

**Organizational Disempowerment:
An Opportunity for Personal,
Social and Political Capacity Development**

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I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the capacity development needs of white-collar employees within large organizations. Common employee problems of violation and diminishment of potential are ignored by mainstream organizational theory and management practice. Because these problems are unarticulated in any formal sense they lack legitimacy in the mainstream discourse. I label such problems, that result from unequal social relations, as problems of “disempowerment”.

This labelling re-conceptualizes the large organizational context as a political community with an institutionalized capacity to disempower employees, stunt their personal, social and political development, and inhibit any challenge to the existing privileged arrangements. The re-labelling of common employee problems in this way positions the research challenge in the political domain, stimulates the capacity to redefine problematic social relations in creative ways and opens the way for different possibilities and different solutions. An analytical examination of multi-disciplinary scholarship reveals articulation of a common theme that can be viewed as facets of the problem which I identify as one of disempowerment. The main body of the thesis examines these disciplines and collates the literature of concern into a structured argument.

The main thrust of the argument is that the alternative debate to mainstream organizational theory and management practice has been marginalized and lacks legitimacy. This situation allows the orthodox view, with its focus on technical problem solving and efficiency, to ignore the more humane aspects of organizational life that demand the socio-political development of employees in order for them to make a meaningful contribution. Although there is a rhetoric of empowerment in organizational development thrusts, these do not address the political challenge of organizational life. The thesis suggests that employees, in collectively picking up the challenge of their own personal, social and political development, can transform organizations into becoming more humane ones that promote capacity development as a common benefit. This initiative would require the institutionalized support of academe in legitimizing and disseminating an alternative debate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS	10
1. DISEMPOWERMENT AND VIOLATIONS OF THE CREATIVE	
HUMAN SPIRIT	23
1.1 INTRODUCTION	23
1.2 VIOLATION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT	24
1.3 COLLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN ORGANIZATIONS.....	38
1.4 THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT THAT INFORM ORGANIZATIONAL	
BEHAVIOUR.....	53
1.5 STUNTED DEVELOPMENT.....	66
2: REVIEWING ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY.....	71
2.1 INTRODUCTION	71
2.2 OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY	71
2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY	72
2.4 THE CLASSICAL APPROACH	74
2.5 THE NEO-CLASSICAL APPROACH	79
2.6 THE HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACH.....	92
2.7 DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINGENCY THEORY.....	106
2.8 CHALLENGES TO CONTINGENCY THEORY	114
2.9 MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE	123
2.10 MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE.....	126
3. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE DISCIPLINE.....	131
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	131
3.2 PARADIGM INCOMMENSURABILITY.....	133
3.3 ALTERNATIVE THINKING	141

3.4 GENERAL COMMENT	169
4. POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS	173
4.1 INTRODUCTION	173
4.2 AN OVERVIEW OF POWER IN ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY.....	174
4.3 SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF POWER.....	178
4.4 MAINSTREAM RESEARCH ON POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS	187
4.5 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND THE MOBILIZATION OF BIAS	205
4.6 ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS.....	213
4.7 RESISTANCE	223
5. INSTITUTIONALISM AND ORGANIZATIONS.....	232
5.1 INTRODUCTION	232
5.2 SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION.....	234
5.3 SYMBOLIC USE OF STRUCTURE	240
5.4 CULTURAL PROCESSES ENABLE CHANGE.....	246
5.5 SOCIAL PROCESSES MAINTAIN ORDER.....	257
5.6 SOCIAL PROCESSES AS POLITICAL CONTROL.....	260
5.7 THE IMPACT OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZED CONTEXT ON THE EMPLOYEE	263
6. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL AND RESISTANCE.....	270
6.1 INTRODUCTION	270
6.2 SOCIAL CONTROL AND ACTION	272
6.3 COLLECTIVE ACTION.....	285
6.4 THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT	291
6.5 EMPLOYEE RESISTANCE IN ORGANIZATIONS.....	299
7. ORGANIZATIONS AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT.....	322
7.1 INTRODUCTION.....	322
7.2 THE CIRCUMSCRIBED ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT	327
7.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	333

7.4 DEVELOPMENTAL ALTERNATIVE TO COMMON EMPLOYEES PROBLEMS	
.....	346
7.5 CONCLUSION	363
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	366

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The number of white-collar employees in organizations is on the increase and white-collar issues deserve to be understood. White-collar problems are not new but are in need of redefinition from an employee's, rather than from the traditional management-orientated, perspective. This thesis addresses the need to stimulate a discourse for the personal, social and political development of white-collar employees within large organizations. This would allow employees the opportunity for the capacity development necessary to engage with and transform their organizational circumstances. The revolutionary struggle of blue-collar workers and their trade unions is a separate discourse that is well established.

I explore the position of white-collar employees in large organizations. Because of the broad stance that I take, I do not treat type of organization as relevant, nor do I regard the generic separation of public and private companies as pertinent to the issues discussed. I am concerned with the conditions of large organizations where managerial power and unequal social relations are firmly entrenched.

There is no existing organizational discourse which owns employee problems. Any acknowledgement of suffering, hurt, damage, enervation and neutralization of employees, suppression or infringement of their creativity and development is not seen as a transgression by mainstream organization theory and management practice. This lack of discursive legitimacy leaves employee concerns unarticulated in any formal sense and allows this problem to go unchallenged. Yet, the human reality of the organizational context is one of unequal social relations to which employees have to adapt. A discourse of

capacity development, essential to engage with these circumstances, in order to improve or change them, is ignored. Even if management's intentions are above reproach, employees are still left accommodating themselves to the unplanned, diminishing potential of existing organizational practice. This reality requires articulation and acceptance before protest can become legitimate.

To accept the mainstream organizational perspective that views such behaviour as "misdemeanours", is to look at the problem through inappropriate eyes. This is because the dominant discourse acts as a filter that skews the analysis of the problem towards an ingrained, predisposed, management perspective.

I label a host of organizational behaviours relative to employee violation and suffering as "disempowerment". The condition of "organizational disempowerment" as an active means of inhibiting the personal, social and political development of employees is my own construct. By my label of disempowerment I re-conceptualize the large organizational context as a political community with an institutionalized capacity to disempower and stunt employee development in areas that would allow alternative solutions and transformation. I remove the conceptualization of employee violation and resistance from within the safe haven of mainstream organizational theory and management practice which allows this neutralized behaviour of 'infringement' or 'mismanagement' to go unchallenged.

In Western society, infringement of the development of autonomous behaviour is seen as hitting at the heart of one's capacity to bring about creative change (Dworkin, 1988). Over-control, it is claimed by Winnicott (1965), stunts development. It prevents human development, or encourages the non-development of creative capacity. It does this by preventing the acknowledgement of alternative ways of acting in different situations and by not recognizing the legitimacy of different options with different consequences.

From a developmental perspective, this is no trivial problem of mismanagement; it is a violation against human capacity development. Yet general literature covering theories of organization and management presents these theories as neutral. These useful intellectual tools are not shown as theories which have the potential to disempower, impinge upon, diminish, circumscribe, or damage employee capabilities.

Knowledge is not neutral. The dominant discourse of organizational theory and management practice is: the lens through which the management and design of organizations are viewed; the accepted way in which people interact with organizations. I explore multiple overarching links from other academic disciplines and identify a number of alternative paradigms to the well-entrenched functionalist discourse of the management perspective. These cover the fields of Organizational Theory and Management practice, Organizational Analysis, Sociology, Ethics, Critical Theory, Developmental and Learning Theory, Social Psychology, Social Work, Gender Studies, Institutionalism and Political Studies.

I recognize a pattern of recurring themes in this scholarship that do not quote each other and are presumably working in the isolation of their own disciplines. These themes in many ways echo my own concern about the disempowerment of people in organizations. [I confess to having avoided Economics, which dominates current management thinking, in order to give weight to the human developmental area. I realize, however, that while one may not be able to ignore the reality of the economic and financial constraints of organizations, budgets should be able to be realigned to match a particular value orientation.]

The mainstream organizational discourse, ignoring this alternative debate, is constructed and disseminated in such a way as to prevent awareness of its bias. Consequently it suppresses or blocks the development of collective employee

organization, in opposition to existing organizational theories and management practice, leaving employees in the minor playing fields of bargaining for better pay and working conditions.

Because my point of departure is to detach myself from this mainstream thrust, I concentrate on the transformational potential of employees themselves (given the necessary personal, social and political skills) to accept the inherent political challenge to build better organizations. Pleading the legitimacy of an alternative debate to shape the institutional field of organizational theory and management practice, I single out academe as a stumbling block to the development of this alternative discourse.

The well-established, institutionalized, mainstream discourse bestows privilege on management, making it a powerful enabling factor in reproducing unequal power relations. This is the institutionalized nature of the problem. The alternative debate, however, also has the potential to shape the institutional field and to influence the broader discourse at the social level surrounding the organizational field. I finger academe as the most influential institutional body capable of bringing the alternative debate into general awareness; this is not an arbitrary fingering.

Academe is identified as being in a gate-keeping position influential enough to marginalize and constrain any alternative discourse to such an extent that it need not appear in the curricula nor in the library! In this way academe is instrumental in allowing certain prevailing concepts to be protected and different practices to be discouraged. Consequently, the way that organizational members participate and engage with organizations is constrained by the limited concepts available to them.

This restraint of discursive activity at the institutional level restricts the process of social construction and inhibits organizational members, not only from

developing a different voice, but from responding to the organizational context in creative ways. It also inhibits the evolution of institutions to enable such action. This disempowerment is a serious matter.

Seeing things from management's point of view usually requires silence by employees where there is a difference of opinion. This silence can be regarded as a lack of a well articulated, and generally acknowledged, employee discourse. It allows distortion of communication and the misnaming of organizational reality (Deetz, 1992). But far worse, it allows the exclusion of the possibility of employees shaping and transforming organizational reality from its present form. Instead, what is promoted by management, is a culture of obedience and conformity (Barnard, 1938). This state of affairs can be viewed as the mobilization of bias and consent by management and the institutionalization of this bias by supporting institutions in society in general (Burawoy, 1979; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Deetz, 1992).

Such contextually constructed ignorance can be viewed as a means of social control (Clegg, 1979; DiMaggio and Powell, 1981), as it suppresses the search for alternative solutions to the everyday suffering of people in organizations; prevents the development of a transformative vision of organizations; and inhibits the challenge and liberating potential of collective human capacity development (Scott, 1990). To be able to address the problem differently one has to go beyond mainstream organizational and management theory.

Viewed in this light, discursive activity surrounding organizational theory and management practice, in particular at the tertiary level, can be described as a political tool and a form of political activity that inhibits the transformation of organizational social relationships. Alternatively it can be one that challenges the status quo and, through insights obtained from interdiscursivity, promotes organizational transformation. Power and discourse in the organizational

context offer tremendous scope for empirical research. It would be a change to pursue this type of research from the employees' perspective.

Acknowledging the importance of the institutional setting, the thrust of my argument is developmental - getting employees to help themselves. My desire is not to offer some vague affirmation of employee consciousness-raising and collective action but to identify an empowering developmental path open to organizational members once they recognize the "disempowering" factors that they needed to contend with. Suffering may be considered a universal conditional, but acknowledged common suffering could be a means of bringing employees together in order to alleviate it. To this end I draw on insights gained from psychological and sociological approaches in the discussion of theories of development; on individual and collective ways of coping with or changing the institutionalized nature of organizational circumstances; on the women's movement which specifically links resistance to empowerment strategies; on the prevailing discourse surrounding employee-driven change as one of resistance rather than empowerment; and on the ethical dimension of organizational development.

The raw material taken from this disparate multidisciplinary literature, is drawn together in a way that not only highlights the organizational problem outlined, but allows the problem to be reconceived. The intellectual development leads to a greater understanding of common employee organizational problems, which present a formidable social and political problem. Despair seems to be the appropriate response to this situation. But open acknowledgement of this biased situation, articulation of alternative organizational viewpoints, discussion and negotiation can transform such covert institutionalized organizational disempowerment into a unique opportunity for the personal, social and political capacity development of employees. This is a strong assertion and is the issue that will be examined in this thesis.

What I intend to show is that at the heart of the management-employee social relationship problem lurk:

- a sense of personal powerlessness against the institutionalized position of management that prevents resistance to some management norms and practices; and
- an under-developed sense of moral and autonomous behaviour resulting in a lack of personal, social and political capacity development necessary to initiate reform.

This institutionalized disempowerment, embedded in existing organizational arrangements, results in a lack of employee group consciousness and employee-driven change around the area of developmental concerns. However I suggest that, should employees themselves wish to initiate change in order to transform their organizational circumstances, there is a developmental path open to them.

I suggest that they take the responsibility themselves for obtaining the analytical, social and political skills necessary to better understand and influence their environment. I go on to suggest that they develop a collective strategy that would work towards the resolution of their common organizational problems in order to achieve common benefits and to avoid the harm that the do-nothing option would bring. To this end, I suggest that they create an employee discourse or narrative; develop a vision of what it is they wish to achieve; set realistic goals and establish the necessary structures (internal and external) to accomplish these; and appropriate the tremendous wealth of change management material readily available.

This is neither a mindset of resistance, nor one of non-political participation in the organization as advocated by mainstream thought. It is an embracing of the politics of collective organizational life, one where employees consciously adopt a strategy to develop the abilities and structures to influence their

environment. [For South Africans this is a particularly opportune time to slipstream into the Government-driven organizational developmental initiatives. This latter development opens opportunities for employee-driven empirical research into the role of senior management, power and discourse. When linked to issues such as employment equity, gender equality and transformation, it would be interesting to document (from the employees' perspective) whether or not these specific initiatives are used as political tools for gaining credibility from the wider community; as instrumental means of gaining commitment and manufacturing consent for preferred goals or for preserving their privileged positions.] Empirical studies that critically examine organizational behaviour and discourse naturally follow once the research problem has been legitimately positioned and accepted within the political domain. I invite political scientists to extend their critical gaze into this private preserve.

One might ask how it is that these employee problems have been ignored for so long? To recognize this state of affairs, it is necessary to critically examine and understand mainstream theory of organizations and management practice; this endeavour finds such theories wanting. I am suggesting that the re-labelling of the problem as disempowerment positions the research challenge in the political domain which allows one to go beyond the limitations of mainstream organizational theory and management practice. I do not address the problem from management's perspective. The question I ask is: "How does one recognize and address the sufferings, abuse and diminishing of the developmental capacity of employees and how does one uncover the source of this unchallenged suffering?"

I develop the idea of employee disempowerment and argue that it is well-established mainstream organizational and management theory that acts as a formidable barrier to changing this situation. Prevailing mainstream theory allows covert institutionalized organizational disempowerment which inhibits

the development of employee capacity and solidarity which in turn would allow constructive opposition to management.

The label disempowerment allows one to see violation and abuse within the organizational context as political rather than pathological. It allows one to imagine a better world, a more liberating one. It stimulates the capacity to re-conceive and redefine organizational problems in creative ways. It suggests the personal, social and political development of organizational members in a way that allows them to make organizations better places for all concerned. It pleads for academe to engage in the alternative debate, for them to legitimize an employee discourse (not just a management one) and overthrow an entrenched paradigm inimical to the human condition in order that organizational life can be ameliorated.

I acknowledge that in bringing about organizational transformation all stakeholders will have to be involved. Because my thesis is specifically directed at the problems encountered by white-collar employees, I stay within this narrowly defined frame of reference and do not pursue the stakeholder approach; this is not because I in any way devalue it. I cast the problem as a long-term political organizational challenge to develop an alternative discourse that necessitates the capacity development of employees to enable them to participate more fully in organizational life.

The progression of thought and the overall structure of the argument are sketched in the description of contents which follows.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

In Chapter 1 the violation of employees is highlighted. Examples of disempowerment given cut across all previously restricted research areas. For my purposes of exposure, it does not matter whether the power constraints reveal themselves in the social relation between the boss and the subordinate of a public or private company, or a professor and a student. There are common human problems. The idea is to get the diminishing potential of organizational behaviour palpably on display.

In particular, attention is drawn to the suppression or infringement of creativity and development in employees because this concern is not seen as an infringement by mainstream organization theory. This myopic lack of perception allows the problems in this area to go unchallenged. Insight around the theme of violation and disempowerment is gained by looking at literature on powerlessness, alienation and indifference (Herzfeld, 1992; Kanungo, 1992; McKendal, 1993; Scott, 1990), collusive social manoeuvring in organizations themselves (Jackall, 1988; Leymann, 1983; Shore, 1989), feminist literature on domination and control (Ferraro, 1988; Gutek, 1985; Tangri, Burt and Johnson, 1982), social competence (Ellis and Whittington, 1981; Homans, 1974), selective literature on cognitive and moral development (Kohlberg, 1969; Milgram, 1974) and the external environmental influence on social learning (Bandura, 1965; Winnicott, 1971).

These various perspectives lead us to an understanding that abuse violates the achievement of mutually beneficial social interaction, stunts development and works against interdependent problem solving. The purpose of this chapter is not to justify the diverse academic theories that identify different aspects of the

problem but to show the problem rearing its head in a multitude of sites and circumstances. This picture justifies the approach I take to ignore the separation of public, private and type of organization in bringing the matter to attention.

In Chapter 2 a survey is made of germane aspects of the vast accumulation of organizational knowledge and management practice. These two aspects (organizational theory and management practice) appear to be fused and portrayed as synonymous. The development of organizational theory is traced; however this development is not linear (and its partitioning is contested by various theorists). Consequently the presentation of the material in a structured way is not easy, nor unbiased, because my focus is on the tension in manager-employee social relations.

The main points of theory, concerning management, employees and organizations, developed in Chapter 2, are highlighted in the following progression of ideas:

- There is one best way to structure all organizations. This is the scientific, rational approach that requires standardization of work and work relationships. This approach is eventually adapted with the formulation of contingency theory where management is recognized as having the responsibility to adopt the appropriate organizational structure necessary to foster successful organizational adaptation to the environment. Structure allows clear lines of authority. This authoritative structure creates the legitimate order of organizations and ensures maximum efficiency. Particular attention is given to the work of Donaldson (1995), Taylor (1911) and Weber (1947) where it is evident that traditional theorists are pro-management.

- Organizations also have a human element. This is evident in the finding that employees are recalcitrant beings with their own informal structure of social relations. This structure is differentiated from the formal one. While the latter is recognized as a functional, legitimate, non-political system of authority, the informal is declared dysfunctional and illegitimate and labelled as "power". Managerial power and control is confused and conflated with legitimacy, one of its functions being to eradicate and suppress symptoms of conflict and "dysfunction". The theoretical bias towards management is clearly evident. Management decision-making is justified as a technical function. The work of Barnard (1938); Mayo (1933); Maslow (1943); Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939); Simon, (1946) is given particular attention.
- Management creates the conditions that will help or hinder employee competence, job involvement (Argyris, 1964; Likert, 1967; McGregor 1960) and motivation (Herzberg, 1959, 1968; McClelland, 1961; Vroom, 1964). Organizational concern is with effectiveness as well as efficiency. Managers are required to motivate their staff, manage their behaviour and develop production capacity. The need for the special personal and social development of managers themselves, as opposed to task competency training, is identified and gains acceptance. Managers and potential managers are singled out and given selective training in developing personal, social and management skills. Argyris (1970), Bennis (1989) Lewis (1947, 1958), Hersey and Blanchard (1982), Kotter (1990), McGregor (1960), Schein (1970), Schein and Bennis (1965) contributed much in this area of management development.
- The development of contingency theory sees a maturing of organizational theory. It attempts to fuse the two antagonistic views of organizations (human and technical) in its recognition of organizations as socio-technical systems (Trist and Banford, 1951). This position is supported by a

substantial body of empirical research (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Chandler, 1962; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Pugh et al, 1963, 1968, 1969; Thompson, 1967; Woodward, 1965). Contingency variables demand structural change, that is, organizational adaptation to external, unpredictable, environmental factors, for organizations to survive and achieve effectiveness. Alternative views that challenge this position appear on the fringes of this academic front (Child, 1972; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Silverman, 1970; Weick, 1969).

- The necessity for the planned management of change to ensure organizational survival is examined from the mainstream perspective as an inescapable function of senior management (Ansoff, Bosman and Storm, 1982; Bullock and Batten, 1985; Lockwood and Davies, 1985; Peters and Waterman, 1982) who expect the collaboration of all organizational members in moving towards a desired future. The idea of organizations as social constructs gains acceptance, moving the analytical yardsticks beyond the technical construct and bringing in its wake a number of ethical, social and political concerns.

In Chapter 3 the problem of developing an academic paradigm to validate the research problem in this thesis is addressed. Mainstream organizational theory and management practice address hard facts and measurable effectiveness in the solution of technical problems. From within this framework they do not address the issues of :

- the suffering of employees and the diminution of their capacity; and
- the resistance of employees to management norms as a positive action.

From the traditional view, organizations are seen through management's eyes and this has had the overall effect of legitimizing the status quo. But there are

alternative paradigms to the well-entrenched functionalist view that give different perspectives such as: the ethical, the critical view of emancipation and enlightenment and the classical view of a hierarchy of human good. The works of Alvesson and Willmott (1992), Burrell and Morgan (1979), Bird and Waters (1989) Clegg and Dunkerley (1980), Deetz (1992), Foucault, (1977), Habermas (1972), MacIntyre (1981) and Reed (1985) are examined because they reveal the political struggle inherent in organizational life, offer alternative insights and expose alternative possibilities to the mainstream management perspective.

These alternative ideologies situate organizational analysis in the realm of the public good. The debate around social values and collective association has relevance in this context as it stimulates the hope that people will continue to aspire to improve the good of society. Defenders of the mainstream approach (Donaldson, 1985, 1988, 1995, 1996; Hinings, 1988) dissociate themselves from this debate (given the difficulty of empirical organizational research) since they view organizational theory as a separate discourse that is no longer attached to sociology and its research problems. My assertion is that there can be no solution to the institutionalized nature of this problem without academe bringing the alternative debate into the public arena. Without this level of discursive engagement, the one debate is privileged and maintains existing organizational advantage, while the other is marginalized, re-enforces unequal social relations and prevents a challenge to existing organizational arrangements.

The theme of power is developed in Chapter 4. Organizations are recognized as a form of collective life in which formal authority justifies the accompanied institutional expectation of obedience. An overview of the traditional organizational view of authority as legitimate control, functionally good and

non-political (Taylor, 1911; Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1946; Mechanic, 1962) is followed by an account of the sociological view of power (Bachrach and Bartz, 1962; Crozier, 1973; Clegg, 1989; Dahl, 1957; Gaventa, 1980; Giddens, 1968; Lukes, 1974; Parsons, 1967; Weber, 1947; and Wrong, 1968).

A detailed breakdown of mainstream research around power looks at the legitimacy of authority (Thompson, 1956; Mechanic, 1962; Crozier, 1964; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974), organizational power as illegitimate (Mintzberg, 1979, 1983, 1984) and organizational power as illegal (Gandz and Murray, 1980). It clarifies the mainstream view of the concept of organizational politics (Mayes and Allen, 1977) and labels it informal (Drory and Romm, 1988).

Though the issue of organizational power is contested, culture as a management tool (Harrison, 1972; Martin and Meyerson, 1988) is traditionally portrayed as generating commitment to change initiatives, creating unity of purpose and “getting results” throughout an organization. From an alternative perspective culture is recognized as a powerful vehicle for disseminating a managerial perspective and is regarded as a vehicle for the mobilization of bias. Alternative thinkers expose organizational culture as a means to minimizing employee dissent and resistance.

Alternative thinkers (Gaventa, 1980; Lukes, 1974; Knights and Willmott, 1989) see this built-in bias as having the effect of neutralizing political manipulation by management and therefore retarding the collective consciousness of employees. Themes such as the management of meaning (Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood, 1980), the manufacture of consent (Mumby, 1987) resistance (Barbalet, 1985), humanisation (Nord, 1978), power (Clegg, 1977), the constitution of identity and emancipation (Deetz and Mumby, 1990, Knights and Willmott, 1989) are explored. The concept of collective self-determination and transformative capacity generated in the course of struggle, put forward by

Hindess (1982), obviously does not fit well with the mainstream view of managerially directed social engineering and profit maximization.

What actually constitutes political behaviour in organizations may be a contested point but it is one which, in institutionalized practice, acts as a formidable barrier to change.

In Chapter 5 the way in which the broad, institutionalized, social context of organizations fits into the larger social environment is brought under the spotlight (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). On the one hand, institutions are a category of organization and at this level of interaction social change and adaptation is brought about. On the other, institutionalized practice of the taken-for-granted "right" way of managing has created "invisible" cognitive and normative belief systems which inform both bias and expectations (Douglas, 1986; Power and DiMaggio, 1991; Zucker, 1977). This belief system both enables and constrains organizational and management behaviour and prevents individuals from recognizing their own interests (DiMaggio, 1988).

Organizations, themselves, are treated as institutions that have an institutionalized expectation of obedience from employees and see autonomous action as a threat to the status quo. As a consequence, analytical thinking, awareness of alternatives and critical reflection - the bases of creative action - are discouraged. From a political point of view this type of critical thinking is a threat to management's perspective of organizational reality; from a performance point of view it poses a threat to the security of routine, red tape, predetermined procedures and answers, that keep an organization "ticking over".

Power and political struggle are embedded in institutional arrangements (Brint and Karabel, 1991; DiMaggio, 1988; Forester, 1989). Organizations are not totally at the mercy of external forces as mainstream contingency theory would have us believe. Different hierarchically positioned organizations act concertedly and politically to influence their institutionalized environment. The institutional vehicle of manipulation is denied those who do not have access to this more powerful level of structural recourse.

Problems and solutions that are accommodated by and acceptable to organizations are those already considered legitimate in the institutionalized context, thus affirming the status quo (Douglas, 1984). Changing this mindset requires a formidable social process that itself would have to achieve taken-for-granted status. Jepperson (1991) sees the overwhelming problem of organizational transformation as a political challenge.

The need for employees themselves to meet the political challenge is the burden of Chapter 6. The theoretical base of the chapter sets the stage for realizing the possible developmental solution outlined in Chapter 7.

In order to come to a point of departure for employees to meet the daunting task of organizational transformation, the issue of social control and conformity in organizations is examined from both sociological and psychological points of view (Stam, 1987). This examination reveals a transition in concepts from the social level of conformity to the personal level of adapting to the social environment. It does not allow employees the capacity to influence the organizational situation constructively instead of merely adapting to it

(Bandura, 1982; Crespi, 1992). Because of this shortcoming the impingement of the social environment on personal development is not acknowledged.

Focusing on the employee as an individual ignores the social, collective and institutional nature of the problems employees face within organizations. The concept of collective action (Olson, 1965) is discussed and the need is recognized for common employee problems to be identified and addressed collectively to bring about organizational change. Ostrom (1990) argues for the development of “better intellectual tools to understand the capabilities and limitations of self-governing institutions for regulating many types of resources” (1990:20). She presents her argument that, given the necessary support and skill, those involved with a problematic situation can collectively resolve difficult problems to achieve a common benefit.

Among those whom a social system renders powerless, collective action can be seen as the means by which they obtain the ability to reflect critically upon things and build the courage necessary to make appropriate changes (Gaventa, 1980). Such a collective approach to power and personal development in organizations is certainly not the sort of mindset fostered by management, nor is it the acknowledged position of labour trade unions which focus on different problematic issues and have come up a different route. Nonetheless, the labour unions have been important in stimulating the growth of non-labour employee awareness of the power of organized collective action (Hoerr et al., 1985:46).

The transformation of organizations is political activity. It addresses the desire to share, constructively, in the associational life of an organization (Knoke, 1986). At present this domain remains the privilege of management.

The women’s movement (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail, 1988; Garner, 1996; Gilligan, 1982; Sawicki, 1981; Trangri et al, 1982) is used as a model for

gaining valuable insight into effective political action and creative social change for two main reasons. It has successfully established a legitimate discourse in the face of a dominant, institutionalized discourse; and because it links resistance to empowerment strategies.

The issue of resistance in organizations is explored. That employees do attempt to resist organizational pressure is uncontested (Buroway, 1979; Clegg, 1994; Mayo, 1933; Taylor, 1911). Research in this area is examined at the employee level, (Collinson, 1994; Jos et al., 1989; LaNuez and Jermier, 1994; O'Connell Davidson, 1994; Rothschild and Miethe, 1994;) and at the organizational level (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Olivier, 1991; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Tolbert and Zucker, 1983).

It is significant to note that discourse around organizational resistance, and/or manipulation of its environment, takes place within legitimate institutionalized structural arrangements and is justified in terms of organizational survival, growth and development. Resistance at the employee level does not carry this acceptance in organizational studies. Consequently not only is it under-appreciated and under-researched but it belongs in a separate discourse within political studies that upholds the premise "that social life can be other than it is" (Perry, 1998:244). A discourse of employee-driven change can transform random acts of resistance into the achievement of specific common goals.

For employees to bring about such constructive organizational change the mindset should not be one of resistance but one where they adopt a strategy to develop the abilities and structures to influence their environment. They need to become an integral part of the creation of their organizational environment

that itself promotes the personal, social and political skills necessary to organize and reform in the process of achieving agreed-upon goals.

The mainstream position does not accommodate such action because organizations foster conformity and obedience and engage with employees at the individual rather than the collective level. When management speaks about personal development and empowerment, it is the individual task competence level that it is addressing. This tactic ignores the social, collective and institutionalized nature of the problem which embraces the politics of collective life in organizations.

The last chapter addresses the need of employees to transform management's rhetoric for employee empowerment into a reality. This organizational empowerment will, in the long term, convert the non-political participation of employees into the achievement of more humane organizations.

A history of employee and organizational development is traced (Steinmetz, 1976; Watson, 1984; Lewin, 1947; McGregor, 1960; Schein and Bennis, 1965; Beckhard, 1969; McKendall, 1993) and its ethical implications considered (Warwick and Kelman, 1973; Walter, 1984; Bermant and Warwick, 1978; Knights and Willmott, 1985; Ramsay, 1977.) This sets the stage for pulling together the argument built up in the thesis.

Based on the insights gained from the various disciplines, I suggest a way forward from my understanding of the way organizations work. The establishment of a legitimate employee discourse is the most shaping political

activity that will enable employees collectively to act effectively. The self-empowerment of employees in the face of active disempowerment, requires that employees themselves break the mould which has stunted their capacity. Circumscribed employee behaviour patterns, stunting personal, social and political development, have been entrenched by organizational theory and management practice. The essential ingredients in the process of self-empowerment, it is suggested, are for employees to:

- recognize employee leadership and achieve employee solidarity;
- gain awareness of common employee problems, of the possibility of alternative solutions and the skills required to engage with them, and embark upon an effective education programme;
- establish the desirability for change to organizational conditions inimical to human growth and development;
- articulate this vision of alternative beliefs and expectations that embraces a common benefit;
- formulate strategies for achieving this future state; and
- create the structures necessary at the appropriate levels (employee, organizational and institutional) to legitimize and achieve concrete employee developmental goals.

In the process of taking responsibility for the realization of their own personal, social and political developmental potential in organizational life, employees might collectively strive to share in the creation of a future organizational environment that benefits all its members. This long-term goal ultimately recognizes the purposeful, constructive social action of all in shaping a more

humane future organizational environment that is perceived as a common good. As a collective problem it can be recast as a long-term political organizational challenge for the development of employees to participate fully in organizational life and the evolution of institutions to enable such action.

1. DISEMPOWERMENT AND VIOLATIONS OF THE CREATIVE HUMAN SPIRIT

One day the evil spirit came to God and said, "Master of the Universe, what is the difference between this group of people who are pure, and these who are impure?" And God answered, "They, the pure ones protested. The others did not protest." "So," said the evil spirit, "had they protested, would You have listened to them?" And God said, "No." "Did they know that?" asked the evil spirit. And God said, "No, they didn't know it; therefore, they should have protested - protested against Me, against Man, against everything wrong - because protest in itself contains a spark of truth, a spark of holiness, a spark of God." [And Wiesel comments:] Therefore, little does it matter whether our protest is heard or not. Protest we must to show that we care, that we listen, that we feel.

Elie Wiesel (1985:36)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is an unfortunate state of affairs that to some extent hierarchical organizations go beyond what can be considered 'normal socialization' to become modern forms of social and personal oppression. From the point of view of full employee capacity development, they can be places that retard the human developmental process and places where the very essence of human beings are abused. They can be places where power, subordination and dependence provide a continual battlefield for the disadvantaged and oppressed versus the privileged and elite, and where this modus operandi is too easily disguised in prevailing race, gender and class conflict. They can be places where, because of a sense of powerlessness, individuality, personal, social and political development has to be suppressed in order to earn a living.

It is difficult to find the right language or words to speak about the infringement of such development in organizations. This is not management's conception of employee development nor that of organizational and management theory. Nor is there a discourse

that own this problem. The general literature covering theories of organization and management present these theories as neutral (MacIntyre, 1981). They are not shown as theories that impinge upon, diminish, circumscribe, or damage human capabilities. The language of mainstream organizational theory (the subject of Chapter 2)

- does not acknowledge the suppression and the violation of the spontaneous creative human spirit that is the outcome of critical reflection and principled autonomous behaviour;
- does not acknowledge an employee-driven vision of organizational life with alternative solutions to particular organizational issues stimulated by awareness of alternative options; and
- does not acknowledge the development of collective employee action as a positive force for bringing about organizational change and transformation.

Much has been written about the good effects of organization, and these are not being disputed. The question asked here is - how does one recognize and address the sufferings, abuse and diminishing of developmental capacity of employees working in organizations, and how does one uncover the source of this unchallenged suffering?

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the theme of violation to human beings and the issue of collusive social manoeuvring in the organizational context. Further, understanding and insight in the area of human development and the potential for stunted development and violation is gained by looking selectively at literature on cognitive development and social learning. Lessons from these fields are linked to the organizational context.

1.2 VIOLATION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Violation within the organizational context is far more prevalent than is acknowledged. To highlight this claim examples are taken from the employee experience of planned organizational change at different levels in the organization, from the experience of

conditions that promote powerlessness and alienation, and from the experience of human indifference to suffering cultivated in some work environments.

Employee Experience of Planned Technology Change at the Clerical Level

New office technology has an enormous impact on the lives of the white-collar sector (Storey, 1986; O'Connell Davidson, 1994). The implementation of change by managers has an enormous bearing on the everyday lives of clerical workers and on how these staff experience these changes. Routine work and job structures are altered and employees react to these changes. Managers of large bodies of clerical workers are themselves not direct users of the computer in the same way as their staff. They are, however, the intermediaries who take action in order to make the necessary adjustments to the work environment when significant technological changes are introduced by top management. Although these changes are handled as if they are merely changes in technology they cause "shifts in tasks, controls and relationships" (Storey, 1986:45) and cannot be divorced from their political social context, as mainstream "apolitical" empirical studies would have us believe (Mintzberg, 1973). The following discussion of technology change at clerical level reveals some critical issues for employees.

The purpose of the introduction of extensive computerization for clerical work is to deskill, standardize and simplify clerical tasks (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:69). To this end, software programs reduce the complexity and functional knowledge required to do a job. This allows for the reduction in numbers of permanent staff and the use of part-time staff during times of overload. It also allows for the development of a "more efficient" multi-functional team. This approach is considered more efficient because with the level of functional expertise removed from a job, everybody within a work unit becomes involved with the unit's wide-range of tasks, but at a lower level of expertise.

In the main this type of technological change involves filling in information on a number of computer "screens". These screens, which are called up, allow information input, storage, manipulation of information - depending on seniority, and retrieval. Built into

the software are supervisor controls which prevent manipulation of data and which count the number of entries any computer user makes and/or aborts.

The choices facing managers in their implementation of such change is critical to how staff will experience the change. This is evident in the following examples taken from two large organizations with hundreds of clerical employees. In the first company, a major British insurer, (Storey, 1986:54) the change was introduced without pressure and at a slow pace. This allowed any software problems to be ironed out. The staff were happy with the change-over as it simplified their lives. They experienced no pressure and there was, surprisingly, no reduction in staff. In fact, staff were now underemployed and had more time on their hands for social interaction. Managers did not reduce their numbers of staff as their grading, status and privileges depended on the size of their departments (1986:61).

An assessment on the overall efficiency of the technological change in the company is complex (Storey, 1986:59). In terms of number of low-level jobs completed, the old system proved to be much more efficient because of personal discretion. Because computerization standardized work, any variation had to be cleared by someone more superior. These control blocks caused delays and prevented initiative. Further, computer downtime and software hitches are built-in inefficiencies, averaging out any efficiencies gained. Clerical staff still had the time-consuming disruption of processing queries and handling telephone enquiries. The efficiencies sought after by top management were to happen across the whole organization once the computerization had standardized and routinized much of the clerical work. Only then when the nature of the work had changed would the unsuspecting employees see a second level of organization change in which departments merged and structures changed.

The second company, a large national utility in the United Kingdom, (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:74) gives a different view of technology change at the clerical level. Here the change is introduced quickly to optimize financial gains and with total disregard

for software problems. As a result of this management decision to move ahead quickly with the change disregarding software problems, all tasks had to be done both manually and on the computer for a full year; only then was the software due to be revised. Consequently work became intense, frustrating and doubly time consuming. Adding to this tension, computer controls were used by managers to monitor work. Permanent staff were reduced and part timers employed. Frustration, anger, hostility and chaos reigned. Staff who had taken pride in their functional expertise resented being deskilled; they resented being reduced to computer appendages; they resented not being able to work effectively, they resented being at the receiving end of customer dissatisfaction. They resented the intensity of the new work arrangement and resented the lack of social relief and social interaction (e.g. fetching a file). They now had no real excuse to leave their computer work-station except for going to the toilet.

What they resented above all was that because of the reduction in their level of expertise they were now more easily disposable (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:85). They had become commodities who lacked standing. With this realization came awareness that they, as clerical workers, did not have the social competence and political expertise necessary to negotiate a better deal with management. The importance of social-political skills to offset the difficulties experienced, although ignored by management, was felt as a lack by employees. In this instance this resulted in passive resistance and subtle acts of sabotage becoming the order of the frustrating day (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:91).

The Tyranny of Change

McKendall (1993) describes her experiences of helplessness and rage as a member of an organization undergoing planned change. Her view is that "practitioners and theorists have engaged in self-deception and depoliticized the practice of induced organizational change by creating a field known as Organizational Development" (1993:93).

I have felt rage and helplessness as genuinely good-hearted people attempted to redefine my reality and alter my working life. Many of

those who have undergone an organizational development effort do not speak positively of the experience; instead, they talk about loss of control and dehumanization and the passing of the buck. (McKendall, 1993:93).

Her experience and research show that much that falls under the banner of organizational development cannot all be labelled as good, and that rhetoric and reality just do not match.

Levinson (1972:83) too, in examining the human cost of the impact of change, describes employee loss of capacity to act as a result of organizational change and psychological injury. His findings were particularly significant with regard to older employees who found their once valuable knowledge obsolete and their previous experience devalued. Not only did these employees feel displaced, victimized, powerless and threatened but they knew they were no longer 'good enough'. They reacted with increased hostility to others, losing their capacity for adaptation, increasing personal problems and decreasing organizational effectiveness.

From the employee perspective, organizations that in the past long rewarded loyalty were changing their emphasis in their desire to stimulate more adaptive behaviour (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Schein and Bennis, 1965). Longer serving, well-socialized staff who had already acquired the unquestioning attitude desired by management felt disorientated by this new demand. Bridges (1986:28) describes how staff exhibit behaviour patterns "commonly associated with mourning". They are not able to accommodate innovative adaptive behaviour unless they deal with these emotions and uncouple their acquired mindset of unquestioning acceptance. They have to do this in the face of their long learnt experience that any assertive behaviour on their part would likely be seen as a problem of obedience and a cue for further management control.

In times of change organizational development initiatives are often used by management as tools to alter power balances; to realign power structures; to break up the threat of

informal control and cohesive resistance, and to induce conformity and compliance to management prerogatives (Mayo, 1933; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980).

There is power in change; a great deal of power. But the power of planned change does not reside solely in the escalation of organizational productivity or in the improvement of less than optimal conditions. (McKendall, 1993:94).

Regardless of whether the goals of these interventions are achieved in the light of overall organizational objectives, much uncertainty is created in the lives of staff.

You know, these things are always very arbitrary and capricious. And what that means is that there is no concept of loyalty anymore. You've got to position yourself continually so that you can get a good job when you're bounced. People feel that they could be rewarded for doing a good job, but they also realize that despite doing good work, their careers could be terminated in a minute. [Manager's comment on times of change] (Jackall, 1988:63).

Employees find that their working reality is redefined, feelings of dependence are created, loss of control is experienced, and compliance enforced (Blau, 1964). The overall effects of these problems are reflected in a drop in productivity. Much of the informal groupings of workers lives' is disbanded, preventing any sense of common grievance and consolidation, and breeding instead feelings of insecurity, anxiety, loss of personal autonomy, stress, hopelessness and resignation.

Anxiety is endemic to anyone who works in a corporation. By the time you get to be middle management, it's difficult to make friends because the normal requirement for friendship – that is, *loyalty* – doesn't fit in this context. You have to look out for number one more than anything else. [Comment from staff official] (Jackall, 1988:69).

While this disruption and disorientation is happening to employees, individual managers are increasing their power base and management purposes are being further reinforced and entrenched (Crozier, 1964). As a result of this element of domination, employees feel a greater vulnerability and loss of control over their own destiny as they lose the balance between themselves and their environment. As their uncertainty increases, management's certainty is increased and dependency promoted (McKendall, 1993:97). Much confusion is promoted and the need

to get out of confusion by finding [a] new frame of reference makes the subject particularly ready and eager to hold on firmly to the next piece of concrete information that he is given. The confusion, setting the stage for reframing, thus becomes an important step in the process of effecting ...change" (Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch, 1974:101).

Reframing in organizations consists in management presenting a new definition of the same circumstances inducing employees "to look at the situation in this new frame and act accordingly" (Watzlawick et al, 1974:109). In short, employees become resigned to whatever transpires.

Despite the positive rhetoric of organizational development and the assumption that planned change is 'inherently beneficial', McKendall (1993:95) suggests that the ethics of organizational development implementation should not be addressed solely from the perspective of management which can be viewed as ethically ambiguous and manipulative. In this regard it is helpful to examine Mannheim's (1964) notion of freedom:

Is not an ideally planned society a prison, a strait-jacket ...Does not the continual development of social technique lead to the complete enslavement of the individual? (1964:132, 133)

and the difficulty he raises in the formulation of a definition of freedom suitable to a given social setting. He states that the "distinction between free and authoritarian organization can be seen in the methods of regulating collective action" (Mannheim, 1964:134) and on being able to exert influence "in determining the aims which are to be realized by collective action" (1964:136). The test of freedom is depicted as being "the desire to create conditions where social adjustment is possible instead of simply accepting things as they are" (Mannheim, 1964:137). The suggestion is that one's freedom is less compromised if one is free to invent, and to determine or contribute to determining aims. Further it is implied that freedom consists in playing off these forces against each other. Within the planning situation, it will exist only if the "planner authority incorporates it into the plan itself" (Mannheim, 1964:139) leaving room always

for the freedom of human adjustment and the maintenance of the "individual capacity for adjustment" (1964:140).

With this insight, managerially planned organizational change can be seen as having the propensity to decrease employee freedom and autonomy, contradicting any 'empowerment' rhetoric that may prevail. The management drive is deceptive, in that a change initiative is masked by the language of 'team-building' and 'improved effectiveness', at the same time that it entrenches management perspectives and purposes under the guise of 'participation'.

Powerlessness and Alienation

Work norms, conditions and management practice can inhibit employee work satisfaction and well being, and promote alienation, a form of psychological sickness in which people struggle for survival.

Such serious consequences of management practice are predictable yet management have been able to ignore these concerns, as they are not held morally accountable for their actions. At a basic technical level if -

I tell someone what to do – like do A, B, or C – the inference and implication is that he will succeed in accomplishing the objective. Now, if he doesn't succeed, that means that I have invested part of myself in his work and I lose any right I have to chew his ass out if he doesn't succeed. If I tell you what to do, I can't bawl you out if things don't work. And this is why a lot of bosses don't give explicit directions. They just give a statement of objectives, and then they can criticize subordinates who fail to make their goals. [Comment from high-level executive] (Jackall, 1988:20).

Yet it was Adam Smith himself who recognized the possibility of impoverishment of spirit and atrophy of the mind as the high price to pay "for the mechanization of the human spirit" (Wilson, 1989:66) and the inability "of forming any just judgement in other areas of life" (1989:67). This idea of alienation incorporates a state of apathy and a sense of separation from one's work, a sense of frustration and "perceived failure to achieve

one's objectives through job and organization related behaviours" (Kanungo, 1992:414). It accounts for employees being psychologically harmed, suffering from stress-related illness, anxiety, depression and low morale, resulting in absenteeism and low productivity (Sashkin, 1984:14). Such powerlessness Sashkin attributes to lack of autonomy and control (1984:11).

Argyris (1957, 1964) too argues that management efforts directed to treating employees as dependent, frustrate the need for autonomy and control over one's behaviour. In other words they frustrate the normal process of human development from infancy to maturity. He also singles out the principle of planning as a prerogative of management, a principle which assigns the primary contribution of employees to that of mere performers - "taking away the planning deprives employees of an opportunity to participate in important decisions affecting their working life. They feel a loss of control over their work world; and these conditions tend to be disliked by mature individuals ... the lack of participation in defining the goals will tend to cause the employee to feel psychological failure" (Argyris, 1957:132).

From this perspective it can be seen that management practices of supervision and job design can act as barriers to the continued process of natural personal growth and consequently stunt development. By designing work that fails to meet employees' basic needs "organizations actually waste their most precious resources and most valuable assets; the people who make up the organization" (Sashkin, 1984:14). Although much management effort has been channelled in this direction, techniques developed by management or their consultants to redesign structure and jobs (job enrichment, goal setting), and methods of supervision (influence-based, participative) have been initiated primarily with productivity and profit in mind.

You always need a core of people who will do the work in an organization whether it's creative or not. You just can't have all superstars. Potential is important but you need some people who are, well, drones. You don't *want* them to move. You need people who will stay in a job for year after year and do the necessary work that is

essential to an organization's survival [Comment from a manager in a large company] (Jackall, 1988:44).

Such an efficient economic perspective is the value orientation of management described by Bird and Waters (1989) as "moral muteness". Managers are seen to avoid moral expression in worker related communications which are considered 'empty gestures' (1989:78). "They 'stonewall' moral questions by arguing that the issues involved are ones of feasibility, practicality, and the impersonal balancing of costs and benefits" (Bird and Waters, 1989:81). In this way managerial behaviour is justified on grounds of cost effectiveness and on the acquisition of a set of necessary organizational techniques. In this superordinate focus, the moral imperatives of reducing worker powerlessness and alienation are lost. Thus 'empowerment' in management literature is dealt with "without paying sufficient attention to the nature and processes underlying the construct. This may have created a management ethos regarding some techniques to overcome worker alienation, but this focus has not adequately increased our understanding of the notion of empowerment and the theoretical and moral rationale for related dealienation practices" (Kanungo, 1992:416-417).

Conger and Kanungo (1988) consider two aspects of empowerment:- a relational construct (Crozier, 1964; Pfeffer, 1981) taking its base from exchange theory; and a motivational one. The relational construct concentrates on delegation of authority and management techniques such as management by objectives, quality circles and goal setting. The motivational construct (McClelland, 1975) emphasizes an enabling capacity that enhances self-efficacy and ability to cope with environmental demands (Bandura, 1982).

Employees feel powerless when they are unable to cope with organizational demands and feel empowered when their perception of the situation reinforces their ability to cope adequately (Abramson et al., 1980). For this reason, that type of participation is advocated by Sashkin (1984) in which employees acquire new skills in setting goals, in making decisions, solving problems and making changes. In this way they become more

capable and feel empowered (1984:5). From this developmental perspective, Sashkin views participative management as a minimalist ethical imperative in doing no active harm to others (Sashkin, 1984:16). But is the manager morally obliged to empower employees and "promote rather than damage the dignity of the human being"? (Kanungo, 1992:420). Ethicists would agree (McIntyre, 1981; De George, 1986; Singer, 1986; Dworkin, 1988; Beauchamp and Bowie, 1993). This concern is voiced by researchers in the field of business ethics where the "task of business ethics research is to help create conditions for ethical practice in organizations and by organizations" (Kahn, 1990:313-314). But the indifference induced by prevailing standards of management practice show otherwise.

Indifference

Herzfeld (1992) finds it amazing that people in business/bureaucracies who profess democratic and egalitarian values are paradoxically able to produce organizations which practice repression and violate personal autonomy at every level. Herzfeld (1992:1) questions why bureaucracies which "celebrate the rights of individuals and small groups so often seem cruelly selective in applying those rights." He claims that these bureaucracies are more inclined to breed indifference, wreak widespread damage, reject a common sense of humanity, and deny identity and selfhood.

Yet employees are inclined to see the problem of bureaucratic indifference as outside themselves. This is a defense mechanism. Bureaucratic evils become disembodied fixed stereotypes and such stereotypical expectations of bureaucratic unfairness offset a sense of personal failure (Herzfeld, 1992:4). The appeal is that employees have an explanation for their inability to deal effectively with the bureaucracy and this superficially minimizes damage and saves face. It becomes a necessary mechanism which provides people "with a means of conceptualizing their own disappointments and humiliations" (1992:13) but it also provides an argument "that, under some circumstances, may lead them to acquiesce in the humiliation of others - the social production of indifference" (1992:13).

A tame example of bureaucratic indifference that is easy to relate to, and which most people have endured, is the total disregard for other people's time. "Come back next week", "Fill in these forms" - all more or less identical - "This is not the right queue - try that one", and then the next, and the next! This attitude of timelessness, professed inability to deal with a problem and constant passing of the buck is experienced by clients as petty harassment. However these bureaucratic ploys allow the parties concerned to ignore the arbitrary nature of their actions and the social dimension of their work (Herzfield, 1992:177).

A less tame example comes from the work of Scott (1990). Large bureaucratic organizations have for decades hidden, rationalized and supported abusive power relationships, particularly in South Africa as part of the established social order of apartheid. It is all too easy to perpetuate the victimization of people who have been steeped in a culture of learned helplessness and powerlessness. This is particularly so if people are willing to sell out on self-respect and autonomy by conforming and complying with abuse for fear of losing their new-found sense of identity through their work, social mobility and earning power.

Scott (1990:x) studied bureaucracies and power relations as it affected slaves, serfs, peasants, untouchables and labourers. This study included patriarchal domination, colonialism and racism as these forms of domination were institutionalized under the guise of a contract to appropriate labour, goods and services from the disadvantaged. What marks these power relationships is an underlying assumption of superiority and inferiority ascribed by birth as well as formalized forms of public conduct (1990:xi). On a personal level domination is individualized by marked arbitrary beatings, insults, denigrations and humiliations which ensures the personal experience of one's loss of standing as a person. Scott suggests that relations between the powerful and powerless have a marked strategic pose (1990:xii).

Members of the subordinate group, in public, feign deference, act stupidly and hide a part of themselves; while in private space they act out a hidden transcript which is a shared critique both of power and the powerful (1990:24). If one uses the words manager and subordinate one recognizes the same pattern of behaviour being described by Herzfeld (1992). For management to overlook or ignore such acts of 'insubordination' is a key aspect to maintaining the situation (Scott, 1990:89). Scott (1990:134) suggests that innocuous public acts of dissembling by the weak disguise insubordination and are a means of passive resistance to domination. The powerful on the other hand (1990:4) use public space to subtly assert their dominance, superiority and appearance of unanimity, and "offstage" use private space to discuss their practices and goals.

While it may be commonplace for etiquette and politeness to smooth social relations, the public interaction of the powerless with the powerful is different, not just a matter of etiquette. This difference lies in the fact that, for the subordinate group, it is a life of pretence and hypocrisy in its accommodation of power (Scott, 1990:136). The public life of the powerless in power-laden situations is viewed as a survival strategy of impression management (Goffman, 1959).

Deference to those in a higher position conveys the outward impression of conformity to a superior's wishes or status in general and confirms one's servile status, as one remains on-guard and watchful, trying to accurately read mood and desires and avoid suspicion. This outward employee performance (speech, tone, posture, gesture and facial expression as well as obedience) is ritualized public behaviour that has been learnt (Scott, 1990:118, 135). It is acquired as a necessary survival mechanism in structured power relations and in no way measures employee depth of conformity (1990:193). Organized life becomes one where the expression of frustration, anger, rage, verbal and physical retaliation is denied; standing on one's dignity or honour is a luxury that will be penalized. Unnecessary energy is spent on the control of fear and anger, masking feelings, and suppressing desire to retaliate. What is suppressed, as a consequence of domination,

finds expression offstage in secret discourse, where the acting out of anger and reciprocal aggression finds release in independent social space (Scott, 1990:200).

Although managers may require this behaviour from subordinates they are not seduced by this ritualized art of subordination evident in obsequious smiling, deference, humility and flattery. They recognize this behaviour for the tactic it is and remain in a state of vigilance and surveillance. They ascribe their watchfulness and actions of control to the characteristics of their subordinates whom they judge as deceitful, cunning and lacking authenticity (Scott, 1990:3). But sincerity is not important, what is important is the performance of obedience and appearance of consent. These behaviours reinforce the situational perspective of those in power. Any public acts of defiance or insubordination will require public showdown and punishment. Because of the sanctions in place there is general conformity to the game described.

In this way institutionalized procedures become treated as clearly defined codes of law; they become the means by which those in power deny their own insensitivity and feel justified in ostracizing those who disobey these codes. In the process the codes are reified (Douglas, 1986) and become the means by which bureaucratic managers escape the constraints of responsibility and accountability; the means by which they avoid their own capacity for interpretation.

Once bureaucratic managers and their employees are no longer expected to think for themselves they have tacit consent to evade responsibility; they may even protest that it is not within their scope and understanding to interpret policies and procedures. In this way they create a sterile environment for themselves, which leaves them impotent against established accepted practice.

Acceptance and maintenance of such an environment prevents the development of a critical frame of reference, avoids problem solving, and ascribes responsibility to some vague impersonal body far removed from oneself. Instead of addressing the problems

and bringing about organizational change, this socialized mindset prevents any useful action in that some unseen source of authority is demonized who then becomes a remote "common enemy" (Herzfield, 1992:70). In short, organizational conditions prevail that ensure a social existence where slights to one's dignity and diminished capacity are justified by the narrow, accepted codes of prevailing norms.

Reilly and Kyj (1990:23) attribute this type of problem to the 'scripts' provided by "policies, directions, codes, decision, and structures" built in to organizations (1990:24).

What is right in the corporation is not what is right in a man's home or in his church. *What is right in the corporation is what the guy above you wants from you.* [Comment from a former Vice-president] (Jackall, 1988:6 author's own emphasis).

Employees pitch their behaviour around the role of significant others, the climate and culture of the organization and the underpinnings of the organizational system itself. These factors are seen to override other ethical or moral values of behaviour. Success in the 'game' becomes the overriding imperative; intellectual and moral context is separated from the behavioural viability of the successful 'player' (Reilly and Kyj, 1990:25). If the system is "designed to promoting ends irrespective of means ... people will separate the particular system from moral content ... They will consider themselves 'ethical' or 'moral' in those aspect of their lives that they control - their personal lives outside of work" and so duality of existence is accomplished (Reilly and Kyj, 1990:27). The way is paved for the game of collusive organizational relationships.

1.3 COLLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Collusive relationships are disguised in many forms in organizations and are subtle forms of violation. The ones discussed in this section are sexual collusion, sexual harassment, patronage, and mobbing.

Sexual Collusion

Socially accepted abusive behaviour (that is, behaviour that is not mutually acceptable) violates or diminishes the other. It is particularly prevalent in sexual collusion in the workplace. From research (Farley, 1978; Collins and Blodgett, 1981; Gutek, 1985; Ferraro, 1988) it appears that some men with female subordinates (and to a lesser extent the other way round), use their position and power in the workplace to control these staff with behaviour that has sexual overtones.

Because the man was prone to do it. It didn't make any difference who it was....He just tried to touch anyone whenever he had a chance.

He's a horny old man. He tries it on everybody. He tries to hold you around the waist tight and kiss you. (Gutek, 1985:90).

Through sexual comments passed and the way they stroke these subordinates (public behaviour), some men create an ambience of sexual intimacy commonly referred to as paternalism.

The owner is always coming up and hugging me and patting me on the butt. He does it to the other girls too. He's always done it. I don't even think about it. He's affectionate. It's a very friendly thing. (Gutek, 1985:91).

Well, he was the supervisor and was like that with all the young girls, putting his hands where they don't belong (Gutek, 1985:82).

Although the overall picture is one of resignation, this type of behaviour is not free for all. It is to be initiated only by this type of manager, and only when they specifically want something. Thus they set the scene and a particular ambience, which has a courting, paternalistic and avuncular feel to it, is cultivated. This provocative yet ambivalent state can be fine-tuned for any occasion by decreasing or increasing sexual innuendo or intimacy to suit whichever ends they particularly desire.

For their prey not to play the game (a game which some subordinates appear to enjoy as they flirt for favours and advantage yet remain mindful of the detrimental effect a negative response would have on their career [Littler-Bishop et al., 1982:139]) is to side-

step the issue of control by the perpetrator. Because of the vulnerability of subordinates, few have the courage to challenge this control. Those who do, are progressively distanced and isolated on a multitude of levels, for example, exclusion from decision making, being given meaningless work, not being invited to social gatherings or meetings. If this is the punishment and one wants to "get ahead", one is reluctantly forced to modify one's behaviour.

Women are put on the spot as a target for floating sexuality, not only to tolerate such overtures, but to enter into such a collusively sexual relationship or to be marginalized. Those who do play the game, that is condone the sexual interplay, are usually rewarded by being patronized and cannot later shout foul. In a study of managers (Collins and Blodgett, 1981) it was revealed that managers expected women to deal with sexual advances as part of the job. If not, they were considered too sensitive or troublemakers. Complaints, from those not prepared to "play" or accept such pandering, unfortunately do not yield effective action or acknowledgment. These cries for help are usually put to deaf men's ears who are blind to this abusive behaviour (Gutek, 1985:72) and who are themselves caught up in a collusive system of patronage. In other words this behaviour pattern is tacitly sanctioned; and when something is sanctioned people accept what is expected of them as they believe that there is no way out.

Because this behaviour is sanctioned employees are expected to compromise their sexuality, their values and their ability to think otherwise. They are caught in a collusive behaviour pattern, and once in this position they are reliant on compliance for favours (Gutek, 1985:44). This type of violation or abuse is clearly a result of unequal power relationships.

A picture emerges of a work environment where an attractive appearance and personality are valued for women and where men socialize with subordinate women who are attractive and personable and hold low-paying, low-prestige jobs, usually clerical. That this situation seems natural and normal for so many people is testimony to the power of sex roles in shaping our view of the work world (Gutek, 1985:41).

Sanctioned violation and abuse becomes an easy means by which some managers can maintain their dominant or superior position. This behaviour leaves others submissive and diminished. As it is usually condoned on a wide scale by the system, a sense of powerlessness develops. Subordinates acquire the attributes of victims. Behaviour becomes passive, dependent, unassertive and docile; responsibility is evaded and this stunted behaviour is actually encouraged, approved of and rewarded by management. In this way the system establishes and maintains a culture of learned helplessness and powerlessness (Argyris, 1990) thus undermining the organization's ability to deal positively with change, foster relationships of mutual trust and respect, and promote innovation.

Feminist literature (Ferguson, 1984; Ferraro, 1988; Okin and Mansbridge, 1994) takes the view that the ideology of dominance, the superiority of males and their social stature is linked to men's ability and right to control others. Consequently a man's perception of being in control is important, as his dominance and his ability to control others is linked to a masculine identity. If a man's control, or his perception of that control, is threatened, he can well believe that his very identity and self esteem are under attack.

This concept of loyalty and control is relevant because "when domination is desired, loyalty is required to ensure control" (Ferraro, 1988:131).

- In the main, loyalty is perceived to be demonstrated through acceptance or unquestioning allegiance. Allegiance with others who may have the capacity to counter-influence this position, is seen as undermining control.
- Control is perceived as being allied to loyalty but distinct from it in that "a sense of control as an aspect of the self is demonstrated not only through loyalty, but through obedience, conformity, and submissiveness" (Ferraro, 1988:134). Dependent behaviour is necessary to achieve this level of control. The submissiveness required is two-fold. It requires the acceptance of traditional roles and acceptance of a man's definition of a relationship because of his "natural" superior status.

Compliance gets rewarded but leaves a person with a sense of having participated in his or her own domination. The by-product of such compliance results in creative disobedience or deception and in mistrust. As a person outwardly conforms to what is expected while carrying on a different inward dialogue a bigger and bigger chasm grows that develops into alienation.

This unpleasant description is not given to afford the "victims" the moral high ground, nor to apportion blame; it is meant to highlight the detrimental effects of organizations where relationships of power and dependence are blindly sanctioned. Gender issues show that the design of institutions is not just and that the responsibility of transforming organizations into places that promote and sustain self-esteem, moral and autonomous development, is not shared.

In a culture of learned helplessness and powerlessness (Abramson et al., 1980) employee capacity is stunted in that employees believe they have no control over their situation. They become paralyzed by the expectation and belief that they are unable to make positive change; as "victims" their only recourse becomes one of relinquishing responsibility and succumbing to paternalism and patronage. One cannot accommodate innovative, adaptive behaviour which requires critically reflective problem solving unless one uncouples this mindset of unquestioning acceptance.

Because of the high visibility of communal organizational life, threats to control and dominance are more likely to be reflected in "abusive" behaviour that is "subtle" and "socially accepted" rather than overtly violent. It is the skilled subtlety of this type of behaviour that has made it difficult to finger, acknowledge, label or appropriately address. Further the so-called "moral neutrality" of organizations has encouraged collusive insensitivity to ethical issues. This stance results in a lack of moral accounting, and disregard for moral safeguards against such pressures condones abusive behaviour and misconduct.

The silence around this type of behaviour has been broken by the work of feminists who gained the acknowledgement for this behaviour to be legitimately investigated. It has been labelled sexual harassment and together with sexual discrimination has gained legal recognition allowing inequality in employment and educational opportunities, to be recognized as a problem. (Livingston, 1982:5).

With the label now accepted we can look more fully at the problem.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was not recognized as a social issue before the mid-1970s "although it is not a new problem for the women who are its victims" (Brewer and Berk, 1982:1). It includes a range of behaviours from verbal innuendoes and threats to physical assault. Describing such sexual overtones as unwanted, presents the 'victim' with the difficulty of having to prove such behaviour. The legal perspective on sexual harassment avoids this difficulty as it focuses on the work environment itself and the effects of harassment. This handling of the problem openly addresses unequal power relations that are exploitative; deals with submission to advances that serve as a basis for selection, promotion, salary increases, and tenure; examines compliance with sexual requests where they are part of implicit or explicit terms of employment; and as a priority investigates whether such behaviour promotes intimidation, hostility and negative consequences for the employee (Gutek, 1985:9).

Although many experience sexual behaviour at work, there is a distinction between experiencing unwanted sexual approaches and describing and labelling it sexual harassment.

Andrea G., a senior, after being asked had declined to go out with Donald L., a 30-year-old professor. While at the library they ran into *each* other and started talking. She asked about her grades. He said that he looked forward to working with her while he playfully poked her in the ribs. (Reilly et al., 1982:103).

Because the situation permits it. Because you're a woman. Because he's the supervisor, you're the subordinate. The pressure. Play or don't get your promotion. Far too much of this going on. (Gutek, 1985:86).

An important issue with sexual harassment is to know at what point "the individual's responsibility ends and the institution's begin with regard to preventing or sanctioning sexual harassment" (Somers, 1982:23). After all it is organizational rewards that are being traded for sexual conduct.

Tangri, Burt and Johnson (1982) explore three possible models of sexual harassment to try and understand this type of behaviour in organizations. Of the three ways presented of interpreting sexual harassing behaviour - the natural/ biological, the organizational and the socio-cultural - there is no clear-cut support of one in particular as the research indicated that the matter is too complex. However each model does suggest clear predictions as to: "(a) who should be likely victims of sexual harassment, (b) who should be likely harassers, (c) the kinds of acts or behaviors to be expected, (d) how victims should feel and react to those acts, (e) what outcomes and consequences are likely, and (f) what characteristics of the work situation should be associated with greater harassment" (Tangri et al. 1982:34).

- The natural/biological model does not have negative overtones. It is a motivational model that rests on the assumptions that - the sexual drive is strong and does not have discriminatory intent; and that sexual attraction is natural, "that both sexes participate in sexually-oriented behavior in the workplace, and that they like it that way" (1982:35). Women are viewed as sexual and their presence elicits the expression of sexuality. If women are treated as women they cannot complain. The behaviour pattern is trivialized, overlooked and ignored.
- The organizational model sees the organization as offering opportunities for those in "power and position to extort sexual gratification from their subordinates" as they lack "the material independence and security necessary to resist". Therefore they are vulnerable to "economic, psychological, physical, and social consequences" (Tangri et

al., 1982: 37-38). This model relates these problems to the organizational infrastructure that provides the necessary opportunities for sexual aggression. Legitimate power can be used to coerce employees to engage in sexual interaction and to accept the role of sex object. Livingston (1982:16) found women to be more fearful when harassed by a male superior where a negative response could be detrimental to their careers; more disgusted by both higher and lower-level attention than that from men of equal status. Yet women are socialized to receive success through their association with males, either by marriage or through a male in a senior position. They are "trained and encouraged to react to men of high status more favorably and perhaps more tolerantly than to men of equal or lower status" (Littler-Bishop et al, 1982:139).

