enhance the prospects for new technological developments and applications in other workplaces and communities, within each region, and to minimise the extent of exclusion from these developments or the marginalisation of working people by these applications.

The Research Circle methodology is particularly important and exciting in the context of the SUNREG Thematic Network. It offers a genuine opportunity to integrate University and Trade Union knowledge and expertise in pursuit of 'scientific social reporting'.

It also opens up the possibility of new insights and innovative proposals - in ways perhaps most widely seen and appreciated in Europe in recent years by the incredibly fruitful outpouring of alternative technological plans and socially useful products engendered through the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee's Workers Plan of the late 1970s - which could be immediately fed into the developing EU/ETAN networks and activities.

The beauty of the SUNREG thematic is that findings and outcomes - concrete benefits and results - should be available throughout the work of the network as well as encapsulated in full and detailed final reports and presentations. The very nature of the work process, its openness and sense of social partnership, ensures such positive outcomes.

3.4 A critical analysis of the partner organisations themselves - as research institutions and trade union collectives - on the ways in which they relate to all the above issues. In this manner it will be possible to lay the potential bases for broader EU developments at the level of Regional Trade Union and University Thematic networks and possible Technology Action-Research Observatories.

From the starting point of SUNREG in three EU member countries - The Netherlands, Spain and the UK - we will work to ensure the replication of innovative (and in some cases unique) regional partnerships between academic/research bodies and working trade unionists.

The self-awareness involved in developing ongoing critical analyses of our own partner organisations' approaches to new technological developments - including how they affect our operations and policy goals, our working methods and our relations with other organisations and social partners - will, we hope, be of interest to fellow researchers and trade unionists across Europe.

The SUNREG partners do not under-estimate the huge and continuing gulf that exists in many areas between 'Town and Gown' - and in particular the major structural, resource and communication differences that often exist between academics and workers' representatives - but we do intend to address such issues actively in the two-year course of this thematic network.

4 WORKING METHODS

Among the specific research tools and methods with which SUNREG is using are the following:

4.1 The network will first start with a concrete socio-economic and industrial relations analysis of the three partners' countries -the UK, Spain, and The Netherlands - within each of which one or two regional-level studies will take place.

4.2 The regions have, in part, been chosen to offer a variety of socio-economic features whilst remaining comparable across the three partner countries. In the context of the UK's chosen regions, for example, the Yorkshire and Humberside Region could be characterised best as facing long-term structural economic problems brought about by the sharp decline in traditional industries such as coal-mining and steel manufacturing. Similar processes have afflicted the Nord-Brabant region on which SUNREG will focus in the Netherlands.

Whilst the Southern Region, including London with its emphasis on finance and business services, could be seen as facing more cyclical problems. The issues facing a highly differentiated region like Catalonia in Spain - again a SUNREG focus - will offer fascinating comparative materials.

4.3 It has also been considered valuable when selecting the regions involved to explore further the relevance of the 'islands of innovation' concept (see 'Competitiveness and cohesion - trends in the regions'- EC 5th Periodic Report, 1994). This needs to be carefully contrasted and compared with the growing EU emphasis on 'targeted Social Fund aid' at the level of specific communities and localities.

The SUNREG thematic network will wish to explore the possible tensions and contradictions between the broad economic-competitiveness goals inherent in the development of 'islands of innovation' and the more socially-oriented goals founded on targeted ESF and Community Initiatives.

The 'islands of innovation' and the 'targets for social cohesion' concepts should in turn be related to the potential barriers against widespread or deep technological innovation in the 'less favoured or peripheral regions' and to the potentially crippling obstacles for social improvement facing structurally undermined Objective 1 and 2 areas. The Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Strategy - 'A Partnership for Europe' - , for example, reported the region was "virtually at the bottom of the regional league table of high technology industries.."

Again, to utilise the two UK Regions as exemplars, the EC report seems to suggest that the SERTUC area contains such an 'island of innovation' whereas that covered by Yorkshire and Humberside TUC has fewer new technological developments much less widely spread across the productive and service bases.

The broader implications of such unevenness in development for both economic development and social cohesion programmatic goals then need to be drawn out by the joint Trade Union and University monitoring teams constructed through SUNREG.

4.4 The research will seek to define, at the outset, specific variables in the application of new technologies in differing productive processes and service provisions.

Among other considerations it will be valuable to research:

- The key new technologies on which to focus detailed action-research in such a way that findings in one partner study may be compared with and generalised to the level of findings in other EU partner-regions.
- The factual assessment of the level and commitment of EC and national governments to invest capital and policy resources in social cohesion programmes and new technological developments on a more or less equitable basis across regions.
- The exploration of the attitudes and perceptions of the social partners, workers and employers at both regional and workplace levels, to the introduction of both new social policies and provisions and of new technological developments, some of them specifically backed by interventions from the EU.
- The technology infrastructures - R and D centres, academic and scientific networks, TA research establishments and national and international linkages - available inside the various regions and, in particular, the accessibility of such structures to regional and workplace trade unionists.
- The differential application of successful social economy initiatives and new technology innovations within Regions- in ways which continue to reinforce the position of some small-scale, multi-deprived areas at 'the bottom of the pile'.

4.5 The overall SUNREG thematic network, its CAITS co-ordinating centre and its individual partners in each region and member state will then seek to evaluate the outcomes of past and present EU initiatives in agreed case-study sectors/areas and in policy spheres of mutual interest.

The monitoring partners will wish especially to explore how specific social programmes, IT initiatives and new technological developments have affected (and may be predicted to affect) employment levels, labour market opportunities and working conditions at regional, sub-regional/sectoral, community and workplace levels.

The action-researchers will wish to explore directly with affected workers and their collective representatives - utilising TA principles and Research Circle methods - the changes in labour processes and shifts in working cultures engendered by specific scientific and new technological developments.

5 THE BENEFITS

At this early stage of the programme we can only speculate on the potential benefits. Our hopes are however that we will make progress in the following:

5.1 Establishing the authenticity of - and building a genuine legitimacy at the level of the EU for - innovative action-research links between trade union bodies and relevant Universities across a range of European regions which will, in turn, facilitate the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge and material resources between universities, research centres, workers' organisations and other 'end users'.

5.2 Taking targeted socio-economic research to regions, sectors, workplaces and communities well beyond the ambit of both the originating programme partners and the normal academic range of EU-sponsored programmes, and thereby enhancing European social cohesion and helping to combat exclusion in the RTD sphere.

5.3 Outlining a range of socially-useful and environmentally sustainable Science and Technology programmes and projects - intimately linked with employment creation and life-time learning and vocational education and training - based upon a closer understanding of the expressed needs and social knowledge of working people themselves. Some of these projects, perhaps in the form of alternative technological plans and socially useful products similar to those engendered through the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee's Workers Plan of the late 1970s, could be immediately fed into the developing EU/ETAN networks and activities.

5.4 Analysing the extent to which responsive and effective training in the new technological applications is being made available to workers and regularly relating these findings in the VET and life-time learning policy spheres to the work of CEDEFOP and others across Europe.

5.5 Offering concrete assessments of the extent to which new technological developments within each case study sector are being generalised and operationalised beyond these specific sectoral boundaries ; with the particular goal of ensuring that sustainable development along the lines of Agenda 21 goals for local and regional communities includes an equitable distribution of new technological processes and opportunities.

5.6 Defining the range of specific socio-economic, political and cultural variables which SUNREG uncovers in the course of its networking and the ways in which these can impact directly on the application of new technologies in differing productive processes, service provisions and local and regional systems of governance across the EU. Here the SUNREG network will offer fruitful linkages with already existing European projects such as those around the 'Telecities' and the 'Campaign for Sustainable Cities'.

5.7 Offering hard-headed, scientific and factual assessments of the historical levels and commitments of both EC and national governments to invest capital and policy resources in social cohesion programmes and new technological developments on a more or less equitable basis across regions; and from these assessments defining the relative success or failure of policies and the most appropriate strategies for future exploration.

