# MANAGING COMMUNITY:

# A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF PRAXIS

by

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To my wife

Helen.

Thank you.

What will men…[and women]…*do* when they see things as

they are?


Colin Wilson, 1956.

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## Abstract

If communities are to become a viable means of implementing social policy then community practitioners must individually examine their personal praxis. Therefore, in discovering a community's aims and objectives, a management model is needed that offers every practitioner a reflexive means of understanding peoples' belief's, values, and attitudes.

This proposition is critically examined through a philosophical framework that explores individuals' diverse perspectives on community, derived from their adherence to contending ontological and epistemological propositions about the social world, and its related ethical and motivational dimensions.

Following a philosophical analysis, the taxonomy of social reality perspectives, developed by Dixon (2003) and Dixon and Dogan (2002; 2003a, b, c, d; 2004), is systematically used to explore the contending views on social reality. Thus, methodological configurations are associated with logical categories, (1) naturalist agency, underpinning the self-interested (free-riding) *homo economicus*; (2) naturalist structuralism, underpinning the obligation driven *homo hierarchus*; (3) hermeneutic structuralism, underpinning the conversation-saturated *homo sociologicus* (Archer, 2000: 4); and (4) hermeneutic agency, underpinning *homo existentialis.*

The disciplines of social psychology, ethics, and political science are employed to explore selected facets of human nature, moral principles, and political ideology chosen, by associates of each set of methodological configurations, in particular relational situations.

Informed by this investigation a sample of community practitioners were questioned about their praxis. This reveals that a substantial majority understand and accept an objective and knowable social world where people are self-interested. Therefore, these practitioners perceive community as a setting where they can influence the decisions of others through discourse and judge its ethical merits by the degree of loyalty and obligation extended to their projects. Thus, it is apparent that community practitioners should evaluate their praxis, through critical self-reflection, if they are to develop suitably robust and durable symbiotic relationships with adherents to each of the four social reality perceptions.

This research leads to a new logic, based on the innovative interpretation of ontological and epistemological configurations offered in the seminal work of Bhaskar (1978 and 1979) and Archer (1989, 1995, 2000 and 2003). Here, an emerging social ontology informs the construction of more specific theories concerning the dynamics of community in identifiable localities. Therefore, it now becomes possible to construct a management model, incorporating contending social realities, the techniques of mediation and the results of changing cognition and cognitive dissonance, that facilitates community practitioner's critical self-reflection and construction of managerial strategies based on community member's contending perceptions of social reality.

# Contents

*Publications*

1. Dixon, J., Sanderson, A. and Tripathi, S. (2004) "Improving Public Sector Leadership: Philosophical Dispositions and Situational Leadership", in *Proceedings of 2004 EFMD Conference on Public Sector Management Development (CD Rom)*, Brussels: European Foundation for Management Development. Pages 378–400.

2. Dixon, J., Dogan, R. and Sanderson, A. (2005) "Community and Communitarianism: A Philosophical Investigation", *Community Development Journal,* 40 (1): 4–16. Pages 401–415.

3. Dixon, J., Sanderson, A. and Tripathi, S. (2005) "Managing in a Paradoxical Public Sector Environment: The Leadership Challenge of Ambiguity", in *Proceedings of 2005 EFMD Conference on Public Sector Management Development and Radical Change (CD Rom),* Brussels: European Foundation for Management Development. Pages 416–427.

4. Dixon, J., Tripathi, S., Sanderson, A., Gray, C., Rosewall, I. and Sherriff, I. (2005) "Accessible Higher Education: Meeting the Challenges of HE in FE", in *Foundation Degree Forward Journal*, No.6: 34–38. Pages 428–435.

5. Dixon, J., Sanderson, A. and Tripathi, S. (2006) "Ethics, Trust and the Public Interest: The Contending Modes of Societal Governance", in *Governance of the State,* (eds. Kakabadse, N.K. and Kakabadse, A.) London: Palgrave. Pages 436–456.

6. Dixon, J., Sanderson, A. and Tripathi, S. (2006) "Community Empowerment: Developing Post-Bureaucratic Management Skills," in *Proceedings of 2006 EFMD Conference on Public Sector Management Development* (CD Rom),

Brussels: European Foundation for Management Development. Pages 457–480.

7. Sanderson, A. (2006) "The Appropriate Role of the State within the Ethical Paradigm," in *Proceedings of the Plymouth Business School and School of Sociology, Politics and Law* (eds. Barton, A. and Lean, J.) University of Plymouth. Pages 481–499.

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# AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

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# Community and Community Praxis: The Complex and Contradictory Nature of Managing Community

The notion of "community" is difficult to define as "it is not just that the term has been used ambiguously; it has been contested, fought over and appropriated for different uses and interests to justify different politics, policies and practices" (Mayo, 1994: 48). This controversy can result in the conclusion that, although it "is a useful categorisation, community must remain an essentially contested concept" (Popple, 1995: 4). For instance, should it be understood only in terms of a locality or incorporate communities of interest, which can be based on ethnicity, sexual preference, gender or age, and which "serve to balance the restricted outlooks of some geographic communities" (Tam, 1998: 204). The latter is advocated by Tam as it offers a means whereby citizens "would be able to develop social bonds which cut across local and national boundaries" (1998: 205) and thereby enhance their capacity to contribute to their own neighbourhoods. This argument reflects contemporary geographic mobility that can result in the weakening of individual's emotive bonds of attachment to a particular area (Tam, 1998: 205). Thus, this thesis adopts an operational definition that recognises communities of

locality that coalesce with communities of interest.

Notwithstanding any definitional difficulties, both explicit and implicit claims continue are made for community building organisations, which can be summarised as follows (Kendall, 2003: 113):

- Confidence, as experience of successful collective action is gained;
- Skills acquired, of relevance for economic, social or political life;
- Individuals' self-esteem and communities' reputation fostered;
- A sense of control over life regained, bolstered or enhanced; and
- Fatalism or 'poverty of expectations' replaced by attitudes and perspectives that are more positive.

Thus, inclusive community participation seems a quintessential element within the concept of community, indeed Tam considers that the extent that "communities adopt co-operative enquiry in their collective deliberations" (1998: 16) will determine the extent that common community values can emerge. Thus, communities are (Tam, 1998: 31-32):

> built upon the structures involving human interactions — not just in families and neighbourhood areas, but also in schools, business organisations, state institutions, professional and community groups, voluntary associations, and international networks. In all cases, necessary reforms need to facilitate the development of citizens' attitudes and abilities as effective participants of inclusive communities, with the help of education, work opportunities, and collective protection.

This definition resonates with Etzioni's description of the concept,[1] therefore, when he constructs his case that endorses the body of thought know as communitarianism he confidently makes the assertion that community members are willing to accept a key role in furnishing the needs of their neighbours. He argues that once individuals have discharged their personal responsibilities they are obliged to pro-actively promote the well being of relatives, friends and others in the community or communities to which they belong (Etzioni, 1995a: 144). This case, for the application of reciprocity in care and compassion, is a familiar theme

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[1] Etzioni (1995a: 119-122) defines community as including all types of social groups, such as schools, organisations, families, neighbourhoods and interest groups.

in communitarian literature as theorists (Bellah, 1995/6; Sandel, 1992; Tam, 1998) argue for a balance between individual rights and collective obligations and responsibilities.

This aim leaves the traditional sociological divide between *gemeinschaft*, or the traditional rural community, and the urban autonomous state of *gesellschaft*, rendered redundant. Thus, community is understood as existing in shared common experiences, as well as in local neighbourhoods. But, all these participant groups are expected to aspire to achieve "new communities in which people have choices and readily accommodate divergent *sub*communities" (Etzioni, 1995a: 122), whilst still maintaining common values and belief systems.

The notion that the unfulfilled "unencumbered self" would find that their fundamental desire to create a purposeful self-identity is only possible through relationships with other community members is crucial to those who proselytise active engagement in community groups. Arising from this understanding, it is expected that greater social cohesion would result from unrestricted human autonomy in a process where, as McIntyre notes, citizens "would grow to understand themselves...only in the context of the community" (cited in Arthur, 1998: 357). In this paradigm, Sandel (1992: 19) has recognised that a citizen cannot choose their purpose in life without recourse to their cultural inheritance. This rich history of attachments and commitments is an essential part of an individual's social reality but is only accessible through the medium of group discourse. Therefore, if the individual becomes deprived of community interaction they would be unable to reach their true potential, as they are forced into a meaningless conundrum, rootless and unclear about their true vocation.

However, a dilemma exists for those actively seeking to develop/engage with community participation — community practitioners — as there is a gap between

aspirations and community reality, in terms of both community engagement and outcomes. This disparity is a source of frustration to politicians and others who promote community as a source of intentional individual collective action, where high levels of participation can be harnessed to provide an effective mode of delivery for, and evaluation of, social policy outcomes (Miller and Ahmed, 1999: 269). There is no doubt that this enthusiasm for the causal capacity of community has been stimulated, both in theory and practice, to facilitate the cultural transformation necessary to engineer the rolling back of the crisis-ridden welfare state (Aldridge, 1998: 9). In this scenario, governments, and their host societies, have begun to acknowledge the ineffectiveness of command–type public policy instruments (Kooiman, 1993; Weimer and Vining, 1997) and to attribute their inadequacy to policy failures (Bovens and t'Hart, 1990; Bovens et al., 2001; Gray, 1998; Sieber, 1981). This has lead to a renewed focus on community organisations as presenting an opportunity for improved interactive governance (Amin *et al.*, 2002) and an emphasis on engagement with tenants and residents at neighbourhood level to stimulate community economic development (Henderson, 1991; Lipietz, 1992 and Daly and Cobb 1994).

However, the failure to initiate a high level of community participation could lie in fundamental misunderstanding of its dynamics. As Popple (1995: 3–4) notes "community has both descriptive and evaluative meanings, and is as much an ideological construct as a description of reality." Moreover, not only do Tam and Etzioni neglect the ideological aspect but they also fail to address the philosophical and ethical dimensions of community interaction. Therefore, it is asserted here that it is necessary to have a more rigorous and robust understanding of community dynamics if this concept is to act as a purposeful unit of analysis in the delivery of social policy.

Etzioni argues that there is a need to confront "inauthentic democratic politics" (1968: 637) as this type of government dis-empowers the majority by restricting societal power to a periodic vote at an election that offers a restricted choice. So communities should seek to stimulate the active society where there would be an emphasis on an "egalitarian distribution of power" (Etzioni, 1968: 517). In seeking to achieve this aim, the principle of subsidiarity is invoked. This maintains that a group, or groups, that are in the closest proximity to a problem should attend to its definition and resolution, with intervention by other groups restricted to the time when support is required. So only when the family unit cannot achieve its aims should the local school, health centre, or other larger organisation take responsibility (Etzioni, 1995a: 44). Thus, dependence on the state is downgraded to the choice of last resort as active communities take control of their own destiny. However, whilst effective community initiatives are generally understood as "a product of a complex interplay of people and organisations" (Parsons, 1995: 185) rather than the result of directives from a governing elite within this scenario community work praxis is pre-dominantly influenced by either the pluralist or the radical approach.

**The Pluralist Approach**

Tam and Etzioni would maintain that further ideological analysis of community is unnecessary, provided individuals are furnished with democratic forums where they can undertake meaningful rather than tokenistic roles in their communities. Therefore, they can accept that the "user-led services and alternatives" (Croft and Beresford, 1996: 195), where people can "plan, act monitor and evaluate" (Chambers, 1998: 135) the needs arising in their community, are a sufficient

incentive for high levels of committed community activity. Thus, their model of participation is based on local people having a purposeful involvement in decision making about issues that effect their lives (Croft and Beresford 1989, 1992; Beresford and Croft 1995). This approach maintains a pluralist position focused on micro change that emphasises "technical skills and knowledge" (Popple: 1994: 25) where the professional practitioner is recognised as possessing competencies that are missing from the skills, attributes and knowledge possessed by the community activist. There are only two key concerns in this reputedly vibrant framework: that local people do not "exclude or discriminate against some groups", and that the "people who get involved may be unrepresentative" (Beresford and Croft, 1993: 207) thus, praxis is informed by the "structural nature of deprivation" (Popple, 1994: 25) and social exclusion. However, as is reflected in the communitarians' belief in the inherent goodness that exists within the social nature of people (Etzioni, 1995a, 1997), it is envisaged that any local suppression of pluralism and dissent can, over a period of time, be resolved.

This model of community practice intervention offers the participating community member a limited decision making capacity as networks of organisations develop partnerships to address community imperatives through a synthesis of ideas and resources. This will involve "clarity and consensus about participatory principles and values" (Webster, 2003: 163) that might, through the encouragement of active citizenship and community consultation, lead to improved local interactive governance (Stoker, 2000).

However, the fragility of relationships amongst community members was clearly reflected in the results of a study that found people to be reluctant to enter into exchanges with other community members, unless they could interact with those in a similar position to themselves to their mutual benefit (Homans, 1951). This

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style of interdependence, governed by self-perception, has also been observed in the cultural and/or financial disadvantages that may limit people's ability to participate in the affairs of their community or communities (Lister, 1990). Furthermore, there is also a tendency for organisations operating at the community level to impose standards of correct behaviour leaving people with limited resources, who are already aware of their poor profiles, having an additional disincentive for becoming actively involved in a group decision-making process (Mik-Meyer, 2001).

Although doubt exists about the vision of partnerships delivering a new pattern of multiplex community relationships, nevertheless recent research has affirmed that "most citizens do seem to engage in some sort of civic activism, even though most are relatively low-cost actions" (Pattie et al., 2003: 465). This study made a distinction between citizens who participated in autonomous activities; those who opted to communicate with people in authority, such as counsellors or local government officials; and those who prefer collective action. If a community member is involved in "one of these types...[they]...need not be engaged to those linked to other types" (Pattie et al., 2003: 465). Thus, community participation appears to be situated in a paradigm of multi-causal characteristics, from which a general distinction is discernible between those who prefer acts of informal volunteering and those who become actively involved in formal frameworks. The existence of this dichotomy was recognised in a conclusion drawn from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey — namely that joining up with community networks was a pursuit of the affluent, whilst their poorer neighbours preferred one-to-one involvement (Home Office Research Development Statistics, 2003).

Therefore, community practitioners adopting a pluralist praxis, could give more attention to the plurality in types of volunteering cultures (Williams and Windebank,

2003). These dynamics might well reveal some of the reasons why new service planning and delivery in the health sector, through primary care groups and trusts, continue to operate through a hierarchical structure, where managers and practitioners exercise considerable more influence than patients and community members (Milewa *et al.*, 2002). As Popple notes "pluralist community work tends to placate rather than liberate the groups that come within its orbit" (1994: 26), as it can function as a deterministic mechanism rather than a conduit to empower community members.

Moreover, if academics aspire to the development of a better understanding of the rationale behind the diverse dialogues between community stakeholders then this aim implies that a theoretical base be created which can adequately reflect the heterogeneity of experiences amongst members of different communities (McKie, 2003). Therefore, the argument leads to the supposition that "we should talk less about community and more about power and relationships" (Loughran, 2003: 179).

Furthermore, it has been observed that once some specific issue that has encouraged community involvement is resolved "community cohesion often collapses" (Abbott, 1996: 95). Thus pluralist community initiatives can fail to make effective theoretical and practice connections between individual's experience and the changing nature of contemporary society (Popple, 1994: 26). This omission has resulted in a call for the dimensions of "sustainability in participation, equity in participation and the dynamic socio-political context" to be added to research programmes, which have only focussed on needs assessment, leadership, resource mobilisation, management and organisation (Eyre and Gauld, 2003).

**The Radical Approach**

This model of praxis perceives the community member as being entitled to

fundamental rights and expectations that result in " a marked shift of emphasis from duties to rights" (Marshall, 1950: 9). Moreover, "there is a basic human equality associated with the concept of full membership of a community" (Marshall, 1950: 8) that is contemporaneous to the norms of current social policy. Effective operation of this mechanism should ensure that the individual can legitimately expect their reasonable expectations of welfare services, such as social security and education, and human rights, including the right to strike and freedom of information, are legitimately provided to every citizen (Marshall, 1981, 96–97). Thus, whether the individual consciously chooses, or is proscribed as a member of a specific community, they have entitlements that justify their opposition to the unfettered operation of the free market (Marshall, 1950: 68). This "goes beyond the sterile dichotomy of state versus individual...[by]...reconnecting the democratic and egalitarian project of progressive community work with the concrete realities of people in communities" (Shaw, 1996: 87). Such a challenge can be addressed through informal community education that promotes the liberating concept of humanisation, which connects community members to the necessity of confronting and working to permanently change the political, socio-economic and cultural contradictions that interact in a hegemonic way to limit their lives (Freire, 1996: 21). This activity, at the micro level of community, becomes related to the macro level of society through its stimulation of "the formation of homogeneous, compact social blocs, which will give birth to their own intellectuals, their own commandos, their own vanguard" (Gramsci, 1971, 204–205).

Thus, Popple (1994: 25 and 1995, 101–102) and Ledwith (1997: 61–94) offer a synthesis of pedagogy and reformist collective initiatives that recognise that "the people themselves are not a homogeneous cultural collectivity but present numerous and variously combined cultural stratification's which, in their pure form,

cannot always be identified within specific historical popular collectivities" (Gramsci, 1985: 195). Therefore, if radical community work is committed to liberating people from oppression it must challenge the hegemonic power of the dominant élite in various spheres of civil society — such as political parties, trade unions, religious groupings and charitable and voluntary organisations. However, within this complex paradigm, communities of locality and interest can co-operate with each other in partnership agreements. They can provide and promote "empowering leadership" (Henderson, 2003: 179) that is committed to the development of knowledge and skills for all community members.

Nurturing and developing the capacity of individuals to share ideas and experiences with other members of their community is the fundamental notion of community participation that underpins Arnstein's ladder of power in the meaningful sharing of decision-making responsibilities that control the outcomes of public policy (1969, 176–182). This ladder moves, in eight rungs, from manipulation, at the bottom, to citizen control at the top. However, the important distinction here for community practitioners who embrace a radical agenda of social transformation is that community members should gradually become actively aware of oppressive forces which render them powerless. Therefore, community practitioners would facilitate a process of critical analysis by community members of alternative meanings for what dominant hegemonies euphemistically portray as common sense (Martin, 1988). Moreover, through the mechanisms of egalitarian community support these alternative meanings can begin to be evaluated in the micro democracies of everyday life and then critically applied to the macro democracy of political parties and everyday government (Siim, 1994) rather than be subsumed in a aggregate effect of top-down, supposedly good, democratic governance.

Therefore, the radical model of community intervention promotes praxis based on permanent social change in marked contrast to the pluralist model that tends to support the maintenance of the *status quo.*

## The State and Community Participation

The complex nature of community praxis, which can feature contradictory aims and objectives, needs to be contextualised within the contemporary delivery of social policy outputs and outcomes in the UK.

### The Provision of Public Services

In seeking to resolve the increasingly constrained role of the state in direct public service provision, strategies have been employed that require a wide range of organisational models. Thus, there has been a movement from centralised to devolved (local and regional) mechanisms with an increasing emphasis on managerialised (corporatised and commercialised quasi-public) provision, communal (private non-profit) provision and market (private-for-profit) provision. This latter form of delivery assumes particular importance due to the dominance of contemporary neo-liberal economic policy agendas and encompasses the desire of policy makers to impose managerialist values and practices throughout the public sector. However, by introducing the disciplines of economy, efficiency and effectiveness into the pubic policy arena uncertainties have arisen over the articulation and measurement of objectives which are often difficult to quantify (Dixon and Hyde, 2003; Dixon et al., 2004). Furthermore, the policy objectives envisaged by government and those outcomes expected by community members may be incompatible with the interests and motivations of the reformed public services.

In this new public management environment policy makers perceive that the

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involvement of community members in the implementation and evaluation of the provision of public services is critical to dealing with issues of fairness, distributional justice, equity, social stability and inclusiveness. However, whilst a number of studies consider how and why people can be encouraged to participate in community initiatives from both a pluralist and radical perspective (for example, Twelvetrees, 1991, Popple 1994, 1995; Ledwith, 1997, Hanley *et al.*, 2000), there is little enthusiasm by commentators for the notion that community participation should replace ineffective public services "rather than complement them" (Taylor, 1992: 18).

In fact, the propensity to emphasise issues of economy and efficiency has prevailed since the 1980's (Barr, 1987, 1991) thereby placing pre-eminence on social continuity rather than social change. Thus, a fundamental contradiction seems to arise in community praxis as the community practitioner, employed by a local authority, struggles to reconcile the expectations of an environment driven by performance management targets, which might neglect the issue of equitable outcomes as they are difficult to quantify. Furthermore, this community practitioner is part of a larger team of local government officers that together form a local bureaucracy. It seems likely that this organisational structure would restrict individual initiative making the community practitioner's praxis subject to pre-ordained, approved interventions that could be designated as token gestures by community members.

**Performance Management**

Community practitioners in the voluntary sector are also faced with increased accountability as "it has been shown that in recent years, the voluntary sector in the UK has relied increasingly on the public sector for its financial support" (Kendall, 2003: 39). Nevertheless, as Kendall notes, "relationships between state

and voluntary sector seem to defy any overall labelling or be animated by any single organising or 'institutional' principle (2003: 40). However, given enthusiastic ministerial rhetoric on the sector's functions as (1) a community-builder; (2) an innovator that can provide 'personalised' services and (3) a means to promote social inclusion (Kendall, 2003: 128), when respective roles and responsibilities are clarified it is likely that performance management targets will be a prominent feature.