- The socio-cultural model has its roots in the patriarchal system that asserts male dominance within a social system that values male aggressiveness and female passivity (1982:40) and "argues that sexual harassment reflects the larger society's differential distribution of power and status between the sexes" (Tangri, Burt and Johnson, 1982:56). Socialization then assures that people are predisposed towards these roles and understand their worth in sexual evaluation by men. The best way to manage this situation would be to remove women from the male domain of the work situation! The work environment becomes a place for gender-based expectations of gender access and "sex-role spillover". Female employees then think this treatment is a function of the job (Gutek and Morasch, 1982:55). Some people do not even know they are being harassed. Farley (1978) reports a woman janitor who had to sleep with the foreman in order to get easy work. She did not consider it harassment, just part of the job. With this construct sexual harassment is a form of power behaviour which has features in common with rape.

The socio-cultural model mirrors the feminist perspective which sees sexual harassment in the work place as the logical consequence of sexism in society where law, religion, business and politics are male-dominated. Women are the inferior sex and men exploit them with impunity. They are rewarded at work for their traditional feminine role and

behaviour rather than for competence at work. This state of affairs has enormous repercussions for organizational life because male-domineering behaviour which was once considered "normal" is now acknowledged as abusive by females usually in subordinate positions. Feminists see the workplace as just another sphere for male dominance; therefore their target remains the transformation of society's norms not just the organization's.

Rather than the feminist model, Nieva and Gutek (1981) prefer to use the model of sex role spillover which facilitates the expression of sexuality at work. Work becomes just another setting for gender-based roles which are actually inappropriate to work. As a consequence women are expected to serve as helpers, assistants or associates without advancing to senior positions. In particular they are supposed to be nurturing, be physically attractive and have a pleasing personality. Familiar roles to fall back on are spouse, lover, parent or child. Or as Kanter (1977) puts it, a woman is recognized as pet, mother or sex object.

Mary was hired as a secretary at a large insurance company. To her dismay, she found that her boss asked her to work late with him on several projects. He spent much of this time telling her about his personal problems, including his unsatisfactory relationship with his wife. He usually apologized for keeping her at work so late and offered to take her to dinner. Mary refused each time but still felt uncomfortable. After three weeks, although she did not have another job offer, she quit. (Gutek, 1985:1).

The work environment that considers intimacy an accepted feature of an organization presumes heterosexuality and asserts that sexual approaches are liked, wanted and encouraged, appropriate and acceptable. This reinforces the gay's position as an outsider and highlights a dangerous quality of their work life should they wish their sexual preference to remain unacknowledged in order to avoid prejudice and hostility (Schneider, 1982:75).

Because the man thought it was his right to go after me. I worked with some very chauvinistic men. They thought women were sex objects. They would make sexual jokes and I was expected to respond to the

jokes in a favorable way or else they would call me a dyke or lesbian.
(Gutek, 1985:89).

Unwanted sexual advances are experienced negatively with embarrassment, anger and disgust, yet not always labelled as harassment. This implies that there is no clear definition of what is and what is not perceived as sexual harassment and that the nature of the interaction itself as well as the organizational setting has a bearing (Brewer, 1982:151).

Women with advanced education and ambition are particularly vulnerable. Most probably lawyers, accountants and academics have higher expectations of being treated in a professional manner and are more likely to label sexual overtones as harassment (Gutek, 1985:56). Unlike low-paid people who can find low-paid jobs more readily, these women have to tolerate unpleasant working conditions and put up with a different type of harassment. They have to deal with sexual comments and touching that distract from their work and draw deliberate attention to their sexuality. This is done as a deliberate sign of disrespect (Gutek, 1985:119-120). It is done as a measure of retaliation to "make life miserable" and encourage them to leave.

Although men too experience sexual overtones, it is exceptional to find them associated with negative job-related outcomes. They are not the ones usually who have to quit a job, be transferred or who are fired. Nor does it hinder their chances for promotion or general opportunities for advancement.

An attractive, unmarried, young woman may behave seductively because she is sexually or romantically interested in the man, wants to acquire extra privileges at work, is trying to have her work noticed, or wants access to useful, job relevant information. It is unlikely that she can affect the man's job, although she may constitute an annoyance or an embarrassment to him. While such behavior on the part of a woman may be persuasive or even irresistible to the man, it lacks any organizational authority of the kind possessed by a foreman or manager making sexual demands of a subordinate....he probably can transfer the woman or even fire her for nonprofessional conduct, as one man in the survey said he did. (Gutek, 1985:66).

Settings do convey meanings and do constrain and shape behaviour; and a work environment can be made to encourage or discourage sexual overtones, aggression or hostility. Socio-sexual relations are not unaffected by structure or work-related segregation of the sexes. Hierarchical structures do give opportunity for relations that have no constraints or limits imposed. Yet employees behave as if the structure is of no effect when much of the problems discussed are a response to structure rather than merely personal behaviour (Lipman-Blumen, 1984:8).

The potential danger inherent in asymmetric power relations and patronage divert energy from constructive behaviour directed to the achievement of positive, realizable goals that benefit all concerned. This mismatch is again evident in a study of patronage.

Patronage

Shore (1989:57) suggests that patronage is a covert and implicit structured code of behaviour that thrives in bureaucratic institutions. This code is implicitly sanctioned as it is never officially recognized, and as organizations have come to stand outside the morality of society (Gellner, 1977:3). Theoretically patronage and bureaucracy are opposed as the one is associated with impersonal, legal and rational norms (Weber) while the other is "personal, partisan, subjective and particularistic" (Shore 1989:58).

Shore (1989) uses a case-study of an Italian university to show that while formal rules exist it is the informal management rules (covert and implicit) which create the social code of conduct for university relations. The university he chooses is one that has 1 600 foreign lecturers (half of whom are English), given the then newly legislated position in Italy that all lecturers in contract posts were to be reclassified as 'self-employed free-professionals' without pension or other benefits (1989:59). Because these staff were responsible for the design of courses, took the lectures and set the exams they broached this unfair situation with the Dean. He expressed surprise that they were being employed in breach of contract. When they returned to the department, its head upbraided them for their action:

she told them they were naïve to go to the dean 'behind her back' (as she perceived it) - first, because he was her 'friend' and had telephoned her immediately afterwards to tell her what had happened (and, she implied, to warn her that if she could not keep her department under control there would be trouble), and secondly, because there was nothing in what they said that he did not already know. His cordiality and surprise at hearing their news was all feigned, and his advice on the phone was to sack any *lettori* that caused problems....She reminded them that their jobs at the university were discretionary on her whim and protection and that to remain employed they merely had to please her and refrain from rocking the boat. She dismissed any threat of industrial action on the grounds that she was immune to itA few months later, most of the *lettori* had either lost their jobs or resigned...(Shore 1989:60).

This example Shore uses to show the pattern of behaviour that the university's system of patronage generated and the sociological and psychological frameworks that facilitate this state of affairs. Relative chaos on campus allows the consolidation of an elite who are able to reinforce their power structures. Deans are shown to behave like feudal barons who "preside over a social hierarchy based on status, rank, power, and personal domination over subordinates, and just as feudal lords gave protection to clients in return for taxes, favours and personal loyalty, university professors are expected to 'protect' their supporters" (1989:62). Jobs are part of private spoils to be shared among supporters. A new type of caste system is born.

While those in power protect some subordinates in return for their personal loyalty and obedience, they create a competitive environment. In such a context where jobs consist in attachment to those in power rather than merit, subordinates would find it difficult to succeed or even survive if they did not comply.

Often behind the scene negotiations make employment, selection and promotion processes a charade particularly when out of many applications only one candidate appears on the shortlist. Yet the motions are still gone through with all the red tape and ceremony. The price paid by the subordinate is not in his/her long term interest as s/he experiences loss of independence, loss of professional self-esteem and integrity as he or

she becomes caught up in an unchallenged web of power where the only alternative is the choice of patron (Shore 1989:63). As a result of such an incapacitating environment there

are people who go through life thinking they can do a lot more than they really do. And the reason is that losing or changing jobs is a very high stress situation and most people prefer to hang on to what they've got – to their routine. They're not happy but they go through life like prisoners of war not recognizing their true situation. [Comment from an executive] (Jackall, 1988:66).

Keeping people in such a circumscribed environment requires tremendous skill. The subtlety of the relationship is that the person in power prefers to portray this relationship as one of personal friendship (Guttek, 1985:16). In this way the informal footing gives a special meaning to the social relationships. It justifies the pattern of patronage as it expresses dominance in the idiom of loyalty and friendship (Ferraro, 1988:131). Further, those in senior positions close ranks against any possible attack. Everyone in the system is expected to play the game, those who don't are considered naïve and bad-mannered. They are neatly and efficiently marginalized. One way of doing this is described below.

Mobbing

The above example of patronage leads to an example of on-the-job "mobbing". Mobbing is a term used in psychological literature to describe extreme psychological violence exerted in the work environment on a person by another or by a group.

Leymann (1993(a):29), after many years of research, describes how such cases of mobbing start off as conflict between a subordinate and his/her manager and escalates according to a fixed pattern which will lead to his/her eventual isolation. He gives the example of Bertil, a capable technical researcher in a research institution (1993(a):28). Bertil had been in charge of 20 research projects, was well supported by granting authorities and customers and was generally popular. His work was regularly presented in international scientific journals and he was often asked to give lectures. A new managing director took over the institute who did not like Bertil's jocular style and had a

different view of the type of research Bertil should be doing. He secretly warned the granting authorities not to endorse Bertil's next project, criticized his work, and declined his annual increase, ignored his expense claims, avoided talking to him and generally started to ostracize him. Bertil began to show his irritation, his easy-going nature was lost and open conflict, in which the director was always the winner, became the norm. Bertil was heading one way - downhill. Colleagues started avoiding him, he lost his standing with customers and contractors, he lost his standing in the community making him an unlikely candidate for new job opportunities. Why? Leymann ascribes this to the mobbing phenomena.

In work environments where asymmetric power relationships are the norm, problems in the boss-employee relationship are not acknowledged. Therefore the normal social norms do not keep an appropriate balance and control. This lack of acknowledgement leads to a lack of constraint. This allows a problem situation to develop. Consequently conflict, which is a normal part of relationships, sometimes gets out of hand. Once this point is reached the conflict requires special constructive effort and tolerance among all involved with the situation. Without this type of positive intervention a crisis of 'ill-conceived actions and desperation' develops. This behaviour can escalate into mobbing by which the "victim" is expelled from the normal social interaction of working life.

The behaviour begins when a particular person is singled out, ostracized, and starts getting "the treatment". S/he is ignored during decision making, humiliated in subtle ways and given meaningless work. This behaviour is recognized by other workers for what it is, and rumours start spreading about the person. Many start to feel uncomfortable and avoid the person; yet the general attitude is that the problem does not exist. Yet everyone knows the individual is a "marked" person.

Those around regularly assume that the cause of the problem lies in the deviant personality of the victim - which is not true. There is no such thing as a mobbing-prone personality. Anyone can be the victim of mobbing. (Leymann, 1993:30).

This kind of terrorization and psychological violence continues and the isolated victim starts losing confidence, behaving in a suspicious manner, and reacting to others with sarcasm at even innocent remarks. Emotional stress permeates all interactions and colleagues distance themselves from the "loser". Misunderstandings are fuelled which further suspicions, low tolerance of stress and exaggerated story telling. Yet nothing is ever concrete, there are all sorts of "hints" about vague complaints and unco-operativeness.

The ugliest aspect, however, is that Bertil's colleagues also distanced themselves from "the loser". At first furtively, with bad conscience, later in a more obvious way - that is when the corridor talk had reached such proportions that they were no longer embarrassed at the betrayal of their colleague. (Leymann 1993:29).

Eventually the point comes where it is more important for management to run the person down and out than to manage the conflict. But by this time such victims are not likely to find different employment easily, as in their downhill experience their state of mind becomes badly disturbed, and personal standings with others becomes compromised. Leymann warns that this authoritarian type of management are likely to behave in this way "every time there is a bit of friction" (1993:30). In Bertil's case:

The two men should have agreed on research priorities and development policies in a couple of planning meetings. There are efficient mediation models to structure this procedure. But of course, the parties have to be able to talk to each other. (Leymann 1993:30).

Will such ill-treated people have the perspicacity to "get out" sooner rather than later, or will they become the deadwood, effectively silenced, prone to many periods of sick leave and hopefully early retirement? Will these be the staff management fingers in relief during major periods of organizational change and retrenchment?

The Bertil in this true story submitted to his fate and went on working with what the management wanted him to do - but a shadow of his former self. He had been effectively silenced as a researcher and work colleague. Had he been a less robust person he would probably have had a severe nervous break-down followed by early retirement or long periods of sick leave - maybe committed suicide. (Leymann 1993:29)

Without a moral dimension in organizations those managers who are morally unsuited for the power they exercise (regardless of how efficiently and effectively they achieve their bottom-line profit) are able to use their positions and tongues as strategic weapons to rob others of their dignity. At the same time they bind others to them as acolytes. These selected employees are prepared to suspend their own moral judgement rather than tempt "the treatment" or tyranny of their "superiors".

Now what it really means is going with the flow and not making waves. If you disagree with something, bowing to the majority without voicing your disagreement. You can indict a person by saying that he's not a team player. That doesn't mean he won't follow directions. It's because he voices an objection, because he argues with you before doing something, especially if he's right. That's when we really get mad – when the other guy is right. If he's wrong we can be condescending and adopt the "you poor stupid bastard" tone ... [Manager's comment on team effort] (Jackall, 1988:54).

This ambiguous yet pervasive misuse of position and power is a form of abuse by which many unfortunate employees become diminished and violated, many to the extent that they stop growing as human beings. It is only twenty years down the line that some of these people eventually wake up to the fact they have, throughout their working lives, been numbed into non-living to become "an echo without voice, a shadow without reflection" (Wiesel, 1968:17).

The ability to grow throughout one's life span is a wonderful attribute of being human. It brings a sense of joy and liberation to living. To have this ability stunted is to have one's creative response to life diminished. This insight is endorsed by the following aspects of developmental literature.

1.4 THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT THAT INFORM ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Selective literature on human development and dysfunctional practices is a useful source of information for learning, recognizing problems and drawing useful links that have implications for behaviour in organizational settings. These areas are relevant because

they show autonomous learning as a continuous life process and reveal potential problems associated with a lack of autonomous development. They also draw attention to social conditions that facilitate competence in social skill development and those that retard development by the diminishment of people.

Theories of Development

Two approaches to social and moral development are examined - the cognitive developmental model and the social learning model. The cognitive developmental approach emphasizes the individual and his interaction with his environment. It concentrates on the development of individual characteristics and a person's reasoning and moral capabilities. The social learning approach draws attention to influential external environmental factors (individual, group or institution) in which socialization occurs and emphasizes the conditions that lead to development. Both approaches highlight different aspects of a learner's environment and both give different types of information that are essential when considering life-long development.

Although the literature on social learning emphasizes what occurs in childhood, social learning continues throughout the life cycle of people both within different groups and within organizational settings. In other words, different settings provide the context for continual social behavioural learning. This is because people are constantly required to acquire skills and alter their behaviour to accommodate these various settings. What it is that people have to learn and why becomes as important as how they learn (Goslin, 1971:2).

Cognitive Developmental Approach

Contemporary work on cognitive and moral development is dominated by Kohlberg's theory (1969) which builds on the work of Piaget (1932), although the idea of moral learning can be traced beyond Piaget to Kant, Rousseau, Aristotle and Plato.

Piaget (1932) reacted to prevailing theories that a child was a passive copy of the world. His research stresses the child's active interaction with his/her environment in assimilating and accommodating it. He argues (Kohlberg, 1971:390, 401) that a child's world is different to that of the adult and that a child goes through distinct cognitive phases showing the development of two moralities. The first classification is a child's development between the ages of four - eight as heteronomous, that is, dependent upon/obedient to those in authority. The second, from eight onwards is described as autonomous, that is, subject to one's own constraints.

Piaget's research (Gardner, 1982:62, 218) indicates that children at an early stage of cognitive development have an 'objective orientation' while older children have a 'subjective orientation'. Piaget offers the following experiment in which he describes two sequences of behaviour and asks children of different ages which boy was the naughtier. Johnny, who inadvertently knocks over a tray breaking fifteen cups, or Henry, who in stealing some cookies knocks over and breaks a single cup. Children up to the age of eight or nine saw the 'objective' greater damage as the fifteen cups and therefore consider Johnny the naughtier. Beyond this age children develop a grasp of intentions and motivation, a 'subjective' approach, and find Henry the naughtier. Piaget's overall work, however, emphasizes problem solving reasoning capacities rather than emotional development.

Kohlberg (Goslin, 1969:376) believed moral development to be more complex and continued for longer than that described by Piaget. Through his research, Kohlberg (1966; 1969; 1981) describes the cognitive reality of a child's own understanding of him/herself based on the child's expanding knowledge, as the key to sequential developmental stages. Only with the achievement of higher levels of understanding comes altered behaviour. Context, however, remains important in the evaluation of a child's behaviour in order to assess the purpose of the behaviour and the meaning it has for the child who has performed it.

To indicate moral development Kohlberg (1969) focuses on an individual's reasoning in situations where a case may be made for different courses of action. The following summarized story (Kohlberg, 1969:379) is one used in many of his studies:

Heinz's wife is on her deathbed and needs a particular drug. Heinz goes to the pharmacy to buy the drug but it is outrageously expensive. The pharmacist has a mark-up ten times the cost price. Heinz tries to borrow the money but only comes up with half. This he offers the pharmacist but the offer is refused. In desperation he breaks into the pharmacy and steals the drug. What should Heinz have done?

As a result of his studies Kohlberg (1969:382; Gardner, 1980:523-4) claimed that every person goes through six sequential stages of moral reasoning and development beginning with an egocentric view moving towards an other-regarding moral stance. These he classifies under three levels each comprising two stages.

- The preconventional level of morality relates to middle childhood where external acts are orientated around punishment and obedience moving towards exchange and reciprocity. (This approach echoes the way organizations are designed and type of behaviour they wish to solicit). Stage 1 lumps people and objects together. Heinz should steal the drug, it's not that he did not offer to pay a reasonable price for it. Or, Heinz should not steal the drug, stealing is a crime. Stage 2 gives greater value to people. Heinz should steal the drug because his wife needs it. Or, he shouldn't steal it because the pharmacist has a right to make a profit from his business.
- The conventional level (typically adolescents 13-16) also goes through two stages in which one conforms to group norms and does what is expected of one. (This level relates to what management hopes to achieve by instilling a particular culture to which all are expected to conform). Stage 3 looks at interpersonal concordance and motive. Heinz should steal the drug because he is a good husband acting out of love. Or Heinz should not steal, he won't be blamed for his wife dying. Stage 4 looks at the action in relation to law and order, as motive is seen as not sufficient reason. Heinz should steal the drug. The do nothing option is not acceptable; but he must also plan

to recompense the pharmacist. Or Heinz may wish to save his wife but it is wrong to steal and take something valuable from another.

- The postconventional, autonomous, principled level (age 16-20) has the final two stages in which one's own conscience rather than the group's values become the basis for one's actions. In Stage 5 right action is measured against general rights and standards. Heinz should take the drug as the law was not formulated with these circumstances in mind. Or Heinz cannot steal as even extreme circumstances will not justify taking the law into his own hands. Desperation does not justify the means used. Stage 6 looks at more abstract principles where it may be right to deviate from a rule as long as one is respecting principles of justice, equality of human rights and human dignity. Heinz, forced between stealing and letting his wife die, must act to respect and preserve life. Or, Heinz should not steal, he has to consider all the others who also need the drug just as badly.

Moral courage is seen as critical for people to live up to Stage 6 as some of "those *capable* of reasoning that way do not wish to be martyrs like Socrates, Lincoln, or King and *prefer* to reason at a lower level (Kohlberg, 1981:139, author's own emphasis). Kohlberg (Thomas, 1991) however, does not address how one acquires "the requisite cognitive skills and the acquisition of a certain motivational structure to have the courage of one's convictions though one's life should be at stake (1991:470). This stage is not accommodated officially in organizations and sensitivity around moral issues becomes muted.

The skill development and training indispensable to the Aristotelian "thought that a person could come to be morally good only by first coming to do morally good things habitually" (Thomas, 1991:471) is not part of the functional organizational mindset. Yet such moral competence would give a person a sense of moral self-esteem. However, Thomas warns of pursuing one aspect of morality as the primary source of one's self-esteem (for example, Socrates' drive to teaching good living and Gandhi's passion for

nationalism both at the expense of being good husbands and fathers) which can leave one "less sensitive to moral claims in other areas" (1991:474). Thomas's (1991) suggestion is that:

Our commitment to morality is not independent of the positive effects it will have upon our self-esteem. And when our self-esteem is deeply anchored in any activity, be it moral or otherwise, we tend to experience blind spots in other areas of life - even other areas of the moral life. From the standpoint of moral development, especially in terms of a commitment to morality for which one is prepared to die, this is a very sobering thought" (Thomas, 1991:474).

Given the above information, it would appear that organizations expect employees to act from Kohlberg's pre-conventional and conventional levels of development where obedience and conformity to organizational norms and practices are accepted as superordinate. If employees do not develop the cognitive skills necessary to attain post-conventional levels of cognitive and moral development their mindset of obedience can lead to frightening results. We see evidence of this danger in Milgram's (1965) experiment.

Milgram (1974) takes issue with Kohlberg's constructs which show moral reasoning but not the relationship between moral reasoning and actual moral behaviour. He finds it one thing to talk about respect and rights in the abstract but "quite another to examine a moral choice in a real situation" (Milgram, 1974:xi). The practice of obedience highlights this predicament. In a disturbing experiment Milgram (1965) shows how people will carry out orders and do without hesitation things that they would consider unthinkable in the normal course of events.

The essence of obedience consists in the fact that a person comes to view himself as the instrument for carrying out another person's wishes, and he therefore no longer regards himself as responsible for his actions ... [T]he freedom to engage in cruel behaviour, and the types of justification experienced by the person (Milgram, 1974:xii)

are the same whether the circumstances are experienced in a laboratory control room or not. Obedience, however, is coloured by cooperation where willingness is present or

compelled by fear where there is threat of punishment as perceived by the person. It is also influenced by position and status in the social structure, which are important factors in the work environment.

As evidence of the inherent danger of such a mindset, Milgram (1965) conducts a vivid experiment where subjects are asked by a scientist on a project to administer increasingly severe shocks to another person. The critical thing in this experiment is to see whether the shock will or will not be given, not why (for example, to further science); and to see at what point the scientist's instructions would be refused. Although a simple experiment, it gained such notoriety that it was repeated with more than a thousand participants at several universities (Milgram, 1974:3).

Participants were engaged (under laboratory conditions) to take part in a memory/learning study concerned with the effects of punishment on the learner (Milgram, 1965:128). The 'learner' (an actor receiving no shocks at all) is strapped into an electric chair. The 'teacher', the naïve experimental subject, is put before an impressive shock generator containing voltage levels ranging from 15 to 450 volts marked up verbally as Slight Shock to Danger-Severe Shock. Every time the learner gives an incorrect answer the teacher is to administer a shock, increasing the level of shock with each error. With each given shock the learner feigns reaction, starting with visible discomfort and escalating to agonized screams. The situation is tense. If the teacher hesitates he is ordered by the scientist to continue with the experiment.

The 'shocking' result of the experiment is the substantial number of participants who continue, against all pleadings and suffering on the part of the learner (let alone their own discomfort and stress), to the last shock on the generator. They behave like good ordinary people doing their job properly. It would appear that few people have the resources necessary to resist authority (Milgram, 1974:6) and translate their personal values into action (1974:10), such as not inflicting suffering on a helpless person. Those

who disobey authority have a gnawing sense of having been faithless and of having deserted a cause (1974:164).

The experiment holds frightening possibilities for management as it becomes evident that "things" change as soon as structural hierarchy is present as in the division of labour. From Milgram's experiment (1965) it is alarmingly evident that although aware of injustice and suffering, the majority of 'teachers' though disagreeing with what they do, and conscious of feeling the tension between conscience and authority, allow the 'legitimate authority' to call the tune. In the original experiment only fourteen out of forty people eventually disobeyed. This problem has ominous consequences for the organizational context (Milgram, 1974:186) as history has all too graphically shown what atrocities were committed during Hitler's dominance, the Vietnam War and the South African apartheid era.

In order to try and judge possible limits of authority and the influence of group pressure on people, Milgram (1965:130) conducted a further experiment. The same experimental design was used except the teacher now has two peers (colleagues of the scientist) who refuse to administer the shocks to punish the 'learner' at his first vehement protest. In this new experiment 36 out of 40 'teachers' disobey the scientist. Group pressure was shown to undermine the scientist's authority. Teachers disobeyed both because of internal values and because of the personal tension felt to comply with peer group judgement and norms. The point of interest is that it is mutual support that is seen as the strongest defence against authority.

The four who remained obedient used phrases such as "I felt they were just being ridiculous ... they lost control of themselves". "I don't think they should have quit. They came here for an experiment and I think they should have stuck with it" (Milgram, 1965:132). These four give legitimate authority full sanction. They accept its authorization of their actions, uncritically accept its view and submit willingly (Milgram, 1974:122). They feel responsible "to the authority" directing them. The "subordinate

person feels shame or pride depending on how adequately he has performed the actions called for by authority". (1974:146).

Goffman (1959) also affirms this state of affairs that once the definition of a situation has been accepted people do not usually challenge it. Milgram (1974) found his study disturbing because he felt that it showed "the kind of character produced in American democratic society, cannot be counted on to insulate its citizens from brutality and inhumane treatment at the direction of malevolent authority. A substantial proportion of people do what they are told to do, irrespective of the content of the act and without limitations of conscience, so long as they perceive the command comes from a legitimate authority" (Milgram 1974:189). This same logic holds for the organizational context in which employee social learning is narrowly prescriptive and in which management is the only legitimate authority.

Relevant points of reference for social learning are now examined.

Social Learning Approach to Development

Children learn to behaviour like adults through imitation. This position, taken by Miller and Dollard (1941), states that initially imitation is accidental but with recognition the behaviour becomes reinforced. Bandura (1965) refutes this position because taken literally every sound a child makes would have to be reinforced in order for the child to learn to speak. Bandura (1965:590) stresses learned sequences of behaviour. Children observe behaviour, retain features of this behaviour, duplicate them and do this in terms of the perceived award. Even antisocial behaviour will be reproduced dependent on the reward/punishment consequences that have greeted the behaviour observed and learnt.

In a powerful demonstration Bandura (1965:593) exposes three groups of children of various ages to watch a film-model play aggressively with a toy doll. In the one group the model is rewarded for his aggressive behaviour, in the other, upbraided and, in the third, there is no consequence to the behaviour at all. The children are then left alone in a

room full of toys and observed. Unsolicited imitative responses varied. Those children in the punishment-model have fewer imitative responses; those in the reward-model have more matching responses, while those in the no-consequence-model have more responses than the punishment-model. In other words, rewarded behaviour is more generally imitated. At this point in the experiment, incentives are then offered to the children for reproducing the model's behaviour. The number of imitative responses obtained wiped out the previously noted differences in performance "revealing an equivalent amount of learning among children" across all three conditions.

Unlike Kohlberg's cognitive account (1969), this social-learning view ignores the child's level of cognitive development and does not acknowledge that children of different ages have qualitatively different views of the world. It concentrates on conditions of reinforcement. In other words, the existence of objects and an understanding of existing social codes of behaviour are taken for granted (Gardner, 1982:59). While the cognitive behaviour approach appears to explain moral reasoning, the social-learning view shows that actual social behaviour such as aggression and empathy would appear to depend on a complex combination of understanding, predisposition and social reinforcement.

Gewirtz (1971) focuses on this element of social reinforcement. He emphasizes how variations in reinforcement affect social behaviour in that particular reinforcers condition people to respond in a particular way (1971:69). For the reinforcers to remain effective they have to become generalized to the extent that they are associated with a variety of functioning reinforcers not just a single reinforcer (1971:149). For example, meeting the expectations of managers and gaining their approval results in advancement, promotion, salary increases, internalization of norms and standards, deference to organizational thinking and subordination to authority. In other words there is a chain reaction to meeting management expectations.

The developmental research discussed above indicates overwhelmingly that people do change over time. This trend is evident in both cognitive development and social

learning. From the cognitive dimension, autonomy and moral development are seen to be lifelong education, progressive growth is identified as one of educated perception (Burnyeat, 1980:72). While on the other hand, the social environment too has a meaningful role to play in shaping the lives of people. From this view morality is concerned with social organization and with institutions that do or do not reinforce certain types of behaviour that encourage mutual benefit and that promote human development.

The two different perspectives of cognitive development and social learning give very different and important insights for those interested in making learning and human development an important part of everyday organizational living. It reveals that

- without active intervention human capacity development can be stunted;
- with necessary cognitive tools people are able to revise their mental constructs in order to assimilate meaningful social experience;
- development in autonomy and moral judgement is not separate but connected to a person's general social development; and
- institutions shape behaviour and need to be created with this reality in mind.

These lessons from developmental and learning theory are relevant for they show that behaviour, and specifically moral behaviour, is not just a cognitive exercise but is rooted in social conditions that are created. Organizations are major influences that socialize behaviour of employees.

Organizations are contexts that create specific conditions promoting certain behavioural characteristics, attitudes and norms to which employees have to conform. They provide the value system, the "basic guidelines for determining how conflicts in human interests" among a specific group of people will be addressed (Rest, 1986:1). This socialization process begs the question as to whether organizations accommodate people, or whether human beings are being made to fit prescriptive organizational conditions. If the majority of employees are tailored to fit narrow functional constraints they are being reduced to

organizational role performers rather than developed to become organizational role players. The skill requirements of role performers are different to those of role players. Role performers need to acquire attitudes of obedience while role players require the acquisition of social and political skills essential for effective participation in their environment. They need appropriate skills to create an organizational environment in which there is respect for differing circumstances and needs, respect for and from others holding different views and positions in the organizations, as all work toward achieving objectives and optimizing mutual benefit.

Those assigned the position of passive role performers cannot challenge their position, or acquire the skills to renegotiate their position which continuous development would demand. By promoting such a dichotomy of organizational roles inequitable organizational conditions are created where those given the opportunity for personal, social and political skill development to become meaningful organizational players can exploit those who do not have the access or benefit of such development.

This is unlike the conditions of Homans' (1974) ideal of a healthy society which works on a system of positive exchange. He states (1974:16) that the elementary form of social behaviour and social relationships is the "success in getting a favourable result". That is, interpersonal competence depends on one's capacity to reinforce and reward others by having the ability to initiate and sustain interaction and to ensure positive outcomes. For exchange to be rewarding for all participants it has to have a bearing on all parties' needs and goals. Homans' (1974) model of exchange theory presupposes social competence to sustain the necessary interaction required.

Social skills are seen as critical for bringing about change in one's environment; as being essential for persuading others to recognize what the world looks like from one's point of view; and in creating conditions for achieving mutually advantageous cooperation.

Social skill is being used here to describe "how we behave to each other, how we achieve

our social ends and," in particular, how we can reflect on our behaviour in order that it may be changed and made more effective (Ellis and Whittington, 1981:11).

The possibility of flexibility of response is built into the concept of interpersonal competence; whereas interpersonal incompetence reveals itself in behaviour patterns that are coercive, domineering, aggressive and negative. Such a socially incompetent style reflects a particular lack of empathy and the inability to resolve problems. Apart from the personal psychological problems that it may reveal and the harm it may do to others, it shows a lack of cooperation and a lack of expertise to achieve mutually beneficial social goals with any measure of efficiency. Social conditions that promote this sort of behaviour pattern show a disregard for the achievement of mutually beneficial social goals and promote a "retarded" form of interaction which is perpetuating. It does this by creating conditions that prevent the development of interpersonal competence (social and political development) among all its members. This developmental vacuum built into social contexts (such as organizations) works towards eroding employee self esteem and the reinforcement of social incompetence. Promoting the relevant personal, social and political development for employees is essential for changing organizational conditions.

Ellis & Whittington (1981:12, 105, 177) describe relevant social skill in their model of interactive behaviour, as the ability to achieve socially acceptable goals in ways that are socially valued. The development of social competence or skill implies that a person must not only be able to reproduce learned behaviours but be able to reflect upon the skill used in a particular situation. This capacity to reflect critically is something that needs to be developed and once acquired is a vital part of creative behaviour and autonomous, moral development. In reflecting upon interpersonal interactions the person learns whether the exchange achieved its purpose in a *mutually acceptable* manner. It therefore promotes an attitude of respect.

It is this particular structure of respect that abuse violates as it works against inter-dependent problem solving and the realizing of the goals of others. While abuse

dominates and diminishes others, social skill and competence in sustaining relationships creates a climate of credibility, trust and mutual respect.

Creating conditions that prevent employees from developing such natural and socially necessary capacities, from increasing their evaluative perception and enhancing their self-respect is not conducive to promoting opportunities for employee well-being or for changing organizational conditions that do not promote a developmental stance. From an ethical standpoint, such conditions not only promote stunted development and the diminishment of people, they are also unjust. The issue of stunted development is now examined.

1.5 STUNTED DEVELOPMENT

Any social environment in which people find themselves has good and bad aspects, and organizations are no exception. On the positive side they offer a 'good enough' environment of interdependence to support the development of people and the accomplishment of objectives. On the negative side, they offer an impoverished environment, sufficient enough for people to survive in the accomplishment of imposed objectives but "little in the way of support for integration and development, for the building of a self and an identity" (Craib, 1989:181).

The concept of the 'good-enough' environment is the work of Winnicott (1965, 1971). Winnicott was a paediatrician and psychoanalyst. He trained as an analyst when medicine could not supply the answers necessary for him to help overcome dysfunctional behaviour in children. Simplistically stated, the emphasis of his work differs from Freud (1938; 1950; Riviere, 1952) who asserts that sexual factors motivate behaviour. Freud's concern was with identifying the structures of the personality/self (id, ego, super-ego) and the basic unconscious drives (life and death) that influence conscious thoughts and actions. It differs from that of Klein in that her work (Klein, 1952; Riviere, 1952) is

concerned with the death instinct (as identified by Freud) and with anxiety in the early phases of mental life, that is, the first months of the first year.

Winnicott's (1965, 1971) contribution and focus is with the life instinct, especially with external environmental factors that allow for the development and flourishing of the total experiencing person. In particular, Winnicott (1965) was concerned with two aspects of the external environment:

- the development of the good-enough relationship between mother and child that is neither one of subordination nor exploitation; and with
- the space needed by children to react creatively with their environment.

These aspects are seen as critical because of the internal processes of 'integration' and feelings of disintegration that children go through when dealing with new experience. In the process of developing a sense of identity and independence a child retreats to an internal place in order to deal with his/her lack of ability to integrate experience, and needs to be able to do this without feeling threatened. (This concept rules out the simplistic behaviourist approach that the relationship between the individual and the environment can be reduced to stimuli/response).

In dealing with the external environment internal tension is created because of this sense of disintegration and frustration. What is required is a creative response from the unconscious. To explain this concept, Winnicott (1971:51, 68) gives an example from his psychological work with disturbed children. He found that children who were *overly controlled* were not able to interact appropriately with others. His research led him to believe that this was so because they had only one mode of behaviour for all situations. They appeared not to be able to recognize that there were alternative ways of acting in different situations. This he ascribes to their stunted or non-development of their creative capacity to deal with the world, and their lack of, or lost capacity to imagine alternative ways of interacting.

Winnicott (1965) explains his position as follows. In the first year of life strict parental control offers a child security and produces compliance (1965:11). The infant therefore has its spontaneity curtailed by two factors:

- the mother/care giver training the child so that s/he can become good and functional;
- the infant developing self-control and restricting his/her own behaviour.

In order to develop in this way it is important that nurturing be 'good enough'. Only if the nurturing is 'good-enough' will the infant be seen to develop a clear personal sense of self instead of merely reacting to his/her environment (1965:12).

With over-control children become dysfunctional because their response pattern is too rigid. It is only through play (with support and trust) when they obtain insight into their own situation, that they once again come in touch with their creative energy and are able to try alternative ways of behaving. Then from a position where alternatives did not exist at all, there are suddenly options and different consequences.

Winnicott's (1965:69) assertion is that an environment that demands an over-rigid defense system does not leave room for the unconscious creative aspects of a person to deal with the complexity of internal conflict, external constraints and the success or failure of the uncertain future. The independent child is shown as being more than a product of socialization because it is in the child's struggle with his/her own world (even if it is disadvantaged) that s/he gains some sense of identity and integrity. As long as s/he is allowed social space to find some creative position, the child will learn to deal with limitations and frustrations in not being able to satisfy all his/her own needs. It is in the creative act of the child that both internal and external reality is meaningfully integrated.

The development of creative ability and the urge to act in a constructive way has its roots in emotional development and independence training. Those babies who receive inadequate support tend to be "restless, suspicious, apathetic, inhibited, [and] compliant" (Winnicott, 1965:17). In this way environmental factors become an important part of the

child's own emotional and personal development. In the interaction creativity comes into being or does not. If it does then the person develops the capacity to be an active, creative member of society (1965:28). This is very much the position of Rogers (1961; 1983) who sees creativity as a relational product which is the result of the uniqueness of the individual interacting with a particular environment (Vernon, 1970:139).

Winnicott's (1965; 1971) research offers lessons that are easily transferable to organizations. He has shown that the capacity to act coupled with the power to interact effectively with others is linked both to ability and to the external conditions. Firstly he has shown how

- the creative capacity to generate alternative behaviour patterns; and
- the capacity to control one's behaviour and cooperate with others

is vitally linked to an individual's capacity to develop his/her identity as an autonomous person. This process is shown to be intimately linked with the external environment.

Secondly, he has shown that the capacity to see alternatives and the power to act independently and creatively is an essential part of normal growth and development. The development of a person's creative capacity enhances the development of personality and makes living a creative act. Yet this personal empowerment and particular type of independent thinking is not the norm fostered by organizations. The rational organization world with its own superordinate logic must find it confounding to realize that creativity stems from the unconscious, the irrational, the illogical; and that space is needed for this complex action to find expression.

General Comment

The stunted development of dysfunctional, problematic children offers invaluable insight into disturbances along normal human patterns of development. If one draws the parallel with overly restrictive work organizations there is an inherent warning that the creative capacity of people can be lost as a result of such over-rigid control. But management appears not to have grasped the precise nature of this relationship between organizational conditions and the expression and emergence of creativity in the expansion of employee

capacity. They have not come to realize that a life of compliance demands constant adaptation and uncreative living, "as if caught up in the creativity of someone else, or of a machine" (Winnicott, 1971:65). They seem unaware that lack of capacity development ensures that employees give up their unique ability to put their own stamp on the organizational world to make it a better place.

Much of the diminishing behaviour described in this chapter is conveniently "mis-labelled" as "mis-management" and as such is swept under the carpet. This euphemism is far too convenient when so much is at risk. The violation and diminishing of employees warrants acknowledgement and redress. Most people would agree with this statement, so what is it that makes the tackling of such a problem of organizational transformation so problematic? A look at established organizational theory will uncover formidable obstacles.

2: REVIEWING ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to give an historical overview of the development of organizational theory and management practice. The accumulation of literature is vast and the material selected does show a bias toward revealing the development of the relationship between management and employees, and the development of an "informal" relationship among employees. This bias is because of my interest in highlighting the human dimension and social relations within organizations rather than legitimating efficient and effective management practice in achieving organizational goals.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

The orthodox view of organizational theories is that they are an attempt to "objectively" explain and predict organizational behaviour. Theories of organization provide:

- models of how organizations are to be structured and managed (which include beliefs and assumptions about work and the nature of man at particular points in history),
- guidelines (based on the above) for practices that prescribe the behaviour of individuals, and
- legitimation of the criteria for judging this behaviour against the yardstick of maximum effectiveness in achieving organizational goals.

The reality of these given objectives is that organizational theory is traditionally seen through a managerial lens and addresses managerial concerns about how they and their organizations adapt to contingency factors. In line with this managerial orientation organizations are ideally depicted as rational, goal-orientated entities - designed for the efficient and effective achievement of organizational goals.

From an alternative view, this traditional, conventional, orthodox mainstream view of organizational theories is seen as having the propensity to fashion within a managerial perspective perceptions of how one sees organizations and interacts within them. In other words the theories themselves help determine the shape of organizations for they are the lenses through which the management and design of organizations are discerned.

An examination of the development of organizational theories will show the form the cognitive reality of organizations takes and which organizational elements are supported and justified by this cognitively constructed reality.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

The development of organizational theory, although cumulative, has not been linear. Over time, there have been various schools, perspectives, frameworks or traditions that have developed from, or in reaction to each other. These tend to oscillate along a continuum - from left (no political connotation here), those focusing on the structural, rational and mechanistic aspects of organization; to right, those focusing more on the behavioural, human dimension. Those on the left are inclined to have a similar view of the world and those on the right another. The left are inclined to independently study similar problems, quote from each other but defend their own position; they are also inclined to criticise the deficiencies of the right, and vice versa. Astley and Van de Ven make the observation that each of the organizational schools "tends to focus on single sides of issues and use such different logics and vocabularies that they do not speak to each other directly" (1983: 246). Starbuck (1974:132) complains that "a casual consensus discloses 6.7 paradigms per organization theorist" and that "there is negligible overlap between the bibliographic citations of different authors" (1974:132). There is even lack of consensus on how to group the schools.

Major schools of organizational thought group theories by their basic assumptions about humans and organizations. Astley and Van de Ven's (1983) classification emphasizes

the deterministic that focuses on structural constraints versus the voluntaristic that focuses on autonomy and self-direction. Uncovering such basic assumptions of different theories helps understand those ideas that guide actions, and influences not only the way organizations are structured and managed (and therefore changed) but also the way in which organizations are judged.

Donaldson (1995) claims that the structural contingency paradigm is the only valid one for examining organization theory which, from the contingency perspective, is concerned with organizational structure in the achievement of organizational goals. "Within this broad paradigm there was scope for development in the contingencies identified, the structural aspects to which they were related, the performance outcomes examined, and refinements in concept and method" (1995:13). The structural contingency paradigm has an acceptable, orthodox pedigree. It developed directly from classical management theory (one best way to structure all organizations) and was able to accommodate the subsequent human relations movement. It constitutes a core theory which is pivotal to its empirical research that compares structures with various organizational contingencies that affect performance.

As the mainstream organizational theory (Taylor, 1911; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Hinings, 1988; Pugh, 1988) it is pro-management, addresses managerial concerns, and mainstream theorists see change as being management driven. All newer theories (for example, social action, strategic choice, resource dependency, population-ecology and institutional theory, to be discussed more fully later) rival structural contingency theory, but none have as yet supplanted it.

Alternative theories, Donaldson (1995) perceives as being anti-management, unhelpful to managerial practice, and not being part of a coherent organizational research paradigm; as such they "seek approval from disciplines such as sociology and economics which carry with them attitudes and values quite antithetical to business and management" (Donaldson, 1995:1).

The above comments highlight the developing tension among organizational theorists and uncover a growing sense of controversy as to what are legitimate issues to be examined within the field of organizational studies. I highlight some historical theoretical approaches to the study of organization and in doing so reveal developments and conceptual tensions in manager- employee relationships. Mainstream approaches to be examined are:

- the classical approach;
- the neo-classical approach;
- the human relations approach; and
- contingency theory.

Parallel work on the fringes of mainstream organizational theory, to be discussed briefly, are:

- social action theory and processes of organizing;
- strategic choice theory;
- resource dependence theory;
- population-ecology theory; and
- institutional theory.

The plurality of theoretical approaches developed during the 1980s is subsumed under the change management umbrella.

2.4 THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

The first comprehensive theory of organization came into being with the emergence of the modern form of organization during the Industrial Revolution. This school of theory (Taylor, 1911; Gilbreth, 1914; Fayol 1949) became known as the classical approach and is also referred to as "scientific" management or the scientific-rational approach. It concentrated on how organizations should operate.

Two schools of thought were dominant; the European model pioneered by Fayol (1949) and the American model promoted by Taylor (1911). Fayol in about 1916 put together the first "principles" of management. These - unity of command and span of control - dealt with direct supervision. The central tenet of Taylor's "scientific" management movement was that there is *one best way*, a precise predetermined manner to perform every job. The key issue was standardization. Management preoccupation is with standardized operating work and standardized work relationships geared around formal authority. There is one best way to structure organizations for optimal performance.

Organizing Around Production

The introduction of large-scale expensive machinery was critical to this period of history as well as the realization of the need to organize production to take maximum advantage of the machine. The eye was on profit, the focus on technical efficiency and increased production. Consequently it is not difficult to understand that the basic assumption and mindset of the theorists was that organizations would operate best, that is most efficiently, when viewed as a machine. People were, alas, also viewed as part of the machine, as cogs in a wheel where the main emphasis was on work organization which required the division of labour according to the paramount organizational value of efficiency (Taylor, 1911). Thus work was reduced, or put another way people were deskilled, to an efficiency denomination, the task level.

So the machine displaced the world of home industry and craftsmen, creating in its wake the factory system, a managed organization of work (Ergang, 1966:556). This was a new type of institution that had tremendous significance for producing wealth for individuals and the nation. It proved to be more than a systematic production oriented approach to control, skill and reward as its unplanned impact on the social environment was particularly significant. It brought into being a *new social construction of work relations* - owner/employer and worker.

It became accepted practice that control of both task and worker rested in authority vested in the position of a manager. The manager, who was primarily responsible for the detailed planning and supervision of executing tasks, was the organizing link between capital and labour. It was up to the manager to decide on the best way to perform a task. He would also direct the detail of the simple human labour and pay for this labour at market related prices. Thinking, planning and processing was done by management while workers supplied the labour force by doing what they were told.

The outcome of such detailed prescription of task performance resulted in an increasing differentiation of skills and the simultaneous minimization of skill. The consequence of low skill demand was cost efficient. Further, it minimized the job training that people would require and ensured that organizations could justifiably pay minimum wages for minimum skill from a multitude of people. This also had the effect of reducing any possibility of wage bargaining on the basis of personal ability. The overall social result was "that the workers had to adjust to the management and not the management to the people" (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982:84).

In general workers were treated as extensions of their machines. Other attributes were superfluous or disruptive of the task to hand and were ignored, suppressed or controlled in the pursuit of production efficiency. Worker intelligence was suspended, consequently capacities and competence of employees were diminished. Organized work was being given the scope to prescribe and circumscribe human possibilities.

Bureaucratization of Organizational Life

As this way of organizing production and economic goals became more entrenched and organizations became larger, the theoretical perspective broke away from the limits of task performed/performance and moved its focus to the organization itself. The economic swing from manufacturing to service related industries, together with a better educated middle class white-collar workforce (socialized by schools to the rules of

society), brought with it the bureaucratization of organizational life. This entailed an increasing division of labour and greater emphasis on specialization.

An ideal, legal-rational, bureaucracy, as formulated by Weber ([1864-1920] known as the father of bureaucratization), would be run along lines of strict discipline, subordination, routinization and rationalization. He was, however, aware of the far reaching consequences of such a mindset. "In Weber's view, routinization and rationalization pave the way for the eventual rise of a new human species - namely the fully adjusted men of a bureaucratic age who no longer strive for goals which lie beyond their intellectual horizon, which is in any case likely to be exclusively defined by their most immediate material needs" (Mommsen, 1974:20). As the bureaucratized mindset pervades all aspects of people's lives, their awareness of their own values, value preferences and particularly conflicts of values is diminished. In this corrosive way they lose their sense of responsibility and personal freedom to choose their own destiny by deciding on value issues. By the diminishment of this capacity, they lose their creative spontaneity. But, in Weber's "theoretical writings, the individual can always opt for or against predominant social trends" (Mommsen, 1974:53). People do have discretionary power and, in Weber's view, if people were to choose "ideal interests" over "material interests" then values would have the potential of a revolutionary force "as they have nothing at all to do with motivations of an economic nature" (1974:55). This sociological complexity is not integral to organizational theory.

In mainstream organizational theory, Weber (1947) is acknowledged as having highlighted the principles of organization and for giving a clear view of ideal bureaucratic structuring and administrative functioning evaluated against rational means (interpreted in mainstream theory as "morally neutral") towards achieving organization goals. The superiority of this bureaucratic model was removed from the complexity of Weber's sociological writings and thus, his concepts were reduced to a "defence of bureaucratic rule and the importance of the administrative function ... The Weber who was politically of the left and intellectually idealist" was ignored (Burrell, 1996:643).

The basic assumptions that became the foundation of organizational theory during this period are:

- Production and economic goals are the prime reason for the existence of economic organizations. This principle asserts the legitimation of organizational goal supremacy and is difficult to challenge within the prevailing paradigm.
- Systematic scientific enquiry is the best way to organize for production as it has the further advantage of reducing human error. Organizational theories are raised to the plain of the "scientific" which are assumed to be rational and carry with it an objective "morally neutral" stance.
- Specialization and division of labour maximizes production and establishes clear lines of authority. This principle justifies the routinization of work, formal structure and subordination, which mask the devaluing of human values.
- Rational economic principles prevail over both organizations and people. This principle justifies depersonalizing relationships and regulating them by rules, procedures and general principles of organization.
- Lastly it is affirmed that people work solely for money as they are accepted as economic by nature (Ott 1989:147).

From the above principles it can be seen that the possible swing to "ideal interest" is wholly suppressed in bureaucratic organizations. Weber's own formulation of a bureaucratic life evaluated against his "objective" rational means is designed for achieving economic ends efficiently in a competitive world fighting for scarce resources. This formulation of bureaucratic life does not leave any built-in scope for resistance against such a superordinate mindset. (This simplified construct does not take into account Weber's view that an industrial order was compatible with democracy, unlike Durkheim who thought that democracy would become reorganized to reflect the world of industrial workplaces [Mayo, 1933:142]).

The theoretical foundation for organizational theory is firmly established. All subsequent managerial theorists assume this underlying moral neutrality in their writings. Authority is justified by appeals to its own effectiveness and attendant debate appears to revolve around how best to influence subordinates towards viewing decisions from this managerial perspective. Weber clearly set the stage for administrative effectiveness and efficiency to be the intellectual justification of managerial authority, and only because of the success of these qualities is bureaucratic power justified.

A neutralized bureaucratic mythology is spawned, justified by its success, and superimposed on other social realities in order to fashion a particular socially controlled way of life that both ensures performance and sustains management power (MacIntyre, 1981:71) Within the organizational context, this prevailing fiction of moral neutrality in organizational theory can be shown to impair the development of moral sensitivity. There is nothing like "ethically neutral" numbers to dull moral reasoning, as it fosters a climate that allows management and other employees to remain insensitive to recognizing, acknowledging and addressing other social or ethical issues appropriately.

2.5 THE NEO-CLASSICAL APPROACH

The next period in the development of organizational theory sees organizations experiencing the "problem" of dealing with recalcitrant human beings, socializing and integrating them into an organizational way of life. This recognition of the "human" dimension in organizations paved the way for the Human Relations approach.

The neo-classical approach expands classical theory by acknowledging the human element of organizations. Problems experienced by large organizations drew attention to the fact that removing or, rather, ignoring the human element of organizations seemed impossible. Central to this period is the work of Mayo (1933, 1949) and Barnard (1938). In particular the wide publicity received by the Hawthorne experiments (Mayo, 1933,

1949; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939) put the "human" issues firmly on the organizational map.

The Hawthorne Experiments

The Western Electric Company in America had a reputation for advanced personnel policies and, at the instigation of the National Research Council, initiated experiments into the relationship of lighting to individual efficiency at their Hawthorne plant which employed 29 000 people. This work on illumination lasted from 1924-1927, had input from academics from various universities but is associated with Mayo, although he "neither designed nor directed" these studies (Mayo, 1949:xiv). It was only after 1928 that Mayo became involved. He became "an essential link" between members of the Harvard Research Group, other researchers and the company. Mayo was a social scientist and his input secured better understanding of workers (both as individuals and team workers) in relation to their jobs. He enlarged the research programme, introduced academics from different disciplines other than the business school (for example, anthropology) and conducted an important study for organizational research purposes, among their men in the Bank Wiring Room, on restrictive practices on the shop floor.

a) Effects of Illumination on Productivity Experiment

The Hawthorne research initially focused on the degree of lighting required to ensure optimum productivity of a small selected group of factory workers. During the research period productivity increased regardless of the increase or decrease of illumination. Interviews revealed that the workers (who happened to be female) had been stimulated by a variety of human factors such as knowing they were the objects of a research study. Contrary to theories of the classical approach, workers were seen to have a need for some form of recognition and that they could not be regarded by management as purely economic beings. In other words, this research indicated that management would need to investigate means other than the economic to motivate workers towards greater productivity.

The problem with the illumination studies was that it "led to a series of inconclusive and puzzling results about the favourable effects of improved lighting on productivity" (Mayo, 1949:xv). Instead of solving a productivity problem the research revealed that they had failed to elucidate the exact nature of the problem (Mayo, 1933:53). What was compelling about this Hawthorne Experiment was that all the experts had tinkered with technological variables (ignoring social factors) to improve productivity. While the results failed to show the relation between illumination and efficiency, they raised questions at the time about the social environment that promoted interest in human relations. The research was allowed to continue.

Management, in an effort to exercise greater control over variables such as work type, work schedules, amount of work, and departmental disruption in order to give greater insight into technological change, initiated further experiments using a selected group of employees isolated from the main group. This experiment became known as the Relay Assembly Test Room experiment.

b) Relay Assembly Experiment

Once again investigators at Hawthorne, interested in increasing productivity, expected their group of "girls" to behave like laboratory specimens. They treated employee attitude towards the test as a constant and any variation in this area was regarded as "poor co-operation" (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:54). Control variables such as temperature, humidity, pay incentives were well documented, but the change in social relations, new loyalties, solidarities and change in supervisors were not consciously noted. (Given this omission the social conclusions drawn from the experiment lack validity). Unfortunately, the significance of these social factors only came to the fore when the results proved again to be inconclusive and unexpected.

The researchers concluded that freedom from rigid and excessive supervision played a large part in the girls' attitude towards work. (This interpretation could also be erroneous

in that coercive supervision could have been relaxed because the women were performing well). This freedom allowed a spirit of friendliness to prevail, and it was this climate which in turn fostered group solidarity and co-operation. This insight was different to the prevailing view in which goodwill and employee co-operation were measured in terms of turnover, sickness and absenteeism. Any increase in group productivity during this experiment could have been attributed to the introduction of rest pauses, reduction of fatigue or the reduction of monotony of assembly type work - all variables tinkered with. But another disturbing possibility could not be ruled out. This was that technological change, physical working conditions or individuals working as isolates could not be seen as promoting productivity independent of the "compact social group" that encouraged co-operation (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:88).

Another possible interpretation contributing to the improved productivity experienced was the gradual changes taking place in the method of supervision. In other words, without all the social changes taking place "rest pauses and shorter working hours alone could not have produced the result" (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:89). Supervisor-employee relations were highlighted as an important area for research and social factors acknowledged as a major circumstance for limiting performance output. This contribution of the Hawthorne Experiments was an important factor for the direction of future organizational research.

During the research period it was becoming evident that there were strong social factors among experimental groups which exercised control over work behaviour. Early in 1931 researchers obtained permission from management to interview individual members of experimental groups on a regular basis (previously once a year had been seen as enough). It was during these interviews, initiated by Mayo, that attention was drawn to "employee interrelations and group organization" (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:379). In particular, attention was drawn to the ability to restrict output which had important "implications for management practice and employee satisfaction" (1939:380).

c) Bank Wiring Room Experiment

With these concerns in mind the Bank Wiring Room experiment (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:409) was initiated, where a vertical section of the Bank Wiring Department was studied. This phase of the Hawthorne research (using a group of male workers) showed a decrease in production. This decrease was ascribed to the fact that although management had determined the daily quota, the workers amongst themselves had decided that this figure was too high. Group pressure ensured that it was the *informal* group's norm that prevailed over those of management (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:426, 535). This was an acknowledgement of major organizational importance.

Because of group pressure, quotas and wage incentive schemes designed by management were rendered ineffectual. This fact was evidence of informal leadership and of a group clinging together to protect themselves from those in the organization that could threaten their position or interfere with their affairs. Also, it appeared that there was more of a relationship between output and group membership than output and individual ability (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:445).

But management was not really interested in understanding the sociological nature of working groups and their defensive behaviour. What was of importance to management was the need to overcome this identified resistance to managerial initiatives and to relate this deviation to the formal and technical organization of a department. In this way the scope and limits of organizational research were narrowly defined. With hindsight the organizational research problems can be seen to be stated in a way that inhibits solutions that have the possibility of promoting dialogue; and as circumscribing the potential for the organization to function successfully in a way that enhances the capacity of all employees. Rather, supervisory practice and the motivation of employees is highlighted as the key area for theoretical/management instigated research. Focused development and training only of supervisors/managers is identified, facilitated and promoted.

The relevance of this Bank Wiring Room for management and research was at many levels.

- There was the identification of the interrelationship between the technical/functional organization and the human organization. In particular social distance "by means of which individuals or groups of individuals are informally differentiated, ordered, and integrated" was seen as being as relevant as physical space (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:559).
- On the individual level, it was identified that within the informal group, each person actually worked at attaining certain status or position. This position became integral to the individual's integration and co-operation in achieving group goals (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:418, 562).
- On the group level, it was found that the experimental group consisted of two sub-groups, the one (due to job design) being of a lower status than the other (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:510). The lower status sub-group deliberately underproduced to get back at the other (1939:564).
- Those employees who did not fit the production curve of their sub-group's norm (usually working at a faster pace) were found to be social isolates (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:462). If productivity levels were challenged by supervisors the group found ways to sabotage equipment, thus forcing supervisors to co-operate. It is interesting at this point to note that while this "game" was being played morale was good and productivity acceptable by management standards. In other words a certain level of "subversive" action is accepted by management as a safety valve for frustration, and as such is ignored.

From the theoretical point of view, the social nature of groups was identified as having the potential for being a positive organizational variable. Social positioning was seen as

having the potential to either "facilitate or impede purposive co-operation and communication" (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:562). Although management might tamper with the functional structure of the organization to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency, the social organization relied on personal interrelations and sentiment to function effectively. This is a different logical construct to the efficiency one. Many employee complaints could, with retrospect, be understood from disturbances to this social equilibrium (1939:575) and from management depriving them of things which gave "meaning and significance to their work" (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939:577).

Overall Relevance to Research of the Hawthorne Experiments

From the above it is evident that Roethlisberger and Dickson's contribution to organizational theory is their treatment of organizations as adaptive social systems, in securing and ensuring a common social purpose and willing co-operation. The issue of functional interdependence is raised and because of *the acceptance of common organizational goals* becomes a theoretical assumption in all future organizational studies.

Criticism of the Hawthorne experiments shows that there has been confusion in the "vast discrepancy between evidence and conclusions in these studies" (Carey, 1967:416). But of more interest is the fact that these discrepancies and experiments are so misdescribed in academic textbooks that they remain the focal point of departure for the Human Relations movement. Much attention is given to management style effecting productivity but it could be argued that employee behaviour in turn affects management style. Mainstream management researchers see the social sciences issues as being fraught with difficulties given the problems associated with experimental conditions and interpretation of evidence (Carey, 1967:416).

Nevertheless, Mayo's contribution to academic research highlighted the significance of informal social factors (human behaviour and human relations) in work organizations,

and the relation of these in securing effective group co-operation. This research was to challenge the prevailing assumptions of classical theory that:

- workers were solely motivated by simple economic factors; and
- there was only one communication structure in organizations, a formal one.

While the managerial mindset was to deal with people as individuals performing assigned tasks, managers now had to take cognisance of the existence of "dysfunctional" informal pressures in co-ordinating co-operative activity. The existence of an unofficial informal social structure with its own relationships, norms and values was uncovered. This was taken up in mainstream organizational research as something illegitimate and disruptive, something for management to overcome. A language of organizational research was in the process of development. Concepts and problem statements defining the dominant organizational research direction are clearly being circumscribed to embrace a management viewpoint that protects management interests.

Co-operation and Organizational Goals

The next influential theorist/practitioner of note during the 1930s is Barnard. Barnard (1938) takes up the concept of the co-operative nature of organizational life rather than its machine-like properties. He describes organizations as a social system that is a "relationship of co-operation" (Barnard, 1938:70). He emphasizes the willingness of workers (1938:82) to make their contribution but accentuates the classical message that this contribution is to be made by individuals in the pursuit of clearly defined organizational goals (1938:89, 139). Further, he tries to reconcile the constraints of an imposed formal organization system on the "natural co-operation" of informal behaviour by describing it as an "exchange" (1938:58). This exchange is couched in terms of organizational inducements which, as Clegg (1977) observes, ignores "the structure of relations which make inevitable an exchange based on a set of terms which as a rule favour the interests of one party above that of the other(s)" (1977:32).

Emphasis is placed on the social effects of co-operation and on communication (Barnard, 1938:163) between management and workers (seen as a collection of individuals) and is heralded as being essential if managers wish their goals to be achieved and not thwarted. Material incentives are acknowledged as not being the only yardstick for performance, and in this respect Barnard (1938:139) differs substantially from the classical school. He highlights (1938:145) informal, interpersonal and moral elements as he believed that non-monetary sociological factors also play a role in achieving organizational objectives. His belief is that management is to play a strategic role in maintaining this delicate balance of co-operation and in protecting the moral integrity of the organization (1938:272).

Barnard's input is relevant as it is his conception of social co-operation that becomes an underlying assumption in subsequent organizational studies. "This assumption establishes the analytical justification for the construction of a model of organization as a naturally co-operative social system in which the general purpose or 'personality' of the social collectivity dominates individual thought and action" (Reed, 1985:21).

Conflicts can now be settled by organizational norms and goals without personal codes being involved (Barnard, 1938:264). Natural co-operation has come to exist firmly within the bounds of the 'organizational personality' which exhibits a willingness to participate and conform (1938:88, 281). The path is set for an extended discourse on social conditioning (1938:45), social control and the development of sophisticated techniques of disciplinary practice as managers seek control of recalcitrant workers.

Categorization of Human Needs

The work of Maslow (1943) was then to influence management theorists even though it was later found not to hold general validation. As a psychologist, Maslow categorized a hierarchy of human needs - physiological, safety, social esteem and self-actualization. Those needs at the top end of the scale such as esteem and self-actualization would only be addressed after physiological needs had been satisfied. This work was very influential as, from this time forward, individuals were seen as having needs which organizations

seek to fill in fulfilling organizational goals. The language of human needs becomes set in this frame of reference. The broader diversity of human developmental needs (for example, social and political) is not only ignored but also suppressed as a specific organizational world is being built that inhibits genuine dialogue between management and workers which would promote a synergy of interests.

Nevertheless organizational theorists would build on this mental framework as they recognized that it was the categorized unmet needs of employees that they would need to act upon to ensure positive motivators in achieving organizational goals. This sets the stage for motivation to become an important theme of the human relations' approach that was gaining recognition. With this background, we now continue with the mainstream of neo-classical writing and formal research.

Management Decision-making Justified as a Technical Function

Simon (1946) is the next theorist of note to criticize the "good practice", or one best way, of classical organizational theory. His research is on management decision-making and its relationship to organizational structure. In his work he draws attention not only to current principles of administration but also to the varying conditions under which competing management principles apply, and how the appropriate managerial response differs depending on circumstances (Simon 1946:81) (thus becoming the fore-father of systems thinking).

Simon's revised work (1976) takes into consideration more complex organizations with greater information processing needs and more effective computer-supported information. Organizations are described (1946, 1976) as bounded rational instruments in which managers cannot rely on a simple, prescribed, single best way to do things (1976:241), nor can they necessarily expect that they will possess the technical expertise of required specialists. Yet good decision-making would require that they take cognisance of information inputs throughout the organization in making decisions that are effective (Simon, 1976:294). This, it is acknowledged, managers do with imperfect

knowledge and incomplete information under pressure working towards a solution that will suffice rather than being the best possible one under the circumstances (March and Simon, 1957). Although bold for its day, this approach is a simplistic, behaviourist stimulus-response one that ignores and suppresses power and politics in organizations.

Simon (1946, 1976) views organizations as social units with complex interlocking decision-making networks. Decision-making is ordered to ensure that the "‘subjective rationality’ of the individual and the ‘collective rationality’ of the social collectivity coincide" (Reed, 1985:26). An instrumental source of order, which is to justify socialization and social control, is theoretically superimposed upon alternative methods of decision-making. The effect is that

organization limits the natural autonomy of the individual by placing him in an environment and providing him with the information needed to make decisions correctly. By limiting the range within which an individual’s decisions and activities are to lie, the organization reduces his decisional problem to manageable proportions. (Simon, 1946:199).

Individual needs and desires are being circumscribed by narrowly channelling them to achieve organizational goals in a prescriptive manner.

Summary

The basic assumptions from this period that become integral to organizational theory are:

- organizations are social co-operative systems;
- there exists a formal and informal social structure;
- human needs can be categorized hierarchically;
- organizational goals are common goals; and
- management decision-making is a neutral, instrumental means of control.

The dominant research discourse has stitched together structure, managerial decisions and performance results. ‘Irrational’ individual behaviour has been identified as causing conflict in collective work environments. ‘Scientific’ practice will be developed to

control these deviant elements from disturbing the superordinate efficient achievement of organizational goals. The valued ends informing this social action is accepted as neutral.

Before we move on to the next approach in the development of organizational theory, it is necessary to step outside this conceptual framework and consider seminal ideas from other disciplines that were influencing society and that would impact on the developing Human Relations approach.

Influence of Alternative Research - Alienation Considered

During this period the main outside influence on organizational theory was the sociological writings on alienation by both Marx (though Classical theorists sought to reject Marxian influence) and Weber (Kanungo, 1982) who built on the work of Rousseau and Hegel. Alienation embraced two concepts:

- removal or transfer of ownership (that is, property or limits on autonomy and freedom); and
- the condition or experience of separation (for example, hostility, aggression) (Kanungo, 1982:9).

Marx borrows from this work and fused the two meanings into a passive state of surrender (Kanungo, 1982:13). Separation becomes the result of surrender, and implies lack of control, autonomy and ownership over one's job and the frustration that accompanies this act. Marx believed the surrender of autonomy and control over one's job together with submission resulted in alienation. In this way Marx highlighted the intrinsic needs (autonomy and control) of workers in doing their job as a necessary condition of job involvement. This part of Marxian thinking (ignoring here the criticism of the capitalist system itself) was to influence mainstream managerial theorists in the area of employee motivation towards achieving organizational goals.