5.8 Laying some of the bases for broader EU developments at the level of Regional Trade Union and University Thematic networks and possible Technology Action-Research Observatories, especially through the self-critical and open assessments of our own academic and trade union organisations, our inter-relations throughout the two year SUNREG network, and the constructive lessons to be learnt for future such co-operative initiatives.

6 CONCLUSION

It is the view of the SUNREG partners that this programme provides an essential complementary perspective on technology, employment and management. Despite all that has happened in the last twenty years, trade unions remain an important force in industry. Many of the recent developments in thinking about strategic management and organisational development emphasise the need to involve as many people as possible within organisations if the ever accelerating pressures of competition and globalisation are to find an effective response. It is our hope that the SUNREG programme can make a modest contribution toward identifying how best to do this within a framework which recognises the legitimate concerns of those most affected by technological change.

APPENDIX 11.1

RIOJA ARTS GROUP: OUTPUT OF THE SEARCH CONFERENCE

1. THE PRESENT

What are we currently proud of in SAG and its activities?

- Campaigning spirit
- Broad range of people we can work with/our high level of accessibility
- Quality/range of the books programme Range and quality of books
- Quality and range of book production and their contribution to re-establishing individual and community identity Changing the perception of self-publishing and distribution
- Empowerment through adult education - user-friendly and accessible
- Innovative and risk-taking
- Good product and reputation that goes with it
- Good outreach into communities and authentic come back thereby preserving cultural heritage
- Demystification of the arts
- Finding new ways of enhancing access to creativity for which technology has been a key
- Quality of staff
- Open and welcoming
- Positive image of SAG in artistic community
- Success of former students

And currently sorry about

- Problems related to reorganisation
- More debate needed about relationship between readers and writers
- Dependence on external funding (not self-sufficient) Funding controls thinking
- Lack of respect and recognition from certain departments and members in the local authority
- Recent past divisions
- Lack of integration of SAG activity into wider strategy leads to short-term rather than long-term benefits to both individuals and communities
- Not reaching enough people or making sufficient impact Building is not as welcoming as we would like Decline in fun/creative projects for all workers has led to deterioration in relationships
- Lack of clarity re management
- Decline in work across the art forms and across the organisation Involvement mostly in books, not enough in other genres
- Lack of resources means restricted access Cramped physical space (also cramps mental space)
- Too clear a split between artists and products

2. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION

(1) Achieve aims and objectives:

SAG catching up with itself

Small, strong nucleus creating work for wide network of artists and users

Developed but maintained original philosophy of increasing access to the arts and providing environment for artists

High success rate for ACE students in moving on Accessibility to users, readers and receivers of computer messages Cultural diversity

(2) Improved physical resources:

Accessible arts-based centre

New resources (a) all parts of production/editing process fully supported with workers/training; (b) electronic publishing; (c) SAG world-wide web site; (d) better building

New building, purpose built including crèche and the latest technology

(3) More innovation and expansion:

38 computers (one for each worker) linked to text and images from our books with our own actors and designers to create virtual Reality Rugby League - is it art? no but it's horrible!

First community publisher to produce an interactive book on CD-Rom

Innovation

Global interlink station - increased access to technology Expansion - 5 new areas for community development; 10 prose fiction publications a year; greater variation of books; into other art forms; more courses

(4) Develop Outreach

Reach a wider 'audience'

Outreach work achieved via mobile arts unit and ACE tutor located at other training centres

Outreach development - transport unit

Improved facilities - wider and better range of 'venues'

(5) Influence politics:

Regenerating local pride as an antidote to nationalism

SAG devised an arts-led economy which, by moving from local to regional, helped break down the European Nation State

Recognition that: all art is community art

(6) Networking Developed:

Collaboration

Networks with other cultural bodies and individuals, artists, organisations

(7) Money and sponsorship increased:

Attracted sponsorship from ICL (computers) to fund and staff computer resource centre

Move from community to corporate sponsorship

Self-financing

Expanding the resource base

(8) Improved management and employment practise:

Management/structures help the unity of arts and administration

Model of employment practice

(9) Greater recognition and higher profile:

National and international recognition for ACE and the quality of the books produced

Recognition

Fiction imprint wins Whitbread award 3 years on the trot

3 THE UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS

What stands in the way of the realization of our vision'

(1) Where are we going?

- Focus on premises rather than function
- Lack of direction and focus
- Seduced by successful projects and funding
- Confused/sluggish marketing
- Lack of confidence to set political agendas
- Failure to identify who our audience is
- Disparity of vision
- Failure to focus on central purpose

(2) Investment in staff -Lack of investment in staff development/small turnover in personnel

- Lack of trained staff
- Overburdened, undertrained staff

(3) Restricted attitude -Resistance to change/complacency

- Geographic location and parochialism - too inward looking
- Narrow approach to what physical and recognition needs are
- Need for fresh ideas and open attitude

(4) Inappropriate management/structures

- Lack of clarity about appropriate management
- Constant re-examination; rhetoric rather than action and research
- Failure to distinguish between activity and achievement
- Bunged up with bureaucracy - 'constipation'
- Obsession with delivery and control

(5) Restricted finance -Lack of sponsorship

- Lack of money
- Lack of funding
- Increased competition for funding

(6) Charitable status

(7) Individual -vs- organisation

- Self-interest of: staff, funders, politicians, other artists
- Diluted commitment

(8) Innovative ideas not matured

(9) Continued lack of national recognition of the value of the arts to society and the economy

4. SETTING THE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

What arenas of activity will resolve the contradictions and release the practical vision to come into being?

(1) Personnel development:

- Training programme for both organisational and individual needs
- Swaps, sabbaticals and collaborations with other organisations
- Placements for staff with other arts companies
- Staff - audit expertise, identify gaps, beg/buy in expertise
- Policy for action-based training of staff

(2) Encouraging enterprise and openness -welcoming change as an idea

- Teambuilding and brainstorming with trustees and staff
- Encourage staff to be enterprising

(3) Getting things done which make a difference

- Action must quickly follow debate
- More doing, less talking

(4) Agree and accept management structure

- Improved staff communications, less secrecy, opportunities for all staff to express views
- Review management structure THEN allow management to manage
Structure - Trustees, management team and co-ordinators, NO role teams, temporary task teams
- Appoint a director
- Remove artificial boundaries in structures
- More clarification of the relationship between workers' roles -making it clearer what you are paid to do

(5) Owning and implementing corporate plan

- Set clear income targets for each area
- Research the market
- Business plan - know it, use it, aim for targets, monitor
- Identify what we offer, what its true cost is, then sell it

(6) Strengthen morale

- Clarify shared emphasis
- Raise internal morale through recognition of achievements, training opportunities for all, and more delegation of duties
- Don't take staff for granted when initiating projects
- Central project at least once a year that everyone works on as part of their commitment to SAG

(7) Increase profile and impact

- Advocating the arts
- Collaborating
- Implement major national focus project
- Sell ourselves
- Exchange placements both internally and with other arts and non-arts organisations

(8) Celebrate diversity -

- Encourage conflicts between individuals and organisation
- Encourage difference and celebrate

5. DESIGNING THE SYSTEMATIC ACTIONS

What are the individual, measurable accomplishments that can be achieved by you to fulfill the strategic decisions you have mapped out?