## Collaborative Working

Whether pursuing a pluralist or radical agenda those involved in community interventions are likely to have opinions about the effect of their work on the perceived improvements necessary in the provision of social justice. As the first holder of a Chair in Social Justice in the UK, Craig (2001: 3) defines the essential elements of this construct as:

- "the equal worth of all citizens"
- "the equal right to be able to meet their basic needs"
- "the need to spread opportunities and life chances as widely as possible"
- "The requirement that we reduce and where possible eliminate unjustified inequalities"

In asserting these aims Craig places an emphasis on "the role of community development as the means by which the excluded and the marginalised can act on their own behalves" (2001:4) thus pro-actively stimulating the growth and expansion of their skills, attributes and knowledge in their search for improved well being. This proposal resonates with his earlier work carried out in partnership with Mayo on community empowerment (Craig and Mayo, 1995). Here they identified the importance of constructing alternative strategies to ameliorate the pre-

dominance of global free market approaches. Thus, community participation needed to become a new orthodoxy that could give primacy to "democratic approaches to planning" that promoted the purposeful involvement of community members in the decision making process (Craig and Mayo, 1995: 11).

In this paradigm, participation can be understood "as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and actions that are stimulated by their own thinking and by deliberations over which they exert effective control" (Kumar, 2002: 24). In this context community groups coalesce around a consensus over issues arising from the economic and political policies that are being formulated and implemented in the wider society. Therefore, as Ledwith (2005) notes, local practices become situated in the imperatives of global social forces that stimulate community members to adopt styles of community development with transformative potential. Moreover, the potential for what Ledwith terms "critical alliance" (2005: 107) emerges from individual's awareness of their own identities, which can result in the recognition of difference, whether from the perspective of ethnicity, gender, age or other particular human experience, as a strength that contributes to a fairer society. Thus, "collective action for sustainable change involves harnessing collective power beyond neighbourhoods to national and global levels. It is essential that we see our practice move beyond local issues to engage with wider movements for change" (Ledwith, 2005: 172).

The Budapest Conference, organised by Craig in 2004, resulted in the Budapest Declaration (Budapest Declaration, 2004: 1–5), which recognised that communities should be regarded as "active and legitimate partners in the development of plans, structures and policies for local economic development" (clause 26). Furthermore, throughout the European Union, national governments should utilise research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of community

initiatives and create means whereby best practice can be shared through the continuous exchange of "research relevant to the needs of local communities" (clause 10). These assertions mirror Twelvetrees conclusion that "local community based action and its role in a just world should find a much more important place in social policy, social theory, social research and theories of effective governance (1996: 172). However, as research undertaken in Ireland indicates, the local strategic partnerships necessary for successful collaborative working at community level have, from the perspective of community development activists, "tended to re-inforce and extend the power of state officials — whether of local authorities or partnership companies — to the detriment of both elected representatives and the community and voluntary sector (Powell and Geoghagan, 2004: 239). Thus, the notion that state officials should "let go the reins: allow members the space to follow political agenda and to innovate to meet the particular needs of their communities" (Wilkinson and Craig, 2002: 40) should be, according to Mayo (2000), treated with a note of caution. This opinion is enshrined in the observation that bottom up participation can "be pursued for varying reasons, as part of alternative policy agendas, from the right as from the left of the political spectrum" (Mayo, 2000: 110). Thus, participation in community initiatives is not, by itself, sufficient to change the existing structures that implement policy instead the imperative arises that "partners adapt to residents' priorities and ways of working rather than always expecting community participants to adapt to them" (Taylor, 1998: 176).

Burns *et al.* identify four dimensions in assessing community participation: (1) the process of decision making; (2) whether or not the various interests in a community are all represented; (3) whether or not there are effective and inclusive channels of communication and (4) the extent and control over the resources that

have been made available to community members (2004: 7). Central to this paradigm is the necessity for the local community to analyse community power structures and test the way that influence is utilised by key actors and institutions. Therefore community members may need to become involved in a programme of Participatory Action Research (Mayo, 1997: 124) that recognises that "the life blood of communities flows through the capillaries of personal relationships and inter-organisational networks" (Gilchrist, 2003: 50). In this scenario those involved in community interventions need to choose how to optimise "opportunities for *communication* with local people, and the kind of communication that will help achieve greater understanding of the community and better rapport with its residents" (Henderson and Thomas, 2002: 132).

The significance of the apparent complex and contradictory nature of community intervention, which can renders praxis ambivalent should not diminish the importance of the following themes which can be regarded as a fundamental framework for the activity of community building.

### The Principle Themes for Community and Community Praxis

The following notions can be recognised as being fundamental to the concept of community and community praxis:

- Individuals have a fundamental need to socialise with other human beings and can only achieve their full potential by working within collaborative groups that concur with a set of common aspirations.

- Community members must discover their shared values, attitudes, and beliefs, thereby enabling the development of a strong moral code that is necessary to redress contemporary social deficits (such as poverty, increasing criminality and inadequate parenting).

- Communities should mediate between the individual and the state to facilitate local co-operative enquiries into the evaluation of local needs and the outcome of policies, to ensure neighbourhood influence over community-based service delivery.

- Communities should extol the virtue of mutuality, thereby promoting the need for high levels of meaningful participation in community decision-making processes by community members.

- Citizens should recognise the weaknesses inherent in individualism and authoritarianism, which have undermined social progress towards an egalitarian society.

These beliefs should govern the attitudes of community practitioners as they apply their praxis to relational situations in community settings. Thus, they would proselytise to non-believers, exhorting, admonishing and appealing to their reasoned judgement in anticipation of their conversion to the following principles of community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** It is only through engagement by the individual in their community of locality or communities of interest that he or she are able to realise his or her fundamental identity and thus their purpose in life. Therefore, the individual's desire to engage in community, although it may need stimulation, is inherently pre-eminent in his or her personal aims and objectives.

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** Every individual, as soon as he or she can effectively communicate with other community members, would have the capacity to engage fully in reaching community decisions that reflect a consensus of opinion amongst the group.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** Every individual would voluntarily

engage with other community members (possibly aided by gentle persuasion) in an egalitarian and respectful way in order to develop a close and purposeful social bond. It would be expected that this bond would be underpinned by a code of values that emphasises the maintenance of social inclusion and the responsibilities held by every citizen to other community members. Thus, language would be laden with value judgements that reflect community members' mutually agreed norms of behaviour.

## Contending Perceptions of Community

The claim that committed community activists, although subject to a complex and contradictory working environment, can offer all community members a vision that accords with their pre-dispositions about community engagement is a contested one. Indeed, this thesis explores contending perceptions of community, which may be held by community members, that may render any confident assertions about high levels of community participation and engagement as overly optimistic. Nevertheless, idealism about the efficacy of community based initiatives relate to community practitioners' beliefs. These beliefs are "somehow maximally secured against doubt" (Welbourne, 2001: 40) through the application of the individual's preferred formula for attaining their personal standard of truth. Therefore, when community practitioners proclaim the existence of a construct called "community" in the theoretical domain of being it acts as "a description or inventory of the things that are supposed to exist according to a particular theory which might but need not be true" (Jacquette, 2002: 3).

However, when adherents to the concept of community seek to convert the sceptic to the principle themes of community and community activism the question arises over which personal principles this sceptic must compromise, and whether

such an action would fundamentally violate this sceptic's ideological convictions?

There follows an analysis of three contending perspectives — all of which regards the concept of community and its capacity to enhance the lives of its members with a degree of scepticism. Furthermore, as has already been implied, by recognising their influence community praxis assumes greater complexity.

## The Hierarchical Model of Community

Durkheim recognised that social structures can influence an individual's cognitive structures and therefore his or her social actions. On this basis his or her mental representations of the world arise from our social participation (Bergson, 2004). Therefore, society creates social facts about social structures, institutions, norms and values that transcend the individual and constrains both that person's behaviour and social action through his or her social relationships. Thus, a community member is socialised into believing certain rules and norms, the violation of which attracts penalties. This scenario (Pinker, 2002: 53):

> does not mean that benevolence and co-operation cannot evolve. It means only that benevolence, like flight, is a special state of affairs in need of an explanation, not something that just happens. It can evolve only in particular circumstances and has to be supported by a suite of cognitive and emotional faculties..

Therefore, the creation of such a common bond for some community members may only evolve in the principles that enshrine the "common good" of society, which has priority over local community interests. Thus, their utopia is a vision reminiscent of Plato's Republic, featuring a social order where everyone has, and is aware of, their pre-ordained position. In such a society, an élite would exercise knowledge-based power through a sophisticated legal system that has benefited from a tradition of tried and tested remedies. Thus, Socrates asserts that (Plato, [c410-347] 2000: 155–6):

if our rulers are to be worthy of the name, and their auxiliaries likewise, then I think the auxiliaries would be prepared to carry out orders, and the rulers would issue those orders either in obedience to the letter of the law, or, in places where we have left the interpretation of the law to them, in obedience to its spirit.

Therefore, community members who embrace the hierarchical model of community take actions that can be posited as predictable as their rational decisions are taken based on prescribed rules, procedures and what strategy is best able to produce justice. Therefore, the notion of individual risk taking would create unease as competition between citizens might fragment the social framework by challenging the authority of the governing elite. Thus, social mobility is restricted although those possessing expert knowledge would be able to overtly climb the social ladder and join the oligarchy.

The concept of community is recognised as a tool to further the traditional conservative imperative for the state to preserve its power over its subjects. This reaction is, to an extent, driven by the contemporary insurgence of neo-liberal thought and its emphasis on economic freedom and profit "that may pose a threat to traditional forms of social life, to custom, religion and morality" (Scruton, 1996: 11). So, communities should contribute towards the preservation of established hierarchical institutions and fear the infiltration of community organisations by radicals attempting to cause social unrest to further their aim of liberating the oppressed.

Thus, the state and society combine together to form a nation in the tradition of Comte's ([1830-42] 1896) positivist[2] project to identify the invariant laws governing the social world in acknowledgement of the interrelated nature of social institutions. This basic uniformity or regularity draws upon natural groupings rather than classifications imposed as a result of the feelings of individuals (Aristotle

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[2] This term is not used here as a synonym for empiricism but instead represents the opposite to "negativist."

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[c.335-322] 1976). This natural order underpins natural laws that govern relationships between institutional and cultural forms that make society an organic whole. Therefore, when community members adhere to deontological imperatives, based on the notion of duties or what is right, that underpins this synergism they have beliefs, not attitudes or opinions, that they interpret as the truth. Within their communities, the traditional values of the state would be expressed through secondary associations, such as the family, the institution of marriage, the church, and neighbourhoods. These values would have been formed by a shared language and history and therefore identify the cultural preferences of the populace in a code of normative morality that decrees what people ought to think (Dumont 1970, Hart [1961] 1994, Hetcher 2004, Raz 1975). Thus, any recognition of moral relativism would represent a self-defeating gesture by the élite, as relativism is the result of a failure to provide robust moral leadership capable of evoking widespread adherence to certain rules of behaviour.

For community members who believe in a hierarchical social structure, society develops organically in a complex and subtle evolutionary pattern that should be devoid of the uncertainties inherent within the dynamics of radical change (Hurka 1993). This means that reason has to struggle to regulate and resolve contrary and conflicting emotions. Therefore, it is acceptable, in the paradigm, that communities can heal the abrasive profiteering of the free market by offering the compromise of locally controlled, state-funded, community services. However, the extent that the community should act as a mediator between community members and the state is a matter for careful consideration. Although, it is acceptable that government should be conducted through a series of checks and balances, which ensures equilibrium by preventing a power imbalance between government institutions, there is a danger in extending such prerogatives to organised

collectives. For instance, if central government provided the resources for communities to evaluate and recommend changes to policy such an initiative risks being a precursor to community members collectively reflecting over wider social and cultural relations of power. Thus, hierarchists affirm their belief in the axiom "they decide what we shall do" (Mamadouh, 1999: 143).

The structure of mutuality favoured by the followers of hierarchism fundamentally differs from the mutual obligations that feature in Tam's community praxis (1998: 15). Using Goodin's (2002: 583-9) alternative models, for organising mutuality and reciprocity, expectations are founded on a conditionality of "mutually conditional obligations" that arises from an ethereal bond between the élite and their subservient fellow citizens. Within this uniting force, subjects are required to discharge their duties to the state only if the state discharges its duties to its own subjects, with this principle applying vice-versa (Seligman 1997: 43). Alternatively, the covenant expected by community practitioners' demands a higher level of conviction and sacrifice. This leads to community members having "mutually dependent but unconditional obligations" to each other. So, if one person fails to discharge their obligations to another the latter is not exonerated from their obligations to the former. Admittedly, after a period of attempted persuasion, the unrepentant deviant, who fails to honour their community's dominant moral and social principles, would eventually be expelled from community membership; nevertheless this action is incidental rather than spontaneous.

Welfare programmes are a fundamental element within the maintenance of the bond of trust between the citizen and the state so the transfer of these policies to local democratic forums, with the possibility that such groups may be parsimonious or discriminatory, is perceived as naïve.

Therefore, those community members who wish, above all to preserve the

status quo and who are anxious about uncertainty, inadequate resources, and the social fragmentation that may be the result of conflict between community members, place a reliance on the state sector to transfer assets to those on low incomes. Thus, the individual citizen's responsibility is to carryout their duties to the state rather than participate in the implementation of policies of localised social protection.

Furthermore those who embrace hierarchism would feel vindicated by any research programme that cast doubts over the efficacy of voluntarism (see, for example, the UK Home Office Citizenship Survey conducted in 2001, which found that systems of organised formal volunteering, possibly encouraged by an acceptance of community orientated responsibilities, is more representative of the "culture of affluent than deprived wards" (Williams, 2003: 289)). In poorer neighbourhoods citizens have a preference for involvement in informal volunteering, which is understood as helping someone on a one-to-one basis who is not part of a volunteer's family, thereby raising the question as to whether such interaction forms mutually contingent obligations for reciprocation over time? Certainly there can be no doubt that that the affluent can afford to work without remuneration whilst the poor would find this scenario less acceptable.

**The Community Engagement Agenda**

Community members who embrace the hierarchical model of community would accept the following propositions about community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** People conduct their affairs by assuming their pre-ordained position in a social order where everyone has, and is aware of, their place. Thus, an individual would desire community involvement if their pre-ordained position and/or their special skills make the hierarchical social order

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expect that they would so participate.

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** The position an individual occupies in the community would be contingent on their place in the social order, which would determine acceptable community roles. Those who express apathy towards any community involvement would be tolerated as they are deemed as implying their consent to community decisions made by those who are more capable and competent than them.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** It would be expected that community members would be willing to make voluntary sacrifices for their community, as this social construct forms part of the hierarchical social order, which must be preserved by all citizens. Within community forums decision-making would reflect the will of the elite with others prepared to accept the decisions made by their superiors in the social order.

## The Market Model of Community

Some community analysts (Wallman 1984, Bulmer 1986) present a scenario at neighbourhood level that reflects a "rational/utilitarian sociological tradition" (Crow, 1997: 19). Thus behaviour is explained in a framework reminiscent of research carried out by Homans (1951), which revealed that people would enter into exchanges with others in a similar position to themselves provided it was to their mutual benefit and they could avoid interaction with others who are not their equals. Such a style of interdependence, limited by self-interest, is exemplified in the observation that cultural and/or financial disadvantage may limit people's ability to participate in the affairs of their community (Lister 1990). This mode of making decisions about social engagement is based on a particular set of believed

or anticipated rewards. Implicit is satisfaction of the need to better understand social reality by the acquisition of information from others (Festinger 1950, 1954; Schachter 1959; Wills 1981). Explicit is the expectation that rewards will exceed the believed or anticipated costs, whether monetary or material (Foa and Foa 1971) or in time spent (Heider 1958).

Freedom of choice and the capacity to change their own futures are the beliefs espoused by community members who embrace the market model. Thus, "the real bottom line is that there are individual actions, that there are outcomes of those actions, and that individuals choose actions in terms of their outcomes, using some decision rule or other" (Laver, 1997: 28; see also Bacon [1623] 1997, Machiavelli [1513] 1999).

The ideologies underpinning the market model are liberalism, its offshoot neo-liberalism and libertarianism. This presents a quintessential challenge to community praxis, as they are founded on the principle of individual autonomy — a doctrine which community advocates can associate with the cause of social atomisation and fragmentation. Therefore, community proselytisers would try to influence self-interested utility maximisers with the exhortation "that *free individuals require a community*, which backs them up against encroachment by the state and sustains morality by drawing on the gentle prodding of kin, friends, neighbours, and other community members, rather than building on government controls or fear of authorities" (Etzioni, 1995a: 15). However, community praxis would have to recognise that the pursuit of an acceptable level of individual self-interest is an inevitable feature of the capitalism that underpins. liberal democracies. This leaves the crucial maxim — that it is the individual's unencumbered self that is the only being that can decide an individual's social role — forgone in return for a hypothetical promise of protection from the possibility of

state interference in the arena of individual choice.

In essence, adherents to the market model seek to achieve material success in order to be recognised as successful by other materially successful people. This emphasises the importance of satisfying esteem needs (Maslow 1970), and prestige needs (Riesman, 1950, Packard 1959), as much as physiological, safety (security) needs (Maslow, 1970). However, whilst these individual visions can, when aggregated, reflect the qualities of certain abstract principles, they can only be extended to a collective agreement about specific outcomes in particular situations when individuals are required to reveal their preferences. For instance, as each individual continually experiences new circumstances that provide previously undiscovered revealed preferences it is impossible for a collective to compose a set of precise opinions that exemplifies the fundamental shared understandings held by members of a community. Thus, defining issues of criminality through "a shared understanding of what we must guard against" (Tam, 1998: 120–1) is an unrealistic objective. Instead, individuals should choose and then implement their own understandings. These individually knowable beliefs make extensive collective discourses about values redundant.

Community members who are rational self-interested agents do not object to active citizenship, they would explain their agenda as taking "the view that if citizens of a democratic society are to preserve their basic rights and liberties...they must also have to a sufficient degree the political virtues...and be willing to take part in public life" (Rawls, 1988: 272). Thus, their priority would be to ensure that the relationships of spontaneous exchange created by self-interested networks of individuals is not hindered or obstructed by local sanctions or boycotts instituted by overly zealous community members who are ideologically opposed to market mechanisms.

Leadbeater maintains that provided the business sector exercises the corporate responsibility of adopting a business code that ensures their virtuous ethical behaviour in the marketplace, then it would have little to fear from organised communities (1999: 162–164). Nevertheless, community practitioners would continue to recognise "civic pride as a key incentive" (Tam, 1998: 156) for participating in community governance rather than financial gain.

The rational self-interested agent is not opposed to mutuality. In maximising the efficiency of actions in pursuit of self-interest, he or she would find themselves asking the question: what would I gain from this action that would benefit others? Therefore, a degree of empathy would emerge with the ethos of Local Exchange and Trading Schemes, whereby individuals help each other based on reciprocal exchange. This type of structured reciprocity is also replicated in the notion of time banks, which "record, store and reward transactions where neighbours help neighbours" (Williams, 2003: 291) making any involvement in volunteering beneficial to the participant. Furthermore, mutualism founded on reciprocity develops informal one-to-one community involvement that emphasises the capacity of the individual to instigate an initiative rather than this being the prerogative of the collective. Moreover, this variation in volunteering may incorporate self-help schemes that directly increase an individual's material well being.

Adherents to the market model of community, whilst perhaps sharing the concern of other community members about, for example, the proper upbringing of children, clearly distinguish between the public and the private spheres with family life belonging in the private sphere. This belief has been intensified by the emergence of the contemporary autonomous nuclear family where, freed from traditional cultural restraints, family life can result in both men and women

developing their careers whilst sharing the obligation of parenting. Such a situation has emerged through the establishment of individual rights, particularly those concerning equality of opportunity, which have changed the, often oppressive, nature of the traditional family unit. This assertion refutes Etzioni's claim that the extension of people's rights in the form of individual empowerment has become a fashionable and unresponsive alternative to the fundamentally satisfying notion of empowered community building (1995a: 142). Thus, the belief that parents would reward or discipline their child in accordance with a code of community norms that have been formulated through public discourse is rejected.

Community members who are rational agents measure the worth of their actions by assessing whether the consequences have been personally favourable whilst either having been a benefit to others or, at worst, not having been to their detriment. The individual's temperament is perceived a sanguine (Burton [1621] 2001) with life's meaning dependent on one's material well being.

## The Community Engagement Agenda

Community members who embrace the market model of community would accept the following propositions about community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** This notion would be irrelevant to the fundamental purpose in life — the making, and the preservation of, material wealth that can offer security, peace of mind and ultimately freedom for the individual.

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** The notion of community would be considered a fictitious concept, as a community is composed of individuals who prefer to engage in contractual relationships where they would exercise their economic power in a self-interested and self-seeking manner. Therefore, the capacity for community engagement would usually follow a material cost-benefit

analysis, although community members may also choose to enter unsolicited altruistic transactions because of the benefits that might be reaped for his or her psyche.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** They would presume that people are unwilling to make voluntary sacrifices for a community so the processes of engagement are contingent upon the benefits from participation exceeding the costs of involvement. In this scenario, no community member has a pre-ordained position and their only loyalty is to the furtherance of their own well being.

## The Anarchical Model of Community

Popple notes that "anarchism advocates the establishment and the operation of voluntary associations based on co-operative principles and mutual aid" (1995: 34) thus enabling its inclusion as a theoretical base informing radical community praxis. However, this model contributes to a distinct set of contending beliefs about community praxis that result in discrete opinions about the desire to, the capacity for and the processes of engaging with community.

Community members create their own essence, in a process where they are subsumed by the compositional arrangements they encounter in their lives or they understand and utilise the potentialities of their own agency. During this lifelong journey of choice between the affirmation of individual will or acquiescence to the false constraints of determinism each person will be alone, confined within their own reality and unable to share their observations and conclusions with anyone else. Thus, Finch notes that "I do not know whether anyone else has what I have when I have a direct experience of the senses" (1995: 175, n. 4) which resonates with Wittgenstein's assertion that "I am my world" ([1922] 1961: 5.63).

Adherents to the anarchical model of community can display apathetic attitudes

towards community initiatives as they experience alienation from their fellow citizens. Thus, to them, the acquisition of knowledge is limited to personal experience reflecting the Sartrerian notion of existence proceeding essence (Sartre, [1938] 1964). For instance, only objects and animals — not human beings — possess universally recognisable characteristics that create an embedded network. Alternatively, individuals can be committed "outsiders" (Wilson, 1957) with highly sophisticated systems of philosophical, political and ethical beliefs. Therefore, it is important to emphasise the wide cultural diversity that manifests amongst these individuals, thereby avoiding the error of labelling them as a social sub-stratum or residuum, characterised as the Marxist "lumpenproletariat" (Marx and Engels, [1848] 1967: 93) or as the "underclass" (Murray, 1996).