While both Marx and Weber believed that a person's worth was intrinsic to their labour, Weber emphasized the "work ethic" as the key to self-realization. Thwarting this desire

(Kanungo, 1982:19) denied expression of individuality. From this view, work conditions that deny the expression of individuality, autonomy, responsibility and control result in alienation.

Sociological influence concentrates on the negative issues of estrangement on workers, and the removal of this alienation. This is considered by focusing on those preconditions identified by Marx, although for him one is only dealing with the symptom (alienation) and not its cause (capitalism). These conditions, the intrinsic factors of individual autonomy and control, and power over work, are examined by those involved with the human relations movement, while the extrinsic factors are ignored. Consequently the factors of autonomy and control, reduced to embrace management demands on a job, are identified as relevant to the work environment. In this way these concepts become absorbed into the mainstream organizational discourse.

Themes in sociological writings of the time are concepts of meaninglessness, powerlessness, anomie, isolation and loneliness – these themes, as they stand, are not embraced by mainstream organizational theorists. Instead the terms are translated into the dominant organizational discourse and become

- lack of control on a job,
- problems with pace of work,
- failure to understand what to believe,
- lack of goals, and
- lack of effectiveness and self-estrangement.

These identified problems are then shown to result in absenteeism, work-to-rule, strikes, sabotage and worker apathy. Thus in the translation of ideas from sociology to the mainstream organizational discourse there is a convergence of concepts of organizational effectiveness and utilization of unalienated human resources. The focus moves to worker motivation and the way is paved for the psychological input of the human relations approach.

While the sociologists concentrated on alienation, the influence of psychologists is quite distinct in that it focuses on job involvement. Management sees psychologists as focusing on the positive side of "job involvement" which is viewed as the "cure" for alienation. The resulting industrial psychology work is to provoke Braverman's barb that industrial psychologists and practitioners of human relations are but a "maintenance crew" for "human machinery" (Braverman, 1974:87). This short overview reveals how the construction of new organizational labels allows concepts, developed in other disciplines, to be manipulated to fit the dominant research's particular focus of the organizational world. The development of these concepts will now be examined in the Human Relations approach.

2.6 THE HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACH

While scientific management focused on work, the human relations movement focused on the adjustment and habituation of the worker to (factory) conditions of work. The game was to get workers involved with their jobs and this is the basis of the psychological approach.

Job involvement

Job involvement was identified with intrinsic human factors such as autonomy and control as understood within the organizational context. The focus on problems of job dissatisfaction was viewed from management's perspective, and labelled as absenteeism, indifference, resistance and hostility. These identified problems were then examined by consultants whom management engaged. The solutions offered had two thrusts. On the one hand, greater job involvement, autonomy and control on the job are encouraged. On the other, securing maximum productivity was identified as requiring careful staff selection with these individualistic values in mind, as well as focused staff training and the manipulation of the work environment.

There are two developments of the concept of job involvement (Kanungo, 1982:33). The one group (Argyris, 1964; Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960; and Vroom, 1964) relates work to self-esteem, growth and development, and participation. This approach sees good performance as enhancing self-esteem. The organization is, therefore, encouraged to develop an environment that promotes a sense of ego satisfaction with competence on the job.

The other school of thought (Lawlor and Hall, 1970) defines job involvement as an individual's psychological identification with his/her job and role. These factors are seen as central to self-definition and assume both an early pattern of socialization to middle class norms and to the Protestant work ethic. Both views assume that intrinsic need satisfaction of autonomy and control is the basis for job involvement and neither group addresses cultural nor class predispositions.

The socio-technical relationship

From the mainstream theoretical perspective, one of the weaknesses of the human relations thrust was that it ignored organizational structure and technology. The work of Trist and Bamforth (1951) was a breakthrough. They highlighted this "socio-technical" relationship in their work in Britain in the coal-mining industry, on the conversion from short-wall mining to long-wall mining (1951:3). In short-wall mining the men worked closely together in small stable groups that had the quality of "responsible autonomy" (1951:6). Their lives depended on their expertise and they continued these close relationships socially above ground as well, caring for the families of those men "injured or killed" (1951:6). Their social relation gave meaning and commitment to their dangerous lives.

With the introduction of new more effective technology (that is, long-wall mining) the men had to work more spread out and in larger groups. This "larger undifferentiated collectivity" undermined their emotional solidarity (Trist and Bamforth, 1951:8). The men lost their sense of solidarity and this resulted in an increase in aggression, inter-team

conflict and an impairing of the quality of responsible autonomy which has been an important feature of their work environment (1951:9). This in turn resulted in problems of carelessness, lower productivity, and less maintenance of equipment. Sadly, the authors report that with this technological change “[n]o new equilibrium came into being” (1951:10).

The results of this research of Trist and Bamforth (1951) were an important theoretical milestone. Task and human factors were shown to be inextricably intertwined.

The theoretical focus of mainstream writing, under the influence of the human relations approach, moves from the work definition of the classical approach to

- work design - functional consequences of structures, and
- worker motivation - on an individual basis

for attaining organizational goals and fulfilling the individual’s need to be meaningfully involved with his/her work. Motivation is now the key for inducing increased productivity. The best way forward for management to motivate workers is identified as

- setting clear goals, and
- awarding adequate incentives

for achieving these goals. Rather than priority being given to the nature of work as was previously done, the work situation in the form of job components and the individual’s motivation to work came to the fore.

In considering motivation, attention moves to a concern for job enlargement and job enrichment as well as worker involvement. Theorists such as Herzberg (1959,1968), McClelland (1961) and Vroom (1964) are singled out as being particularly influential.

Motivation of workers

Herzberg’s (1968) motivational theory is two-fold in that it emphasizes both job content and job context. Motivators are seen as coming from the psychological state induced by the nature of the job itself, for example, achievement, recognition for the achievement,

the challenge, progress and responsibility. These job content factors are regarded as intrinsic motivators. Dissatisfaction, he suggested, come from external "hygiene" factors which he describes as working conditions, supervision, organizational policies and procedures, salary, status and security (Herzberg 1968:74). The first (job content) become related to "intrinsic" motivators and are seen as being important for human growth and development while the second, job context factors, are relegated to "extrinsic" satisfiers or conditions (Herzberg, 1968:103).

Although Herzberg's (1968:x) motivation was to look at "man's total needs ... within the world of work", his concern was that business was becoming the dominant institution of society and he feared that economic needs were being met at the expense of human development and happiness. He therefore concentrated on the job itself as offering intrinsic possibilities of human growth and development, which was very much in line with liberal philosophy of the time. External controls in terms of policy, administration, supervision - all those factors that control the context of the job - are sadly not acknowledged as relevant.

Already it is presumed that organization, and leadership to influence these factors and transform the environment, are not the domain of workers.

McClelland's (1961) motivational theory, or "achievement motivation" sees a relationship between an individual's performance and his social culture. By highlighting the social environment, McClelland draws attention to the learned aspect of human behaviour rather than innate tendency or predisposition. He groups those human motives that he identifies as relating to needs for affiliation, power and achievement (McClelland, 1973:302). The strength of these needs, conditioned by cultural factors, determine the amount of effort a person is prepared to extend to achieve their goals. Staff selection becomes an area of concern and it is found to demand skilful interviewing to uncover the predispositions demanded for satisfactory organizational adaptability and productivity (McClelland, 1991:273).

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation is a process model, influenced by the developing concept of systems theory and the concept of valence - "affective orientations toward particular outcomes" (1964:15). The strength of an employee's motivation depends on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction obtained, or expected, from a preferred outcome (1964:17). He suggests people will work well if they see that their efforts are likely to achieve success (1964:146). Variables that are taken into account are expectations, outcomes (performance and reward), satisfaction and choices. Participation in decision making (autonomy on the job) is seen as leading to higher involvement and greater levels of performance, particularly for those employees with a strong need for autonomy (Vroom, 1964:115, 119, 140). From this perspective, job design and job opportunities are emphasized to allow for the stimulation and enrichment of workers to ensure greater productivity (1964:121, 141). The yardstick of organizational success remains maximum efficiency and formal rationality is achieved through goal-oriented coordination. Less emphasis is given to social interaction among employees while much attention is focused on managerial, top down communication.

A More Positive View of Human Nature

The 1950s and 1960s mark the peak of the human relations period and major thinkers include McGregor (1960), Burns and Stalker (1961), Argyris (1964) and Likert (1967). This humanistic approach would be further developed during the 1970s by Schein (1970, 1981, and 1985).

The negative view of people found in the classical approach changes to a more positive one. Employees are expected to grow and develop in their task execution and this is something that organizations are expected to encourage. There is concern with organizational effectiveness rather than just its efficiency. Job involvement is critical; employees have become organizational "assets" (a label that can be seen to carry with it connotations of ownership, that reduces employees to a means to organizational ends to

be utilized and discarded at will) and consequently personal and skill development are encouraged within the prescribed context of achieving organizational goals.

Organizations, in theory, are keen to motivate their staff, gain commitment to organizational goals, manage productive behaviour and develop production capacity. But managers from the traditional school are not accustomed to behaving in this way. The use of meetings and group involvement reveals a lack of the required social skill or a mindset that prohibits this type of interaction. These managerial developmental concerns become the focus of McGregor's work (1960).

McGregor (1960) unveils the prevailing assumptions that managers have about human nature. These are shown as critical to management's ability to change their own behaviour if they are to get more effective performance from subordinates. He terms Theory X, a negative view of man, and Theory Y, an idealistic one. Theory X (1960:33) assumptions remain well embedded in the classical approach and focus on the negative beliefs managers hold of their subordinates while managing them to do organizational tasks. The basis of Theory X is that:

- people dislike work and are lazy;
- workers are passive, they must be forced to do their jobs;
- workers want direction and avoid responsibility; and
- people have no ambition, they desire security.

Managers holding these views are expected to develop a particular management style (such as that advocated by the Classical school) that creates a constricting and controlling environment for employees and provokes an anti-management response (McGregor 1960:38, 152). This managerial behaviour will not encourage employee development in their jobs and the organization will lose out.

The assumptions embedded in Theory Y are positive:

- people find work natural;

- workers are not passive, they are capable of self-control;
- workers will accept responsibility if committed to goals; and
- people have the capacity to grow and develop (1960:47-8).

Managers acting according to these basic assumptions will develop a management style that will create the conditions necessary for encouraging workers to develop self sufficiency in their task competence, take responsibility for and achieve their organizational goals (McGregor, 1960:56). These are the intrinsic factors perceived as critical for job involvement. All employees are to be socialized to this environment and are to be selected with these qualities in mind. Managers, in particular, are identified as needing specific development to create and perpetuate these organizational conditions.

Development of Management by Influence

McGregor's (1960) view of human nature and behaviour has greatly influenced modern management theory. Two areas are particularly highlighted – leadership and personal development. In the area of leadership he requires a change in the values driving the philosophy of management. He advocates a *choice of management style* that focuses less on control (Theory X) and more on influence (Theory Y) in the way managers solve their human problems.

A problem-solving style of management that necessitates two-way communication is urged (McGregor, 1967:153). Managers' efforts are directed to creating the conditions in which employees are encouraged to learn more about their job and the organization, and are then willing to make a personal contribution (McGregor, 1960:190). In this way they will be encouraged to utilize their potential by expanding their capabilities in satisfying integrated personal and organizational goals (McGregor, 1967:137). The problem of lack of co-operation from employees is seen as a problem with "management's ingenuity in discovering how to realize the potential represented by its human resources" (McGregor, 1960:48). McGregor (1960:129) describes the values of human growth and development

but also warns about the resultant spin-off of such development which is increased employee capacity to question and participate.

This attention to the development of staff was a major change in organizational focus (McGregor, 1967:143). Until this point managers were accustomed to giving orders and planning the detail of work in an authoritarian manner. Within such an organizational environment, questioning the boss would amount to insubordination. An expansion of employee capacity to question as well as participate in decision-making on matters that affect them, would be difficult for management to accept and would warrant serious *management adjustment*.

There is now a strong focus on managers and their development in both the theoretical and practical areas of organizational reality. Managers are told that they have to learn how to examine their own values about people as it is in their organizations' interest to adopt this *influential approach towards behaviour control for greater productivity*. Constraints that frustrate employees' natural tendencies to satisfy these intrinsic needs are seen as harmful for the organization's productivity and the onus is put on managers to alleviate such a situation. An appreciation and commitment to employee development (McGregor, 1967:143) is seen as a prerequisite both for senior managers' effectiveness in achieving organizations, and for successful leadership in a highly competitive environment.

Focus on Management Development

This breakthrough gave rise to a wealth of organizational development literature (Bennis, Benne and Chin, 1964; Schein and Bennis, 1965; Argyris, 1970) which built on the pioneering group dynamics work of Lewin (1947, 1958) in unfreezing (overcoming resistance), changing and refreezing (reintegrating) behaviour.

Lewin's model of change (1947) focuses on individual behaviour and his or her realization that change is required. It works from the premise that before new behaviour

can be "imprinted" the old has to be relinquished. This type of real change that relates to overall organizational behaviour usually takes place in a group and involves a re-education process. For, says Lewin, "it is usually easier to change individuals formed into a group than to change any one of them separately" (1958:210).

Stage 1: Unfreezing

The process commences with confrontation. Disconfirming information about specific behaviour is given to highlight a need for change. This information makes the person, whose behaviour is of concern (in the organizational setting it is the concern of management that is addressed), feel uncomfortable. If the individual can see that his/her preferred way of doing things does not achieve what s/he accepts as its purpose then there will be agreement that there is a problem, and s/he is likely to accept that his/her behaviour is no longer effective (Lewin, 1947:209). From an organizational perspective this learning would take place in team-building sessions designed to deal with serious problems.

Stage 2: Changing

Having received information and analysed the situation, the person concerned now has a wider frame of reference (the perspective of others) with regard to his/her actions. If s/he accepts the need for change s/he is likely to try different behaviours. But these might not necessarily "fit". Different behaviours will have to be tried and tested. Only those that fit are likely to become permanent (Lewin, 1947:209). From an organizational perspective this type of discomfort should initiate a relook at values and attitudes that permeate structures and behaviour.

Stage 3: Refreezing

This is the final stage and is a "process through which a state of 'considerations' (indecisiveness) is changed into a state where the individual has 'made up his mind' and is ready for action, although he may not act at that moment" (Lewin, 1947:203). In the process of gaining confidence s/he experiences new feelings (1947:211). If these are

positive and the changes fit well they become reinforced and integral to the person (Lewin and Grabbe, 1964:508). These integrated responses will then permeate all interactive relationships. From an organizational perspective this type of change should penetrate not only practices but also culture, norms and policies.

Management is singled out and given opportunities for acquiring a level of social competence not available to other employees. Development at this stage has a strong personal focus in equipping individual manager's to cope with a more acceptable style of managing. First, there is heavy concentration on upgrading and extending managerial skill and motivational ability, the development of leadership potential and the development of more effective group skills to encourage participation (McGregor, 1960). The informal group system is targeted as a decision-making mechanism to be absorbed into the formal structure. Later in this movement (as a result of the coalition theory development of Cyert and March, 1963) attention did eventually move away from individual managers and become integrated into a planned systematic process of managing organizational change.

Second, there is a strong emphasis on changing an individual's mindset in order to break down any resistance to this required change. This type of training is known as sensitivity or laboratory training as the learning experience is structured in a social setting of a growth group with a view to integrating intellectual and emotional learning (Schein and Bennis, 1965:332). Such a learning experience can be both dramatic and traumatic. Forced participation in such groups caused much unhappiness among some managers and selected employees with managerial potential. Further, managers who had until now been authoritarian, were not conditioned to handling this type of feedback. Nor were many of these people, when back in their organizational setting, sufficiently skilled to give this type of behavioural feedback to their own staff in a manner that did not harm or demean (Schein, 1974:22). The dissatisfaction was pervasive enough to eventually discontinue the practice (Handy, 1985:282) and to highlight the need for "professional"

ethics in regard to confidentiality of information, inadequate skill or knowledge and manipulation of others (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:379; Reed and Anthony, 1992:606).

This ethical orientation was more in relation to professional associations and codes of conduct (Aguilar, 1994:61) than the rights of employees (in this case managers) to have their personal values, beliefs and attitudes respected (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:379). Sadly, it was not recognized or acknowledged that apart from the disparity in skill being fostered there is a tremendous conflict of values when it comes to personal growth and development within organizations. This is because personal growth and development, within organizations, was not regarded as having value as an end in itself; it is strongly linked to behaviour control for greater productivity in achieving organizational goals. According to this mainstream approach, the dominant discourse surrounding the development of employee skills has value only in its capacity to achieve those goals and in espousing those values and in determining the practices of the organization itself.

A Systems Approach to Structure and Behaviour

Likert (1967) was the next theorist of note in the development of organizational theory; he builds upon McGregor's work. The group was now targeted as a management tool to improve organizational effectiveness. While McGregor did not address the organizational structure that would support the type of behaviour he advocated, Likert created an internal systems approach (that is, the needs of the organizational system as a total system) to organizational structures and behaviour. He focused on management's need to recognize group interdependence rather than the individual as an organizational unit in order to achieve greater organizational effectiveness (1967:64). This approach was seen as being more appropriate in processing specialist information and co-ordinating specialist functions throughout more complex organizations.

Likert developed a participative approach to the management of the total organization in interaction with its environment which he called "System 4" (1976:131). The thrust of this approach was to encourage supportive managerial relationships. It was based on

managers interacting and influencing each other as they created personal networks in the process of solving organizational problems in the face of environmental change. This early encouragement of a participative approach was not cast in democratic terms but rather as an effective way of getting people to perceive and act from management's point of view. The overall relevance of this approach is that it establishes an understanding of organizations as complex social systems whose purpose is the attainment of organizational goals in order to survive and grow; the need to manage this organizational process effectively becomes a more clearly defined managerial function.

Situational Management of Effective Behaviour

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) were to link McGregor's Theory Y type of organization with Likert's participative approach to management in examining a specific context. (With the move to a systems way of thinking, there has become less focus on the individual and greater focus on context). They focus on the judgement of managers to produce effective behaviour, which has a quantitative outcome or measurement (1982:111). They indicate what they think are the appropriate managerial styles (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982:152) needed to guide and direct a subordinate's needs (as defined by Maslow, 1943); and highlight the importance of the manager's ability to assess the subordinate's maturity level to perform specific tasks within a particular situation (1982:156). This judgement is needed for the manager to give the necessary socio-emotional support that may be needed within a given context.

Maturity, seen as a *greater ability and willingness* on the part of the individual in doing his/her job *without detailed supervision*, is equated with self-control and independence in the job context (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982:157). Thus defined, autonomy and control are advocated as the core to employees' self-image and carried the highest employee value in management's eyes. These values together with a work ethic have risen to central stage in the work environment.

A vocabulary relating to needs, participation, employee development and autonomy within the organizational context, is acquiring specific meaning. It entails doing what management desires to achieve organizational goals without supervision. Thus the “organizational” concepts of employee needs, autonomy, development and participation in decision making are interpreted strictly within the dominant organizational discourse; they are neatly removed from other understandings or interpretations.

Role Development for Managers

During this period there is a strong focus on managers and a groping for clarity on what managers actually do, in order to help them achieve organizational goals more effectively. Early organizational writers had portrayed management functions as having to plan, lead, organize and control *in relation to task control*. From this mindset the motivation of staff to perform prescribed activities is only seen as a sub-factor of a manager’s job. However with greater emphasis on organizational change, early change literature (Schein, 1983; Bridges, 1986; Bennis 1989) becomes concerned with the ability of managers to break down resistance to change in their employees, to unfreeze established behaviour and refreeze desired behaviour (Lewin and Grabbe, 1964).

It is not until the development of change management theories during the late 1980s and early 1990s that there is a distinct swing from a focus on personal development to organizational development. With this conceptual move, leadership and management are distinguished and described as different action orientations. Leaders and managers are seen as qualitatively different (Kotter, 1990:25). These qualitative differences are both between the two concepts and among individual manager’s themselves. People in various managerial ranks are not equal and cannot be lumped together, nor can they be considered as having the same perceptions of the organization. Those at the lower end of the hierarchy are seen as having greater areas of dissatisfaction.

Leaders and managers are seen as having different personal orientations, different personal attributes and different, though complementary, roles to play in the

establishment of long-term objectives and in achieving these objectives (Kotter, 1990:27). Whereas good management copes with the complexity of order and consistency, leadership is seen as coping with change (1990:25). The focus is on leaders' insight and ability to see new developing relationships and interdependencies and on their ability to sway a majority to achieve this reality (Kotter, 1990:28). An organization's vision of its direction and future state remains a "pipe dream" if it cannot be converted into a realistic strategy (1990:26). Leadership skills are identified as recognizing change, communicating these changes, initiating adaptation to these changing circumstances and moving people through a period of uncertainty in the direction desired (1990:30). These necessary skills (social and political, although not acknowledged as such) relate to steps in the change process which is very much 'management-driven'.

Summary

In summary, the basic underlying assumption of the human relations approach is that *organizations are functional* and have social *value for all* its members. Organizations are depicted as complex social systems in which an influential style of management is advocated because:

- organizations serve human needs;
- organizations and people need each other;
- a poor fit between individual and organization is detrimental; while
- a good fit benefits both.

Development of employees is recognized as being necessary for successful organizations, particularly the managerial necessity in acquiring social and political skills necessary for effective leadership and management-driven change. A dominant discourse on organizational development has become well established.

The driving force behind this developmental movement is the need for organizational adjustment and the recognition of organizations as part of a wider system. Global competition and uncertain turbulent environments have made stable conditions a thing of

the past; the emphasis is on the need to change organizations so that they cope with uncertainty and change; and most important, the need for managers to initiate and manage that change. Organizational attention switches to survival, coping with competition, the need for innovation, management-driven change, and breaking employee resistance to these management efforts.

2.7 DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINGENCY THEORY

The position of Classical theories was concern with formalized organizational arrangements - a prescribed, centralized, top-down organizational structure (one best way) and detailed job specification, formalization and planning. The Human Relations theories challenged this view by looking at individual participation, a degree of autonomy, and shared influenced through participation (McGregor, 1960, Likert, 1967). These diverse and antagonistic views become fused with the development of the particular research concepts and language of contingency theory in which the study of organizations is conceptualized as a socio-technical system.

Contingency theory is primarily about the structuring of organizations to achieve effectiveness. Situational contingency variables (circumstances) require organizational adaptation, that is, structural change to achieve effectiveness. Effective structures are seen to vary as a function of task, technology, size, strategy, type of environment and the challenges it presents (Donaldson, 1996). This position is upheld by research in which insights obtained through the investigation of these identified factors develop into a full-blown contingency theory of organizational structure.

Through research conducted by Burns and Stalker (1961), Chandler, (1962), Woodward (1965), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), Pugh et al., [the Aston group] (1969), and others and the widely repeated reproduction of their research results by many in different organizations in various countries, structural contingency theory became the recognized mainstream research paradigm. Within this theoretical orientation primacy was given to

the organizational-environment interface. It was accepted that organizations adapt to their environment, and that it is management's function to ensure this adaptation and fit by deliberate intervention.

An examination of this well entrenched mainstream organizational theory now follows.

Contribution of Leading Researchers

A recognized style of empirical research developed (Pugh, 1988; Donaldson, 1995:13) in which it was made evident that structural fit affects performance positively, and misfit adversely.

The contributions of early researchers firmly established the structural-contingency approach as accepted practice. These researchers examined contingency variables such as:

- task uncertainty and stability (Burns and Stalker, 1961),
- size and technology (Woodward, 1965),
- diversity and integration (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967),
- rate of environmental change (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967),
- structure and technology (Thompson, 1967),
- size and economies of scale (Blau, 1970),
- structure and information (Galbraith, 1973), and
- structure and strategy (Chandler 1962 and Child 1972).

Task uncertainty

Burns and Stalker (1961) address *task certainty and uncertainty* relative to appropriate structure. They draw attention to the relationship of organizations' structure and the way they cope with their stable or changing environment. They describe organizations along a continuum from mechanistic (centralized/formalized) to organic (decentralized/less formalized). Mechanistic organizations fit the description of those described by classical

theorists. They have a clear hierarchy of control and a formalized specialization of task. They are seen as having an organizational design that copes well with predictable tasks and stable environments (1961:123). The organic organizations in contrast are described as being able to operate more successfully in fast changing environments. Tasks are unpredictable and uncertain and the organizations are marked by their more informal, flexible structure that encourages greater speed in interaction and decision making (Burns and Stalker, 1961:89). A mechanistic organizational structure in such a fast changing environment would prove counter-productive as it would be less effective.

Again attention is being drawn to the fact that there is no one best way to structure and manage all types of organizations given differing circumstances. Responsibility clearly rests with management to adopt the appropriate structure and practices that will foster successful change for their own particular organization. A key concept is that organizations function as a system in achieving their goals through rational decision making.

Size and Technology

Woodward (1965) also looked at *structure* but *allied to operational technology*. She focused on changing conditions in one hundred manufacturing concerns and highlights the influence of technology in this environment. She examined the structure of these firms and found it unrelated to the size of these organizations or their industry classification. She connects operation technology and organizational structure and finds that "organizational structure is not so much a function of technology as a function of the control system" (Reeves and Woodward, 1970:37). Her basic premise was that the control system could be "studied independently of both the social system and the technical system" (1970:38). She then related this hierarchical control system (monitoring, feedback and corrective action) to performance levels in the achievement of organizational goals while adapting to changing circumstances. She found work environments more formalized in mechanistic mass productive environments but more organic in capital intensive organizations that required teamwork. Work environments

that required craft skills, for example, the manufacturing of musical instruments, were even more informal and organic. The *right structural fit* to the work environment was identified as causing superior performance.

During this period, research emphasized organizational design and the problem of mismatch of design to contingencies which resulted in poor performance as indicated by economic indicators. It was management's function to recognize the structural change needed, avoid the structural inefficiencies identified, and then to make structural adaptations, minimize the misfit or transition period and to maximize performance.

Diversity and Integration

Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) are reputed to have coined the term contingency theory as applied to organizational studies (1967:184). They examine organizations in the processed foods and container industries in which rates of environmental change and product diversity are key elements (1967:v). Their research on structure focuses on departments within organizations demonstrating *diversity and need for integration*. They identify different functional departments as requiring different structures for effectiveness (for example, research and development, and production) (1967:108). They examine the difficulty of co-ordination at interdepartmental and superordinate levels given different structures and different cultures (organic and mechanistic in the same organization) (1967:140). They explore this functional and interpersonal differentiation together with the problem of integration and co-ordination. They highlight the *appropriateness of structure for high performance*, the need for greater emphasis on integration and joint problem-solving, and the adequacy of functioning measured in terms of profitability or growth of sales. Furthermore, they identify the importance of managers' flexibility in integrating inputs from differentiated units, of having to respond to changing external environments and having to confront conflicts (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967:158).

Structure, Technology and Uncertainty

Another organizational researcher within this contingency paradigm is Thompson. Thompson (1967) distinguishes between closed and open system organization and argues that organizations attempt to protect their core production technologies in a closed system. He believes that different parts of an organization reflect different parts of the environment and the different tasks required of them. He highlights task interdependence and co-ordination as a source of uncertainty. The output of one stage of product process influences the input of another subunit and consequently workflow needs to be handled at different hierarchical levels which impacts on design. This approach to structural differentiation is built upon by Blau (1970).

Size and Economies of Scale

Blau (1970) introduces the idea of economies of scale. He argues that organizational *size* and growth (that is, greater differentiation in number of sub-units, units, sections, divisions, levels in hierarchy and horizontal differentiation) - *allow for greater economies of scale*. That is, the proportion of managers, administrators and support staff decline relative to increasing organizational size.

Much consolidation of the mainstream research of this period is published by Pugh et al (1963, 1968, and 1969) who also reported the reliability of variables. In their examination of diverse organizations spanning manufacturing, service, public and private sectors, they apply principles learnt from psychology, sociology, economics and statistics to organizational theory, and relate these to multi-causal material factors such as organizational context, size, structure (for example, specialization and centralization), and performance, and to individual behaviour such as job satisfaction and turnover. In particular, size and structure are studied across various firms such as manufacturing, education, service and trade unions. They find that larger organizations are both more structured with regard to rules and functions, and more decentralized in terms of span of decision-making authority.

Structure and information

Information management is highlighted as a key area in dealing with uncertainty and decision-making structures. It is Galbraith (1973) who argues that the demands of technology on structure reflect a need to process information. Information requirements increase with complexity, diversity, uncertainty and interdependence. He draws attention to the rich diversity of relevant information necessary for effective decision-making that is available throughout an organization, making network approaches to decision-making important. More and more stress is levelled at managerial competence rather than position. It is acknowledged that managers do not and cannot possibly have all the answers. They have to access the richness and diversity of their staff to get relevant information needed to make good decisions. In order for them to do their job effectively it is their responsibility to get the best out of their staff. These same staff (and particularly the managers themselves) have ideally been socialized to exercise personal control and autonomy on the job, or more specifically, to show willingness to do what is expected of them without supervision.

Structure and Strategy

Chandler (1962, 1977) in his seminal research shows that *strategy leads to structure*. He examines structural fit to strategy in large multi-functional organizations. Again it is recognized that management have a vital role to play in planning and allocating resources to ensure competitive advantage in a particular environment. Deliberate management action is essential to achieve optimal performance and thus managerial strategy leads to structural change. He argues that as organizations increase their product diversification management need to facilitate this complexity by creating a structure that is more decentralized. This functional complexity is accommodated in a multi-divisional structure. A structure that does not accommodate an organization's functional complexity will be a poor fit and retard performance.

Strategic change is shown as a dynamic process that can initiate the misfit in that it causes a "shift from fit to misfit and the subsequent structural change causes the shift

from misfit to new fit" (Donaldson, 1995:34). The strategy-structure framework is seen as a major contribution to contingency theory and perpetuates its continued dissemination and practice in that standard textbooks on organizational structure and design come from this conceptual framework (Bedeian and Zammuto, 1991; Daft, 1986; Mintzberg, 1979).

Allied to the above development of contingency theory is the theme of the special development of strong professional management and the development of change management theories. This will help organizations recognize and respond to market opportunities, diversify, build multi- and transnational organizations, and ensure the best fit between structure and strategy.

This research period concentrates on showing that *structures are functional* and a particular research language gains precedence and legitimacy. Though this position becomes the established mainstream view, insights gained from other research do hint at other political possibilities.

It was Cyert and March (1963, 1992) who first introduced the "perspective that sees firms as coalitions of multiple, conflicting interests using standard rules and procedures to operate under conditions of bounded rationality" (1992: xi/xii) by linking research on economics with research on organizations. They were interested in the effects of structure and practice "on the development of goals, the formation of expectations, and the execution of choices" (1992:1) and looked at these issues by studying actual decision-making. In particular they highlight unresolved conflict among coalitions or various subgroups (an idea that will eventually develop into a stakeholder approach). This insight recognizes the principle of collective control and the need for continual negotiation. Control variables are identified as those that influence price, strategy, revenue, cost, structure and policy. These controls are instrumental in achieving organizational goals, which are themselves subject to changes in the coalition structure. From this point of view, profit maximization loses its prominence in an environment where goals change with shifts in *coalition formations* and "local rationalities" on any

given decision. But even this view is, at that point in time, absorbed into contingency theory under the label of uncertainty.

Summary

Contingency theory gained ascendancy and became the dominant organizational research discourse and approach. The fit between organizational design, functional co-ordination and environmental uncertainty were linked. Certainty gave way to contingency and the success of an organization was now seen as dependent upon management's developed ability to recognize changing circumstances, analyse these, make the appropriate design adjustments and align staff to move in the right direction. The design adjustments, it was noted, would be influenced by levels of environmental uncertainty and dependence (Thompson, 1967), by technology (Woodward, 1965) and the size of organizations (Pugh et al, 1969). Common to them all was the fit between structure and contingency factors on effective performance.

Difficult times and the failure of many businesses made it abundantly clear, from within this contingency paradigm, that organizations were severely affected by environmental challenges. These were termed *unpredictable external variables* (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974). Organizations could no longer regard themselves as closed systems. The organization-environment interface became vital.

Literature on the open systems approach to organizational management (Thompson, 1967; Child, 1984) became the new message of theorists, adding mechanical words such as, feedback mechanisms, self-regulation, input and output to the management vocabulary. This influence became more full-blown with words like re-tooling and re-engineering as management attempts were made to build unpredictability and flexibility into structures. In this way research attention was directed to addressing management's need to bring about total organizational change in dealing with environmental challenge successfully. Before following this direction and the plethora of work that is covered by change management, it is necessary to look at challenges to contingency theory in order

to recognize the diverse concepts that change management theorists are trying to take cognizance of, absorb or reject in their mainstream approach.

2.8 CHALLENGES TO CONTINGENCY THEORY

The late sixties in Western society were a time of counter-culture, and this phenomenon was also to be seen on the academic front. On the fringes to mainstream organizational theory, two sociologists Silverman (1970; 1971) and Weick (1969), who had an interpretative perspective on organizations, were attracting attention.

Social action theory

Silverman (1970) gives an alternative view of *organizations as social construction* rather than the more passive view of organizations adapting to environmental determinism. This view challenges the predefined organizational goals of functionalism and systems theory that is perceived, from this alternative view, as curtailing potential political behaviour.

In this perspective, actors rather than systems, are the main focus; in that organizational goals and rules do not "exist separately from the actors' definition of the situation" (1970:6). This perspective is different from the contingency one as it offers an *interpretative* approach to organizations *rather than a functional* one as organizations adapt to their environment.

Silverman sincerely believed that it was reification of managerial goals that created the division between the formal and informal organization. From his view it "seems doubtful whether it is legitimate to conceive of an organization as having a goal except where there is ongoing consensus between the members of the organization about the purpose of their interaction" (1970:9).

These concepts find expression in social action theory (Silverman, 1970) that discounts contingency theory's account of organizations and their structure; rejects the systems paradigm in organizational analysis and constructs an action frame of reference as an alternative method of analysis. Drawing on the work of Schutz (1967), Silverman's criticism of systems theory is that it separates interaction between subjectively meaningful action and structural constraints for the sake of methodological purity.

Social action theory (Silverman, 1968) draws attention to the behaviour of the individual and the meaning he/she attaches to his/her actions. Actor and agency are central to the theoretical discourse. Organizations are explained in relation to the meanings that cause people to act in a particular way; the perceptions and beliefs of the actor in influencing a situation, is stressed.

Silverman (1971) also emphasizes interaction between the organization and society, and the necessity "to move from an examination of the micro problem of particular actors to the macro problem of the systems of expectations that is established as they pursue their ends in the context of the meanings and symbolic resources which they and other actors import from the wider social structure" (Silverman, 1971:165). In this way his theory aligns itself with broader social change. The action frame of reference becomes a method of analysing social relations and changes in them. This view, Silverman maintains, reconciles a social reality that deals with both meaningful interaction and socially constructed restraints that define situations.

Strategic choice theory

Strategic choice theory is an attempt by Child (1972) to reconcile social action theory with mainstream thought. He concentrates on the role senior management plays in creating and modifying structure. His focus is less on internal and external constraints (size etc.) and imperatives, and more on managerial choice from within a range of possibilities. Between contingency variables and structure, he believes, is a substantial degree of managerial choice shaped by perceptions, values, beliefs and political factors

(Child, 1972:2). It is this inclusion of political factors and explanations that contingency theorists find hard to swallow.

From an ideological perspective, Child (1973) finds fault with contingency theory because it does not consider the deterministic logic of its basis – a ‘logic of effectiveness’ committed to the rationalization of organizations. This is regarded as a social given and the ‘scientific’ knowledge regarding the structure and function of organizations is then applied regardless of the ideological distortions produced, or the fact that divergent views should be evaluated and collective social action informed by them. The idea of organizing a collectivity is gaining in ascendancy; this is the area in which Weick (1969) makes his contribution.

Processes of organizing

Weick (1969) focuses on the processes of organizing "which create, maintain, and dissolve social collectivities" (1969:1) rather than the concept of organization. The individual is seen as acting in context. Context is recognized as an integral part of the *constructed system*. This constructed social system is built through interactions, using rules and resources. This approach *views structures as the outcome of interaction* not as a given.

People are depicted as processing a double action - being active in creating their environment and then in making sense of how they responded to this environment. In other words they are shown as making sense of their organizing through reflective interpretation of their actions. This retrospective analysis or "double interact" (interaction response-reflection-adjustment) becomes Weick's unit for organizational analysis (Weick, 1969:33). For example, a manager wants his subordinate to do B instead of A. To analyse the change an observer will need to know the subordinate's response to this directive. This response pattern will only be understood by comparing it to the behaviour pattern that was underway while A was being executed. The model for the studying of organizing is given as:

- enactment - creating the information that the system adapts to;
- selection - sorting the information into an orderly form, removing equivocality; and
- retention - integrating and retaining new or different information that may reaffirm or contradict the established way of doing things.

Because each step of the model increases equivocality within the organization (1969:91) there is a need to introduce rules and co-ordinated action to deal with and reduce dysfunctional levels of ambiguity.

The above two alternative concepts (organizations as a social construct and the process of organizing) allow a whole new development in organizational thinking which is not embraced by mainstream theorists in their structural-contingency paradigm. As a result these schools of thought are inclined to run parallel to mainstream thinking and practice. Nevertheless the influence of these approaches will be seen in subsequent chapters that deal with culture (which works from an interpretative perspective) and power (which focuses on the processes of organizing).

Cultural and political processes, which view organizations as manipulated artefacts, do not find a natural home in systems theory that aligns itself with operational efficiency and effectiveness. It totally undermines the view of organizational studies as a "*science* geared to the identification of causal relationships between 'organization' and 'environment' " (Reed, 1992:3 author's emphasis).

Resource dependency theory

It is in dealing with environmental challenges that flaws become evident in the structural-contingency paradigm. Organizations are seen as being dependent upon their environment to obtain resources necessary for growth and survival. They have to cope with this challenge. Resource dependency theory introduces concepts of manoeuvrability, co-opting powerful organizational members on various boards and altering the so-called unpredictable external environment by mergers and acquisitions.

Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978) holds that external constraints force organizations to manoeuvre (for example, merge, diversify) in order to retain their autonomy. These mergers are not a result of flaws or needs of internal structures but responses to inter-organizational dependencies and market strategy.

Organizations are dependent upon their environment for resources and need to interact with that environment in order to ensure survival and obtain desired scarce resources.

Critical to their survival is the ability to:

- ensure superior performance to gain competitive advantage over other organizations, and
- alter their environment to make it more compatible and to control access to resources.

Apart from mergers and acquisitions this is facilitated by co-opting members of organizations on the boards of other organizations (Pfeffer, 1992). Structure is used to divide and conquer the opposition (Pfeffer, 1992:267). The importance of engineering the broader environment as well as the organization itself acquires significance in order that the external environment is made more conducive to organizational success. It is also used as a way for powerful executives "to have their decisions made or ratified by boards or committees in order to avoid acquiring personal enemies as they exercise their powers" (1992:274).

Population-ecology theory

Whereas traditional theory addresses social relations within organizations, population-ecology (Hannan and Freeman, 1977) has its primary focus on social relations between organizations in that they share common rules and compete for resources at the same time as being "in a state of competitive interdependence" (Aldrich, 1992:18). This situation among like-organizations makes for a complex relationship that is both competitive and co-operative allowing boundaries to become blurred.

Population-ecology theory (Hannan and Freeman, 1977, 1984) deals with organizations in decline. Hannan and Freeman (1977) react to that aspect of contingency theory research that recognizes size and structure as functional in producing greater effectiveness. They challenge the premise that it is size that dictates changes in structure and the adaptation of organizations (Hannan and Freeman, 1984:158).

Their research investigates changes in many organizations over an extended period of time rather than just at one point in time in individual organizations, as the case of early contingency research. They hold that it is the life and death of various organizational types that shape the form and structures of future organizations, not management adaptation (1984:149). Hannan and Freeman (1984:162) see uncertainty and pressure demanding reliable collective action and accountable performance, these, they say, are organizational aspects that favour structural inertia.

Because their interest is mainly in the decline of organizational forms, Hannan and Freeman (1984:149) focus on organizational inertia or lack of change. Their main level of analysis is volatility in population demographics among organizations themselves, that is the founding and dissolving of businesses, so they give little attention to the individual, decision-making processes or the broader social community. Nevertheless, Hannan and Freeman (1977:957) see organizations as political systems in which management, as the power holder, has vested interests. They explain structural inertia in terms of reliability, accountability, stability and standardization of routines, and assert that management is more interested in their vested interests than in adapting, timeously, to environmental demands. Successful strategies are seen as happening as much as a result of good fortune and accident, than as the outcome of rational managerial planning or any “high degree of congruence between design and outcomes” (Hannan and Freeman, 1984:151).

Institutional theory

The conceptual move in mainstream organizational theory from organizations as closed systems to organizations as open systems draws attention to an organization’s larger

environment. It shows a progression in thought as organizations try to come to terms with both the internal and external forces affecting them. Institutionalists, in linking organizations to the wider social environment, address different aspects and see the external organizational environment with different eyes. From the institutional perspective the broader social community frames the assumptions under which organizations may operate (Zucker, 1977). In other words, the social situational context is a power medium around organizations which will either facilitate or inhibit organizational survival and success.

Institutional theory (Selznick, 1957; Zucker, 1977; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) challenges the contingency theory premise that structural fit of organizations relate to task contingencies. It holds that organizational structures fit with wider institutional demands not with task contingencies. By placing organizations firmly in the broader social environment they show that organizations have to conform to social norms to ensure survival and success. It is society that grants legitimation and approval.

The theoretical base for this approach is sociological. The work of sociologists, like Selznick, (1957) Berger and Luckman, (1967) and Berger, Berger and Kellner, (1973) influenced institutionalists because they drew attention to the social construction of reality; the role institutions play in creating social order; and the importance that routine social behaviour has on the cognitive nature of 'common sense' knowledge which controls human conduct. It is the powerful, cognitive, diffusive nature of routine scripts that gains social legitimacy and the formidable effects of institutional rules that attracts the attention of the institutionalists such as Meyer and Rowan (1977), Zucker (1977), and DiMaggio and Powell (1983).

Meyer and Rowan's (1977) seminal work challenged the well-established mainstream theoretical tradition that formal organizational structure is linked to management problems of efficiency and effectiveness in co-ordinating tasks (Simon, 1946; Woodward, 1965; Thompson, 1967) and that environmental forces have a determining

effect upon structures (Thompson, 1967; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Although the early work of March and Simon (1957) did draw attention to the limits of rationality and the work of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) did show concern with an organization's autonomy and power (rather than efficiency in the organizational-environment relationship to resource dependency), this was done from a different mindset. Meyer and Rowan (1977:340) make a more definite break from the mainstream view in that they highlight the symbolic properties of structure.

In the underpinning of their theoretical approach Meyer and Rowan (1977:341) have built on Berger and Luckman's (1967:54) understanding of the rules and classifications built into society that makes organizations reflect, in a structural way, its socially constructed reality. In particular they relate this line of thought to the dominant mainstream research paradigm that the formal structure of organizations is "the most effective way to coordinate and control the complex relational networks involved in modern technical or work activities" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:342). They query the empirical foundations of this mainstream technically rationalized view in that they question whether formal structure is contingent upon its technical requirements (for example, size, technology, resources etcetera); and whether coordination and control are the critical organizational dimensions to be managed.

What institutionalists such as Meyer and Rowan (1977) debate, which is not acknowledged by mainstream theorists, is the symbolic use of structures as part of an on-going struggle for power and meaning among organizations at a macro-level. This debate challenges the pervasive view of the organization as a separate entity perpetuated by the myth that organizations "described in legitimate vocabularies are assumed to be oriented to collectively defined, and often collectively mandated, ends" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:349).

Institutional theory has two major thrusts on how social reality is constructed:

- Organizations themselves are treated as institutions. From this view the theme is stability and order, and the focus is on internal processes and the creation of organizational culture (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977, 1983, 1988).
- The environment is treated as the powerful institutional, rule-like formal structure from which organizations gain legitimacy by conforming (Hinings and Greenwood, 1988). From this perspective organizational structure is imposed by a coercive power (Dobbin et al, 1988); induced by funding and incentives (Meyer et al, 1988); acquired by imitation (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and incorporated through adaptation (Selznick, 1957). However organizations do not take this problematic position with the external environment passively, as some theorists would have us believe. Organizations take concerted, collective action to both influence and shape their environment and institute institutional practices to protect their interests.

Powerful institutional practices and rules surround organizations providing an enabling environment that facilitates organizational survival (March and Olsen, 1984:735). People interested in changing organizations have to deal head on with this power medium. They will have to identify and understand how these institutions surrounding organizations operate; how they fit into the rest of society; how existing organizational structures and rules become accepted, 'taken-for-granted' behaviour; how those in positions of power and authority act from a mindset of obligations and duties; and how the management of meaning, symbols, rituals and ceremonies impact on society (March and Olsen, 1984:735). These are the issues institutionalists address as they look beyond the narrow technical concerns of output, efficiency and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals.

When it is conceded that the battle is fought and won at the political level (March and Olsen, 1983, 1984), organizational change is hard to square with mainstream theory which would have us focus on functional and technical expectations that are rules of appropriateness. (Because of the critical importance of the concepts outlined above for organizational transformation, institutionalism will be discussed in greater depth in a

chapter on its own - Chapter 5, once the theme of power {Chapter 4} has been examined).

Summary

The theories in this section on alternative concepts have a greater tendency to focus on external expectations, demands and constraints than the more internally focused mainstream contingency theory. Although mainstream theory is informed by the problems presented by these alternative theories they have not been able to integrate them into that paradigm or vice versa. What mainstream and alternative theories have in common, is the need to address the problem of surviving in a fast changing environment where the rules of the game itself are constantly changing, and where there is a need to manage that change successfully.

As can be seen, by the 1980s orthodox organization theory appears in disarray. There is a plurality of theoretical approaches towards organizations without any common language, theoretical integrity or intellectual coherence that makes the development of organization theory readily comprehensible. Systems contingency theory with a focus on the individual organization, and its treatment of survival in a potentially hostile environment is seen by alternative thinkers as inadequate. The focus moves from the organization to an organization "institutionally embedded in social and cultural practices" (Hughes, 1992:296). With this move the role of top management in manipulating the organizational environment - the deliberate construction of their organizational reality in a variety of possible forms and the mobilization of bias and consent - gains in ascendancy. This, in essence, is what change management is about.

2.9 MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

The management of change umbrella becomes the next dominant theme under which varying theoretical approaches to organizational studies and theory are grouped together to make some sort of intellectual sense.

New forms of organization

The focus of management literature in the early 1980s moves towards attempts at describing new forms of organization (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Kanter 1983; Handy 1989). Peters and Waterman (1982) promote the idea of the entrepreneur and use an almost evangelistic approach to show that top companies are value-driven, extended families. People may be heterogeneous but organizations as complex social institutions are encouraged to have a prescriptive view in inculcating homogeneous values and an entrepreneurial approach.

The underlying thrust is with organizational form, for this is the way social behaviour within organizations is influenced, structured and controlled. There is a drive away from the bureaucratic form as an ideal and a move towards the concept of networks and alliances (Charan, 1991).

Kanter (1983), as a social scientist, looks forward to a 'post-entrepreneurial' (driven by an entrepreneur) organization; one in which innovative employee behaviour is coupled with strategic alliances among other organizations that promote trust and co-operation. Handy (1989) sees the organization of the future as being smaller, more flexible and less hierarchical than the labour intense models of the past. Organizations that are not machine and material intensive are seen as being able to work around contracts rather than permanent employment (1989:42). This gives rise to the development of pragmatic values of partnership and contribution as the organization becomes located in a wider social setting. This new type of relationship, he sees as responding to negotiation, persuasion and consent but not command (Handy, 1989:131). Authority does not come automatically in this "loosely" arranged organizational environment and consequently management would have a much harder job influencing, controlling, manipulating cultural variables and mobilizing agreement or consent to organizational goals.

The ideal of leadership and its development comes once again to the fore. But this time, in the thrust of change management, the concept of leadership converges with the role of senior management – management is now seen as a collective. Type of organization is no longer the central issue. Once organizations have clear objectives in mind senior management need to focus on how the changes necessary to achieve these goals are managed.

The Role of Senior Management in Managing Change

The role of senior management is to set a direction, to create strategies to achieve that vision, and paint a picture of the future that inspires others by appealing to their values and emotions (Whiteley, 1995). Common aspirations and a sense of connectedness are required. Leaders are exhorted to construct a social reality of "collective aspirations and shared commitment" (Senge, 1990:211). Because of the privileged positions leaders occupy they have the opportunity to put a palpable stamp on their organization. This they do by managing what people think and feel about their organization. Should this strategic attitude permeate their being, senior management become the visible embodiment of their organizational culture, its strengths and weaknesses.

Theories of leadership move away from the earlier view of the dominant, charismatic founder of a business; described as larger than life, quick to react and make decisions; out in the forefront moulding the lifestyle, beliefs and values of those around them (Schein, 1985). These entrepreneurial leaders who had been perceived as prime communicators, masters of rhetoric, fashioners of symbols and organizers of rites, symbolizers of economic success and holders of a winning formula, are no longer the ideal. Their dominant position had brought with it a downside; with radical external change over time, coupled with internal organizational change, these leaders were usually unaware that their impact had diminished and that their social control had slipped away (Brown, 1995:47). So confident is this type of person of her/his own ability to get things done that s/he does not usually develop sensitivity to others nor does s/he recognize the need for different processes necessary for managing change and radical transformation.

The enormous task of planned transformation and strategic management gives greater emphasis to the multiple skills of top team effort and the necessity of a combined leadership's ability to create a whole new identity for an organization that has meaning and application throughout that organization (Chandler, 1962, 1977; Ansoff, Bosman and Strom, 1982; Cummings and Huse, 1989). From this theoretical mindset, the management of change involves the management of organizational culture. That is, organizations are acknowledged as social entities with distinctive value orientations and planned organizational change is seen as creating a new identity for an organization and in developing that new sense of identity throughout the organization. This activity of senior management is one of gaining commitment (mobilizing bias) and manufacturing consent in achieving organizational goals. The theoretical thrust moves to finding the best model for accomplishing organizational change.

2.10 MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Learning-Action

Ansoff et al (Ansoff, Bosman and Storm, 1982) recommend a learning-action approach to managing change as they believe all levels of management learn on the job (1982:6). Their view of strategic change is not sequential but parallel and incremental revealing overlapping aspects of planning, implementing and revising. In particular, planning of change is not something done by top management at head office. It is a process that involves all managers who are responsible for implementation of decisions (1982:13) and is geared around problem solving and strategy diagnosis (1982:14). In this way organizational change is seen as a built-in problem-solving planning process that spreads responsibility for action throughout the managerial ranks.

There is an initial launching platform from which senior management create the preconditions for commencing the change process (Ansoff et al, 1982:8). This pre-planning stage is one of mobilizing support and minimizing political and cultural

resistance (1982:29). It concentrates on diagnoses, on understanding of the need for change, on creating pro-change coalitions to tackle the real strategic problems identified and on reducing resistance. Managerial capacity is expanded as managers are encouraged and trained to work on those problems that are relevant to their jobs and that affect them (1982:13). In this way managerial problem-solving and behaviour development are linked to strategic challenges. In conjunction with the planning stage, multiple problem-solving projects are launched at the end of each planning module to ensure maximum involvement (1982:23). However with this diverse involvement comes a warning; the change process will deviate from initial expectations and controls are essential. These controls, although developed in an ad hoc way, are to ensure balanced progress (1982:24).

If this learning-action model of change is to become institutionalized in an organization then structure and the reward, incentive, information and control systems, all have to be adjusted and aligned to reflect this priority (Ansoff et al, 1982:20). The alignment of these organizational variables ensures that this way of thinking and behaving when confronting organizational problems, becomes institutionalized and that a new culture and structure evolve naturally to support the required level of innovation.

Phase Model

Cummings and Huse (1989) focus on the distinct phases that an organization moves through during a planned change process. They produce an 8-phase change model and point out that "the concept of planned change implies that an organization exists in different states at different times and that planned movement can occur from one state to another" (1989:51). Bullock and Batten (1985) also develop a phase model. Their model, a synthesized neat 4-phase model developed after their review of thirty change models comprises the following phases:

- **Exploration Phase**

Becoming aware of the need for change, committing resources, seeking assistance and establishing a contract with an outside facilitator.

- **Planning phase**

Gaining understanding of the organization's problem, diagnosing the problem, establishing change goals and designing appropriate interventions.

- **Action phase**

Implementing changes planned, managing the change process, gaining support for actions to be taken, evaluating activities and giving feedback for necessary adjustments to be made.

- **Integration phase**

Reinforcing new behaviours through feedback and rewards, diffusing successful aspects of change, and training managers to constantly improve upon the activities (Bullock and Batten, 1985:400).

The two dimensions of this model are - the states through which the organization moves towards a higher level of performance, and the methods/ techniques used to bring about the changes desired. Although each phase looks well contained in its own little box, major organizational transformation is not a neatly organized arrangement. As Lawrence and Lorsch have noted "while we treat them as separate stages, in practice they are highly overlapping and interconnected" (Bullock and Batten, 1985:386).

Summary

The models offered do not guarantee success. Managing change is depicted as a complex process that begs competence and commitment of all staff, particularly all managers. Furthermore, the management of change is not just about adjusting technical organizational parts, this organizational manoeuvring does not happen in a vacuum; it is facilitated, hampered and restrained by an organization's culture.

Organizations are heralded as more than just technical organized places of work. Change management efforts have revealed organizations as social entities with distinctive value orientations in which culture plays a pivotal role. In fact, the transformation of an organization is almost reduced to the management of culture as senior management use

culture as a management tool for mobilizing bias to achieve their desired goals. The management of change is represented (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Ansoff, Bosman and Storm, 1982; Cummings and Huse, 1989) as a major management-driven initiative in which senior management are depicted as enlightened, scientific managers of organizational transformation.

The nature of organizational change or transformation may be an arbitrary management decision (with or without the aide of specialists). This is particularly so in business where organizational direction and long-range planning is accepted as the inescapable function of management. Nevertheless, all organizational members are expected to collaborate in moving towards the desired future. This collaborative effort (even at the managerial level, Ansoff et al, 1982:13) is far more readily obtained where there is collaborative planning and participation in decisions that entail adjustments throughout the system instead of enforced implementation of non-negotiated decisions. While this collaborative approach appears as good rhetoric in management literature (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Senge, 1990) it is not the generally accepted view of organizational planning or of planned change (Ansoff et al, 1982:6). The difficulty with the model is that it is political. That is, it relies on different views of a problem situation being presented and strategies being negotiated. In mainstream theory this area, of problem diagnosis, problem definition, decision making and strategy formation, is the domain of senior management and negotiation with other parties in this regard is unacceptable to the orthodox approach.

Controversy surrounds the concept of planning. Circumventing the debate, Lockwood and Davies describe organizational planning (within a specific university context) as

the continuous and collective exercise of foresight in the integrated process of taking informed decisions affecting the future (Lockwood and Davies, 1985:167).

Because this definition addresses the collective nature of planned change, the process can be broken down into "problem diagnosis, problem sharing, and diffusing problem

ownership to significant pressure groups" (Lockwood and Davies, 1985:150). It is different from the mainstream approach in that emphasis is on problem acceptance, sharing and ownership rather than on a major senior management driven implementation thrust. But even this less orthodox model does not allow for the political nature of collaborative problem definition.

Change management issues highlight the role of senior management in the light of increased social science knowledge about cultural and symbolic processes, and the institutional arrangements that facilitate their progress. This theoretical thrust removes organizations from the tame, functional, neutral, technical world neatly contained in orthodox organizational theory and management practice. It portrays organizations as manufactured social constructs with all the contending intellectual problems that this entails.

Organizational analysis too has to move beyond the examination of the technical organization. The plurality of theoretical frameworks, diverse methodologies and general intellectual controversy surrounding the analysis of organizations pose problems in organizational studies that force academic research to reach beyond its traditional, narrow disciplinary confines, in order to address the widening circle of concerns and to search for some overarching sense of intellectual integrity (Reed, 1985). This problem of organizational analysis which reveals discourse as the foundation process in the creation of organizations as social constructs, will now be addressed.

3. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE DISCIPLINE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The academic environment is a place for discursive struggle. This activity is a social process of reality construction in which a discourse, for example organizational theory and management practice, plays a role in shaping organizational concepts and the way things get done. Those involved with organizations “are convinced that the norms underlying their actions can be justified at any time within a discourse” (Bleicher, 1980:163).

A discourse is a system of texts and discussion that opens up possible ways of being (Bleicher, 1980:229). In this way discourse gives legitimacy and validity to accepted norms. It also is a means of representing a “fixation of meaning” (1980:230) which has an ideological effect. Discursive activity has this ideological effect in that it “can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:258). This effect is of particular significance in the formalized, hierarchical, organizational context.

In my attempt to find an academic home for founding my research, I reveal in this chapter the dialogical struggle relating to organizational reality. It is a struggle in which the mainstream discourse is privileged and the alternative debate marginalized.

Mainstream organizational theory and management practice deal with the efficient and effective achievement of organizational goals. Within this frame of reference or discourse they do not address issues pertaining to the suffering of employees and the diminution of their capacity; nor with resistance to management norms and practice as a positive action. This blindness restricts awareness and gives rise to a problem of

academic validity when making an assertion that these issues are relevant and are of enormous consequence.

As an area of academic knowledge and discourse, mainstream organizational theory is mainly preoccupied with technical/administrative concerns aligned with managerial interests and labelled "management science". Unfortunately this "intellectual and operational convergence between academic and managerial interests in complex organizations" forms a "seemingly coherent and viable 'theory of organizations' " (Reed, 1985:99). This managerial thrust and narrow disciplinary discourse ignore the social and political revolutions of the last century (and is inimical to the organizational transformation happening in South Africa at present, evidenced by marked industrial militance).

The conceptual language of mainstream organizational theory does not recognize the reality of struggle of organizational members in the problems that they confront in their everyday lives. The "costs" of violation, capacity reduction, personal impotence, and stunted identity formation highlighted in Chapter 1 are not openly acknowledged.

This narrow and unnecessary circumscription of organizational theory has been institutionalized with academic credibility, as an objective, value-free discipline (Reed, 1992:3). Such a managerial model, whose formulation can be described as controversial, if not arbitrary, is sustained and given acceptability in its present form because of the way it is taught at universities, technikons and business schools (Benson, 1977:10). As a result of this assumed credibility, theoretical validity is not openly questioned. This is because few academics see the discipline as a problem (Ackroyd, 1992:107) and because they see their audience as other academics (interested in theories and concepts), management (for the solving of technical problems) or potential manager practitioners (that is, graduate students).

[A]cademics are more concerned to affect colleagues' research strategies and priorities rather than managers' beliefs. This means that detailed knowledge of how organizations function is of less interest than

general conclusions about managerial problems which have implications for theoretical issues. (Whitley, 1988:50)

This situation results in a disjunction between scientific knowledge and everyday organizational reality (Whitley, 1988:61). This is because feedback from practitioners, managers and administrators, is not cultivated as in other professional areas of knowledge. For example within social science itself there is feedback from educators and welfare organizations; within psychology there is feedback from professional bodies for psychologists, para-medical and para-penal associations; within medicine there is feedback from medical boards, councils and academic hospitals. Because of a lack of feedback from all levels of organizational staff, academics remain conservative as regards to subject matter and issues that make up their courses, thus preserving the status quo. Added to the lack of feedback, the highly contextual practical nature of managerial skills and current practice ensures that “managerial skills and competence is determined more by large employers and market success than by practitioners and practitioner controlled knowledge” or research driven programmes (Whitley 1988:56).

At present organizational knowledge or management science is skewed towards managerial interests. The acknowledgement of different organizational audiences places the need to recognize different theories on the agenda, and the consequences of that placing (Ackroyd, 1992:111). It will also reveal the tension between theory, practice and efforts to change the organizational world to make it a better place for everyone concerned. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight such problems and to present alternative academic debates in organizational analysis.

3.2 PARADIGM INCOMMENSURABILITY

One of the problems with criticizing organization and management practice is that criticism falls on deaf ears. The reason is that such criticism is just not regarded as valid when coming from a framework or conceptualization other than that of the traditional discipline.

Mainstream management theorists speak from within a particular tradition; a tradition of efficiency and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals. Within this framework contingency theory has proved to be a coherent paradigm in analysing organizational structure. By means of empirical, validated scientific research it is shown (previous chapter) that aspects of organizational structure change to accommodate internal and external environmental constraints in achieving rational organizational goals. This has led to a bias towards controls geared to 'survival'.

From within this mainstream management perspective and discourse, Donaldson (1985: 120-1) argues that core functionalist concepts are sound and that the traditional field of organizational studies should not be conflated with the broader social issues of the sociologist and political scientist. "Hard scientific data" are what theorists are interested in. Within this tradition the appropriate way of doing work is examined; consequently other areas of study are not regarded as relevant within that domain of organizational practice. Debate that engages with the discourse of the "soft", "interpretative" social scientists is excluded even though this discourse exists.

There are alternative ways of looking at organizations, and theorists from other disciplines speak with a different voice. It is not just an issue of adding this voice to the existing research but examining different phenomena, collecting different data and exposing different problems. This difference appears to be not just a problem of wearing different lenses but looking from within different independent, polarized viewpoints or "incommensurable paradigms" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:viii).

What is seen in one camp as functional and productive is seen in another as dominant and repressive. What is viewed as dysfunctional by the traditionalists is viewed as emancipatory by an alternative discipline. When applied to organizations and the appraisal of management, the perspective of other disciplines (such as Critical Theory)

gives validity to alternative paradigms and acts as a point of departure for critical reflection on mainstream management studies.

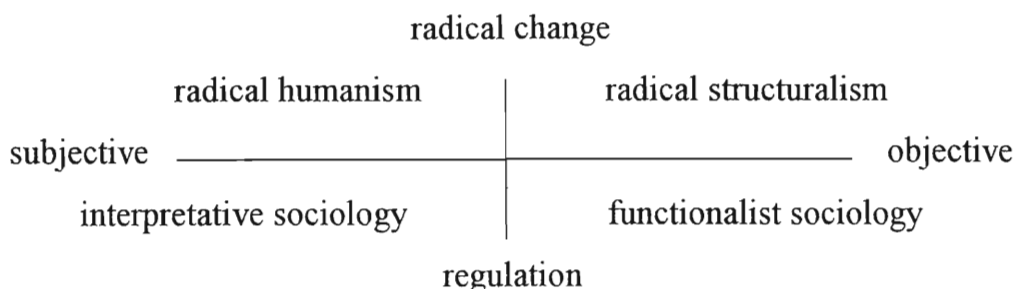
One of the reasons why theorists working in one discipline perceive things differently to those in another is because they do not share a common language or common projects. The different perspectives adopted by each discipline appears to have opposing beliefs, language, research methodologies and foundational assumptions that at this stage remain unnegotiable as no translation rules exists between discipline paradigms.

The fact that paradigmatic problems of other disciplines are ignored or viewed as invalid is the view of Burrell and Morgan (1979:24) in their theory of paradigm incommensurability or mutual exclusivity. This state of affairs results in competing claims about organizations, their structure and practices. Whereas mainstream theorists accept practices of bureaucratic organizations as legitimate, alternative theorists question the very legitimacy of organizations and their practices. Their different frames of reference afford different explanations.

Key to the issue of acceptable paradigms is the nature of science and its rigid way of looking at and measuring aspects of organizations and their administration. The notion of alternative social science disciplines puts into question the static nature of the conceptualization of mainstream "scientific" organizational theory, given the dynamic nature of organizational life.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) argue that the normal state of organizational science is pluralistic. As there is "very little agreement over the types of conceptualizations to be used, never mind the actual conceptualization itself"... words in a dominant conceptualization could "serve to imprison, immobilize, and injure that which they seek to address" (Burrell, 1996:645). Burrell and Morgan (1979:10) take up this notion of paradigm and examine knowledge accumulation around incompatible ideas about science and society. All social scientific statements make assumptions about the nature of society

and the nature of science. In attempting to classify these mutually exclusive knowledge units Burrell and Morgan (1979:22) use the aid of a grid. This grid consists of two axes at right angles to each other - the horizontal being subjective-objective and the vertical representing radical change-regulation.



The subjective-objective axis (1979:3) relates to philosophies of science – the objective being the external observable reality captured by empirical analysis and the subjective relating to social phenomenon understood from an interactive subjective construction of reality. Radical change and regulation (1979:17) look at conflict in social relations and pressure for transformation on the one hand, and order and consensus on the other in organizations and society. Four distinct boxes are created that are shown to be distinct areas of scientific analysis. These four boxes are identified as radical humanism and radical structuralism, above the horizontal, and interpretative sociology and functionalist sociology below the horizontal. These are explained as follows:

- Functionalist sociology, identified as the dominant paradigm of the social sciences, is problem orientated around the conflict-order debate and usually "firmly committed to a philosophy of social engineering as a basis of social change" (1979:26). It is guided by technical interests, pragmatic solutions, social order and stability. The approach is conservative and has as an emphasis the explanation of the status quo and regulation in social affairs (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:28).
- Interpretative sociology is concerned with how the everyday world is made 'objectively real' by the use of symbols and intersubjectively shared meanings (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:31). These are regarded as the result of emergent social

processes rather than the hard facts of the functionalist. It addresses the participants' subjective frames of reference rather than that of the observers (1979:28). The context is perceived as being in a world of human affairs that is "cohesive, ordered and integrated" (1979:31) and involved with issues of consensus and solidarity.