(A) Training:

- Cater for the specific needs of people (by designing nodules of training)
- Ensure training gives value for money - VFM Each co-ordinator to develop a training plan in consultation with the staff they line manage
- Make sure everybody writes for and reads the Business Plan Run a day's training for whole organisation re interpreting Corporate Plan - 'Where do I fit in?'
- All staff to go on placements at least once in a three year period; swaps and partnership in training
- Set up short placements with other organisations with staff at every level

(B) Work programmes -Identifying individuals role in Corporate Plan

- Everyone with a personal work plan with clear targets
- Implement a programme of job 'swaps' to allow people to do all they want to do
- Identifying individuals roles in action plans
- Be more specific about outcomes - limit all papers to two sides of A4

(C) Communication -Team building exercises/workshops/forums

- Encourage assertiveness and respect for other people's strengths and contributions by setting up and supporting hour-long

presentations/workshops led by each staff member. Focus to be their working lives outside SAG or personal interest

- Initiative hour (personal thinking time) linked to a monthly discussion
- A staff wall where people can make their own display Research links between old arts and new technology - return to storytelling but through use of new communication technology

(D) Innovative budgeting:

- Research and development budget to be allocated to one role team a year each year
- Create fund to allow SAG to initiate and implement projects not restricted by the constraints of funding bodies
- Make more use of existing partners and find new partners
- Reconstitute group information sharing across the structure with visible outcomes/ follow-up
- Give the structure time to prove itself
- Accept present management structure - let managers manage Train enthusiasts from all classes to work on specific action-based project as from next Tuesday

(E) Marketing

- Quality organisation of events
- Identify what we have to sell, cost it, sell it
- Set up a SAG presentation at a national conference

(F) Project development

- Whole organisation works on a project with a community led by a worker from outside the organisation
- Instigate a project in a new area, building in a recruitment angle
- Purpose-built building with creche, £500,000 capital investment for building, expansion into Europe, still providing training and opportunities, making money, emphasis on importance of writers and artists

APPENDIX 11.2

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE: THREE YEAR OUTLOOK REPORT

(1) Introduction

The contents of this report are drawn from the outputs of the 'Future Search Conference' held in June 1995. This event involved members of the department's staff including members of the departmental management team, middle managers, representatives of the manual staff, external stakeholders and the chair of the Sub-Committee.

The purpose of the conference was to identify the strategic directions for the future as seen by staff and stakeholders, and to develop ways in which these directions might be fulfilled. As part of this process the group also examined the threats and opportunities open to the department and the resulting 'dangerous opportunities as well as its strengths and weaknesses. As this process progressed, elements of the strategic vision changed, either growing or diminishing in importance. This paper summarises the conclusions of these activities.

(2) Strengths and Weaknesses

The group identified the following as some of the strengths and weaknesses of the department:

Strengths:

- the quality of services
- the quality of the collections in the care of the department
- the commitment of staff
- creativity within limited resources
- the diversity of activity
- good at collaborating

Weaknesses:

- the bureaucracy with which the department has to work
- the scramble for corporate resources
- constant uncertainty
- the poor condition of the department's buildings and displays
- the endless budget cutting
- the human stress and pain of change

(3) Threats, Opportunities and Dangerous Opportunities

The following chart lists these:

Threat	Opportunity	Dangerous Opportunity
Political choice: Arts vs. Other	Young People	Threats challenge complacency: give a cutting edge
Sound bite culture and home based entertainment	Responding to more leisure time	Responding to changing society
Loss of resources	Growing need for environmental services	Exploit/challenge competition
Local government's inability to cope	Work with other agencies	Link with cultural/ economic development agencies
Financial cuts reduce and demoralise and fragment	Embrace new technology to improve access and services	Political revolution
	Taking services to where the public go	Lottery
	'Authentic artefacts'	

(4) Hopes and Expectations

The hopes and expectations of the group were:

- a cohesive department with shared vision
- a shared and achievable vision involving external stakeholders, and retaining services and jobs
- a clear vision, plans for growth, and ways of achieving this
- a shared common aim for the department that is relevant to the city
- self-empowerment and support

(5) Key Elements of Vision

The following were seen as the key elements of the future vision:

- focus on the 21st century and renewal
- internal collaboration
- partnerships and networking
- access, choice and involvement
- political recognition and revalidation
- external communication and marketing to create new audiences
- effective exploitation of information technology

(6) Underlying Contradictions

The following were some of the underlying contradictions which would have to be dealt with

in achieving the elements of the vision:

- * lack of resources and competition for resources
- * internal fragmentation and bureaucracy
- * collapsing and inflexible buildings
- * the need for money masking primary functions
- * 'Newtism' - low perception of the arts
- * crisis and short termism destroying vision
- * the danger of a naive approach to partnership (sponsorship and collaboration)

(7) Strategic Directions

In view of these factors, the group defined the following as the strategic directions for the future:

- a coherent partnership strategy
- a review of resources (buildings and people) to maximise benefit
- an image building campaign
- a fund-raising strategy and programme
- increasing collective creativity and responsibility with control

(8) Systematic Actions

To commence movement along these strategic directions, the group defined a series of systematic actions under the following headings:

- user communication
- changing political mindsets
- marketing and product development
- audits of buildings and public facilities
- teamwork, involvement and communication
- partnerships and rich links

(9) Implementation Timeline and Implementation Briefs

Finally the group defined timelines and briefs for implementation

(10) Conclusions

The conference was very useful in determining from a collective viewpoint:

- a survey of the department and its environment
- the hopes and expectations for the future
- the key elements of the group's vision and the underlying contradictions
- the strategic directions to pursue over the next three years
- the systematic actions and implementation timelines required to pursue these strategic directions

The undeniable strengths of this approach lay in the extent and depth of commitment achieved by those with an interest in the future of the department's work, from both internal and external perspectives.

APPENDIX 11.3

WIMBLEDON: COLOURFLOW DIALOGUE OUTPUT

THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISCUSSION GROUPS

GROUP FUNCTIONING

The need to widen and improve decision making within the group

Improve Group organisation by addressing:

Discipline - attitudes

Accessible to all

Time to debate e.g. minute night

Tiered structures e.g. back bench committee

Ensure Group discipline

Re examine Group's working

More support for Members

Team work, more discipline, Group discipline, listen to each other, don't be afraid to express opinions - respect opinions even if not agree

POLICY AND BUDGET

More concentration on policy making

Political and service priorities are both purely budget issues

Better budget monitoring

Budget to be concluded by Xmas

IMPLEMENTATION

Political priorities by getting useful information

Make sure officers implement policy

Policy Group to take active role in policy monitoring and chase up issues and service delivery

Negative and problem areas to be identified early and dealt with coming year

GROUP, PARTY AND CITY

Development of better relationships between party and group [mutual support]

Develop better links with voters

Develop more effective PR

Develop effective links with local areas and other councillors

Better links with Party on important decisions

More involvement in Party activities

Better information to Party especially local issues

Communicate with local Wards

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

GROUP DISCIPLINE

Clarify discipline requirements

Clarify standing orders and Group procedures, including the following:

- Only speak once on an issue
- Time limit on contributions

Ensure every member of Group has a copy of the standing orders

Hold a briefing session on the Standing Orders and Group procedures

ACTION

Group officers

Group whip

Group whip

Group chair

CONDUCT OF GROUP MEETINGS	ACTION
Hold meetings in a comradely style, in which differences are respected and personal attacks are avoided	Everyone
Avoid side discussions	Everyone
Introduce short [10-15 minute] breaks in long Group meetings	Group chair
Hold more meetings - especially policy discussion - using small groups	Group officers
Use alternative meeting venues where appropriate	Group officers
Hold two Group meetings a month	Group officers
Develop a separate time for briefing sessions, including Policy A's	Group officers
Review role of Minute night	Group officers
Review purpose of group meetings, looking at the best ways to raise relevant issues and make Group meetings a forum for proper political debate	Everyone
Review the way Executive minutes are dealt with at Group	Group officers
Hold an awayday for Group/DLP reps before summer	Group secretary
In Group debate, non-Executive members to have priority	Group chair
Timetable items for debate	Group chair and secretary
Items to be introduced by the person raising them	Group chair