Anarchical community members accept the standpoint that denies the proposition that a social context can bring meaning to life. Therefore, they dispute essentialist arguments that maintain there are some fixed essential properties that determine peoples' behaviour. Thus, they would oppose any attempt to exclude individuals from their communities after they had failed to comply with dominant values and attitudes, perceiving such action as the inevitable malevolent outcome of a collective informed by flawed objective philosophical preconceptions (Hankinson 1995, Montaigne [1563-92] 1957). Therefore, adherents to the anarchical model would be cautious about their involvement with community organisations. They would expect to receive benefits for any contribution made towards the work of the collective, whose actions would be considered unpredictable. Thus, axiomatically, community is just another instrument of potential or actual control engineered by individuals in an attempt to render people as determined automata with community members sensing "that their own abilities, as human beings, are taken over by other beings" (Giddens 2001: 683).

Moreover, they reason that the reification of a social construct is implausible in "that there are no principles that govern the social realm as a whole" (Schatzki, 2002: 141) so any attempt to describe and analysis social reality is merely speculative ideation. Therefore, there is no acceptance of belonging to a community, making apathy an acceptable response to exhortations to "become an active citizens."

The anarchical model requires its adherents to search for a moral code that entails a personal journey of discovery, leading the individual to choose how they would conduct their relationships with others, and the norms of behaviour that are contingent on these decisions. Thus, they reject the notion of a community consensus over what is right and what is wrong or what is good and what is bad. Instead, they maintain that people must individually confront or avoid their moral dilemmas by either making their own choices or denying their responsibilities.

A common morality, initiated and supported by the influential members of a community, is anathema to the anarchist. Instead, the search for a moral code entails a personal journey of discovery that leads the individual to choose how they would conduct their relationships with others, and the norms of behaviour that are contingent on these decisions. Thus, moral beliefs are not absolutes, merely opinions; matters of personal taste leaving each community member to "devise his own virtue, his own categorical imperatives" (Nietzche [1888] 1969: 121). Therefore, the notion that a consensus can be reached in community forums over a set of principles, robust enough to be regarded as moral truths that can guide moral decisions about virtuous behaviour is rejected. Instead, it would be maintained that "there are no moral *truths*, that there is no moral *knowledge*, that in morals and politics all that we can ultimately do is to *commit* ourselves (Bambrough 1979: 14). One implication of this is that no one can be held

responsible to others, morally or otherwise, for their actions (Cicero [44 BC] 1971).

When community practitioners gather information they accept contending values, attitudes and opinions as matters for group discussion, however, they do not maintain that this knowledge is the truth. Instead, they place an emphasis on the second phase of their decision-making process. This demands extensive, inclusive democratic discussion, through which community members can reach an informed consensus about any issue. Thus, the means justify the end product as the collective reaches an agreement on what is valid information and how it should be used. In stark contrast, anarchists would not accept any knowledge that claims to be true as they dismiss any information that has not become manifest in their own reality. Therefore, forward planning is pointless in a world of unpredictability, where the best decisions should be based on inspiration and the minimising of risks, with lengthy procrastination over available options being an acceptable strategy. Moreover, making sense of any situation involves a rolling or serial hindsight that is driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick 1995).

However, community members who embrace the anarchical model may decide to join a group on the basis that this action would not compromise their striving for authenticity. In this scenario, the group members would pledge themselves to the achievement of some common purpose; thus, every individual would accept reciprocity of enforcement, which underpins each group member's view of himself or herself. As the group becomes operational, the members would then develop reciprocity of dependency. "Thus, freedom, as common *praxis*, initially produced the bond of sociality in the form of the pledge; and now, it creates concrete forms of human relationship" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 466). The pledged group, however, accepts that no experience can be fully shared by two people.

Anarchists would also maintain that the unpredictability of human behaviour

renders mutuality based on mutual reciprocity as gullible. Nevertheless, whilst they presume that there can be no certainties in modes of reasoning they would nevertheless strive to make sense of their reality. Therefore, in this search for plausibility, they may accept some community responsibility, as it appears to be the right thing to do, that decision being the product of their own perceptions.

## The Community Engagement Agenda

Community members who embrace the anarchical model of community would accept the following propositions about community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** The anarchist would presume that all human actors behave in ways that are ultimately unpredictable. Thus, there cannot be any credibility in the notion of structural causation. Therefore, why engage in a collective that is incapable of understanding the causes and probable consequences of social action?

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** As the concept of community would be perceived as a pointless attempt by community members to take control over a setting that is unknowable with virtually no capacity for personal transactions, then the statement "capacity to engage in community" is a contradiction in terms.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** The anarchist would demand an authentic approach to joining a collective through a process of developing reciprocity of enforcement, that underpins each individual's pledge to a group. Thus, community groups might be coercive and manipulative as they presume that there are certainties that can inform their decision-making.

# Inclusive Community Participation: Recognising a Quadripartite Reality

It is apparent that community activists who proselytise the benefits of active social engagement and acceptance of the imposition of behaviour constraints imposed by others as a means to the "good life" for community members are challenged by the task of convincing community members with contending social reality perceptions to change their minds about their desire to engage in community, their capacity to engage in community and their understanding of the processes of community engagement.

The community practitioner would recognise the following notions as being fundamental to community praxis, which give rise to the associative social engagement process that establishes egalitarian relationships amongst community members.

a. Firstly, individuals have a fundamental need to socialise with other human beings and can only achieve their full potential by working within collaborative groups that concur with a set of common aspirations.

However, from a **hierarchical perspective**:

- Community members would have to recognise community as a dynamic social mechanism capable, in its own right rather than as an instrument of the state, of bringing measurable improvements to the lives of its members.

Furthermore, from a **market perception** on community:

- Community members would have to accept that the social construct of community has a causal capacity, which can protect the free market for goods and services from interference by the state.

Moreover, from an **anarchical perception** on community:

- Community members would have to accept that community initiatives can be effectively planned then efficiently implemented, and that they will make a real difference to the individual well being of community members.

b. Community members must discover their shared values, attitudes, and beliefs, thereby enabling the development of a strong moral code that is necessary to redress contemporary social deficits (such as increasing criminality and inadequate parenting).

However, from a **hierarchical perspective**:

- Community members would have to accept that the concept of community-based moral relativism should take precedence over the moral imperatives inculcated by the state.

Furthermore, from a **market perception** on community:

- Community members would have to accept the agreed moral code of their community despite restrictions this may impose on their individual search for material wealth.

Moreover, from an **anarchical perception** on community:

- Community members would have to agree that the accumulated experience and understanding possessed by community members can be communicated with a personal meaningfulness that leads to a consensus about a community's essential values, attitudes and norms of behaviour.

c. Communities should mediate between the individual and the state to facilitate local co-operative enquiries into the evaluation of policies and to ensure neighbourhood influence over community-based service delivery.

However, from a **hierarchical perspective**:

- Community members would have to accept the notion that community has a critical role in mediating between the needs of community members

and available resources of the state.

Furthermore, from a **market perception** on community:

- Community members would have to accept that volunteering to work on community initiatives by joining an organised group is more praiseworthy than undertaking individual action to further their self-interest.

Moreover, from an **anarchical perception** on community:

- Community members would have to agree that community represents a means of liberation from the control of the state.

d. Communities should extol the virtue of mutuality, thereby promoting the need for high levels of meaningful participation in community decision-making processes by community members.

However, from a **hierarchical perspective**:

- Community members would have to accept that they have mutually dependent, but unconditional, obligations to all the other members of their community or communities.

Furthermore, from a **market perception** on community:

- Community members would have to be willing to undertake work in their communities that does not offer them the chance of material gain.

Moreover, from an **anarchical perception** of community:

- Community members would have to agree that community members should make voluntary sacrifices to other community members on the understanding that this practice might not be reciprocated.

e. Community members would have to accept that the human trait of altruism could be an efficient and effective inspiration for community members to participate in the formulation and implementation of social policies that would benefit their needy neighbours.

However, from a **hierarchical perspective**:

- Community members would have to agree that negotiated community values are relevant to both the public and private spheres.

Furthermore, from a **market perception** on community:

- Community members would have to agree that community members should make voluntary sacrifices to other community members on the understanding that this practice might not be in their own self-interest.

Moreover, from an **anarchical perception** on community:

- Community members would have to agree that, in accepting community responsibilities, the needs of the individual could be accommodated by the community.

Therefore, a complex community paradigm confronts the community practitioner in their efforts to facilitate inclusive community participation. They face the challenge of building a community consensus amongst community members whom:

- have chosen to be socially passive and accept the imposition of behaviour restraints by others;

- have chosen to be socially active and reject the imposition of behaviour restraints by others;

- have chosen to be socially passive and reject the imposition of behaviour restraints by others.

## Conclusion

Community practitioners apply community praxis in a formidable and sometimes ambiguous environment. Not only are they confronted by contending visions of the aims and objectives for community praxis but they may also face restraints

imposed by their terms and conditions of employment. This chapter, after examining these issues, has analysed three contending, yet totally legitimate, dispositions that may exist amongst community members. Based on this premise it is asserted that the exclusion of these contending beliefs, values and attitudes will render community work praxis unrepresentative.

The next chapter examines the epistemological and ontological underpinning of a set of contending social reality perspectives drawing upon a framework developed by Dixon and Dogan (2005). Moreover, this framework acts as an explanatory tool that facilitates further scrutiny of the issues identified in this Chapter. Axiomatically, the exploration incorporates the debatable contention that a philosophically coherent community member can choose a social reality paradigm that allows them to interpret a community engagement setting, as they would like it to be. Through this analysis, it is possible to adopt a suitable taxonomy of perspectives on social reality that can further inform community praxis.

# 2

# The Nature of Society:
# How do we Explain or Understand Social Life?

Two fundamental theoretical dilemmas confront social science in its mission to interpret and evaluate the web of beliefs about the nature of human activity and social institutions. The first is the epistemological issue relating to the continuing debate about the concept of knowledge, which includes the limits of application that should attach to the use of scientific methods in the description and evaluation of human affairs. The second is the ontological issue concerning human action and social structure. This demands that consideration be given over whether creative human actors can control the circumstances that shape their lives. Arising from their analyses of these issues, philosophers of the social sciences offer an opportunity for critical reflection over the systems of categorisation within rival epistemological belief systems and their resultant ontological clearings.

In reaching a conclusion over their preferred ontological and epistemological marriage, individuals would choose to embrace the notion that they can *explain* social reality or the notion that they can *understand* social reality. This rudimentary

dichotomy leads to different methodological truth claims about epistemic properties.

The truth-maker principle of *explanation* asserts that our social reality is objective and that a scientific method can be utilised to offer causal explanations that "makes truth true" (Psillos, 2002: 167). Therefore, this method is modelled on the natural sciences as contingent propositions are proffered as proved on the basis of a definite deducible logical relationship existing between the initial conditions governing an event and its combination with higher-order natural laws.

The truth-maker principle of *understanding* asserts that our social reality is subjective and that "the social world must be understood from within rather than explained from without" (Hollis, 1994: 16). So, actions originate in culture, language, practice and experience. These various meanings derive from both individual and community interpretations and can "range from what is consciously and individually intended to what is communally and often unintendedly significant" (Hollis, 1994: 17).

## Truths and Truth Propositions

The proposition is that people can know a fact only if they hold a belief that a proposition (a knowledge claim) is true, thereby making it a true belief (or genuine knowledge) held by them. This conversion of a knowledge claim into genuine knowledge requires a criterion or standard by which judgements can be made about what is and is not genuine knowledge — what is knowable. Thus, what is required to prove that something is true? The concept of truth is fundamental to our very existence, as it determines what we can know and what we can learn about the social world. However, beyond this expansive supposition, lies the

uncomfortable realisation that those who have a predilection towards multifarious standards of evaluation can comfortably interpret truth. Therefore, to prevent the possibility of degeneration into mere rhetoric, at this point it becomes necessary to examine the various theories of truth and their associated truth criteria.

**Theories of Truth**

Answers to philosophical questions can be true or false but when that answer is given the proponent should give their reasons for their response (Scruton, 2002: 6). Such reasons might be guided by the following theories:

- The *correspondence theory of truth* that proposes truth as a knowledge claim that corresponds or agrees with some elements of reality in a way that validates a proposition. Thus, "a belief is true when there is a corresponding fact, and is false when there is no corresponding fact" (Russell, 1912: 129). Therefore, the substantiation of a truth occurs through the replication of reality.

- The *coherence theory of truth* that proposes truth as a knowledge claim that is coherent with, and mutually supported by, other knowledge claims. Thus, a truth fits into a system or network of mutually coherent propositions however, on this basis, the perfect truth must be in accord with the whole of reality, which provides it with a status that is beyond judgement. (Bradley, [1893] 1930). Therefore, the substantiation of a truth occurs through other knowledge claims.

- The *consensus theory of truth* proposes truth as something agreed upon by some specific group of experts even if it fails to describe reality. Charles Sanders Peirce (1932) developed this non-ontological theory. It maintains that a statement is true if those who have investigated it can agree to it. However, it

is implicit within the notion that not all statements can be assigned a truth-value.

o The *social constructivism theory of truth* proposes that truth is socially constructed and is thus contingent upon convention, human perception and social experience. In this scenario the individual rejects determinism as a factor in truth making and recognises that democratic discussion with members of their community is central to the process of ordering human activity. Thus, this paradigm makes personal and group enquiry paramount as a web of social relationships reveal the agent as embedded in a series of social systems. These systems must be thoroughly critiqued to enable a community to initiate plans for purposeful social development.

• The *pragmatism theory of truth* is a variant of Peirce's consensus theory. This approach proposes that truth be judged by the success of its practical consequences. Thus, truth becomes something that is only true if it is useful to believe. This notion is encapsulated within the observation that "No concrete test of what is really true has ever been agreed upon" (James, 1897: 15).

**Truth Criteria**

These theories, each of which offer equally legitimate understandings of what constitutes the truth, inform individual truth-making through the selective application of various truth criteria. These criteria act as benchmarks that personify truth claims by enabling individuals to utilise their chosen standards of judgement to evaluate whether a theoretical proposition should be designated as true or false. Moreover, these various means, which warrant the legitimacy of a claim to knowledge, can be categorised as follows:

- *Sensory experience* (*a posteriori*[1] inductive knowledge) or *reasoning* (*a priori*[2] deductive knowledge), both of which, to varying degrees, may provide criteria that validate or inform propositions that are advanced by all the truth theories. However, both the truth doctrines of social constructivism and pragmatism compartmentalise, and critique, scientific conclusions when they begin their analysis of what constitutes a truth in order that outcomes of human subjectivity takes precedence over factual objectivity.

- *Epistemological foundationalism* recognises that self-justified knowledge claims, if they are raised upon robust and unambiguous foundations through a combination of experience and reason, constitute a set of beliefs that do not need further justification (Lewis, 1929, 1946). These criteria specifically accord with the consensus theory of truth but they refute coherentism as propositions may be know without a foundation in certainties.

- *Epistemological reliabilism* can be understood as an externalist approach to truth. Here the observer experiences sufficiently good reasons that are grounded in the process of direct apprehension or of reasoning, that produces a high proportion of generally reliable true beliefs. So the subject follows a process that may be outside of their own awareness and thus, possibly unjustified (Sellars, 1975). These principles accord with the coherence theory of truth making.

- *Epistemological probabilism* is the doctrine that if reasonable degrees of probability can be assigned to some area of social life, then the observer may

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[1] A proposition is knowable *a posteriori* if it can only be known by inductive reasoning based on experience of the specific course of events that give rise to its occurrence in the actual world.

[2] A proposition is known *a priori* if it can be known by deductive reasoning without experience of the specific course of events that gave rise to its occurrence in the natural world.

settle for such a hypotheses on the basis of their willingness to act in accordance with these axioms (Peirce, [1868] 1966, 36–8). These criteria can inform the consensus theory of truth making as part of a process of abduction.[3]

- *Epistemic defeasibility* accepts that a knowledge claim can be made defective by additional, previously unknown evidence (Popper, 1974). Such proof of falsification would render any truths substantiated by an incorrect fact in the application of the correspondence, coherence or consensus theories of truth making as disproved. However, under the doctrine of both the social constructivism and pragmatism theories new, previously unknown evidence may be rejected as irrelevant.

- *Consensual pragmatism* would exist amongst a group of experts who can reach a unanimous agreement that a knowledge claim is true on the basis that each member of the group have enough expert experience to judge it. This field of professional expertise may draw on both naturalist[4] and hermeneutic[5] epistemological knowledge (Bhaskar, 1979).

- *Instrumental pragmatism* is the doctrine that almost any belief might be true provided, after all matters are considered, that it works by offering beneficial results to its believers. This notion could form part of being an active participant in a knowing situation where "knowing is itself a mode of practical action and is *the* way of interaction by which other natural interactions become subject to direction" (Dewey, 1929: 106–7).

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[3] Abduction is a creative process of using evidence to reach wider conclusions. However, some people deny that probability can inform abduction, a conclusion that is contested here.

[4] Social reality is objective and understandable only by the application of deductive logic and inductive inference.

[5] The method of interpretation of the whole social historical and psychological world. Thus, social reality is subjective, understandable only as a set of interpretations derived from culture, language, practice and experience.

These categories do not offer a precise division between criteria based on objectivity, and criteria based on subjectivity, however, whilst there appears to be no irreconcilable division between these tendencies some theories of truth are inclined to embrace the notion of explanation more than understanding and vice-versa. For instance, the correspondence, coherence and consensus theories place an emphasis on objective criteria, whilst social constructivism and pragmatism comfortably espouse subjectivity.

Thus, a subtle but discernible epistemological dichotomy about truth-making influences the standards of truth people choose to apply when endeavouring to gain knowledge about social phenomena. Of course, a fundamental issue becomes apparent — "you cannot search for X, whatever X may be, unless you are from the outset equipped with a good enough notion of what X is to provide you with criteria by which to judge whether you have found what you are looking for" (Welbourne, 2001: 14). However, this assertion presupposes that individuals would select a method of gathering knowledge that offers a suitable framework for analysis from a particular perspective of social reality. Here, it is proposed that people choose to accept information as knowledge starting from their standards of trust. Thus, when they answer the question of what constitutes legitimate knowledge this influences their explication and acceptance of particular forms of social phenomena.

### The Epistemological Dichotomy: Naturalism or Hermeneutics

The dichotomy between naturalism and hermeneutics reflects the different understandings in the philosophy of social sciences over how people can learn

about social phenomena. The dichotomy is clearly illustrated in Figure 2.1 however further sub-divisions exist in both the main categorisations.

**Figure 2.1:  The Contending Epistemological Perspectives**

| Epistemology | |
|---|---|
| **Naturalism** | **Hermeneutics** |
| Presumes an objective social world, **best** knowable by the application of scientific methods, and embraces, *inter alia*, empiricism, verificationism, logical positivism, and falsificationism. | Presumes a subjective social world, **best** knowable only as it is socially constructed, and embraces, *inter alia*, epistemological existentialism, phenomenology and linguistic epistemology. |

*Source*: Dixon and Dogan, 2003a.

**Naturalism's Epistemological Dichotomy: Empiricism or Rationalism?**

Descartes concluded that individuals could accept that they should only concern themselves with knowledge achieved by their rational intellects ([1628] 1961: 149) where reason triumphs over instinctive passions. However, whilst passions may have been transcended the question still remained as to the value that could be placed on an analytical statement where the predicate is established within the concept of the subject, for example "all sisters are female". This resulted in Kant ([1781-7] 1956) agreeing with the empiricists that knowledge should be *a posteriori* or empirically based on evidence from sensory experience. However, Kant also agreed with the rationalist's assertion that synthetic *a priori* propositions, where denial would not imply a logical contradiction, may be truths for another reason. Following this logic, and from a contemporary perspective, Nozick is wary of

placing too much faith in the supremacy of rationality and suggests that we should "track the truth" (1981: 172–8) and reach a conditional analysis of knowledge.

**Knowledge from Experience.** Positivism, in a general sense, can be understood as a rejection of the theoretical philosophy of being and knowing known as metaphysics. The positivist adheres to the belief that observation and measurement, employed in a framework of scientific method, can reveal laws about cause and effect that can determine the limits of peoples' truth in relation to phenomena. In drawing its sharp distinction between the realms of fact and value the movement embraces several differing shades of opinion so, in this section, British Empiricism will be compared to the contemporary British Logical Positivist, or Analytical, tradition. Subsequently the basis of rationalist thinking is critically analysed. This process leads to some important contentions in theoretical reasoning that effect the possible reconciliation of the two schools of thought through a synthesised ratio-empiricism.

Locke, Berkeley and Hume are the principle philosophers associated with British Empiricism. All three contributed to the establishment of an eighteenth century movement which refuted innate cognition, or the theory that the source of knowledge is inborn in humans, with our innate meanings deriving from intuitiveness developed by reason (Shand, 2002: 67–70). Therefore, the human intellect, in Locke's critique of innate ideas, when confronted with the challenge of explaining the relation between mind and object, is a *tabula rasa* awaiting inscription from aspects of experience. In this process, he maintains that "No man's knowledge here can go beyond his experience" (Locke, [1690] 2004: Bk.2, Ch.1, Sect.19)

Locke classifies experiences as being of two kinds. External sensations, which awake sensible qualities in our minds, exist in external objects. These sensations are divided into primary objective qualities, such as size, movement and shape, and secondary subjective qualities such as colour, taste, sound and so on. Internal sensations can be termed *reflection* and are responsible for the ideas produced as a result of sensation data. In a similar manner, ideas are subdivided into *simple* and *complex* with the latter being compounds of a simple notion that cannot be reduced further, for instance, the idea of the colour green. Furthermore, an idea is understood as representing an epistemological relationship between two entities as it expresses the conception that the knower has of an object (Locke, [1690] 2004; see also Shand, 2002: 111–3). In this relationship, "All men are liable to error, and most men are, in many points, by passion or interest, under temptation to it" (Locke, [1690] 2004: Bk. 4, Ch. 20, Sect. 17).