- Radical humanism looks at contradiction in consciousness rather than structure (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:32). The focus is on constraints placed on human development and the need to liberate people from oppression in order that they may transcend those social arrangements that "tie them into existing social patterns and thus realize their full potential" (1979:32). Assumptions are inverse to the functionalist perspective as concern is with ideological superstructures that create false consciousness, domination, deprivation, radical change and realization of potential.
- Radical structuralism deals with economic structure, social injustice, class exploitation and control in capitalist society. This underlying economic base is identified as the key determinant of power relations and processes in organizations. The focus is on the exposure of structural constraints that dominate and the revolutionary transformation of a capitalist system (1979:378), in order to emancipate people from the social structures that keep them fettered and exploitable (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:34).

This work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) was seminal in that it defined alternatives in organizational analysis. Without going into the controversy of the respective boxes, the significance of this work was that it openly acknowledged alternatives in organizational analysis, firmly suggesting a matrix of legitimate, competing discourses or perspectives rather than one objective truth. In so doing Burrell and Morgan (1979) codified the academic debate in a helpful form that explored doubts surrounding the legitimacy of alternative perspectives to well-entrenched functionalism.

Although there is a natural aversion by organizational analysis to paradigm incommensurability, (as it prevents the creative resolution of important issues and ensures that knowledge remains fragmented), Jackson and Carter (1991:111) argue that it protects a plurality of competing scientific models of enquiry and creates the potential to expand the scope of organizational studies. These theories appear destined to remain fragmented and contradictory as it is the methodology of each discipline that assigns "truthfulness" to their scientific knowledge and discourse. In this sense researchers should not talk about universal truthfulness but rather what can be considered legitimate against appropriate criteria. However the "otherness" of alternative views does create boundaries which more clearly delineate the specific identities of the various fragmented islands of knowledge.

Although this approach was criticized for reducing knowledge to social relativism, what Burrell and Morgan (1979) succeeded in doing was "to highlight the breakdown of the field of organization theory into warring encampments and to demonstrate that functionalist approaches, whilst popular, politically superior and common, were by no means the only possible avenues open to organizational analysis. The text articulated and legitimated to some extent the voices of those who did not share the functionalist orientation" (Burrell, 1996:648). The alternative camp valued more debate in explaining different philosophical positions, as this guaranteed variety of conceptualization and would prevent the authoritarianism of the mainstream viewpoint. The approach, of Burrell and Morgan, although conscious of dialogue being the weapon of the powerful (1996:650) allows a dominant view either to be rejected or re-established in the context of different objectives achieving different goals.

Deetz (1994) criticizes the Burrell and Morgan grid which he concedes not only gave asylum to researchers engaged in alternative research but also appealed to dominant functionalists as it afforded them a place of protection from growing criticism. The idea of separate but equal had appeal. Deetz' criticism of the grid is that it "reproduced the world as viewed from the mainstream tradition, thus reaffirming that tradition at the same

time as providing a "safe" understanding of the developing alternatives" (1994:1).

Further he voiced concern that the grid's dimensions obscured important differences of current research, thus minimizing debate.

In this regard, the four paradigms are seen as an easy means of reducing conceptions to categorization rather than being a means to stimulate debate, to contest the meaning of conceptions and to examine the constituting aspects of language which load the rules of the game. From this perspective functionalism, in the Burrell and Morgan model (1979), retains "definitional authority" which explains why it was so readily acceptable to mainstream management science. This particular problem embodies the capacity "to foster less interesting and productive conflicts and developments than are possible" (Deetz, 1994:4) in academic debate and research programmes.

At the heart of the problem is the subject-object controversy where research programmes themselves become focused on the interior (subjective) or exterior (objective). Interpretivists dealing with their interpretation of a socially constructed world acquire the subjective label while those dealing with the natural world using quantitative studies have the privilege of being labelled objective. This dualism constrains the conception of science and creates hierarchies among "research programs based on the same faulty logic as the distinction itself" (Deetz, 1994:6) rather than describing meaningful differences. The dominance of this subjective-objective distinction in research "affords identity protection and privileges for powerful groups both in academy and other organizations" (1994:8) and the language of the dominant discourse becomes socially shared and central to interaction with the world, leading to distorted understanding. In other words, both concepts and the statement of research problems become part of the knowledge producing process and 'other' research is seen and understood in relations to the dominant discourse.

Deetz (1994:5) advocates a dialogical approach to academic debate using two dimensions – consensus and dissensus - in order to provide alternative productive avenues for debate.

From this perspective a consensus dimension treats the existing position as unproblematic; order is highlighted and conflict viewed as a system's problem (1994:13). A dissensus dimension considers disunity, struggle, conflict and tension to be the natural state of life. Research viewed along these lines is geared to reinstating conflict and to enhancing capacity "to challenge guiding assumptions, values, social practices, and routines" of a powerful product in order to foster "further potential and variety than is immediately apparent" (Deetz, 1994:17). From this position, transformation becomes accepted practice.

Within this dialogical paradigm, conceptions of power, knowledge, agency, and political action are brought to the fore and enriched (Deetz, 1994:16) allowing space for the world to be continually transformed. Such a dialectical approach allows the development of discourse beyond "separate but equal". It reclaims "the suppressed tensions and conflicts among the many contemporary stakeholders to negotiate a life together based in appreciation of different and responsive decision-making" (1994:26) rather than based on imposed traditional problem statements and models.

One does not wish to reduce scientific debate or "a chosen theoretical idiom" to rhetoric but Alvesson (1996:10) warns that a dominant "well-integrated theoretical frame of reference should be treated with caution". An appreciation of the limitation of vocabularies and understandings is advocated. This conceptual awareness recognizes the ambiguities of the social world and allows "greater willingness in diverse vocabularies, interpretations and voices to make themselves heard in research tests" (Alvesson, 1996:11). Such a healthy scepticism is seen as lessening the "boundaries and blind spots of particular theoretical perspectives" (1996:14) and of interpretations associated with different perspectives.

I am not in a position to debate the philosophical soundness of the above intellectual positions or to justify the variety of competing paradigms for scientific and qualitative research. My point of departure is the need to speak within a framework of some validity

in order to address problems that the preponderance of organizational employees can identify with, so that they themselves are in a better position to improve their own lot. This mindset is not the mainstream focus of traditional organization and management studies.

Accordingly, I shall look at some of the academic debates in alternative thinking to traditional mainstream organizational analysis which includes insights into value-neutral conceptual structure (MacIntyre, 1981), organizational analysis within a larger social milieu (Reed, 1985), critical theory (Habermas, 1971, 1972, 1984; Clegg, 1977, 1990; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992); power (Foucault, 1975, 1980) and the organization as a political entity (Clegg, 1975; Deetz, 1992). The themes addressed by these researchers echo my concern about the disempowerment of people in organizations, expose critical areas in organizational analysis and justify a departure from the narrowly defined orthodox view.

3.3 ALTERNATIVE THINKING

Modern morality and a value-neutral conceptual structure

MacIntyre's (1981) concern is with modern day morality. He recognizes variety in moral beliefs and practices and draws particular attention to the fact that our present Western evaluative standpoint is informed by liberal individualism that ignores other historical conceptualizations. The language of morality, he believes (1981:2), is in disorder and this remains in the main part invisible because of the "value-neutral" conceptual structures of scientific thinking (logically valid and impersonally rational) independent of historical and sociological context, personal and other evaluative criteria within the real social world. The appeal to objective standards and hard facts disguises the fact that moral dilemmas cannot easily be resolved.

In drawing attention to specific social context (here the organization), MacIntyre highlights the social role of managers in having to direct or redirect human and non-

human resources to the achievement of predetermined organizational ends in the most effective way possible. The bureaucratic criteria they use to evaluate this effectiveness is "matching means to ends economically and efficiently" (1981:24). Managerial authority is also justified by this knowledge and by expertise in achieving organizational goals efficiently and effectively.

Effectiveness becomes the justification for managerial authority coupled with the way management control employee behaviour and suppress conflict which further works to reinforce this managerial justification (1981:25). Because ends are treated as given and are outside the scope of responsibility of the individual, the manager's area of concern is "effectiveness in transforming raw materials into final products, unskilled labour into skilled labour, investments into profits" (1981:29). This managerial mindset obliterates the distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations and separates the rational (that is, "fact" as viewed from management's perspective) from "value" (which is non-rational). It ignores the mindset of building human institutions to sustain and further other ends rather than the pursuit of economic goals.

Rooting the development of bureaucratic organizational knowledge and theory in historical developments allows broader debate. It can be seen that the knowledge possessed by a manager to control and manipulate employees and the environment is not solely reliant on technocratic generalizations of organizational behaviour. Managerial expertise, restricted to the realm of organizational fact, technocratic generalizations, means, and measurable effectiveness allows management not to engage in moral debate. Management are able to take this stance, MacIntyre (1981:74) asserts, because the language of efficiency and effectiveness is evaluated in terms of morally neutral means of achieving rational organizational objectives.

This moral neutrality, he protests, is not only a fiction but an illusion. It is this illusion of the moral neutrality of effectiveness that MacIntyre queries as being "inseparable from a mode of human existence in which the contrivance of means is in central part the

manipulation of human beings into compliant patterns of behaviour" (1981:71).

Accepted practice views managerial expertise as neutral and avoids moral dilemmas, conflicts and uncertainty that pervades everyday organizational life.

Although managers talk as if their actions are only guided by organizational goals and interests, their behaviour reveals that they are in fact guided by moral considerations as to how they and others ought to behave. They have just learnt that moral talk is dysfunctional, empty gestures that "will threaten organizational harmony, organizational efficiency, and their own reputation for power and effectiveness" (Bird and Waters, 1989:76).

Managers develop moral muteness when it comes to raising issues that those superior to them disagree with. They know it is futile to raise questions about organizational practice or decisions made by their superiors - although they may do so privately. They project a loyalty they do not feel for they know the consequences of those who blow the whistle (1989:78). Although they know organizations conform to professional standards, legal requirements and social mores they remain morally inarticulate in practice. Bird and Waters (1989:81) contend that managers 'stonewall' moral questions by relating organizational issues to financial considerations and matters to be ruled upon by senior management. Sensitive issues are not for public debate. In this way "creative exploration of action alternatives that might enable the organization to balance better conflicting demands or approximate better the highest ideals" are prevented and collaborative problem solving denied (1989:81). Instead an organizational silence is created where raising moral issues and debating sensitive areas are avoided. A whole form of logic, reasoning and discursive skill in problem solving is denied.

Management "science" is depicted as a form of human "science" that excludes that part of human understanding that deals with intangibles such as intentions, beliefs and reasons for action. Reduced to a technical, mechanical science, management science deals with predictable law-like generalizations which neatly removes it from any moral context.

This stance ignores the social reality of management practice and the institutional structures that supports its position. Taking an historical perspective, this is a very different position from a classical, Aristotelian understanding of human behaviour explained teleologically "with reference to the hierarchy of goods which provide the ends of human action" (MacIntyre, 1981:81).

MacIntyre (1981:viii) questions in general the character of modern facts and experience that can be interpreted without reference to other theoretical interpretations. He sees the modern industrial view as excluding the classical view of the world in that it ignores the transition in concepts from a hierarchy of human good to the "scientific", and leaves this transition unacknowledged and unrecognized. MacIntyre asserts that, because the organizational context excludes "the good" to which all humans ascribe, "facts" concerning organizational ends become "value-free". From this value-neutral perspective organizations justify their activities and authority "by invoking their own competence as scientific managers of social change" (1981:82). This position they then evaluate from within their own distinctive evaluative standpoint and thus remain immune to criticism outside this "scientific" stance and blind to alternative ways of managing.

From MacIntyre's (1981:82) perspective, organizations are primarily human communities directed towards the pursuit of organizational goals. They become corrupted by technocratic and economic values and these overarching values then destroy the potential for human association based on different values that permit a wider range of issues to be addressed. In the 'mode of being' perpetuated by traditional management theorists, neither rational justification nor meaning is assigned to moral standards and moral evaluation. Moral judgements are somehow suspended or apportioned to a person's private rather than public life. It is because of this action that the organizational fiction of moral neutrality survives. An unfortunate consequence is that moral sensitivity is impaired in so far as it dulls moral reasoning. This disturbing state of affairs encourages both management and other employees to remain insensitive in recognizing, acknowledging and addressing ethical issues appropriately.

MacIntyre (1981:122) draws attention to moral education and in particular to the way moral thinking and action are integrated in the classical view of life through the art of story telling. He suggests it is narrative that provides historic memory and the moral background to debate. Within this context of the social community striving towards the "good", the life of the individual is given meaning and recorded (1981:135). The narrative recognizes the individual's vulnerability (the human condition) within the collective social structure of the social community; gives this humanity its dues, and perpetuates understanding of the particular life's significance. This significance and vulnerability of the individual, within his or her social context, may then be debated in the socially embodied argument of what the good (human flourishing and well being) consist in. The "individual's search for his or her good is generally and characteristically conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual's life is a part" (1981:207).

The problem of human agency and an imposed institutional order pervaded by ambiguity, uncertainty and moral conflicts are viewed as the basic philosophical issues pervading collective social life. It is this communal reality that MacIntyre (1981) argues is ignored in modern day organizations. Within the organizational context, the superordinate dominance of the technocratic system denies the relevance of an ethical and political community and a concern with citizenship, justice and the distribution of power.

These overriding collective norms (ethical and political) are also the yardstick for individual socialization. Learning takes place within this collective context. Within the discipline of human development, it is shown that in the process of learning how to behave in a socially acceptable and responsible manner that people grow, evaluate different positions and learn how to shape their own lives (Piaget, 1932; Kolberg, 1969 and 1981; Gilligan, 1982). They do this by developing a sense of self-control and by taking responsibility for acting (in a principled way) with the courage of their convictions. These principles, as criteria of excellence in behaviour, become central to a

person's self-esteem. In other words, people develop a moral standard of excellence that becomes a way of conducting themselves and interacting with others (Blum, 1988:473). Thus ethical behaviour within an organizational context is seen as having the potential to create a climate of mutual trust and respect, which are the virtues that promote learning, supportive relationships, innovation and informed risk taking (Aguilar, 1994).

Unfortunately, the issues of ascribing praise or blame for good or bad actions is obfuscated in the academic moral language of human agency and therefore is not readily translated into organizational life. This state of affairs is complicated further in that organizations are themselves not human entities but human constructs. They have been able for many centuries to avoid the issue of moral responsibility and moral accountability. However the rise of society's concern for environmental and social issues, and the powerful lobbying by 'green' and social responsibility groups has drawn attention to the fact that while one may not be able to ascribe motives to an organization, one can evaluate its actions from a moral perspective. This type of thinking towards moral accounting has created a certain amount of pressure for mainstream theorists to adopt a stakeholder approach when considering an organization's various publics. But this approach removed from its moral context does not encourage or assure ethical conduct by an organization's members.

MacIntyre (1981) however, believes that functional organizations can encourage moral behaviour. He suggests linking behaviour in organizations with a set of virtues attached to human needs and desires. He argues that a way of inculcating desirable virtues is to follow the (above-mentioned) narrative example of tradition with its myths and legends (1981:114). Story telling has been shown to work as a means of moral education, moral thinking and action in situations where people are working towards a particular value scheme such as found in Greek culture or Christianity (1981:123). Correspondingly, he suggests the narrative of the organizational world be adjusted from its narrow economic focus and told in a way that shows the moral significance of action. From the perspective of a wider ethical social order of life, he proposes (1981:190, 207) that the lives of

leaders and ethical action be linked to specific virtues such as trustworthiness, integrity and moral judgement in relation both to their specific organization and the wider social context of society. For example, a manager declining a business deal, because it would have necessitated bribes, becomes the fabric of an organizational story. This story becomes a narrative that creates both a value or moral structure and a context of meaning in which employees evaluate various purposes and goods that transcend profit or self-seeking. In this way organizational narrative keeps certain standards and pertinent moral issues to the fore and allows people to develop and be transformed through their own ethical reflection.

The stories of both success and failure would take on the role of moral education as they become an organizational base of common awareness and moral reflection. The narrative is translated into the types of virtue that organizational employees embody, and that depict a pattern of life that exemplifies virtues regarded as good and successful for the community. Thus it is the larger view that becomes the framework of the narrative form of moral education (MacIntyre, 1981:190). In this context the narrative gives a certain account of what it is that is good for all. It explains how one ethical person stands in relation to others, and how his/her life is to be understood and evaluated in ethical terms.

From this perspective the qualities praised on the one level as being efficient and effective can be translated on a different plane. A plane where individual organizational members are shown as people who act ethically in the interest of the shared concerns of their community in achieving economic success. Acting in this way implies dialogue with other stakeholders and cognisance of the different values of various groups (Solomon, 1993:361).

The above responsible, ethical behaviour presupposes sound moral reasoning. It suggests an ability to trust one's own judgement from within a moral tradition, and an ability to be critical of social and psychological pressures. Griffin (1993:172) warns that if people do not develop these capacities they will stagnate as human beings and deny their potential

for autonomous growth and development. Organizations that dull their employees' ability to reflect critically can be viewed as organizations that leave their members prey to compromising ethical standards, blurring relationships of trust, becoming cynical about issues that involve integrity, and prone to treating people as if they are naive. Further, they are likely to become immobilized both by their indecision in sensitive situations and by their conflict-torn confusion and helplessness. This is not a desirable situation in an organizational context that demands co-operative effort.

The articulation of a moral thread, in a society surrounded by conflicting ethical traditions (for example, charity, property rights, redistribution of wealth, compassion, and personal autonomy), is an essential base for critical reflection. By promoting a set of sustainable virtues that has meaning within the context of organizational practice, employees "can feel they have a place in life in which they are emotionally committed to those around them, in which their work expresses their natures, and in which individual good connects to some larger project which began before a life and which continues after it" (Pence, 1991:251).

From the above ethical perspective organizations are seen as having the potential to become places where wisdom and compassion are a part of commitment to others; as places where work will fulfil deep-seated human needs by giving meaning to lives. Work itself is viewed as being expressive of who people are, and of enhancing a sense of value and responsibility to oneself and others. A sense of community becomes an essential part of work relationships rather than the site of adversarial relations (Mansbridge, 1980 and Jackall, 1988).

However, the development of such ethical conduct requires moral development and demands specific environmental conditions that not only foster personal growth, autonomous and responsible action but can sustain such excellent behaviour. Both the fostering of such moral development and conditions that promote ethical conduct is

inherently neglected in the neutral stance of traditional management theory because the organizational context has been separated from its position in the larger social milieu.

Organizational analysis within the larger social milieu

Reed (1985) puts MacIntyre's concern with human agency within the framework of the organizational analysis debate but criticizes him for ignoring "the sub-plot of the historical drama" in which organizational theory find itself (1985:95). The theoretical development in organizational theory and analysis cannot be seen outside the complexity of interactions of socio-historical processes nor can it ignore the direction in which intellectual inputs have shaped the study.

Reed's (1985) approach to the concept of organizational analysis is to view it as a secondary social practice as he explores "the process whereby collective social action becomes organized" (1985:1). This concept of organizational analysis is an intellectual activity providing the integration, regulation, control, stability, and the design of administrative, political and judicial mechanisms directing the co-ordination and control of primary economic orientated productive practices of providing goods and services (1985:121).

The orthodox systems model of organizations in providing goods and services has many distinctive features - "structural inequality, social conflict, individual resentment, collective deceit, and outright coercion – [that] are selectively filtered out in favour of a concentrated focus on the cognitive and motivational aspect of organizational behaviour" (Reed, 1985:7). But this is not immediately recognized. This is because organizational analysis restricted to an applied science directs attention to "organizational structure and functioning, directed to the manipulative needs of an enlightened managerial elite" (Reed, 1985:5). This technocratic vision embodies an image of a "value-free social science of organizational behaviour directed at the solution of technical problems" (1985:5). It ignores the social and moral integration of its members while it refines its "sophisticated techniques of social control" (Reed, 1985:29). The technocratic view of organizational

analysis treats "value ends informing social action as outside the purview of its theoretical focus" (1985:29).

By locating organizations in a technical context other issues such as the distribution of political power is removed. People within organizations are treated as objects to be scientifically manipulated through social engineering in fulfilling a technical vision. Technocratic management becomes equated with a harmonious "non-political" form of association. By removing areas of uncertainty, unpredictability and uncontrollability, social problems are reduced to rational, practical, technical problem to be solved in the furtherance of rational organizational goals. These technocratic norms are institutionalized, in order to preserve the status quo, and become considered as group norms and values under the erroneous notion that they benefit the whole group equally.

This dominant discourse/perspective, because of its technical bias, limits both the scope of social action and the capacities of social institutions, thus minimizing the social significance of organizational theory as a normative influence. The need for sensitivity to organizational contradictions between instrumental and moral action, between formal association and natural communities is what led Reed (1985:116) to construct an alternative conception of organizational analysis.

His alternative view of organizational analysis firmly places organizations within the larger social milieu (Reed, 1985:116). Part of the management dilemma is seen as the imposition of tighter controls to cope with ever changing socio-economic conditions. This in turn results in increased tension between the desire to inflict detailed instrumental control and the desire to allow individual freedom through communal action and moral codes.

The need to facilitate creative and co-operative human action and to impose institutional order and control is highlighted as an inherent problem of social action, which is endemic to organizational life and an intellectual challenge to be addressed by organizational

theorists. In order to facilitate this type of research he develops four developmental strategies (which he labels integrationist, isolationist, imperialist and pluralist) for differing theoretical models of change in which to route the redirection of organizational theory (Reed, 1985:170).

The challenge facing the integrationist is "to provide a more systematic and coherent account of organizational structures as the outcomes of a continuous process in which members attempt to come to terms with the contextual constraints that limit their design outcomes" (Reed, 1985:175). The interrelation between social action and contextual constraint, political process and differential distribution of power, dependency, and control over resources all have to be dealt with. With this task done, integrationists will then be able to present a more coherent account of organizations than that of contingency theorists by modifying the 'scientific method' in research settings.

The isolationist focus is on revealing the hidden assumptions and mechanisms behind the institutionalized system of social relations of the integrationists. They do not want their concerns contaminated by technical ones and therefore demand paradigmatic independence and paradigm closure between intellectual analysis and technical concerns. Meaningful social interaction stays in a subjective, constructivist box while objectivist concerns are founded on structural determinants irrespective of social settings and independent of human agents. Creative autonomy and intellectual protection is the stance encouraged tending to "neglect the contextual determinants of the dynamics of internal theoretical developments" (Reed, 1985:187).

The next theoretical thrust, identified by Reed (1985:191), is that of the imperialist. The imperialist development is to move the debate from the individual organization to the institutional level. The focus is on the identification of organizing principles that influence the institutional form in which organizational units find themselves. Organizational analysis, relocated in a wider social analytical framework, becomes geared to the examination of long term historical transformations in institutional social

structures and the underlying principles that sustain these. The technical concerns and managerial interests of "mainstream theorizing are redefined in terms of a political struggle to regain control over the organizational mechanisms which mediate societal forces" (Reed, 1985:191). This externalist account of theoretical development focuses on situational conditions which favour the intellectual hegemony of certain 'world views' as opposed to others" (1985:191).

While mainstream management theory is exclusive in that it assumes that only the scientific organizational theorists are the legitimate producers of knowledge, Reed's (1985) argument allows the inclusion of other organizational stakeholders including members themselves. The exclusive discourse has a claim to absolute truth whereas the other allows debate around meaningfully different positions.

What Reed is calling for is the rejection of the 'paradigm mentality' which has an emphasis on promoting academic order rather than organizational transformation. Reed, himself, promotes the pluralist strategy, grounded in the model of proactive agents who, aware of complex social processes, help shape their organizational environment through interaction with others. The central concept within this approach is social interaction. Pluralism rejects the search for synthesis or the desire for theoretical exclusivity, and promotes an awareness of tensions between technical and theoretical concerns, between theorists and social context. The "pluralist strategy attempts to provide a narrative account of how theoretical perspectives become progressively transformed" (1985:203) as they move ahead "sensitive to the recurring dilemmas of organizational life" (1985:201).

Open debate on the merits of divergent theory revitalizes the intellectual community and is seen to promote discourse rather than theoretical anarchy. This is the purpose of Reed's (1985) analytical exercise – to break from the paradigm mentality, broaden the concept of organizational analysis, deepen the dialogue, place it within a traditional discourse of socio-political theorizing, and allow the development of knowledge in the

field of organizational studies that is insightful and useful (Ackroyd, 1992:112).

Organizational analysis is to be seen both as a moral science and an intellectual practice geared to the creation of institutional structures and human communities that are better than those currently in existence. This is also the aim of critical theorists.

Critical Theory

Different from, but informed by, the above views is critical theory. Critical theory is concerned with the concept of emancipation. Their understanding of the concept is described by Alvesson and Willmott (1992b) as "the process through which individuals and groups become freed from repressive social and ideological conditions, in particular those that place socially unnecessary restrictions upon the development and articulation of human consciousness" (1992:432b). From the growing awareness of management as a social phenomenon (MacIntyre, 1981; Knights and Willmott, 1987; Jackall, 1988; and Reed 1989), critical theorists have become responsive to this consciousness and suggest points of departure that are radically different to conventional management theory.

Traditionally the discipline of management " is considered to be a socially valuable technical function, normally acting in the general interest of workers, employers, customers and citizens alike" (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992a:1). Critical theorists encourage disillusionment with traditional management theory and practice. They do this by:

- representing non-managerial interests and perspectives;
- representing these other interests in relation to developing management theory about functions, processes and discourse, drawing attention to the conflicting views of management as either a technical function or a socio-political phenomenon;
- exposing distortion of communication and the suppression of dialogue;
- highlighting the advantage gained from the social and functional division of labour and the issue of purpose or interests served by work;
- drawing attention to the limitation of options;

- reflecting upon the problem of managers, themselves caught in the tension of perpetuating particular "discourses and practices that unnecessarily constrain their ways of thinking and acting"; and
- highlighting the institutionalized practice of non-accountability of management to those they manage (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992a:6).

From their critical perspective mainstream management theory is narrow, dangerous and oppressive as "established management discourse and practice tends to incorporate and 'swallow up' larger and larger domains of social and personal life, such as culture, conflict and even pleasure ..." (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992a:3). Because of its pervasive influence in people's lives, critical theorists wish to inform and enrich the development of management and organizational theory and practice.

There are two major thrusts within critical theory that concern the development of organizational theory. The one has its theoretical roots in Marxist social thought (Benson, 1977; Clegg, 1979; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980; Salaman, 1979) and the other in Habermas' writings (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Deetz, 1992).

Marxist Influence

From the Marxist perspective mainstream organizational theory is seen as dominating the organizational field and emasculating all other perspectives. Mainstream organizational theory is seen as being grounded in an ideological framework that supports capitalist theory, practice and interests of the dominant class. Its institutionalized structures and assumptions shape organizational settings, yet are taken for granted and uncritically accepted by organizational members and society (Benson, 1977:2). This situation prevails despite the fact that class relations are antagonistic.

Clegg and Dunkerley (1980:58) argue that organizational theory is an intervention by which one class's interests are promoted against another. Those denied access to formulating different visions of organizational reality are also prevented from influencing

the broader economic and social structures (Clegg, 1990:16; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980:480). Social relations in and of production are the overriding theme, with concern for issues relating to class analysis on the one hand and issues relating to labour process control and organization on the other. The overall emphasis is on exploitation and economic determinism (Clegg, 1990:8).

Mainstream organizational theory is seen as satisfying management needs to continually design more effective forms of organizational control and is highlighted as a distorted form of social knowledge (Benson, 1977:17). Once it has been decoded it is seen for what it really is – a system designed to sustain prevailing power relations.

Power is exposed as not being a neutral resource. Unequal access and control over economic and technical resources is shown to perpetuate the existing social relations of production. What neutralizes the situations is that this state of affairs is taken for granted. The fact that it appears that power is only used where members of an organization deviate from the formal system is an intellectual illusion. This is because power relations are maintained by their "effectiveness not so much through overt action, as through [their] ability to appear to be the natural convention. It is only when taken-for-grantedness fails, routine lapses, and 'problems' appear, that the overt exercise of power is necessary" (Clegg 1979:35).

The focus is on organizations as economic institutions, on control over means and methods of production, and social relations of production; on maximization and appropriation of economic surplus by an elitist class whose domination is founded on exploitation and ideological deception (Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980:509). The emphasis is on class consciousness and revolutionary structural change to break this political and economic domination (1980:58). Organizational control becomes social control, and socialization of labour on a collective basis is for the private appropriation of labour surplus, namely profit. (Labour theory extends these arguments but is not addressed here.)

Clegg (1990) criticizes the narrowness of the labour/management debate given changing organizational conditions. In more developed countries the labour/management debate can be seen as not taking into account the huge white-collar worker arena or expanding middle class (Clegg 1990:19). The focus of debate is required to move towards locating organizational positions in order to recognize agents of labour or capital (1990:20). The social conditioning and the type of training organizations offered is seen as constituting the identity of organizational members and influencing the position they occupy within their organization (1990:23).

For the white-collar worker, participation and co-operation on an individual level will be seen to further his/her interest in improved status and better social relations (Clegg, 1990:28). While with the blue-collar worker collective action is widely accepted as the mode for achieving improved working conditions. This situation widens the gap between the emerging middle class and labour even though their goals may be the same. Thus organizational theory is presented as an ideological intervention, an intellectual tool that obscures antagonistic class relations in capitalistic modes of production that are in the interests of the capitalist class. Without a doubt the above theorists are clear in their assertion that different accounts of organization are not only possible but very real for those trapped in the organizational milieu.

Habermas' Influence

In Habermas' view (1972:4), the rigid application, misunderstandings and uncritical acceptance of the idealized concept of science, or scientific knowledge claims, created an intellectual stranglehold to which all knowledge had to conform or be labelled unscientific. This cultural authority of science and scientific imagery, a closed system of thought, had to be challenged and broken in order to broaden intellectual scope and allow cross-fertilization (Brown, 1992:67).

Habermas' (1972:4) contribution to this challenge was to declare that there is no single model of science but various forms of academic enquiry depending upon the kind of cognitive interest motivating the research and in declaring what becomes accredited knowledge. This enquiry rests upon a particular dimension of the social world (1972:178, 196), specifically that of those involved in knowledge-generating activities.

Within this perspective Critical theory exposes the interest basic to the generation of knowledge which is:

information that expands our power of technical control; interpretations that make possible the orientation of action within common traditions, and analysis that free consciousness from its dependence on hypostatized powers (Habermas, 1972:313).

Critical theory does this in order to remove those institutionalized practices that frustrate or hinder the process of emancipation. Habermas' concept of interest links generation of knowledge to the reproductive processes of social life (1972:vii). He identifies different types of knowledge thereby encouraging a broader vision of science, for example, natural science, cultural science, and human interest in autonomy and responsibility. According to Habermas:

- Knowledge in the natural sciences has an interest *in predicting and controlling* natural and social forces (1972:77, 176). It is guided by a cognitive interest in *technology* and purposive-rational action and follows empirical-analytic procedures, observing controlled "objectified" experience (1972:191).
- Knowledge dealing with people being able to make sense of social reality, in order *to understand and communicate* with each other is labelled the historical-hermeneutic sciences (1972:163). This area of knowledge deals with language, culture, reflection and communicative action. Such knowledge has a *practical* interest rooted in the attainment of possible consensus (beyond the concern for instrumental uses). Its interest is primarily *in understanding* different life worlds given individual/group meaning and context. It is necessary in assimilating one's own traditions as well as

interpreting those that are foreign. From this view reality is organized through the world of language, interpretation and interaction (1972:192). But the lifeworlds of people can be reduced to describing what is already in existence (1972:192).

- The critical social sciences, therefore, have an interest *in generating knowledge* concerned with the development of an *enlightened* society - autonomous and responsible citizenship replacing tradition and superstition. This line of reflection has the potential to promote *emancipation* from oppressive aspects of modern industrial society. Through self-reflection and the understanding of hidden forces the workings of power relations are exposed and these interests shown to construct a "particular" rather than an "objective" reality.

Reflection upon knowledge allows the reconstruction of the process whereby 'relations of dependence' become 'ideologically frozen' (Habermas, 1972:310) thus promoting the values and priorities of an established group that, from a moral perspective, is not geared to the realization of the good life for all. With this insight, facts and values are no longer separated as the facts are exposed as being embedded within a particular normative framework (Habermas, 1971:105). However values fall within the public realm, yet public discussion (practical questions) concerning the solution of the technical problems and the standards used are not a reality (1971:103). Ethical considerations lose their function and are marginalized in the name of science and objectivity.

To counter a total slide into a technocratic mode of being Habermas advocates "*removing restrictions on communication*" (1971:118 author's emphasis) at the institutional level. Communication at all political levels might not improve the functioning of society but will provide opportunity for personal growth and development (1971:119) so that the prevailing technocratic consciousness can be challenged. The superstructure of strategic instrumental rationalization from above is to give way to a "rationalization" that evolves communicative action at all levels where, through a process of dialogue, rational

consensus may be reached (Habermas, 1984:11) in a way that encourages learning, critical reflection and collective self-determination (1984:18).

For Habermas "potential for rationality" is founded in speech (1984:339). This potential is never completely achieved but there are degrees of rationality depending on common knowledge that make up worldviews in which social actions become co-ordinated by striving for understanding. A

lifeworld can be regarded as rationalized to the extent that it permits interactions that are not guided by normatively *ascribed* agreement but – directly or indirectly – by communicatively *achieved* understanding (Habermas, 1984:340, author's own emphasis).

To make this conceptual move, Habermas distinguishes lifeworlds from action systems. For example, the action sub-system of the economy is formed on the basis of money, while the action sub-system of administration is formed on power yet they both fall into the lifeworld of social action. If these sub-systems are uncoupled from the public realm of social action they will in turn uncouple themselves from the processes of reaching understanding (that is, language and debate). In other words, these purposive-rational, success-orientated actions themselves need to be institutionally anchored in the lifeworld to which people are and remain actively engaged. But as these sub-systems gain greater prominence without the integrating principle of reaching consensus, the common lifeworld is neutralized. For example, while social movements such as the women's and ecological movements can be seen to expand the dynamic of communicative action, management science in its present form distorts that dynamic.

Management science does this because it integrates its action system through money and power (rules, sanctions and inducements) in such a way that the action system can bypass the generation of understanding and active consent. Because of such minimum interchange the lifeworld is culturally impoverished (Habermas, 1984:xxv). This promotes an elitist stand-off as an expert professional culture disengages from the context of communicative action in everyday life. This leads to a process of colonization and bureaucratization operating on management decree rather than a process of debate in

which the views of all organizational members influence and expand upon organizational reality.

From the perspective of this theoretical school (Habermas/Frankfurt), critical theory is seen as part of the human struggle. A struggle

- rooted in the right to participate in the construction of meanings that affect our lives (Putnam et al, 1993:227); and
- which requires meaningful participation in processes that create structures that would otherwise have the propensity for "institutionalizing and sustaining needless forms of oppression, confusion and suffering" (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996:51).

Organizational Theory and the Potential for Emancipation

With the above discussion in mind and proceeding "from an assumption of the *possibilities* of a more autonomous individual, who, in the tradition of Enlightenment, in principle can master his or her own destiny in joint operation with peers" (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992a:9), critical theorists challenge the legitimacy of management theory and practice. These they see as limited, partial and oppressive. They question the values of the guiding institutions and act as a counter-force to mainstream theories believing that their contribution is relevant to everyday organizational life. Their aim is twofold. On the one hand it is to influence the development of organizational theory, and on the other, to influence the behaviour of individuals.

Development of organizational theory

Within the broad critical discipline debate, on the development of organizational theory, comes from varying fields of interest. The debate:

- questions organizational theory's basic assumptions - the supremacy of organizational goals, the superordinate virtues of efficiency and effectiveness, and the non-accountability of managers to subordinates. Above all they expose the 'value-neutral'

idiom of organizations and reveal them as political, cultural and ideological phenomena (MacIntyre, 1981; Reed, 1985; Jackall, 1988; Deetz, 1992).

- regards the usefulness of the current mainstream organizational discourse as being diminished (Gergen, 1992:208). New formulations are invited that recognize the significance of organizations, increase options and unrealized opportunities (Alvesson, 1987; Nord and Jermier, 1992:203).
- reveals organizational and management practice in a way that is radically different from conventional management and organizational theory (Braverman, 1974; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980). Management is seen as politically partial (Deetz, 1992) as being in the interests of a capitalist elite (Clegg and Dunkerley, 1977) and privileging managerial ends (Forester, 1989).
- draws attention to the pervasive influence of science and technology in society by reducing debates on ethical and political issues and limiting options (Alvesson, 1987). Because management is reduced to a technical function the socio-political issues can be ignored (Habermas, 1971; Deetz, 1992, 1994).
- emphasizes how the neutral and objective techniques of professional management reduce human and political issues to effective administrative problem-solving and social engineering. The struggle of interests between owners, managers, workers, consumers, and public are ignored, while collective actors that challenge the status quo are suppressed (Clegg, 1989; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Clegg, Hardy and Nord, 1996).
- highlights technocratic pervasiveness, that deems that management design the what and how of involvement and participation (Steffy and Grimes, 1992:181), as a danger for human autonomy and responsibility (Habermas, 1971, 1984; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992a:1-18).

Development of the Individual

On the personal emancipatory level, Alvesson and Willmott (1992a and b) provide points of reference for critical study that focus on individual development and behaviour. In order to raise the consciousness of individuals as critics, they encourage individuals to :

- question the assumption that management is unproblematic;
- challenge the view that the body of knowledge on management theory and processes is neutral;
- gain insight to the meaning and diversity of human needs;
- demand the expansion of autonomy in personal and social life;
- understand their social condition; and
- critically reflect upon, and realize, emancipatory potential.

All these points ideally demand critical reflection as a way of being from the individual, active engagement with his/her organizational reality, and a focus on personal growth and development. Critics of critical theorists are sceptical of this conceptualization of human autonomy declaring it to be out of step with modern day society. They believe that cognitive processes alone do not release people from oppressive conditions (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996:86). They dismiss the emancipatory debate of critical theorists as leftist propaganda that is hopelessly value-laden (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996:83). Feminists object to critical theorists as being gender-blind, neglectful of patriarchy as a pervasive source of oppression, and failing to recognize that "implicitly male gendered organizational theorizing has kept women's voices silent" (Calas and Smircich, 1992:235). In short, the above ideals are dismissed by some as the ideal lifeworlds of privileged, disgruntled academics out of touch with the real interests of people. However, I will persist with the critical view.

Language and Communication

For Deetz (1992) the emancipatory problem can be addressed by the philosophy of language debate (Habermas, 1984; Forester, 1989). His focus is on hegemonic discourse,

communicative distortions, misrepresentations and illegitimacy. In focusing on language and communication he finds it useful to understand the modern corporation as a political entity (1992:43).

This perspective encourages the recognition of the fact that a leading political issue of the modern organization is its daily disciplinary practices "out of which identity, meaning and common sense are formed". By concentrating on the exercise of power and control in organizations, attention is diverted from mainstream discourse which concentrates on functional operations and enhancing managerial control, and is instead directed at the political reality of everyday organizational life.

Organizational discourse, its practices and suppression of conflict, becomes central both to understanding asymmetrical power relations in organizations and to understanding identity production and organizational knowledge. Instead of presuming a "neutral" body of knowledge, practices and processes that concentrate on improving managerial control, the emphasis shifts to the examination of alternative ways of being and doing.

Of particular relevance to this perspective is Foucault's (1977, 1978, 1980) concept of power and his description of 'disciplinary power'. Foucault's treatment of power is unconventional in that he does not develop his ideas along orthodox sociological lines (for example, structure/interests/individual), nor along the lines of traditional political studies (for example, the state/the individual/ representation). Instead he views power as relational; as a network that is ubiquitous. Power is understood as:

the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, (Foucault, 1978:92-3).

Power is always seen as a "struggle" and as something that is exercised (Foucault, 1980:156). Power is a struggle in that everyday life is regulated, constrained, circumscribed. This restriction of freedom is achieved through the exercise of power; the forms, techniques and practices it takes in exerting a network of disciplinary influences.

Disciplinary Practice

Foucault (1977) describes contexts in which people have to interact within power rituals that impose rights and obligations. He focuses on the exercise rather than the possession of power, and draws attention to the tension between various parties caught up in unequal reciprocal power relationships. Power is seen as a strategy and the

effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functions; that one should decipher in it a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess; that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or a conquest of a territory. (Foucault, 1977:26).

In organizations, disciplinary power can be viewed as governance, in that it is a visible arrangement, that confers the right to structure the way others must act or conduct themselves and then allows those in power to act upon these actions of others, by approving, rewarding or disciplining. Thus those in power are invested with the authority to decide what is right or wrong behaviour (Foucault, 1982:221). However, the vestiges of struggle remain because at "the heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and intransigence of freedom" (1982:221/2).

But disciplinary power is considered sinister in that it revolves around a system of surveillance and normalizing judgements. Through detailed prescription of what is permitted and considered normal, and careful observation to ensure that this way of behaving is obeyed, conduct is regulated either by the evaluation of others or one's own submission to the 'objective' standards and meanings. This normalizing process is seen as the result of preceding discourse that shape people. A discourse being "a theoretically based line of thought, regulated and inspired by power relations and social practices, but

also constituting and regulating these practices; it is thus both socially and economically determined and determining. It provides frames of thinking and is associated with the development of knowledge during a particular period, and contributes to the determination of practices" (Alvesson, 1996:103-4).

This conception of disciplinary power is described as being inseparable from knowledge. A key issue is the capacity of discursive practices to objectify knowledge and transform people into subjects. Linked to the scientific approach this implies that those with more scientific knowledge are better suited to interpret and therefore better suited to make decisions for others. This approach further justifies such people being in positions of power and control regardless of other qualities or values and is perpetuated by systems of surveillance and sanction. Consequently one is socialized to respond in organizationally enforced, preconditioned ways. This control circumscribes development in that it has the capability to stunt the capacity that promotes the learning necessary to identify differences, resolve conflict or solve problems (Spence, 1978:9).

Further, this scientific culture masks (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982:107) what is arbitrarily "created and imposed by other people" in that there is no "true" reality behind the scenes of everyday experience, only explanations and reasons for something which can be clarified according to an established cultural practice. Different explanations and different discourses imply different games with different rules. The acceptance of contemporary organizational practices as if they were the absolute rules of the game can stifle critical thinking and development in people.

However, as long as one has the ability to relate to one's experience, question one's reality and discriminate between standards, there is always the possibility that one can look for different standards and choose differently. Hence the idea of "struggle" is appropriate if employees are prepared to pick up the challenge of changing organizational practice.

Yet the conceptualization of the organizational context is not designed for an alternative discourse or mindset. "By classifying and marking their victims, concepts perform an imprisoning act of considerable sophistication. Once immobilized, the body of thought becomes subject to inscription" (Burrell, 1996:645). Thus the object of organizations and their structure from the mainstream discourse is to break down functions, ensure productivity and survival in achieving organizational goals. Any other discourse is considered deviant and non-conforming.

Social Control

Rationalized structures of organizational control promoted in the mainstream discourse have advantages in that they give stability and support to directing predictable behaviour towards goals. Its function is tied to roles which makes it rule-oriented rather than people-orientated. Such a structure creates a dependent mindset that suppresses employee debate about alternative ways to act as well as any awareness of shared concerns about organizational actions from any other perspective such as an ethical, social or political one.

Much social control can be imposed on an employee (as seen in the example of Bertil in Chapter 1). Pressure on employees will depend on the network of people involved in this process of continuous and efficient 'surveillance' (Leymann, 1993:30) and the number of people trying to gain recognition from management by reporting non-conformism. This pressure generated by management to conform, no matter how subtle, is aimed at both punishing and repressing alternative ways of behaving. By habitually conforming to policy and procedures, rules and management value systems, employees become more and more what these particular cultural practices make of them. The path of least resistance is to agree to acquiesce, become docile and dependent by-products of the system (Foucault, 1977). However the 'do-nothing' option invites continuation and carries with it collusion in the impairment of one's personal and moral development (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Deetz, 1992). Consequently when change is suddenly

important and expected, stunted development finds employees incapacitated to deal with such demands competently.

The functional benefit of this control for organizations though, is twofold. First, the manager becomes the yardstick for scrutinizing and judging performance, and for administering reform or reward. Second, techniques are developed for employees to conform to managerially imposed criteria. Thus the rules normalize both the judgement of the manager and the behaviour of the employee by creating constant pressure to conform. Consent is manufactured through the use of "systems of definition, distorted value, and information production" (Deetz, 1998:55).

This process of "normalization" within organizations creates a culture that differs from organization to organization depending on what value systems, methods of implementation, cost, and evaluation of performance are prevalent in that organization. Overall however, this acculturation process reveals a value orientation towards efficiency, routine, conformity, acquiescence, rationalization, rules, supervision and obedience all of which are a link with long-established practice of the past. In its exclusion of debate around these issues, organizations deny the building of a new social environment that encompasses different values that allows choice regarding development (Deetz, 1992a:3). This ongoing state of affairs and conflict in goals and values is perpetuated, sadly, with the full involvement of employees (Deetz, 1992:39).

Identity Formation and the Dominant Discourse

This issue of whether the identity of individuals is a by-product or an end-product of organizational practice is part of an alternative debate that develops with the formation and articulation of other legitimate group discourses, goals and interests (Knight and Willmott, 1985:22). Recognizing the potential for organizations to diminish employees has stimulated me to articulate conditions that effect white-collar employees; this concern colours my interaction with organizational literature and my questioning of traditional organizational practice in the modern day.

Deetz's (1992a; 1992) political focus on power in organizations allows for the formation and articulation of competing interests, the development of alternative leadership and the formation of representations. But for this to happen, Deetz believes, managerial advantages and prerogatives must "be seen as taking place through economic-based structures *and* systems of discursive monopoly" (1992:24). It is this inherent privilege or domination that, he believes, does not allow the managerial construct to be "treated as natural and neutral". His concern is that the dominant discourse hides alternative constructions.

The well-established institutionalized discourse bestows privilege on management and is therefore a powerful enabling factor in reproducing the existing unequal power relations. In this way traditional organization and management concepts produce the ultimate form of a managerial panopticon (Foucault, 1977), an architectural form which is symbolic of political technology "polyvalent in its applications" (1977:205). Breaking this discursive monopoly, perpetuated by teaching institutions, becomes a critical factor in the liberation process of employees and the transformation of organizations. Academe is identified as being in a gate-keeping position influential enough to marginalize and constrain any alternative discourse and in so doing deny discursive legitimacy to a non-managerial perspective. In this sense academe is instrumental in allowing certain prevailing concepts to be protected and different practices to be discouraged.

The way that organizational members participate and engage with organizations is constrained by the limited concepts available to them. This restraint of discursive activity at the institutional level restricts recognition and the naming of social relations problems in different ways, for example, disempowerment. This constraint further inhibits organizational members, not only from developing a different legitimate voice, but from responding to the organizational context in creative ways. Because collective discursive practices that create meaning is restrained the evolution of institutions to enable liberating action is further inhibited.

3.4 GENERAL COMMENT

The way in which we understand and interpret the historical development of organizational analysis as a practice is critical to understanding organizations. The alternative ideologies discussed situate organizational analysis in the realm of the public where the nature of a good society and the social values that inform collective association deserve continual debate in the hope of improving the good society to which people aspire.

In mainstream organizational analysis, the social complexity of organizational life is minimized to the technical, and made subservient to irrefutable, legitimate superordinate goals and structures under the ideology of rationalization, efficiency and effectiveness. However, the managers of today, despite their efforts to keep up with popular prescriptions (for example, change management, entrepreneurship, re-engineering, totally quality management), are unaware of the theoretical underpinnings of management theory and practice. It is Ackroyd's contention that "management and administration remain the only important professions without a highly developed, formal knowledge base or professional organization" (1992:102).

Yet management theory is specific knowledge in which managers claim specific expertise. This claim to expert knowledge and practice results in asymmetric distribution of resources, and a hierarchy of influence and control which becomes the taken-for-granted political discourse.

This dominant organizational discourse structures complex relationships between the individual and the organization and between other organizations. As knowledge it is deemed political "in the ways that its theory legitimates some practices while it marginalizes others, in the ways that its rhetoric provides not just legitimation but the

raison d'etre for what it is that some people are able to do to some other people" (Clegg and Palmer, 1996:3).

Donaldson (1985, 1988, 1995, 1996) is the defender of the mainstream approach to organizations. In his view, organizational theory has become a separate discipline and is no longer part of sociology. Hinings (1988:2) confirms this position and states that the leading top management journals (Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Organizational Studies, Journal of Management, Harvard Business Review, Sloan Management Review, California Management Review) do not concern themselves with sociological issues. The central tenet of the new discipline is to design efficient organizations.

While the ideas of paradigm shift may legitimize change in direction it is not a change of interest to those within the new discipline. All the alternative discourse does is illustrate the "continuing divorce of organizational theory from sociology" (Hinings, 1988:4). The critical debate does not even touch North America where organizational theory is already institutionalized as a separate discipline (1988:5). Aldrich (1988) verifies this statement and confirms that taking the top five critical thinkers of alternative debates including Burrell and Morgan and examining the Social Science Citation Index these pieces were mentioned only seventy-seven times in the United States. Even then it was only to "buttress fairly general statements about social processes" (Aldrich, 1988:22). The only debate they were influencing was fringe issues of concern to the applied social sciences in "forcing practitioners to confront their otherwise unstated assumptions" (1988:24).

Hinings (1988:5) reiterates that the debate in Europe continues to show its ties with sociology and that this debate has no impact on North America. The long institutional separation of organization theories from sociology is already taken for granted. Textbooks of organizational theory see design as "the central problematic and even if efficiency and effectiveness are not directly dealt with empirically, they are a basic component of most models" (1988:6).

However, Donaldson (1988) insists that the critical movement has been destructive to the cause of mainstream organizational theory. The United Kingdom which was once the leading exponent of mainstream organizational theory has no new research centre promoting this view and nor do the once four top United Kingdom analytic structural research centres (Aston University, Bradford University, London Business School and Imperial College) play this leadership role (1988:31).

It would appear that the ongoing academic debate has become uncoupled from organizational practice. There is institutional silence in that the alternative debate, although it is active, is not for public consumption. Institutional control around academic publications ensures that it is not. Academics know the issues being discussed and as insiders know where to find relevant articles that promote alternative thinking. In the meantime those employees, whose lives are intimately affected by organizational design, organizational theory and management practice, remain ignorant of relevant issues.

Mainstream literature in promoting the views of management as reliable scientific knowledge and a value-free discipline is using knowledge as an effective instrument of political control and has aligned itself with the economic interests of management and shareholders. The legitimacy of this technically based position is well established as this is the position taught by tertiary institutions and is the message of various public seminars. Employees remain unaware of options and the debilitating nature of their constraints. They are conditioned to organizational conformity, are socialized to accept the status quo and continue to have their capacity to imagine alternatives, and act on such options, diminished. Effective, innovative, transformative action is neatly curtailed.

Any long-term resolution of this problem will require discursive legitimacy for non-managerial viewpoints. Tertiary institutions are critical in stimulating such an alternative debate into general awareness.

I plead the legitimacy of this alternative debate to shape the institutional field of organizational theory and management practice, and the broader discourse at the social level. Discursive activity surrounding organizational theory and management practice, particularly at the tertiary level, prevents the naming of social relations problems thereby restricting those discursive practices that create meaning for them. In this sense discursive activity at the tertiary level can be described as a political tool. It is a form of political activity that has the capacity to inhibit the transformation of organizational social relationships. Alternatively it can be one that challenges the status quo and, through insights obtained from interdiscursivity, name social problems such as disempowerment. Such redefinition of existing problematic relations can promote meaningful collective debate and action that will redefine the organizational context and what is considered legitimate behaviour. In this way boundaries to the present privileged situation can be established and organizational transformation promoted.

The following examination of power relations in organizations will expose the influence of the dominant discourse; show how organizations are structured and managed; and reveal how management's dominant and privileged position is sustained.

4. POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Power in its broadest sense refers to the governance of the field of possible action understood in terms of socio-historical settings (Foucault, 1977) and the forms of power that define them (Clegg, 1989). That is, it is the organizing process of relationships among those sharing a particular collective life. Although there has been much academic debate about what constitutes an appropriate definition of power (Weber, 1947; Dahl, 1957; Crozier, 1973; Lukes, 1974; Foucault, 1977; Clegg and Dunckerley 1980), each time the issue of change in organizations rears its head, or more dramatically, the issue of transformation, then old power structures and systems responsible for the distribution of power, stand out in clear relief (Crozier, 1973:211). In other words, the formal and informal, subtle, smooth operating processes that maintain the status quo are challenged and the underlying power structures and processes revealed for what they are.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop, in greater depth, the theme of power by addressing the shaping of the collective organizational environment and the effect this shaping has on the empowerment/disempowerment and development of employees. This is approached in the following way. First, the concept of managerial authority is viewed, since the issue of order in organizations has been depicted in mainstream literature on organizational theory and management practice, surveyed in Chapter 2. The point of departure of the orthodox discourse is that managerial authority is legitimate and non-political while employee power is informal, illegitimate and political. Second, the concept of power is explored from a sociological point of view to gain greater insight into its theoretical complexity. With these intellectual tools, the third step is to examine specific mainstream research on 'power' in organizations. Although the reality of power is skirted the management of organizational culture (step four in the argument) brings managerial power clearly into relief. Fifthly, I present the views of alternative thinkers on power in organizations and this leads to six, which is alternative thinking on the issue

of power and political behaviour cast in the idiom of resistance. What actually constitutes political behaviour appears to be a contested point which an alternative perspective exposes.

4.2 AN OVERVIEW OF POWER IN ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

The traditional functions of an organization are planning, organizing, controlling, co-ordinating and evaluating action. Organizing these activities requires structures and people to make decisions. From the classical perspective of rational economic institutions, organizations are accomplished at making unilateral decisions with regard to efficient task execution according to economic criteria of good or bad. Much attention in early theory was given to structure, and structural design is actually built into classical and contingency theory. Within this framework organizations are given a formal order that enables them to function efficiently. This order then assumes the legitimacy of organized management (authority) to exercise the control necessary to obtain performance in order to achieve desired results efficiently.

During the classical period of organizational theory development, there appears to have been no debate about power. Discussion centres on formal authority or hierarchical structures (Taylor, 1911; Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1946). Legitimate 'power' is depicted as and equated with formal hierarchy. This focus on authority, as described by Clegg and Dunkerley (1977:23/24) stems from the word "herrschaft" in Weber's work being translated as "authority" in mainstream North American literature.

With the emergence of the human relations approach in organizational theory, there is acknowledgement of a dysfunctional informal structure and the need to engender willing co-operation from workers (Mayo, 1933). This knowledge gives a different level of complexity to the matter of organizing for results. Power emerges as a formal-informal distinction, that is, the informal part is labelled as power. What has been uncovered,

according to mainstream theorist, is "illegitimate" power which formal authority has to deal with (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Crozier, 1964).

This theme is taken up in mainstream literature by Bennis et al (1958) where influence is advocated as a subtle form of authority. Much organizational attention is given to the development of managers to assist them in exerting influence in a variety of organizational situations. Although emphasis is given to the ability of managers to take on a leadership role and influence their staff, the real desired end of management is compliance and the obedience of employees in achieving organizational goals (Mintzberg, 1983). The emphasis is not on management acquiring the leadership skills of social and political competence, but on their ability to induce the necessary attitudes of compliance, identification and internalization (Kelman, 1964:511) required of employees in order that they, as managers, can assert greater influence and control.

With the development of the theme of leadership in mainstream writing on management practice, authority is linked to personal capacity and the exercise of will (simplified as A getting B to do what is wanted regardless of what B wants to do). Only managers are assumed to have this authority. In the development of these ideas in contingency theory, power and control are confused and meshed with legitimacy and function (Hardy and Clegg, 1996:630). Given this powerful position, benevolent rather than autocratic management is advocated and it is anticipated that the by-product of the organizational experience will be one where feelings of closeness, pride and competence prevail. This is a doctrine of community or fellowship (Child, 1969), where influence is the preferred manner of exercising authority. It cleverly averts the problem of power, whether formal or informal.

By management adopting a philosophy of community, camaraderie and parental guidance, conflict is viewed as a symptom of dysfunction or disease, and therefore something to be suppressed or eradicated (Reed, 1996:37). Defensive patterns (Argyris, 1990) that require skilful learning are expected "to cover up in order to help organizations

survive and not to upset organizational players" (1990:xii). These behaviours or underground dynamics are openly viewed as "necessary, practical, realistic, and even caring" as they show the type of concern for people that the organization values (Argyris, 1990:xii, 29). In this sense, conflict is reduced to a game of hidden agendas (1990:7). Rhetorically open communication is encouraged in maintaining good relationships but "openness is actually a strategy top management has devised to cover up its resistance to influence" (1990:28). Messages are crafted that contain inconsistencies, and then one has to act as if these messages are not incorrect. Thus the ambiguity and inconsistency in the message becomes 'undiscussable' with the final rule of the game being the 'undiscussability' of the 'undiscussable' (1990:27). If these rules are adhered to, sensitive issues, criticism, and bad news can be communicated in a way that makes it acceptable and the outcomes less difficult for management to control. The problem with this strategy, however, is that it requires recipients of this "caring" attitude to be "submissive, passive and dependent" (1990:13). This means they are being denied the choice to actually deal with the situation. They are being denied not only the opportunity to learn but also the capacity to learn. It is this denial of the capacity to learn that remains tacitly accepted as undiscussable and which diminishes the creative potential of human beings (Argyris, 1990:30, 105).

With the tremendous drive for the development of managers, managers learn to recognize the source of their power base - physical, resource, position/status, expert, personal (French and Raven 1959:156; Handy 1985:151) - and are expected to identify the appropriate style and method of influence, whether this is force, exchange, rules or persuasion. With this knowledge managers are then expected to adjust their behaviour so that it can be appropriate to a given situation. Given the attention to style, influence and situation, the focus on decision-making becomes detached from the realities of power which somehow "vanishes" in a discourse that does not recognize a mobilization of bias by minimizing dissent and resistance (Lukes, 1974:123).

Structural functionalism together with systems theory are the lens through which these mainstream decision-making processes are viewed. The systems' language of maintenance, equilibrium and regulation in the quest for survival neutralize the political manipulation of power (Child, 1972:2). Problems and value differences among varying parties are reduced to technical hitches in a system that is functioning to achieve specific goals rationally. This reduction is at two levels: first, in orchestrating the various unit "interdependencies" to achieve organizational goals (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). This is the systems and contingency approach to seeing and discussing organizational reality within a structural hierarchy that avoids promoting sectional interests which would detract from superimposed organizational ones. Second, there is a determined effort to balance the tension between the superordinate needs of the organization and the controlling of the needs of "self-interested" individuals. These needs of the individual have been discussed in Chapter 2 as being carefully delineated and defined by management and management researchers (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1968).

The acceptance of this approach to management practice as fact is accomplished through the conditioning of employees to accept prescribed organizational goals unquestioningly, and by the accepted authority of mainstream organizational theories. A superordinate design is created which is imposed upon and dominates all other realities. Clashes between organizational needs and illegitimate needs of self-interested individuals are held to be disruptive and dysfunctional for survival and are summarily dealt with by sanction or dismissal.

It is evident that mainstream organizational literature (Simon, 1946; Donaldson, 1985) has focused on formal structures through which legitimate authority is exercised. If the issue of power is raised (Hardy and Clegg, 1996) it is labelled as the voice of resistance - dysfunctional, illegitimate and self-interested. In this way, mainstream management theorists have defined power "as those actions that fell outside the legitimated structures, and which threatened organizational goals" (Hardy and Clegg, 1996:626). Thus the only time one observes political activity, according to the management theorist, Pfeffer

(1981:7), is when there is opposition or resistance. This political behaviour, Mintzberg (1983) states, "**refers to individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, in the technical sense, illegitimate - sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (though it may exploit any one of these)**" (1983:172) [author's emphasis].

Power becomes nothing more than illegitimate self-interested behaviour, and is identified as being bad for the organization. Managers, on the other hand, only use authority in pursuit of organizational goals. They learn about the use of charismatic power by studying such leaders as Hitler, Mussolini and Pol Pot (Hardy and Clegg, 1996:629)! Fortunately for them ethical issues associated with the use and abuse of power evaporate. "Potential abuses of power by dominant groups are downplayed, while those who challenge managerial prerogatives are automatically discredited by the label 'political' " (1996:629). This dominant non-power or functionalist position is essential to mainstream organizational theory and reflects managerialist values and interests. Alternative views on power stay safely in alternative disciplines.

It is not surprising that mainstream organizational theorists have been able to assert such dominance over the use (abuse) of the concept of "power" in organizations for so long. Organizations have made a tremendous contribution to the wealth of individuals and society, and have become the dominant production-consumer orientated way of life. An examination of the concept of power in sociological thought will give greater insight into the complexity of organizational power.

4.3 SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF POWER

A good starting point in analysing power in organizations is the commonly accepted concept of getting someone to do something even if they do not want to (Weber) or would not otherwise do so (Dahl, 1957). Barbalet gives Weber's definition of power as

the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (1985 :532).

Crozier cites Dahl's definition as

The power of A over B is the capacity of A to make B do something he would not have done without the intervention of A (1973:216).

Linked to managerial concepts of formal authority, the concept of power has wide acceptance as a capacity to control others, that is, A having power over B. This definition has been considered virtuous because of its simplicity in relation to direct action that can be seen to be done and measured. That is, B's response to do what A wants can be measured. This definition looks specifically at what happens, and implies that power is held by people (the idea of human agency) rather than by organizations (structured conditions) (Crozier, 1973:217).

It also ignores the distinction of power as "intentional" confrontation (Wrong, 1968:676) and power as involuntary influence (Crozier, 1973:216). A resolves to get B to do something which does not always work the way A intended. Power in organizations cannot always be equated with what is rational and efficient. A pattern emerges of a type of problem with recalcitrance being experienced that does not fit in with the prevailing definition of power (Wrong, 1968:680; Crozier, 1973:226). These problems and the conceptualization of various definitions of power will play an important role in the progress of academic research on the ambiguous problem of power in organizations.

Quantifiable, scientific research will concentrate on formal 'power' as researchers are generally employed by those in power to study problems associated with formal authority. As this view of power is so specific and narrow, many aspects of power are thereby neglected (Crozier, 1973:213).

In highlighting aspects of neglect, Crozier (1973:214) brings three problematic points of view to mind - the moral, the logical and the structural. The moral side is caught up with

the discomfort of taboos about power. To examine power in terms of dependence and domination is considered unthinkable for they are seen as moral categories. The problem is exacerbated by the constraints of scientific enquiry. Traditional scientific research does not investigate the moral categories of domination or dependence because these factors do not fall into the objective category of quantifiable scientific facts. From the point of view of logic, the examination of concepts such as domination and dependence require irreconcilable reasoning methods. The rules of the game for judging efficiency based rational rules are very different from analysing the capacity of individuals to withstand this push.

Finally, Crozier (1973:214) brings to attention the broader institutional system within which the power relationship develops. He feels that no social system, no matter how autonomous, stands in neutral isolation. An organized system requires shared goals and rules. If this is an accepted base then each part of a system deeply affects other parts; and this means that as processes develop over time, the lives of individuals, groups and organizations are transformed, not necessary for the better.

Wrong (1968) raised different concerns to Crozier. He (1968:673) viewed power as a special kind of social relation which is asymmetrical "in that the power holder exercises greater control over the behavior of the power subject than the reverse". The difficulty of confining power to intended consequences was highlighted because it did not take into account the unintentional effects of power on others. The "intentional control of others is likely to create a relationship in which the power holder exercises unintended influence over the power subject that goes far beyond what he may have wished or envisaged at the outset" (1968:677). Thus power is seen as the capacity to perform acts of control. A's power over B exists even when not exercised, if B believes that A possess that capacity. This belief makes the potential or the latent possibility to act in a controlling way, and the actual act of exercising power, as having the same effect (Wrong, 1968:679). This effect is particularly forceful when examining the resources of a social group in relation to those of an individual where there is asymmetrical differences.

Although Wrong (1968:675) views power relationships as asymmetrical, they remain interactive in that one can:

- attempt to exercise countervailing power;
- set and enforce limits on the exercise of power;
- destroy one person's hold over another; and
- acquire the power oneself.

In this way he (1968:675) raises the issue of resistance. Resistance is seen as a struggle to escape the effects of power, and as a struggle for power in order to limit the extent of power effects. But from this understanding of power it would appear that power only exists as long as there is conflictual tension in a relationship, or that where there is an absence of resistance, consensus prevails. Perhaps this is because of the use of the terms A and B which are individualistic. Consequently, it would follow from such framework of organizational decision-making that unarticulated interests and grievances would be said not to exist because they are not directly observable. Therefore it would be presumed that consensus prevails among organizational members.

The problem with the above views is that they are too one-dimensional, according to Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1963, 1970). Power has two faces: it initiates, decides and vetoes - but more importantly, it confines the scope of decisions. This is done by preventing potential issues from reaching an agenda and by preventing individuals from being part of the decision making process.

A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962:948).

Thus power's second dimension or hidden face is revealed as the ability to exclude and hinder B. It suppresses or thwarts issues and individuals that are latent challenges to A's particular interests and values. A ensures that some things get done and others do not. That is, A is able to mobilize bias (1962:948). In other words, there is some structure in

place that allows A to behave in this way. While earlier views of power focused on A's capacity, here it is structure rather than agency that has the desired effect: structure indicates an organized setting that allows issues to be organized in or out. It is a built in device to do A's will automatically as the legitimate thing to do. This points to the relevance of rules of the game. In the case of organizations, the rules of the game are things that work in A's favour, namely, values, myths, rituals and institutionalized practice. Any challenge by B against such issues would not be considered 'safe' and would therefore be excluded. Alternatives of any sort pertaining to such issues would not be open for debate. Obviously, therefore, consciousness of such options could be prevented. This is the contribution made by Lukes (1974).

Lukes (1974) develops Bachrach and Baratz's (1962) two-dimensional approach, as he believed they did not go far enough in their conceptualization of power. Their definition assumes observable conflict (overt or covert) and observable action or inaction. Yes, A might well exercise power over B by getting B to do what he does not want to do. But the ultimate power for Lukes (1974:24) is the ability to determine B's very wants, to shape B's preferences, and prevent conflict from arising at all.