MEMBER SUPPORT	ACTION
Coffee/tea to be available in the Members' Library from 4.30pm	Group officers
[this to be available for all Councillors	
Committee Chairs to be available in the Members' Library before Group meetings - especially on Minute Night	Committee Chairs
Current position on improving Members' support to be clarified	Group Secretary
Action to be taken on:	Group Secretary
• Childcare and carers' support	
• IT in Members' Library	
• Secretarial and professional officer support	
• Code of practice on members' queries	

RELATIONSHIP WITH OFFICERS	ACTION
Introduce running list of decisions requiring officer or Committee chair action, with monthly review of all outstanding matters	Group secretary
Develop budget timetable now	Chair of Finance
Officers to produce one page summaries of reports, clearly indicating recommended course of action	Chief Executive
Officers to be concise in introducing reports	Chief Executive
No papers to be circulated at the meetings - mailing to be on Friday	Chief Executive and Group Secretary

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GROUP AND PARTY	ACTION
Encourage all Wards to discuss with their Councillors what support they need, for example help with surgeries, letter writing, transport	DLP and Branch Secretaries
Encourage Councillors to attend Party meetings	All Councillors
Identify issues which need DLP debate	Group and DLP officers with Committee Chairs

WIMBLEDON LABOUR PARTY: VISION

EDUCATION

Fully comprehensive education

Education success - Director of Education - communication and trust developed with schools and people

Local authority role seen as increasingly vital

Nursery provision/child care for all

Class sizes 30 and falling

End to selection in schools

Increased support services to schools

Education best in country

TRANSPORT

Fully integrated [subsidised] transport system

sustainable integrated public transport system

Improved public transport infrastructure and pollution control

COUNCIL

Community councils linked with more effective community activity

Improvement in access to buildings and care for disabled and elderly persons

Enthusiasm for labour controlled council resulting from labour government's achievements and strong direction

Changed structure and culture of council

Housing regeneration programme - public and private - underway

EMPLOYMENT

Wimbledon vision - centre of excellence

Financial and industrial development

Funds released for housing programme - increasing jobs

Regeneration both industrial and economic

Created links between schools - training agencies - industry - funding organisations and city council

PARTY

Consultation with young people

Active membership with young membership

Very good link with minority community and more membership

Quarterly city wide newspaper

Regular communication with electorate

Positive action for equality of opportunity and outcomes

Party truly representative of electorate

Paid organiser[s] funded through local members

CRITICAL FAILURE FACTORS

INSULARITY

Highly parochial attitude

Insularity

FEAR OF CHANGE AND POOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Resistance to / fear of change - or lack confidence to carry it out

Inability to manage change

Continue to resist change

POOR / OUTDATED PARTY STRUCTURE

Lack of political education
Bad decision making / lack of debate
Meetings and organisation boring and irrelevant
Losing control of the Council

APATHY

Lack of activity and involvement of members
Not enough commitment
Burn out of active members

OUT OF TOUCH

Failing to respond or not knowing local needs and issues
Failure to communicate and consult with members and community
Lack of involvement and empowerment of ordinary people
Poor organisation and communication
Lack of communication with members
Poor communication with our members and electorate

LACK OF SHARED VISION

Lack of clear political vision
Lack of clear shared vision
Lack of a strategy to achieve our ends with limited resources
Lack of follow up on implementation of policy
Lack of forward planning
Lose organiser

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

Improve communications to

- Party members	- Community groups	- General electorate
- Governors	with feedback	
Run regular newsletter	Consult about manifesto	

SHARED VISION

Engage members in new vision for Wimbledon
Clear shared vision

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Building community links and interaction
Share policy making
Roots in the community
Involve members in the community

LEARNING FROM OUTSIDE

Are we amateurish? [support best practice from other areas]
Learning from outside Wimbledon

MORE FLEXIBLE STRUCTURES AND MEETINGS

PEOPLE FRIENDLY PARTY

Work more collectively as a Party
More flexible party structures
Promote a structure to strengthen, involve and promote party members

Networks

Know membership - put members in touch with others with similar interests
 Invite members to take a 'lead' in issues where they have special interest
 Open meetings
 Sharing ideas and cross boundaries
 Encourage debate and interaction within meetings.
 Remove unnecessary jargon

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Visit new members to welcome and encourage them
 Find out what new members want
 Listen to new members and younger members

VALUE DIVERSITY OF CONTRIBUTION

Shift to activity based party, with wider range of activities
 Skills audit of members
 Build up party profile
 i.e. Local activities, letters to press, press releases, party newspaper
 Widening of definition of activism and campaigning

ACTION PLANS

NEW MEMBERS			
DLP	New members pack production [Organiser] Correlate all members' interest information [Organiser] Big General Election meeting in Town Hall [Organiser] Radio and Press announcements	Correlate new members interests information [Organiser] - keep doing Victory party [touchwood]	Membership drive - announce Telephone recruitment
CLPs	Monitor new member visiting New members meeting with MPs and social [Agents] Birthday cards to 18 yr. olds [Volunteers] Party pack First time postal voters	Keep good records of helpers during election [Agents] Thankyou letters and post election meeting/social [MPs/Chairs/Secs]	Work out target areas for membership drive [Officers]
BLPs	Get everyone to introduce themselves at start of meetings Information to ethnic minority groups Visit new members - deliver new member pack in person [Chairs/Secs/Volunteers] Produce central pages for new members packs [Volunteers] Collect members' interests information Welcome new members to meetings [talk to them]	Visit lapsed members Phone for post election meeting/social [Chairs/Mem Secs/Volunteers]	Help target areas in membership drive [everyone]

POLICY DEVELOPMENT			
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Dec
DLP	Accept that policy development is not a priority until after General Election Assert that Party members have to 'own' policy development - promote a local political discussion on how we interpret VALUES into government programmes. Local/national ownership fosters ACTIVISM	Agree to use productively 'no local election' space Assume labour victory Debate/promote Wimbledon Policy Forum Invite papers/suggestions on policies to include hearings and discussion publicly	Proceed with hearings Publish provisional reports Working Group to translate these into draft manifestos - local - national
CLPs	As above	Some items local/national Suggest 'sub-hearings' leading to priorities for next Manifesto and define subject areas	
BLPs	As above		

PARTY STRUCTURES			
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Dec
DLP	Consult on ward structures and mergers Identify key networks e.g. Education, Health DLP set dates for 6 formal meetings and 5 open/network meetings Develop strategy for young people and women Develop model for skills audit	Assess Jan-Mar work Adopt workplan With CLPs/BLPs : training for new officers Start to pull together networks Test-mail delegates Identify activity groups	Implement, assess and modify if necessary Organise a structures review meeting Review ethnic minority involvement
CLPs	Consider open meetings Consider adopting a similar structure as above Establish campaign meetings	Assess Jan-Mar work Adopt workplan All CLPs hold at least one open members meeting on a current political theme [General Election]	Implement, assess and modify if necessary CLPs hold at least two open meetings
BLPs	Set up delivery rounds for SLN - linked to visiting members [and new members] - realistic arrangements Identify common interests across ward boundaries Look at adopting bi-monthly structure Start to identify key networks in their community	Assess Jan-Mar work Adopt workplan Organise a network meeting Contact all members at least once for a skills audit Develop telephone tree	Implement, assess and modify if necessary