However, Berkeley, in maintaining his opposition to materialism, rejects the notion of primary and secondary qualities in external objects and maintains that all ideas are of a subjective nature. Thus, he observes that "They are neither finite quantities, or quantities infinitely small, nor yet nothing. May we not call them the ghosts of departed quantities?" (Berkeley, [1734] 2004: Sect. 35). Therefore, Berkeley is committed to the notion that people's intelligible thought must refer to what they have comprehended through their personal experience. However, in this scenario, scepticism about the existence of God is dismissed as an affront to common sense as only those ideas, which we perceive through our senses, can have any meaning. This subjective standpoint becomes extreme subjectivism in Hume's work, where the mind is not a *tabula rasa,* but is predisposed to instincts, which shape knowledge. So he concludes that "reason is and ought only to be the

slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" ([1739] 2004: Bk. 2, Pt. 3, Sect. 3, Para. 4). Furthermore, ideas or copies of sensory impressions are thought able to *agglomerate* amongst individuals leading to the association of ideas that produces a level of commonality in human perceptions (Scruton, 2002: 126).

Evolving from eighteenth century theorising three fundamental suppositions are discernible, which together define contemporary empiricism (Scruton, 2002: 125–6):

- Propositions that are advanced after scientific enquiry are only true by virtue of their inherent ideas. Reason is therefore, nothing but the relationship between different notions.

- The only available framework of knowledge, other than observations, is matters of fact. However, they are unable to generate further necessary truths as they can only offer a summary of what is known to be true and, by implication, what is not true.

- There cannot be *a priori* proof for any matter of fact as knowledge is contingent upon experience. Thus, the principle of induction, which proceeds from inference from, known events to the probability of the occurrence of the next event, is the only source of a factual proposition. Therefore, if observation results in the perception that "all swans are white" this supposition remains a fact until a black swan appears.

Hume, in developing empiricism to its preordained conclusions, denies the objective value of the concept of causation arguing that an assertion, explaining one event in terms of another, is based on confused logic. Thus, two events, which exist at separate times, are discrete within human thought and one event can be

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imagined without the other. On this basis, any proposition maintaining that it is a necessary truth that one event must automatically follow another is, no matter how clever, based on a fallacious argument (Hume, [1748] 1975: Sect. 12, Pt. 3). However, it is through a process of "habits of the mind" that people are influenced by previous observations into making connections between events independent of consistent external perception thus, "custom, then, is the great guide of human life" (Hume, [1748] 1975: Sect. 5, Pt.1). Therefore, it is axiomatic "how use doth breed a habit in a man!" (Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*).

The problem that dominates British Empiricism is whether an objective metaphysics is achievable through the explanation and modification of our sensory perceptions. Logical positivism, a school of thought pursued during the early part of the twentieth century in the work of the Vienna Circle of philosophers, mathematicians and natural scientists, aimed to connect positivism with empiricism. This task was to be carried out by "their making the impossibility of metaphysics depend not upon the nature of what could be known but upon the nature of what could be said" (Ayer, 1959: 11). Thus, synthetic *a priori* knowledge does not exist. Therefore, apart from analytic statements of logic, which includes mathematics and geometry, knowledge is restricted to empiricist experiences, which includes psychology, physics and biology, and is capable of building into scientific theories, which can become the basis of hypotheses that extend beyond human experience. Thus, a precise distinction between the analytic and the synthetic resolves the tension within Hume's philosophy, which regards *a priori* propositions as "matters of fact" and the stuff of real existence. So, logical positivists can designate Hume's statement that "It is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger" ([1739]

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2004: Bk. 2, Pt. 3) to triviality that precludes knowledge of the actual, or the contingent, from pure logical reasoning.

Having established a separation between analytic and synthetic propositions logical positivism, in attempting to offer a general set of methodological rules that would be the same for natural and social sciences, found that it was axiomatic that "all metaphysical, ethical and theological doctrines are meaningless. This conclusion was inevitable, not because of any defect of logical thought, but because these strands of thought were unverifiable" (Scruton, 2002: 288). Therefore, all significant propositions that are not necessarily true, such as a tautology, must be observationally verifiable (Gordon, 1991: 594). This assertion, which has its origins in the thinking of Wittgenstein, leads to the necessity of distinguishing between observational and theoretical non-analytic statements. To resolve this dilemma Ayer (1959) proposed to limit the concept of verification to "verification in principle" and "weak or probabilistic verification". Thus, both the trap of denying the meaningful premises in empirical propositions, that cannot be verified due to the existing limits of experience, and the danger of conclusive verification or falsification when observation can only reach a conclusion which "is more or less probable" is avoided. Therefore, Ayer's thinking logically takes him to the conclusion that "all empirical observations are hypotheses because there is no way of absolutely confirming or refuting such propositions (Shand, 2002: 248). However, this prescriptive rule returns logical positivism to the contradiction that is central to the uncertainties of induction as "if an induction is worth making, it may be wrong" (Russell, 1927: 83). Whilst knowledge is recognised as an explanation of observations which lead to scientific laws that state universal truths nevertheless, as these generalisations are only ratified through a *positive*

experience how can their truth be guaranteed? (Scruton, 2002: 128). For this reason, logical positivism adopted a deductive system of analysis that was informed by Popper's arguments (1974) about the proper growth of human knowledge.

Popper (1974) characterised scientists as problem solvers who propose theories that go beyond existing knowledge, which are immersed in information and are exposed to falsification. In a deductive procedure first of all the consistency of the proposed theoretical system is established before, as a second stage, the analytical and synthetic elements are distinguished. Subsequently the new theory is compared to other theories to ensure that it advances existing knowledge, before, as the final element in Popper's falsificationalism, the new theory is subject to rigorous testing. If the new theory survives attempts to falsify it, and as it can explain all the content of the existing theory or theories, it is adopted as highly corroborated. However, this result not in the discovery of the truth but of the best-unfalsified theory offered. Therefore, Popper is a metaphysical realist in a regulatory sense although he acknowledges that theories can only be tested in the idiom of our current critical awareness of reality (Popper, [1934] 1977).

Empiricism has the weakness of being unable to judge the truth or falsehood of analytical principles that are not grounded in observation. However, logical positivism's embrace of Popper's methods of scientific enquiry, in an attempt to unify empiricism and positivism, offers a means of reconsidering the contribution empiricism can make to the theory of knowledge.

The fundamental tenets of rationalism will now be analysed. This examination reveals how philosophers, in the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz

and Spinoza, have regarded the notion of explaining reality as fundamentally a product of human reason.

**Knowledge from the Intellect.** Rationalism can be understood through the axiom "placing trust in reason" (Bunge, 1996: 306). Like empiricism, in its search for the truth about this world, it acknowledges that humans cannot be direct recipients of knowledge but instead, have to interpret phenomena. As already discussed, empiricists base their epistemology on observations made by the senses whilst rationalists place a reliance on the resources of logic and intellect. However, within the discipline of philosophy, rationalism appears in two strengths, moderate and radical. The former is an adaptable doctrine that can be combined with other epistemologies as, while it accepts that reason is necessary, nevertheless it acknowledges that, in particular relational situations, different individuals may interpret rationality in different ways to fully comprehend phenomena. Alternatively, radical rationalists considered here as primarily supporters of the thinking of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, are apriorists, which, by implication, leads to their discomfort with both empirical data and positivism (Bunge, 1996: 306).

The dogmatic assumption of radical rationalism — that there can be only one perception of reality that accords with reason — is readily apparent. However, this prescribed critique leaves as self-evident the opportunity for moderate rationalism to become a player in a synthesis of doctrines that may advance the positivist's cause. Such a possibility of synergy is a valuable asset in addressing the need, from a human perspective, of allowing our own theoretical powers to identify from experience the effects, if any, of social structures on our social arrangements. We are then able to subject these observations to reasoned reflection through application of our chosen criterion of verifiability (Ayer, [1936] 1975).

Descartes' philosophy attempts to allow explanations of nature to be free from a scepticism that leads to confusion and conflict. Human ideas can be determined through sensation, rooted in fractious and self-important notions, or, as in the idea of God, be innate and thus, sealed with validity. In this typology of theodicy, the individual is the ultimate arbitrator as each person reaches their own decisions about the validity of truths and knowledge (Descartes, [1641] 1964).

Thus, whilst the human senses are not ignored they are regarded as inferior to explanations derived from reason. These explanations would, through a process of deductive reasoning, assert that their conclusions necessarily follow from the truth of their premises. On this basis deductive reasoning appears to produce contingent truths reliant on the validity of firstly, the *a priori* knowledge available from previously established premises and secondly *ceteris paribus* where "truths" or "laws" emerge in a closed system. However, despite this qualification, rationalism maintains that truths about the "really existing intelligible world that underlies the appearance of changing particulars that we experience" (Shand, 2002: 69) can be discovered through the methodical application and findings from deductive reasoning. Ultimate reality becomes explainable through the Cartesian separation of the mind and the senses, with the former capable of indifference to sensory sensations, as it comprehends the natural order of reality. This dualist vision is rooted in Descartes' observation " that it is only the things that I conceive clearly and distinctly which have the power to convince me completely" ([1641] 1964: 123). Thus, clarity of mind, divorced from the body, can perceive objects with certainty and truth.

The world, from a rationalist perspective, is of necessity logical. As Spinoza observes this condition reflects the nature of God, so denial of the theorem that is

derived from the accepted axioms is an illogical contradiction implying God's imperfection ([1675] 1989; see also Shand, 2002: 87). Leibniz refined this principle to the acceptance of theorems after the application of sufficient reason by acknowledging that truths might be contingent because God is under no compulsion to actualise all truths. Accordingly, it is enough for every fact to find its justification in a previous fact to justify the necessary and logically rational process of causality. Thus, it is acknowledged that although the world is perceived through a variety of perspectives humanity can still obtain "as much perfection as possible" (Leibniz, [1714] 1973: 187–8).

Therefore, rationalism addresses an imperative for both the natural and social sciences; cause and effect become explainable concepts offering declarations of greater value than a process of observation that is unable to move beyond mere correlation. Nevertheless, strong rationalism still seems insufficient to fully explain the world, whilst theories are the product of reason they still demand subsequent empirical observation for their validation. Similarly, the design of empirical research is informed by the content of theories making an irrefutable argument for the interdependence of both scientific methods.

Examination of Popper's theoretical maxim of falsificationism has revealed a doctrine that contributed to the proponents of logical positivism rejecting the inductive approach. However, an alternative means of unifying rationalism and empiricism had been proposed by Kant in the late eighteenth century. Kant had found grounds to agree with empiricist thought noting that "intuitions are without exception sensuous, and therefore, no speculative knowledge is possible which reaches further than possible experience" ([1781–7] 1956: 46). Furthermore, Kant also maintained that a *priori* knowledge of objects is of importance but "is of only

practical application, since it has not the slightest effect in enlarging theoretical knowledge of these objects as insight into their nature by pure reason" ([1781–7] 1956: 58). Thus, explanation through *a priori* knowledge is limited to immediate appearances resulting in Kant concluding, "the highest good is a synthesis of concepts" ([1781–7] 1956: 117) where perception and experience can be united into a single consciousness. Therefore, synthetic *a priori* propositions that cannot be refuted after experience present transcendental deductions that can lead to *a priori* truths. Furthermore, Kant, in his conclusion to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, recommends self-reflection over the effects of both rationalism and empiricism "on common sense" to "avoid the error of a crude and unpractised judgement" ([1781–7] 1956: 167). Nevertheless, this assertion still leaves the dilemma that first principles, or *a priori* knowledge, cannot be proven and synthetic propositions can always be denied without contradiction making Kant's attempt to create a method of ratio-empiricism through synergy inconclusive.

However, there is an alternative foundationalist theory of knowledge that can offer a secure underpinning for factual explanations of what we can aspire to know about the real world. This strand of thought was, largely, the work of perhaps the most seminal figure in nineteenth century American Pragmatism, Charles Peirce. His theorising offers an opportunity to re-appraise the notion of explaining the social world within a different theoretical framework. However, before we explore this theoretical re-framing, it is appropriate to examine the schools of thought that place an emphasis on the subjective understanding of the social reality.

**Hermeneutics: Social Constructivism, Phenomenology and Existentialism**

The epistemological techniques that rely on a process of explanation emphasise the notion of prediction. These are made on the assumption that a

situation is free from any influence other than that of the factors under consideration. However, in an alternative narrative, the word *understanding* replaces the notion of *explanation* and the complex variant of human subjectivity, although present in the broader interpretation of positivist thought, assumes a dominant role compared to the objective goals of "scientific" exploration.

**Understanding Social Life.** Hermeneutics inevitably relies on human subjectivity. Therefore, in this context, it is necessary to examine the interpretation of the word "subjective."

Freud ([1929] 1971); Knorr-Cetina (1981) and feminists[6], such as Harding (1986; 1991) and Shepherd (1993), maintain that subjectivism cannot just be confined to recognition of the relevance of human feelings, beliefs and interests. These particular notions have already been incorporated into strands of empiricism, for instance, Berkeley ([1734] 2004) in taking an idealist stance, regards all objects of knowledge as mental objects or ideas. However, radical versions of subjectivism perceive the world as the creation of the knowing self, rather than existing independently from the mind. Thus, scientific facts are excluded from deliberations, the possible dichotomy between truth and reality is deemed an irrelevance and problems of objectivity do not arise (Bunge, 1996: 330).

Some feminist thought extols intuition over reason. This strategy is largely based on the imperative to further feminist values, centred on the individual's self-identification with the outcomes from oppressive practices that have remained

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[6] Feminist writers are concerned with epistemology — specifically how women learn about their reality — thus prominent commentators do not engage in the ontological debate that is explored later in this Chapter.

hidden in a framework of dominant scientific study constructed around preponderantly male norms and legislation (Harding, 1986, 1991; Shepherd, 1993). However, the feminist imperative that requires the incorporation of feminist values into the design of research programmes is no longer such a distinctive standpoint, as the majority of contemporary natural and social scientists no longer approach their work as "value free" (May, 1993: 40).

If the world is subject dependent then, by implication, one person's truth is just as valid as another's, and so each individual can create reality in a metaphysical domain that is incapable of being addressed by the methods of science. In this scenario, as Kant ([1781–7] 1956) reasoned, collectively we cannot know any ultimate reality. Alternatively, this assertion, with its affirmation of permanence, seems to lead us to an unacceptably restrictive position on "the scope of human reason" (Callinicos, 1999: 31). Therefore, possibly to avoid falling into a complicated predicament, moderate subjectivism restricts itself to an individualistic perspective. This constraint is reminiscent of Berkeley avoiding the challenge of explaining inter-subjective agreements by accepting the assumption "that God takes care of the uniqueness of the world" (Bunge, 1996: 332). Nevertheless, the contentions of moderate subjectivism do allow individuals to define the meaning of their subjectivity by comparing and contrasting their understanding with that held by others (Schleirmacher, [c.1835–45] 1977; Dilthey [1883] 1988).

Husserl, in the twentieth century, reinterpreted notions of subjectivism that may have relied on the omnipotence of a divine authority. He constructed the method of "phenomenological reduction" or "bracketing" that aimed to exclude reflexive and speculative thought from descriptions of mental conditions and thereby isolate pure consciousness (Husserl, [1929] 1981). Subsequently, Sartre, as the primary

modern exponent of existentialism was to reject both an objectivist and subjectivist philosophy in developing a position of human intentionality of consciousness (Sartre, [1960] 1976). However, before we proceed to examine both phenomenology and existentialism in more detail, the subjectivist viewpoint is combined with collectivism to produce the school of thought known as social constructivism (Bunge, 1996: 335).

**The Collective Interpretation of Understanding.** Popper, in opposing totalitarianism, as exemplified in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, made a linkage between political philosophy and epistemology. In this relationship, methodological individualism was both the correct method of scientific investigation and a means of maintaining liberal democracy. However, advocates for a collectivist doctrine maintain that the greatest good for individuals is to serve the political economy during the duration of their lives on a basis determined by collectively agreed social ends and purposes (Popper, 1966; see also Gordon, 1991: 658–9).

As it is understood that "science cannot attain objective, representational knowledge" (Bohman, 1991: 131), as the facts it offers are as relative and vague as any other singular elucidation, there is a reliance on communities to achieve consensus amongst their membership. However, there is a flaw in this rationale as the premises arising from scientific hypotheses may be indeterminate and the knowledge possessed by the researcher may far exceed that of other community members. Thus, Woolgar's sceptical strategy employed against what he described as "a false objectivist epistemology" (Woolgar cited by Bohman, 1991: 131) fails to offer an adequate logical analysis that can overturn traditional claims for scientific knowledge.

Woolgar, working with the philosopher-sociologist Latour, created an actor-network theory, which, whilst maintaining a strong anti-realist stance, aimed to overcome the rigid dichotomy between the subject and the object of knowledge and unite society with nature. The theory was formulated after completion of an ethnographic study into scientific activity, which recognised that the practices of social science are deeply intertwined with scientific experimentation incorporating such matters as economies, dimensions of power and technologies into the totality of participants' belief systems. Thus, the statistics generated in the laboratory only assume the semblance of reality through the interaction of the researcher with other scientists. This process results in alliances that lead to further political struggles that extend the creditability of creative theorising to capital, the military, religious organisations and so on. A successful conclusion to this series of negotiations has the effect of legitimising the power to define reality through the now uncontested new scientific fact or facts (Latour and Woolgar, 1979). However, this assertion raises several contentious issues. The initial status of the objects created by science is unclear. Are they embryonic explanations resulting from the application of a particular scientific method or do they possess a different status? This lack of clarity is also apparent in the relativist, non-realist, categorisation of scientific findings both during the duration of the formation of scientific and non-scientific alliances, and their transformation into the realm of realism after disputes have been resolved. So the question about the standards of specific criteria that should be satisfied other than the particular viewpoints of influential individuals and groups, remains unanswered. Finally, the entire approach seems hierarchical, almost totalitarian, as it ignores wider democratic debate about scientific discoveries. Whilst this might be an accurate reflection of the opinions of part of

the scientific community the analysis, as a model to unify nature and society, lacks certitude (Bohman, 1991: 206–11).

Extreme theoretical notions have been inspired by some understandings perpetuated by the school of social constructivism, for example Fleck (cited by Bunge, 1998: 227) denied the existence of syphilis, labelling the disease as a social construct contrived by the medical community. Such an assertion, as it concerns an epidemic that has inflicted a painful death on its victims since the sixteenth century, seems somewhat absurd. However, it is rational to accept that an entire series of biological, psychological and social factors have shaped the public's perception about this disease resulting in puritanical reactions that are still prevalent in relation to contemporary understandings of the AIDS virus. Therefore, it is acknowledged that an objective condition may be confused with a social reaction, necessitating the application of a philosophical pragmatism that can accommodate scientific facts whilst dismissing the more extreme pressures of a community based thought collective.

The philosophical method of analysing language, rather than what language ostensibly concerns, is the focus of linguistic epistemology. It is asserted that individuals learn the rules of language that govern the social meaning associated with any action. These language rules vary both simultaneously and continuously in different cultures as they act to shape the acquisition of knowledge. So, collective inter-subjectivity, which engenders a particular understanding of social reality, is part of the expressive function of language that, in its expression of thoughts and feelings, produces an aspect of interpretation that accords with others of a shared disposition (Wittgenstein, [1953] 1958).

Collective understanding of language patterns questions the possibility of a private language through which we can express our own awareness without modelling our words on the awareness of others. For instance, the individual experience's unique sensations but can they then use words that describe these personal metaphysical pictures or intuitions? Wittgenstein proposes that such a private language is not possible in asking the question "are my words for sensations tied up with my natural expressions of sensation? In that case, my language is not a 'private' one. Someone else might understand it as well as I. — But suppose I didn't have any natural expression for the sensation, but only had the sensation? And now I simply *associate* names with sensations and use these names in descriptions" ([1953] 1958: §256). Therefore, the use of language requires the individual to follow the language rules of their community, a notion incompatible with a private language.

The nature of public language illustrates how the general acceptance of particular patterns of behaviour by a community assumes normative standards. Thus, a legal system is accepted by the majority of citizens not because it possesses threats and sanctions but instead, that the law affirms, in its language system, that its rules should be obeyed (Hart, 1961).

Therefore, the doctrine of social constructivism might benefit from inquiry into language customs as such observations "on the natural history of human beings;...have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes" (Wittgenstein, [1953] 1958: §415).

**Consciousness Restrained by Intentionality.** An individual can understand the social world by recognising that it can only be interpreted through their own construction of reality. Such a reality may be formed through social interaction

where an individual's consciousness experiences a distinct and meaningful occurrence that influences their own future patterns of behaviour (Husserl, [1929] 1981). Thus, social phenomenology investigates the relationship between the objective and subjective social realms.

Arising from this investigation the advocates of phenomenology understand their social world as possessing a spiritual, rather than a material, dimension that offers meanings that can become part of a system of interpretation rather than provide a descriptive framework for social systems. For instance, the doctrine's affirmation of the value of abstract reasoning as a purposive outcome in its own right may offer a means of improving our understanding about the ways in which individual consciousness relates to social life. Furthermore, phenomenological concerns extend to the process of reciprocal interaction, whereby shared human awareness can determine our agency, the manner in which social life can become "structured" and the resultant, and sometimes negative, implications from these processes for the construction of reality.

The empirical psychologist Bretano, working in the late nineteenth century, rejected all premises of idealism by maintaining that the human mind could only be understood from the viewpoint of the first person. Knowledge is provided by conscious perceptions, but these impressions are mediated by intentionality, which draws a distinction between material and intentional objects, or propositions and ideas about indeterminate and determinate phenomena, which means that knowledge may not correspond to material reality (Bretano [1874] 1973). Bretano's pupil, Husserl, developed phenomenology with the aim, similar to that of Descartes, of "establishing a unified certain foundation for all knowledge" (Shand, 2002: 218). Initially he pursued this goal by studying logic, which leads him to

reject positivist explanations as they relied on the *mechanical* application of reasons to logical consequences. Therefore, instead of universal naturalistic analysis, restricted to the appearance of phenomena, Husserl advocated that we should focus on the understanding of "essences" through conceptualisation and self-reflection (Husserl, [1929] 1981; see also Gordon, 1991: 612).