Lukes' (1974) radical departure from Bachrach and Baratz (1962) is his evaluative concept of interests:

Extremely crudely, one might say that the liberal takes men as they are and applies want-regarding principles to them, relating their interests to what they actually want or prefer, to the policy preferences as manifested by their political participation. The reformist, seeing and deploring that not all men's wants are given equal weight by the political system, also relates their interests to what they want or prefer, but allows that this may be revealed in more indirect and sub-political ways - in the form of deflected, submerged or concealed wants and preferences. The radical, however, maintains that men's wants may themselves be a product of a system which works against their interests, and in such cases, relates the latter to what they would want and prefer, were they able to make the choice (Lukes, 1974:34).

A's role becomes one of mobilizing bias not only to prevent conflict and to control issues but to prevent people's consciousness of grievances. Within an organizational context, the whole concept of managing culture to which people have to conform comes into question, for by management providing such an environment employees are not aware of other possible options. In other words, management can manufacture employee consent

by shaping their perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial (Lukes, 1974:24).

This amounts to powerlessness, in Gaventa's (1980) view. He tackles the problem of powerlessness by attempting to explain the inactivity of deprived groups (1980:vii). He examines this problem within the context of a political system preventing grievances from becoming key potential political issues and the consequent powerlessness that prevailed in a particular social and economically disadvantaged community in the Appalachian Valley in the United States. His criticism (Gaventa, 1980:5) of the one-dimensional approach used by pluralists was that it concentrated on the behaviour of participating. This presumes that grievances are acknowledged and acted upon, and assumes that decision-making systems are open to organized groups. Consequently, low or non-participation of disadvantaged groups gets explained away with reference to the ingrained apathy of the impoverished (Gaventa, 1980:7). This prevailing perspective allows no consideration to be given to the actual power relationship, specifically to B's powerlessness in relation to A (1980:8).

Although the two-dimensional approach acknowledges the mobilization of bias and although it allows that inaction or non-participation may be related to power, Gaventa (1980:9,14) found that it did not come to grips with the actual barriers to effective action. Lukes' (Gaventa, 1980:15) inclusion of a third dimension paved the way for serious sociological attempts to study the means used to influence others, in the what and how of communication - how meaning is constructed to become a dominant discourse, and how people are socialized into a culture of silence without realizing it (1980:16).

Taking such an historical and sociological view of powerlessness and apathy changes the inclination to dismissively put the blame on people's inactivity or non-participation in a given situation. The change occurs because, as a result of analysing power processes, there comes a realization that these very processes shape the consciousness of inequalities in a way that maintains a non-conflict environment. This quiescence is maintained even though there are genuine grievances.

Political learning comes about with political participation as this affords some degree of mastery of one's environment (Gaventa, 1980:18). This insight leads to the further realization that without organization and political acumen people

- do not know how to turn their grievances into both demands and challenges to the prevailing dominance, nor
- do they know how to sustain these challenges in order to be effective (1980:24).

To be politically effective those with genuine grievances have to organize and "go through a process of issue and action formulation by which B develops consciousness of the needs, possibilities, and strategies of challenge" (Gaventa, 1980:24). It then becomes essential that these formulations are articulated and transformed into challenges of counter-power. This is done by carrying "out the process of mobilization of action upon issues to overcome the mobilization of bias" (1980:24). But even more critical is the necessity of those who are caught in the powerlessness of gross inequality (1980:259) to develop their own resources, organization and values, and to network and create strengthening alliances to help and promote their own position. From the perspective of the powerless, power becomes equated with focused, collective action.

Parsons' (1967) view of power links it to bringing about change in the process of achieving collective goals. This view, however, also ties power to authority and justifies the capacity to exercise power as it presuming that consensus exists. Parsons (1967:140) is concerned with the problem of order, with a social context that is cooperative, and in

which the uses of power contribute to the maintenance of that order and civility. This view sidesteps the relationship within and between groups, securing compliance, averting opposition and negotiating order, as it assumes an all-embracing moral order to which all citizens have been socialized and on which there is consensus. Because power is exercised within this normative context it "is both enabled and constrained within that social order" rather than being a conflictual mechanism (Clegg, 1989:132).

Parsons (1967:207) is also concerned with choice as to how one can act. The process involved in exercising power is seen as a key issue as it draws attention to the consequences that flow from action or inaction, and to the fact that the exercise of power can be linked to acting responsibly. So although there is structure and organization in place it is the moral agency of some people that is emphasized in order to bring intention and resources into alignment in such a way that others are obliged to obey.

Giddens (1968) criticizes Parsons (1967) for sanctifying power and for always seeing that it is associated with "institutionalized" legitimate authority (1968:260). Not only is compliance inferred it is assumed by obligation.

What slips away from sight almost completely in the Parsonian analysis is the very fact that power, even as Parsons defines it, is always exercised over someone! By treating power as necessarily (by definition) legitimate and thus *starting* from the assumption of consensus of some kind between power-holders and those subordinate to them, Parsons virtually ignores, quite consciously and deliberately, the necessarily hierarchical character of power, and the divisions of interest which are frequently consequent upon it. However much it is true that power can rest upon 'agreement' to code authority which can be used for collective aims, it is also true that interests of power-holders and those subject to that power often clash. (Giddens, 1968:264).

In other words the system facilitates the achievement of A's collective goals while disadvantaging B from forming or achieving collective goals as well as punishing B for recalcitrance in achieving A's goals. "Recalcitrance to collective objectives may well be ethically sanctionable, according to this formulation, but not where it is resistance to a facilitative power in which one has played no part" (Clegg, 1989:134).

Giddens (1984) defines power as "the capacity to achieve outcomes" (1984:257) for which purpose they produce structure, the reproduction of which is then tied to human agency.

To be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action depends upon the capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events. An agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to 'make a difference', that is to exercise some sort of power. (Giddens, 1984:14).

Agency and active doing is dominant in this view of power with structure playing an enabling role rather than a deterministic one (Giddens, 1976:160):

... structure exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents. (Giddens, 1984:17).

Rules and resources are an important aspect of structure. Structure thus has the capacity both to constrain and to enable (Giddens, 1984:25). Clegg (1989) argues that the "criterion of structure is not that there are individuals constituting it through their instantiations but that relations between individuals and other forms of collective agency are constituted in relatively enduring ways which routinely constrain and enable differential opportunities for action and inaction on the part of those agencies" (1989:145). Structure is seen as having a determining effect on relations of autonomy and dependence between agents/agencies regardless of the constraint of the agent.

For Foucault (1977, 1978) the problem of the relations of agency and structure are constituted discursively. He gives two conceptions of power - disciplinary power (1977:139), a set of highly regulatory practices targeted at both individuals and collectives, and bio-power (1978:143) targeted at control of populations. In bio-power what is normalized by the discursive practise of psychiatry, social work and medicine becomes institutionalized as the definition of what people can do, say, and think, to be considered 'normal'. Both concepts structure a highly institutionalized environment

which centres on fixing the norms and behaviour of everyday life and on creating obedient bodies (Clegg, 1989:176).

This selective overview from the general sociological view of power provides the insight with which we will now re-examine how the theme of power is developed in organizational research and literature. We will see the idea of power broadens from its initial position as formalized authority to a tentatively circumscribed political view of coalitions.

4.4 MAINSTREAM RESEARCH ON POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS

Astley and Sachdeva (1984) give an overall view of traditional research on power in organizations which they regard as both fragmented and ambivalent given the contested nature of the general concept of power (1984:104). In an effort to integrate a picture of context specific organizational power which is functionally orientated, their starting point is the formal nature of authority (1984:105). Authority is examined in relation to the control of resources upon which others depend as well as to the “centrality of location within the organization’s network of workflow linkages (network centrality)” (1984:105). They emphasize the formal aspect of authority which is accompanied by a hierarchical structure and *an institutional expectation of obedience* to formal commands.

Within this framework they look at the three above-mentioned structural sources of intra-organizational power - hierarchical authority, resource control and network centrality. Such formal authority is reinforced by management’s function to control resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). The authoritative power structure is enhanced both hierarchically and horizontally through the structural dependence of interconnecting workflows (Astley and Sachdeva, 1984:107). The closer to the top of the hierarchical structure the more powerful a unit is likely to be. If a unit is pivotal in resource exchange this network centrality will also make it more powerful (1984:108). This perspective is congruent with mainstream contingency theory where those strategically positioned units

gain control of strategic contingencies and therefore cope best with uncertainty (Crozier, 1964). What is pervasive is the positive relationship between hierarchy, resource control and centrality. In other words, structure is acknowledged as the means of distributing formal authority in an organization and the means of exercising power. It puts the focus on internal organizational design, authority and obedience, and the ability to get staff to do what they otherwise would not.

Although the words power and authority may appear to be used interchangeably, the managerial view of power does draw a distinction between power and authority. Authority is what management has, it is taken for granted; it is legitimate control and functionally good. Power not granted by this legitimate authority is illegitimate. Management commissioned research projects (Thompson, 1956; Mechanic, 1962; Crozier, 1964) dealing with trouble in this area declare that authority is what management have. 'Power' is what subordinates exercise in thwarting organizational goals. As such, it is political, illegitimate and dysfunctional; and is excluded from being a field of research in its own right (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Bennis et al., 1958; Mayes and Allen, 1977; Drory and Romm, 1988). The paradigm in which this empirical organizational research takes place is the structural contingency theory approach to organizations - effective organizations need to fit their structure to the various internal and external contingency factors of their environment in order to be successful (Donaldson, 1996).

This empirical scientific research explores themes of authority relationships, patterns of communication, patterns of decision making, centralization and decentralization. Because of my specific interest in power, the aspects of this research that I select to explore are those that deal with legitimate authority, conflict and the illegitimacy of power, moving thereafter towards the acknowledgement of coalitions formation, organizational politics, the management of organizational culture and meaning, and the mobilization of bias.

Legitimacy of authority

The concept of legitimacy of authority is relevant as it sets the early stage for the 'justified' expectation of obedience in organizations. It assumes compliance with directives and simultaneously creates an environment that de-legitimizes any conflicting demands of others (Pettigrew, 1977:85). This view of authority is power integrated with legitimate order to ensure efficiency (Mechanic, 1962:355). Socialization to the organizational norms, values and rules serve to reinforce this view of authority. Examples from the work of Thompson (1956), Mechanic (1962), Blau (1964), Crozier (1964), Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) and Pfeffer (1981) are examined to explore the theme.

The concept of legitimate power or the legitimacy of hierarchical authority was noted by Thompson (1956) in a study of the United States Air Force Bomber Wing. His concern was with authority, "that type of power which goes with a position and is legitimated by the official norms" and "authority structure as a relatively fixed, regular, and continuous power relationship between offices as they are formally prescribed" (Thompson, 1956:290). Although structurally the air-crew possessed greater formal authority than the ground-crew, research revealed that on an operational basis it was the ground-crew who exercised greater power not derived from legitimate hierarchical, structural design. This was attributed to the strategic overarching concerns for safety and security.

Irrespective of the actual structural hierarchy, perceived power rested with highly technical operational people who were central to the workflow, safety and survival. Thompson (1956) highlights neglect in research of such "unauthorized or illegitimate power" in favour of the 'rational aspects' of the organization (1956:290). This distinction is labelled 'formal' and 'informal' by Bennis, Berkowitz, Affinito and Malone (1958).

Blau (1964) in his work highlights the necessity of legitimation to provide a stable environment and to prevent opposition (1964:199) and the right of management to impose its will despite resistance. "Power conflicts in and between societies are

characterized by resistance and opposition, and while the latter occur in organizations, effective operations necessitate that they be kept at a minimum there and, especially, that members do not exhibit resistance in discharging their daily duties but perform them and comply with directives willingly". (Blau, 1964:200). Other studies already discussed under the development of the contingency theory focus on technical design of tasks (Woodward, 1958) and the functional interdependence of tasks (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Woodward's (1958) work showed that mass production operated with high levels of standardization, a low level of skill, and a simple management structure based on personal surveillance. Greater complexity would require different levels of specialization and more layers of structure/line management to oversee production.

Mechanic (1962) builds on this work and introduces expertise as a base for power. Despite formal hierarchical design, his research showed that those in lower positions (for example, secretaries and hospital attendants) can circumvent higher authority. He attributes this to access and control over persons, information, facilities and resources; knowledge gained from long service about complex workings of the system which those in higher positions are dependent upon; and because of employee attractiveness or closeness to those in authority (Mechanic, 1962:349). For example, a favoured secretary controls access to the boss by controlling appointments, scheduling events and only bringing selective matters to attention.

Mechanic (1962:356) tells how hospital attendants were able to thwart the goals of senior administration to bring about reform by withholding information, lack of co-operation and through an unwillingness to shield physicians from patient demands, thus making the physicians' lives difficult and their functioning inefficient. Physicians were vulnerable being particularly dependent on the co-operation of attendants for the handling of paperwork, administering of drugs and ongoing interaction with patients. Such lower level power is seen as "divorced from the traditions, norms, and goals and sentiments of the organization as a whole. Lower participants do not usually achieve control by using the role structure of the organization, but rather by circumventing, sabotaging, and

manipulating it" (Mechanic, 1962:356). They are depicted as usurping authority, making it work against, rather than for, the organization.

From the above examples, technical knowledge and technical requirements of operations can be firmly identified as a base of power within an organization. This work gave rise to a flurry of further research identifying various bases of power in organizational life (French and Raven, 1959:156; Handy, 1985:151; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974). Each researcher's list varied depending upon the circumstances examined. The main purpose of this research was for management to understand, grasp and use the resources available to them.

The next development was the work of Crozier (1964). Crozier (1964:164) highlights "uncertainty" as a dysfunctional problem of the exclusive possession of knowledge by expert staff. By attaching the concept organizational power to the control of uncertainty, he links it to a central principle within the contingency approach. An understanding of his ideas are gained by following his description of the behaviour of the maintenance staff in a French tobacco factory.

From a design point of view the maintenance staff were marginal while the production workers were central to the organization's existence. The reality of organizational life was experienced as being very different from what this rational perspective depicted. In theory all staff were treated equally because they were controlled by an extensive set of rules. The production environment was highly prescriptive with work being formalized, planned and regulated, and with workers being paid on a piece-rate system (Crozier, 1964:165). The only area of uncertainty was the breaking down of machines which brought the added frustration of diminishing earnings and production bonuses (1964:109).

Because all other tasks were routinized, the group with the most power in this factory environment were the maintenance and repair personnel who were those most in control

of production "uncertainty" (Crozier, 1964:154). Their availability was central to workflow as an unpredicted breakdown could stop all production. This situation made the production workers dependent upon the maintenance staff, and allowed informal power relations to develop (1964:193). Management's attempts to regulate the problem by introducing planned, routinizing maintenance were foiled as the maintenance section managed to thwart this attempt to circumscribe their power by sabotage and the 'loss' of technical manuals. The expert knowledge of the maintenance staff ensured that management could not remove their relative autonomy, power or privileged position, thus highlighting a possible dysfunctional problem of experts in highly formalized organizations. Factory managers did not have time nor the professional competence to check on maintenance. The ability to control production uncertainty was identified as a source of informal power which could make it difficult for managers to introduce change.

While Crozier (1964) focused on dysfunction, Etzioni (1961) focused on order. Etzioni's view is that employees do things in an organization for fear, esteem or money (1961:5); therefore their compliance is calculated in a positive way (commitment) or negative way (alienation) (1961:9). This calculated involvement is rewarded on a coercive, normative or remunerative basis. Prisons function in a coercive environment while blue and white collar industries are perceived as being predominantly utilitarian (normative compliance being secondary). An example of normative compliance would be a professional firm (1961:30) such as an accounting organization. To ensure normative control prevails all line functions are managed by accountants even though support functions may be managed by non-accountants. This configuration ensures that power resides in the relevant professional expertise. It is held by DiMaggio and Powell 1983) that professional groups of people are slow to change as they only change as their profession changes. That is, they are only likely to introduce change as they upgrade their skills; as they learn about professional ideals, skills and knowledge from their professional society or tertiary institution (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:69; Meyer and Rowan, 1992:96). This power of professional institutions is part of what Foucault (1977:11, 179) would term normalization with the disciplinary power of surveillance and control.

Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck and Pennings (1971) move the debate from vertical positions of power to power distribution within organizations. Power is depicted as a dependent variable among interdependent sub-units resulting from the division of labour in the organizational system (1971:217). That is, it is presumed that equilibrium exists prior to the emergence of power and that this state of system's equilibrium is to be returned. A unit has or does not have power ensuing from its control of strategic contingencies such as uncertainty, centrality and substitutability, upon which other units are dependent (Hickson et al., 1971:227).

Power is shown as a dependent variable within a strategic contingencies framework. Thus coping with uncertainty, substitutability and centrality in relation to the control of strategic contingencies for dependent activities becomes the key focus, and this is particularly pertinent when it comes to a critical organizational function. Where Crozier (1973) gave the example of the power of experts (the maintenance and repair staff in the tobacco factory) Hickson et al. give examples of functional units which hold critical functions. For example, the immediacy of the production staff with regard to workflow in a factory environment ensures that the power balance stays with them rather than say the financial staff, even though financial constraints are pervasive. In a consumer company the swing moves to marketing and sales. For such a complex system to function effectively it is assumed that management of each sub-unit is the ultimate "determination of behavior" (Hickson et al., 1971:218) even if they have to form coalitions with others in or outside the system in order to maintain it (for example, marketing and sales) through the creation of more and more dependencies. In other words, some sets of players are allowed greater capacity to exercise power because of their structural relevance while others are granted the capacity to labour (Clegg, 1977:32).

Benfari, Wilkinson and Orth (1986) in their research examine how critical resources confer power and how individual managers use their specific power base. Because

Benfari et al defined power as the capacity to influence the behaviour of others (1986:12) they take eight behavioural bases of power - reward, coercion, authority, position, expert, information, affiliation with those more senior and reciprocal group relationships - and indicate that a manager's survival depends on positive use of these resources. Thus by restricting the bases of power to use of resources the concept of critical resources conferring power, is justified as a legitimate function of authority which has "discretionary control of strategic contingencies or resource dependencies" (Clegg, 1989:190).

Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) also look at the power of resource control and recognize the political processes involved in scarce resource allocation. They use the example of a university's budget. They link departmental decision making power to the proportion of budget received in a particular university (Illinois) during the years 1958 to 1970 (1974:135). Archival records were examined to establish decision-making influence while quantitative budget allocations were examined to establish the political nature of disbursements. In theory, a rational-choice model of organizations would ensure that organizational objectives would be the main criteria for budget allocation. But Baldrige (1971) had already argued that a political model was more likely to represent reality more accurately if the organization is viewed as depicted by Cyert and March (1963) as a coalition.

Given this position Pfeffer and Salancik's (1974:136) interest was to ascertain who had power within the university's decision context. They needed to assess who was able to influence the criteria according to which budget allocations are made. Two classes of decision variables were identified - those representing bureaucratic criteria (for example, work-loads and students numbers) and those representing political criteria used in decision-making. The allocation of budget would depend in varying degrees upon both of these.

Because financial resources were scarce there was competition between departments and bargaining within coalitions. The actual budget allocation would reflect the result of the struggle for this scarce financial resource. Those departments would prove to have the advantage if the financial resources obtained were greater than what the bureaucratic criteria allowed for. In theory, given stable organizational structures (Davis, Dempster, and Wildavsky, 1966) the best indication of what the budget allocation would be for a current year is the previous year's allocation. From their exercise at the university Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) were able to show that understanding of organizational behaviour (such as budget allocation) cannot be limited to the rational optimizing of organizational goals. They found, in the case of the university, that the best predictor of power was access to outside funds because this is what the university authorities valued.

Pfeffer's (1982) later work includes in his study uncertainty, ambiguity and change. He views power and politics as being primarily concerned with conflict over resources, and as being illegitimate. Legitimate power is upheld as authority. Power threatens legitimacy and "makes it possible to introduce political concerns into the issues of corporate governance" (1982:12). This is clearly spelt out as dysfunctional for management and managerial power, and authority is necessary to defeat such conflict.

Pfeffer (1981) defends his position by arguing that symbolic aspects of power are only used to legitimize behavioural (substantive) outcomes arrived at as a result of resource dependencies. That is, attitudes are only influenced after an event through the use of such variables as myths and rituals. In this way, by deliberately restricting the focus to resource dependencies, power is defined in terms of conflict and illegitimacy (1981:7). Within this paradigm of resource dependency, researchers do not have to deal with the mobilization of support to prevent conflict from arising in the first place.

Power as Illegitimate

Management theorists look critically at what subordinates are up to within organizations, but avert their critical gaze from the exercise of managerial authority. Various research

studies, commissioned by management, confirm the managerial view of power as illegitimate internal organizational behaviour (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Thompson, 1956; Crozier, 1964; Blau, 1973). Mintzberg's (1979) work encapsulates the theoretical position held.

Although, Mintzberg (1979, 1983, 1984) views organizations within the contingency framework he recognizes that it is a context in which power is pervasive. His work resonates with the concept of authority with its stress on obedience, and draws attention to the dysfunctional 'political'. Simply stated - management control is functional and therefore apolitical.

Mintzberg (1983:1-2) takes the simplistic view that though the study of power may be a "bottomless swamp", if "we are to improve the functioning of our organizations from within, and to gain control of them from without to ensure that they act in our best interests, then we must understand the power relationships that surround and infuse them" (Mintzberg, 1983:1-2). Despite this "search for a secular equivalent to divinely inspired obedience" Clegg (1989:200) contends that mainstream organizational theorists have had to contend instead with inhibiting capacity and restricting action to that which is obedient.

Mintzberg (1979), however, by making his view "parochial", and by describing power in terms of "who gets it, when, how, and why, and not what it is", is able to make the assumption that it is apolitical (Mintzberg, 1979:2). He positions himself between two bodies of literature - those that concentrate on the individual and those that take a societal, inter-organizational perspective. He states that the bias in his point of departure is the organization itself, its structure and the flow of power in and around organizations. For no matter what the means of formalization, whether "by job, work flow, or rules - the effect on the person doing the work is the same: his behaviour is regulated" in order that it can be predicted and controlled (Mintzberg, 1979:82). In this view the rules of the game are all taken for granted and fixed by the interpretation of those in authority. The

words he uses as qualifiers to this scheme of things, are -‘goals’ and ‘goal systems’, ‘influencers’, ‘systems of influence’, ‘internal and external influencers’ (for example, line managers would have an internal base of influence and suppliers an external base).

A local or parochial view of organizations is rooted in the founder/owner model where there is one authority figure who pushes for profit in order to survive in a competitive environment. This concept of a single organizational goal was expanded by Simon (1964) in his discussion of multiple goals all seen as constraints in taking acceptable courses of action in organizational decision making. The complexity of management goals was compounded when Cyert and March (1963) introduced the concept of a coalition of individuals. This made management a multiple authority concept.

With this understanding of an uncontested game plan it is particularly interesting that Mintzberg (1983:27) considers staff associations as external influencers because their action is taken "outside" of the organizations' "regular" decision-making channels. In other words, an employee's place inside an organization is assumed to be limited to obedience; compliant workers accept and contribute to achieving organizational goals. Directors are seen as the interface between the internal and external influencers and consequently coordinators of the power influences around an organization. He develops a view of the organizational's influence system described in terms of internal and external coalitions. These various coalitions are then seen as sites for power games as they engineer aspects of organizational power (Mintzberg 1979, 1983, 1984:209). From an internal perspective these are seen as being:

- personalized where a dominant leader uses his/her personal attributes to influence decisions to such an extent that it discourages personal expertise and bureaucratic standards;
- bureaucratic where there is a dominance of formal standards and hierarchy with administrators augmenting their own power base;

- ideological where there is dominance of strong internal norms built around an organization's mission and members are highly socialized and indoctrinated so as to facilitate decision-making throughout the organization;
- professional where organizations are dominated by technical knowledge on which the firm depends for its survival: such firms tend to be less bureaucratic and coalitions are mainly formed with outside influences as loyalty lies with a profession rather than the organization; and
- politicized where conflicting forces dominate; that is, there is no centre of power and administrators form coalitions to displace an ineffectual leader or make attempts to renew the organization. This type of configuration is described as dysfunctional where conflict is pervasive and intense and where resources are wasted or diverted from the goals of the organization.

These various influence-structures are seen to change during an organization's life cycle and development (Mintzberg, 1984:207) and to be affected by coalitions formed among the external pressures influencing the organization. Thus the effects of external control or lack of it also influences the internal structure of the organization (1984:208).

External coalitions are seen to be dominant in that they hold the balance of power, divided by competing groups or passive. By passive it is meant that outsiders do not use their voice to influence the organization. Mintzberg (1984:209) describes just how external coalitions influence internal organizational structural arrangements.

- A dominant external coalition would give rise to a centralized bureaucratic structure of formalized and standardized behaviour as management attempt to meet imposed requirements.
- A divided external coalition encourages politicized internal coalitions as managers seek external support from different outsiders.
- A passive external coalition is encouraged by strong internal coalitions being effective in their organizations.

But this view is particularly sanitized. It does not in the least reflect the world experienced by people undergoing a change management initiative. Change in resource allocation deliberately alters existing coalitions in order to create new dependencies, while changes in structure destroys dominant coalitions leaving members scrabbling for protective alliances (McKendall, 1993:98). What is clear, however, is that organizational change is a central dynamic to coalition building. This is because it is key players who are instrumental in changing the rules of the game. This they do so as to remain strategically placed to ensure their continued ascendancy in the organization and to prevent other powerful coalitions from forming and altering the rules of the game (Clegg, 1990:97).

It is evident that a political model which acknowledges the possibility of contested interpretation of rules in the regulation of meaning and of competing power groups would be anathema to Mintzberg's mainstream view. Such a political model would negate existing theory by offering illegitimate alternative views of an organization that would not fit the structural contingency paradigm (Clegg, 1989:201). This would lead the way open to questioning the very basis of organizational authority. From the mainstream view this questioning can only be done by distorting legitimate authority and by displacing an organization's legitimate interests and goals. It is far easier to use the following rationale - where dysfunctional power situations arise they are to be seen as being the result of problems arising from unsatisfied needs which are likely to reveal themselves in those areas where there is discretion in work. It is in this area of discretion that Mintzberg (1983:188) identifies a number of power games which he categorizes according to the reason for playing them - for example, games to build a power base, to defeat rivals, to build alliances and mobilize for change.

As the problem of "political games" comes to the fore in organizational research, Mayes and Allen (1977) surveyed management and organizational literature in order to construct a definition of this new idea of organizational politics. In doing this they assess claims against:

- the allocation of an organization's resources, for example, Harvey and Mills' (1970:181) study of generating demands for and mobilizing support for them which is then rewarded as 'adapting to change';
- whose preferences will prevail over policy conflict, for example, Wildavky's (1964) example of the budgeting process as not just an allocation of financial resources but as a series of political decisions favouring a particular view;
- the multiplicity of tactics used by people in senior positions to gain control and influence to impose their interpretation of an organization's purpose (Martin and Sims, 1974:177; and Burns, 1961:257);

and decided that the common thread throughout this literature is calculated influence.

However they state that *the organization as it exists* in its present form must be *excluded* from this construct, as those structures and activities acceptable in attaining organizationally desired outcomes *must be considered non-political*. With this reservation they conclude that

organizational politics is the management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-sanctioned influence means (Mayes and Allen, 1977:675 authors' own emphasis).

Gandz and Murray (1980) follow up on the work of Mayes and Allen (1977) and state that within the categories examined, the attribute "self-serving" behaviour is contrary to organizational effectiveness and conflicts with the interests of others. Although privately acknowledged among academics, research in this area of self-serving behaviour is, they state (1980:238), not pursued as it is difficult to meet the "neutral" "objective" demands of scientific empirical research. This difficulty accounts for research in this area being restricted to resource/budget allocations.

Nevertheless Gandz and Murray sent 590 questionnaires (428 returned) to resident-graduates and part-time MBA students (covering public and private sector organizations) in order to gauge managers' subjective experience of what organizational processes are perceived as political. Given their biased sample (young, male, educated) they conclude that politics should not be used

synonymously with well-established concepts of organizational conflict, power, and influence. It should be restricted to denote *a subjective state in which organizational members perceive themselves or others as intentionally seeking selfish ends in an organizational context when such ends are opposed to those of others* (Gantz and Murray, 1980:248 authors' own emphasis).

Drory and Romm (1988) continue with this line of research. They examine the concept of organizational politics from the perception of organization members. They wished to give greater clarity to the label "organizational politics" which was relatively new in management literature. While there was agreement that it involved attempts at influencing others (Mayes and Allen 1977), there was "a wide difference with regard to the purpose, the means and the circumstances which distinguish political from non-political behaviour" (Drory and Romm, 1988:166). The term organizational politics was examined in relation to seven defining elements - formal behaviour (that which is prescribed), informal behaviour (discretionary to the person) or illegal (totally prohibited) as well as the circumstances of behaviour, described as "'conflict', 'power attainment', 'acting against the organization', and 'concealment of motive' ". The results of the study were complex:

- organizational politics was perceived across the spectrum as being related more with informal than formal or illegal behaviours;
- formal influence was not labelled political but circumstantial elements could change this perception (for example, adding concealed motive, however conflict was not perceived as political);
- characteristics of the observer (manager or subordinate) influenced the study as managers were inclined to perceive situations as being less political.

These views of Drory and Romm (1988), are in agreement with the work of Mayes and Allen (1977); Gandz and Murray (1980) and Mintzberg, (1983) that managerial power, namely, authority, is essential to defeat conflict seen as dysfunctional organizational politics.

The above views centre around the traditional view of ownership in organizations. But large organizations are seen no longer to fit this description nor to function in this way. This leads to a look at a wider view of corporate power examining the social relations of corporate elite groups of directors.

Scott (1991:182) views interlocking directorships as a power network that transcends specific corporate functions. These associations create opportunities for communication between, for example, mining houses, bankers, insurers and politicians. "The presence of the same director on two or more boards creates a social relation between the two enterprises, and the simultaneous occupancy of multiple company boards by the members of the inner circle, creates a complex web of social relations" (1991:182). This type of research in North American organizations has developed into theories of financial hegemony which Scott (1991:191-199) claims cannot be generalized across European or Asian companies where family and kinship play a dominant role. Thus he draws attention to the broader cultural and economic milieus in which specific networks of social relations are embedded (Hofstede, 1980).

Powell and Di Maggio (1991) push even further beyond traditional organizational confines and call attention to wider structural and ideological issues in the broader social environment. These issues are shown not to fit the traditional organizational model. They fit better with institutional and political models of organizations where organizational action is supported and structured by

shared systems of rules that both constrain the inclination and capacity of actors to optimize as well as privilege some groups whose interests are secured by prevailing rewards and sanctions (Di Maggio and Powell, 1991:11).

These rules which come from professional and institutional bodies guide political and economic action (1991:28) and act as the disciplinary techniques appropriate for impersonal surveillance. They are the impersonal means that bring this about by routinizing and legitimizing prevailing cultural norms and by political processes which continue to be mobilized to maintain the status quo. This is a powerful built-in advantage

that those wishing to bring about change to the established way of doing things would need to address.

The fact that institutional isomorphism produces similar bases of meaning over a multitude of organizations is a way of gaining increased legitimacy by its pervasiveness. On the one hand, because of the strategic role these institutionalized forms of organizational practice play in struggles over power they cannot be "reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991:8). At the other extreme of the continuum " 'oversocialized' individuals are assumed to accept and follow social norms unquestioningly, without any real reflection or behavioral resistance based on their own particular, personal interests" (Tolbert and Zucker, 1996:176). This reality of organizational power is not openly acknowledged. Hardy (1994; 1994a) believes that the time has come for management to admit that power is critical to getting things done.

Hardy and Redivo (1994) look back at definitions of power as one-, two- and three dimensional approaches. They then describe these perspectives, in parallel to Lukes' (1974) work, as the first dimension equating to the formal decision making arena; the second, the prevention of access to the formal decision making arena; and the third, the prevention of conflict. With these concepts in mind, three dimensions of organizational power are identified as - resources, processes and meaning (Hardy and Redivo, 1994:31).

- The power of resources is seen as relating to access to "rewards, sanctions, coercion, authority, credibility, charisma, expertise, information, political affiliations and group power" in relation to others (Hardy and Redivo, 1994:31).
- The power of process is shown as a means of protecting the status quo by denying access to the decision making arena, controlling participation and setting agendas (1994:31).
- The power of meaning is revealed as lying in the ability to define reality, manipulate symbols, structure and values (1994:31).

Hardy's (1994) call is for management to acknowledge upfront the power they have and to mobilize responsibly for strategic action. Her position is that the achievement of organizational goals does not just happen; "power drives the organization towards its strategic goals" (1994:3). Getting an organization to where it wants to be requires actions that "hinge on the use of power to orchestrate, mobilize, contain, and direct them. It involves being sensitive to the dynamics of change, able to appropriate the available levers to shape change, and street-wise enough to know when, why and how people resist" (1994:3).

What is critical to responsible action in Hardy's position (1994a) is that management acknowledge the important distinctions between

- "power used in the face of conflict and power used to prevent conflict arising in the first place", and between
- "actors who benefit from their conscious mobilization of power through political strategies and those who benefit inadvertently from power that resides in the system" (Hardy, 1994a:220-1).

Her plea is (1994a:234) that management use their drive for power, and their built-in power advantage of the organizational system, responsibly. She also acknowledges that because of an organizational emphasis on change and realigning structures, senior management's drive is inclined to be one of managing the organization's culture as a means of mobilizing bias to achieve desired goals.

In any other discipline such mobilizing for power is acknowledged as politics. An acceptance of this political reality of organizations would require the transformation of organizational structures in order to accommodate the diversity of needs, interests and goals. That this position is long overdue is the view of those researchers criticising organizational theory and offering an alternative view of organizational power. We will see how these critical ideas take hold as we follow the development of knowledge around the concept of organizational culture. This concept starts as a management tool for

achieve organizational goals and moves towards an understanding of how an organizational environment is created in order to legitimize meaning and mobilize bias.

4.5 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND THE MOBILIZATION OF BIAS

Organizations do not just exist they are social constructs that imbued with meanings which have grown out of discursive activity (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

Organizations as Social Constructs

Social construction theory focuses on shared assumptions, shared values, and shared beliefs that guide and pattern behaviour (Berger and Luckman, 1967). Its foundation is discourse which acts as an instrument for revealing or bringing “situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relations between people and groups of people” into being (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:258).

As a theory it refutes and challenges the well-entrenched assumptions of traditional organizational theory arranged primarily around organizational goals (Taylor, 1911; Donaldson, 1985). Social construction theory also refutes and challenges the existing assumptions and beliefs about how organizations function, about the way organizations need to be looked at and how they ought to be researched (Jelinek et al, 1983:331). In particular, the change from a narrow technical view of organizations to them being social constructs allows structural elements and functions to be perceived differently from that presented by traditionalists (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). They certainly are more than technical aids as they can be created in such a way as to prevent critical discourse, conflict and consciousness of grievance that would allow different interpretations and understandings of organizations. This discursive interaction would allow concepts governing organizations and their reality to be expanded and transformed (Lukes, 1974).

Perceiving organizations as social constructs opens the way for organizational culture to be viewed as a concept that gives substance to underlying structures of meaning that

persist over time (Pettigrew, 1979:572) and prevents other meanings from arising (Lukes, 1974:24). Culture gives shape not only to what an organization "is" but also to the organizing processes that makes it what it is (Meek, 1988:469). This view of culture highlights the generative processes of organizing and brings into relief the undergirding power and politics in organizations as it allows a focus on managerial discursive activities that draw attention to desired values, beliefs, assumptions, leadership, myths, rituals and ceremonies (Silverman, 1970). These aspects of organizational culture are then given coherent substance in the organization's vision, mission, strategies and policies which describe what the organization desires to achieve and the means that are going to be used to get it where it wants to be.

Culture as a Management Tool

In the early 1980s organizational theory presented a picture of organizations as having a common culture (Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Peters and Waterman, 1982). Development work on organizational culture highlighted different types of culture, for example, power, role, task, and person (Handy, 1985; Harrison, 1972) and the implications for each in the management of change.

Depicting an organization's culture was an interesting way for senior management to get a conceptual and manipulative hold on something that was not tangible (Schein, 1985). As a result mainstream organizational literature (Harrison, 1972; Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy 1982; Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983; Schein, 1985; Kelman et al., 1985) used culture as a way of exploring ideas in a manipulative value- engineering process whereby senior management was able to "re-engineer" their organizations in order that they could more effectively achieve their goals and gain financial success as a by-product of cultural consensus, consistency and harmony. This orthodox development of organizational culture was mainly about the tools an organization's management fashions in organizing for success. "Rather than being basic research, these efforts were directed towards enabling 'scientific' managers to

better control subordinates by taking workers' cultural reactions into account" (Gregory, 1983:361).

Culture as Integrative

Mainstream work in organizational culture (incorporating change management, vision, mission and strategy development) is generally perceived from a managerial framework, where it is very much valued as an integrator, a sort of glue that keeps divergent parts together (Smircich, 1983:344). Culture is seen as a useful means of generating commitment to corporate values, policies and practices, and a major vehicle for disseminating management's perspective. This preferred way of understanding events throughout an organization creates unity of purpose and is a way of controlling employee behaviour without direct supervision (Brown, 1995:58). Because of this unilateral approach, management's view of organizations is considered to be the only legitimate one (Zucker, 1988). This basic assumption of mainstream theory allows management's goals to go unchallenged and justifies management's determination of organizational structures, other control systems and the distribution of power.

Culture as Differential

As part of this mainstream work on cultural studies, researchers such as Martin and Meyerson (1988) uncovered other localized cultures in organizations. They examined these in relation to the main culture and labelled them sub-cultures. As sub-cultures they were seen as varying from the "norm" as they generally avoided a management orientation (Meyerson and Martin, 1987:625). Described as such, they are given validity only in a subordinate relation to the dominant culture.

Those sub-cultures researched (Martin and Siehl, 1983; Meyerson and Martin, 1987) related, in the main, to lower-level employees. Signs of this difference were highly visible when comparing dress code, office décor and stories that circulated among the various groups at variance with each other (Martin and Siehl, 1983:60). Further studies

following this approach of recognizing sub-cultures (Louis 1985; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989) revealed that differences in job, rank, gender, ethnicity, and professional occupation (Gregory, 1983) showed different value orientations, and confirmed previous research that the values espoused by management were not necessarily embraced by lower-level employees (Rosen, 1985; and Van Maanen, 1991).

The body of work on sub-cultures became known as the differentiation perspective and it revealed an inconsistency in policy and the practice of everyday working life (Martin, 1992:12). It also highlighted the fact (critical to those managing change) that the rate and pace of change (1992:105) could be inhibited by divergent sub-cultures. Research exposed oppositional thinking by unveiling the workings of power in organizations and by acknowledging conflicts of interest and differences of opinion between groups (Martin, 1992:83). The research recounted power differences and conflicts between competing, 'loosely-coupled' sub-groups and not whether these sub-groups were "positive or negative in orientation towards management" (1992:90).

The differential approach to organizational culture, although plural in perspective and critical of the integrative view, did not challenge the dominant integrative managerial view of life. Senior management continued to provide the dominant interpretative framework of organizational reality and initiated change, being better informed, motivated and equipped to initiate a programme of planned change (Martin, 1992:104-5).

Planned organizational change works on the premise that successful organizational efforts need to be guided by *shared meaning and shared values* (Davis, 1984:1). Consequently, employees are encouraged to adopt culture-building processes. However, the inter-organizational tension between different values and beliefs remains, given that it is the chief purpose of culture-building exercises to gain understanding and acceptance of management's view (Martin and Siehl, 1983:62). Management's main drive in initiating culture change is to achieve a common purpose, the "culture" component is just a means to that end (Becker 1982). Consequently there is no real desire to achieve cultural

synthesis in the process of negotiating a new organizational reality. All that is required is that people act *as if* (Becker, 1982:513) they share a common culture in order to achieve organizational goals. They are not expected to enter into a dialogical struggle in which different experiences and understandings of the organizational world are contested and social relations transformed.

Culture as Fragmented

Different from her earlier joint work on culture (Martin and Siehl, 1983; Martin and Meyerson, 1988), in her later work, Martin (1992) notes the disorder that the research on organizational culture has brought into view. She describes this fragmented view as the constant change in complexity of relationships within which employees have to face contradictions as a consequence of finding themselves part of one organizational sub-cultural group after another (1992:9). The resulting dynamic of consensus and dissent in organizational life is seen as transitory and issue-specific (1992:12).

This chaotic view of organizational culture gives no clear consistent message and has not been embraced by mainstream theorists or popularized in off-the-shelf management literature. Yet, Martin (1992:186) suggests that if any large organization is studied in depth, aspects of integration, differentiation and fragmentation of culture will be found, and that adopting a multi-perspective framework might be the more appropriate way of bringing about organizational change. She concedes that the academic debate (Martin and Frost, 1996) has become a post modernist one, that reveals a struggle for intellectual dominance, where researchers cannot agree on fundamental issues (what is culture and how is it changed) and in which "the goal is not to establish a better theory of culture ... but rather to challenge the foundations of modern cultural scholarship" (1996:612).

Culture as Organizational Learning

Lundberg (1985:170) reframes the cultural debate as organizational learning, staying within the context of planned organizational change (1985:172). He believes that

organizational culture did ensure a way of understanding experience but doubts that it alters employee assumptions and values. To change this would demand some deliberate intervention to aid the transition; learning experiences are recommended (1985:172). These are to be designed in such a way as to expose the unquestioned values and *assumptions held by employees*. This gives them the opportunity to reinterpret their experience, make the necessary mental and emotion shift and *reformulate them in line with management's view* of the organization.

He recognizes that organizational change is usually an “ongoing, negative-feedback-dominated change” (1985:173) as performance errors are detected and corrected. He comments that this negative experience becomes even stronger if employees discover “that their unquestioned values and assumptions have been violated” (1985:174). Rather than allowing this negative spiral, Lundberg presents a learning framework (1985:176-180) for facilitating real organizational change and suggests that management extend concern and give some degree of positive feedback (1985:174). In this way the experience of change will be given new, more appropriate meaning around which employees can reformulate their values and assumptions, and with this fundamental change of mind “envision alternative organizational futures” (1985:177). The final outcome is the reformulation of the organizational culture.

Although Lundberg's model (1985) promotes the formulation of a common culture, it is heavily concerned with the enabling of leadership vision and senior management's role in aiding organizational learning. It has a strong managerial bias rather than a concern with discovering and building shared meanings and values that dialogue would facilitate.

The views of organizational culture discussed above all vary. Some theorists (Jelinek et al., 1983) understand organizational culture as what it means to be organized. Others (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982) have viewed the organization's culture as something it has and how management use this variable to accomplish what organizations do more efficiently. These theorists see culture as a tool to be used.

Regardless of the structure of the different debates and the various insights derived in understanding the concept of organizational culture, they all seem to have focused on the way senior management get results through manipulating organizational culture. Riley (1983) and Golden (1992) however take a different view, that culture is an action strategy to be discussed in the following subsection.

Culture as Strategy

Riley suggests that organizations are systems of integrated subcultures, complex mixtures “of game playing, rule following, self-promotion, competition, and hidden agendas” (1993:414) where rival images are tolerated (1993:415). Just as mainstream studies of culture have highlighted social processes, that have allowed senior management to understand the organizational world for better organizing to achieve their goals, it is suggested that non-managerial group are also capable of this mindset (Golden, 1992). Employees can also use knowledge circulating in organizations to gain a better understanding of the processes and consequences of being organized (Golden, 1992:1).

Individuals have the capacity to remain active agents within their context (Golden, 1992:4). Therefore employees can look critically at their organization’s context, recognize the social reality being constructed and see it from their own point of view, rather than that of management’s, even if this does produce conflict (1992:4). They can then evaluate just how the organizational culture limits their actions and become aware of the tension between the regulated action required and what it is they would prefer to do. Golden (1992:6) believes that employees can then address the strategies that are needed to challenge the assumptions of the organizational cultural system. She described her work in a traditional Fortune 500 corporation where, although cooperative action was highly valued (1992:8), some managers were deliberately uncooperative in order “to break continuity with the past and to challenge the traditionally-based beliefs” (1992:9). But the Group’s President would not admit conflict and therefore areas of dissension were avoided during formal meetings (1992:17). Where difference of opinion existed, it was met with silence and a change of topic under discussion. Those managers in

disagreement made sure that they did not provoke senior management, consequently they were not able to achieve the organizational change they desired (1992:18). Golden's (1992) point of departure, is for individual managers to decide whether to: covertly not adhere to the system, openly try and bring about change, or depart; that is, she presumes the options of exit and voice are viable options (Hirschman, 1970).

At the individual level, judgement and the adaptive capacity to continually recreate reality is seen as being part of normal living. As autonomous human beings, managers are expected to engage with their circumscribed circumstances. A question that needs to be asked is whether they can, as individuals, address this aspect of their organizational reality and whether moving from organization to organization will make any real difference. Given the organizational forces circumscribing the individual, it is a moot point as to whether employees at the individual level do manage change, or merely adopt a strategy to survive.

It is understandable that this questioning mindset is not part of mainstream management literature. If it existed, it would be classified as a counter-culture (Martin and Siehl, 1983:63), because it would run contrary to the values of stable, traditional organizations. As things stand, such questioning on an individual level cannot be sustained, given the conflict it would generate and given the reality that, in mainstream organizational theory and practice, conflict is not institutionalized. The socialized organizational mindset is one of conformity, one of unquestioning obedience to authority in pursuit of rationalized organizational goals (Mintzberg, 1979). In this sort of environment critical judgement is undesirable and suppressed.

This attitude of conformity has the potential to seep over into other areas of employees' lives making them unresponsive to the need for change, both at an individual and community level. Because of the potentially negative influence of unreflective living, Bowles (1989:405) believes that work organizations strongly influence the way people conduct their structured interpersonal relationships, which carries over into their lives in

general. He believes the present superficial ideology of organizations does not provide the necessary challenge that enables people to participate more fully in either their work or social lives. Because of this tragic potential for widespread disengagement (1989:406), he feels strongly that managing cultural change cannot be reduced to a multi-faceted task of getting an organization to a position which is more desirable. He concedes, however, that contextual factors do create pressures for organizations and that an understanding of culture has the advantage of allowing senior management to analyse their organizational situation from a wider social perspective (1989:413).

One of the many difficult problems of managing organizational change is for senior managers themselves, to come to terms with problems they face, which they cannot unilaterally alter, and with problematic issues that impinge on wider cultural issues that they cannot arbitrarily change. How organizations avoid or deal with such issues highlights how control and organizing processes are used to achieve goals. Instead of tightening discursive control over thoughts and emotions in order to secure greater commitment, Willmott (1993:515) suggests that organizations come to terms with the political quality of organizational culture (1993:518). This point of departure invites a look at alternative views of power in organizations.

4.6 ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS

The work of Clegg (1975; 1977; 1979; 1981; 1989; 1990; 1994) frames the alternative debate. For Clegg (1989:17) a theory of power must also be a theory of organization in that it will address how obedience is produced, and how agents become effective. He has many questions that frame this debate. What are the social relations that constitute effective agency? Given an unstable social environment with many interests, how are some agents made to align their interests with others, and why do they comply rather than revolt? How do the power resources of an organization, the rules and the game become fixed in A's favour? How does B resist the meaning that A has given to the game in

which B is trying to express a different interpretation in order to make different moves? How does A get B not to do what B would reasonable do? (Clegg, 1989:217).

Before engaging in intellectual battle Clegg's (1977; 1989) and Clegg and Hardy's (1996) first line of defence is to categorize issues that are skilfully promoted as facts in organizational theory and management practice and therefore not subject to debate. These concerns, discussed in Chapter 2 and in an earlier section of this chapter, can be summarised as:

- the "air of authenticity" surrounding organizational power which researchers "wear as plausible scholarship is a manifestation of their mode of production" .. an "engagement with method" (1977:21);
- the neglect of power to the benefit of authority as a result of Parson's translation of Weber's use of the concept 'herrschaft' as authority, making power a degeneration of its function (1977:24);
- the legitimation of authority and the illegitimation of informal power seen as a study of deviance at variance with the formal structure of an organization (1977:24);
- the superordinate embracement of functionalism as the rationale of the organizational system (1977:25);
- the theorized basis of power without exposing the embedded prejudice of how some have gained inequitable access to the resources they are now in a position to distribute (1977:25);
- the one-dimensionality of organizational goal-orientation which turns organizational life into a monologue of unthought consensus (1977:28); and
- the formal structure of dominance as surface expression of deeper, subtler domination and the ideological social relations of production (1977:37).

With these problems in mind and as a result of concepts developed in organizational cultural studies dealing with change, the work of various alternative researchers are examined. The themes developed will concentrate on: structure as a framework for meaning; the manufacture of consent; the humanization of organizations; the problem of

resistance; the constitution of identity; the domination of interests, emancipation and the realization of outcomes.

Structure as a Framework for Meaning

Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood (1980) examine the internal workings of structure in organizations and offer the management of meaning as an alternative framework for conceptualizing organizations. They (Ranson et al., 1980) break from the mainstream conception of structures as the only scientifically relevant and validating formal framework for organizations as promoted by the contingency approach. Instead, they propose meaning as a theoretical framework, develop analytical propositions about structural change and conclude that "the production and recreation of structural forms through time should be conceived as the outcome of a complex interaction of interpersonal cognitive processes, power dependencies, and contextual constraints " (1980:1).

They are attempting to integrate traditional perspectives (determinate) with interactionist ones (frames of meaning for action), and to this end argue (Ranson et al., 1980:2) that the patterned regularity of structure seen in authority differentiations, rules and procedures need not be counterposed to the patterned regularity of interaction. This separation, they say, has come about due to an emphasis on bureaucratic rationalizing of organizations in which precise impersonal structures of task, rules and authority relations to control performance are depicted as essential. Alongside this technical view patterned regularities of interaction have shown that an informal substructure exists (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939) not only for getting jobs done, but to realign goals, subvert roles and amplify rules (Blau, 1963:270).

While acknowledging the distinction between the two kinds of structure, Ranson et al. (1980:2) believe the unhelpful contrast can be "overcome by conceiving of structure as a complex medium of control which is continually produced and recreated in interaction and yet shapes that interaction." As a framework "it facilitate[s] prescribed purposes by

differentially enabling certain kinds of conduct" and is "intrinsically involved in shaping the actual operation of rules and the real working of authority, sustaining the distribution and conception of the division of labour" (Ranson et al., 1980:3).

This proposition, they say, is evident if one examines the province of meaning which allows people to share understandings and assumptions in the process of structuring itself (Ranson et al., 1980:4). For example, the value preferences of specific styles of management, codes of ethics and mission statements should give members a frame of meaning that allows understanding of an organization's allocation of resources. In other words the organization can impose meanings across division of labour and role inequalities in order to achieve its purpose.

It is not as an abstract framework that structure has meaning, but in the control of constituting structures which either recognize issues as relevant to decision-making or not (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). As a source of power, structure is most effective and insidious in its consequences when issues do not arise at all, when actors remain unaware of their sectional claims; that is, "power is most effective when it is unnecessary" (Ranson et al., 1980:8). Organizations are not just structures of control but instruments for defining reality and mobilizing support (Pettigrew, 1977:78), within limits of some internal and external contextual constraints (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967:158; Mintzberg, 1983:45, 96; Mintzberg, 1984:209).

With the idea of change central to their analysis, Ranson et al. (1980:12) argue their position by claiming that:

- the revision of meaning and interpretative schemes in an organization will bring about structural change as some form of structural change will give meaning to the symbolic one (for example, professionalism would change an autocratic environment);
- a contradiction between an organization's espoused values and purposive value will create crises in decision-making which will suggest structural change (for example,

the espoused value of autonomy coupled with the need for strict standardization and administrative efficiency);

- through the distribution of scarce resources existing coalitions can be undermined and change forced by the creation of new power dependencies (for example, faculties or departments in a university could be combined into schools changing old power relationships and bring new ones to the fore). This arrangement readjusts interpretative schemes which will in turn shape the environment;
- significant changes in size, technology or environment constrain organizations to adapt structurally (for example, advanced machinery would necessitate a change in work processes); and
- contradictory demands of environmental constraints will force a change in structure (for example, less governmental funding to universities coupled with a need to accommodate financially disadvantaged students).

In this way Ranson et al show that organizational change emanates "from changes in or contradictions among meanings, power, structure, and context" (1980:13). Alternative views of power in organizations continue to explore this theme.

Manufacturing Consent

The cultural approach to organizations (Frost et al., 1985) cannot but break away from traditional functionalist approaches because it recognizes that organizational members, in particular senior management, are actively involved in the construction of its reality. Mumby (1987:113) examines the relationship between an organization's power structure, ideology and narrative and argues that organizational meanings are produced and created by organization's power structures. (Here power includes authority. A mainstream view emphasizes structures of authority, and regards structures of power as potentially subversive, countervailing factors.) Those in senior positions work actively towards swaying competing world-views by influencing the way their organizational world is to be perceived. They dominate the use of symbolism (Deetz and Mumby, 1985) such as narrative to articulate and to legitimate their preferred views, thereby

restricting the interpretations and meanings that can be attached to organizational activity. Closure frames discourse in a distortive fashion, and often misrepresents the interests of particular groups within organizations (Mumby, 1987:113).

Thus narrative can be regarded as a politically motivated product of senior management, a product of control to function ideologically in maintaining and reproducing existing power structures. This concept is anathema to mainstream views. The rational-functional perspective that "emphasizes efficiency, productivity, and a concern for the well-being of personnel ... does not fit very comfortably into this image" (1987:114). Yet even human resource management and organizational psychology have been firmly positioned within mainstream organizational theory. They have their roots in the human engineering of scientific management, where the role of the human resource function is to initiate policies, practices and actions that improve productivity and strengthen the organizational culture (Steffy and Grimes, 1992:181). As a function, human resource management, embodies all those aspects that regulate and stabilize the rewards and behaviour of employees.

In this environment of sanction and reward, control and order, differentiation ensures maximum visibility. Through this differentiating process managers are more easily able to act upon the actions of others, to organize, scrutinize, direct, and supervise processes of activity, to plan, adjust, train, marginalize and channel information selectively - so that people may be transformed from being "confused, useless, or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities" (Foucault, 1977:148).

Human resource practices serve a psychological function (Deetz, 1992:182) and are often solutions to research problems which themselves validates theories, that explain and predict employee behaviour expressed in the mainstream view. Only those issues serve as propositions "that are empirically testable, or observable" from within this view (Deetz, 1992:184). Alternative competing theories such as those from the critical tradition are not part of the conceptual framework. Although mainstream research professes to humanizing the organization with programmes that emphasize employee

quality of life, they just do not have the discourse to do so (Nord, 1978) as they treat these issues as means to productive ends.

The Humanization of Organizations

Nord (1978:674) questions why the humanization of organizations has been so slow, and why organizations have resisted humanization. The answer, he says, lies in the existing role of organizational power and politics which does not allow "altering the flow of resources and energy so that at least some of the five aspect of humanization" are given increased emphasis (1978:675). This would imply that employees are not treated as means to other ends, but ends in themselves; are given the opportunity to engage in challenging work; are encouraged to develop their own particular abilities fully; are treated fairly and with such dignity and respect that positions them above non-human ends; and are able to exercise control over decision-making, in particular decisions that affect them (Nord, 1978:674-675).

The sort of constraints working against the humanization of organizations are listed below.

- Competition among conflicting parties for resources and energy. This does not create a climate conducive to humanized ends (Nord, 1978:675). Turbulent environments produce changes in existing power positions, and those whose power position is threatened act defensively while those acquiring greater power move to consolidate their position. Employees caught in this tension are hurt and slow to heal (1978:676).
- Core technologies are protected from these changes so lower level employees (where core technologies lie) do not benefit from the deroutinization that takes place (1978:676).
- Power is built into organizational design which reduces the participation of those at lower levels (1978:676). Further those in power have the built-in advantage of deciding which issues get on to an agenda and which are ignored, thus suppressing or thwarting challenges to the status quo. There is therefore no negotiation on non-

issues (that is, non-management issues) and therefore no chance of negotiating a changed future (1978:677).

- The effect of unequal power distribution has unintended side effects such as inhibiting cooperation or promoting dependence on superiors, which in turn generates a servile attitude towards managers (1978:677).
- Those with power tend to treat those they see as powerless in a de-humanized fashion (1978:677). A dramatic example of this is Zimbardo's (1973) study of a mock prison which follows (but personal experiences of initiation at high school, military service or university, might also come to mind).

Zimbardo (1973:38) planned a two week mock prison experiment at Stanford University using college students, "normal, healthy, educated young men" (1973:56). This experiment was initiated in order "to understand more about the process by which people called 'prisoners' lose their liberty, civil rights, independence and privacy, while those called 'guards' gain social power by accepting the responsibility for controlling and managing the lives of their dependent charges" (1973:39). However the experiment was aborted after only six days and nights.

It was found that a 'perverted symbiotic relationship" (Zimbardo, 1973:40) developed between prisoner and guards. Escalating aggression, self-aggrandizement, authority and a sense of mastery from the guards was met with progressive passivity, dependency, helplessness and hopelessness from the prisoners. This interplay of behaviour was considered normal until some prisoners began to revolt. That is, they removed their caps, ripped off their numbers and barricaded themselves inside their cells. The 'good' prisoners would have nothing to do with the rebels which meant that there was now a division among the prisoners themselves, with some becoming informers.

But the really frightening part of the experiment was the guard's "inventiveness in the application of arbitrary power" (Zimbardo, 1973:44). For example, prisoners were made to do things on command such as sing, smile, refrain from smiling, defile one another,

push-ups and any petty meaningless task that came to mind, as well as being deprived of privileges and being sent to solitary confinement "creating a capricious, arbitrary environment" (1973:44).

Slowly the prisoners became resigned to their condition; they could no longer deal with each another as people, they could only extend the reality of their lives as prisoners. "As they began to 'toe the line', they stopped resisting, questioning and, indeed, almost ceased responding altogether. There was a general decrease in all categories of response as they learned the safest strategy to use in an unpredictable, threatening environment from which there is no physical escape - do nothing, except what is required. Act not, want not, feel not and you will not get into trouble in prisonlike situations" (Zimbardo, 1973:44). Being passive and dependent gave a sense of freedom that released them from the responsibility to act or think otherwise.

After only six days and nights, the behavioural changes in both the prisoners (incessant pacing, weeping, depression, stealing) and guards (sadistic, authoritarian, cruel, aggressive, insulting, threatening) became extreme. What may have been considered pathological in other circumstances was regarded as 'appropriate' in prison. Given the fact that the experiment was dealing with America's 'cream of the crop' it was felt that there was too general a tendency to locate behaviour disorders inside individuals and underestimate "the power of situational forces" (1973:56).

Zimbardo's (1973) experiment provides convincing evidence "that the possession of power itself leads the powerful to treat the less powerful in a non-humanized fashion" (Nord, 1978:677). This has frightening implications for organizations. For subordinates it suggests that the experience of powerlessness, dependence and servility (Gaventa, 1980) can be a direct result of inequalities in power, and that 'shared assumptions' could be an organizational trap that induces a vulnerability to excess influence and an acceptance of the status quo (Culbert, 1974). These factors would suggest a need for greater employee discretion and participation that a political solution would encourage.

For those who hold arbitrary power in organizations, Zimbardo's (1973) experiment serves to caution of the built-in propensity for the non-humanized treatment of those less powerful. It also acts as a warning of the dangers of operating as a closed system that ignores the values of the wider community, particular if these are concerned with justice, dignity, equality and freedom.

In addition to the possible de-humanizing aspects of closed systems, Nord (1978) raises the added concern that there exists in organizations an ideological distinction that promotes democracy in 'political' organizations but not within 'private' 'economic' organizations. This organizational mindset encourages a culture that prevents challenges to a privileged position and allows the prevailing dominant discourse surrounding work organization to be perceived as truth, with further knowledge entrenching this position (Daudi, 1983:275). Daudi suggests that "the truth of the discourse is to be found in its position and in the strategy of the speaker" (1983:277) and affirms the opinion that organizational knowledge cannot be accepted as neutral. As power and knowledge strongly interact and imply each other the generation of knowledge itself becomes a political act in that every organizational culture

has its limits, its methods of defining what belongs and what must stay on the outside, what it accepts and what it rejects its way of shutting its eyes to what it does not want to see (Daudi, 1983:275).

For example a "scientific" management approach ignores the alternative view and denies that voice from its mindset. The objectivity of organizational knowledge requires denouncement not as true or false but rather as "legitimate or illegitimate for a particular set of power relations" (Daudi, 1983:281). To uncover these power relations that constitute identity (Foucault, 1977) requires looking at the complex network of relationships that permeates the micro-level of every day working life. These readily reveal that "knowledge has its conditions of possibility in power relations" and identifying these exposes apparent objectivity and the illusion of truth (Daudi, 1983:281).

The above alternative views emphasize the creation of organizational meaning as emotionally and structurally produced and draw attention to the fact that knowledge and legitimacy are not something uncontested and natural (Pettigrew, 1977; Ranson et al, 1980). The contested nature of organizational reality, although ignored in the mainstream view, ensures that management has, and will continue to have, to deal with resistance to what they espouse as natural, logical, functional and legitimate.

4.7 RESISTANCE

With the insights gained from the work of Lukes (1974) and Giddens (1976, 1979), Barbalet (1985) returns to Weber's definition of power as

the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (Barbalet, 1985:532).

and argues that Weber's discussion of power has not been adequately explored by traditional management theorists. Weber links power and resistance as distinct aspects of the power relationship. The context of power speaks of a relationship in which there is both power and resistance; both concepts are distinct and different, if interdependent. This aspect of the power relationship within social systems requires further examination, as it becomes more evident when examining specific social characteristics and specific social contexts that it denotes dialogue with another power of agency.

Power relationships do imply a measure of acceptance by agents of that power and the legitimacy of some to exercise that power. But this acceptance does not mean that efforts will not be made to limit, moderate or contain the effects of power (Barbalet, 1985:531). Just as power can take many forms, so too can resistance take different forms. These forms need not necessarily be associated with conflict as popularly accepted (Dahrendorf, 1968) though they all impose limits on power.

Because of difficulties in operations or because of lack of interest in realizing goals, those in power have to cope with less capacity than they need to mobilize the achievement of desired outcomes as well as having to cope with resistance. But again, the way they overcome this resistance does not necessarily imply conflict. Conflict will depend on the form that power takes in coping with the presence of resistance (Barbalet, 1985:533).

Power for Weber is not simply the realization of will in the presence or absence of resistance ... but the realization of will *notwithstanding* resistance (1985:534).

It is this aspect of power relationships that views resistance as "a capacity in its own right" that Barbalet (1985:537) believes is not adequately dealt with. But this is not the view of mainstream organizational theory on power which works against such a deeper understanding of resistance. Deetz (1985:257) asks the question - what kind of people will we become if we continue to ignore these issues and manage in this way? Clegg (1989) in addressing power and the individual, Knights and Willmott (1989) in gaining an understanding of what constitute identity and Deetz and Mumby (1990) in examining discursive practices, pick up the challenge to this question.

Power and the Individual

Clegg (1977:37) examines the social relations that undergird power in the following way. He explores the possibility of a person developing his/her natural abilities and capabilities in diminished circumstances, and the possibility of moving away from existing forms of domination. He asserts (Clegg, 1989) that it is the regulated, normalized life at the every day operational level (as characterized by Foucault, 1977) that preserves the mainstream theorizing framework. This regulation is accomplished by

- management deciding what are significant issues to be dealt with (suppressing or thwarting issues that are latent challenges to their interests and values) (Clegg, 1977:35); and
- management deciding who has and ought to develop the expertise and capacity to deal with these issues (1977:37).

Recognition of this framework is critical as it is this rationalization and underlying principle of management's supremacy that supports exploitation in that it allows organizations tremendous scope for diminishing human capacity. It is this normalizing framework that allows the socialization of relationships that selectively promote the "empowerment or disempowerment of agencies' capacities" (Clegg, 1989:224). In other words, employee development is distorted (Deetz, 1985) to serve organizational, or rather management's understanding of organizational purposes. This orientation shapes psychological and affective patterns of relations, and employees can be viewed as being caught in the tension between conformity/obedience and greater individual autonomy. Financial constraints and a value system that is geared to short term results (thus underestimating long term impacts) affects this relationship critically. These factors infringe and impair the potential and capacity to develop as morally autonomous human beings with the social and political capacity to transform organizational circumstances. In this way organizational practice not only harms what exists, but influences the formation or deformation of the human character. This issue is taken up by Knights and Willmott (1989).

Constitution of Identity

Work and the workplace are central to most people's lives. It is not only a place to perform functions to produce goods and services but it is also a place where most people's social interaction takes place. As such it is a place that plays an enormous part in the development of a person's sense of identity.

Knights and Willmott (1985, 1989) believe that the effects of power constitute identity, but surprisingly argue that the resistance people put up to protect themselves from their own powerlessness has the potential to undermine transformative possibilities and to reproduce asymmetric power relations. The core of their argument is that

reproduction and/or transformation of social relations requires a conception of power and interdependence that incorporates the insights of contemporary developments in the theory of identity (Knights and Willmott, 1989:23).

This alternative look at power has its roots in labour processes which reasons that people reproduce themselves through their interactions with others; therefore, their identity is contingent upon their interactions and interdependence with others (Knights and Willmott, 1985:25). In the work environment true interdependence between manager and subordinates is denied because of the way the system is skewed in management's favour (1985:28). Subordinate employees, in protecting themselves from becoming totally dependent upon managers, act as if they are independent of managerial control (1985:30). But they cannot avoid the reality that possession of resources and the control over resource distribution rests with management. Access to these requires compliance.