CAMPAIGNING			
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Dec
DLP	Collate city-wide list of contributors to CLP/BLP activity Organise meetings for DLP/CLP officers	Rolling programme of technical training and media contact Identify Elpack users/trainers and match them with those wanting training Central stock of information useful for leaflets, information packs, campaigns etc. centrally kept with organiser	Social: Regional Festival Residential weekend one and half days political education cross city Changing yearly focus, but to include forward planning Organiser to collate good practice information - circulate it to inform branches, CLPs planning visits Councillor training and members of panel 'Share and tell' newsletters circulated - contacts arranged for skill sharing, advice etc. Dealing with press and media [this could happen at CLP too] Overnight winter training school Changing focus
CLPs	Post AGM - training meeting for constituency and branch officers - create network - support work on constituency/branch workplan	Ward slots - campaign success reports as brief, regular feature. Requests for offers of help.	New members focus - training and meeting MPs Visitors from other CLPs Swap success stories Visits to own hall Councillors - offers for members to 'shadow' them Short written ward reports on good and back points e.g. 'We do well ...', 'We need help ...' Officers of advice, support - practical MPs make themselves available monthly to appear at small [or larger] community group meetings
BLPs	Make space in structure for political education Identify branch members who can 'lead' on issues Devote at least one branch meeting to campaign activities - letters, items for newsletters, etc.	Canvassing and other campaign activities Thank you letters/leaflets after campaigns to ward residents/member s/ deliverers as appropriate	Social - barbecues etc. Meet every member Stalls Campaign! Carnivals, festivals, set up stalls Find out when they are early and plan rotas and literature etc. Review of ward organisation - delivery networks - leaflets and newsletter - visits rotas - newsletter review Identify computer boffins and make them share expertise with computer idiots Surgery - share Branch members support councillors and develop own skills

POLITICAL EDUCATION AND BEST PRACTICE

	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Dec
DLP	Organise fundraising for full time organiser Collate stories for Wimbledon Today A checklist or profile of each Branch and their activities	Continue to fundraise Continue to collect stories	Continue to fundraise Continue to collect stories
CLPs	Standing item on Agenda - Key seats Identify link person to raise profile in Branches - key seats General Election campaign	Standing item on agenda for key seats General Election campaign	Begin to organise Constituency campaign
BLPs	Forms made available for standing orders to raise money to finance full time organiser Standing item on agenda - key seats Street stall once a month - petition, leaflets, recruitment forms etc Get stories for Wimbledon Today Form a team to contact members for skills audit - prepare an audit sheet for skills and interests	Fill in profile of Branch activity checklist Wimbledon Today immediately delivered when election called standing item on agenda for key seats Street stall once a month - petition, leaflets, recruitment forms etc Get stories for Wimbledon Today Begin to contact members personally for interests and skills audit	Distribute summer and Autumn editions of Wimbledon Today Regularise collection of stories and photos for Wimbledon Today Continue and begin to exploit skills and establish topic discussion groups Street stall once a month - petition, leaflets, recruitment forms etc

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Dec
DLP	Ensure councillors/party officers offer support and provide information to those involved at BLP level Feedback and advice to BLPs	Establish links with organisations - e.g. Universities, TEC - sympathetic to aims of local groups to assist them - survey, research, needs audit Organise meeting of Councillors to discuss their role - 'community champions'	Receive results of research and report back to BLPs Arrange city-wide 'forum of forums' following CLP forum

CLPs	Cross fertilize ideas across wards feedback and advice to BLPs Ensure there is no duplication	Ensure that BLPs haven't opened a 'Pandora's Box' of problems with huge resource implications - defensive Contact ? With minority groups	Arrange constituency wide 'forum of forums' Receive feedback from contact with ethnic minority groups
BLPs	Develop profile of community activity Identify core issues in locality Contact community groups Identify where meetings could take place	Invite local groups to foundation meeting - identify needs of group Ensure continuity of meetings Address problems for participants as carers, parents, disabled	Continue to offer support to group - advice on organisation - steering groups, constitution etc separate issues - housing/ environment/ transport Look to offer models of good practice.

TOWARDS 2001 The Action Plan for Labour in Wimbledon

The following recommendations are put to Wimbledon District Labour Party on the basis of the paper prepared, and the consultation process which has taken place over the last few months.

It is useful to begin by clarifying two issues. First, the paper prepared in January was not a statement of DLP, or DLP Executive, policy. It was a draft, based on the workshop debate, to stimulate discussion - which it has indeed succeeded in doing! Second, 'Towards 2001' is in no way intended as a means by which DLP instructs Branches and CLPs on how they should be doing things. Below we outline the proposals which we believe should be adopted by DLP. Proposals relating to Branches and CLPs need to be considered by them, and adopted if they agree. DLP is of course not a separate body - it is composed of delegates from CLPs, trade unions and affiliated organizations.

The recommendations focus upon the first six months of the programme, within the six priority areas identified in Towards 2001. The longer term ideas contained in the draft paper will be considered later in the year. All the recommendations will need to be reviewed in the light of experience.

WELCOMING MEMBERS	
PRIORITIES FOR DLP	PRIORITIES FOR ORGANIZER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare information-sheet on membership drive • Seek volunteers to develop recruitment strategy for ethnic minorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up profile of people willing to be active/ provide special skills/ be on Boards/ act as representatives / develop networks • Develop this based on existing information, invitations in newsletters, new member pack

CHANGING PARTY STRUCTURES	
PRIORITIES FOR DLP	PRIORITIES FOR ORGANIZER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain current practice of 11 meetings a year. Six of these to be formal, five to be devoted to in-depth policy discussions • The policy meetings should be open to all members [although voting would of course be restricted to delegates], and should be able to take emergency business • Invite suggestions from DLP members for topics for these policy discussions • Mail delegates for formal meetings, for a trial period • Review date of Executive Committee, to allow advance mailings [which would include details of resolutions received]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize training for officers • Hold discussions with branches considering merger • Develop a 'shadowing' system available to potential councillors • Arrange informal meetings of Party Officers to help share best practice

CAMPAIGNING	
PRIORITIES FOR DLP	PRIORITIES FOR ORGANIZER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate cross-city networks [e.g. campaigning, women, health, education] • Develop role of campaign group • Support Regional Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for street stalls • Continue rolling programme of technical training [started during General Election] • Ensure people know about information available centrally • Arrange an event every four months for new members, involving MPs, Councillors, Party Officers [It is noted that some CLPs already have similar arrangements]

POLICY DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link manifesto to the Labour Government's five pledges and to the national manifesto • Identify from this issues to be achieved by May next year • Establish a Policy Forum to prepare the Manifesto. This to include public hearings. Further paper on this to be considered by DLP in July .

POLITICAL EDUCATION AND ORGANISATION	
PRIORITIES FOR DLP	PRIORITIES FOR ORGANIZER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare next Wimbledon Today for September • Review distribution of Wimbledon Today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an overall training programme for the year, to include relevant events for: • Party officers, Potential panel members, Council candidates, Campaigning, Political Education, Publicity, Agents • Prepare speakers' list, based on members audit • Develop fund-raising: targets are to increase annual funds by £4000 by March next year, and by £8000 thereafter. • Develop support for political education

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	
PRIORITIES FOR DLP	PRIORITIES FOR ORGANIZER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send Working Group report on this matter to Branches for debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised open meeting on community involvement in Autumn • Ensure awareness that the role of the organiser is party-wide

CLPS AND BRANCHES

The responses submitted by CLPs and Branches indicated that a number were already engaged in some of the activities proposed in Towards 2001. We encourage all sections of the party to look at the proposals contained in the original draft and develop their own plan of action.

In particular, we ask Branches to consider running a membership campaign now, building on the success of the General Election. We also ask them to consider holding joint meetings where this is appropriate.

Finally, we would like to thank all affiliated organizations who took part in the debate on Towards 2001, and submitted proposals. The major suggestion not reflected in the above proposals was that delegates to DLP should be elected directly from Branches, which does not fit within the current constitution of the organization.