The heart of phenomenology is located in its method of reduction. Therefore, Husserl can support the Cartesian position by maintaining a separation between the intrinsic elements of our mental states from extraneous encumbrances (Husserl, [1929] 1981). The presuppositions people possess concerning the designation of mental phenomena are to be *bracketed off* or suspended from their belief or judgement to allow them to deliberate on *pure* phenomena. Such an enhanced reflective awareness, which is facilitated by their own intuitive intellectual vision, excludes existing theories and assumptions to achieve a phenomenological attitude that can comprehend the essence of the reduced objects of consciousness (Shand, 2002: 223–4). Therefore, there is an assertion that all human behaviour can derive from individual intentionality, so the individual is free to search for their own identity by following a process where they must struggle to achieve an authentic way of life.

**Freedom and Living an "Authentic" Life.** The philosophical movement known as existentialism achieved popularity from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century although contemporary proponents such as Wilson (1956), an English existentialist, still advocate and develop its principles. However, a concise definition of the doctrine is problematic. For instance, two of the movement's notable philosophers, Heidegger and Sartre, considered that the question of existence is a matter for solitary meditation that should not become the subject of

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discourse (Wahl, 1949: 2). Nevertheless amongst exponents of existentialism there are certain broad concerns and assumptions that symbolise this philosophy of life such as the emphasis on individual existence, that precedes the fundamental nature or inherent characteristics of the self, and which consequently values subjectivity, individual freedom and choice. Therefore, existence precedes essence in a process that recognises men and women as having jurisdiction over their own awareness of the purposeful possibilities of their actuality.

Whilst this section primarily features the work of Sartre, from his rejection of some of Husserl's conclusions to the formulation of the notions of "bad faith" and authenticity, it will also mention some other eminent figures beginning with Kierkegaard. This Danish thinker is considered the "father of existentialism" in his mission to contradict the notion of totality or the progression of understanding that proceeds from the self to the entire human species and finally to the "absolute idea" (Wahl, 1949: 3). However, his insistence on the uniqueness of individuals, his complete adherence to subjectivity and the removal of all structure leaves human beings contemplating the absurdity of a life of no reason where the self is just a contingent fact engulfed by the infinite. This bleak outlook was mitigated for Kierkegaard by his struggle to become a Christian, which the cynic may find a convenient means of avoiding the darker elements in his philosophy. In fact, a fatalistic pessimism pervades much of subsequent existentialist thought particularly in the gloominess of Sartre and Camus. So the question arises, is the belief that life consists of unending tragedies justified? Certainly Wilson (1956) does not think so, believing that the doctrine should inspire a sense of detached reality with the possibilities it holds, in a rigorous grounding of logic, for the realisation of human potential. He maintains that if individuals are free then they

are free to choose the cast of their minds in a setting devoid of unreality (1956: 30). In this scenario, triviality can be designated to its proper place thus permitting people to experience a sense of unencumbered self-realisation in a state of total awareness (Coniam, 2001: 20).

The task of analysing the problem of self-knowledge arises from Heidegger conceiving the self in the everyday world as an entity, unconscious of its own existence, and inhabiting the "domain of Everyman" ([1927] 1996). Thus, it is only through a sense of anguish, or the dread of the "background of Nothingness" that being "detaches itself as a sort of rupture" (Wahl, 1949: 12–13). Those who exist, having experienced this forceful dislocation, must contemplate "being for death" (Wahl, 1949: 14) when all possibilities become possible. Again, a gloomy prognosis, mollified by the probability of redemption, and reflected in Heidegger's ontological understanding that maintains "that there are no principles that govern the social realm as a whole" with the social representing either "a clearing of being and intelligibility or inherently tied to one "(Schatzki, 2002: 141).

Sartre can identify with the immediacy of stripping away the sentimental metaphysical and scientific speculations used to derive objective descriptions of a world dependent on necessary truths substantiated by disciplines such as mathematics and logic. Whilst existentialist thought does not reject scientific and abstract contingencies nevertheless the doctrine's conviction is that true or false descriptions can only be based on human projects and not founded on the basis of a detached viewpoint. Thus, Sartre rejects both objective and subjective speculation as his existentialism propounds the belief that only a reality divested of its various descriptions is accessible. In this space being is indefinable,

unknowable and unattainable thereby making metaphysical speculation misleading in our quest for genuine human engagement (Shand, 2002: 230–1).

Sartre's goal is to study the voluntary purposeful activity in the praxis that arises from the projects of human organisation. In this frame of reference, the satisfaction of human needs, brought about through scarcity, constitutes "praxis, as the praxis of an organisation which reproduces its life by reorganising the environment is man — man making himself in remaking himself" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 329). This notion is contextualised through the assertion that "the whole of human development, at least up to now, has been a bitter struggle against scarcity" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 123). This conflict has produced a pervading social atmosphere, which has encouraged individuals to construct institutions, and to enter into disagreements with each other, over a relationship originally rooted in nature but which is now the product of the relations of capital. Therefore, it is axiomatic that Husserl's creation, the transcendental ego, cannot form part of Sartre's philosophy as the subjectivism within the doctrine of intentionality suggests that objects can be moved into a passive and pure realm of consciousness and in existentialist thought this realm cannot exist. Thus, Sartre considers that consciousness is not a thing at all but just an awareness that can accommodate human perceptions about objects, which, by implication cannot be modes of consciousness in themselves (Shand, 2002: 232).

A distinction is necessary between what denotes reality within the familiar forms that make up our everyday perceptions, such as furniture, buildings and people, and another level of reality that refers to the real within the metaphysical domain. Predominately entry to the latter, which consists of two modes of existence: in-itself (l'en-soi) and for-itself (le pour-soi), can only occur from the former. Being-in-

itself applies to the being that has no consciousness of existence and so possesses the characteristics of non-human inert objects. Alternatively, being-for-itself is the type of conscious existence that leads to the making of choices involving values and meanings, these selective outcomes arising from the constant movement of intentional awareness. Sartre also identifies a third ontological category to complete his types of being: being-for-others (le pour-autrui) which involves the process of inter-subjective relations that provide individuals with fundamental understandings about their social reality (Sartre, [1943] 1958).

Individuals would experience Sartre's reality of familiar forms, as structured in accordance with human meanings, but these perceptions are not part of the metaphysical real. Being in the metaphysical realm is the result of the relation, not the fusion, between the in-itself and the for-itself with the for-itself possessing the status of the imaginary, which can sustain a kind of reality (Perna, 2001: 16). Thus, "consciousness arises as a self-awareness of being not-the-objects-of-awareness" (Shand, 2002: 238) and an appreciation that we need not be absorbed into these objects. However, in the creation of our own essence the real would be mixed-up with the imaginary necessitating philosophical reflection to act as a guide to action (Perna, 2001: 16).

Sartre, in articulating his desire to liberate us from a false view of the world, differentiates between imagination and creativity. This dichotomy encapsulates the advent of the notion of "bad faith" through which "a person seeks to escape the responsible freedom of being-for-itself" (Sartre, [1943] 1958: 629). An individual would apply a synthetic unity between the transcendental and facticity, or the for-

itself's connection with the in-itself, which allows a person to proclaim that the for-itself exists (Sartre, [1943] 1958: 631).

The person who can validate their credibility through bad faith would conform to a serialised life style typified in Sartre's example of the group of people in the Place Saint-Germain waiting for a bus in front of the Church. These people, ostensibly differentiated by age, sex, status and so on, "in general, they do not look at one another; they exist side by side alongside a bus stop. At this level, it is worth noting that their isolation is not an inert statute (or the simple reciprocal exteriority of organisms); rather it is *actually* lived in everyone's project as its negative structure" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 256). Thus, the arrangement is not disorganised but instead, there is a serial reality that demands a rigid prefabricated order or association of isolation. This is a united social ensemble, meeting outside of a Church that extols the virtue of individual responsibility. However, the arrival of the bus and the issue of bus tickets are the dominant inert foundation for a group rooted in isolation by adherence to the custom of not talking to strangers. Those in the bus queue are a collective but they react to each other through a pseudo reciprocity that is at the core of the thoughts and feelings of serial behaviour through which "the individual achieves practical and theoretical participation in common being" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 266). The instrumental practice involved in the creation of an inert reality may be thought of as an ideology that "imposes itself as an exigency and destroys all opposition" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 261). This dialectic relationship of association can become a philosophy for living as, where scarcity is at its most virulent the "struggle for life" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 815) may produce antagonistic urges that suggest that it is impossible for two individuals with different serialised lifestyles to co-exist. Therefore, seriality can produce an

isolation and impotence that assists in the exploitation of individuals through their internalisation of dominant values and attitudes.

The dominant norms of behaviour that are forced into an individual's consciousness would constitute the facticity that can be questioned by a person striving to live an authentic life. This process does not imply that humanity can be divided between those who have transcended to a higher level of consciousness and those who are confined to being-in-itself, as, instead, it recognises that every human being is incomplete. As the for-itself "is in no way an autonomous substance"(Sartre, [1943] 1958: 618) but an act of denying within the in-itself, such consciousness becomes possible through a revealing intuition that allows individuals to use the power to be free and make choices about their lives. People can then avoid suffering the imposition of adopting externally imposed identities. However, if people's awareness of their individual existence is to be meaningful they must work, until death, to overcome the pretence of seeing themselves as objects and denying that they can choose their characters.

In being-for-others Sartre recognises that people cannot deny the existence of others as it would abandon the significance of their facticity. Therefore, Sartre describes the relations individuals have with others as a struggle to absorb each other's freedom. So "conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (Sartre, [1943] 1958: 364) as people begin their relationships with a look that determines others as identifiable objects.

The existentialist understanding of the world offered by Sartre provides a useful frame of reference to interpret and evaluate the situation of the individual in relation to contemporary events. For instance, it facilitates an understanding of how the exploration of the potential of pure thought has been neglected, thus

rendering human consciousness a product of an unconscious mind. Alternatively, the rationalist approach has tended to ignore matters that cannot be comfortably accommodated by mathematical logic or empirical observation that are attributed with the capacity to control and shapes our lives. However, as was found through examining social constructivism and phenomenology, social knowledge that is the outcome of efforts to "understand" social life seems to suffer from an exclusive focus on humanism and a reliance on non-deterministic accounts of free will. Thus, changes in our established patterns of thought that can inspire a self-perpetuating optimism requires a more demanding process of critical self-reflexivity, so as to accommodate an individual's pure will and its relationship with power, meaning and purpose (Nietzsche, [1883] 1967).

**Truth and Reality Re-appraised**

In his philosophy the American Pragmatist Charles Peirce made a distinction between truth, or the condition the world must meet if a particular statement is to be generally accepted as true, and reality (Peirce, 1932; see also Mounce 1997: 42). Whilst it is recognised that people's sensory perceptions are essential to explain their meanings of the world, habits and dispositions are also created through socialisation with others that can re-enforce or amend the individual's rational patterns of behaviour (Williams and May, 1996: 102). In such a scenario, a definite "subject-object dichotomy" can be rejected along with "an epistemology based solely on reason, or solely on experience" (Williams and May 1996: 102). As Foucault observes, nearly a century after Peirce, the notion of governmentality has particular facets. Thus, the individual would tend to adopt, in the construction of their own self-identity, not only the way they identify themselves but also the

way that they are identified by others (Foucault, 1991). So, knowledge should be understood as inherently fragmented and tenuous in a social world that is constantly subject to change.

However, Peirce (1932) did not advocate the total separation of truth and reality as such an overly deterministic approach would, as Williams and May note "open up the whole question of the relationship between values and scientific practice" (1996: 105). The pragmatic alternative was to adopt a position that recognises individuals and groups as reaching common understandings of truth whilst also being part of reality and reality being part of them. Such a proposal avoids the paradox within relativism, or the idea that beliefs or judgements do not need to meet independent standards, by maintaining that, through the assiduous and continuous testing of theories, truth can gradually evolve towards reality.

American Pragmatism proposes that, within the human conceptualisation of truth and reality, there can be an epistemology with more than a single source of knowledge and various scientific methods of enquiry. However, whilst the pursuit of scientific research might then become a form of free association or creative thinking, this approach should not be confused with Feyerabend's contemporary assertion that the limitations of all methodologies only leads to the one rule "anything goes" (1978). Instead, it is maintained that a complementary use of inductive and deductive techniques can lead to innovation and creativity within scientific enquiry, and further the cause of utilising both explanation and understanding in a flexible research paradigm. This aim can be purposefully pursued through placing an emphasis on the production of new imaginative theories beginning with a process of abduction, where inference contributes towards the construction of a provisional explanatory hypothesis. Subsequently, a

deductive process leads to information about anticipated observations that can corroborate the explanatory hypothesis whilst the inductive technique has now assumed the role of fundamentally underpinning the entire systematic framework. Whilst this process necessitates fallibilism it also encourages creativity in contrast to the reliance on the sterility of attempting to just disprove hypotheses or researching the objective observation of phenomena.

Whilst Peircean philosophy assists in reconciling the dichotomy between objective reality and subjective observations of phenomena it is maintained that inductive strategies still remain unable to provide new ideas as the sensory data available can only result in superficial conclusions. However, as Hempel (cited by Blaikie, 1993: 142) notes "the transition from data to theory requires creative imagination...hypotheses and theories are not derived from observed facts." In this context, Peirce does confront the charge of superficiality as his epistemological position provides a basis to address the possible weaknesses in the progression of the inductive approach. Moreover, the fragility of progression from specific instances to a generalised law, and the matter of the strategy's apparent imprecision concerning the need for numerous observations over what might be an indefinite period of time are both matters that demand clarification. So, in response, Peirce argues that a process cannot commence with complete doubt, just because there are many uncertainties the scientist can still know something (Mounce, 1997: 15). This assertion is not an encouragement to cease enquiries but rather an appreciation that knowledge can be gained about reality through the interplay of doubts and beliefs (Mounce, 1997: 16). In this nexus, the individual develops a feeling of self-consciousness. This feeling is defined as "a knowledge of ourselves. Not a mere feeling of subjective conditions of consciousness, but of

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our personal selves. Pure apperception is the self-assertion of the ego; the self-consciousness here meant is the recognition of my private self. I know that I (not merely the I) exist" (Peirce, 1932: 5.225). Thus, placing reliance on inductive observations in the research process is elevated to the expression of the human attribute of informed intuition.

The hypothetico-deductive[7] strategy, like the inductive method of reasoning, is criticised for failing to produce new concepts or ideas. Popper defends this accusation by maintaining that the key to scientific progress is the falsification process that facilitates learning by mistakes (Popper, [1934] 1977; 1979). However, Peirce's insight questions the importance of the allegation that deductivism provides no rational basis for choosing between un-falsified theories in order to make a practical prediction. In stressing the continuity of knowledge Peirce does not consider that it emerges from pure logic but is instead an historical and social product where "testimony gives the first dawning of self-consciousness" (Peirce, 1932: 5.233).

Social scientists may observe the way that their beliefs are determined by the communities to which they belong and the process, as individuals, through which they expand explanations of social life by building on their existing framework of familiar community dispositions. On this basis, knowledge can be self-corrective as it accumulates over periods of time. Whether this leads to the continued acceptance of un-falsified theories by reliance on inductively obtained data is dependent on the "point of view or perspective...of the observer, the absolute

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[7] The consequences of a hypothesis are deduced and then tested against experience. If the hypothesis is falsified then it is discarded. However, if it is not falsified then it is subject to other tests to ascertain whether it can survive.

understanding of explanation having been replaced with a…relative conception" that is regulated by moderate rationality (Mounce, 1997: 14).

So, assisted by Peirce's pragmatism, a fusion has been established between the methods of rationalism and empiricism. This synergy gives rise to the conclusion that, in view of the deficiencies in both the inductive and deductive scientific methods of explanation, they may be relegated to the function of suggesting scenarios that might make the researcher aware of how reality may be explored. Furthermore, freed from the belief that each approach offers the best available scientific method, it becomes possible to envisage the strategies as complementary frameworks for research design. Therefore, the qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection can be selectively utilised to reach a pragmatic solution over the issue of truth in relation to specific phenomena.

This re-appraisal cannot replace the distinct explanatory naturalist epistemology provided by rationalism and empiricism or the epistemic hermeneutic understandings offered by social constructivism and existentialism as illustrated in Figure 2.1. Nevertheless, American Pragmatism does provide a foundation for consideration of how contending philosophical dispositions can acknowledge the fundamental legitimacy of alternative perspectives on reality.

## The Ontological Dichotomy: Agency or Structure

The task of understanding ontological notions begins with the necessity of making a distinction between pure philosophical and applied scientific ontology. The former "is concerned with the meaning of the concept of being, with the question why there is something rather than nothing, and the modal ontological status of the actual world" (Jacquette, 2002: 3–4). This definition implies that pure

philosophical ontology is a prior foundational study that proceeds towards the assertion of the existence of certain preferred theoretical entities. In contrast, the second category of applied scientific ontology achieves a scientific status in the social sciences through its aim to determine the ontological questions and answers about "specific areas of thought and discourse whose meanings require the positing of a particular choice of entities" (Jacquette, 2002: 5). Having determined this dichotomy the following section follows the logic of applied scientific ontology and proceeds to examine and contrast ontological commitments to agency and structure (see Figure 2.2). Thus, this analysis embraces the presumption that logic dictates that both the world and the individual exists, as substantiated by Descartes in his maxim "I am, therefore, I exist" (Descartes, [1641] 1964: 82).

## Agency: The Free Individual

The term agency has, as its central proposition, that "individuals have some control over their actions, enabled by their psychological and social psychological make-up" (Parker 2000: 125). Figure 2.2 represents these empowered individuals as employing a methodological disposition that can explain their social reality through patterns of predictable, unconstrained individual self-interest. This reduces the causal state of social structures to epiphenomena: "a mere aggregate consequence of individual activities, incapable of acting back to influence individual people" (Archer, 1995: 4). Thus, human beings would knowingly define or interpret their social reality then act to enhance their personal utility (Baert, 1998: 3). However, both in historical and contemporary thought some philosophers have adopted and advocated a more radical individualism that would either deny

"the existence of social bonds and social systems or assert that these are fully reducible to individuals and their actions" (Bunge, 1996: 243).

**Figure 2.2:  The Contending Ontological Perspectives**

| Ontology | Structuralism | Social structures exercise power over agency, so social reality is **best** explained or understood as a collective that exists independently of its members. |
| | Agency | People are agents of their actions, which makes his or her social reality **best** explained or understood as a domain where only individuals exist |

*Source*: Dixon and Dogan, 2003a.

The utilitarian thinkers Bentham ([1789] 1982), Mill ([1875] 1952) and Spencer (Peel, 1971) accept society as having a distinct existence as an aggregation of individuals but refute the notion that it has any causal capacity of its own. Thus, Spencer declares that "society exists for the benefit of its members; not its members for the benefit of society...the claims of the body politic are nothing in themselves, and become something only in so far as they embody the claims of its component individuals" (cited in Peel, 1971: 187). This assertion sustains the supremacy of individual hedonism and egoism and thus can accord with Spinoza's conclusions about the attainment of individual freedom through actions, determined by reason. What brings meaning to this endeavour is the human

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essence categorised as a *conatus* that, whilst characterising all organic life, also generates a self-conscious desire in people. Therefore, when needs are satisfied by the striving of the individual the process will benefit that person's well being (Spinoza [1675] 1989).

Individualism is a popular philosophical standpoint,[8] which, as Bunge (1996: 244) maintains, can be explained by reference to the following factors:

- It offers an unwavering recognition of individuals as instigators of social relations.

- It reflects the belief that humans act in a rational self-interested manner.

- It can be applied within all the disciplines of human science.

- It sits comfortably within the parameters of liberal democratic capitalism.

- It promotes the utilitarian principle of utility, the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Consistent ontological individualism regards institutions as no more than collections of conventions agreed by individuals that provide practicable criterion for human behaviour. Therefore, arising from this perspective, structures are unable to possess causal capacity, (Bunge, 1996: 244–5). These beliefs have lead Popper to designate social relations primarily to a theoretical realm dealing with ideas and problems (1974: 14), with society as being nothing more than the aggregate of the relations between its membership. This hypothesis harmonises with the medieval philosophy of William of Ockham whose nominalistic beliefs led

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[8] Herbert Hoover, President of the USA 1928-1932, advocated "The American system of rugged individualism" (campaign speech in New York, 22nd October 1928).

him to accept the predication of common human natures or essences that cannot be ontologically separated from the characteristics of individuals. Thus, the notion of universality can exist in thought, but if this results in universal names for groups of individuals then such a commonality can only reflect the particular characteristics within the natures or features of those individuals (Ockham, [c1300–1347] 1990).

However, further examination of the doctrines advanced by the advocates of agency occasionally reveals that they are not consistent in their arguments. For instance, Hayek resorts to the social construct of the market, with its causal capacity to initiate the trickle-down effect that allows the poor to improve their position as a result of the self-indulgence of the rich (Hayek, 1960)[9]. Additionally Homans (1974) writes about unanalysed social structures and Popper refers to the dangers of the totalitarian State in its possession of a will that is independent of the people within its boundaries (Popper, 1966). In fact, as Bunge concludes (1996: 249), whilst the renaissance of western democratic liberalism in the latter half of the twentieth century has lead to a harmonious methodological individualism (Homans, 1974; Becker, 1976 and Coleman, 1990) such a rigorous academic commitment has not been apparent in relation to ontological agency. However, despite this inattention, the following ontological positions are apparent:

**Agency Grounded in Rational Self-interest.** This concept is grounded in the work of Hobbes ([1651] 1996), Manderville ([1714] 1988, Machiavelli ([1513] 1999) and Smith ([1776] 1976). Here the presumption is that the person is self-determining, with the necessary hopes, beliefs and desires needed to take self-

interested and self-seeking action. In this scenario, an individual will exercise their free will,[10] which permits the choice of what is best for him or her. Collective restraint will only be applied in the event that a particular action is likely to result in harm to others. Thus, social action is explained by reference to a person's own self-interest calculations (*Rational Choice Theory*—Arrow (1984)) or to his or her self-interested responses, under conditions of uncertainty, to the decisions of others (*Game Theory*—von Neumann and Morganstern (1944)).