This controlled sense of interdependence makes social relations subject to arbitrary action, uncertainty and unpredictability in the organizational context. Interaction is rendered problematic and therefore distorts effective interdependent social relations. In their efforts to induce a sense of security by complying with strategies of control employees do not find a solution to the problem of unequal power relationships. Acting as if they are independent does not address nor does it evade the built-in mobilization of bias within the system that suppresses dissension. Rather the maintenance and reinforcement of the prevailing power arrangements are engineered by the system itself and intentionally or unintentionally produces indifference (Herzfeld, 1992).

In trying to find a theoretical way out of this situation Knights and Willmott (1985) have looked at the work of Giddens (1976). Although in Giddens' (1976) theory of structuration there is the notion of dialectic (for example, manager's dependence upon employees) to advance a system with transformative potential, it is hampered by his notion of power as capacity over others. Knights and Willmott (1985:31) argue that

Giddens neglects to consider how, in acting as if they were independent of one another, both controllers and controlled pursue their sectional interests in ways that unintentionally impede rather than advance collective power. (Authors' own emphasis).

Although Giddens takes the structural relationship into account in the power debate, the social psychological processes which help secure a sense of self through social relations that have become mediated by a "dialectic of control", contradiction and conflict, are not addressed.

To illustrate their particular point of view, Knights and Willmott (1985) take an example from the work of Nichols and Beynon (1977) who explore the working lives of men in a multi-national chemical manufacturing company. They expose the manipulative human resource skills of management and reveal management's ability to charm staff and inflate their egos in the process of getting them to take responsibility for organizational goals. Nichols and Benyon (1977) focus on the workers' perceptions and their complaints of management's manipulation, but according to Knights and Willmott (1985:33) they tend to overlook the manufacture of indifference (though workers' lack of concern for their work is noted). Resigned indifference to their commoditized labour is depicted as a means of protecting their private identities. What Knights and Willmott (1985:34) want to emphasize is that this indifference "is a *condition* as well as a consequence" of management control. It is shown to undermine

not only the productive power of interdependence but also the collective will to transform the structures of control that reproduce the conditions of indifference (Knights and Willmott, 1985:35).

In another example, this time taken from a study by Willis (1977), they show how strategies to avoid power relations perpetuate existing class structures. In this particular study, Willis (1977) explores how the development of a tough counter-culture by working class school children to their school's ideology and management offered these children a sense of solidarity, identity and illusion of independence. The unintended consequence of this accommodation, however, was to reinforce their position at the bottom of the social scale and therefore perpetuated the status quo. While counter-culture identity expression may deaden the dehumanising effect of power and routine and violate the dominant values, it simultaneously works towards preventing any collective political action to transform an interdependent situation that is oppressive. The conflicting

concerns are not openly discussed. This problem of communication is taken up by Deetz and Mumby (1990).

Discursive Practice, Dominant Interests, Emancipation and Outcomes

Deetz and Mumby (1990) argue that the workplace is a primary institution in modern society. Because much of a person's waking time is spent in organizations, human possibilities are increasingly circumscribed by the mindset of organizational socialization, its goals, productivity and the maximization of profit. Not only is it a place of struggle around economic issues but a place of discursive struggle over the meaning of organizational practice. The work environment, as a place where different interests converge, is a site for potential conflict. Communication plays a vital role in resolving or suppressing these conflicts of interests. Deetz and Mumby (1990) wish to highlight just how critical the discursive structure of this communication is. "Who holds control, how and on what bases they hold control, and to what ends this control is directed" (Deetz and Mumby, 1990:19) are all issues that have a bearing on what becomes the dominant discourse that defines what it means to work in an organization.

The domination of managerial interests to the exclusion of other interests is identified as being problematic on a discursive level. "Economic" processes define an employee's subjugated position and inculcate and regulate the norms of social interaction. Within these constraints an organization's cultural reality is shaped in which managerial discursive practices dominate. Informed by research on organizational culture, Deetz and Mumby (1990:39) argue that greater understanding of the relationship between power and discourse will highlight the pervasive domination of that managerial discourse on identity formation. The particular thrust Deetz and Mumby (1990:38) take is to highlight the need for reformation of this discursive imbalance and to enhance the prospects of competing legitimate interests appropriating discourse for their own purposes. From an alternative perspective, the purpose could be developmental interests and emancipation.

Talk of emancipation does not fit with a managerial paradigm concerned with the profitability of organizations, their survival and growth. Yet traditional organizational theory has addressed quality of life issues, has concerned itself with styles of management that empower people and has attempted to address worker autonomy on the job. But these "soft" efforts on the part of management prove merely, from an alternative perspective, to be managerial instruments that coexist with, and are all qualified by, the superordinate goal of improving organizational performance.

This "soft" approach on the part of management, Alvesson and Willmott (1992:433) believe, will not contribute toward employee emancipation. From the perspective of the critical tradition, emancipation involves *struggle*; a struggle that involves active individual action and collective self-determination. Top-down soft humanistic versions of management theory and practice do not afford this experience. Such an approach is more likely to *mould* people in the image of their organizations (Deetz and Mumby, 1990) and impose limits on initiatives. This has the "effect of weakening employees' capacity to reflect critically on their work situation" (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992:434) rather than to initiate transformation. Power in organizations has not only the capacity to get certain things done, but also the capacity to prevent other things from being done.

The specific conditions of organizations, in which employees need to struggle for their developmental interests, are loaded in management's favour. The asymmetrical distribution of power, resources, skill, decision-making mechanisms and control techniques are the conditions of their struggle. Hindess (1982) argues that the action of employees will always be "dependent on conditions that are not in their hands" (1982:501). This means that they are confronted with working conditions where "differential means and conditions of action, the possibility of employing different types of strategy and deploying different weapons" favour one side (1982:504).

While the capacity to achieve specific outcomes does not guarantee the realization of those outcomes, some employee benefits can be produced in the course of the struggle

itself (Hindess, 1982:505). They will be produced when employees face conditions that constitute them as employees, and when they face the problem of the means of action and potential means of mobilization available to them in achieving their recognized goals and concerns (1982:506). For the struggle to become a positive force with liberating potential, employees caught in dominant power relations need to

- recognize their position,
- recognize the resources they have at their disposal (1982:501),
- learn to mobilize them to counter-influence the control of employee capacity development (1982:502),
- alter intended consequences,
- adjust limitations and
- influence the bias of a system (1982:509).

The change generated by this type of interaction carries with it the transformative capacity for both the social relations of organizations and its social context. The realization of such outcomes will bring with it a realization of employee power. This is a dramatic view of power which is more than the capacity to exercise power or to use its resource basis (Clegg, 1989:208). It infers the marshalling of disparate collective forces to achieve common outcomes against much resistance.

General Comment

The theme of power developed in this chapter explored many controversial issues. The mainstream organizational discourse emphasizes legitimate, formal structures of authority and regards informal structures of power as illegitimate, political and potentially disruptive (Taylor, 1911; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Thompson, 1956; Bennis et al, 1958; Mechanic, 1962; Blau, 1964; Hickson et al, 1971; Donaldson, 1985). The alternative view moves beyond this authoritative functionalist paradigm. It builds on the sociological debate that examines relational aspects of power - the ability to exclude others, thwart latent challenges, confine scope and control issues (Lukes, 1974),

mobilize bias (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962), induce powerlessness (Gaventa, 1980), secure compliance (Parsons, 1967), normalize behaviour (Foucault, 1977) and constrain and enable capacity (Clegg, 1977). It addresses the structural capacity to achieve outcomes (Giddens, 1984), and recognizes the inherent relationship between power and resistance (Barbalet, 1985).

Although there was much intellectual excitement in the alternative debate, the dominant discourse has been able to ignore this voice as if it were merely background noise. Researchers (Harrison, 1972; Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982) in orthodox writings did, however, adapt the idea of organizations as social constructs (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) to suit change-management initiatives and to perpetuate the dominant discourse. This development was turned into an important tool in the hands of these mainstream theorists for equipping senior management with the necessary knowledge to re-engineer and manipulate organizational culture to achieve desired results. This planned organizational management of change, labelled by alternative theorists as managerial 'mobilization of bias', 'fixing of meaning', 'manufacture of consent' and 'constitution of identity', provoked further critical debate (Clegg, 1975, 1977, 1989; 1990, 1994; Ranson et al, 1980; Deetz and Mumby, 1985, 1990; Knights and Willmott, 1985, 1989; Deetz, 1992). That debate recognized and highlighted the politics of change and struggle inherent in the political reality of organizational life. It is a struggle which harbours the transformational potential of employees collectively organizing for change.

It is argued that the picture presented is one of legitimate struggle. The supremacy of organizational values world-wide is not easy to challenge even though the illegitimate impact of power relationships in organizations circumscribes the personal growth and development of employees. Critical to employee emancipation and the transformation of their conditions, is not benevolent managerial-directed social engineering, but a struggle in which employees themselves, are able to enhance their capacity by developing critical self-reflection, by inculcating the organizing ability of social capacity and by political

skill development towards the achievement of these goals. They need to articulate a different organizational position and transform their discourse into a legitimate challenge to the mainstream view. This is no mean challenge as far-reaching circuits of power exist in the mainstream framework that are firmly institutionalized (Clegg, 1989). It is this institutionalized perspective that presents such a formidable barrier to change to which I now turn.

5. INSTITUTIONALISM AND ORGANIZATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Institutionalists link organizations to the wider social environment and address organizational aspects that go beyond the narrow technical concerns of output, efficiency and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals which occupy the attention of mainstream organizational theorists.

The external environment (originally restricted to an organization's technical network, for example, customers, suppliers, etcetera) was seen as complex and uncertain, and acknowledged as playing a part in shaping organizational structures and activities (as revealed in contingency theory, discussed in Chapter 2). Complexity and uncertainty as used by organizational theorists (from the functionalist's point of view) described aspects of the environment that made organizations appear powerless. These factors are seen as outside the control of the organization and therefore problematic within the context of efficient task execution and goal attainment. As organizations battle with these problems certain structures are adopted which are common to a variety of organizations as functionally successful. This is the mainstream organizational position.

The mainstream contingency approach to organizations addresses similarity in organizational structures from the deterministic point of view of size, technology and competitive market pressure. The institutional approach ignores this technically deterministic rhetoric when looking at the external environment. Instead the institutional approach looks at similarity (isomorphism) in organizations from a sociological perspective. That is, the culturally valued requirement of the larger social community in which organizations are embedded, frames the assumptions under which organizations operate (Zucker, 1977) and demands this conformity to cultural norms. Organizations

conform in order to gain support and legitimacy for their operations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). This social context proves also to be a power arena in which strategically placed organizations utilize the resources available at this institutional level in order to shape the construction of the institutional reality in their favour (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

There are many branches of institutional theory that use different frameworks for examining factors that shape the institutional environment in which organizations are embedded. These theories flow from the disciplines of economics, political science, international relations and sociology. I will be examining that branch of institutional theory associated with sociology "that has made its mark on organizational theory" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991:1). The sociological underpinnings of this work stem, on the one hand, from the specific functionalist contribution of Selznick (1957) to organizations and, on the other, from Berger and Luckman's (1967) concept of a socially constructed reality. This is a social reality where institutions, customs and norms create the framework in which preference and choice are understood, and environments are created that hinder some and privilege others.

5.2 SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Social institutions deal with the ordering of life and conformity to institutional forms and procedures (Eisenstadt, 1968:409). This ordering affects all individuals, groups and their interests. The arrangement of the ordering is an attempted solution among alternatives to mobilize bias in a particular way in order to solve problems generated by a particular society. Early writers such as Hughes (1936, 1939) emphasized a bias towards the functional properties of social institutional structure which gave special attention to persistence, stability and survival. Time and context play an important role as different cognitive and normative systems become institutionalized (Hughes, 1939:283). What institutional form they take depends on the conditions under which these forms develop.

Selznick's Functionalism

Selznick (1957:6) recognizes that organizations are embedded in their communities. They do not only adapt to this environment but they strongly influence it. They take the 'informal' norms of the community and adapt them to their own organizational character, their own ideology. This happens as an organization "begins to be more profoundly aware of dependence on outside forces, its very conception of itself may change, with consequences for recruitment, policy, and administrative organization at many levels. As a business, a college, or a government agency develops a distinctive clientele, the enterprise gains the stability that comes with a secure source of support, an easy channel of communication. At the same time, it loses flexibility. The process of institutionalization has set in" (1957:7) which he sees as a process of adaptive change to both internal and external social forces.

This type of organization he describes as adaptive and outward looking, and therefore impregnated with community values (1957:19, 94). Although Selznick highlights the fact that values are instilled over time and describes the process to show that this is so, he does this without explaining how and why it occurs. This debate is only extended with later cultural studies.

In the area of adaptive change Selznick (1957:3) is concerned with norms, values, commitment and socialization that he believes transcend the "logic of efficiency". He speaks about a reality that is more than the formal account of organizations and which is shaped by culture. He speaks about "the transition from administrative management to institutional leadership" (1957:4); about instilling value over a period of time; of people identifying with organizations; of these organizations becoming part of people's lives; and of people's dependence upon them.

Selznick's (1957:1) basic concern is with administrative leadership. He recognizes the industry of organizations as an institution with organizational leaders that command large

resources. Because of this he sees the nature of organizations and their leaders becoming increasingly public as the actions and disposal of their resources affect the welfare of entire communities. He believes (1957:4) that it is the job of senior management to transcend their role of administrative management to that of institutional leadership. He sees this task as demanding social competence because it is aimed at creating an integrated social organism and recognizes the role of culture in shaping this organizational reality.

From Selznick's perspective, organizations become institutionalized when they are "infused with value" (1957:17). The organization has an image which it infuses with value; it relates this image to the goals it is trying to achieve and to the plans and tactics it uses to attain these goals. Staff are 'socialized', values are 'internalized' and the organizational environment is one of 'commitment'. His account carries all the good feelings with it that later cultural theorists would seek to generate and harness in the interests of organizational task achievement. But these normative obligations are exactly what later institutionalists warn against because when they become taken for granted and accepted as facts they are no longer instruments of change (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This latter approach stems from the theoretical work of Berger and Luckman (1967).

Social Construction of Reality

Berger and Luckman (1967) argue that social order is created by a shared social reality. It is a sustained human construction whose meaning is created in discursive social interaction. The creation of a shared reality is an historical view of social order as a product of human activity, that is, order comes into existence as a result of controlling human activity (1967:49). This activity involves taking action, interpreting that action and sharing its meaning with others so that they too will interpret and respond in the same manner.

Once this way of behaving over time becomes accepted practice, people lose sight of the fact that their behaviour is the result of a human product (Berger and Luckman, 1967:70).

This is so because socially generated knowledge is perceived as standing in isolation from discursive human activity, as an objective fact supported by rules (1967:78). Thus knowledge gains 'taken-for-granted' certainty rather than being a tentative solution to a problem. Because knowledge is perceived as objective fact there are controls on its interpretation and application on the level of subjective consciousness. The rigidity of surveillance surrounding this ordered reality will determine to what extent man becomes a "social product" of the enforced stable behaviour patterns of his particular social context. These concepts are extended by Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973) to describe spheres of influence.

Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973) draw attention to that part of social reality that "is the web of meanings that allow the individual to navigate his way through the ordinary events and encounters of his life with others" (1973:12). They speak about a "social life-world" that "is constructed by the meanings of those who 'inhabit' it" (Berger et al., 1973:12). They differentiate between the organization of knowledge (the external what) that comes from institutions and institutional processes and the cognitive style (the how) from within of experience (Berger et al., 1973:15-16). The analysis of the two different areas (what and how) they use as tools for conceiving alternative possibilities to the existing social conditions of the large "number of ordinary people whose everyday lives involve them in various facets of technological production" (Berger et al., 1973:24).

Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973), because they distinguish different spheres of influence, highlight not only the segregation of work knowledge from the private life sphere but also emphasize the plurality of life worlds which constitutes modern living. "Each of these segregated constellations of consciousness refers to specific social and institutional sectors of the individual's life" (Berger et al., 1973:29). To an outsider (that is, someone who does not share the collective significance of the relevant meanings) these many different worlds (technological production, bureaucracy and life-worlds) appear incomprehensible.

Although Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973:65) recognize and emphasize both the pluralization and "dichotomy of private and public spheres" they are wary of the distinction. Because the belief systems governing each sphere is different there is a real problem in that the personal or moral sphere of life can become disconnected from the rest. To overcome this problem, Berger et al. (1973:165) draw attention to the interconnection of these two distinct belief systems that shape modern consciousness and identity. They contend that though the belief system of each may be associated with a distinct cognitive style spread throughout economic, political and social organizations, their interconnection leads to "contamination", collective bargaining and compromise (Berger et al., 1973:165). So multiple belief systems cannot be disregarded when assessing influence in a particular area. This multiplicity of interrelationships and influence is evident in the organizational environment.

Institutions and Organizations

Organizations are themselves embedded in a framework of institutions (Zucker, 1988:31) and institutions are themselves a category of organization (DiMaggio, 1988:13). The embeddedness of institutionalized elements in society (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:343) and the embeddedness of organizations within that society set the context for everyday living to influence institutions as well as the institutions to affect everyday living. However the influence of collective behaviour is capable of flowing both ways. On the one hand, collective preferences and meanings are shaped through education and socialization (Cohen and Axelrod, 1984:30) and, on the other, collective behaviour is shaped by the internal struggles of a rule-generating or political system that allows discursive struggle (Burns and Flam, 1987:15; Jepperson, 1991:145; Friedland and Alford, 1991:256).

All social life is organized and ordered and because part of this organization takes institutional forms, institutions are a critical part of collective life (Eisenstadt, 1968:409). They are a built-in advantage for getting some things done and not others, in a way that is perceived as being culturally specific (Hofstede, 1980).

Social Environment as Culturally Specific

Hofstede (1980:11) holds that nationality and family upbringing predisposes people to think and act in different ways. On the individual level this value orientation or mental programming is unique, but on a collective level there are patterned ways of thinking that are shared with others that becomes institutionalized. Highly institutionalized patterns of behaviour become well-entrenched social practices and do not change readily as they are mutually supporting (1980:67). For example, the principle of voting in the USA is not likely to change easily as it is embedded within other formal institutionalized democratic supporting and reproducing practices. Other countries which do not have these practices (for example, Lesotho) would be reliant on political intervention to ensure fair elections and voting procedures as democracy would appear to be a relatively unintegrated social practice. An example of deinstitutionalization would be the fact that different people in South Africa may choose to live in separate, previously segregated areas as a matter of preference but this behaviour is no longer institutionalized by supportive apartheid regulation.

The relevance of Hofstede's (1980) research here is its indication that because of certain cultural predispositions various nationalities behave differently in their engagement with life and organizations. We can assume that in one culture that has a predisposition towards a Protestant ethic with regard to work it may be appropriate to inculcate values of autonomy and control to achieve greater productivity. But in another with a more collectivist approach to socialization, different values may be more relevant in order to stimulate and achieve collective goals.

Within this cultural context institutional forces constrain organizations, determine structure and enhance survival prospects. But this is not a passive, powerless relationship as early organizational theorists have depicted. Institutional structures and processes are able to become sources of organizational power which are then used to shape the broader social environment. In this way culture plus the institutional frame create the conditions in which organizational actions are constituted (Clegg, 1990:115).

To illustrate his point Clegg (1990), gives an interesting organizational example of French bakeries (boulangeries) which is a delightful account of just how social embeddedness works. American efficiency and effectiveness experts, he claims, "would be appalled at what they saw (though they might be surprised by what they ate)" (1990:116). The inefficient system that exists, fifty thousand bakeries offering baguettes, croissants and cakes for fifty-two million people, is contrasted to a few bakeries that dominant the British and American markets which are ultra-streamlined, and which efficiently produce a staple bread product for the nation. In this world of efficient mass production the continued existence of the boulangeries is an anomaly and is ascribed to the strong culture of the French peasantry, who are prepared to work the incredibly demanding hours of a small bakery for small returns.

Their survival, however, has not been without struggle. A big-milling company saw the opportunity of commandeering the market and in order to facilitate its ascendancy to this position changed their terms of trade. They were only prepared to deliver full truckloads of flour to their customers. This would make life impossible for the boulangeries "who had neither the market nor the storage capacity to warrant such an amount" (Clegg, 1990:111). Fortunately for them they were able to make contact with small rural mills which, it so happened, were losing their fight against the big milling companies and were only too happy to regain some business. Clegg (1990:111) reflects that making bread might not be a rational life but it satisfies the fierce cultural independence of the French rural people who are prepared to suffer the hard life for small returns to maintain this independence. Those who eat their products are only too grateful.

5.3 SYMBOLIC USE OF STRUCTURE

Institutional belief systems are seen as constituting a set of elements whereby institutionalized rules become constituted. These institutionalized elements in organizations serve technical ends and have become so well established that they are claimed to function as "rational myths" that account for organizational form or structure.

Rational Myths - a Belief Systems

Rowan and Meyer (1977:340) describe socialized "rational myths" as widely shared rationalizations that engender rules and belief systems, professions, policies and programmes. They believe that "social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rulelike status in social thought and action" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:341). They propose that these institutionalized rules or rational myths force existing organizations "to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society" *as if these institutionalized rational myths only served technical ends* (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:340). Their claim is that these procedures often have little or no effect on the demands of an organization's technical activities at all, but rather *achieve culturally valued purposes*.

Meyer and Rowan (1977:343) look at the sources of rationalized prescriptions (for example, public opinion, important constituents, laws, knowledge legitimated through the educational institution and professional codes) and the rule-like way of pursuing these (for example, licenses, credentials, procedures). These sources are not located in the technical aspects of organizations (the job, the market, resources and customers) but in cultural elements such as normative beliefs, cognitive systems and symbols which are 'taken-for-granted' as legitimate and necessary. Even though technical demands may conflict with ceremonial rules (for example, the fact that a sick employee is treated by a doctor does not mean that the person received effective treatment though it usually means that the treatment received is accepted medical procedure) it is important "the appearance that the myths actually work" is maintained (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:356). In other words the rational rather than the cultural element is stressed. The reason they become myths is that they "deny value in as much as it is argued that organizations must inescapably adopt certain forms under certain contingencies" (Clegg, 1990:84).

Organizations differ in the emphasis they give to ceremonial or image management (Goffman, 1963) and to the extent that formal structures incorporate prevailing ideology, categories and theories. Those organizations that are more technical may well put greater emphasis on solving technical problems than on coping with institutional demands (Scott,

1992:155). But Meyer and Rowan (1992: 96) are confident in the point they make, that the impact of the environment is not limited to boundary relationships such as customers, and suppliers. They claim that the impact of the institutional environment is highly visible in organizational conformity to pervasive cultural and social expectations "independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:340) of their internal environment. This is particularly apparent in those aspects of professional behaviour - such as personnel management practice, labour relations and (in some countries) pollution control - that have had to become accepted aspects of organizational reality.

Justification of Organizational Structural Variation

Explanations in mainstream organizational theory to justify technical variation in structure are given as loose coupling, imposition of structure and uncoupling (March and Olsen, 1976; Weick, 1976). These same phenomena, with the addition of buffering (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) are examined by institutional theory, even if there is disagreement among institutional theorists themselves, as to why and how this is. Different emphasis on what is singled out for attention, what causes are identified and which structural aspects are affected, effect the institutional explanation given (Scott, 1987:501). These accepted structural elements (loose coupling, imposition of structure, uncoupling and buffering) are now examined from the institutional perspective.

Coordination and control of tasks is the mainstream explanation given for the loose coupling (linking) of functions to each other. But institutionalists believe that the performance of tasks is not the only relevant criterion to be socially evaluated in organizations; similar organizations are likely to adopt the same structural arrangements that have acquired social meaning in order to gain the social support, legitimacy and resources needed to survive (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:352).

However, formal structures do not always have the desired effect on the everyday activities of organizational life, as the symbolic and task relationships of coordination and

control may only be loosely coupled. This is evident when the management level is loosely coupled with the operational level. In other words "rules are often violated, decisions are often unimplemented, or if implemented have uncertain consequences, technologies are of problematic efficiency, and evaluation and inspection systems are subverted or rendered so vague as to provide little coordination" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:342). An example of this behaviour was evident in a particular South African university's problem with conditions of service. Although Council, the highest decision making body in the university, had over the years made many changes to academic conditions of service, unbeknown to Council members none of these changes had ever been enforced. The original academic conditions of service did not incorporate a clause that allowed for amendments. Because of this problem, the personnel department ignored all the relevant changes as it would have meant keeping record of many different conditions of service depending on employment date and when Council adjustments came into effect. This would have been an administrative nightmare; one that was, fortunately for the university, eventually resolved with legal help. These findings do provoke questions about the clear-cut depiction of mainstream organizational structure-function reality.

Pressure is another example of induced structural change. The state is a powerful environmental agent that imposes structure on organizations. Tolbert and Zucker (1983) give an example of the diffusion of structural change in the American civil service. In their investigations they found that when new procedures were required by the state those departments that had internal problems adopted the formal structure early as a response to dealing with those problems. However they found that later adopters of civil service procedures were responding to the fact that these procedures had already become institutionally accepted and were part of the definition of legitimate municipal structures (Tolbert and Zucker, 1983:22). This observation implied that organizations could not easily take a rational actor approach to the diffusion of innovation nor just an institutional approach. The two approaches were not points on a continuum. Both approaches point to different conditions, and as such give different perspectives and explanations of a complex environment (Tolbert and Zucker, 1983:26).

State intervention is classified within the coercive view (DiMaggio, 1983:151), but as it concentrates on authority relations it is seen as legitimate. This situation does not imply that organizational hearts and minds accept such prescribed practice. It can lead to employers adopting "due-process governance to cool out potentially litigious employees and demonstrate good-faith compliance with government mandates" (Sutton et al, 1994:946). In this way the adoption of structure becomes a strategy to avoid government intervention and litigation. Unfortunately it can also serve as a false symbolic appearance that allows organizations to continue in their old ways at the same time that their deliberate game of prolonged "due-process" resolves nothing.

The above position indicates that there is strong emphasis on how social constraints and requirements affect the structure of organizations. These dominant structures then become invested with shared social meanings that are symbolic rather than task generating. "In this context rationalized structures present an acceptable account of organizational activities, and organizations gain legitimacy, stability, and resources" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:353). This approach allows for new insights into the causes and consequences of structure. One is the cynical view that organizations create ceremonial structures to accommodate affirmative action, gender equality, and social responsibility just to maintain face in areas of public concern to which they are not committed (Powell, 1985:565). This behaviour has previously been described by March and Olsen as "more intended to reassure observers of the appropriateness of actions being taken than to influence the actions" (1984:738).

Another recognised defence mechanism in mainstream literature is the actual bypassing of organizational structures in order to cope with contradictory pressures. This uncoupling phenomenon was first identified by March and Olsen (1976) and Weick (1976). They described how formal structure can, in some organizations, be loosely coupled from actual work activity. From a mainstream perspective this is an organizational strategy to decouple and insulate technical activities from environmental uncertainties. From the institutional perspective it is seen as concealing the violation of rules and the subversion

of control systems by the non-implementation of socially approved regulations. For example, *The Cape Argus* (1997), reveals how white companies were registering Black front companies to bypass real affirmative action. They "then hired freelance black 'executives' to bid for a contract as a senior official of that empowerment company" (Argus, 1997:2).

Meyer and Rowan (1977:341) see the phenomenon of uncoupling from a different angle. They see the loose coupling of formal structure from actual work activities as a deliberate buffer. Frameworks established by larger institutions buffer structures from actual technical work. "Thus the technical organization faces in toward its technical core and turns its back on the environment, while the institutional organization turns its back on its technical core in order to concentrate on conforming to its institutional environment" (Meyer, Scott and Deal, 1992:47). In this way institutional rules can be devalued by organizations to a resource variable if the meeting of institutional demands is viewed as an alternative source of formal structures, and as achieving different ends.

But technical and institutional environments cannot be so neatly separated. Technologies (for example hospitals and grade accreditation) "become institutionalized in their own right, and organizations come to be required to conform to them in actual work activity for institutional rather than technical reasons" (Meyer et al, 1992:61). Normative pressure arises from both the technical and institutional spheres, making change necessary for survival. From this perspective, Meyer and Rowan (1977) emphasize the mindset of the "way things are to be done" which if conformed to increases the social support, legitimacy and survival prospects of those organizations that comply. In this way formal structure, rules and practices are shown to depend upon a pattern built up in the wider environment, and more importantly are acknowledged as a resource to be exploited. Organizations, by adopting these structural definitions of social concern (personnel, affirmative action), counter their vulnerability by then proceeding to accumulate protective knowledge around these areas. In this way institutional theory reveals how the social context, rules and structures built into the wider environment affect the rules and structures of organizations and aid in their creation and maintenance.

5.4 CULTURAL PROCESSES ENABLE CHANGE

For DiMaggio and Powell (1983) institutional pressure toward organizational conformity, the iron cage, is not an amorphous process but quite specific. It is shaped by government and professional bodies that regulate organizations by enmeshing them in rules. As organizations conform to this prescriptive environment as a result of coercive, mimetic and normative practices (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:150) they begin to look the same or to use the jargon, the institutional environment produces "sectorally isomorphic" organizations. These organizations become structurally similar and produce patterns of behaviour and rules that reproduce more of the same. DiMaggio and Powell believe (1983:147) the institutional conforming process inducing organizational change in "structure, culture and output" takes place within an identifiable sector (or field).

The theoretical position that institutional change takes place within institutional fields, is examined empirically by Brint and Karabel (1991:337). They look at the development (in the United States of America.) of two-year community colleges (mainly liberal arts colleges plus a few religious and agricultural colleges) into predominantly vocational training institutions. These community colleges were radically transformed during 1960-1980 from institutions of doubtful repute to one of American great success stories. Although the transformation was advocated in 1920 it took forty years for the change to happen. From the institutional perspective this transformation is explained as follows.

The environment in which these colleges were embedded had three distinct powerfully established institutions- four-year colleges, business hiring behaviour and governmental bodies - identified as significant power structures constraining the development of the community colleges (Brint and Karabel, 1991:346). The biggest stumbling block however, was the rational myths of the four-colleges that dominated the college field.

The four-year colleges were high-status schools that set the normative order, the regulating mechanisms for an education type of institution, and the education standards

for the kinds of categories that were created and accepted for prestigious and lucrative jobs. By contrast, the two-year colleges "were for less advantaged, less able, and [had] less mobile students" (1991:338) unlikely to transfer to a prestigious school and unlikely to compete favourably in the job market. The only way forward for socially-mobile and competent students was to somehow transfer to the four-year colleges.

To overcome this culturally embedded subordinate, low status and transfer-orientated mentality the two-year colleges had to be refashioned. But given their circumstances and population base they could not compete within the existing education hierarchy and social structure. To overcome this positioning at the bottom of the education ladder, they had to simultaneously reposition themselves as terminal vocational education for the semi-professional environments and have this position institutionalized as legitimate and worthy. Instead of being at the bottom of the education field they could be transformed to the top of an "entirely new occupational training hierarchy" (Brint and Karabel, 1991:340).

Given the colleges' cultural embeddedness within the power structure and opportunity fields within the larger environment this had to be done against persistent student opposition (who wanted to survive within the accepted form and norms) and big business's indifference (being well entrenched with the prestigious colleges whose students they hired).

Thus the environment set the conditions and structures of powerful developmental constraint in which the two-year colleges had to operate and survive. Within this environment they also had to conform to the government bodies that accredited the colleges' activities. Any change to the colleges activities would have to gain government sanction and the colleges would "have to create an accepted meaning and place for themselves in a chain of institutions with specified relations to one another that legislators could support without question" (Brint and Karabel, 1991:348).

On the business front it was only after government and major private foundations began to sponsor and employ these vocationally trained graduates that perceptions changed with regard to job opportunities. Consequently, students became less fixated about the possibility of obtaining a bachelor's degree (Brint and Karabel, 1991:341). With new market conditions being created the liberal arts programme became less attractive. This change over was encouraged by the fact that economic conditions changed which left many four-year graduates unemployed. These factors were all able to influence the subjective perceptions of would-be two-year students. However, the naked fact remains that "higher salaries, greater changes of promotion, and lower rates of unemployment" (1991:341) attach to the four-year programme.

From this perspective the change becomes a game of political moves within a particular institutional field. The leaders of the college mobilize various groups and interests across government, business, students, staff and the wider community to achieve the change that they regarded would be in the best interests of the two-year college.

It is through the manoeuvring of key elites that power and the interests of the community colleges organizational field was shaped. The two-year college elite tried to take advantage of the environment, fashion it to their own interest as well as that of the two-year college. Their primary concern was their personal status within the college community they resented being at the bottom of the liberal arts education ladder. By pushing for a vocational education they would solve this problem.

Consequently, the agenda of the community college was fashioned to fit with the goal orientation of their background and status. The drive was motivated by the status of chief administrators despite the resistance of students. Their media drive painted a picture of "high economic returns" to their students "that was utterly incompatible with available research evidence showing far more modest results for these programs ... [H]ad two-year college administrators and their allies in the foundations and the government been as vigorous in cultivating liberal arts transfer programs ... it is entirely possible that the

community college today would be more balanced in its liberal arts and vocational enrollments" (Brint and Karabel, 1991:341/2).

There were problems in bringing the academic community in on the drive. These professionals were more concerned with commitment to traditional academic standards. In some ways their interests were separated from the pursuit of the organizational interests of the colleges themselves which only really developed once the two interests became more aligned. Only at this stage could staff worry less about their own survival and more about long-term organizational interests. The major finding of the study was the uncovering of multiple layers of "group struggle" involved in an institutional field, who are critical "in shaping organizational structures and policies" (Brint and Karabel, 1991:356).

From DiMaggio and Powell's (1983:148) theoretical thrust, the above example shows how the specific sector, "*a recognized area of institutional life*", becomes the unit of analysis that links individual organizations to wider societal levels in formally structured vertical links (Scott and Meyer, 1991:108). These institutional sectors operating within the same meaning structure, are subject to similar regulatory processes and adopt similar structural solutions.

Fligstein's (1985:387) empirical research studied changes in organizational form by examining one hundred American, non-financial firms by asset size during the period 1919-1979. He shows that as organizations diversify, they adopt a multi-divisional structure if others in their sector did so, in particular, their competitors. He searches for an explanation as to why these large firms switched to this multi-divisional form. In the process he examines (1985:377) various theories of organizational change and finds that each theory contributes to an understanding of different organizational phenomena and that no single theory gives clear answers in incidences where multiple dimensions need to be explored across both sociological and economic variables.

Fligstein 's findings suggested (1985:388) that those in power who had the resources "to implement their point of view on appropriate corporate strategy" and structure would choose to implement the multi-divisional form. Fligstein's (1985) research drew particular attention to the concept of leadership and leaders' ability to interpret their external and internal environments. These interpretations, he says, "will reflect their structural positions, and their solutions will reflect the interests of those structural positions" (Fligstein, 1985:388). To enable implementation of their preferred interpretations and solutions, leaders must have the necessary resource base and power to back them up. These actions, however, do not guarantee success for their organizations, but should it do so, this success will be achieved under the watchful eyes of other organizational leaders within their sector. These people "watch one another and adopt what they perceive as successful strategies for growth and organizational structure" (1985:389).

In DiMaggio and Powell's (1983:150) view, conformity (isomorphism) within such sectors is induced by sectoral pressure which is described as being coercive, mimetic and normative. Coercive isomorphism refers to both formal and informal pressure, from other organizations that an organization is dependent upon (for example, professional codes, safe operating procedures, and funding availability) and from the society's cultural expectations in which the organization functions, (for example, legal mandates and fear of penalties). To gain legitimacy within society an organization has to reflect in its structure and practices those rules and practices legitimated and institutionalized. Influential organizations within a given sector will use political influence to shape the environment to their purposes and small organizations will be forced to conform in order to survive (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991:67). Institutions themselves are able to shape the environment in this way as can be seen in the example given by Karabel (1984).

Karabel (1984) shows how the transformation of "Harvard, Yale, and Princeton played a vital role both in creating, reinforcing and defining the shared culture and personal ties that constituted the very foundation of the solidarity of America's dominant status group; the Protestant upper class" (Karabel, 1984:9). In order to maintain this Protestant

upper class organizational interest, resolutions were passed by these colleges that limited "the enrollment of Jews and negroes" (1984:9), and that only allowed "men of approved character and promise" to be accepted (1984:12). This cultural definition "while *arbitrary* in its content" (1984:2) was not random in its execution but specific in its "closure of social and economic opportunities to *outsiders*" (Karabel, 1984:3). The gates were well manned and firmly watched to exclude those from 'subordinate' groups who may wish to edge their way to elite status.

The strategy was to avoid the public declaration of intent as this would only excite opposition and stimulate the mobilization of other interests who would contest the legitimacy of criteria governing selection for admission. This would provoke political struggle with other groups who would promote alternative criteria "expressing the interests of the society as a whole" (Karabel, 1984:3).

The struggle between groups (here moneyed-Protestant and others) is carried out both over and through organizations. "What this means is that the administrators who preside over elite colleges will tend to evaluate the claims of external groups in terms of their assessment of the effects of granting such claims on the long-term interests of their institutions" (Karabel, 1984:5). The interests of these groups are not some objective reality but "the values and perceptions of those who have the power to define what is 'good' for the organization" (1984:5). Others may define this differently.

In order to implement their policy of status group closure Harvard found that admission examinations were not the answer. Too many 'precocious' Jews were finding their way in diluting the "proper emphasis on soundness of body and spirit (that) would enable Christians to demonstrate their underlying superiority" (Karabel, 1984:16). Instead they found their weapon in 'neutral' administrative forms that required information such as "'Religious Preference,' 'Maiden Name of Mother,' 'Birthplace of Father', and 'What change, if any, has been made since your birth in your own name or that of your father? (Explain fully)'" and required that students submit photographs not only of themselves but

also of their fathers! (1984:15). To prevent anyone slipping through any loophole school principals were required to check the forms.

Yale and Princeton were quick to follow suit. They did this "as much out of sheer cultural antagonism as institutional self-interest" (Karabel, 1984:18). Private conversations between the senior administrators of these establishments ensured that institutional influence was reciprocal. Given the considerable resources at their disposal, they were able to "use scholarship policy to shape the ethnic, social, and regional composition of their student body to bring it more closely into line with the contours of perceived organizational interests" (1984:25).

Harvard, Yale and Princeton were organizations "so tied at that historical moment to the outlook and interests of the Protestant upper class that they readily volunteered for service on behalf of its interests and eagerly embraced its fundamental goals" (Karabel, 1984:29). The culturally embedded values of the dominant class were so institutionalized that they ensured their continual dominance in the social hierarchy and their future control over scarce resources.

Mimetic processes (as in the case of Yale and Princeton) are a standard, imitative response to uncertainty within a given sector. Those practices that prove to be a good response to uncertainty will be adopted by other organizations faced with the same circumstances (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991:69). Modelling the practice of successful organizations is a powerful influencing factor when faced with ambiguous problems and environmental uncertainty. Leading consulting firms play a major role in this area as they are inclined to suggest a limited number of organizational designs to a multitude of organizations. This structural change is adopted, not because it is going to be effective, but for outside approval and legitimation. (For example, a non-profit organization adopting business structures and jargon in order to be perceived as being effective, modern and performance orientated in order to attract funding or to appeal to professional funding boards).

Normative pressures are associated primarily with professionalization of the organizational environment (practice and form). These pressures arise from formal education, professional training, professional bodies, in-house socialization, government recognition of highly visible associations and the number of administrative professionals sitting on funding bodies (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:153). If one is trying to bring about organizational change without the support of these normative bodies one might as well be flogging a dead horse. As a regulating power the actions of these influential professional bodies are the primary modern shapers of organizations as they develop the common understandings that form the rules by which organizations are shaped and regulated (Zucker, 1983:1). Conformity with their requirements lends status and prestige to an organization and gives it a competitive advantage over others in its field. In this way the institutionalized environment advantages some at the expense of others. The process of participating at this institutional level becomes such an important learning and knowledge opportunity that it is possible that some will find being part of the process more important than the decisions made (DiMaggio, 1988:14).

Interest and Agency

The context of institutions sets society's rules of the game, informs bias and expectations and declares what alternative solutions or choices can be considered legitimate. In this way political structures simplify the complex world of governance and the institutions themselves are even perceived as autonomous actors setting the rules of the game and encoding behaviour.

DiMaggio (1988:12) places interest and agency within a specific structure which is itself embedded in the wider institutional environment. It is within this institutional structure that institutional theory views specific efforts towards change as being supported or opposed. DiMaggio (1988:9) acknowledges the paradox of this situation in that institutionalization is seen as both outcome and process. "Institutionalization as an *outcome* places organizational structures and practices beyond the reach of interest and politics" and by contrast "as a *process* is profoundly political and reflects the relative

power of organized interests and the actors who mobilize around them" (1988:13). The people who do the mobilizing he terms institutional entrepreneurs (1988:14).

Institutional entrepreneurs are those people "who are able to articulate the new political goals, organize their framework, and mobilize the resources necessary for their functioning" (Eisenstadt, 1968:413). These people do not come in from the cold; although they attempt to impose their own orientations and solutions on a situation, they are part of the socially constructed institutional environment. They are institutionally situated to assess, direct or control institutional positions and resources such as power, money and symbols. For example, in South Africa we have seen a major reorganization of the health and education sectors initiated at government level being curbed by existing institutional arrangements such as The Medical and Dental Council, and various university, teacher and pupil organizations.

Leaders in differing institutional sectors, if they have the ability to articulate varied collective goals within the dominant framework, they expose conflict, exert influence across a number of institutional spheres and gain political support from core constituencies (a threshold of institutional followers) and then they are able to mobilize existing institutional forces to instigate or crystallize institutional change.

Although the task of designing institutional structures falls to those in office, these people are not permanent fixtures, yet while in office these leaders can impose their preferred outcomes. The task of designing institutional structures is not just a technical problem of ensuring order and controlling behaviour for mutual advantage. Essentially these institutional structures are structures of coercion (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991:67) and as such they have to accommodate interests that may be in direct conflict with the solution desired by those in control (Moe, 1990:126). Because of the cost of conformity to all involved within a sector, the institution may have to accommodate these other conflicting group interests, should these have a large enough following and be sufficiently powerful. This political act of accommodation mitigates technical efficiency because in accommodating different interests different goals are being achieved. Those people in

positions of leadership benefit enormously on a personal level from their participation at this organizational and institutional level and have the means (should they so desire) to stimulate this developmental process for others.

The position of leaders in an institutional structure affects not only the distribution of resources but the area of concern that is likely to receive attention (Cyert and March, 1992:235), leaving other concerns unattended or unnoticed. As leaders are involved with many different things organizational attention is always shifting. As a result what receives particular attention from whom is temporal rather than hierarchical, given multiple claims on attention at any specific moment in time. Short-run changes in attention to political concerns make "highly contextual combinations of people, choice opportunities, problems, and solutions" (March and Olsen, 1983: 286). For issues such as the social and political development of employees to become relevant they have to secure and sustain attention among vast competition for the attention of powerful actors.

Organizational conformity to institutional demands is never absolute. Organizations in different structural positions, as long as these positions are institutionally recognized, try to resist change, take different bargaining positions and in the process adapt formalized norms and values to suit their own ends. In this negotiating process they build differing constituencies. So although formalized behaviour promotes stability, DiMaggio and Powell's (1991) view is that the autonomy of each organization allows for social change and variation in adapting to such requirements. Zucker (1977) disagrees with this theoretical construct; for her they sustain order and hinder change.

5.5 SOCIAL PROCESSES MAINTAIN ORDER

For Zucker (1977:726), highly institutionalized knowledge engenders highly institutionalized acts; the "institutionalization process simply defines social reality and will be transmitted and maintained as fact" (Zucker, 1977:730). From her perspective, the actions of an *individual* unbolstered by institutionalized office and high intersubjective knowledge (which render subjective understandings as facts), derive no legitimacy from

its social context (1977:729). Institutional concern is with compliance to institutionalized prescription. "The actor plays no independent role in maintaining these institutions, rather they serve to constrain his behavior" (Zucker, 1977:727). Attempts to change highly institutionalized behaviour by personal influence are likely to be unsuccessful; they are more likely to "result in a redefinition of the actor [as deviant] rather than the act" (1977:730).

Structural Conformity

Zucker (1983) comes to view organization as "the pre-eminent institutional form in modern society" (1983:1). Organizational form has become the established, legitimate shape of "efficient arrangement of work" (1983:17). This mindset has affected all areas of collective activity altering other aspects of the social system. Structures and vocabularies that started as an efficient manufacturing form based on "scientific principles", have come to play a central role in formally structuring all aspects of the social systems (business, government and non-government). Most people not only become known by their organizational position but acquire social status and social mobility through such classification. As organizational status comes to define relationships, other classifications become insignificant (Zucker, 1983:30).

Occupational stratification in major organizations become diffused among similar organizations (Zucker, 1983:25), as does vocabularies that describe functions and motives. Stratification not only delineates a reward system but allows for accelerating one's rank and status by changing jobs within similarly structured organizations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:153).

The institutionalized dominance of such a structural force in everyday organizational life is to engender conformity - not a conformity of sanctions or internalization but "conformity rooted in the taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life" (Zucker, 1983:5). From this perspective, organizational behaviour is seen as being engendered by highly conforming belief systems pervasive throughout society that are highly resistant to change

once established (1983:24). Can the individual influence this situation? Unlike DiMaggio's (1988) positive view of the institutional entrepreneur, Zucker (1983) thinks otherwise given the institutionalized nature of role and office. A situation will be influenced by the degree of institutionalization of the role and position of the actor (Zucker, 1977:728); and a setting will influence the actions of an actor depending on the assumptions made about what behaviour is expected and regularized within a particular organizational context (1977:729). Holding a particular office (Hughes, 1937:79) will influence the way people interpret appropriate action and what the office bearer can or cannot do, depending on the degree of institutionalization. The way things are done will take on impersonal characteristics "and any action by incumbents is thought to be potentially repeatable by others if they occupy the same position" (Zucker, 1983:37).

Zucker (1988) does not believe that an entrepreneurial approach (DiMaggio's, 1988:9) can explain change. Zucker (1983:21) sees people in powerful structures as being more likely to protect their privileged position and resist change that does not promote its continuance. (A view consistent with population-ecologists, Hannan and Freeman, 1977). Zucker (1988:28) concentrates on formally organized collectivities and planned convergence of interests. This is because, in her view, it is not social change that is planned and organized, but social order. This affirms Coleman's (1974) contention that organizations interact with other organizations and that for individual actors to become effective they need to emphasize their collective character and create "countervailing corporate actors to offset the power of existing ones" (Coleman, 1974:73). The evolution of social structures is seen as a response to social dilemmas, therefore the focus is on interconnectedness, coherence and stability (Zucker, 1988:23). To this end differentiated roles in exchange relations are established that focus on the impersonal aspect of action; other roles and procedures gain legitimacy by association; networks are formally organized which have the right to act; and only then do new kinds of relationships come into being. At all times "the role of institutionalization of elements embedded within networks structures" will promote the integration and stability of the social system (1988:30). Such an orientation will

encourage internal forces to concentrate on system coherence while viewing external forces as having the potential to disrupt and destabilize this desired, predictable, social order.

However, it is acknowledged that internal organizational arrangements are continually changing on an incremental level; that different interests groups vary in their power positions; and that inconsistencies between the macro institutional sphere and the micro organizational sphere require adjustments. For Zucker (1988:36) this is done in a give-and-take manner regarded by relevant parties as being fair exchange. For Zucker institutionalization permits resolutions of these social dilemmas (1988:23) "by the construction of formal entities that provide interactively defined standards of fair exchange that are relatively permanent and detailed, allowing attainment of the best joint outcomes and minimizing the social traps and free rider problems" (Zucker, 1988:45) that are Olson's (1965) concern with collective action (discussed in a subsequent chapter). But the 'standards of fair exchange' are themselves embedded in an environment in which organizations have "control of basic institutional structure and processes (Zucker, 1983:2) that "privileges some groups whose interests are secured by the prevailing rewards and sanctions" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991:11). This position brings us back to the political environment of the organization.

5.6 SOCIAL PROCESSES AS POLITICAL CONTROL

The internal struggle within and between organizations emphasizes political control as distinct from technical managerial control (March and Olsen, 1983: 283). This reality is evident in two distinct organizational rhetorics. The rhetoric of political control deals with "the litany of interests, politics, conflict, bargaining, and power" while the rhetoric of administration deals with "the litany of coordination, chains of command, authority and responsibility" (March and Olsen, 1983:284). Both rhetorics are important, although they develop different logics of arguments, actions and solutions; change within the one sphere can lead to change within the other. Persistent arguments over a long period of time, particularly in the realm of ideas, beliefs and values, educate and socialize people so what

is initially seen as unacceptable can eventually be accepted as appropriate (1983:292). In this way rhetoric becomes an important precursor to administrative change; “persistent repetition of similar ideas and similar arguments over a relatively long period of time appears to make some difference. ...[I]t can educate the public and help to change the climate of opinion” (March and Olsen, 1983:289). Proposals that are denied initially may well be approved further down the track.

In obtaining their research data March and Olsen (1983) examine twelve twentieth century re-organizations of the USA administration. They find that public administration demands constant bureaucratic change over time as new agencies appear, disappear, merger or have their responsibilities changed (1983:281). Effectiveness of the administration appears to enhance the effectiveness of the political system, therefore control of the administrative structures is seen as critical to the ruling body. It is within this highly structured administrative environment that politics reigns. Politics ensures where the budget will flow, what will be curtailed, and what policies and procedures will facilitate or hinder the operation of effort in a particular direction. The administrative rhetoric can be directed to focus on managerial control of those areas promoting efficiency, reducing expenditure, working towards coordination and reducing overlap.

However, this re-organization of the bureaucracy has to be linked to the interpretation of politics and political control (March and Olsen, 1983:283). Major administrative re-organization requires long-run development which political change does not allow. Instead the focus has to be on political re-organization and short-term results. Proposals are more important than projects in that, in the short-term, it is more important to be seen to champion particular projects that reflect a value orientation, than to implement them (1983:285,290).

Part of the problem is rooted in the short bursts of action that are afforded issues when they receive their moment of attention (March and Olsen, 1983:292). What receives attention and when, is determined by an item’s political nature and its importance at the

time in the political dynamic of developing preferred meaning. In others words the social context of political life is preference-driven (March and Olsen, 1984:741).

That these preferences of policy formation are institutionally fashioned is the contribution of Cohen and Axelrod (1984). Coping with the complexity of everyday living in organizations inevitably means that people are acting with incomplete information, and on beliefs that are incomplete or false (Cohen and Axelrod, 1984:30). Cohen and Axelrod (1984) comment that while the models of March and Simon (1957) and Cyert and March (1963) explore limited rationality, concepts such as "satisficing and dynamic aspiration levels do suggest that decision mechanisms as well as beliefs are adaptable underlying preferences are taken as given" (Cohen and Axelrod, 1984:30).

Cohen and Axelrod (1984:31) propose a model that allows the development of alternatives to prevailing policy because it incorporates preference change that may not necessarily be conscious. By being sensitive to context and adapting to experience, that is, by recognizing the difference between expected results of an action and actual action result, values are modified, shared preferences established and meanings of actions reinterpreted (1984:34). For example, newly appointed managers may oppose fringe benefit increases for staff in order to gain approval from their superiors. Once they becomes involved with their staff they may support improved benefits for them. This support may have the unexpected result of improving performance. The manager's preferences to support or not support the fringe benefit package changes as his/her belief system of how staff behave is seen to have been misinformed (Cohen and Axelrod, 1984:38). New "information is used not only to update beliefs about how choices map into outcomes, but that it is also used to modify the very utility function that is being maximized" (Cohen and Axelrod, 1984:39). In the updated edition of their 1963 work Cyert and March (1963, 1992) also acknowledge this "endogenous construction of preferences" (1992:227).

Transforming preferences becomes the base material for conversion to a different view of the world. Participating in politics is identified as a valuable means of gaining experience.

It exposes one to different ideas and provides opportunities to see the process that redefines meaning and fashions new beliefs that are able to change world views. Without this discursive experience and the further development of social and political skills participation can be kept to a superficial level. (How does this institutionalized state of affairs effect the employee?)

5.7 THE IMPACT OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZED CONTEXT ON THE EMPLOYEE

Because of the large numbers of people employed by organizations, management's concern is as much geared to social organization and social control of employees as it is to functional and technological control. As social institutions, organizations have a need to control both their employees and the perceptions of the public (particularly clients, customers and prospective employees, clients and customers). Being able to hire or dismiss an employee is different to being able to control a hostile group of workers or a hostile group of clients or customers.

Management desires that employees do their jobs without creating difficulties, do things in particular ways, and develop particular behaviour traits (for example, a rule orientation that is obedient). Organizational structures become complex because of the need for abstract control systems - employees cannot be directly supervised all the time. This micro level of control (Foucauldian) concerns itself with work rules, job categories, discipline, definition of responsibility, and all forms of procedures and policy relating not only to job function but employee attitude and work habit. Employees are then evaluated, compensated, punished or dismissed in relation to this control system rather than according to the work itself (Edwards, 1979:148). They are further constrained by information management systems, by financial controls, by professional bodies, by lawyers, and by well established models of management.

In this context organizations shape the environment with technical norms, values and culture that go way beyond neat structural-functional explanations. Such an organizational context creates a built-in means of facilitating organizational control and

suppressing resistance so that other options for creating and structuring organizations are not conceptualized let alone examined. Edwards (1979:152) believes these forms of control deserve to be challenged as it is the employee's soul as well as his/her labour that is demanded by organizations.

Internal "bureaucratic control rests on the principle of embedding control in the social structure or the social relations of the workplace", that is, "the institutionalization of hierarchical power" (Edwards, 1979:21), which creates a built-in expectation of obedience. The meaning context of organizational work supports existing organizational form and organizationally patterned behaviour. DiMaggio's (1988) believes that given these specific context constraints employees are "*unlikely to recognize or to act on their interests*" (DiMaggio, 1988:4) and for the few who do try to act on their interests, their circumstances are such that they are "*unable to do so effectively*" (DiMaggio, 1988:5).

Because employees normally are unaware of the nature of this socially constructed reality that sustains their obedience as a matter of routine, Douglas (1986) warns of the social hold that institutions have on cognitive systems. She explains that institutionalized cognitive controls address what it is that people in organizations are actually able to recognize, classify and remember (1986:45). In this subtle way institutions "systematically direct individual memory and channel our perceptions into forms compatible with the relations they authorize. They fix processes that are essentially dynamic, they hide their influence, and they rouse our emotions to a standardized pitch on standardized issues" (Douglas, 1986:92).

Institutionalized arrangements supply not only the rules which help establish employee identities and create the labels which people adopt as the norm, but also supply the "activity scripts for such identities" (Jepperson, 1991:146). Employees then proceed to assume these identities and to become those sorts of people. (While some people are able to reject these classifications and hold different views, they are advised to keep this to themselves as they are likely to be seen as deviant rather than as holding a different valid

mindset {Zucker, 1977:730}). The unreflective nature of organizational behaviour induced ensures the bias towards preferred built-in responses.

This bias is particularly apparent when employees attempt to solve problems that concern them. The difficulty is that an "answer is only seen to be the right one if it sustains the institutional thinking that is already in the minds of individuals" (Douglas, 1986:4). Because of the way institutions nest with and mutually support each other, this institutionalized mindset facilitates, empowers and legitimizes some activities by ignoring or clearly demarcating the constraints of other behaviour. In other words, only those organizational problems that fit into the existing institutional frameworks will be acknowledged and addressed.

Experience that does not fit with prevailing institutional mindsets is not relevant and can be ignored. Therefore acceptable solutions to employee concerns come from a limited range of experience, and must be compatible with the prevailing values of the time, on which judgement is justified. All other alternatives are perceived as being legitimately ignored. But more disturbing is that appropriate alternative solutions to employee problems cannot even be conceived. "The high triumph of institutional thinking" is that all this happens on subtle, shared belief systems that are "completely invisible" (Douglas, 1986:98).

Friedland and Alford (1991:232) see the controlling aspect of organizational life as impinging on the individual at various inter-institutional levels - individual, organizational and society. Each level presents its own "patterns of activity" and "symbolic systems" through which institutionalized activity is categorized and infused with meaning. Each is imbued with its own logic of action, its own rationality which is the basis of its evaluation. But they cannot be viewed in isolation as their relationship is "mutually dependent yet contradictory" (1991:241).

The different compartmentalized levels are recognized by their differing actions which are described as "individuals competing and negotiating; organizations in conflict and

coordination; and institutions in contradiction and interdependency" (Friedland and Alford, 1991:240/1). However, the regulation of human activity at the different levels are "nested" with multiple logics providing alternative meanings; each area is a theoretical base and knowledge grouping. The legitimacy of each area is perceived as being dependent upon the powerfulness of supporting institutions.

This compartmentalization results in tension, conflict, resistance and/or transformation. Hernes (1976:513) claims that each level of structure, process and parameters bring into action opportunities and constraints that open or destroy available alternatives (1976:517). For example, theories that focus on the individual as primary tend to be "voluntaristic approaches in which the entire world is renegotiated in every social interaction" (Friedland and Alford, 1991:241). Theories that make organizations central do so regardless of other logics like those surrounding kinship, religion or normative constraints of individual interaction. The operation of organizations from this centralist point of departure is always analysed as if organizations were a superordinate central body separated from societal structures and membership. This mainstream view presupposes that one accepts the institutional myth that organizations are like an envelope that are assumed to be "unitary centres of calculation to which a number of other relationships, including the employment contract, are subordinate" (Clegg, 1990:120).

General Comment

Institutionalization is not an organizational backdrop but a formidable social process (Jepperson, 1991:143). The strength of institutionalization lies in the nature of "a particular set of social reproductive process" that relies, not on recurrent collective mobilization, but on the built-in persistence of routine reproductive procedures that support and sustain its pattern and further its reproduction (1991:144). This patterned regularity acts as the social controls which reproduce themselves and go unquestioned not only because of their 'taken-for-granted' nature, but because the institutionalized mindset has prevented the development of alternative institutions.

Management has the advantage of being in such a well-entrenched institutionalized position; the mainstream account of organizations is taken as fact (Jepperson, 1991:145). People are not aware of any other account and therefore existing organizational theory, management practices and organizational arrangements are seen as social fixtures. This situation allows the position of management and the conditions of organizations to be such that its patterned regularity (management's collective mobilization of bias and re-engineering to secure, maintain and sustain its reproductive pattern as a matter of routine in achieving organizational goals), is unconsciously, therefore unquestioningly, accepted (Jepperson, 1991:147).

Given this entrenched position, it is the institutionalized reproductive nature of organizational life that Jepperson (1991:144) most fears. Because this well-established pattern is so thoroughly embedded within other integrated social frameworks (for example, professional and educational institutions), any meaningful or significant attack upon it is likely to be extremely difficult. In fact, he believes, it will continue undeterred unless a specific type of action is instituted. That is, Jepperson conjectures that it will continue undeterred "unless collective action blocks or environmental shock disrupts, the reproductive process" of its modus operandi (1991:145).

Nevertheless, the institutional context and institutional conditions, because of the tension created at the different interaction levels, do allow for contest, even if they do so within a legitimate frame of circumscribed behaviour. Friedland and Alford see institutional contradictions as the "bases of the most important political conflicts in our society; it is through these politics that the institutional structure of society is transformed" (1991:256). The fact that this contextual level holds the possibility of transformation makes access to appropriate institutional structures a critically empowering factor for bringing about "new social relationship and new symbolic orders" (Friedland and Alford, 1991:250). Equally important is the necessity to violate the meaning of existing relations, in order to make way for the creation of new socially valued meanings that will accommodate new relationships and structures more appropriate to the community. In other words, the rhetoric of an alternative re-organization will be a development of meaning that needs to

precede structural change (March and Olsen, 1983:288,292). Any transformative lines of action will need to be carefully conceived, socially defined and themselves incorporated into a 'taken-for-granted' structure that has acquired social legitimacy. Jepperson's caution to those eager to break out of the established self-sustaining adaptive pattern of social relations and bring about organizational change to an alternative mindset, is that this "near insuperable collective action threshold" represents "a formidable collective action problem" requiring political action.

The transformation of organization life is cast as a political struggle waged at the organizational and institutional levels; this demands a legitimate, institutionalized response. However, given the social hold that existing institutions have on cognitive systems the task to destroy the established mindset is formidable. Given the fact that those advocating an alternative view lack the institutions to give their call legitimacy and an authoritative public voice to guide and protect their future actions or curb the force of management power, the outlook appears frighteningly pessimistic (Jepperson, 1991:151). We may, however, take heart from Douglas's (1986) pragmatic view. "For better or worse, individuals really do share their thoughts and they do to some extent harmonize their preferences, and they have no other way to make the big decisions except within the scope of institutions they build." (1986:128). It is up to us to understand the nature of organizational control, accept the political challenge and make the organizational world a better place. As the first tentative step in grasping this challenge the issue of organizational control and resistance will now be examined.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL AND RESISTANCE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the concept of control and the issue of resistance within organizations. Just as institutions exert power over organizations and organizations attempt to control, minimize, or resist this influence, so too do employees attempt to resist organizational control.

This chapter examines the concept of control from sociological and psychological viewpoints, as well as the effects of this control on the individual (Bandura, 1978, 1982; Crespi, 1992; Maier and Seligman, 1976; Stam, 1987). I transfer the insights gained to organizational control and the effect of this control on employee subjectivity. Employees learn that they are helpless because they believe any effort on their part to change their conditions will be ineffectual. Once they realize that some of their organizational problems are not personal but are the result of socialization and structured social relations that impinge upon their development to cope on the social and political level (the theme developed in Chapter 5 on institutionalism), the problem takes on a different perspective. It becomes one, not of the individual coping with his/her environment but, of employees coping with common problems.

The realization of the social dimension of organizational life opens the way for employee problems to be addressed differently and collectively. It also reveals aspects of managerial control that are problematic to such a development. Organizational control strategies are designed to differentiate, isolate and scrutinize employees at an individual level in order to induce obedience and monitor performance. This restricted focus on the employee as an individual allows management to ignore other associational aspects of employees' organizational life such as the social, collective, institutionalized nature of inherent problems (Knoke, 1986). By management's treatment of employees as competitive individuals striving for scarce resources (in a punitive environment),

awareness of the nature of shared problems, the promotion of collective interests, the development of genuine interdependence and the gaining of the capacity to overcome such imposed conditions is inhibited. This organizational reality needs to be understood and challenged in order to overcome the constraining factors that hinder employees from recognizing their biased reality, from defining their position in an alternative way, and from collectively changing organizations so as to benefit all organizational members.

The problem of collective action is explored (Olson, 1965) and Ostrom's (1990) perspective, of enhancing the capacity of those involved with common problems in order to achieve a common benefit, is discussed. This view explores the internal and external factors that hinder people from working towards the resolution of common benefit problems given the lack of institutions to support this behaviour.

The women's movement is identified as a collective action, social movement which has struggled with similar problems, yet can be regarded as a successful political action movement directed at social change. As a movement it has created awareness of alternative ways of viewing women's issues, thus opening other possibilities (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail, 1988; Garner, 1996; Gilligan, 1982; Sawicki, 1981; Tangri et al, 1982). In doing this it has empowered women to act politically to achieve collective goals. This movement is examined and the insights gained help to articulate a challenge to prevailing organizational and management practice. The movement's powerful linking of resistance to empowerment is a strategy that may well be borrowed to help transform large organizations into places that promote a better future for all its members.

Individual employees do offer some measure of resistance to organizational norms and management practice but it is not effective. Isolated acts of resistance outside of a meaningful discursive framework do not succeed in changing management practice or organizational conditions. This is understandable given the insights from the previous chapter which reveal the institutionalized nature of organizational practice and the necessity for concerted collective action at many structural levels to change this reality.

Scholarship on resistance is explored (Braverman, 1974; Buroway, 1979, Clegg, 1994; Collinson, 1994; Jos et al, 1989; LaNuez and Jermier, 1994; O'Connell Davidson, 1994; Olivier, 1991; Rothschild and Miethe, 1994) and put in the context of developing an alternative discourse for organizational change. Without this overarching narrative and interactive discursive activity, meaningful employee-driven organizational change will be impossible. Given the lack of a legitimate employee discourse, the lack of an articulated vision of what it is that employees want to change and the lack of structural mechanisms to facilitate employee-driven change to achieve specific organizational goals, random acts of resistance may turn out to be petty acts of revenge that achieve no meaningful end.

The exploration of these ideas commences with the concept of social control.

6.2 SOCIAL CONTROL AND ACTION

The concept of social control in sociology has been a long and varied history (Stam, 1987:134). In the early 1600's, Hobbes saw the social problem as a need to control unrestricted individualism (Clegg, 1989:22). With this in mind, Ross identified internal and external social controls (Stam, 1987:134). The internal controls referred to social ideals, while the concept of external controls referred to punishment. By the 1920's this mindset had changed and social control referred to collective problem solving. By the 1940's, Janowitz argued the sociological concept of social control inferred social conformity within a particular value orientation (Stam, 1987:135).

Personal control is the psychological equivalent to social control. It focuses on a person's capacity to satisfy his/her needs with minimal damage to him/herself or others. The internal locus of control (Rotter, 1971:37) relates to a person's perception that outcomes depend on his/her own efforts (autonomy, self-efficacy and self-direction),

while external control refers to a person's belief that outcomes are uncontrollable and inescapable, dependent upon luck, fate or powerful others.

Learned Helplessness

In situations where outcomes are expected to be out of one's control, the belief is also likely to be that this will be so for the future as well as for the present. This concept of future expectation gave rise to a theory of learned helplessness (Maier and Seligman, 1976). The debilitating consequences of this learned belief are that they retard initiative (motivation) and present a particular cognitive block to learning (having learnt that X is irrelevant to Y it is unlikely that I will readily see that X produces Y). Also if a person has learnt that s/he cannot influence an outcome this knowledge will have a negative effect. That is, the person will become passive, negative and/or depressed (Abramson et al., 1980:4).