APPENDIX 11.5

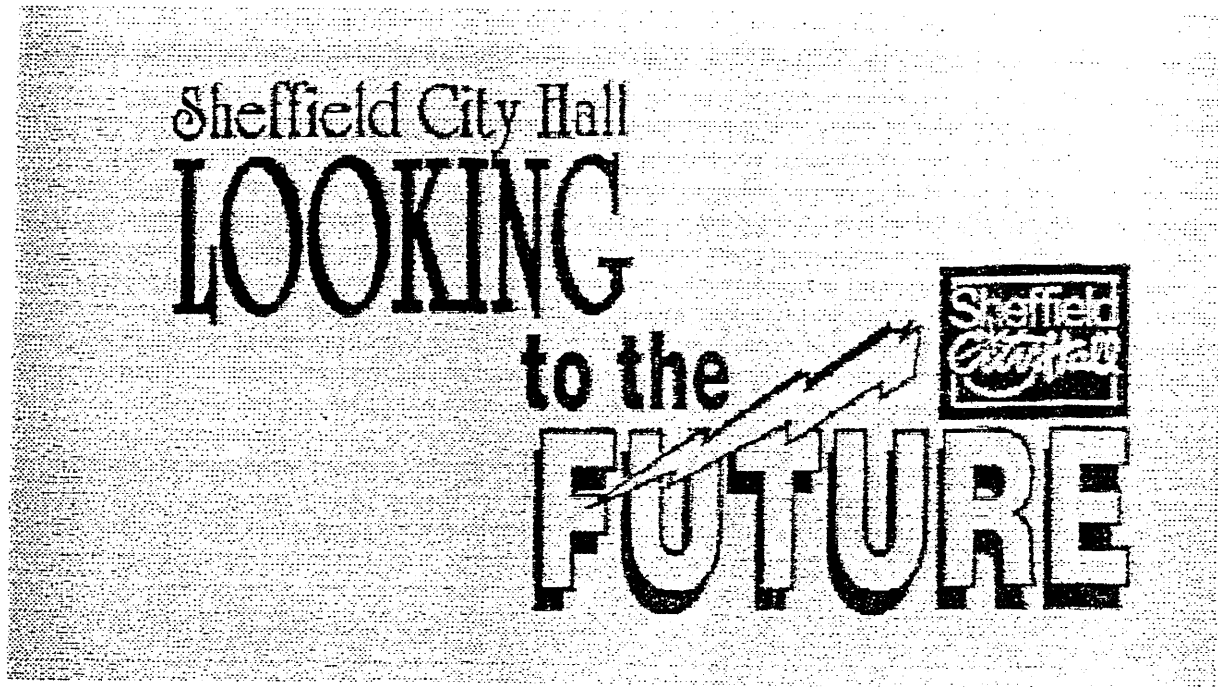
CITY HALL FUTURE SEARCH

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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

**Copy of Output from first event,
which acted as input to second**

Appendix 11.5



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SWOT Analysis

FIRST DISCUSSION

Purpose and Strategy

Questions ..

Do you agree with the statements of purpose and strategy given below?
Are there Critical Success Factors which are missing?

What else could stop this happening?

What makes you proud about the City Hall?

What makes you sorry about the City Hall?

Our purpose can be simply stated: it is

To be the region's top arts and entertainment venue

We believe that the following are the
eight Critical Success Factors in achieving this:

- ◆ We need to win the lottery bid and achieve financial investment
The lottery funding will allow for the complete redesign and renovation of
City Hall into a superb building with fine facilities, including high tech
possibilities
- ◆ There must be a total customer focus
This involves a positive total customer experience, exceeding their expectations,
and leading to repeat business. We will also need a strong marketing policy.
- ◆ We require financial viability
- ◆ The City Hall should be at the cutting edge
- continually developing and open to change
This involves a high quality classical programme, with City Hall as a regional
centre for symphonic music through residences and international artists. It
also involves creative outreach and education programme taking City Hall
out to Sheffield's communities
- ◆ We require clearly defined and accepted strategies
Success will come through: Clear vision; Cohesive efforts; Sustained purpose.
It also requires staff support in the company structure, and clear strategic
management
- ◆ The City Hall requires freedom and independence
Entrepreneurial freedom leading to programme variety and encouraging new
business
- ◆ There must be leadership at Board and management level
- ◆ We must have positive links with external stakeholders

What could stop this happening?

We have identified a number of things which could prevent us achieving our objectives:

- ◆ Lack of cohesion and motivation e.g. Trainings, Investment in staff
- ◆ Lack of focus internally
- ◆ Blockages to change
- ◆ Management by committee
- ◆ Failure to take entrepreneurial approach
- ◆ Unforeseen external changes
- ◆ Insufficient initial funding
- ◆ Lack of financial investment
- ◆ Failure of lottery bid / lack of finance and reinvestment
- ◆ New build elsewhere and inability to sell product
- ◆ Lack of commitment and support from key stakeholders

What we are proud about

Public loyalty
Versatile entertainment venue
The building - still intimate, and has grandeur
'Entrepreneurial' under difficult circumstances
The potential
The staff
Unique as the only concert hall in a wide area
The classical concerts
Varied programme



What we are sorry about

State of the building - dilapidation
Derivative restrictions
Totally inadequate bars; no corporate facilities
Translocation of sound from lower ground floor to Oval Hall
Lack of entrepreneurial freedom
Non-delivery of arts policy for building
Demotivation of staff and 'hairs' of City Hall
Accessibility
Council waits for trials



SECOND DISCUSSION

Activity and Programmes

Questions ..

What should be the activities and programmes of Sheffield City Hall?
How can existing ones be developed?
What new ones should there be?

Existing activities in the City Hall

Oval Hall			
Primary	Secondary	Development / Capital Investment	
Philharmonic season	Large conferences	Education, programme with	
Rock music	Large meetings	Philharmonic Education projects linked to other popular music	
Popular music	Religious meetings	Spaces for visiting orchestras	
Middle of the Road music	Union meetings	Standing rock concerts	
Comedy	Organ recitals	Other large scale ceremonies	
Light classical		- the Universities?	
Amateur drama		'Multi media orchestral concerts	
Dance ceremonies		Grand Organ - education & projects	
Children's theatre		Maximise commercial market niche	
Dance			
Local one-off events			
Community events			
Ballroom			
Primary	Secondary	Development / Capital Investment	
Ballroom dances	Dinner dances	More Nightclubs	
Nightclubs	Exhibitions	Conferences/Presentations	
Dance classes	Weddings	Medium sized rock music concerts (standing)	
Cultural Events	Religious meetings	Education projects (dance, music)	
		Cabaret	
		Folk concerts	
Memorial Hall			
Primary	Secondary	Development / Capital Investment	
Meetings	Rehearsal space	Increase share of comedy market	
Community use	Cloakroom	Increase small scale music	
Comedy	Religious services	Jazz	
Folk / acoustic music		Corporate - presentations	
		Training Courses	
		Small/medium conferences	

THIRD DISCUSSION

Building and Facilities

Questions ..

What facilities should the revitalised City Hall have?

What new features should there be?

What should be saved, what restored, and what transformed?

Diagrams of City Hall's main areas will be on display during the event, to help in thinking these issues through.