**Agency Grounded in the Search for Identity and an Authentic Way of Life.** This concept is grounded in a person's search for his or her 'essence'— essential characteristics — or a sense of who he or she is, and for self-fulfilment, which is achievable by giving priority to his or her immediate personal experience of aloneness, death, and moral responsibility. Therefore, there is an emphasis on the individual's perception of alienation from both self and others. For example the existential notion that individuals simply exist — "Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing — as he wills to be after that leap toward existence. Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself" (Sartre [1946] 1974: 28). Moreover, the existence-precedes-essence process recognises a

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[9] It should be noted that neo-classical economists are of the opinion that the market is purely an aggregation of individuals with no causal capacity beyond that of the individuals conducting transactions within its parameters. This notion is disputed here.

[10] The extensive discourse about free-will is concerned with whether or not people are free agents who can be morally responsible for their actions. Hobbes ([1651] 1996) asserted that minds cannot exhibit free will because they operate in a deterministic manner (see also Dawkins 1976; Wilson 1975, 1978). Opinions on this range from a those who argue that free will is compatible with determinism (*compatibalists*, such as Hume [1748] 1975), who conclude that people will always do what they are inclined and able to do in any situation; to those who argue that free will is not compatible with determinism (*incompatibalists*, such as Kant [1788] 1998), who conclude that, as a natural conviction, people are free and morally responsible, which means that determinism must be false, although it is acknowledged that people are not genuinely free agents, and thus cannot be truly responsible for their actions, because they are not *causa sui* — self-caused — and thus responsible for the way they are (Kane 1996, Strawson 1986).

person as possessing jurisdiction over his or her own awareness of the purposeful possibilities of their actuality.

**Agency Grounded in Physiological Events.** This concept is premised on all mental states — including intentional ones — being identical with physical states (Armstrong 1968), making human behaviour a product of physiological events occuring in the brain. Therefore, social action can be explained by, and is constrained by, biological processes of genetics (Wilson 1975, 1978, Dawkins 1976). Some advocates are known as *epiphenomenalists*, and they take this proposition to extremes. They argue that human behaviour is the product of cerebral processes in the nervous system, a bi-product of which is the human mind experiencing mental states (Caston 1997, Hyslop 1998, James 1890, Rivas, and van Dongen 2003).

**Implications.** Agency's dilemma is that it can apparently explain the empirically strong correlation between individual behaviour and free choice, but it cannot explain outliers that are the product of a correlation between individual behaviour and a social cohort (Williams and May 1996)[11].

**Structuralism: The Constrained Individual**

The philosophical basis of holism negates all the suppositions of individualism and postulates that the study of society is impossible if it is broken down into component parts (Saussure, [1916] 1974). Thus, Figure 2.2 portrays structuralism as structures that may exercise constraint or offer specific opportunities in the shaping of agency. Therefore, in a nexus that restrains individual creativity, human

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[11] The problems of ontological conflation, or a bridging of the divide between agency and structure, are extensively discussed in Chapter seven.

behaviour becomes predictable. So, holism or collectivism can be equated with the notion of structure and its central proposition that "the ordered social interrelationships, or the recurring patterns of social behaviour that determine the nature of human action" (Parker, 2000: 125) impose themselves and exercise power upon individuals. Thus, structure, which is difficult and perhaps impossible for an individual to change, constrains agency by determining people's actions (Baert, 1998: 11).

Aristotle and Plato agreed that "knowledge is of invariant or unchanging universal necessary truths" and that these necessary truths must be married to "ontologically suitable objects" (Shand, 2002: 33). However, Aristotle developed the notion of real or natural kinds of groupings, which are posited by nature rather than arbitrary classifications imposed as a result of the subjective feelings of individuals (Aristotle, [c.335–322] 1996). This formulation was, centuries later, adopted and replicated by Comte in the tenets of the French tradition of positivism. He asserted that, apart from brief transitory periods, society reflects the order that is in nature. Thus, this same order fundamentally underpins the social laws that govern relationships between institutional and cultural forms, making society an organic whole with the individual "only comprehensible in relation to his or her social formation and existence" (Bryant, 1985: 19), which leaves the family to form the basic unit of society.

The conceptualisation of society as an organism deeply impressed Durkheim. He wrote that "whenever certain elements combine, and thereby produce, by the fact of their combination, new phenomena, it is plain that these phenomena reside not in the original elements but in the totality formed by their union (Durkheim, [1895] 1962: xivii). Marx, too, maintained that action is determined by structure

with the individual subjected to powerful economic forces (Marx and Engels, [1848] 1967: 79–94). Therefore, those who undertake social study from this ontological position would adopt a process that proceeds from the position of the macro to the micro.

By advocating this approach, some human characteristics, understood by Rand (1965) as the rational egotistical belief in self-determination that protects privileged individuals, can be set aside. Moreover, the method of explaining social reality that arises from this action need not produce a discontinuity between the human and natural sciences. Instead, as Lévi-Strauss' anthropological studies (1968) lead him to believe, the complex constraints and diversities of human culture are, notwithstanding their disparity, part of nature itself and assume a homology with language. The human brain is recognised as a biological entity and complies with the "very same laws that govern natural objects like the brain governs human thought" (Anderson et al., 1986: 110) so these binary categories fit into the ways people observe norms of behaviour and communicate with each other. This notion is discernible in Parson's recognition of the *mechanisms of socialisation* where such institutions as the family and the school would teach children to internalise certain values and attitudes. Thus, social stability is created in a functionalist conception of a society which can be explained as a system "of action-elements relative to the persistence or ordered process of change of the interactive patterns of a plurality of individual actors" (Parsons, 1951: 24).

Ontological structuralism regards society as acting on its members with the latter being left with little capacity to individually determine their lives. Therefore, the application of this principle means that social change is restricted to those particular times when collective agency can be mobilised with an outcome that

affects the individual. Thus, society is understood as surpassing its members in its capacity to initiate emergent properties that are irreducible to its component parts.[12] However, some of these propositions are contestable by individuality as, whilst agency may appear to be constrained by structure, in fact society's properties could be perceived as nothing more than the aggregation of individual activity thereby questioning its capacity for intentionality with respect to its members. Moreover, although social change seems to be driven by social movements nevertheless it is individuals who are responsible for the implementation of new ideological perceptions (Bunge, 1996: 261). In this scenario, people choose to collaborate to understand their social reality from the perspective of their community.

Some Neo-Marxist theories of the state use an instrumental analysis, which identifies capitalism as shaping the structural relations of individual's everyday life. Thus, the State adapts "the 'civilisation' and the morality of the broadest popular masses to the necessities of the continuous development of the economic apparatus of production" (Gramsci, 1971: 242). However, these relations are still based on conflict between an exploitative class, with its imperative for profit, and workers' interests, which are focussed on improving their economic condition. The resultant conflict between these dispositions provides a theoretical approach that both "accommodates structure *and* the individual, *and* conflict *and* change" (Williams, 1989: 23) brought about by class struggle. Therefore a higher dialectic "consists not merely in producing and apprehending the determination as an opposite and limiting factor, but in producing and apprehending the *positive*

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[12] "I do that which is my duty to do. Nothing else distracts me; for it would be either something that is inanimate and irrational, or somebody who is misled and ignorant of the way" (Aurelius, [c.170-180] 2004:64).

content and result which it contains; and it is this alone which makes it a *development* and immanent progression" (Hegel, [1821] 1991: 60). This analysis offers a framework that assists in the exploration of long-term historical transformation and social evaluation, which, as well as guiding work on classes and social groups can also benefit the appraisal of the notion of individual identity in collective consciousness (Hobsbawn, 1997: 83). However, some social scientists have rejected the opportunity to emulate this type of framing as critical analysis arising from this approach is restricted by the shadow of Marxist economic determinism.

The following traditions are significant as forming part of structural analysis:

**Historical Materialism.** The concept is premised on the primacy of material (socio-economic processes and relations) as determinant of, or at least as decisive influences on, how particular forms of society are responsible for observed social phenomena that come into existence. Thus, development and change in human societies is attributable to the way in which people as workers — the proletariat — collectively engage in work, their behaviour and available resources. As Marx ([1859] 1999: i) observed:

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. [13]

**Anthropological Structuralism.** This tradition focuses on structural factors that pattern cultural expressions that makes them resonate with people albeit sub-

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[13] Lukács ([1923] 1971) saw Marx's proletariat as both the subject and object of history and as embodying class-consciousness as revolutionary subjectivity.

consciously. Grounded in the work of Levi-Strauss, Needham and Leach its prime proposition is that social structures mirror cognitive structures, this means that social interaction patterns are manifestations of cognitive structures (Levi-Strauss 1968). By reducing expressive objects like artwork or mythological stories to contrastive structures, an abstract picture of the social structure can be constructed. This would explain how people in a society relate to social organisations and societal structures.

**Structural Functionalism.** Grounded in the work of Parsons, Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, this concept is founded on societies being coherent, bounded and fundamentally relational constructs, functioning like organisms with people in various social institutions working together to maintain and reproduce them. Thus, for Parsons (1951: 5-6), society is, as a social sytem,

> a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the "optimization of gratification" and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols.

Therefore, he theorized that social systems overarch the integration of values-oriented individual actions.

Structural functionalism places particular emphasis on functions such as systemic adjustment, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance. These functions determine the interdependence, consensus, equilibrium, and evolutionary change within society. Thus, social order is considered to be the product of voluntary social co-operative action as "people act on the basis of their values...[and]...their actions are oriented and constrained by the values and norms of people around them (Knapp 1994: 191–2). Therefore, society consists of parts, each with its own functions, that work together to promote social stability.

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**Linguistic Structuralism.** This tradition is grounded in the work of Saussaure, Boas and Bloomfield and is premised on language as a set of rules governing the combination of sounds that produce meaning. Submission to these rules is a prerequisite for any individual who wishes to speak a particular language. Moreover, as a group convention, these language rules enable a person within the group to take meaning about the social world from making sense of what others say.

The focus of linguistic structuralism is on the underlying system of language (*langue*), namely, *semiotics* (how the elements of language — pre-verbal, vocal, rythmic and sign elements — relate to each other at particular points in time (synchronically) rather than throughout their historical development (diachronically)); and *symbolism* (how language related to social and culture influences is rule-governed), and their interplay. Saussure ([1916] 1974) argued that linguistic signs comprise the *sound pattern* of a word — the *signifier* — and the *meaning* of the word — the *signified*. Language is, thus, a social activity, a systematic structure that links thought and sound, a series of arbitrary but mutually intelligible linguistic signs, which means that content-elements (meaning) cannot be identified independently of expression-elements (sounds and words).

**Post-structuralism.**[14] This tradition, developed in the work of Foucault, Derrida and Lacan, considers that individuals are shaped by sociological, psychological and linguistic structures. In turn, these structures have been shaped by rule governed systems over which individuals have no control (Belsey 2002, Williams 2005). Therefore, Foucault argued that the human condition could not be

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[14] Here the term "post-structuralists" incorporates post-modernists as both reject the grand narratives of universal truth and meaning grounded in western science and philosophy.

explained by reference to underlying *objective* social structures, because no social environment can be investigated objectively, as it is impossible to step outside the discourse that gives meaning to those structures. Moreover, Derrida, influenced by Heidegger and Nietzsche, argued that any discourse has multiple interpretations, making the possibility of a final and complete interpretation impossible. For Lacan, these multiple interpretations resulted in the individual being the creation of ·language, which enables him or her to experience the world meaningfully (Dor 2001). Thus, a person's understanding of his or her body and the world at large is grounded in the language he or she has acquired. This gives language a major role in the way each individual constructs meaning, and allows the Freudian unconscious, which Lacan considers to be structured like a language without grammar, to enter into that understanding and dissolve essential distinctions between the subjective and the objective:

> For Lacan, Freud's central insight was not ... that the unconscious exists, but that it has structure, that this structure affects in innumerable ways what we say and do, and that in thus betraying itself it becomes accessible to analysis (Bowie 1979: 118).

The self is considered by post-structuralists to be incoherent, disjointed, and decentered. It is merely a site in which various cultural constructs and discursive formations are created and sustained by the power structures within a given social environment. Thus, any meaning attached to social reality is derived from self-reflexive discourses that acknowledge the inherently fragmented, diverse, tenuous, ambiguous and culture-specific nature of knowledge, which is always changing and contestable, so it can never have a finality and completeness.

Therefore, the following ontological positions are apparent:

**Structure Grounded in Economic Participation.** Marx maintained the supremacy of powerful economic pressures, which determine peoples social actions (*economic determinism*) (Marx and Engels [1848] 1967: 79–94) because they are essentially productive beings whose interaction with the social world is focused on work. Thus, social reality can be explained by the prevailing mode of production, which is a creation of economic structures — capitalism, socialism and communisms (Cohen 1988, 2001, Dupré 1966). As Marx ([1859] 1999: i) observed: "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness." Thus, "man is not an abstract being squatting outside the world...[instead]...the real nature of man is the totality of social relations" (Marx [1845] 1989: 66) and "individuals are...embodiments of particular class-relations and class interests" ([1867] 1993: vol.1: 10). Moreover, Marx maintained that economic pressures that shape the structural relations in everyday life determine human action.

Under capitalism, these relations are founded on the conflict between an exploitative class, with its profit imperatives, and workers' interests that are focussed on improving their economic condition.

**Structure Grounded in Social Participation.** For Durkheim social structures influence a person's cognitive structures and, by implication, their social actions. He argued that basic categories of thought — representations of the world — arise from social participation (*theory of the social origin of mind*) (Bergson 2004). Thus, society creates social facts about social structures and institutions. These facts result in norms and values that transcend the individual as they arise from his or

her social relationships. Thus, these social facts places constraints on a person's behaviour and regulates that person's social action:

> When I fulfil my obligations as brother, husband, or citizen, when I execute my contracts, I perform duties which are defined, externally to myself and my acts, in law and in custom. Even if they conform to my own sentiments and I feel their reality subjectively, such reality is still objective, for I did not create them; I merely inherited them through my education (Durkheim [1895] 1962: 1).

The key to the transmission of social facts is socialisation, where social institutions, such as families and schools, teach children to internalise particular values and attitudes. This is a process of alignment that takes place when a person moves into social environments that have their own rules and norms, the violation of which attracts penalties. Thus, it is only by adopting collective values and attitudes that a person can integrate into any social group.

**Structure Grounded in Cultural Participation.** This position is ensconced in Lévi-Strauss's belief that underlying all human behaviour are fundamental universal mental structures that are culturally specific in their contents (1968). These deep structures produce and reproduce meaning within a culture by creating a system of symbolic communication expressed in a culture's practices, phenomena and activities such as as mythology, kinship and religious rites. Any attempt to understanding these deep structures can only succeed if the structures are reduced to their relevant constituent parts, thereby permitting the discovery of their operating principles (Lévi-Strauss 1968). This constitutes the 'deep grammar' of a society, which originates in the human mind of its constituent members as language and is cultural practices are learnt, and operate unconsciously on them.

**Structure Grounded in Linguistic Participation.** Harré (1983) developed this position from the perspective that human reality has a practical (physical) and an expressive (conversational) dimension. The latter tends to be dominant as in the assertion that "I take the array of persons as a primary human reality. I take the conversations in which those persons engage as completing the primary structure, bringing into being the social and psychological reality. Conversation is to be thought of as creating a social world just as causality generates a physical one" (Harré 1983: 65).

Harré (1986: 42) advanced the proposition that "the private experience of a human being is shaped and ordered in learning to speak and write...That ordering is expressed in language and other intentional, norm-gathering practices." Therefore, language is a dynamic activity that affects, and is effected by, cultural practices (Barthes 1977). This makes it a collectively derived objective cultural artefact. Thus, "one lives in a public world where one learns to use language in accordance with the prevailing social use of words. These practices instruct us in how to use terms applying to such things as tables, other people, astral bodies, and various institutions" (Stroll 2002: 119). This makes "[speech-acts or acts of communication (Austin 1962, Tsohatzidis 1994)] the primary entities in which minds become personalised, as private discourses" (Harré and Gillett 1994: 36). In addition, results in the minds of individuals become "privatised practices condensing like fog out of the public conversation into material nuclei, their bodies" (Harré 1986: 50).

**Implications.** Structuralism's dilemma is that it might be able explain the empirically strong correlation between individual behaviour and social cohort, but it cannot unambiguously explain outliers derived from acts of choice by free

individuals unencumbered by social norms and practices (Williams and May 1996).

So, this brief review of the ontological classifications of agency and structure offers the following two principles:

- That an ontological perspective based on either agency or structure could be overly deterministic.

- That social theory does not offer an immediate alternative to the agency/structure dichotomy and further analysis and synthesis is needed to address the issue of the agency-structure problematic.

### Methodological Categories within a Quadripartite Social Reality

This Chapter has provided an overview of the philosophical strands of thought that contribute to the methodological debates within the disciplines of social science.

As illustrated in Figure 2.1 people are divided by their preferences in relational situations to contending epistemological perspectives. For instance, exponents of "the scientific methods" use these procedures to *explain* the social world that is perceived to be objective and knowable only by the application of deductive logic or inductive inference. Alternatively, believers in the unique capacity of human beings to construct and interpret their own reality maintain that society should be *understood* only as a set of interpretations derived from culture, language, practice and experience.

Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, a clear ontological dichotomy is apparent between those who dismiss structure as a false conceptualisation, as they believe that human behaviour derives from individual intention, human action

is voluntary and therefore, social actions taken by individuals are intentional and instrumental. Alternatively, advocates of approaches that embrace notions of rules and norms of behaviour, which both enable and constrain the actions of agents, believe that social structures, or ordered and recurrent patterns of social behaviour, determine the nature of human action as it moulds individuals' values, attitudes and opinions.

Therefore, it is now appropriate to encapsulate this discussion through an amalgamation of Figures 2.1 and 2.2 in Figure 2.3. This framework illustrates the four contending ontological and epistemological marriages that collectively form a quadripartite perspective on social reality. It is conducive to the association of each of the investigative methods used to explain, understand and interpret social life with the following methodological classifications:

- *naturalist agency*: the adherents to which are self-interested (free-riding) *homo economicus*;

- *naturalist structuralism*: the adherents to which are obligation-driven *homo hierarchus*;

- *hermeneutic structuralism*: the adherents to which are conversation-saturated *homo sociologicus*;

- *hermeneutic agency*: the adherents to which are *homo existentialis*.

## Conclusion

This thesis is founded on the conviction that professional community workers must critically examine their praxis if the notion of community is to be a viable means of implementing social policy. Therefore, they must understand that some

**Figure 2.3: The Contending Social Reality Perspectives**

| | | Epistemology | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Naturalism** | **Hermeneutics** |
| **Ontology** | **Structuralism** | **Naturalist Structuralism**<br><br>Social reality is **best** explained as an objective domain, where a collective exists independently of its members, and behaviour in it can **best** be explained and understood by reference to material social practices or institutions in which people take part. Embracing, *inter alia*, anthropological structuralism, functional structuralism, historical materialism, and linguistic structuralism. | **Hermeneutic Structuralism**<br><br>Social reality is **best** understood as a socially constructed domain, where a collective exists independently of its members, and behaviour in it can **best** be understood by reference to people's shared interpretation of that reality. Embracing, *inter alia*, hermeneutic phenomenology, post-modernism, post-structuralism, and language games |
| | **Agency** | **Naturalist Agency**<br><br>Social reality is **best** explained as an objective domain, where only individuals exist, and behaviour in it can best be explained by reference to what they wish, desire, believe or will. Embraces, *inter alia*, rational choice theory, game theory, social phenomenology, dramaturgical analysis and ethnomethodology. | **Hermeneutic Agency**<br><br>Social reality is **best** understood as a subjective domain, where only self is known to exist, and behaviour in it can **best** be understood by reference to self's subjective perceptions of it. Embraces, *inter alia*, social phenomenology, symbolic interactionalism, dramaturgical analysis, and ethnomethodology. |

*Source*: Dixon and Dogan, 2003a.

community members may perceive their behaviour as the product of collective discussion, as derived from intentional acts of choice taken by a free individual, as derived from the influence of objective social structures (such as economic forces or the state), or as the outcome of what they believe to constitute social reality.

Therefore, this Chapter has, through the use of deductive logic, established a taxonomy of perspectives on social reality that clearly identifies and classifies four discrete methods of describing, explaining, understanding and interpreting the social reality that might exist amongst community members. Each perspective can be associated with particular human attitudes[15] that manifest in personal values and behaviour.

Thus, in pursuit of the endeavour to construct a managerial model that can inform the management of community, it is necessary to consider how these attitudes are formed and their durability. Therefore, the next Chapter addresses, in the context of the four contending perceptions on social reality, the fundamental facets of human nature that underpin certain attitudes, (1) free will and determinism; (2) moral certainties and moral scepticism; (3) trust and distrust and (4) equality or inequality, which are integrated into a critical assessment over how different perceptions of community can be associated with different understandings of social reality.

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[15] The French novelist and airman Antoine de Saint-Exupéry shrewdly observed that "The meaning of things lies not in things themselves but in our attitudes to them."

# 3

# Contending Facets of Human Nature

How a person chooses to comprehend social reality in a particular relational situation determines the values, attitudes and behaviours they wish to exhibit (see Figure 2.3), in that situation. This makes possible the gaining of insights into the complex and intricate paradigm of human nature as individuals determine their own ways of understanding particular social realities. Therefore, an exploration of some fundamental facets of human nature in this context will illustrate the continuing dilemmas over conflicting justifications about the way community is, or should be understood, ordered and engaged with. So, this chapter begins by reviewing some relevant social psychology literature, and its synthesis with Olli's (1995 and 1999) three plausible models of the individual, which introduces the relationship between individuals, their meta-ethical commitments and their loyalty to a specific social reality perspective.