This negative effect is related to specific situations. People become helpless in particular circumstances where they learn that no matter what their response is, it will have no bearing on the outcome of the situation. The psychological 'solution' provided is to change the expectation of the uncontrollability of the outcome by linking this expectation to the attainment of specific skills (1980:33). People may then see themselves as having the potential to influence a situation even if they do not exercise it.

In this theory, the psychological focus rests on the individual's experience of helplessness (cognitive, emotional and motivational deficits) and depression, as well as on the individual's ability to adapt or change in a given situation. In other words a problem of social relations (Stam, 1987:139) is translated into a problem of individual perception of how he/she can cope with or adapt to the situation as it is. It is in this area of getting employees to adapt to their conditions that much psychological and human resource work in organizations is done. Attention is on the employee coping with, and adapting to, organizational conditions and requirements, and not on employees recognizing common

problems and attaining the ability to adapt their organizational circumstances to deal more effectively with them.

This transition in concepts from the social to the personal does not acknowledge that the social environment is actually impinging on employee development. In this way the social process, that is the social relations and conditions of organizational life, is ignored and denied. Consequently the alternative course of action which is to deal with one's problem in the course of changing the social environment is not explicit. Therefore the skills and mechanisms to become socially and politically effective are not acknowledged, encouraged or developed. The organizational focus is kept on how the individual as a unit copes with situational problems rather than on how individuals address common problems collectively.

Bandura (1978) in his theory of self-efficacy tries to overcome this social shortcoming.

Self-efficacy

Bandura's (1978, 1982) theory of self-efficacy relates to psychological procedures that are able to strengthen the individual's expectation that behaviours will lead to certain outcomes. This notion of efficacy which requires mastery of knowledge and skill (Bandura, 1982:142) and carries with it responsibility and risk, is believed to influence the amount of effort (1982:123) that a person will expend in order to cope with a difficult situation.

Bandura (1982: 127) extends this theory to collective action as he considers the notion of perceived self-efficacy to be the backbone of collective efficacy. Those people convinced of their own inefficacy are not likely to make the effort to bring about social change. Individuals with the "cognitive structures" of self-efficacy are more likely to work from the expectation that, with concerted collective effort, they will be able to solve common problems or improve the group's position with regard to power holders, vested interests and other competing interest groups. From this perspective, social reality

becomes very much part of individual motives and efforts in helping to shape a future environment.

Conflict of concepts

Both the psychological theories of learned helplessness and self-efficacy relate to the individual in an environment where there is conflict of interest. Society and individuals are both seen by Maier and Seligman (1976) and Bandura (1978, 1982) as separate, distinct, self-determining and self-regulating. Neither theory explores the interaction of individual and institution, or the possibility of social domination. The environment remains external and is translated into psychological language or reduced to individual perceptions and expectations. Although Bandura (1978) advocates "reciprocal determinism" rather than a uni- or partially bi- directional view of relationships he (Stam, 1987:146) does not adequately explain existing "built-in cognitive structure".

Questions of control are fundamental to psychology's concern with autonomy. But according to Sampson (1988:19) so-called self-directed and self-regulated individuals are a predictable product of advanced industrial nations that promote self-contained individualism for its own ends. He repeats Foucault's (1975) argument that the discourse on individual autonomy and individuation masks the processes of power, management and social control. Psychology is so thoroughly embedded in its culture that it has become the chief instrument for sustaining this type of behaviour. Stam (1987:53) suggests that the discipline re-examines its position with regard to contemporary social life and comes up with new directions and other alternatives.

Stam's (1987:149) concern is that the psychological language of "outcomes" ignores political agendas. He suggests that both the concept and the language of the psychology of control should be rewritten using the concept of power relations and the conditioning reality of domination. With a change of mindset the struggle against domination can, in psychological terms, be seen as a struggle for a new identity (Knights and Willmott, 1985) other than the one socially constructed by domination. From this perspective the

concept of self-control need not be limited to individualism but can be recast and redefined within the context of social interdependence. Crespi (1992) explores this issue of autonomy and social action in the discussion that follows.

Social Action, Autonomy and Power

Unlike animals, human beings do not just react to stimuli. Intelligent human action has complexity of intention, whether conscious or unconscious, as well as a capability for autonomous choice which drives the energy, potential and capacity to act. Crespi (1992:14,18) believes that this multiple dimension of social action is ignored by many theorists such as Luhmann (1979), who takes a reductive functional approach to social action, (that is, functional to the system), and Homans (1974), who uses a reductive profit-loss model as his concept of social action rationality. Giddens' (1984) conceptualization of the dialectic process between structure and action (discussed in chapter 4), is also criticized by Crespi (1992:35) for not adequately asserting the autonomous dimension of action. Crespi's (1992) reasoning follows.

People are born into a particular family and very early in their childhood development learn to say "no". This "no" is in fact a "yes" to disobedience and can be seen as a positive, liberating act that confirms identity (Crespi, 1992:8). The potential for negation is relevant and important, for it allows an individual, as he/she develops, to differentiate him/herself initially from others and then from the values and beliefs of various communities. This capacity, that has the potential to develop autonomous actions, comes in the dawning awareness of one's relation to others (1992:77).

Instead of following animal-like instincts, a person's actions are guided by symbolic mediation (structure and culture) such as values, beliefs and rules (Crespi, 1992:84,97). This system of symbolic meaning helps define collectives as well as the individual, because it gives a person a sense of identity with others (1992:87). However, given that each person has his/her own peculiar and complex life experiences, the meaning an individual attaches to these symbols will be uniquely his/her own (1992:98).

Even though collective norms, values and structures bring a predictable character to social action, the dimension of the individual's unique life experiences has the ability to bring an undetermined character to social action (Crespi, 1992:9,97). The tension within the individual between his or her conditioning (or determinacy) and that part of him or her that is not fixed and does not want to be limited by particular structures, beliefs and values, creates the energy for the individual to exercise his or her capacity for autonomous behaviour in social action (1992:93,97). In the workplace this means that "autonomy" cannot be reduced to "doing something the boss wants done without supervision".

It is this tension in people, together with instability in the social system, that allows creativity and transformation. Although social systems (such as work organizations) strive for identity and order through shared meaning and values, it is the tension between the opposing needs of "identification with and distantiation from determinacy" (Crespi, 1992:94) that creates the capacity for transformation. As people differentiate their "I" from their social identity and shared collective social experience, they shape autonomous meanings and codes of behaviour. In theory they are able then to exercise this capacity to negate social norms, substitute other symbolic norms and transform their social reality.

The dimension between the inner capacity to deal with contradictions and actual social action, Crespi (1992:95) believes, is power. From this perspective, power does not just rely on a person's cognitive capacity to evaluate and judge situations but on a person's capacity to act in ambivalent social situations. This dimension is analysed on two levels - the subjective (inner and outer) and the structural level (1992:99).

Subjective level

Firstly, the subjective level deals with the individual's inner capacity of self-identity to act in social situations. The individual does this by discovering himself in his/her "social identity" as being similar to others and in sharing meaning and values; and by

discovering his/her "personal identity" as being different to other human beings (Crespi, 1992:85). With this awareness the individual is able to establish distance between his/her own personal experience and what society expects from him/her (1992:102). These problems are addressed by psychologists such as Piaget (1932), Kohlberg (1969), Winnicott (1971) and Aboulafia (1986). Information in this field addresses the person's capacity to be assimilated into society as well as the capacity to resist total absorption and develop the potential for autonomy which allows one to be creative and transcend circumstances (Crespi, 1992:103).

Secondly, the subjective level addresses the individual's capacity to deal with contradictions found in external social relations (Crespi, 1992:104). He/she has to understand the intersubjectivity of his/her social reality and transcend this in symbolic interaction with others. Problems in this area are addressed by social psychologists such as Mead (1934); Schultz (1967); and Goffman (1959). The social reality people find themselves in is not a simple one of working towards collective goals. It is a reality in which others can bring coercion to bear upon those who do not conform (Winnicott, 1965). In such a context where there is conflict of interest and lack of consensus, power would imply having the inner and external capacity to deal with, negotiate and mediate the contradiction between different collectives and individual interests.

Structural level

The structural level deals with the normative-institutional order of complex systems as well as with the relationship between action and structure (discussed in Chapter 5). Problems in these areas are addressed by the disciplines of sociology, politics, law, and ethics in, for example, the works of Kant (1724-1804), Weber (1864-1920), Bachrach and Baratz (1962), Parsons (1967), Lukes (1974), Poulantzas (1973), Foucault (1975), Clegg (1979), Habermas (1984) and Luhmann (1988). The structural level (institutionalism, examined in the previous chapter) addresses the controlling power of the prevailing system and of symbolic norms both within the environment and within institutions (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

In this context, Crespi, (1992:117) views power as a dynamic that balances the controlling and enforcing function of those in power to ensure conformity, stability and entropy. He believes that “the ‘negotiable’ distribution of power” (1992:117) allows for changing norms and the “possibility of transforming power relations by a better allocation of power” (1992:118) is essential for survival and continuity.

From the above discussion it appears that Crespi (1992) conflates the terms power and resistance. Crespi’s (1992) position with regard to social action is, that all three aspects: inner subjective, outer subjective and structure, deal with the person’s ability to manage contradiction in his/her everyday living. All three are linked to the individual’s personal capacity to recognize contradiction, distance him/herself from social pressure and act accordingly. People are supposed to function in this way even when the role society expects them to play is ambivalent. It is presumed that a person will somehow acquire the strength or power to distance him/herself from a dominant discourse and the normalizing and disciplinary effects of society and institutions that sustain it.

Personal development and Managerial Control

Personal development is a key issue for the employee wishing to realize greater potential for autonomy. It is in the process of heightened awareness that the individual becomes able to express doubts, question prevailing assumptions and break the habitual chain of role continuity (Dworkin, 1988). It is this process of personal development that allows one to become creatively true to oneself (Winnicott, 1965). It is in the struggle with tension on a personal level that individuals release their creative energy (Winnicott, 1965, 1971) and, given the appropriate opportunity, are ideally able to participate constructively in the transformation of their social reality. But this is not the organizational understanding of personal development.

Within the organizational context, development is dependent upon the perceptions of managers, upon the constraints of personnel, budget priorities and performance goals, all

of which are reliant on socialization that gives priority to organizational goals and values (Zucker, 1977). It is a context in which the alternative discourse has no legitimacy. While organizations may promote a rhetoric of development and empowerment, this rhetoric must be recognized for what it is - the development necessary to perform a particular task without supervision. This is not an empowering rhetoric of genuine autonomy that develops from within employees as they take control of their lives and act from the strength of being able to define who they are. From this position they would be able to come to terms with a variety of shifting identities and the contradictions these induce (Clegg, 1994), as well as with their strengths and weakness in adopting or rejecting an organizationally designed and desired identity (Knights and Willmott, 1985).

But organizations are contexts for unequal power relations where management provides the organizational conditions where specific identities, such as the obedient subject, are fostered. Clegg asserts (1994:274) that this relationship between power and the constitution of subjectivity reveals itself in resistance. Clegg's (1994:275) contention is that the changing relations of power continuously shape "shifting subjectivities" (for example, biological relevance, father, mother, elder, deacon, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, etcetera). That is, subjectivities are contingent upon power relations. If organizations can remove the shifting they can achieve stable organization.

It is this routine fixing of stability on the personal level that organizations try to achieve through the use of predictable power circuits such as occupation, structure, discipline, discursive practices. Shifting subjectivities are problematic for organizations because they bring with them different dimensions of seeing and being, and are, therefore, sources of resistance to organizational power. To prevent this shifting capability, subjectivity in organizational life is fixed in terms of hierarchical membership, occupational title and disciplinary action. In this way organizations are able to define employees as particular kinds of subjects.

This is not a superficial practice but one that is institutionalized by knowledge and accepted organizational practice. Knowledge and power together constitute what is 'normal' and what is normal is institutionalized by an array of support institutions (Foucault, 1977). The individual then disciplines him/herself from within this normalized gaze while other accounts of reality are discounted or marginalized (Clegg, 1979 and DiMaggio and Powell's, (1983) account of isomorphism). While we all know this sort of conflict happens, it is not well documented as resistance to managerial control.

The exercise of organizational power and control generates tension and resistance. Tension in that management seeks to secure a particular employee definition by means of employment contract, occupational title, institutional and managerial practice that forecloses other possibilities, and resistance among employees who refuse to be reduced to organizational occupation and disciplinary practice and who behave otherwise. In this sense self-identity becomes an active struggle in circumstances which circumscribe personal development to task competencies, limits the creative use of intelligence to solving managerially defined problems and constrains the development of a fuller sense of self-esteem and self-confidence (Knights and Willmott, 1985:27).

This exercise of power and control is clearly evident at the performance level. As a means of control, the management-employee power relationship isolates the individual, induces obedience and reinforces this situation by its ubiquitous anonymity (Foucault, 1977) in that it is the "accepted" treatment of organizational employees. Performance appraisal is such a management tool. Through performance appraisal employees are differentiated and individualized by a detailed record that makes a person a knowable object in a special way for managers to categorize.

Employees are isolated and individualized by having their everyday behaviour scrutinized by criteria that they can neither discuss nor modify by different potentially valuable inputs. Managers specify and detail behaviour, then watch for deviation which

they subsequently modify through training and supervision. The desired result of this supervision is docile subjects who perform efficiently. The process of reform and training ostensibly puts managers on the side of employees and at the same time makes employees collude with a system that controls them in that it suppresses “conflict ... often with the full involvement” of employees (Deetz, 1992:39).

By collecting and classifying detailed behaviour, a dossier on each employee is compiled from which management assesses a person’s competence and attitude. Managers are not, however, only interested in what is external to a person but also want to know and influence the mind or moral person. Through individual interviews with their staff, managers acquire more personal information about an employee’s ambitions, attitudes, desires and fears. From this information a detailed record is created which is a ‘fixed’ and ordered knowledge of management’s categorization of employee behaviour that enables individual employees to be reduced to knowable objects. This knowledge allows managers to manipulate for reward, punishment or reform and thereby transform an employee into an object that “is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault, 1977:136). Thus employees enter into a “machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it” (Foucault, 1977:138) for its own purposes.

All that managers and their intermediaries have to do is their job. They work within the prescribed rules pertaining to each job against which they judge performance. The rules are part of a total rule system that structures and regulates organizational action in a predictable way according to specific management organizing principles which facilitate the organization’s objectives (Clegg, 1994:280). Because of this specific scrutiny of the individual, the rules themselves remain unchallenged and accepted as neutral, fair and legitimate. In not challenging the rules and the legitimacy of specific rules, the distribution of power remains undisturbed and unchallenged.

Because of intense personal scrutiny and in order to avoid the arbitrary use of managerial power, employees actually welcome the explicit detailing of rules and expectations

(Knights and Willmott, 1985). In this subtle way they remain disempowered because the focus is deflected from the power relationship and concentrated instead on the individual in his/her capacity to perform. Failure and incompetence can be punished, adaptation to organizational requirements rewarded and adherence to grievance procedures for the solution of so-called "private" problems enforced.

On a personal level, the individual is not likely to fare well in challenging this type of situation and will become frustrated and angry. This frustration is rooted in the incapacity to function fully as a human being within the prescribed organizational context. Acquiescence or indifference (Hirschman, 1970) is felt as the only acceptable alternative to leaving the job. An attempt to change the situation through voicing complaints and by negotiation on an individual level grievances that are common to all, are not accepted as viable alternatives.

Should individual employees speak up about their concerns or express their anger, they are likely to be silenced, scared, diminished and isolated (Leymann, 1993; illustrated in Chapter 1), punished, fired, or in some way financially sanctioned by rewards being withheld. The individual becomes suspended from the mainstream and effectively isolated, while the "problem" (as defined by management) is brought back under "control" (Leymann, 1993). This often takes many months and while attention is directed to much detail, larger issues not forming part of the mandate are ignored. In short, during the investigative process the individual is made to feel alone; certainly he or she does not become candidate for support (Leymann, 1993:29; Rothschild and Miethe, 1994:261). Because the individual is psychologically set apart, the problem is not seen as being common to all. Other employees fear management's fierce retaliation and for their own self-preservation disassociate themselves from the contaminated person. Consequently there is no sense of being part of a collective group of employees who may be facing the same difficulties and concerns (Clegg, 1977:35).

In this way, organizational practice defines employees as isolated individuals and deals with them as competitively striving for organizationally conceded benefits. Individual wants and needs such as job security, promotional opportunities, money, "autonomy" and "interdependence" are also defined (discussed in Chapter 2). Because employee needs, grievances, conflicts and demands are dealt with on an individual level they are not translated into actions within the collective decision-making arena (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). This practice disregards employees' potential to promote their collective interests in the development of genuine interdependence.

Although rhetorically management pays lip service to the idea of interdependence, the reality of its decision-making is that it continues to act as if it, management, is independent. Because employees' interests are identified solely as self-interests and management concentrates on controlling the pursuit of these interests, it fails to explore the transformative potential of their true interdependence. This means that management denies employees the development of capacities essential for transforming interdependent organizational relations (Knights and Willmott, 1985:30).

Because the development of genuine interdependence is not the goal, employees subvert their creative ability in resistance, avoidance and indifference. This behaviour unintentionally sustains their position of subordination (Nichols and Beynon, 1977; Scott, 1990). Part of the problem is that employees do not see themselves simultaneously as being both isolated and a collective of individuals (Weick and Roberts, 1993:357) suffering common prescribed circumstances. Consequently they have become ignorant of, or insensitive to, their collective sufferings, their collective needs, their collective aspirations and humanistic goals. Instead their legitimate human desires, values and demands are individualized by a management collective, which labels them illegitimate and parades them as deviant and dysfunctional. Thus labelled, any idea unacceptable to management and its interests, no matter how noble, will remain marginal and uncoordinated.

Employees do not realize that they are caught in such a dominant mindset that works against them ever changing these circumstances. They remain unaware that the system works against a collective consciousness, against organized collective action, against the development of those socio-political skills necessary to achieve a better interdependent organizational future.

Redressing this situation is not a simple personal problem. It is a collective problem that demands the capacity development of all members concerned in order to enable them to participate constructively in transforming their social reality. This social reality that demands collective action takes the discussion into the realm of difficulties faced in attempts to achieve collective benefits.

6.3 COLLECTIVE ACTION

Group theory (Lewin, 1947; Lewin and Grabbe, 1964) allied with rational self-interested behaviour allows one to assume that groups of individuals with common interests will act to further these interests. But this is not the case; large groups of people do not voluntarily act in this way (Olson, 1965:2). (This theory, he explains, does not hold for small groups where the dynamics and complexities are different). Unless members of large groups are forced to participate, or unless there are specific incentives over and above the common interest, members do not organize to further their common goals. Although large groups have the potential to act, more often than not this potential remains latent.

This is because there are specific problems in large groups that impede the organization of common interests. For Olson (1965:48) these problems stem from the fact that individuals' efforts are invisible in that individuals do not make a visible contribution. This is compounded by the fact that the larger the group the smaller is the share of the total benefit. In other words there is little reward for group action. Consequently there is less likelihood for a small sub-group of members to labour incessantly for the good of the

whole, because they are not rewarded sufficiently to carry the whole burden. Further, the larger the group the greater the resource and the organizational costs with regard to effort required in communicating, bargaining, and obtaining agreement.

It does not matter that a goal is common and the benefit collective. People do not act as if they have a common interest to share the burden of the resource cost and effort of organization to attain and maintain these (1965:21). There is no incentive to bear the burden of collective action (for example, the state is concerned with the common good yet taxation, for obvious reasons, is compulsory not voluntary). To overcome this barrier of mobilizing collective action, Olson (1965:51) recommends selective incentives that will accrue only to those who actually contribute to the common goals. In other words, to gain active support, it becomes necessary for large groups to supply additional benefits to members other than the collective benefit desired. (For example, the South African Broadcasting Corporation in order to try and encourage people to pay their TV licences promotes game shows with enticing prizes. Only those people with TV licences are eligible to participate).

It is obviously expedient to be able to justify a collective benefit sufficiently to obtain compulsory membership and so to acquire the resources necessary to become a powerful force to be reckoned with. In this way the collective and non-collective (selective) benefits become obtainable.

Olson's (1965) point of departure is an *economic theory* of public good or benefit to all, where a self-interested individual's contribution will not exceed the benefit s/he will derive. The individual's contribution is so small relative to the total contribution that his/her lack of contribution will not make any difference - hence s/he is easily deterred from making it - the free-rider problem. From this perspective the problem of collective action can only be solved by coercion or selective benefits. Douglas (1986) comments that one of the difficulties with this latent group encounter is that "its members, by

definition, have not got any strong personal interest in remaining in it" (Douglas, 1986:38).

Ostrom (1990) on the other hand focuses on the collective benefit and comments that it is not necessary to let the free-rider problem dominate the decision process as this solution may not give the optimal collective benefit. She "would rather address the question of how to enhance the capabilities of those involved in order to change the constraining rules of the game" (1990:7). She recognizes that "getting the institution right" is a "difficult, time-consuming, conflict-involving process" (1990:14) given that new theoretical models do not work that efficiently in the field in the context of the problems of understanding, implementation and cultural specific difficulties. She believes that it may be more immediately effective to concentrate on improving the capacity of individuals to influence their situation. This development would take place during the process of working out for themselves, a workable solution to a common problem.

Internal factors preventing the resolution of problems could be that participants do not have the "capacity to communicate with one another, no way to develop trust, and no sense that they must share a common future" and this mindset would need to be changed (Ostrom, 1990:21). External factors working against such people solving their own problems are the lack of "autonomy to change their own institutional structures" and the fact that they "are prevented from making constructive changes by external authorities who are indifferent to the perversities" of their problem "or stand to gain from it" (1990:21).

Ostrom's (1990) ideas are gained from exploring the management of common-pool resources such as water, fish and meadows in situations where there are no well defined property rights. While economists may push for privatization or outside monitoring as the solution to such problems, Olson (1990:1) explores alternative solutions given that other problems such as skill deficiency can be addressed to allow a measure of self-governance or common-pool management. As long as analysts believe people are

helpless and do not believe that the people concerned can deal with their problems constructively they will not pursue this alternative course of enquiry (1990:21). The same premise holds true for organizations.

As long as researchers see employees as recalcitrant or helpless they will not see employees as capable of changing their organizational circumstances constructively. Therefore they are not likely to apply themselves to employee problems or identify what factors would help or hinder them in their efforts to resolve them. Rather they will continue to focus on solving management's problems. While the end goal may be the same, that is, having organizations that are viable, the solutions may be poles apart and the unintended consequences damaging to the human spirit.

Nevertheless, there are theoretical difficulties surrounding collective action and there are institutions that support or restrain such action. It does, however, require skilful organization to become a concerted force to be reckoned with. Such organizing action is an instrument to:

- acquire membership;
- achieve common objectives (and the particular advantage of membership);
- achieve selective incentives available for active support; and
- create the by-product of an effective pressure group.

In the organizational environment there is effectively in place such an organizing system; a huge institutionalized organizational machinery to further the interests of organizations, their shareholders and existing management practice and to inhibit other interests and conflicting behaviour. Further there is a dominant discourse sustaining this position. Mainstream, orthodox organizational theory is an institutionalized body of knowledge, a built-in cognitive and normative belief system that sustains and enables management and organizational practice in its present form, and that marginalizes any alternative discourse. This system creates the institutionalized rules and structures that privileges

management while it regulates, maintains and facilitates purposeful collective organizational action.

These rules and practices of organizations that enable the strategic actions of management, restrain those of employees (Clegg, 1989) and become part of employees' own reasoning in that they interpret these rules and practices to ensure the achievement of management and organizational goals (Zucker, 1983; Burns and Flam, 1987). All organizational actions and systems gain relevance in relation to this particular rationale which mainstream organizational theory has successfully 'fixed'. But this interpretation of organizational life can be contested.

Discursive practices can create new meanings as old problems become redefined. At this knowledge level, alternative ways of understanding organizations have still to be accepted as legitimate and disseminated widely. Employees themselves lack knowledge of the way things are (Knight and Willmott, 1985:32; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992:432) and are not aware of common organizational problems. Although individual employees may assert dissatisfaction in private, employees as a collective have not established legitimacy for their own collective humanistic ideas. Until this happens submissive acceptance of the prevailing power structure, ideology and practice will continue to produce employees who remain ignorant of power strategies necessary for transforming their circumstances and for achieving other legitimate human desires within the organizational context (Knights and Willmott, 1985, 1989). Consequently an understanding of common benefits (Ostrom, 1990:7) and the idea of changing the system to address common organizational problems collectively, is neither part of the agenda nor part of the employee mindset.

Organizations need to be socially transformed. This will require change in the structure and rule making spheres of action. This is political activity whereby organizational rules are made and reformed in order to transform, innovate and restructure organizations (Burns and Flam, 1987:27). These changes need to be done in such a way as to

accommodate an alternative cognitive approach that is more inclusive of other legitimate goals and which solves other common problems.

The idea of rules as common "resources and states in social interaction and the strategic structuring of social life" in co-ordinating *alternative solutions to collective problems* is not part of the organizational mindset (Burns and Flam, 1987:25). A political construct has no legitimacy in the organizational context. In short, there can be no alternative shaping of the agenda as there is no alternative vision, frame of meaning or value system counterbalancing the dominant thrust of management. Creative resolution of the problem by all parties concerned is prevented by the very discourse, structure and rules of the game.

The lack of a legitimate alternative discourse is a serious concern that stands in the way of organizational reformation. Because employee concerns remain unarticulated in a formal sense there is a lack of an authoritative public voice and institutionalized machinery to further the interests and development of all organizational members, not just the elites. This lack inhibits discursive exchange which in turn results in a lack, at the social and ethical level, of a legitimate institutionalized theory of organizational good. Such debate could encourage a view of organizations where the good of the whole is a superordinate concern; where the moral imperatives of an organization are accepted as democratic practice, justice and fairness and where opportunities are justly distributed (Rawls, 1971:468).

An inclusive mindset at the organizational level of policy making, decision-making and allocation of resources, contrasted to the individualization of employees, is one of association (Knoke, 1986). This view recognizes the organization as a political community. A community in which "the organization collectively decides to which purposes it will apply the pooled associational resources over which it has gained collective control" (Knoke, 1986:9). In such a community, decision mechanisms and procedures encouraging or suppressing "participation in and support for collective

actions" becomes critical (Knoke, 1986:11). As does leadership skills to enable a collective to articulate its purpose, be responsive to all interests and preferences, and decide how to achieve it. Yet the dominant discourse would have this level of interaction remain the privileged domain of management. Within mainstream organizational theory and management practice the concept of association has been conflated with that of management. This is a formidable reality that deserves to be challenged.

To help and encourage us upon a path of reform that suggests wishful thinking, the women's movement is examined. The women's movement is explored because, despite formidable odds, it has been able to establish a legitimate discourse that offers an alternative to the institutionalized way of looking at the position of women. Of particular significance is its achievement in translating a movement of resistance into one of empowerment. As such it offers valuable insights for those who, facing a dominant institutionalized discourse and practice, remain committed to an alternative path for improving organizational conditions and management practice.

6.4 THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The women's movement is about women who despite their social and power disadvantage have come together as a group to organize for action and change. The feminist viewpoint (Radtke and Stam, 1994; Grimshaw, 1991; Sawicki, 1991; Adamson, Briskin and McPhail, 1988 and Gilligan, 1982) recognizes that women are oppressed and exploited because they are women, and as such represents an alternative way of looking at women and women's issues. It challenges the dominant "truth" about women being subordinate to men as well as the mainstream image of femininity. This challenge is not narrowly confined; it is seen in the home, at the workplace, and politically in legislation.

Historical Background

Initially women's movements focused on issues such as obtaining the vote, gaining property rights and helping the underprivileged; and women organized for social change

around these areas (Garner, 1996:311). Although the various activities were rather amorphous and not articulated overall as a political instrument, the women's movement developed into a many-sited, multi-issue movement of empowerment, resistance and emancipation (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail, 1988:7, 137).

It is a movement that has

- named violence against women in many forms - abuse, incest, rape, sexual harassment (Ferraro, 1988);
- labelled oppression and second class citizenship (Frieden, 1963);
- exposed discrimination, exploitation and lack of equal access to advantages under prevailing norms (Farley, 1978);
- claimed that women have the right to decide issues relating to their own bodies (in particular, birth control and abortion) (Tangri et al, 1982) and demanded the health facilities to deliver this service.

This was achieved in the face of formidably entrenched and ongoing opposition. From a mainstream intellectual perspective, the contemporary work on moral development, dominated by Kohlberg's theory (1969) and Piaget's (1932) work was criticized by Kohlberg's student Gilligan (1982:18) because "in the research from which Kohlberg derives his theory, females simply do not exist. Kohlberg's (1969, 1981) six stages that describe the development of moral judgement from childhood to adulthood are based empirically on a study of eighty-four boys whose development Kohlberg (1969) has followed for a period of over twenty years." Gilligan comments further that similarly in "Piaget's account (1932) of the moral judgement of the child 'the child' is assumed to be male" (1982:18). The psychology of women with its greater orientation towards relationships and interdependence is consequently seen as a *deviation from the norm*. Women are different to men and are likely to see some "moral problems arising from conflicting responsibilities rather than from competing rights and" these will require for their "resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract" (Gilligan, 1982:19); they have a different voice.

Grimshaw's (1991:493) response is that in a male dominated society it is not surprising that differences in the way men and women think about moral issues has been expressed "in terms of *deficiency* on the part of women". Her suggestion is that "we might recognize *difference* without ascribing *deficiency*; and maybe a consideration of female moral reasoning can highlight the problems in the male forms of reasoning which have been seen as the norm" (1991:493). This deficiency debate appears to have evaporated with further research and calls to mind the anecdote told about King Charles II who summoned his wise men around him for an explanation as to why a dead fish weighed more than a live one. After listening to many learned explanations he was able to tell the cognoscenti that it did not.

Organized Action

The women's movement challenges, both at the grassroots and institutional levels, woman's powerlessness to act effectively to bring about social change (Adamson et al, 1988:136). In the latter part of the twentieth century feminist have borrowed from the work of Foucault (1977; 1982) in that they understand power to be a political dynamic and as such open to possibilities of resistance, change and transformation (Sawicki, 1981).

Feminism has been responsible for, and successful in, creating a different public consciousness and discourse (Adamson et al, 1988:137). Women, as a result of this concerted effort, are seen and heard differently (Gilligan, 1982); that is, they are heard through the clamour of the dominant discourse described as male. This *awareness and challenge* manifests itself in feminist *resistance* to the dominant mindset of gender subordination, inequality and marginality. It is *articulated* through a combination of consciousness-raising activities that reveal other choices and activities open to women. These consciousness-raising activities include, at an institutional level, highlighting power relations of privilege and dependency; and at the grass-roots level exposing power and emotional abuse, and bringing to public awareness the prevalence of domestic

violence. These discursive and social activities have resulted in the individual, collective and *political empowerment* of women (Adamson et al, 1988:200).

Strategies of resistance

Some feminist groups (Gilligan, 1982) examine the dominant discourse to see how women are classified. They reject this classification and clarify just how power relations are patterned. Strategies of resistance are then formulated from these starting points. Problematic women's issues in the family are identified as domestic authority, housework and child care, sexual subservience and abuse, violence and gender compulsory roles. Help is offered in the form of information, battered women shelters, counselling and child care facilities.

Issue is taken by women activists with various churches where secular gender relationships are regarded as expressions of sacred ones; where women are subordinate to men, and women's role in the church is carefully prescribed and circumscribed (Lipman-Blumen, 1994:119). They lobby for women priests, and fight on the secular legislative level for the right for women to make decisions regarding their bodies, thus by-passing the authority of the church. Feminists have brought attention to the criminal justice system (Livingston, 1982). They give an alternative perspective of re-victimization of women in that they show, in their own countries, how the justice system's focus on the offender causes further damage to victims in cases of rape, sexual abuse and family violence. They lobby on the legislative level for women's rights, run anti-pornography campaigns, open rape crises centres and offer counselling and material support.

Other activists (Ferguson, 1984) focus on the economy and work situation. They highlight job and promotional discrimination, pay disparities, tax and benefit discrimination, training and mentoring discrimination, as well as sexual harassment. They campaign for equal pay for equal work and equal opportunity. At a professional level they lobby for the promotion of women into male dominated occupations and into

leadership positions (Ferguson, 1984); they force action on sexual harassment and campaign for the provision of childcare.

Other groups focus on the biological aspects of women (Tangri et al., 1982). They object that the medical discipline is seen through the eyes and minds of male doctors who have categorized the female body and turned it into a victim of biology. They demand that woman have control over their own bodies particularly with regard to sex and reproduction.

On the fragmented, individual level there has been increased awareness of the constraints of power relationships. This widespread re-understanding of relationships has been quite revolutionary in private spheres of life such as the family and intimate relations (Castoriades, 1991). This individual awakening, however, is firmly rooted in the material and emotional support of the collective context.

On the collective, cultural and cross-cultural level women's actions are inclined to be grassroots and local (Ferraro, 1988). There is much assertive networking linking women by their shared problems and feelings; a massive re-education and protection programme regarding powerlessness, discrimination, violence to their sex; denunciation of inferiority, resistance to gender hierarchical power relations, resistance to compulsory gender roles and counselling.

This solidarity is also shown at times in national and global discursive contexts; and has the capacity to translate into liberating political action for women, for example the role of United Nations in drawing attention to gender discrimination genital mutilation (Garner, 1996:325). This focused action has the potential for transformative challenges. It calls for greater human freedom for all rather than enhancing the privileges of some. Overall the movement is politically empowering for women because as they become aware of alternatives, other perspectives and other possibilities, women are able to move from a

position of social inertia to the realization that they can bring about transformative social change through collective action.

Strategy for social change

Although the women's movement from its loose beginnings has not been a well coordinated strategic movement for social change, contemporary feminist discourse is more inclined to follow this route by developing a shared vision of future social relations. Adamson, Briskin and McPhail (1988:23) suggest a social change model for feminist practice that they believe will allow the feminist vision to succeed. Their model has two key components - disengagement and mainstreaming.

- **Disengagement**

Disengagement allows for the distancing of oneself from the prevailing system and standpoints. Removed from the prevailing mindset one is free to create an alternative vision of society as well as alternative social structures to achieve this vision (Adamson et al, 1988:177). It is, however, sadly acknowledged that if too few follow this course of action they will not create the critical mass necessary to be taken seriously and will instead end up being marginalized. Because of this downside, the idea of mainstreaming becomes important.

- **Mainstreaming**

It is critical that large numbers of women be involved in the struggle to change and improve their position. The feminist movement as an instrument for social change organizes to involve the majority of women (Adamson et al, 1988:178). Their activities are designed to reach the general population by bringing to its attention alternatives that can be used as particular solutions to particular issues.

The strength of the woman's movement rests on the huge numbers of women involved, but this fact has brought its own problems. Much energy is spent on multiple activities in many places without a cohesive structure or shared vision beyond the immediate

problems at hand. Given this reality the women's movement has been important in that it offers an alternative view to personal change, its focus and strategy goes beyond the individual. Among activists there is a firm realization that for women to bring about change at a personal level concerted collective social action is required.

What the women's movement has identified as being necessary is far-reaching social change that deals specifically with unequal social power relations organized around class, race, gender, sexual orientation and patriarchal capitalism. The realization of the scope of this challenge has brought with it an awareness that a major organizational process to change is required as well as the adoption of a determined strategy. This strategy will include joining forces to achieve political ends (Garner, 1996:324). Although the women's movement prides itself on its autonomy it has become necessary for political effectiveness to show a willingness and ability to form alliances with movements outside the women's movement such as labour and other liberation movements.

Politics of Change

Essentially the level and type of social change desired by the women's movement demands an understanding both of power and the politics of generating organizational change. It requires a cohesive discourse and a clear vision of the future. From this base a shared common purpose, agreement on issues to be addressed and agreement on the strategies and tactics to deal with the issues can be generated in order to achieve the desired vision of the future.

The complexity of the women's movement does not appear, at present, to have this cohesion. It does have a collective consciousness but it is fragmented in its pursuit of diverse goals (Garner, 1996:316/317). This fragmentation is evident in the following ideological positions. Liberal feminists are happy with the mainstream but focus on redistribution; they want equality of opportunity. For radical feminists, the issue is the differences between men and woman and the oppression that results; they want feminist alternatives to the dominant male culture. Socialist feminists, on the other hand, analyse

the power relations of capitalist society that result in oppression by virtue of class, race, gender and sexual orientation; they want alternative structures that will allow the social transformation of society. Each discursive category challenges prevailing assumptions about women in social relationships. Together they have the potential to empower women, and society in general, in so far as women organize for an alternative social way of life that is geared towards improving the human condition.

Sawicki (1991:32) suggests that women understand their diversity of experience, and utilize these differences as a way of categorizing oppression and identifying effective and ineffective practices of struggle. In this way she avoids the difficulty of viewing differences as something that divides, and promotes the realization that differences can be used as effective sources of political action and creative change.

The lessons we learn from the discourse of the women's movement are multiple. It has translated its cause into a many-sited, multi-issue movement of resistance, empowerment and emancipation for the majority of women. Translating these lessons to the organizational environment would suggest the following.

It suggests that any attempt at organizational reform would need to be a major organizational change process involving the majority of employees. That a legitimate discourse of employee-driven change within organizations will have to be promoted that challenges the established, institutionalized mindset. This alternative discourse and action would challenge the prevailing socialization of organizational theory and management practice that conditions employees to accept existing organizational arrangements. These currently taken-for-granted practices condition, on the one hand, employees into accepting second-class organizational citizenship and on the other, seduces with privileges, those who sustain the system in its present form. It would suggest that there would have to be a well-articulated vision of the desired future as a shaping political discourse firmly linked to the practical side of identifying specific organizational situations, particular problematic issues and offering alternative

possibilities. The issues will need to be defined and articulated in consciousness raising activities that highlight common problems such as power relations, infringement of capacity development and abuse.

Such an action-orientated initiative would require that special attention be given to employee capacity development to allow this level of participation, that goes beyond task competence, in order to facilitate skilful social interdependence - the personal, social and political skills necessary to lead an integrated organizational life. As employees develop autonomously, socially and politically they will move, from a position of organizational acceptance and inertia, to a realization of other possibilities where concerted action and alternative structures can help to achieve common benefits and bring about organizational change. This developmental approach could, in the long-term, generate a challenge to the narrow superordinate rationale of what constitutes an organization's goals.

Are these ideas utopian or do employees already in some way reject what is currently being asked of them? An examination of employee behaviour would suggest that they do resist organizational practice. Their account of resistance is just not a legitimate discourse, nor is it articulated in a manner that politically shapes action or gives a sense of identity with other employees. It is not geared towards positive organizational reform. As we turn to the examination of employee resistance we gain understanding of the problems employees are grappling with and of how effective or not their efforts are.

6.5 EMPLOYEE RESISTANCE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Employee resistance to prevailing management and organizational practice is not well documented. That is, there has not been a clear historical development of employee protest, struggle, or organized resistance in order to transform organizational theory and practice.

What we do find in early theoretical accounts is the recognition of informal power relations in organizations (Mayo, 1933) and the investigation of various strategies by management to recognize and deal with issues labelled as recalcitrance (Taylor, 1911), dysfunctional political behaviour (Mintzberg, 1983) and resistance to change (Lewin, 1947; Plant, 1987). The focus of this mainstream approach is to get employees to do what they otherwise would not do.

Organized Resistance

In contradistinction to this mainstream literature is Marxist theory that operates from the grand narrative of worker exploitation within the capitalist mode of production. Within this framework, the collective nature of co-operative labour allows the extraction of surplus value by agents of capitalists for the accumulation of profit (capital). The emancipatory focus of this literature is on labour developing itself, creating a working class consciousness, rising up in revolution against capitalists and capitalism, and creating a socialist environment. An offshoot from this line of thinking is labour process theory which developed from the work of Braverman (1974) and Buroway (1979). Briefly, labour process theory is about what happens once management have bought labour (work potential) and then try to convert this labour into work effort under conditions that permit surplus accumulation (Littler, 1990:48).

Apart from the issues of the construction of the labour market itself, Braverman's work had two particular thrusts: the degradation, fragmentation and deskilling of work in order to intensify labour (1974:195), and the managerial strategy of tightening control (1974:87, 120). By deskilling work a homogenous labour pool is created who are excluded from the ranks of management. Management then, from their privileged position, draw on this labour pool at market related prices. In Braverman's view (1974:443) worker capacity to resist this situation is diminished as a result of their deskilling - workers do, managers think. Braverman (1974:27) is concerned with workers as a class whose class interest, he believes, is to organize against the capital accumulation process.

For Burawoy (1979, 1985) the work context is understood as involving three dimensions - the economic (the production of things), the political (the production of social relations) and the ideological (the production of experience). It is in the areas of politics and ideology on the shopfloor that Burawoy (1985:28) sees the struggle, definition and organization of class interests. Burawoy's (1979) main contribution is with subjectivity and the manufacture of consent. "Our jobs may have had little skill in Braverman's sense, but they involved ingenuity enough. ... Objectification of work, if that is what we were experiencing, is very much a subjective process - it cannot be reduced to some inexorable laws of capitalism. We participated in and strategized our own exploitation" (Burawoy, 1985:10). Burawoy's concern is not only with exposing the compliance of workers that is demanded by capitalism but in revealing the hostility and antagonism that accompanies this compliance within the work context. Because of the focus on class his concern is with blue-collar resistance.

This scholarship directs attention to management control strategies and to specific practices of resistance by male blue-collar workers on the shopfloor in particular circumstances. Also embedded in this literature is the development of trade unions and grievance machinery designed to place some restraints upon management's authoritarian controls but which in effect succeeds in setting "limits on workers' struggles" (Burawoy, 1985:10). However, the purpose of this chapter is not to follow the development of class conflict, class interests and their revolutionary struggle. Instead, it is to acknowledge the recognition of subjective employee experience within the work context and to establish the existing resistance debate within the organizational context of management control strategies.

The following are examples of the where, why and how of empirical work on organizational resistance in specific contexts. From these works we can judge for ourselves whether the dominated do indeed consent to their subordination; whether there is a developing discourse of resistance; and whether the personal cost that this struggle

entails is justified. The examples are varied and reveal that acts of resistance are exercises of power; that power cannot be simply categorized as evil nor that all practices of resistance are liberatory. Some employee oppositional struggles are worth endorsing while the behaviour of others need to be redirected if it is a better future that employees desire.

Research on Resistance

Collinson (1994) describes his work in an all-male engineering factory environment of the components division of a heavy vehicle manufacturing company in Lancashire, England. This division is characterized by "a strong class and gender based community spirit ... [which] did not translate into a harmony of interests within the organization as a whole" (1994:31). The research project was undertaken after a takeover of the company by an American transnational.

Resistance by Distance

On being interviewed, workers complained of being treated as commodities to be hired and fired at management's discretion, of being treated as unthinking machines, and as being second class citizens as regards terms and conditions of service within the company. This was their deeply felt subjective experience of their work with regard to management practice.

Their reaction to this situation (Collinson, 1994:32) was to distance themselves from management by avoiding any personal overtures. The suggested calling of managers by their first names was ignored and offers of lifts or cigarettes were declined, all of which they termed 'yankee bullshit' and propaganda. Further they refused any opportunity to meet with senior managers without the presence of a shop steward.

The workers saw themselves as having "nothing in common" with management and took pride in their counter-culture that emphasized their informal working class identity

(1994:32). They praised their practical engineering, production skills and disparaged the paper chasing, pen-pushing role of management and white-collar workers. The shopfloor was where the real stuff happened.

Incentive schemes to improve productivity were 'outsmarted' by fooling rate fixers. What management had designed "to generate employee flexibility and enhance productivity became a resource of inflexibility and output restriction" (1994:34). As workers had no access to the information management used to calculate production figures they mistrusted the figures that management supplied to justify bonus calculations. Above all they did not want to collude with managerial manipulation and management functions. So by producing false impressions, the workers felt that they had greater control of their performance in that they created work space in order to be able to spend time in the privacy of the cloakrooms and created work time to do their own odd jobs and car repairs.

In this way they tried to separate the public sphere of their commodity labour and the private sphere of their competence, leisure and domesticity where management had no prerogative. This separation, however, proved quite illusory when it came to redundancy which rather confirmed the "worker's experience and awareness of their own disposability as manual workers" (Collinson, 1994:37). Their efforts at separation were also part of their downfall. In their uncritical acceptance of managers' technical financial expertise and knowledge they were left with no information with which to challenge management's interpretation of facts. Their strategy of resistance by distance had backfired.

This strategy of resistance by distance, while reinforcing the workers' identity of themselves as working class practical people, cannot be evaluated as a successful strategy of resistance (a position confirmed by Willis, 1977 discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis). It fails both to challenge or to change the conditions it sets out to test.

The focus of the above study has been on the creation of distance through informal social organization of male workers on the shopfloor whereby they redefine time and space to create the opportunity for private space and private work. By taking a strategy of distance they leave management to do the managing and have no part to play in anything they consider managerial. This stance is taken so as to avoid co-optation with those they see themselves as having nothing in common. In other words they concede management the prerogative to do as they wish. But the price they pay to reinforce their preferred work identity is enormous.

First they separate themselves not only from management but also from all other workers in the organization with whom they could create bonds of alliance. Secondly, because of their uncritical acceptance of management's knowledge they do not obtain the necessary information to evaluate management's actions. Consequently they do not obtain alternative information from collaborative sources and are easily outmanoeuvred by any financial justifications that management uses for bonus payments or redundancies. All they have managed to do is accommodate themselves to their commodified labour. From an academic perspective the project also showed the difficulty of trying to neatly separate resistance and compliance in work organizations when they are so problematically interlinked (Collinson, 1994:37).

The next case study is taken from a white-collar setting and will show the value of solidaristic organization.

Resistance through Persistence

This case study is drawn from an insurance industry in the United Kingdom in which Jane takes up the issue of gender discrimination (Collinson, 1994:40). Jane is part of a national organization that has a strong union presence. The company has been taken over by an American multinational that has a "strong public commitment to equal opportunities and an even stronger sensitivity to the possibility of bad publicity regarding gender or ethnicity" (Collinson, 1994:41).

Jane, a grade six clerk, applies for a grade seven post, is unsuccessful but is 'next in line' for the next promotional vacancy. Two vacancies arise but Jane is now pregnant. Of the applicants for the promotional opportunity she has the highest qualifications and is the only one with an 'A' work performance record. She does not get the promotion. The two successful candidates are a woman who was previously rejected outright and a man who has received a management warning. Jane requests an explanation for her non-appointment and is told dismissively by her supervisor that he could not support her appointment.

Jane does not want to resign from the firm, she does not want to only claim her maternity benefit and leave, nor does she want to just accept the present situation, distance herself from the organization and become less committed to her work. She decides she will "challenge management's refusal to justify their promotion decision" (Collinson, 1994:42). She takes the position of resistance through persistence.

Jane is able to take this position for a number of reasons. She is an internal candidate and knows the position regarding the other candidates. She has been with the company for quite a while and is well acquainted with the organizational rules and practices. As a local union representative she has knowledge of the workings and practices of the union which are strongly committed to equal opportunity principles. As a woman she has a good relationship with a senior national official of the union who is also a woman and is prepared to represent her. She has all the support systems in place and she knows the rules of the game. It is now a matter of strategy.

The national union official arranges a meeting with the branch manager, Jane and herself at which they request the formal selection and rejection criteria. The branch manager is not able to supply these but assures Jane that her pregnancy has nothing to do with the decision. The meeting is adjourned so that the manager can consult with the supervisor. When it is reconvened the decision criteria are given as follows: Jane did 'not

demonstrate the personality to take on the job'; she was never fully committed and allowed other issues to interfere with her work; she was 'reputed to have made a critical comment about the company to a colleague'; she was not committed to working overtime and she had not sat for her insurance examinations - all plausible and difficult judgements to challenge (Collinson, 1994:43). The union official adjourned the meeting and asked for a further meeting, but in the afternoon in order to accommodate Jane's morning sickness.

The following meeting was arranged for 9 o'clock, the time of which was viewed as a tactical move on the part of management. As a result Jane was given the following advice. Not to talk directly to the manager but leave any talking to the union official. Not to criticize the two successful candidates and not to leave the room if nauseous but if necessary to be sick on the manager's new carpet.

The union official took the line that the criteria given by the manager was 'vague, inconsistent and incorrect' (Collinson, 1994:44). The manager tried to side-step the formalities and appealed to Jane on a personal note, which she ignored as advised. He then adjourned the meeting as it was becoming obvious that Jane was likely to be sick on his carpet. He reconvened the meeting on an afternoon. The company's own written reports revealed that Jane was complimented on her personality to deal with the work; that her performance was excellent and that overtime records proved that she had done a fair share. Although she did not have the formal insurance qualifications, neither did the other two appointees. The union official and Jane persisted in asking for the formal selection material. The branch manager refused to budge.

The union official took the matter up with the corporate personnel department and advised that they had sufficient material to take the matter to the Equal Opportunities Commission. The branch manager was advised to upgrade Jane and cover the unbudgeted cost from other financial sources.

The case study reveals many pertinent points. If an employee takes on management that person has to have the strength and determination of character to withstand pejorative personal attacks on his/her work identity, to withstand the psychological accumulative pressure of a long drawn out procedure of incrimination, the fear of victimization and vulnerability. All these difficulties are nothing more than aspects of the power relationship that reveal management's use of the personal to destroy further resistance; and management's use of the grievance procedure to control and limit an employee's case.

The case shows how management restricts information as a means of control - evident in the supervisor failing to explain the promotion criteria and the further lack of adequate correct information to justify the position taken. It shows that knowledge of organizational practices and criteria and how to use them in concrete situations are critical in articulating grievances. It also inadvertently shows that the judicious use of management information makes management's actions 'more visible and accountable' (Collinson, 1994:47).

Legal knowledge of the position on discrimination also played its part in the success of this case. Not only did it give confidence in taking a particular line of action but in Jane's case was a precondition of the possible success in addressing this grievance. Jane's own involvement with the union and her longstanding working relationship with the national union official were all knowledge resources that give insight into the social organization of power. Further, her close gender identification offered solidarity and support, and was articulated through a consciousness of legal rights (Clegg, 1994:300). These were all factors that supported Jane during a difficult period and ensured commitment to the issue she was contesting. The effectiveness of this line of resistance is in sharp contrast to the earlier shopfloor case where resistance was shaped round the construction and protection of a particular oppositional identity.

Collinson (1994:58) draws other conclusions from his work on resistance. The conformity of the many marginalizes opportunities for resistance and makes it very difficult for those who do to resist the frustrations and dissatisfactions imposed by managerial disciplinary practices. As long as the majority of employees comply with these practices it will mean that the chance of the minority being effective in their resistance is not very likely. Management are so easily able to marginalize the few, discredit the legitimacy of their complaints, impute negative motives to their behaviour, emphasize personality 'problems' and label these people deviant. This is a difficult situation to face without tremendous personal resources when a challenge to managerial practice brings with it the danger of losing one's job.

An example of just how difficult things can get for an employee is revealed in the work of Rothschild and Miethe (1994).

Whistleblowing to change the way things are done

Rothschild and Miethe (1994:252) examine "bottom-up resistance" (subordinates challenging superiors) which they see as taking many forms - outright sabotage, work avoidance strategies and whistleblowing. They view whistleblowing as a political act in that it is a strategy to exert influence in the workplace. As a political act it involves "the disclosure of illegal, unethical or harmful practices in the workplace to parties who might take action" (1994:254). These employees will go inside or outside the organization to gain attention by challenging, changing or exposing organizational abuses neglected by those more senior. Rothschild and Miethe (1994:252) contend that in the process of opposing the problem whistleblowers bear the brunt of such vicious management reprisals that they are inadvertently transformed into political subjects. In the process of dealing with the unjust reprisals and the corrupt practices they distance themselves even further from management and continue the fight in an effort to maintain and assert their own integrity and dignity (1994:252).

Rothschild and Miethe (1994:253) have drawn their conclusions from ongoing research in a variety of organizational settings, from data from archival records of the National Association of Social Work, a 10-page survey and numerous in-depth interviews. They have come to highlight the political nature of whistleblowing rather than follow the existing academic view which explains this type of behaviour as an ethical expression of conflicting values that reveals a gap between an organization's acclaimed mission and values, and actual practices. This prevailing argument takes the form that whistleblowing is only morally justifiable and permissible where there is the danger of considerable harm to the public (De George, 1990:231).

Whistleblowers try to change the way things are done in an organization. They report their concerned observations about a specific organizational practice to more senior management in the naïve belief that "if senior managers knew of the abusive or illegal practice, they would surely intervene to end it" (Rothschild and Miethe, 1994:254). What they experience instead, is the full force of management's behaviour as a political strategy to discredit them and neutralize the power of their information. It is this ordeal that transforms the consciousness of these individuals. It makes them realize that if they are going to survive the ordeal with management, then they will have to link their criticism to some social movement of collective value-based protest that challenges the way things are done and promotes concrete change to prevailing practice.

As a description of these people, Jos et al. (1989:552) claim that whistleblowers are among the most highly competent, professional and respected people who have a vested interest in the well-being of their organization and who sincerely believe, that given their credibility, notice will be taken of their concern. They hold strategic positions within organizations that allow them opportunities to observe misconduct. Further, Jos et al. assert that the principles of their behaviour are informed by a variety of influences (family, religion, profession, associations) that transcend the narrow norms of organizational practice and gives them broader moral standards (a case of shifting subjectivities, Clegg, 1994).

Rothschild and Mickle (1994:261) discover from their interviews that very few employees who observe waste or fraud, report it. As a result of this silence, whistleblowers "are isolated in criticism of the organization ... [and] become easy targets for management retaliation" (1994:261). This position is confirmed by Miceli et al. (1991) who examine factors associated with internal auditors. They take the position that internal auditors are whistleblowers (1991:113) because they evaluate very carefully the wrongdoing they do in fact report. This is because internal auditors get mixed signals from management. While their role demands that they report wrongdoing and while management "give 'lip service' to encouraging reporting, ... informal norms and reward systems may actually discourage it" (1991:114). In this informal world where there is tacit acceptance of wrongdoing auditors have to recognize what is wrongdoing, assess whether this wrongdoing is tolerated, consider whether this action is something for which they have to take responsibility for, and evaluate whether reporting the matter will have the benefit of bringing about the change and whether they will escape retaliation (1991:115). What Miceli et al confirm is that what the auditors actually report depends on whether many others have also observed the incident and on the social support they will be provided if the wrongdoing is reported. Generally their findings among auditors indicate that those people who make such reports are well-paid, competent individuals, "valued, committed members of the organization who feel their own sense of moral behaviour and who believe they are doing their jobs as the organization has prescribed them" (1991:126).

The case study of Anne, is used as a vivid example of what it means to be a whistleblower. Anne's job was to mix chemical compounds for a company making rubber belts. After a few days on the job she experienced some strange physical reactions but this did not deter her hard work. Within a couple of months she received special commendations for her work and was asked to assist in the training of others. Because of the persistent burning in her nose and mouth, her headaches and pains in her bones she decided to learn more about the chemicals she was using. But there were no 'pinksheets'

on the chemical drums in use, so she approached the supervisor for information.

Although the supervisor said this was a good idea Anne was summarily fired the next day.

Anne refused to take this quietly. She started collecting information about the plight of other employees, gained access to technical information and with the help of a university expert realized that employees were being exposed to chemical compounds a hundred times above the legal levels allowed. While the company doctors had dismissively minimized her physical distress she soon found tumours growing in her mouth.

Independent medical examination revealed permanent liver damage and softening of the skull. (Her case is still pending). But for Jane, on a personal level "the most bewildering and in the end embittering response that she encountered was from co-workers and community members who 'turned their back' on her and told her to be quiet because 'jobs were at stake' " (Rothschild and Miethe, 1994:263). There was no note of any collective support or action on the local level. It is not surprising that she has moved her protest from the local level to the national level.

In other cases they studied, Rothschild and Miethe (1994) find consistency in this type of management behaviour. Whistleblowers are suddenly declared incompetent and in cases where they are not immediately fired processes are set in motion towards building a case for their dismissal or downgrading. Labelled as deviant and charged with being "too stressed or dysfunctional to perform their jobs", they are sent to psychologists sympathetic to the company's viewpoint (1994:265). One psychologist has himself turned whistleblower and his advice to would-be whistleblowers is "*not to do it*" as the extreme stress management put them through is likely to leave them permanently scarred (1994:267). (To support this action Rothschild and Miethe's (1994:265) report on the findings of Elaine Draper (1994) whose research on company doctors reveals their professional dilemma when management send them 'difficult' employees for evaluation in a particular way).

A further example of what gets meted out to whistleblowers is found in Collinson's appendix. Collinson (1994:63) makes mention of Stanley Adams who revealed the Swiss drug company, Hoffman-Roche's illicit price fixing. Although Roche was fined \$430,000 by the European Economic Community, Adams was nonetheless arrested in Switzerland and charged with industrial espionage. Not only was he a broken man after the ordeal, but his wife committed suicide. She could take no more. As an aside Collinson mentions that the U.K. government is considering "the introduction of 'gagging clauses' into employment contracts" (Collinson, 1994:63).

Perry (1998:235) confirms that the statistics on the social fate of whistleblowers are bleak. It is a story, across America, the United Kingdom and Australia, of job losses, arrests, blacklisting, marital breakdown, ostracism, long-lasting health and financial problems. "The rhetorical subtext may be 'don't let the bastards grind you down', but the empirical message is that they almost certainly will" (1998:237).

Rothschild and Miethe (1994:270) reaffirm the message - if the painful road of resistance is taken then a strong emotional, financial, legal and media support network is a priority. The road to changing organizational practice and enhancing the voice of employees requires strong institutional support if the challenge is to go beyond the personal experience of the few that leaves some embittered and others political resisters.

From a different point of departure, O'Connell Davidson (1994) gives an example of clerical workers' resistance to a management restructuring initiative of their office work (aspects of which were raised in Chapter 1).

Sabotage as acts of Routine

O'Connell Davidson (1994:69) explores the case of a privatized British National Utility (NU) which employed 80 000 staff, 60% of whom are involved with clerical work on a functional basis. While the majority of clerical workers are women, supervisors are predominantly male.

The study is involved with the intensive computerization of clerical work in order to "standardize and simplify clerical tasks; to centralize control over the planning and pacing of work which had, until then, rested with the clerks; and to diminish the organization's dependence upon any individual clerk's experience and acquired knowledge" (1994:69). The aims of the change initiative are to:

- cut costs;
- remove the inefficiency of functional work;
- reduce the labour porosity (idle time) in the working day (for example, work flows are not smooth; during low periods workers are idle and during peak flows overtime is required, by using part-time staff workers are precisely matched to workloads and standard time is paid (1994:73);
- deskill the clerical function; and
- create flexible, multi-functional teams operating on a geographic basis.

To these ends management introduced a new computerized office system designed as a number of screens for inputting and extracting information. By reducing the complexity of the work management could promote 'job enlargement' and introduce multi-functional teams. This initiative would also allow management to reduce their numbers of staff and promote the cheaper practice of using temporary and part-time staff during peak periods. This would reduce porosity and match labour and workload more evenly. The reaction of the compliant office workers came as a surprise to management.

To begin with there were so many design and software faults that the clerical workers were frustrated, unhappy and eventually exceedingly angry as their working conditions turned into something of a nightmare (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:75). The screens did not supply enough space to capture the relevant information and once data was entered it could not be amended. Separate manual records had to be kept as well as ongoing records of corrections and amendments (1994:76).

Job sheets that scheduled the work of the repair and servicing engineers were now automatically produced by the computer which worked on average, standardized figures. But as these figures take months to average out the computer-scheduled appointments were unrealistic as they could not make accommodation for problem jobs, absenteeism, sickness and turnover rates. Since the computer system was designed to deal with routine it brought to light the previously invisible important contribution of workers with regard to discretion and the ability to cope with emergencies (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:82). Having had their main area of discretion removed, the clerks now had to pick up all the resultant problems of over-scheduling and deal with irate customers on a continual basis.

Because their discretion was removed, the clerks could not deal with the problem constructively. All they were only able to do was interact as the interface between the computer screen and the customer without actually solving the problem. Eventually a temporary 'broken appointments clerk' had to be appointed who became a permanent fixture and who still could not cope with the volume of calls per day (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:77). For a company that professed to value 'service to customers' the reality was a farce.

Work for the clerks became doubly stressful compounded by the fact that they had to appease disgruntled clients at the same time as coping with an increased intensity of work. As appendages of their machines the clerks were locked into a fixed work position. They were no longer required to interact with each other in the organization of work and had no legitimate excuse to leave their work station other than to go to the toilet (1994:78).

While the clerks had been promised ease of work by the changes the reality was that their jobs had increased and became more complicated. While they had been told the initiative was to improve standards of service to customers the opposite was blatantly obvious and this rationale was perceived as a managerial ploy. While they had been promised job

enrichment and personal development in reality they had become appendages to their computer, and more readily dispensable (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:79).

Although they agreed that functional specialization had its inefficiencies and had no hostility against reform in this area, they felt that management had taken the cheap way out, thus denying all other aspects of their empty promises. Customers were left high and dry. Job training consisted of a few hours getting acquainted with the computer screens. Work had become more frustrating, more intense, compounded by systems failures followed by huge backlogs and the dissatisfaction of clients. All this they felt had to be put up with, without any financial compensation (1994:81).

Prior to the introduction of these changes management had commenced discussions at the national level with the unions about the new computer system and possible grading changes. But it was not until a year later that detailed information started filtering through to the unions (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:86). They did not become actively engaged at the local level because their strategy was to win major concessions with regard to work flexibility, annual leave, child allowances and redundancy packages on an overall basis (1994:87). This did not help the local unions who had to deal with implementation problems of multi-functional teams, work intensity and working conditions.

The local unions declared a formal dispute with management. But no industrial action was taken because their goals would have undermined the strategy of the national level; they were told to hold tight. But by the time the national level got their information and plan together management had already eliminated all job demarcations (O'Connell Davidson, 1994:88). The resultant inaction left clerks feeling even more frustrated. They felt as if they had no voice in an environment that was completely dominated by men who had a different agenda (the union as well as the management hierarchy was male) (1994:89). Their mounting frustration led to acts of sabotage (1994:91).

These acts of sabotage were acts of routine and therefore difficult to challenge - screens were overloaded, information was lost, vouchers were hidden, absenteeism increased and work was slowed (1994:92). All acts of petty individualistic resistance that showed a rule consciousness that would not incur loss of employment. Although resistance occurred, as an effort to increase voice and influence management the exercise can be seen as a failure in that it changed nothing.

While O'Connell Davidson (1994) describes petty sabotage as a form of resistance by low level clerks, LaNuez and Jermier (1994) look at sabotage occurring at the technocrat and managerial level. Their generalized findings are that people resist excessive administrative and technical control. These controls result in reduced personal control, power and privilege which in turn are accompanied by negative feelings of diminished control, increased powerlessness and insecurity (Abramson et al., 1980). This in turn leads to increased frustration and negativity, and a willingness to engage in opposition which finds an easy outlet in selective sabotage (LaNuez and Jermier, 1994:219).

Sabotage is not seen as the isolated, irrational acts of organizational misfits, malcontents and the blue-collar strata. Rather LaNuez and Jermier see it as "a complex behavioural process that is usually social, conspiratorial, restrained and highly symbolic in nature ... often ... a rational and calculative act" (1994:221). LaNuez and Jermier's (1994:222) ongoing research indicates that employees knowingly weigh potential risk and take a chance at all levels of the organization. The more senior the person usually the more creative the practice.

Their generalization is that the work environment is fast-changing because of mergers, takeovers, restructuring and computerized controls. As a result more levels of staff are susceptible to surveillance and measurement, particularly at middle management and the technocratic level. Widespread control systems have altered the role of this organizational strata, deskilling the required professional and person-to-person interface and substituting in its stead the servicing of computer-based information systems through

computer mediated communications. The system consequently advances younger, technologically advanced employees who do not require expensive training or retraining (LaNuez and Jermier, 1994:229). Consequently, the long-tenured, older employees find their employment experience degraded, their acquired skill area under-utilized and their social relations diminished. This creates the space for intense conflict and resistance. The type of sabotage incidents reported such as erasing of records, the injection of computer viruses and planting 'logic bombs' that result in time delays and is often euphemistically referred to in organizations, because of the difficulty in identifying the culprit, as carelessness, accidents or pranks.

What the authors are keen to show is the fact that sabotage potential can be found at all levels of the organization. But their concern is with the concentration of management to bring in more controls to eliminate possible sabotage. This focus does not come to grips with the probability that these acts are rooted in the everyday struggle of organizational employees to cope, assert greater control, protest and contest values. They believe that apart from revenge and frustration, sabotage symbolically tells a story of "alienation, opposition and resistance" (LaNuez and Jermier, 1994:246).

It is understandable that a concern with sabotage from management's perspective may result in resistance being seen as acts of deviance and subversion. From the employees' perspective resistance, even if they are petty acts of sabotage, they are acts whose meaning and significance are of importance - if misdirected. These acts are not articulated as part of a legitimate struggle of concerted action to bring about organizational change.

The above examples reveal that there is resistance in organizations at all employment levels and it would appear that these acts, particularly at the white collar level, are increasing in frequency and becoming more destructive. But this account is not used to give the false impression that resistance in organizations only happens at the employee

level. An examination of the literature reveals that organizations, too, are involved with acts of resistance.

Organizational Acts of Resistance

Organizations actively influence their environment; they do not conform passively to environmental pressure (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). They exert this influence even though they have to be responsive to their environment in order to survive (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) and to obtain stability, legitimacy and professional acceptance (DiMaggio, 1988). They attempt to exercise power over that environment particularly at the institutional level (Tolbert and Zucker, 1983; Meyer, Scott and Deal, 1992) and to control the resource flow (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). From the perspective of conformity, for example, coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), power is attributed to external institutions. Organizations are shown to acquiesce to these demands through conformity, imitation and compliance. But that is only part of the story. Organizations actively exert efforts to influence the institutional environment in line with organizational objectives. This resistance is an important aspect of strategic organizational behaviour.