FOURTH DISCUSSION

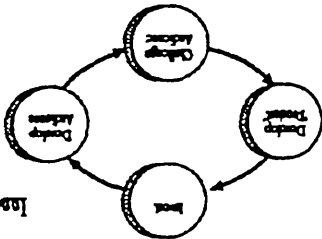
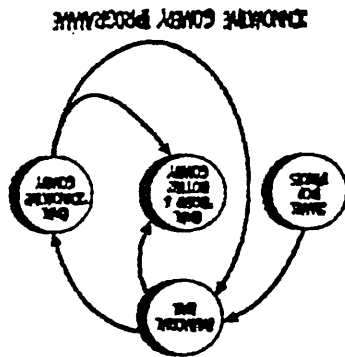
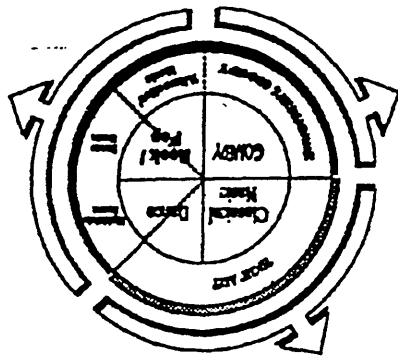
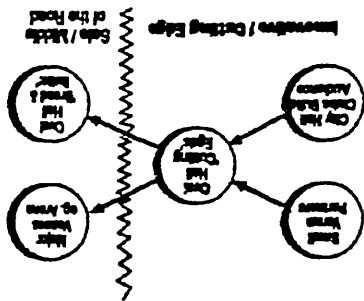
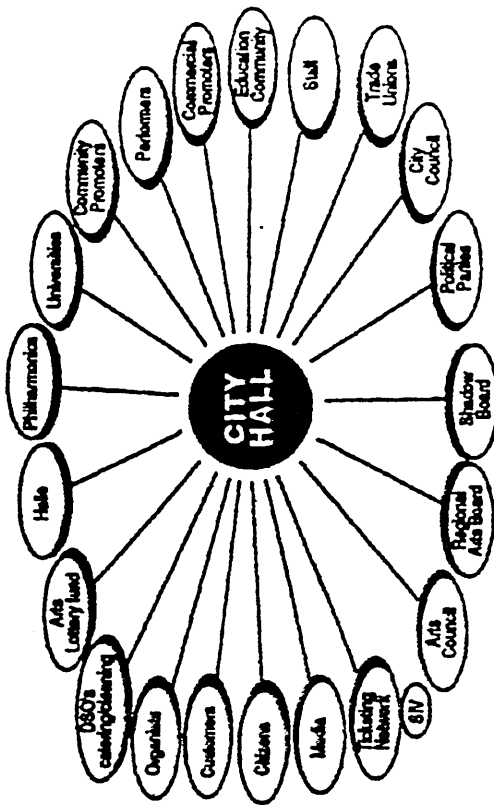
Working Together

Questions ..

How can Sheffield City Hall best be a part of a wider network of organisations involved in culture and entertainment?

How can we best work together with you?

How can we develop a spirit of 'co-competition' in Sheffield?



We aspire to put on a 'cutting edge' programme of events at the City Hall. This diagram is intended to act as a basis for a discussion of what that might mean in the different areas of activity of the programme.

Innovative Dance / Music Programme

Background Information

To help you in thinking about the above issues, here is some further background information we have prepared.

The first table looks at the environment of Sheffield City Hall.

The second is an analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The diagrams which follow outline the competitive environment in which the City Hall exists.

ENVIRONMENTAL 8 CAN

Political	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Possible change of central government? - more support of regional authorities ◆ Local government to move from direct provision to other means of service delivery? ◆ Culture Arts Council will require strong cultural component and plans - increase in partnership funding from local sources ◆ Increased emphasis upon education - especially within the context of the arts ◆ Effects of closer integration with Europe? ◆ Effects of regional assembly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increasing local and regional competition for the leisure spend ◆ More disposable income generally ◆ High level of low-income families/individuals ◆ Local economic reconstruction to continue?
Technical	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ IT systems likely to develop in terms of - - link-ups with other leisure venues - power of marketing packages - power of planning and management information packages ◆ Potential of interest for enhanced communications -marketing -planning -liaison ◆ Developing forms of concert presentation: sound, video, lighting etc. ◆ Growth of recorded music industry and market: currently second biggest exporter after British Steel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Impact of social reconstruction and competition between other leisure facilities - new entertainment ◆ Policy stated in 1984 of cashing up capital on projects that are expected to generate jobs and income ◆ Growth of private sector in major leisure centres ◆ Major role for voluntary organisations

SWOT (Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats) Analysis

[illegible]

CITY HALL FUTURE SEARCH SUMMARY OF KEY IMPLICATIONS

The Search Conference broadly supported the approach in 'Sheffield City Hall: Looking to the Future', which was developed by the Shadow Board in conjunction with City Hall staff. There were however many useful additions to our thinking, and also suggestions for changes of emphasis. Attached are all the issues which were highlighted in the Conference, together with a number of other comments included on the flip charts prepared during the day.

From this wealth of material I would highlight the following.

SHEFFIELD CITY HALL: WHAT WE ARE PROUD OF

The Conference participants have similar 'Prouds' to the Board. There is greater emphasis on the unique role the City Hall plays in Sheffield, given both its function and its history - it clearly inspires strong feelings of loyalty, and is seen as an important community resource.

SHEFFIELD CITY HALL: WHAT WE ARE SORRY ABOUT

The physical problems are paramount here. Indeed the list produced here, coupled with the other material when we looked at improvements, provides a template against which to judge the proposals for the Lottery application - if it succeeds in addressing the concerns expressed at the Conference, then it will have transformed the situation.

THE DRAFT PURPOSE STATEMENT

The draft purpose statement is seen as too broad and over-ambitious. Several alternatives are suggested, which the Board should consider.

NEW CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The comments reinforce and extend the meaning of the eight CSFs identified by the Board. Thus 'clearly defined and accepted strategies' must include the development of a balanced artistic programme. Similarly, 'total customer focus' should embrace the best of both the commercial and the public service ethos.

ACHIEVING THE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Here we have again a call for integration of the public service ethos [public accountability, visibility, trustworthy] and a more commercial approach [refocus from bureaucracy to business, market assessment]. Clarification of priorities is requested - and this indeed is the next step required of the Board.

OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING THE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Several of the above points are reinforced here. Transport, communication and accessibility also come out as important issues. The balance of Board membership is also raised.

IMPROVEMENT TO EXISTING ACTIVITIES and THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ACTIVITIES

One of the overall themes to emerge from the day is the need to become much more proactive - a theme that reinforces the views of the Shadow Board. A wide range of activities were identified at the Conference, and it might be appropriate for the Board to initiate a means by which these can be thoroughly investigated, to determine which

have real potential, and how they might be integrated into a cohesive approach to activity.

NEW FEATURES and FACILITIES TO SAVE/RESTORE/TRANSFORM

Many of the issues raised here are the subject of the Lottery bid: it would be worth cross-referencing to ensure that they are all incorporated. A theme that emerged in these debates was visibility: at present it is possible for the City Hall to be packed with people, yet from the outside no one could tell this. Attention to the external environment, together with greater day time use and greater visibility of activities, will be important in giving people the sense that this is an accessible and active building.

WHAT FACILITIES NEED ATTENTION

Here again the ideas need to be cross-checked with those in the Lottery bid. There is a useful stress on some of the 'background' facilities which need to be in place if the City Hall is to function more effectively.

DEVELOPING THE WIDER NETWORK

This was a wide ranging debate, which reinforced the Shadow Board's view that there is an advantage in developing closer links between the organizations and facilities represented at the Conference. It is a question now of how to build on existing initiatives, and sustain the momentum created by the Conference.

CONCLUSIONS

We need to recognise that a number of the ideas which came up during the Conference echo work underway by City Hall and Council staff, and it is important to build upon initiatives already in place. We also need to recognise the need for both an immediate programme of action, which reinforces existing activity, and a longer term programme [which is of course dependent on the Lottery bid]. Therefore action suggested by the Conference includes the following:

- 1 *Review with staff existing initiatives, taking account of the Conference findings, and prepare an agreed programme of action over coming months.*
- 2 *Review and refine the Purpose Statement*
- 3 *Cross-check ideas generated at the Conference with those developed for the Lottery bid.*
- 4 *Develop a long term priority programme of action*
- 5 *Review Board membership*
- 6 *Investigate improvements to car parking facilities*
- 7 *Develop the network with other organizations*
- 8 *Develop proposals for future use of City Hall*
- 9 *Consider immediate steps that could be taken to improve the City Hall's external appearance, and the visibility of activity*

CITY HALL FUTURE SEARCH

PROUD

- Wide social ownership
 - Commitment and service
 - Inspires respect
 - Best venue in the region
 - Serves all community with high, varied usage
 - Flexibility - various programmes of events
 - Shared vision
 - Internal assets
 - Looking to place itself in 24-hour city culture
 - Efficiency - wider utilisation of building / rooms
 - Monument for city
 - Programme - varied, good, international
 - Durability
 - Staff
- Contribution to life of city centre
 - Uniqueness
 - Building, History, Design
 - Building, history, design
 - High usage - events/attend
 - High recognition
 - Resilient
 - Strong competitive position