After examining the manner that individuals' attitudes are formed, and may change in a particular relational situation, the conundrum of what is found acceptable or unacceptable, admirable or contemptible is considered from the

perspective of each social reality perspective. Thus, attitudes to (1) free will and determinism; (2) moral certainties or moral agnosticism; (3) trust and distrust; and (4) equality or inequality are explored in relation to the four contending social reality perspectives. These meta-ethical[1] principles inform personal preferences and elaborate on the attributes that can be associated with the self-interested (free-riding) *homo economicus*, the obligation driven *homo hierarchus*, the conversation-saturated *homo sociologicus* and the autonomous outsider, *homo existentialis*.

## An Absence of Meaning and Purpose in the Quadripartite Reality

All four social reality perspectives illustrated in Figure 2.3 constitute logically and cognitively consistent ways of comprehending a particular relational situation. However, these mutually exclusive and contending sets of perspectives inevitably lead to the conclusion that each is fundamentally flawed in its inability to accommodate alternative epistemological and ontological standpoints. Thus, Plato's question — "Can you see any difference between people who have a true opinion without understanding and people who, though blind, are going along the right road?" ([c410-347] 2000: 212) assumes a critical importance for community praxis and community practitioners.

Moreover, in seeking to clarify the essential components that contribute towards the formation of each individual's system of cognition in relation to human nature

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[1] The focus of meta-ethics is on..."once the meaning of terms like 'good' and 'right' had been clarified,...[whether]...a science of ethics might be possible" (Stingl, 1997: 134). Thus, the validity of moral claims in general regarding correct or incorrect human behaviour is subject to critical evaluation. This discipline is used selectively in this thesis as it is concerned with the values, attitudes and behaviour human beings adopt in relational situations with other human beings. Thus, human relations with animals or deities are irrelevant to this text. Furthermore, there is no intent here to judge the value of a particular set of meta ethical principles but instead, to identify how such a set of principles can form part of a coherent and intellectually legitimate system of beliefs.

the quadripartite categorisation of social reality perspectives offers an ideal point of departure. For instance, the inclinations that underpin personal evaluations and specific preferences about such a matter as participation in local governance can be readily identified. However, arising from this pattern of configuration of social reality perspectives, the notion of the dualities between structure and agency and between the objective and the subjective, enters into the way individuals choose to interrogate their social domain, which is influenced by both rational and emotive feelings and predilections. Thus, social behaviour can include a high quotient of emotional drives and passions that, inspired by people's fears and concerns, may shift the individualistic self-centred utility maximiser towards a more hermeneutic perspective (Turiel, 1983: 7). For instance, the researcher on stem cells, whilst wholeheartedly accepting the genetic code, may also attend church every Sunday in his or her unwavering belief in a relational situation where each human being has an eternal soul. So, is the espousal of certain attitudes indicative of an individual's capacity to occupy two or more of the quadrants in Figure 2.3 simultaneously or is there an alternative explanation for this ambivalence?

## Types of Relational Situations

Individuals engage in a myriad number of face-to-face encounters with other individuals that lead to a sense of *connectedness*. Each of these encounters constitutes a relational situation that confronts a person in his or her social domain. Furthermore, each relational situation constitutes a particular social reality that provides the context within which a person consciously and sub-consciously internalises self-identity through the development of relationships with others (Bourdieu, 1976, 1990). Moreover, each relational situation is distinguished by a set of interpersonal (social) engagement circumstances — the total sum of

physical, psychological, socio-cultural and economic factors that act on human behaviour. This demarcates the social arena of that relational situation, which constitutes a bounded realm of activity, in which a person can engage with others in mutual transactions (such as the enactment of pre-conceived roles, the transmission of ideas or the attainment of knowledge).

When encountering relational situations (such as talking about community issues with people in business, in government or as members of a community of locality or interest) the individual may also draw upon past experiences and might speculate over an array of possible futures. So, within this bounded arena a person brings a set of facts about themselves that are unchangeable by acts of will (such as age, gender and race) together with his or her perceptions about self, others and things — patterns of belief, behaviour and taste — that constitute his or her most basic understanding of that arena, and how he or she should behave in it. While these perceptions may, perhaps, be taken for granted and unquestioned, they are potentially changeable by acts of will.

The product of an interpersonal interaction that that takes place in the arena of a relational situation is the existence of a state of association between those involved as they share the linkage of a mutually recognised relationship.[2] This state describes their interaction, and its particular meaning-content for the subject's subjective worthiness; their dependence on each other; or their mutual interdependence. These emergent categorisations may become apparent within the mechanisms of interpersonal (social) co-operation, which can be, in nature, formal (such as families and kinship groups, communities and congregations,

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[2] Pinker (2002: 65) observes that "social reality exists only within a group of people, but it depends on a cognitive ability present in each individual to understand a public agreement to confer power and status, and to honour it as long as others do."

organisations and their committees, and societies), or informal (such as, spontaneous mutual-transaction gatherings).

## Attitude as a Concept

If, in a variety of relational situations *homo economicus, homo hierarchus, homo sociologicus* or *homo existentialis* each adopt similar behaviour patterns then they can be attributed with a discernible social attitude (Triandis, 1971: 2).

Theorising by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960), which was subsequently validated by Breckler (1984), determined that three processes could be identified as contributing to the assumption of an attitude. Thus, adherents to each of the four social reality perspectives would experience affective arousal, behavioural stimulus and cognitive awareness, all of which contribute to making an attitude "an idea charged with emotion which predisposes a class of actions to a particular class of relational situations" (Triandis, 1971: 2). In fulfilling this function, an attitude would satisfy the various demands of five elements within an individual's personality (Smith et al., 1956; Katz, 1960; Shavitt, 1989). These elements are:

- The knowledge function, which serves to let the individual either explain or understand what forms their reality, thus, it encompasses opinions about the predictability of objects and the outcome of events.

- The ego-defensive function, which operates as a defence mechanism by allowing individuals to distance themselves from what they perceive as negative objects. Thus, the dutiful citizen could become part of the local "neighbourhood watch" thereby distancing their beliefs from that of the criminal fraternity.

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- The value-expressive function, which would encourage individuals to associate with that reference group whose aims reflected their own core values. Therefore, women who have defined themselves as feminists would search out others with identical aims and objectives.

- The social adjustment function, which encourages people to adopt the values of a particular community so permitting them to become a fully integrated member of this group.

- The adjustive-utilitarian function, which is rooted in self-interest. Hence, support would be forthcoming from an individual to another individual or organisation on the basis that monetary rewards will be provided.

The five functions, whilst discrete, are also totally inter-related in that a strong adherence to a particular function may also result in a low adherence to another. For instance, Synder and DeBono (1987) found that people, motivated to carry out a high level of self-monitoring of their own behaviour to comply with the social expectations of others, would be more socially adjustive than individuals who disregard social conventions and favour value-expressive outcomes. This conclusion substantiates the proposition that *homo hierarchus* would be aware of their social obligations, and if necessary would adjust their behaviour, to observe and comply with a pre-defined hierarchical social structure. Alternatively, *homo existentialis* prioritise actions that accord with their own internal dispositions whilst *homo sociologicus* give primacy to their endeavours to be part of a "group" and *homo economicus* strive to maximise their adjustive-utilitarian aims.

It is important to note that a combination of the ego-defensive and value-expressive functions would motivate *homo economicus*, *homo hierarchus*, *homo sociologicus* and *homo existentialis* to associate with other individuals who share their core values, attitudes and behaviours.

Following these propositions the following suppositions are offered in relation to the formulation of attitudes. Firstly, the knowledge function within attitudes places them as context dependent constructs. So, if attitudes are to change then the individual must question their ontological and epistemological beliefs after receiving information that initiates deep reflection. Secondly, the presence of affective, behavioural and cognitive processes within the construction of an attitude suggests that emotional reactions can over-rule unfavourable beliefs about an attitude object. Thus, attitudinal ambivalence towards a specific object can exist for a scientist, rooted in naturalist principles, with his or her dominant objective explanations conflicting with a religious observance that may ameliorate the fear of the unknown. Thirdly, whilst some level of attitudinal ambivalence is an accepted occurrence the balance theory of cognitive consistency (Heider, 1946, 1958), the congruity model (Osgood, and Tannenbaum, 1955) and the dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) all found that people would strive to achieve consistency within their cognitive awareness. Therefore, these research results render it unlikely that individuals would simultaneously occupy more than one of the quadrants in Figures 2.3 in any given relational situation. Fourthly, the presence of affective, behavioural and cognitive processes within the five essential elements as they manifest in each person's personality implies a complexity that can result in individuals occupying different positions along the continuums of adherence to each methodological family. Thus, whilst the reality perceptions within Figures 2.3 remain intact, individuals would find that the strength of their beliefs are unique variables within their preferred vision of social reality.

These four suppositions accord with the notion that the formulation of attitudes can be understood in the context of Figures 2.3. Therefore, an individual, whilst subject to a combination of objective explanation and subjective understanding in

a given relational situation would, nevertheless, find that their pre-eminent attitudinal preference would concur with only one of the four reality perspectives. This preference may have been subject to interrogation but uncertainties would have, even to a minimal extent, been over-ruled by the motivation to achieve consistency in a given set of social circumstances.

However, the very existence of an enduring process of choice substantiates the notion that each of the four social reality perspectives remain unable to fully satisfy the demands of logic, thus leaving each culpable for providing an analysis that fails to fully address the complexities of ontological and epistemological rationality. Therefore, the question arises as to whether there can be an answer to some of the conflicts between different value systems in a fifth reality perspective that offers a conflation of epistemological and ontological doctrines that is strong enough to provide an elegant and sustainable solution to unite the four conflicting standpoints. Certainly, as noted by Bolton (1979: 234–6), the method of solving this problem would need to address the following issues:

- The resolution of intractable differences, such as *homo hierarchus's* belief that inequality is natural and therefore, unquestionable.

- The avoidance of opportunities to resolve conflict by adherence to dogma such as the belief of *homo sociologicus* in the over-riding altruistic nature of humanity or *homo economicus's* adherence to market-based solutions.

- *Homo existentialis* maintaining the maxim that apathy can dominate an entire system of belief.

- The use of manipulation by elite hegemonies of *homo hierarchus* to dominate others.

- The belief that may be held by some advocates of each of the four reality perspectives, that some form of weak compromise, rather than a strong

consensus, can be achieved, which will settle differences about contending opinions and attitudes.

In view of this series of antithetical assertions, it is difficult to affirm the notion of a fifth methodological position. Whilst objective decision making may synthesise with strands of subjective thought, and vice versa, nevertheless a feasible synergy between (1) the ontological belief in agency or that social action derives from individual intention; and (2) the ontological belief in structure or that social action derives from social structures remains improbable. Alternatively, it is proposed that individuals would, in particular relational situations, exercise the values, attitudes and behaviours that accord with their own sense of security and self-satisfaction. This preference for a personally reassuring pattern of attitudinal appropriation can be discerned in Olli's (1995 and 1999) three plausible models of the individual, which explores the relationship between people and the manner that they bring meaning to their social reality.

## Olli's Three Plausible Models of the Individual

Olli's first model illustrates the coherent individual (1995: 60) who would adopt "consistent, solid and single-minded" opinions in all relational situations. Thus, the coherent individual's personal beliefs can be defined as an important element in their self-identity. Therefore, whether this single-minded individual either totally rejects the other three reality perspectives or is merely indifferent to them, changing attitudes in different relational situations would be regarded as undesirable.

The second model illustrates the sequential individual who can "quickly adapt ...[to particular relational situations]...by changing their biases to a new set of values and attitudes thereby still being internally coherent;...[thus]...a rejection of

one bias follows the acceptance of another bias depending on the context" (Olli, 1999: 60). Therefore, the sequential individual's personal beliefs are centred on the perceived net benefits that are to be gained from adopting a different set of attitudes in different relational situations. Moreover, this individual in prioritising their personal well being, would, subject to careful consideration, be prepared to change their perceptions of social reality to accommodate the perceptions of others.

The third model illustrates the synthetic individual who can "almost turn into schemes or versatile jigsaw pieces of knowledge" (Olli, 1999: 60-61). Such an individual can freely adopt different status and role relationships in differing circumstances. Thus, this individual can justify re-configuration of their perceived choice of reality perceptions to accommodate the ambiguity and unpredictability that demands expansive personal boundaries in particular relational situations.

Therefore, it is asserted here that these models offer a valuable insight into the following issues:

- The discrete nature of each quadrant in Figure 2.3.

- The variable strength of belief felt by individuals as they choose to adopt one of the configurations in Figures 2.3.

- The inclination of individuals, subject to empirical investigation, to adopt a coherent, sequential or synthetic series of attitudes in different relational situations.

- The inclination of individuals, subject to empirical investigation, to adopt particular attitudes towards the notion of community that are rooted in their ontological and epistemological interpretation of this social construct.

## The Social Reality Dispositions and Human Nature

The contemporary world is characterised by diversity and people strive to produce forms of unity within divergence. In this scenario, human nature may or may not be a *tabla rasa* or literally a "scraped tablet." However, whether ideas are innate, or are the product of socialisation, they do influence the way we understand cause and effect, attribution and result, and perhaps most decisively error and retribution.

## Free Will or Determinism?

**The *Homo Hierarchus* Perspective.** *Homo hierarchus* adheres to the view that the first priorities for individuals are to obey social obligations, to conform to social norms and to protect social structures. These obligations are determined by the allegiances owed by each individual to "authority, which is to say power conceived as legitimate and so bound by responsibility" (Scruton, 2001: 25). Therefore, this moral tie is founded "in respect, honour, or (as the Romans called it) piety" (Scruton, 2001: 23). Whilst this doctrine does not prohibit an individual from making political criticisms nevertheless it would be unacceptable for the authority of the state to be limited by abstract rights granted to citizens (Barry, 2000: 77). Thus, *homo hierarchus* would preserve the stability of social structures by promoting the idea that it is natural for people to be prejudiced in favour of the superiority of their culture.

Therefore, *homo hierarchus* would anticipate that individuals would subordinate his or her free will to comply with a robust notion of the common good as defined by the ruling elite. Moreover, self-determinism would be secondary to the acceptance of hierarchical imperatives that legitimise the status quo.

**The *Homo Economicus* Perspective.** The acceptance of arbitrary boundaries that restrict the application of free will would deny *homo economicus* the capacity to make their own decisions about the validity of their opinions. This state of affairs, which assumes the infallibility of a minority in, as Mill argues, the presumption "that their certainty is the same as absolute certainty"([1859] 1989: 21) is perceived as wrong.

*Homo economicus* would accept the desirability of diversity of opinion to curb both the potential for tyranny exercised by a minority and the oppression that can result from majority opinion (Mill, [1859] 1989: 8). Furthermore, provided *homo economicus* does not harm others, they should be free to act on the results of their own deliberations. Therefore, social rules would exist as commonly accepted devises but permitting, to the greatest extent possible, for *homo economicus* to exercise the customary practice of free will in the pursuit of their chosen goals.

**The *Homo Sociologicus* Perspective.** Within a socially constructed world, conceived through the medium of group discourses, *homo sociologicus* would understand free will as being exercised by individuals in the critical public debate that has, as its outcome, the particular shared meanings of the participants. This process of group involvement, underpinned by the encouragement of freedom of expression would be regarded as a means to individual self-realisation as previously hidden human potential emerges in a cathartic process that forms part of a genuine manifestation of individual liberty. Therefore, *homo sociologicus* would not be coerced into accepting group decisions as an emphasis is placed on education and persuasion for the adoption of reasoned and virtuous action (Etzioni, 1998: xxxvi).

**The *Homo Existentialis* Perspective.** The opportunity to exercise free will would be seen as a challenge for *homo existentialis*. The societal pressures exerted on human beings can result in the marginalisation of individuals' capacity to employ their unique perspective in analysing the essential elements, and the irrelevant trivia, of life. Thus, human relationships can be reduced to a seriality which inhibits the development of shared meanings with others by encouraging apathetic isolation as a creed for the individual (Gordon and Gordon, 1995: 145). To overcome this ever present danger to individual self-determination Neitzche implores humanity to realise its will to power, to discover one secret of life that is "I am that which must ever surpass itself" ([1883] 1967: 166). Following Neitzche's exhortation to the courageous Sartre offers the notion of "the pledge" — or an oath backed by penalties for non-compliance, through which each member of a newly formed group promises to confront and overcome the external threat of seriality (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 430).

Therefore, within the unity of the pledged group, *homo existentialis* would wish to exercise free will in a dialectical relationship of association.

## Moral Certainties or Moral Scepticism?

**The *Homo Hierarchus* Perspective.** *Homo hierarchus* may be accused of being pessimistic about the essential morality of human beings. This charge is inspired by their belief that knowledge about morality is discernible in an objective sense and should be accepted by people as a set of moral imperatives. Therefore, the scientific method of reaching explanations is accepted as a suitable means of explaining the social world. However, this practice suggests that the imperfectability of human morality is inevitable, as nature itself has little

compassion with infanticide, rape and cannibalism common amongst animals as they strive towards "survival of the fittest" (Pinker, 2002: 163).

Therefore, it is no surprise that, as adherents to elitism, *homo hierarchus* would prefer a deontological moral code built on a system of moral exemplars, which have been provided with enough structural recognition and authority for their pronouncements to appeal to human reason (Walker *et al.*, 1995: 371). Thus, both religion and the traditional nuclear family founded on heterosexuality and marriage would provide useful vehicles to restrain individuals from slipping into degenerative behaviour patterns that may result in them questioning the existing social order. Obviously, as Scruton notes, subtle authoritarianism would always benefit from the notion that good conduct in this life would be rewarded in the next (2001: 170). In fact, this spiritual indemnity against damnation would be complemented by temporal protection as the elite assumes a degree of responsibility for those who adhere to their proscribed duties and obligations. This pattern of behaviour produces moral certainties for those born and trained to lead but the docile majority who are destined to follow must rely on judgements made by their superiors.

**The *Homo Economicus* Perspective.** When restraints are placed on individual freedom *homo economicus* regard such measures as a means to perpetuate a type of immorality, because, as Mill mused, "after the primary necessity of food and raiment, freedom is the first and strongest want of human nature" ([1869] 1989: 212). So, as a result of the competition and subsequent rewards of the free market, Hayek maintains that release from the constraints of regulation would inspire the entrepreneur to be "led by the invisible hand to bring the succour of modern conveniences to the poorest homes he does not even know" (1976: 145).

In this scenario, individual egotism is of far greater importance than any altruistic urges, thus benevolent paternalism, through the notion of *gratia gratiam parit* could motivate successful capitalists to adopt a "caring" attitude towards the deserving poor. In these circumstances, despite the likelihood that the respectable poor will remain in relative poverty, the benevolence rendered by the enlightened affluent citizen can maintain a wider vision that renders the dependant citizen as compliant and obsequious.

Therefore, a seductive consequentialist moral code can emerge that assumes a certainty and attractiveness for the successful who, by properly using the mechanisms of the free market, should consequentially gain material rewards. Alternatively, the failed entrepreneur may question the moral basis of a system that unflinchingly punishes errors of judgement without concern for the circumstances of failure or its consequences.

**The *Homo Sociologicus* Perspective.** *Homo sociologicus* would emphasise that a code of virtuous moral values and its application can be taught to the individual both in the education system and through the social interaction people experience when in groups of their peers. So, these principles would form an essentially optimistic point of view for *homo sociologicus*, where moral certainties arise from people committed "to a set of shared values, norms and meanings" (Etzioni, 1996: 5) encouraged by persuasion that appeals to their "better natures" (Etzioni, 1998: xxxvi). Furthermore, it is anticipated that numerous small groups, each functioning in a democratic and inclusive way, would interrelate with each other to achieve a common social bond that can accommodate human diversity such as gender, ethnicity, disablement and so on (Waltzer, 1992: 106).

In seeking to inspire a code of virtuous behaviour, *homo sociologicus* would believe in moral relativism[3]. This doctrine offers a vision that allows a community to achieve a morality that is certain and undisputed amongst all its members. However, such a code might not accommodate the dissenter who, in exercising his or her self-determination, cannot comply with the dominant norms.

**The *Homo Existentialis* Perspective.** The *homo existentialis* perspective on social reality rejects the knowability of moral facts and thus rejects the imposition of any moral code. Therefore, its adherents would be unable to sanction the moral notions grounded in deontological, consequential or virtue ethics. Thus, the self is recognised as functioning in a world of moral scepticism. However, transformation, of a person with moral commitments, is possible in a process that begins with the emotional urge to follow "an organised pattern of means directed to an end" (Sartre, [1939] 1971: 41). This process of praxis is "a free productive dialectic" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 235) founded in individual authenticity, which is achieved through expression and reflection over motivations, obligations and responsibilities.

Therefore, the free dialectic facilitates insight that may lead to cognition and acceptance of virtues (such as truth and honesty) as *homo existentialis* pursue their praxis within group interaction. Nevertheless, human morality would remain uncertain alongside deontological, consequential or virtue moralities that have been advanced by adherents to alternative social reality perspectives.

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[3] Moral relativism leaves the truth of moral doctrines as being relative to the opinions of the group of judging subjects (Lang, 2002:24).

**Trust or Distrust**

**The *Homo Hierarchus* Perspective.**    In pursuit of their aim to discover what can be accredited as true about the social world *homo hierarchus* would accept as true those perceptions that correspond with facts that are in agreement with their reality.  Therefore, they would embrace the notion of replicating reality through the correspondence theory by using both *a priori* and *a posteriori* methods to evaluate knowledge.  By employing this approach, epistemic defeasibility can render an existing truth claim redundant but it would be preferred, especially if the reinterpretation was socially contentious, that consensual pragmatism, achieved by experienced experts, determines the revision.  Therefore, *homo hierarchus* would sustain their belief in the existing social status quo whilst acknowledging the power and right of experts to revise existing truths.

In this scenario *homo hierarchus* would distrust the motives that underpin truth claims made by (1) *homo economicus*, which are based on their individual objective experience; (2) *homo sociologicus*, which are based on community-orientated social construction and (3) the *homo existentialis*, which are based on individual pragmatism.