What is not discussed in these works are the strategies organizations employ to resist institutional pressure. Olivier (1991) addresses this gap. She identifies four strategies of organizational resistance: organizations compromise, avoid, defy and manipulate (Olivier, 1991:152).

Organizations compromise when they try to balance conflicting institutional demands or when institutional expectations conflict with organizational objectives. For example, the allocation of funds to ecological concerns and the meeting of shareholder demands. Even though there is resistance, the organization puts a lot of energy into appeasing the source it resists. But organizations will bargain outright for concessions in meeting expectations, for instance, they bargain with unions and fight for acceptable standards (Olivier, 1991:153-4).

Avoidance is "the organizational attempt to preclude the necessity of conformity" and this is achieved by "concealing their nonconformity, buffering themselves from institutional pressure, or escaping from institutional rules or expectations" (Olivier, 1991:154). Organizations conceal their behaviour by window dressing (for example, token affirmative appointments), they uncouple the technical operation of the firm from the strategic one (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) or escape from the stringent demands of say, pollution control, by changing their production processes or paying for the activity to be done in a Third World Country where such stringent demands are not yet in operation (Olivier, 1991:155).

Defiance is a more aggressive response of dismissal, challenge and attack (Olivier, 1991:156). If there is no chance of external enforcement then an organization can dismiss or ignore an institutional requirement, for example, affirmative action, if they do not believe they will be caught (Salancik, 1979). A school, however, may challenge institutional demands by departing from the expected rules and norms of what is prescribed as effective education by becoming a private, alternative school with a different education vision. A company may challenge laid down water pollution standards by maintaining that the standards they use are acceptable elsewhere and then wait to be challenged. An organization may go so far as to unequivocally reject any attempt at conformity to established norms and when exposed may attack the media's 'misrepresentation' of their affairs. They may be so secure in their position (by virtue of a monopoly) so as not to bother about such norms.

Manipulation is an active response to pressure by "purposeful and opportunistic attempt[s] to co-opt, influence, or control institutional pressures and evaluations" (Olivier, 1991:157). Important members of institutions are co-opted to sit on boards of directors in order to neutralize institutional opposition (Pfeffer, 1992). Organizations lobby government to influence, for example, export controls, and use trade associations to influence public opinion. By forming associations organizations not only influence the regulations restraining their organizations but attempt outright control of these bodies

Organizations use a range of strategies and tactics to side-step conformity to institutional demands. While resistance may render an organization less popular there is a trade-off. Where organizations do resist to further their own political and organizational ends they are likely to be more flexible, innovative and adaptive (Oliver, 1991:174) since institutionalization can slow the adaptation process (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:351); and this is their justification.

The organizational resistance described does not take place in a vacuum but within a legitimate discourse and within legitimate structural arrangements. Within the framework of organizational goals, causes of organizational resistance are looked upon as having some sort of merit. By contrast, the causes of employee resistance to organizational and managerial practice are under-appreciated and under-researched. They belong in a separate discourse; one that has no legitimacy in mainstream organizational theory and management practice.

General Comment

Mainstream orthodox organizational and management theory as a 'science' "sets the standard of legitimation for the production relations that restricts" the potential of the productive framework (Habermas, 1970:89). Yet employee resistance infers that there can be other possibilities. Such an alternative discourse would intersect with a discourse of politics that holds the conviction "that social life can be other than it is" (Perry, 1998:244).

If employees wish to realize such an organizational alternative then their problem is not one of resistance. It is one of having the abilities, structures and legitimate discourse to influence their environment. In the existing state of affairs, management declares spheres of interest and concerns, enjoys contact with diverse people and gains exposure to a broader range of activities (Selznick, 1957). In short it is only management that gains the experience in social interaction at a political level. The concept of employees initiating

and managing change creatively at an organizational level, and gaining an increase in personal power stemming from this broader social and political level of experience and development, is intrinsically absent and is implicitly denied.

Addressing this reality presents a difficult challenge, a challenge that articulates a problem of employee socio-political empowerment. It moves the prevailing focus from employee retaliation to management-initiated behaviour and looks forward to the facilitation of employee behaviour towards initiating organizational change. It looks at the design of systems within a political community that allows employees to engage in constructive organizational development and promotes the realization of the personal, social and political skills necessary to organize and reform - a dimension of employee development that is not one offered by organizations. Ultimately, it challenges the politics of organizations as a management imperative.

The problem of employee empowerment to initiate change is given greater clarity in the following chapter which takes a critical look at employee development in organizations.

7. ORGANIZATIONS AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Employees need to be aware of the tension between management's rhetorical desire for employee empowerment and personal development, and its desire to circumscribe this development within the parameters of enhanced performance towards organizational goals. Earlier chapters have shown how various organizational realities such as institutionalized mainstream organizational theory and practice, power distribution and inequalities, managerial control and employee inaction all contribute to the problematic of this situation.

In the foregoing chapters of this thesis the following steps are taken towards the development of this argument. It is shown that mainstream organizational reality is one of managerial control which instils, among employees, a culture of obedience and conformity to management's perspective (Taylor, 1911; Mintzberg, 1979; Astley and Sachdeva, 1984). Further the orthodox discourse that sustains this position does not adequately explain or address the suffering of employees or the diminution of employee capacity within the organizational context. More importantly it does not adequately address resistance to management norms as a positive action. Management practice, it has been argued, has institutionalized an expectation of obedience and has mobilized organizational bias in such a way as to minimize dissent and resistance (Lukes, 1974; Clegg, 1979; DiMaggio, 1983; Jepperson, 1991; Jermier et al, 1994).

The institutionalization of mainstream organizational theory has had a two-fold effect. It has legitimized management practice and management concerns (Zucker, 1988) at the same time that it leaves employee concerns unarticulated in any collective and formal sense. It is argued that an employee discourse, highlighting their concerns, is by consequence institutionally delegitimized.

Though existing organizational practice promotes passivity and defensive behaviour, (Abramson et al., 1980) suppression and violation of the creative spirit of employees it is not considered an infringement. Such diminishing of employee concerns and the developmental capacity to deal with them (Winnicott, 1965), because they are not articulated by the employees themselves nor by an authoritative public body, are not acknowledged and are consequently ignored. This unacknowledged aspect of employee reality and lack of discursive legitimacy allows distortion and the continued misnaming of aspects of organizational reality (Deetz and Mumby, 1985).

The ability to mobilize action to deal with this problem would have the effect of legitimating employee protest, encouraging resistance to some management norms and promoting organizational change. This behaviour could promote a greater measure of interdependence and pose a challenge to prevailing authority, power structure advantages and privilege.

Such a conceptualization of an alternative discourse to the mainstream discourse of organizational theory and management practice is problematic because research problems that give credence to this perspectives are not concentrated in any one academic area. Rather they are found on the fringes of diverse disciplines such as sociology, political science, social work, law and ethics (Marx, 1954; Habermas, 1972; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980; MacIntyre, 1981; Reed, 1985; Knights and Willmott, 1990; Alvesson and Willmott; 1992). By contrast the mainstream position is very definite; any resistance to management norms is conceptualized as deviant. An acknowledged alternative paradigm may, by contrast, welcome such resistance as timely, necessary and creative. Such creativity would be seen as attempts to transform positively a narrowly conceptualized technical system that has come to dominate, encroach upon and contaminate other collectively desired social norms that work towards the good of all organizational members.

The development of employee capacity and solidarity to allow constructive opposition to management is inhibited by mainstream organizational theory and management practice. This it has been argued is a result of the mainstream discourse which portrays formal management power (authority) as non-political at the same time that it labels the informal power of employees as illegitimate, dysfunctional and political (Mayes and Allen, 1977:675). This well established, discriminating belief system is institutionally sanctioned resulting in "due process" procedures (Sutton et al, 1994) that work in favour of management who arbitrarily make and administer organizational "laws" and policy. To use civic terminology, "citizenship", or full membership, is only accorded to management while the status of other employees can be classified as second class.

This mainstream position is reinforced by organizational structure. Hierarchical structure is intrinsic to organizational theory and management practice, and the institutional forces shaping organizations have these social relations established as the "right" way of managing (Bedeian and Zammuto, 1991). There is no acknowledgement of the inherent political struggle present in these conditions for all employees. Yet, an examination of organizational behaviour at the institutional level has revealed that there is political struggle and contest among organizations themselves to ensure that the built-in bias remains the way it is. It was seen in Chapters 5 and 6 how organizations in similar structural positions act collectively (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Olivier, 1991), and how those in differing structural positions take different bargaining positions and adapt formalized norms and values. In the process, organizations build different organized constituencies which actively engage with the larger institutional environment to accommodate their specific organizational needs and interests to ensure their continued survival (Scott and Meyer, 1991:108).

Any organizational solutions to problem areas or choices appropriated and considered legitimate are prejudiced by the institutional context which affirms existing organizational theory and management practice (Zucker, 1977:730; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991:67). In this way the organizational context can be seen as overwhelming in

that it has its own built-in institutional means for taking control of employees' psyches and suppressing resistance around the development of alternative possibilities (Douglas, 1986).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, political struggle remains embedded in this arrangement even though the context sets the rules of the game and reinforces bias and expectations (Jermier, et al., 1994). Though the context may be overwhelming and may be a formidable social process (Jepperson, 1991:151), once acknowledged as a problem, it can be addressed. However, such major organizational transformation is only likely to come about when those entrenched institutional forces that presently sustain theory and management practice in its present form are successfully challenged. This challenge presents a formidable political task that will, on the one hand, require the development of employee leadership, vision and political skill and, on the other, the evolution of institutional forms that legitimize the discourse of employee-driven change in the achievement of a common benefit. This process would also institutionalize a discourse of the common organizational "good".

Such a challenge does not have a short-term solution and is unlikely to happen without long-term employee capacity development on a personal, social and political level to a degree that goes beyond the management norm of what is held to be part of employee development and empowerment.

The argument and structure of this chapter proceeds as follows. The position of organizational development is examined from its early beginnings in apprenticeships (Steinmetz, 1976) and the call for accelerated training to meet the needs of industrialization (Watson, 1984), through the important recognition of management developmental needs (McGregor, 1960; Schein and Bennis, 1965) to the challenge of total organizational development linked to managerially planned organizational change (Bennis, 1969; Plant, 1987).

The constrained context of organizational development interventions has led to various critics voicing their ethical concerns about this management practice (Kelman, 1965; Warwick and Kelman, 1973; Bermant and Warwick, 1978; Walter, 1984). These concerns highlight the human condition of organizations rather than its technical aspects. They draw attention to the infringement of employee freedom to choose (Kelman, 1965; Walter, 1984); the formidable combination of power and resources to implement initiatives regardless of how it may affect others (Bermant and Warwick, 1978; McKendall, 1993); the privileged base of knowledge that puts others at a disadvantage (Warwick, 1978); and the implications of management's definition of organizational problems being accepted as neutral and objective (Warwick, 1978; Bermant and Warwick, 1978; Kelman and Warwick, 1978).

The accommodating role of employees to management driven initiatives that may affect their lives in unplanned, diminishing ways is highlighted. So is the unintended identity formation role that regulated social relations plays in displacing creative potential to achieve true interdependent relationships. Once the development problem is recast with these ethical concerns in mind, other possible ways of addressing the issue of employee capacity development that are not management inspired, come to mind.

An alternative way of approaching this developmental problem is suggested and addressed at three levels: the employees, the organization and the institution. Personal, social and political capacity development at each of the three social levels of interaction are necessary if employees are to realize themselves as a meaningful organizational constituent capable of initiating meaningful organizational change.

One possible remedy explored in this thesis is that employees as a collective take responsibility for their own capacity development. This development should be tailored to meet, more fully, the demands of employees to function effectively in their overall collective organizational life. This approach overcomes the problem of employee developmental needs being restricted to the gaining of performance competence to tackle

immediate organizational tasks at hand. With the necessary socio-political skills to engage effectively within organizations, employees become capable of bringing about positive social change by addressing common problems collectively for achieving common benefits.

7.2 THE CIRCUMSCRIBED ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT

The social context of organizations impinges on personal development. Organizations, as fundamental task centres, need to co-ordinate individual performance towards organizational goals. Management needs to ensure that the tasks that employees do are done in the way the organization wants them to be done. This organizational learning and socialization takes place under a variety of headings: “training and development”, “management development” and “human resource development”; all of which have over the past fifty years become subsumed under the banner “organizational development”. An historical overview of the development of this practice follows.

Apprenticeship

Training has its beginning in apprenticeship where all craft knowledge was transmitted by direct instruction from the masters, literacy being the privilege of the few. The steps of task and personal development were apprentice, journeyman, then master. Guilds were established to offer "mutual protection, assistance and advantage", to create private franchises and to "establish quality standards of products through quality standards of workmanship" (Steinmetz, 1976:4).

With the expansion of markets and the introduction of expensive equipment, standards of skills were raised. Qualifying as master became more and more difficult, and it was now also being tied to acquiring the necessary financial capital. In this way, those with money were being given the best chance of setting the rules of the game and deciding the best possible "input/output equation". They were also able to establish "what the discourse of

power consists of" and gain "context control" at the expense of other "partners constituting that context" (Lyotard, 1984:45,46, 47).

The accumulation of industrial and historical factors reduced the opportunities of journeymen to acquire master status and they recognized the need to protect their position (Steinmetz, 1976:8). But craft unions did not recognize the game for what it was. They did not set out to change the rules of the game but to protect their own vulnerable position. This they did by regulating craft training and the number of applicants acceptable, as well as working hours, wages, prices and tools (1976:8).

Training

With greater industrialization and the growth in the large numbers of workers the apprentice system soon proved inadequate for those needing to train as machinists. Consequently factory schools were introduced that bypassed the existing apprenticeship system. By 1912 the first industrial training associations were established in America (Steinmetz, 1976:8).

The onset of World War I brought with it an urgent need for ships and fast track supervised training. The four-step "show, tell, do, and check" was introduced (Steinmetz, 1976:9). World War II capitalized upon these experiences and the emphasis was now placed on supervisors undergoing intensive job instruction training. The purpose of training was to teach people specific job related skills and to raise performance on a job to the standard required. The job of the supervisor or trainer was to solve productivity problems efficiently.

As employment numbers increased and managers jobs became more defined, the emphasis on manager education became a main concern. This was because managers now needed "not only to help trainees to acquire greater knowledge, but also help them to develop the skills and personal characteristics they need to use their knowledge" (Watson, 1984:xi) in the way the organizational wanted them to. By this time it was

realized that very few people became good managers if left to chance. Management ability had to be developed.

Management Development

Management development was seen as a deliberate process that involved "sound selection procedures, organization and manpower planning, performance evaluations, reviews, and appraisals, and day-to-day coaching and counselling" (Watson, 1984:3). The management development function was seen as crucial to the long-term development of the organization. The early 1960s saw the involvement of the social sciences and people like Lewin, (1947), McGregor (1960), Bennis, Benne and Chin (1964), Schein and Bennis (1965) became heavily involved with learning experiences for managers (discussed in Chapter 2). All these experiences were geared to organizational improvement. People were being developed for higher responsibilities.

This work of the development of managers and training of staff rested with training and development practitioners. The significance of the function to senior management was not yet recognized. Its importance would only be realized with the planning of change and the engineering of organizational culture. In the meantime the development side was a fast growing area of knowledge that was "not well understood nor well defined" (Beckhard and Harris, 1987:v).

The emphasis was on the personal development of managers in laboratory settings (Lewin, 1958:210; Schein and Bennis, 1965:332). But this laboratory training revealed a flaw (as discussed in Chapter 2). While the personal experience may have been dramatic for the individual manager, there was no significant behaviour or performance change evident in the organizational context. The problem of transferring the knowledge learnt to the organizational context had to be addressed. This highlighted a need to transform the isolated learning experience into a social learning experience by bringing together managers of the same organization. With the work of Blake and Mouton (1964) personal learning became linked to organizational teams and to problem solving within the

organizational context. The development group within the organization became the learning focus (French and Bell, 1978:22).

Fast changing environments, as a result of advances in knowledge, technology and communications, were outpacing organizational ability to change. This was not only a question of new organizational forms having to be developed. It was an imperative that "more effective goal-setting and planning processes must be learned, and practiced teams of interdependent people must spend real time improving their methods of working, decision-making, and communicating" (Beckhard, 1969:v). It was the function of senior management to recognize the change required, plan this change and influence others to accept the change direction (Plant, 1987).

Organizational Development

The concept of development became rooted in management control and the survival of organizations in uncertain environments. It was now seen as Organizational Development (OD) which is firmly linked to planned organizational change. Various definitions of what this entails started appearing in the literature.

Bennis (1969:15) views organizational development as a response to change "intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structures of organizations". Beckhard's (1969) definition of "(o)rganizational development is an effort (1) planned, (2) organization-wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organization effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organization's 'processes', using behavioral-science knowledge" (1969:9). French (1978) talks about "the applied behavioral science discipline that seeks to improve organizations through planned, systematic, long-range efforts focused on the organization's culture and its human and social processes" (1978:xiv). Induced organizational change has more recently been labelled organizational development (McKendall, 1993:93).

McKendall's (1993:97) concern (raised in Chapter 1) is that it is management who mandates planned organizational change and creates uncertainty for employees throughout an organization. Management alone possesses the power to initiate and temper uncertainty. While the majority experience the change in greater or lesser degrees of uncertainty, the management-driven change initiative is a means to generate dependence and foster compliance. While employees are in this state of uncertainty and upheaval, management is secure in its definition of the organizational problem, the solutions to be followed and its hold on the relevant information (McKendall, 1993:97).

Central to the concept of organizational development is the notion of action research and the use of a change agent (Walton, 1978; Ansoff et al, 1982). The change agent collects data, feeds the data back to the client (management), and plans the problem-solving action. Evaluation of the initiative is a separate consideration. Although feedback sessions were initially only intended for management, French and Bell (1978) quote correspondence with Likert complimenting the application by Floyd Mann:

when the survey data were reported to a manager (or supervisor) and he or she failed to discuss the results with subordinates and failed to plan with them what the manager and others should do to bring improvement, little change occurred. On the other hand, when the manager discussed the results with subordinates and planned with them what to do to bring improvement, substantial favorable changes occurred. (French and Bell, 1978:23).

While early change agents were attached to universities and were the outgrowth of the human relations movement, current change agents tend to be attached to firms of accountants. The focus is on the redesign of organizations, structural change, financial controls, co-ordinating mechanisms and remuneration schemes (Walton, 1978:121).

The diagnostic target of organizational development has become the total organization. Its quality of system openness, the sharing of information and participation are seen as important issues for the realization of organizational goals in bringing about planned change.

Built into the organizational development drive is the rhetoric of autonomy. Although participation is urged, management requires initiative and independent behaviour from employees (Sashkin, 1984:11). They need employees to:

- get on with their jobs without constant supervision;
- take responsibility for not only doing their job, but acting in the interests of the organization without totalitarian systems of control;
- deal with on-the-job problems in the interests of the organization without these problems escalating and requiring the intervention of another;
- bring about continuous improvement in the service they are offering;
- interact effectively with others (from the same or other departments/sections) who are working towards the same overall organizational goals while competing for scarce resources; and
- exercise their own judgement in making decisions on management's behalf in pursuing organizational goals.

Although all these desirable employee actions may occasionally be self-initiated they are heavily prescribed, circumscribed and constrained by the organizational context. Models for employee actions are expected to be taken from the socialized mindset, values and goals of the organization, as well as from the prevailing broader context of professional standards, with all that that implies. Senior management spends much time and money on forging a specific organizational identity and managing an organizational culture which employees are expected to embrace (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985; Frost et al. 1985).

The type of education that organizations offer employees to develop new attitudes, values and beliefs to accommodate organizational change, as well as the type of skills training given, is typically strictly controlled in the organization's interests. This practice is of critical importance as the training and development function has value only in its capacity to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals and to facilitate the adoption of those values and determining practice of the organization itself. From management's point of

view, it also has the added value of nipping in the bud any other ways of thinking or doing, and so prevents and suppresses opposition to its preferred mindset. This position raises ethical concerns (Woodsworth, 1982).

7.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The areas of concern various critics raise about organizational development highlights the human condition rather than the technical aspects of the organization. For Warwick (1978:147) the term organizational development is ambiguous and compounded by disparities of power. Organizational development carries a combination of meanings, covering improved productivity and improved social functioning in order to enhance quality of human experience. Is it fair, Warwick asks (1978:149), "that those who already possess power and control wealth, have disproportionate access to the techniques of organizational development?"

Another important consideration of organizational development is how the challenge of employee development is met. Are a few who already have management values carefully selected to benefit from a developmental initiative or are the many educated to meaningfully evaluate, question, influence decisions and make their contribution?

Part of the criticism of organizational development stems from the fact that change management initiatives are always undertaken from a management perspective (Woodsworth et al., 1982:315). This is because change management professionals have already been conditioned by their management-focused learning at universities, business schools and in seminars conducted by management specialists.

Organizational development interventions carry concern because they can infringe employee freedom. Freedom of participation in developmental initiatives would imply informed consent and voluntary participation. Although employees are not given the

information to weigh their participation, they do know that they are prevailed upon to conform.

Freedom in organizations is essentially about the "capacity and opportunity to make reflective choices and to act on these" in the knowledge of their consequences (Warwick, 1978:152). The Pirandellian Prison experiment (Zimbardo, 1973 discussed in chapter 4) is a case in point. Any intervention that controls and manipulates human behaviour "is beset with enormous ambiguities" for which change agents have to accept responsibility (Kelman, 1965:31).

If the enhancement of freedom of choice is a social value then any manipulation of human behaviour without free consent is a violation of the essential humanity of employees. To be fully human is expressed in the ability to choose. "Thus, an ethical problem arises not simply from the ends for which behavior control is being used (although this too is a major problem in its own right), but from the very fact that we are using it" (Kelman, 1965:33).

Bermant and Warwick (1978) look specifically at the freedom of employees to "choose the degree of their participation in programs of intervention" (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:378). This is of particular relevance in a context where an attitude of ends justifying means is seen to prevail in the long term interests of the organization. There is little choice left to the individual. When forced to participate in team building sessions, laboratory training or confrontation meetings, individual employees do not have the skill necessary to interact appropriately, ask the right questions or to expose and examine the relevant issues and concerns. Added to this is the requirement to be open and honest in exposing an individual's weakness without respect for confidentiality. Those who don't comply are seen as being inadequate (Walter, 1984:435).

Planned organizational change is seen as a political matter in that it tampers with people's lives against their will (McKendall, 1993:97). This experience is not always welcomed

or desired, nor is it beneficial for everyone. As a result of these dilemmas employees see no purpose in what they are doing (Frankl, 1984), they feel they are being used solely for organizational ends, and have no control over their organizational life (Rotter, 1966). The years they have invested in acquiring organizational skill seems of no value under the changing circumstances and this loss promotes feelings of low esteem and confusion (issues raised in Chapters 1 and 2). Walter (1984:436) recommends that ethical guidelines should be established for organizational development interventions.

Walter (1984) points to other "effects of change efforts on personal freedom" despite the fact that attention is given to (the notion of) democracy under "enlightened supervision, and to (the notion of) equality in "participation" (1984:427). Organizational change has shown that a "skillful group leader may be able not only to manipulate the group into making the decision that he desires, but also to create the feeling that this decision reflects the will of the group discovered through the workings of the democratic process" by structuring the whole initiative in such a way that particular values dominate (Kelman, 1965:37). In this way employee freedom is destroyed or reduced by deception, manipulation and coercion.

The freedom to choose has the potential to curtail tyranny and together with group solidarity (discussed with regard to Milgram's experiments, 1965 and 1974 examined in Chapter 1) must be the employees' biggest protection from harm. If the change agents and employers accept the ethical concerns mentioned they would have to acknowledge that they need to relinquish a certain amount of control and promote the conditions that would favour employees exercising choice (Kelman, 1965:36).

Bermant and Warwick (1978) articulate their concern by stating that the:

intentions and ambitions of the intervenors and their clients are usually beyond reproach. They are neither corrupt nor venal nor beset by unresolvable conflicts of interest. But they intend to change the behavior of other people in socially significant ways, and most important, they have the resources to act on their intentions. The

intention to produce a social change combined with the resources to act on it become the exercise of power (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:378).

They are more concerned with the ethical issue of the combination of power and resources (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:378). Intervenors (usually consultants external to the organization) have specialized knowledge and their clients (senior management of an organization) are usually from influential organizations, this powerful combination has tremendous influence over the individual and other less privileged groups who are their targets.

The privileged base of knowledge of consultant and client, together with the built-in advantage of the dominant discourse, allows them to define the problem, decide the intervention and justify it on the basis of their own problem definition. By doing this they are able to undercut any opposition as they hold all the cards (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:394). It cannot be presumed that employees understand the relevance and implications of an intervention without being given the relevant information. Unless employees have a counter-consultant they are not likely to really know the advantages or disadvantages of their involvement (1978:406).

Within this context, it is in the nature of organizational development that power balances will shift and those planning the reorganization will decide who will gain and who will lose in this reshuffling. Management redesigns the organization to realign strategy, structure and resources. In the process they disrupt working patterns, formal and informal social relations, force new alliances and realign employees with management (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). By these actions any cohesive resistance to management control is continually disrupted or repressed. At the same time the velvet glove is used to appease employees in other soft areas such as the provision of canteens or sports facilities.

The choice of goals, defining the target of change, the means to achieve that change, and the assessment of the intervention - all carry ethical considerations (Warwick and

Kelman, 1973:379). These concerns (who will really benefit from the change initiative, what values will be compromised, what methods of coercion/persuasion will be used, how will methods and consequences be justified?) also have to be evaluated with cost considerations in mind.

The choice of goals is not a neutral matter as the values that drive these will be imposed on the lives of all who are part of the organization; some will benefit and others will suffer (Kelman and Warwick, 1978:10). The identification of a problem depends on a preferred point of view. For example, are protestors breakers of social order or promoters of social justice? Is their behaviour deviant or does it focus on more equitable distribution of power? If the concern is for justice then a focus to bring the protestors back into line would be the 'wrong' remedy (Warwick and Kelman, 1973:397). Are employees forced to participate or just manipulated to choose one preferred alternative which is selectively reinforced? (1973:400).

Ethical problem arises at the diagnostic stage because employees are not given the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the diagnostic process. Therefore they do not develop the capacity to understand the consequences of the intervention (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:401). This circumscribed awareness gives them a restricted frame of reference. Consequently they do not realize the forces shaping their lives nor do they realize the consequences of accepting organizational "problem definition" as something that is neutral and objective. Employees are so busy concentrating on coping on a personal level with their inadequacies and insecurities in their changing organizational environment that they do not realize that their condition is shaped by external factors (for example, problem definition, constituencies) that they can influence (Freire, 1971:12).

Warwick (1978:149) asks whether this asymmetrical power position is acknowledged explicitly and whether all parties concerned are able to make informed moves and give informed consent to changes. Informed consent would be improved by accurate naming of concerns, participation in the initial arrangements, and pilot projects. These steps

would give employees the chance to gain understanding of the effects and intensity of the proposed changes and to make genuine inputs. Because this does not happen, Warwick wants to know if management power is deliberately masked behind interventions such as "team building," "problem solving" and "improved effectiveness" (Warwick, 1978:149).

Warwick (1978) looks at problem definition from the ethical perspective of the change agent. The change agent can go along with management's definition and act purely as a technician ignoring other issues and concerns. But he contends that what are neutral data collected in times of peace and harmony become political data in times of crisis. Data can become "instruments of battle or administrative repression" (Warwick, 1978:150). While data are collected in an atmosphere of trust, if "the data show that three division chiefs are roadblocks to effectiveness, transfer or dismissal rather than discussion and rehabilitation may be the order of the day" (1978:151). The punitive use of data prevails in times of organizational change.

Consultants are also in a position to play a double game. They feed back to management employee dissidence and management is then able to target these people, prevent them from gaining any possible peer support and use the fear generated by the bitter retaliation to achieve greater internal cohesion and commitment to its goals (Bermant and Warwick, 1978:392).

Bermant and Warwick (1978:379) are concerned with the legitimate extent of accountability "for protecting freedom against abuses of power by professional intervenors" or their client, given the limitation on opportunities for employee capacity development. The issues of compromised freedom and the manipulation by management is clearly evident in the recommendations of those who wish to remove deviant attitudes, straighten misdirected employees and enforce the acceptance of management norms (Brimm, 1972:104).

Warwick (1978:155) describes his own experience in an organization of raising an ethical question which was obviously not part of the agenda; efforts were made to discredit him rather than deal with the issue. More often than not management request consultants to evaluate "problem people". They believe that these individuals will co-operate with such an exercise because of the consultant's expertise and impartiality. But the camouflage of consultant neutrality does not dissolve the "gritty realities of sponsorship and latent agendas", nor the use or misuse of information (Warwick, 1978:152).

Misuse of information does tremendous harm. It destroys trust, provokes hostility and resentment, and prevents people from supplying relevant information. Often people are made to feel important by data gatherers and are seduced into revealing more than they wish. The backlash from this confidentiality could be enormous and so would be the individual's anxiety level unless it is in the nature of the exchange that career advancement is in the offing.

Organizational development interventions are not evaluated for the harm they may do nor are they an ethical concern of any professional body. The only type of accountability organizations have would appear to be legal liability. Because of this lack of control, it is really only to avoid litigation that care is taken in the handling of employees. The only type of accountability professional consultants have is to the code of ethics of their professions. We therefore see that an engineering solution would look at a system's input/outputs ratios and processes, while accountants will seek solutions in "profitability problems by tightening up financial controls" and the financial structure (Armstrong, 1986:27) and routinize any other work that is not related to their profession. Budget allocations become the new tools for control (1986:33).

With more and more change-management initiatives being handled by firms of professional accountants, the limitations and concerns of their specific area of professional regulation and accountability are what count. These consultants are often

seen as hired guns to sort out the financial concerns of the organization - everything else remains subordinate to this goal.

Employees need to be aware of this changing organizational reality as it would appear that safeguards are required to regulate this technical bias. Only when employees have achieved levels of empowerment that allow them to evaluate recommendations, challenge recommendations and have the power to act on their concerns, will they not need the protection of this safeguard.

Because of this lack of protection, Warwick (1978) is particularly concerned with the values of professional change agents/consultants. Depending on the narrowness or breadth of the value orientation driving change initiatives, he sees a possibility of an organizational focus going three ways - achieving organizational goals within the orientation of traditional management; enhancing the quality of work life to ensure justice; or an orientation making an organization's effects more positive on the wider community (1978:122/123).

The traditional focus of organizational development is organizational efficacy; quality of work life issues are the means to an end. Walton's (1978:144) comment on this organizational reality is that the basis of legitimacy for organizational action in America is shifting. Communities outside organizations are affected by management action and are in turn rallying to affect organizations. Consequently the "shift in the basis of legitimacy is accompanied by a reordering of societal values from almost exclusive emphasis on self-expression to the simpler joys of human encounter and greater appreciation of the earth's natural endowments" (1978:144). He presumes this societal shift will, in due course, influence the actions of organizations. Walton's (1978:145) final insight with regard to organizational action is that all action is subject to error. There are hazards involved, there are moral costs to both action and non-intervention. The wise thing to do is "sin bravely".

For Knights and Willmott (1985:22) the organizational developmental issue of concern is identity formation. Organizational power relationships regulate social relations in which employees constitute their organizational identity. For employees to "avoid identity-damaging disciplinary controls" they comply with what the situation demands and sometimes act as if they are independent of these controls (1985:25). This survival tactic "has the largely unintended consequence of obscuring and displacing the creative and productive potential of fully interdependent social relations" (Knights and Willmott, 1985:27).

These coping efforts are revealed as self-defeating. For instance, employees who are in a problematic work environment often absent themselves mentally from the degradation of their situation; they become resigned and indifferent to their condition (1985:34). They rationalize their behaviour because they need the money; they endure unsatisfactory conditions believing that they can sustain a healthy private identity. But it is their very indifference that allows the system to continue as it is. By complying with arrangements that make their conditions unacceptable employees forego the transformative capacities inherent in true interdependent relations that would imply effective participation in productive political processes (1985:35). By their compliance employees reproduce the management induced organizational conditions of indifference (Herzfeld, 1992); they do this *by ignoring instead of transforming* structures of control that produce these conditions (Knights and Willmott, 1985:38). Training and development reinforces this socialized situation.

In training and development initiatives employees are taught the accepted social norms of interacting with deference to managers. The cultural norms that shape organizational reality are carefully controlled (Deetz and Mumby, 1990:478). In this socialized way the system actually sets managers against the rest of the organization because they are elevated. From this elevated position and the solidarity of the management "club", they gain a new sense of their own worth. They also become conscious of the lack of self esteem, passivity, and unused intelligence of replaceable, routine employees who can be

rationalize as being in some way inferior and potentially incompetent (Gaventa, 1980; Lerner, 1986). As long as employees are socialized to feel this social divide, they will not recognize their socialization to these unequal power relations for what it really is (Freire, 1971; Scott, 1990). They will not recognize that problems that stem from these unequal social relations are not personal, but external aspects of their organizational context that can be changed (Freire, 1971:12; Stam, 1987).

The organizational purpose of training and development is not to encourage independent thinking, the improvement of social relations nor the capacity to transform these social relations (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992:452). Training and development is a function that exists to facilitate acceptance of the organization's conditions, values, norms and objectives, the achievement of these goals and the attainment and improvement of specific job related skills.

There are many organizational developmental opportunities available, but these remain "distorted by corporate demands" and "philosophies of management control" (1992:459). In short, development in some areas is enormously encouraged, while being discouraged in others. In particular team work or 'participative' management is encouraged.

Participative management is a development resulting from the work of those social scientists enlisted to sympathetically help employees to deal with change and minimize resistance (Bridges, 1986:24). The objective of these exercises is to facilitate management's planned change initiatives and is part of management's drive to manage organizational change.

Yes, management does "allow" participation in management-initiated change but in reality it is training people to accept its preferred options. It may also be argued that management does organize groups to improve quality and processes, and that this enhances personal development. But this learning is required to happen without stepping out of line and often these groups create tension in employees. Yes, there is the pleasure

of involvement and joy of improving what one is doing which does generate a renewed sense of self-respect. But somehow there is also a feeling of being duped because, in the final analysis, nothing really changes and the imbalances in the management-employee relationship remain.

The idea motivating management to adopt participation as a mode of interaction has come under scrutiny. Ramsay (1977) criticizes management's motivation as being the necessity "to create a forum for the communication of management's version of reality and the problems of business which would cause employees to temper their demands and accept management leadership" (Ramsay, 1977:495). The real purpose of employee participation is not the capacity development of employees but a management tactic to secure compliance with management's objectives. Management's tactic of regaining control, by the illusion of sharing it, is motivated by the existence of tensions in the power relationship that threaten the smooth conduct of business as usual.

Genuine participation or organizational engagement requires social and political learning as well as adequate preparation (Horvat, 1983:290). Participants need adequate information, they need to be able to recognize relevant issues and need to be able to have informal consultation prior to meetings. Technical and legal issues need to be clearly formulated so that all participants can understand what is going on and get on with the business at hand. The purpose of such meetings is involvement and engagement that entails a contribution that is not merely an endorsement of management initiatives.

From his study, Ramsay (1977) finds that all participative initiatives "emphasize almost without exception a consensual, unitary philosophy, and bear related hallmarks of management ideology" (Ramsay, 1977:496). The literature on the subject claims success for this approach. This success is based on management's or the consultant's objectives being achieved within the existing power relationship. The basic power relationship is not in any way changed. The employee experience of powerlessness, frustration,

negativity and inertia is not addressed by management-driven change initiatives, given the lack of any real control (Abramson et al., 1980).

The well established discourse of employee-management relations continues to assume that employees will subordinate their own personal capacity development and any other human values and interests to management's overarching assumptions, concerns and strategies. It assumes that employees have no meaningful contribution to make within the organization other than to get things done. It assumes that participation is the only means to co-operation and that conflict cannot give rise to synergy and creative ways of doing things.

It is always management that declares spheres of interest and concerns, defines problem areas to be addressed, enjoys contact with diverse people and gains exposure to a broader range of activities (Selznick, 1957). Managers are granted the challenge of more interesting jobs that give a more holistic view of the organizational system (Barnard, 1938). With this status comes solidarity, the pleasure of accessing more privy information, the increased scope for decision-making (Simon, 1976), the exposure to different people with diverse life views (Selznick, 1957) and the development of personal, social and political capacity to interact at many levels.

In short it is only management that gains the experience in social interaction at a political level. "Given their greater involvement, leaders benefited more from the organization's actions and hence they expressed greater commitment" to the organization (Knoke, 1986:7). This "commitment (satisfaction, identification, and involvement) arose as a function of the total amount of control rather than the distribution of control across roles" (Knoke, 1986:8). The concept of employees initiating and managing change creatively at an organizational level, and gaining an increase in personal power stemming from this broader social and political level of experience and development, is intrinsically absent and is implicitly denied.

By neglecting, thus inhibiting, such development in employees, management prevents employees from experiencing this enhanced commitment. Not only does this situation breed apathy but it diminishes capacity development among other organizational employees both in coping with complexity and meaningfully participating in the joint pursuit of diverse goals. The inhibition of such potential not only limits an employee's creative ability on the job (which would be in the organization's interest) but, more to the point, it stultifies the ultimate challenge to prevailing authority, power structure and mindset. Consequently there is no demand created for employees to participate in a struggle to achieve this level of participation within organizations (Clegg, 1977, 1981, 1990, 1994; Deetz, 1985, 1992; Knights and Willmott, 1985, 1987; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, 1996).

Organizational socialization, control and developmental strategies foster the lack of employee solidarity as a formally organized, cohesive and recognized employee group. It disempowers them while strengthening the solidarity of management. Consequently it is assumed that employees, as a group, lack the capacity and potential to transform their imposed non-political participation into political participation in which more fair and democratically constructed objectives are achievable. This we have seen is not a fault inherent in organizational staff, it is a fault of management design (Chapter 6). It is the end-product of management's means of controlling and circumscribing the employee at the individual level and restricting creativity and capacity development to task competencies.

This tragic situation cannot be resolved by the individual employee. It is an organizational problem that is common to the institutionalized organizational context. However, by redefining such disempowerment problems as common to employees and by gaining acceptance of this position, the organizational game and the organizational players can change (Ostrom, 1990). This redefinition allows the various players to get onto the organizational playing field to talk to each other. It fingers rules that would have to be modified in order to reform, innovate, restructure and transform the way

organizations operate. It presupposes that organizational members will have the opportunity and capacity to acquire a greater level of knowledge and socio-political skill. In fact it demands a fundamental re-assessment of employee development.

How this challenge of employee development can be met at the personal, organizational and institutional levels is the focus of the following section.

7.4 DEVELOPMENTAL ALTERNATIVE TO COMMON EMPLOYEES PROBLEMS

While the only way of improving working conditions for the blue-collar worker is perceived to be through collective action, for the white-collar worker improved status, increase financial rewards and better social relations are seen as the result of co-operation with management (Clegg, 1990:28). Having examined the dominant discourse in organizations we can see why employees view their situation in this way and how management has been able to maintain its present advantage by reproducing this way of perceiving organizational life.

The dominant organizational discourse and the built-in hierarchy of influence and control needs to be recognized and accepted as political. These factors structure the complex relationships between the individual and the organization, and between other organizations (Clegg and Palmer, 1996:3). It is within this structure of reality that employees are prevailed upon to embrace organizational values and norms and encouraged to participate in problem solving towards management's preferred options.

I suggest that the legitimation of an employee discourse will redefine organizational problems and foster in employees such ideas as responsibility for their own personal, social and political development. The development of employee leadership and political problem solving within a formally organized employee structure would further facilitate the development of legitimate power structures necessary for transforming organizations for the good of all members. These ideas are now discussed.

Personal Development

Personal development is not a resource that belongs to the organization. Learning is critical for bringing about change. In the process of learning and growing as human beings, there is heightened awareness; a person starts to doubt what once was taken for granted. In expressing these doubts prevailing assumptions are questioned. By questioning the way things are, a person breaks the chain of role continuity and is open to autonomous action and creative solutions (Dworkin, 1988:31; Castoriadis, 1991:20). As discussed in Chapter 3, developing responsible, ethical behaviour pre-supposes critical reflection and sound moral reasoning, that is, developing the ability to be critical of social and psychological pressures and the ability to trust one's own judgement while respecting that of others (Dworkin, 1988; Griffin, 1993). Castoriadis wishes everyone autonomy, he wants "all people to learn to govern themselves, individually and collectively: and one is able to develop one's capacity to govern oneself only by participating on an equal footing, in an equal manner, in the governance of common business, of common affairs" (1991:132).

Despite the rhetoric of empowerment, this type of learning that involves negotiation is not fostered in organizations where compliance and obedience are prime virtues (Edwards, 1979:21; Mintzberg, 1983) and where a mindset of unquestioning acceptance is perceived as loyalty. Management's superiority of status and control of employee relations, not only breeds conformity and submissiveness, but also causes an imbalance in the relationship between management and employees which prevents the latter group from developing and seeing differently.

Even though management talk is about promoting competency development, it is not the capacity to bring about organizational change. Organizations may promote a rhetoric of empowerment but this rhetoric must be recognized for what it is; management's way of getting employees to view the organization from management's perspective (Bermant and Warwick, 1978).

By contrast, the effective route for bringing about organizational change is for employees to develop mental, emotional, social and political skill competencies in order to realize themselves more fully and achieve increased levels of participation within the organizational context. At this level of social construction employees are more likely to define who they are instead of accepting management's version of what they should be. This will stimulate them into taking responsibility for and planning their own development, and into re-negotiate organizational norms. In so doing they will release their creative energy, solve common problems and transform their organizational reality.

Negotiating around the areas of real developmental issues, system and rule changes and organizational goals, processes and values requires concerted, well-organized collective action. It will not come to pass while the one-on-one competitive stance prevails among employees. The individual employee can be no match for a cohesive management front and institutionalized mindset. It is not the individual employee taking responsibility for managing his/her own growth and development and negotiating a collaborative contract with management that is likely to bring about a different organizational environment conducive to the social, autonomous and political capacity development of all employees. No matter how strong and powerful the isolated person is, he/she does not have the power and social transformation potential of a focused collective, following a collective action drive to re-negotiate their position. But this type of action requires a clear employee discourse and focussed social and political development.

Social and Political Development

Social skills are critical for bringing about change in the organizational context as they focus on how people behave towards each other in achieving social ends (Ellis and Whittington, 1981 discussed in Chapter 1). Socially competent styles of behaviour do not violate others as they are the learned ability to solve problems in socially acceptable ways in achieving mutually beneficial social goals. Autonomous behaviour is underpinned by respect for others. There is tremendous social skill needed to persuade

others of a preferred point of view and to recognize the merit of the views of others. This skilled social behaviour would create the organizational conditions necessary for achieving mutually advantageous cooperation.

When employees collectively develop a discourse, they will be able to articulate their needs and realize their desire for achieving common organizational developmental goals for personal, social and political capacity development. In the process, they will also develop the potential and capacity themselves to govern themselves collectively and bring about meaningful organizational change. They will develop a legitimate employee discourse that commits them to a profoundly transforming initiative. As a cohesive group with a common language and vision they will constitute a recognized association which, over time, will gain legitimacy for its changing objectives. They will be on an employee-driven political path of transforming organizational life in the interests of full human capacity development. They will have established a legitimate discourse to challenge the dominant managerial discourse that tolerates the present stunted human development available in organizations.

The development of a legitimate employee discourse, along with political consciousness will encourage employees to be pro-active rather than passive within the organizational context. It will allow them to be critical and to be aware of other alternatives and speak legitimately for these. It will allow for the institutional recognition of conflict and the management of meaning in organizations that will threaten the existing state of advantage and privilege. It will allow for the provision of opportunity to redefine problems previously ignored. This allows participation in the resolution of such issues which can lead to organizational innovation. It will allow the possibility of employees developing good problem solving skills and the social competence necessary for mutually advantageous co-operation in the achievement of diverse goals. It will allow employees and management to transcend their limited self-interests and transform the institutions and communities that mould them. It will allow organizations the opportunity for creating the nucleus, in the workplace, of a true democratic structure in society.

Such meaningful social organizational change places a tremendous responsibility on management and employees for it requires a sound understanding of various stakeholders within the organizational context and the political nature of organizational change (Clegg and Dunkerley, 1977; Clegg, 1989). It will require the management of conflict and collaboration in order to achieve better organizational conditions for all concerned.

A new awareness of the social context of shared problems will develop which will lead to an awareness of the strength of concerted political action. It will be appropriate that they take up this challenge of the political struggle inherent in organizational life (Knights and Willmott, 1989; Deetz, 1992; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992).

Leadership amongst Employees

When employees realize that it is up to them, not just management, to shape the future organizational work environment in a way that stimulates their capacity to sustain collaborative as well as conflictual activity in the presence of diverse, legitimate goals. They will establish a legitimate discourse that will enable them to behave differently as a result of understanding and defining their situation differently (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971; Bermant and Warwick, 1978).

Once they have come to define their own situation knowledgeably they will have removed barriers to effective action and be able to change their behaviour (Gaventa, 1980). There is nothing really stopping employees (that is, apart from asymmetrical power relationships and institutionalized organizational and management practice!) from generating their own developmental interests and forging new power sharing avenues with management that change structures, foster autonomy and allow social and political competency development. The point is how to resist, or begin to think of resisting despite these formidable constraints. The paradox being that employee resistance is really a demand to participate more fully in the meaningful processes of organizational transformation.

Although the leadership-competency aspect of organizational life still "belongs" to management, it is only so because staff associations have limited their own self-initiated involvement to bargaining for improved economic benefits and fighting for better working conditions. With the development of a legitimate employee discourse, participation in organizational life is taken to new levels that will demand greater degrees of employee competency - hence the personal, social and political development advocated.

This will create new problems in that management will recognize this new level of employee competence and be quick to use their well-tried ruse of rewarding and co-opting employee opinion leaders to lead management initiatives (Zimbardo, 1973). This managerial practice they neatly prevents the development of alternative leadership that allows the contest of the prevailing managerial advantage. With the loss of employee leadership, employees may once again feel that they are powerless, isolated and defeated. But employees need to be prepared for this situation and recognize that, inequalities are enormous and the transformational task at hand is difficult. How to proceed?

The success of the women's movement would suggest a particular route for creating the pressure for change; to this end women have taught us that anger can be an organized resource. An organized resource with the capacity to transform the isolated individual floundering in defeat, failure and self-blame into a collective force to be reckoned with, having the potential to transform fundamental inequalities of power and disrespect between parties (Lerner, 1986:160). Harnessing this potential requires a safe place where employees can articulate their anger. Understand the legitimacy of their anger at a system that has the capacity to circumscribe human potential (Lerner, 1986) and sound out doubts and possibilities. This could entail organizing "rap" sessions, meetings, education seminars, airing of grievances and creating awareness of what must be painted as "employee reality".

The information gained must be well disseminated by an employee network so that employees may obtain a sense of common identity and solidarity in their experience and so develop a collective understanding of shared organizational problems. Instead of anger and frustration immobilizing and debilitating the individual, righteous anger can be liberating. It can become a positive force that forges solidarity and transforms helplessness into concrete steps to alleviate their position. The breakthrough will be to get employees to see their reality for what it is. This will allow them to define their situation differently and do something about it.

From lessons learnt in discussing collective action (Chapter 6), the process of employees redefining and truly appreciating their problems will present them with alternative views of their situation, will generate alternative choices of action and alternative possibilities (Ostrom, 1990). It will establish a distinct employee discourse. A desire for the effective social change of organizations will be awakened within employees so that they can become a politically strong enough community with a common interest (Boreham et al., 1986:200). Once employee actions become rooted in shared problems, their collective frustration and anger can be keenly focused and appropriate collective transformative action initiated.

The next step will be to channel this energy into strategic action. It will be necessary to gain agreement on what employees want to achieve, and why. In other words one sets into motion (as seen from our examination of management practice) a planned change intervention, a deliberate effort that has a goal (Zaltman and Duncan, 1977:10). This will require the adoption of structures, processes and learning to achieve the goal. The status quo will be disturbed and this should facilitate the redistribution of power in certain areas. All the ethical considerations relevant to management will be pertinent to employees; the entire organizational social system - the individual, the group and the organization - will be affected.

In articulating the discourse and creating new meaning within the organizational context a vision must be created that will set employees on a course of action that is heading in a particular direction towards a better future (Kotter, 1990). What is the 'good' in the future state that employees are desiring? Is the target the employees, management or the entire system? For example, is the goal

- to gain control of employee capacity development? or
- to achieve meaningful participation in organizational life? or
- to improve employee-management relations and empower employees by a change in structure to achieve more equitable distribution of power? or
- to achieve a more just way of determining goals? or
- to achieve a more acceptable manner of resource allocation?

These are the sorts of questions that employees will have to address because how their goal is articulated will determine the type of intervention used to achieve their desired end.

Next, concrete strategies have to be developed that will achieve this vision by bringing the majority of employees along (Chandler, 1962; Child, 1972). Lessons may be taken from Ostrom's (1990) developmental framework for the self-management of common-pool resources (discussed in Chapter 6). In the process of becoming an autonomous group employees in working together will affect each other's norms and perceived benefits (Ostrom, 1990:184). They will start shaping and reshaping their unorganized environment to facilitate communication, for solving employee problems and for making decisions. In this incremental process of organization and change they can transform themselves and on a small-scale lay the foundations for new institutional arrangements. Success on a small scale "enables a group of individuals to build on the social capital thus created to solve larger problems with larger and more complex institutional arrangements. Current theories of collective action do not stress the process of accretion of institutional capital" (Ostrom, 1990:190).

Once parameters have been set for collective-choice situations then rules have to be established for creating and limiting the powers of individuals as well as for protecting free speech (Ostrom, 1990:192). As all individuals cannot be involved with every operational decision to be made, employees will have to choose from strategies available to them which change strategy, they as a group, will support (Ostrom, 1990:194). Employees will need information to make this choice on the benefits that the new strategy can promote and the range of opportunities it will open, and on the harm that flows from allowing the status quo to continue (Ostrom, 1990:194). The idea is to allow employees to reflect critically on their situation and to use this self-reflective capacity, engage in debate and make informed judgements. With the necessary information they are then able to make informed judgements of the benefits and drawbacks involved in being part of such an employee-driven change initiative.

Ostrom asserts that people “will differentially weight the expected benefits of avoiding future harms more heavily than the benefits of producing future goods” (1990:208). What employees will come to realize is that there is no outside body that will put pressure on them to change and therefore they cannot be dependent upon external powers or authorities to solve their problems. If they choose to work towards a positive solution to their problems the momentum will have to be employee-driven.

An assessment will need to be made of the skills needed by employees to enable them to meet the new demands that achieving these goals will make. The skills required can be developed with the help of experts in the necessary areas identified (for example, assertiveness training, social interaction training, conflict handling, negotiation, analytical skill development, learning how to ask the right questions and examine relevant issues, problem analysis and political awareness).

The talk needs to be walked continually (Peters and Waterman, 1982). It must stay alive. To enable this to happen, employees must have an active role to play. Just as MacIntyre (1981; discussed in Chapter 3) suggested management employ narrative so too can an

employee discourse of organizational life be developed that keeps the vision alive and desirable. This narrative must become a shared conception of the desired good that is worth pursuing even if its attainment is not in one's own lifetime. This narrative must build a composite picture of employee empowerment. It must tell stories of success. It must tell how employees unite in order to achieve certain realizable goals no matter how small.

Stories of failure must also be circulated. They must be told to ensure that the failure is not in vain but is given significance in the building of understanding. The stories must expose individual vulnerability and the human condition of organizational life. They must tell of the human cost involved and tell of the long-term goals desired.

Employee stories must provide the historic memory and moral background (the folk-lore or legends) to the struggle for employee empowerment. They must tell of the suffering and joy of those employees working towards greater capacity development. These human aspects must be given new meaning within the organizational context (MacIntyre, 1981:135). In this way learning will take place within the context of the employee collective working toward making organizations a better place for all.

Just as in the women's movement, the type of change envisioned is social change on a large scale, therefore none of these actions can take place in isolation. Networks need to be created with all other local and regional social change associations (for example, labour unions, staff associations, professional associations, church organizations, women's movement and other grassroots movements of empowerment). Such associations have much to share and advice to give. They can also lend moral support to the initiative and add political muscle if necessary. The important thing is to get the employee discourse out and in circulation so that it becomes part of the broader social environment that in turn will influence the organizational context.

Political Problem Solving

To enable employees to act collectively to achieve their developmental needs they will need to be taught to think politically (Gaventa, 1980). They will need to see developmental issues beyond the limitations of the managerial discourse. If they are able to define their situation clearly they will not be compliant in merely solving managerially formulated organizational problems (Bermant and Warwick, 1978). To make the cognitive jump of being able to re-label substantive issues such as disempowerment employees will need to know what questions to ask and how to expose relevant concerns and not to just accept management's version of an issue. This will involve a whole new way of interacting that will remove the belief that one is hopeless, powerless and defeated.

With knowledge employees will come to understand that the "social or communicative construction of problems is deeply political, for it is necessarily selective, allocating attention and concern to some issues but not to others, shaping the agendas of consideration (and participation) for a range of actors and decision makers" (Forester, 1987:171). To meet the challenge that this situation demands, employees require learning experiences that will allow the development of:

- analytical skills to enable them to identify issues, recognize organizational conditions, the other parties concerned and the organizational policies relevant to an issue (Coplin and O'Leary, 1988:3). They will need to be able to recognize the goals associated with specific interests and goals that will benefit the organization as a whole;
- social and political skills to create discussion, debate, and the dialogue necessary to deal with "tame" problem resolution and work toward the resolution of complex problems that are "ill-structured", have widespread inter-connectedness and are difficult to define. Such complex problems have no easy solutions and the givens of one party are bound to be challenged by other interested parties (Mitroff, Emshoff and Kilman, 1979:583).

Employees need to be able to think politically as well as technically by probing "political questions as well as functional ones" (Forester, 1987:160). They must identify the real problems that affect them in specific situations, label them, evaluate them, formulate an argument and collect evidence to support their view. They must identify the other players/parties involved in order to understand the constraints within which they are working and to understand what these constraints will mean in the handling of a specific problem. They will need to become competent to identify those aspects of the problem around which they must negotiate.

Employees will need to become competent to define the scope of the problem and the possible courses of action and alternatives, given their new-found political perspective in addition to their technical view. They will need to identify and appreciate the consequences of defining the problem in their particular way and how consequent action will affect other parties concerned given the strategic nature of policies and procedures. They will need to initiate the adjustment, removal or formulation of policy and procedure to ensure the resolution of the problem.

Employees will need to attain agreement among themselves and the competence to negotiate with management on the resolution of the problem. They will need to understand both conflict and collaboration as means of collective action and seek creative solutions to newly defined social engagement problems. They need to ensure their full participation in the implementation and management of the ongoing process of bringing about the required change. Employees will need to cope with the responsibility of the re-organization of tasks and deal with the consequences of this re-organization. They will have to interpret these consequences and make necessary adjustments. They will need to appropriate the lessons from change management theorists previously discussed.

In the social process of creating new meaning, in re-formulating and solving problems employees will create a legitimate discourse. They will also create a whole new learning dimension in their lives that allows them to understand politics as the continual

evaluation, planning of alternatives and choosing of strategies to achieve improvement in their everyday organizational life. This process of analytical, social and political skill development will allow the possibility of collaboration in situations where organizational reality is experienced differently by different organizational sub-groups. The white-collar sub-group will itself develop a legitimate discourse; a "certain moral and political stand against others" in the organization (Gergen, 1991:259).

Though gaining the recognition of a legitimate discourse is an ideal upheld by Habermas (1984), multiple points of view do not naturally lead to consensus, as the discourse of each belief system does not readily work toward agreement (Lyotard, 1984). This recognition of conflict in organizations needs to be acknowledged. Although conflict needs to be institutionalized, organizational focus needs to go beyond these obstacles to obtain agreement on the co-ordination of action to solve organizational problems in a way that is reasonably fair to all parties. Paradoxically, enabling employees to achieve this level of capacity development and to deal with conflict appropriately, is likely to benefit the organization by making it both more human and more efficient in a way that moves beyond the narrow technical efficiency of current management science. Such political behaviour and collaborative participation would improve organizational conditions for all concerned, make the organization more efficient in terms of operation and more effective in getting people with different versions of reality to adopt "an idea and practice of justice" (Lyotard, 1984:66).

This level of employee competence is not a question of task ability nor the ability to work within the constraint of being able to use organizational information to define a problem from management's perspective. It is the capacity to use organizational information in order to make new connections and to formulate different efficient strategies for solving organizational problems for the long-term benefit of all its members (Lyotard 1984:51). To this end one looks forward to organizational development "that can increase one's ability to connect the fields jealously guarded from one another by the traditional organization of knowledge" (1984:52).

Is this goal of formal participation realizable given management's "strong emphasis on professional competency and agreement on what that means"? (March and Olsen, 1982:285). This fear is not perceived as a significant stumbling block; there are many educated, professional and intelligent white-collar employees with the collective capacity to transform organizations. It is the overarching discourse, leadership and structure to catalyze awareness, collective thinking and action that are currently lacking. The first two have been addressed, I now examine relevant structural factors necessary for mobilization.

Structure

For the political mobilization of employees three levels of structural change are required: among employees themselves, within the organization and at the institutional level.

Introduction of employee structure

Employees need to create a structure amongst themselves to achieve their goals. The structure will require two levels of action. The one is to ensure democracy in the mode of decision-making with regard to values, policies and procedures (Horvats, 1983:280) and the other is to ensure efficient execution of tasks by those competent to do so.

Employees need to divide themselves into specific task force groups to deal with and manage different aspect of their goal achievement. Team building and management training interventions will be required. The issues of participative management, structure and strategy will have to be understood and dealt with, as will the management of conflict and the ability to deal with uncertainty. Conflict resolution mechanisms must be put in place to allow the handling of differences and efficient decision-making, and to prevent some from being harmed and others from evading responsibility or acting irresponsibly and destructively (Horvat, 1983:295).

Rules need to be established to facilitate the achievement of these goals within the value principles advocated (for example, democratic, just) and these will have to be reiterated, enforced, amended or reinterpreted given the nature of the problems arising from time to time. It would be critical to show that existing practices of management (the intention being to change these) are not reproduced! Moral bonds and practical structures need to be formulated that place constraints on arbitrary behaviour.

Given these opportunities, employees have the potential to develop an understanding of their own skills, ability and development needs, to direct their energies where they are most suited and prudently challenge those areas in which they, as employees, have acquired both competence and support. In this way, while in pursuit of their long-term goal for a better future, employees will generate positive feelings of self-respect and esteem as they gain influence and control over relevant issues. In the process they will give meaningful expression of who they are as a collective. This will energize them to avail themselves of further development opportunities, gain the capacity to act more effectively in organizationally confined contexts and fundamentally change their working relationships to that of genuine interdependence.

Change at the formal organization

Concurrently with getting their own house in order, employees will have to tackle the organizational system. By this stage they should have acquired (incrementally) sound social and political skills through effective developmental programmes and experience. (Initially these will need to be conducted in their spare time as they gain management acceptance of what they are doing, but the group should move towards building the capacity developing exercises into their working day.)

Employees will have to find ways to negotiate with management decision-making mechanisms at various levels within the main structure. This will be necessary for them initially to influence developmental decisions and eventually (working on an incremental development plan) to make their contribution throughout the organization. This decision

making level of interactive organizational activity will bring with it a greater understanding of power and the politics of generating organizational change; the politics of social change itself becoming a critical area of autonomous growth.

Links within the organization will need to be established with target-specific groups (for example, unions, staff associations, affirmative action groups) to establish developmental needs for achieving employee goals and to gain their agreement and involvement in achieving these as a common benefit.

Change at the institutional level

The institutional level will also need to be addressed. Major changes will have to be made in seats of tertiary education to integrate the teaching of alternative views in the fields of organizational theory and traditional management practice, and to establish discursive legitimacy for non-managerial viewpoints. This will enable the built-in bias (explored in Chapter 3) of the respective views to be acknowledged and evaluated from the various standpoints. In this way knowledge around contested issues can be openly debated and new behaviour patterns developed that challenge prevailing patterns of advantage.

At the institutional level (governmental, tertiary educational, professional bodies and unions) it needs to be conceded that large organizations require constraints. These need to be targeted towards restraining the organizational potential to diminish human capacity development by disempowering employees (discussed in Chapters 1, 5 and 6). In particular, professional bodies which deal with human relations and capacity development, need to be targeted as potential allies rather than as pro-management specialists with a bias towards ensuring compliance within existing conditions. Such a change in mindset, that adopts the legitimacy of other discourses, would be evident in changes made to their codes of ethics and in the training and development initiatives offered.

As suggested at the organizational level, links and alliances need to be made at the community/institutional level. Those bodies that are likely to be sympathetic to an employee-driven initiative for capacity development (for example, national unions, personnel boards, training and development boards, professional associations, women's movement, Life-line, churches, political parties) need to be targeted. The employee discourse must reach the broader community and be assimilated by them. These bodies have the potential to influence what is considered legitimate organizational behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). If the discourse becomes part of community values and expectations, they will come to demand this level of capacity development as an appropriate common organizational benefit.

A professional association for all white-collar organizational members (for example, an Institute for Administration or an Association of Employees), rather than one's for managers (for example, Institute of Management), would be a powerful new instrument for bringing about organizational transformation. If such an institution promoted the level of capacity development described it could be recognized as a legitimate, authoritative public voice for such developmental organizational concerns. Members of such an association could gain social standing should their code of practice grant a measure of professional competence. This in turn would stimulate membership growth so others could also gain from its initiatives and be influenced by its institutional perspective.

The success of such initiatives at the employee, organizational and institutional levels would induce change in the organizational environment facilitating conditions for the personal, social and political development of employees. The developmental opportunities provided and collective experience gained would allow employees the opportunity to achieve goals they would be unable to achieve as individuals. Most importantly in the daily process of interaction and social construction they will create an employee discourse. The democratic and developmental processes envisaged would break the disempowering and stunting stranglehold of the prevailing arbitrary exercise of

managerial power. These changes would offer employees and management the opportunity to transcend their own interests in transforming the organizations and institutions that now mould them. Is this not what management professes to want in their technical drive for efficiency and survival?

7.5 CONCLUSION

The way employees engage with organizations is constrained by the limited concepts available to them. Deliberate restraint of discursive activity denies employees the opportunity to share in the associational life of organizations (Knoke, 1986). This opportunity to share in the political shaping of organizations would offer employees and management the opportunity to transcend their own constraining interests for the good of the whole.

Prevailing organizational and management theories do not seem to offer employees the tools or capacity development to accomplish such collective objectives. Nor do they offer a way to improve problematic social relations that underlie the inherent political struggle within organizations. A fundamental change from the over-control of management to greater dialogue between management and employees is not likely to happen easily. This transformation will only take place with discursive legitimacy; when different goals gain legitimacy; when management feels secure enough to cope with the difficult task of achieving legitimate diverse goals; and employees develop the social and political capacity to influence their own organizational circumstances.

The traditionally dominant, clear-cut, rational model of organizational decision-making that assumes homogeneity, consensus for goals and profit maximization, and that permits arbitrary resolution of conflict by management is dangerously outmoded. A move away from this technocratic mainstream model will allow the conceptualization of an alternative way of organizing the work environment that is more likely to accommodate the personal, social and political development of employees, and their structured active

engagement in the associational life of the organization. This effort and structure would circumvent haphazard confrontation, breaking of rules, working to rule and the possible disruption of organization life by aggression, hostility or passive resistance. As a developmental process it would allow employees to deliberately choose the constructive challenge of making organizations a better place for all and promote, in the process, the idea of organizations as institutions of goodwill.

Such a discourse, when given legitimacy, will open the way to a new understanding of social relations of unequal power distribution in organizations. It will facilitate the naming of social conditions of disempowerment and the redefinition of problematic organizational relationships. It will allow those concerned with organizational life to recognize the organization as a political community. This will allow different strategies of participation or engagement to develop that will stimulate collective debate, create a new vision of that future environment, choose it and shape it towards the achievement of a common good. The by-product of this process and involvement would promote civic-mindedness (Curtis, 1991:171).

The development of socio-political organizational skill can be accomplished in a way that encourages an understanding of both rights and obligations. If organizations accept this socio-political challenge of developing civic-mindedness, they themselves will be transformed in the process. This would be evident in the way they:

- acknowledge the civic order they are attempting to induce;
- treat all their employees as "full nationals" rather than "second-class citizens";
- create structures for full participation and development; and thereby
- create conditions for civic competence.

Having attained this broad strategic level of human association, organizations would be free to take an Aristotelian view that the good of the whole is a superordinate concern that supersedes sectional interests. At this level the moral imperatives of the political

organizational community embracing development, democratic practice, justice and fairness are appropriate concerns in a society that subscribes to the "good" life for "all".

To attain this goal, new solutions that embrace the acceptance of multi-cultural values within organizations (with all the attending problems of conflicting values and interests), need to be found. These solutions would encourage organizational members to be reflective and to think creatively - critically, analytically, socially, politically - and to acknowledge and accommodate different and competing interests in the difficult task of co-ordinating action in the process of meeting legitimate multiple objectives.

It is my thesis that an alternative discourse, which necessitates the socio-political capacity development of employees, is urgently in need of debate. It is proposed that this discursive development be a challenge to employees themselves who in the process of taking responsibility for their own personal, social and political capacity development will realize their maximum potential within an organization. Such a developmental goal would be a struggle directed towards a desired good worth pursuing that allows employees to collectively strive, as a community, towards shaping a more humane future organizational environment.

... and after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Work'd with a dim and undetermin'd sense
Of unknown modes of being; in my thoughts
There was a darkness, call it solitude,
Or blank desertion, no familiar shapes
Of hourly objects, images of trees,
Of sea of sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty Forms that do not live
Like living men mov'd slowly through the mind
By day and were the trouble of my dreams.

(Wordsworth: The Prelude)

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