SORRY

- Lack of investment
 - Inherent flaws
 - No coherent development policy for city and building
 - Acoustics
 - Lack of public space
 - No identity as conference venue
 - Not regionally or nationally known for facilities or product
 - Poor facilities
 - Inflexible seating
 - Lack of facilities [storage and equipment]
 - Short termism
 - Civic insularity
- Public perception of reactionary decisions
 - No car park
 - Allowed fabric to decay
 - Grotty environment
 - Lost out to new initiatives - new build and events
 - No coherent policy for the city
 - Difficulties making activities appropriate to building
 - Usage revenue driven at the expense of building
 - Lack of investment to maintain customer satisfaction
 - Bar closed too early
 - Disabled Access
 - Box Office inadequate

PURPOSE

- Question the opening statement - 'to be the region's top venue'
 - No one building can be this venue - rather concentrate on strengths
 - Wider remit to put business in a mutually supportive role
 - Add 'in its markets'
- Strengthen education / community emphasis
 - Statement does not address heritage value
 - Uniqueness of building and goal of prestige
 - To be the region's most versatile entertainment venue with a programme to match

NEW CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Political - new government interested in economic
- regeneration of arts, so forge links
- Develop financial viability further
- Balanced artistic programme that

- - wins lottery and match funds
- - creates financial stability
- - maintains wide ownership
- To maintain a well-motivated and efficient staff
- Need to achieve capital investment
- Strong communications
- Retains strong commercial and public service ethos

ACHIEVING CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Development of public space
- Ability to cross-programme successfully [to maximise use of whole building] ✗
- Market assessment of what people of Sheffield want from City Hall
- What is missing is: clarification of priorities and how this will crystallise key objectives and business plan needed
- Strong team effort - Board - Staff
- Public accountability
- Visibility
- Trustworthy
- Lottery funding
- Refocus from "bureaucracy" to "business" (look at how to sell not how to run)

OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Accessibility to building
- Communications with community
- Competition- Manchester/Birmingham
- Prepared to take bigger risks - to make venue more attractive
- Transport
- Parking / transport access
- Coles/City Centre - use of Coles Car Park
- Listed nature of City Hall may limit development
- Should include - Economic value of art - not being given enough profile
- Unclear objectives
- Building decoration
- Dysfunctional Board without correct makeup and 'political' champion
- Absence of capital
- Accessibility to building and within - not alive
- Change of attitude imperative if we are going for international status e.g. classical concerts need not always be on Friday and Saturday (not set in stone), create a concert-going audience

IMPROVEMENT TO EXISTING ACTIVITIES

- Access
- Guided tours
- Marketing mix
- Well resourced marketing team
- Lunchtime activity
- Encourage daytime use of building -
- Closer partnerships with promoters and venues to produce proactive and non-competitive programme
- More projection into community and education/business and conference activity
- Improve customer facilities: Toilets, Audio, Sound, Clocks, Catering, Lift, Bars, Bistro, Access and Individual entrances, Removable seats, Car park, Vary hire fees
- Sport
- Better communication between promoters
- Assessment of current business range and costs
- Education programme
- More focus but retaining universal appeal
- Freeing up staff - needs more imagination
- In-house promotions, control and structure programmes be PROACTIVE. Potential for income generation. Summer Festival? Build recognition. Proms

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ACTIVITIES

- Rehearsal rooms - all styles of music
- Corporate hospitality facilities
- Conferences
- Banqueting
- Develop in-house promotions which produces control
- Festivals / Summer seasons
- Student power
- Exhibitions/Commercial events
- 'Open building' activities: Coffee shop/catering, Shop/merchandising, Daytime community work
- Develop identity for spaces other than oval hall
- Opportunity for secondary spend
- Gambling / boxing / wrestling / dinners
- Increase daytime use: lunchtime recitals, catering, crèche, exhibitions, conferences, meetings - part of 24 hour city
- Major banqueting venue to compete with Cutlers Hall and others
- Flexible venues to create different range of events
- 'Stand up concerts'
- Large-scale theatrical events (block-busters)

NEW FEATURES

- Hospitality
- Ball room - multi purpose small scale venue
- Memorial - Bistro, Recital room
- Build out and up if possible
- Public Art
- Lions
- Café / bar / meeting place
- Sound proofing and acoustics
- Change location of box office
- Improved signage and doorways and access
- Improved bars and toilets at all floor levels
- Hospitality suite
- Front of Hall - catering, exhibition space, box office, merchandising
- Technical improvements - lighting, sound, video conferencing
- Audio-visuals
- Something outside
- CCTV
- Acoustics
- Air conditioning
- Sealed off spaces [when required]
- Improved external environment - external cafes, floodlighting, improved signage, electronic signage
- Oval Hall - acoustics, seating, staging, recording/broadcasting, refurbishing, lifts and access, bars, dressing rooms, toilets

FACILITIES TO SAVE/RESTORE/TRANSFORM

- Transform Memorial - if same, more facilities
- Air conditioning
- Better use of the space within the building
- Restore art deco features
- The lions
- The organ
- Original architectural features
- New features - soundproofing, lighting, new facilities for disabled, seeing the whole as a complex [old NUM building for administration, box office etc]
- Save - building facade, original features
- Restore - organ, building general
- Full refurbishment backstage and FOH - acoustics, staging, PA/sound/lighting, dressing rooms, security, storage, piano, hospitality suite
- Remove inappropriate additions - box office, bars, improve grid

WHAT FACILITIES NEED ATTENTION

- New facilities for business
- Aspects, catering, bars, crewing, storage, offices, seating/standing
- Front more welcome
- Acoustics
- Internal decoration
- Roof
- BBC wire-in
- Better custom facility
- Major cleanup
- Everything we have now plus items on yellow slip
- Revitalised Front of House, bars, catering, box office, lifts
- Catering, bars, access, box office
- Foyer
- Corporate hospitality
- Moveable seating
- Conference facilities
- Quality of the interiors - seats, fixtures and fittings, etc
- Save and restore existing halls and their fabric [including organ]
- Access to all levels and venues - public, tech, disabled
- Decent toilets
- Technical equipment e.g. lights, p.a.
- Decent bars
- New offices - staff/ refurbished dressing rooms
- Storage rooms
- Crewing facilities

DEVELOPING THE WIDER NETWORK

- Better facilities in the building - cigarette vending / telephone kiosks
- Culture clash - promoters / management
- Better communications
- Better bar opening hours / no plastic mugs
- Wider representation on Board - not just professionals
- Wider networking of BOCS
- 'Time out' for Sheffield
- Better tie-up with transport
- Combined bus/tram/concert tickets
- Coles car park open in the evening
- Better loading for touring companies' lorries
- Co-ordinated marketing effort
- Coordination of education programmes and services
- Promotion of central ticketing system
- Sharing expertise
- Corporate reward - loyalty card 'dream ticket'
- Formalised communication between venues
- Time out type publication
- Internet Meadowhall - Oasis - one location
- Trade Association - Sheffield Cultural and Entertainment Association
- Objectives - grow the market; strategic and local planning; advocacy; sowing and reaping [wild oats]
- Staff exchange
- Consumer voice
- Mass cuddle, positive strokes
- Big chain for president Chamber of Plecsole
- Openness
- Line of communication
- Forums [e.g. marketing, ticketing and programming already exist]
- Need Strategic Forum
- Provide information
- Building relationships
- Long term planning
- Staff placements
- Future search conferencing
- Pairings
- No 'them and us'
- Public / private sector cooperation
- Singles nights and 5-a-side football
- Marrying events (sport, music, art, club) together from different venues
- Member of Yorkshire and Humberside Arts in own right