**The *Homo Economicus* Perspective.**  In pursuit of their aim to discover what can be accredited as true about the social world *homo economicus*, in their objective social reality, would accept the validity of their individual perceptions that fit into their system of mutually coherent propositions.  Thus, truth would be determined through the relationships individuals have with other individuals instead of how it relates to social reality.  Therefore, *homo economicus* would employ epistemological reliabilism that is founded in a process of direct apprehension whilst accepting that epistemic defeasibility can cause existing

explanations that have achieved the status of truth claims to be overturned. In this scenario, *homo economicus* sustain their belief in the primacy of the free market where individuals strive to maximise their utility through the mechanism of contractual relations.

So, with their preferred approach to ascertaining truth, *homo economicus* would perceive an unacceptably high level of risk in the following truth claims, which they would be inclined to dismiss (1) the assertions made by *homo hierarchus* based on the replication of their objective reality; (2) the community-based social construction of truths favoured by *homo sociologicus* and (3) the *homo existentialis* particular preference for individual pragmatism.

**The *Homo Sociologicus* Perspective.** In pursuit of their aim to discover what can be accredited as true about the social world *homo sociologicus*, in their subjective social reality, embrace the notion that democratic discussion with other members of their community, drawing on social conventions, social perceptions and social experiences would determine what is true about the social world. Thus, truth is socially constructed in a paradigm of personal and group enquiry that would utilise *a priori* and *a posteriori* methods to collect information before practising epistemological foundationalism to reach a group consensus based on the collective perceptions of community members. Following this process the community's socially constructed truths may not be discarded following falsification through epistemic defeasibility as any new evidence offered may be refuted. Therefore, by adhering to the notion that truth is contingent on collective agreement about meanings *homo sociologicus* would affirm their commitment to the concept of community as central to achieving the good life.

Thus, with their belief in socially constructed truths that attain the level of virtues, *homo sociologicus* would distrust the motives that underpin the truth claims made by (1) *homo hierarchus* based on the replication of their objective reality; (2) *homo economicus* based on their individual objective experience and (3) the *homo existentialis,* which would be based on individual pragmatism.

**The *Homo Existentialis* Perspective.** In pursuit of their objective to discover what they can know about the social world the *homo existentialis,* in their subjective social reality, regards all universal theories of truth as irrelevant. Instead, they embrace a deflationary understanding of the concept, which renders the individual's understanding of particular truths as a possible outcome arising from that individual's lonely and demanding journey in search of their own credible social reality. In this scenario, where all classical theories are redundant, some *homo existentialis* might be prepared to acknowledge the notion of instrumental pragmatism, or that any belief can assume the importance of a truth ascription if it offers beneficial results to its adherents. Therefore, in a spirit of individual pragmatism that draws on instrumental pragmatism, the *homo existentialis* may endorse a particular proposition as true if it enhances their own well being.

Thus, with their belief in the irrelevance of universal concepts of truth, the *homo existentialis* would perceive as nonsense, and would therefore distrust the truth claims made by (1) *homo hierarchus* based on the replication of their objective reality; (2) *homo economicus* based on their individual objective experience and (3) *homo sociologicus* based on the social constructivism of the community.

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**Equality or Inequality?**

**The *Homo Hierarchus* Perspective.** When Rousseau wrote that "peoples once accustomed to masters are not in a condition to do without them" ([1755] 1993: 33-4) he expressed how the notion of inequality can be justified through the reality perspective demarcated by naturalist structuralism, as the concept is made an essential everyday characteristic in the pursuit of purposeful social relations. So, adherents to naturalist structuralist perceptions on social reality accept the causal capacity of structure over agency combined with an epistemology premised on the innate abilities of individuals to exercise their capability of reason to gain knowledge about the world. Arising from this scenario, *homo hierarchus* would accept that humans are not born equal. Some are perceived as possessing particular talents, and different levels of intelligence, that have been acquired as a result of a socially stratified educational system and economic processes that favours an elite. This results in the necessity for this elite to make decisions for the majority who would be prepared to follow their instructions, in accordance with their sense of responsibility and obligation. This situation maintains the existing status quo as a system of selective succession limits access to power by controlling the knowledge, mastery of the political system and access to financial resources that together sustain hierarchy. Moreover, people need to be constrained by institutions, which can exercise disciplinary practices, as without these constraints the instinctive behaviour of the majority would lead to instability and uncertainty. Thus, *homo hierarchus* would emphasise the preference of the poor and the weak for the safety and predictability of subservience. And they would also acknowledge that "in all healthy societies it must be the needs and

values of the strong which should obsess the popular imagination and dominate the public mind" (Worsthorne, 1978: 154).

**The *Homo Economicus* Perspective.** The philosophical perception of reality that is underpinned by the principles of naturalist agency is linked to a commitment to maximise freedom of choice for all. Whilst producing inevitable inequalities, this offers a system of natural selection where the most able citizens are allowed to maximise their material well being. Truth is found in Hayek's observation "that individuals believe that their well being depends primarily on their own efforts and decisions" (1976: 74). Thus, the special characteristics of humans that enable them to reach their full potential requires that they are unimpeded by the demands of structure, thus ensuring individual equality of opportunity to engage in markets largely unfettered by state rules and regulations. Therefore, the motivators that inspire individual action are located in the constant competitiveness of a group of people striving to maximise their personal well being in relation to other individual players. As a result the successful achieve high levels of self-esteem, pursuing self-centred materialistic goals, whilst those who fail in this market orientated meritocracy must gracefully accept their inferior abilities.

**The *Homo Sociologicus* Perspective.** *Homo sociologicus* understand people as primarily social in their habits, needing, through a conscious process of "bonding together," to form "webs of social relations that encompass shared meanings and above all shared values" (Etzioni, 1995a: 24). Problems are defined collectively through tight local networks that draw on the institutions of family, religious associations and schools, or in communities of interest such as trade unions or political parties. In this framework Walter recognises the internalised reward of becoming an "office holder" with socially recognised responsibility for pursuing

collective aims and objectives that endows a person with a status that makes them equal with other non-professional community activists (1983: 132-3). This notion of equality is rooted in the conviction that humans can value each other's contribution to the common good without attributing a greater significance in the successful completion of community initiatives to a group of high profile individuals rather than the unrecognised, yet exemplary, efforts of others. Such an optimistic view of human nature leads Walter to revise Marx's axiom to a new rule of conduct "from each according to his ability (or his resources); to each according to his socially recognised needs" (1983: 91). In this pattern of inter-action *homo sociologicus* accepts that social meanings reign supreme over the less credible inclinations of those who wish to exercise individual choice.

As people determine their reality by collective interpretation, the word *equality* seems to possess only a modicum of descriptive content. Instead, the perspicacious proclamations from *homo sociologicus* judge that the notion of equality should be primarily superficial, thus they support the development of an attractive ideal without identifying a fundamental justification for such properties within the human psyche (Barry, 2000: 171).

**The *Homo Existentialis* Perspective.** The unique nature of *homo existentialis* lies in his or her belief that all humans only have access to knowledge that is found through inner personal experiences. Therefore, by implication, each individual can proclaim their own existence but can either reject or be uncertain about the existence of others. This attitude embraces solipsism[4] with its principle that humans are condemned to live their lives with the conviction that they cannot know anything beyond themselves. Furthermore, the existentialist maxim, *that*

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[4] Solipsism is the view that the self is all that can exist or can be known. Within this doctrine scepticism can even extend to doubt about the validity of one's own past states.

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*individual existence precedes essence,* is also present in a scenario that renders social reality as unknowable; and debates about the structural equality or inequality of groups or classes irrelevant. Thus, individuals' character is shaped by the necessity of enduring the challenge of human existence, as best they can in a world purely comprised of their own representations.

*Homo existentialis* would accept that each individual should create their own distinctive understanding about the value and purpose of personal relationships whilst maintaining that it is futile to attempt to share knowledge of personal experiences with others. So *homo existentialis* would draw inspiration from Schopenhauer's supposition that "in what we do we recognise what we are" ([1839] 1999: 87) thus, making it impossible to achieve new levels of consciousness of the self through ordinary social interaction.

However, a genuine equality of humanity remains a feasible aim for those who associate with the perspective of hermeneutic agency through the proposition advanced by Sartre that "everyone comes to everyone, through the community, as a bearer of the same essentiality" ([1960] 1976: 599). This axiom is founded on the apparent self-reliance of individuals in the pursuit of their needs, which results in shared praxis. Here we become inter-dependent in a world where people must recognise and overcome their own sense of isolation through reflection over their autonomous behaviour within organised groups. However, a notion of mutual respect can arise from an awareness of the capacity of others to contribute to some shared objectives. In time, this insight may transcend to a higher affirmation of shared equality, strengthened by its disregard for status, power and security and knowable through the stages of a dialectical development that affirms individual identity.

Sartre does recognise that human beings are a collection of isolated individuals who find it impossible to understand the motivation of others. But, what he calls *the practico-inert*, where individuals are held prisoner by their own creations, can be overcome by a critical self-awareness achieved through the shared objectives of an organised group ([1960] 1976: 556-7). For instance, *homo existentialis* can realise that they have become complicit in their own alienation by their neglect in affirming their own life. Moreover, whilst their belief in their own autonomous creation of reality remains intact they can still exert "a will to power" (Nietzche, [1883] 1967, [1887] 2003) that consolidates their influence over their own existence. Therefore, the *homo existentialis* would challenge a local authority's attempt to reorganisation a small community group into a bureaucratic structure thus rejecting apathy whilst maintaining adherence to his or her beliefs.

## Conclusion

It is proposed that when some community members collectively address the issue of formulating, and then implementing a programme of community engagement, the commonalities amongst those who understand themselves as *homo sociologicus* might not be shared by community members who adhere to contending perspectives on social reality. Furthermore, these attitudes may influence community members' social preferences to the extent that holistic community participation in productive co-operative endeavours becomes increasingly difficult.

The synthesis of Olli's three plausible models of the individual with the theoretical observations made by social psychologists in relation to the formulation of attitudes, offers a useful means of understanding how difficult it can be for some

individuals' to change their values, attitudes and beliefs. Furthermore, sometimes when change is possible, it is only inspired by self-interest. This crucial pronouncement, by implication, requires the completion of a deep and rigorous analysis of the four contending social reality perspectives as it is imperative to explore whether common ground can exist between the differing standpoints.

In seeking to devise a research programme that can empirically validate that individual community practitioners choose a particular social reality perspective in community engagement settings, the next chapter extends the examination of meta-ethics principles into the micro sphere of individual ethical perceptions concerning the concept of community. Thus, the different comprehensions of personal ethics is explored and associated with *homo economicus*, *homo hierarchus*, *homo sociologicus* and *homo existentialis* in the attitudes they adopt towards community and community engagement.

# 4

# Contending Explanations of Personal Ethics

The four contending ontological and epistemological perspectives on social reality assume the status of categories and, within these four categories, it is proposed that individuals' would realise or manifest particular dispositions in particular relational situations, such as a community engagement. These dispositions can act as individual self-knowledge, and can guide what ethical principles are embraced and what predicated moral truths are rejected. To facilitate this process, individuals use their practical reasoning to reach conclusions over what constitutes acceptable standards of "good," "right" or "virtuous" behaviour or conduct. Thus, the analysis shifts from the meta-ethical level[1] (in Chapter 3) to the level of applied personal ethics.

Standards of behaviour govern the lives of individuals — or, fashion their self-identity — or, represent their actuality (Hegel, [1821] 1991: 190). Therefore, an individual's ethics can be regarded as a self-policing mechanism that can stimulate self-control, motivate adherence to matters of principle, accentuate feelings and give rise to particular lines of thought. However, such a pattern of idealistic

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[1] An investigation into the concepts and methods of ethics, or the science of morals in human conduct, with the aim of addressing the validity of moral claims in general.

impulses may require each moral agent to confront, or to obfuscate over, inconsistencies in their behaviour that might be the outcome of a compromise arising from the imperatives of objective or subjective necessity, which give rise to particular lines of thought. Therefore, ethics can also be fashioned by pragmatism. This makes their formulation a fruitful area for analysis in compiling a review of the associated sets of theoretical propositions that can be attached to each of the four perspectives on social reality. Furthermore, the completion of this process will also result in a set of propositions that can inform the design of the empirical investigation that is described and analysed in Chapter 6.

As this thesis will now be concerned with normative ethics or general theories about "what ought to be " (Taylor, 1975: 175), it is possible to achieve a better understanding of the ethical foundations that underpin the four contending perceptions of social reality (see Figure 4.1). These contending ethical principles give rise to four discrete ethical perspectives on community and community intervention.

## Homo Hierarchus and Deontological Ethics

The social reality perspective preferred by *homo hierarchus* requires a structuralist ontology and a naturalist epistemology. This configuration accords with deontological principles, with agency restrained by "the recurring patterns of social behaviour that determine the nature of human action" (Parker, 2000: 125). Thus, structure has a causal capacity with decreed duties becoming objectively knowable by agents. Therefore, deontological ethics are concerned with what individual duties are, who has rights, and what strategy is best able to produce justice. So, the fundamental precepts of this doctrine lead to a code that defines

**Figure 4.1: The Ethical Foundations of the Contending Social Reality Perspectives**

| | | Epistemology | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Naturalism** | **Hermeneutics** |
| **Ontology** | **Structuralism** | **Naturalist Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, **best** knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which structures exercise power over agency, which makes human behaviour predictable.<br><br>*Ethics*: deontological<br>*Homo hierarchus* concludes that what is right is found in observing duties and obligations deduced from structural considerations. | **Hermeneutic Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world, **best** knowable only as it is socially constructed, with people's action being determined, and made predictable, by their collective interpretation of this reality.<br><br>*Ethics*: virtue<br>*Homo sociologicus* conclude that virtuous behaviour emerges from jointly affirmed social norms. |
| | **Agency** | **Naturalist Agency:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, **best** knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which people are agents of their actions, with their behaviour made predictable by their unconstrained self-interest.<br><br>*Ethics*: consequentialism<br>*Homo economicus* concludes that the goodness of actions is judged on whether they create some good state of affairs. | **Hermeneutic Agency:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world that is **best** knowable as what people believe it to be, with agency constrained by their subjective perceptions of social reality, which makes human behaviour unpredictable.<br><br>*Ethics*: scepticism<br>*Homo existentialis* conclude that moral knowledge or moral reasoning is impossible. |

*Source:* Dixon and Dogan, 2003a.

what actions are right and permissible, and thus what actions are wrong. As Blackburn observes, "they take us beyond what we admire, or regret, or prefer

or even what we want other people to prefer. They take us to thoughts about what is due. They take us to demands" (2001: 60). Therefore, this section addresses the leading deontological system of Kant ([1785a] 1998 and [1797] 1963) and then examines how the general principles produced by a Kantian system have been developed by reference to the work of Fried (1978). Subsequently, some alternative deontological doctrines are presented, which offer ethical proposition that comply with the reality perceptions of naturalist structuralism whilst incorporating the notion of power.

**The Nation State and the Categorical Imperative**

Kant made an important contribution to the field of ethics by formulating the principle that morality be derived *a priori* or from pure reason, instead of individual experience. He insisted that for people to accept moral laws, their construction must be "freed from everything which may be only empirical" (Kant, [1785a] 1998: 289). Thus, individuals do not construct their morality by considering the consequences of their actions, but, instead, discover their inherent capacity to act morally or dutifully. This process of enlightenment lies at a deeper level than that of affectation, as individual behaviour should fully comply with the intent of a duty, rather than just observe its tenets, if a person is to achieve the particular postulates of Kantian "good will." From this process of subjective awareness there arises a code of objective ethics, which accords with the thinking of *homo hierarchus* in that impartial standards of behaviour are created, which can be subject to dispassionate judgement. As Kant maintains, judgement must be passed on what is right and what is wrong by the use of pure practical reason thus making morality absolute.

When a person acknowledges their moral obligations, they accept "the categorical imperative," or that moral rule that recognises that human characteristics — such as loyalty and duty — possess a discrete inherent value. This distinction is clarified by Kant in his statement that if an "action is good only as a means to something else, then the imperative is hypothetical; if it is conceived as good in itself and consequently as being necessarily the principle of a will which of itself conforms to reason, then it is categorical " ([1785b] 2003: 2). Following this assertion he proceeds to confirm the existence of "but one categorical imperative, namely this: Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, [1785b] 2003: 6). This fundamental principle is often cast into the popular saying "do unto others as you expect them to do unto you" although this cliché does not fully accommodate the extent of Kant's insight.

Taylor (1975: 88) has identified the following three formulations within the categorical imperative. Firstly, "for a rule to be a moral rule, it must be consistently universalizable." Secondly, "for a rule to be a moral rule, it must be such that, if all men were to follow it, they would treat each other as ends in themselves, never as means only." And thirdly, "for a rule to be a moral rule, it must be capable of being self-imposed by the will of each person when he is universally legislating."

Through the first formulation, it is envisaged that the imperatives of moral obligation, loyalty and duty, are consistently applied throughout the hierarchical nation state. Within this social structure, obligations and duties accompany the privileges granted to the individual. These values have as their aim the achievement of the common good and the maintenance of stable social order.

The second formulation predicts the achievement of the common good if everyone accepts their duties and responsibilities — or what is right — instead, of

taking actions they deem necessary to achieve a chosen result. Thus, *homo hierarchus* can visualise the preservation of social order without the individual exercising choice about what action would produce a desirable, or good, outcome.

Finally, the third formulation accommodates *homo hierarchus's* understanding of the ethical priorities of patriotism and allegiance to the state as principles that bind the social order together. These principles are absolute, and would be freely self-imposed by the will of each person, as that person perceives the state as providing the rights and legitimate expectations that ensure the maintenance of social order.

**The Categorical Imperative and Absolute Morality**

If certain actions are considered right or wrong, whatever the circumstances, then people can be faced with moral dilemmas. Consider the issue of arranged marriages — following Kant's argument, if it is accepted that enforced arranged marriages are wrong but arranged marriages that take place with the voluntary agreement of all the parties are right then this principle should be applied universally. However, the word "voluntary" can be defined differently, resulting in the universal application of this notion being inappropriate to particular individual situations where coercion is present. Therefore, the uniqueness of a situation does expose the shortcomings of the Kantian deontological doctrine.

Fried deals with the moral dilemma between absolutism and relativism by proposing a system of categorical norms "concerned with what we do, rather than with what we allow to happen" (1978: 20). Therefore, if a forbidden result comes about intentionally this is morally wrong but if a forbidden result is a concomitant arising from an action, even if this was foreseeable, then "it does not violate the categorical prohibition" (Fried, 1978: 21). Thus, in part, categorical norms are absolute, in that "they point out certain acts we must not perform." However, they

also "do not state that a certain state of the world is of such supreme importance that the value of everything else must be judged by its tendency to produce that state" (Fried, 1978: 11). So, a complex relationship is proposed between the judgements of the deontological system and the agent's evaluative judgement on "producing good in the world, but without violating the absolute norms of right and wrong" (Fried, 1978: 11).

By introducing the intention of the agent into the gap that exists between judgements of right and wrong and the state of affairs in the world, Fried recognises that "we relate to the world as human beings as we pursue our purposes in the world" (1978: 27). In this process the theory of prima facie duties, compiled by Ross (1930), provides the reality perspective of naturalist structuralism with the means to corroborate that, in a particular set of circumstances, the individual would intuitively know whether an act is right or wrong thus making moral knowledge accessible to everyone. Therefore, it is possible to refine Kant's universal maxim, provided the absolute element within the categorical norms is respected, as individuals may then fashion their intentions so that they do not contravene these absolutes. Thus, in the matter of arranged marriages, it is enough that the coercion of individuals into a marriage contract is never condoned and by this means we then fulfil our duty.

However, the concept of premeditated action remains problematic in defining ethical obligations. For instance, during the Nuremburg Trials,[2] a common defence made by the accused was that they were "only following orders," "doing their duty," and "unaware of any violation of human rights." Therefore, it seems inevitable that the *homo hierarchus* would be concerned to give regard to the presence of power within deontological ethical premises.

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[2] The Nuremberg Trails took place in 1946 with the defendants, consisting of the captured Nazi Hierarchy, accused of brutal atrocities against Jews, Roma and other minority groups.

## Power and Deontological Ethics

Pure human reason, which inspires individuals to observe the categorical imperative, is now tempered with notions of political influence in an analysis of the "interest" ethics of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Burke. Although these philosophers reflect on individuals' manipulation of others to achieve favourable ends, this intention accords with the categorical imperative as the manipulator accepts their obligation to the manipulated, making the latter not a means but an end in the framing of the intent. In this scenario, *homo hierarchus* can recognise a sense of ethical purpose as an elite aims to maintain existing social arrangements and perpetuate existing social divisions and sectional interests in nation states through a system of obligations and duties that ensures a compliant and productive populace.

## Truth and Deceit

Usually people associate Machiavelli with *The Prince* ([1513] 1999), thereby reducing his reputation to that of a philosopher who advocated the political juxtaposition between the concepts of truth and deceit. This labelling is unwarranted and unjust as his major project, *The Discourses* ([1518] 1969), represents "the attempt to accommodate interests and forces rather than to suppress or destroy them" (Gaede, 1983: 11). Nevertheless *The Prince*, written for a select group of rulers rather than the general populace, perhaps due to its accessibility, has moved into the mainstream of managerial discourse in Britain (Parry, 1972: 114) thus influencing the formulation and implementation of an important field in the ethics of naturalist structuralism.

Machiavellianism consists of beliefs that supplement the thinking that inspired the categorical imperative as power is consistently linked with responsibilities. So, *homo hierarchus* would have come to accept as sacrosanct that the retention of

power is conditional upon a ruler or prince having the vision to acknowledge their duties to their subjects. In turn, this belief has lead some dominant hegemonies to be suspicious of commercial and social partnerships until they are satisfied that they share the common aim of maintaining social stability. In this paradigm, the label "irresponsible" would be allocated to those who have not learnt from previous experience that "there is nothing more difficult to handle, more doubtful of success and more dangerous to carry through than initiating changes in a state's constitution" (Machiavelli, [1513] 1999: 19). Therefore, if such changes are to be avoided, those in control of a state must exercise the knowledge, skills and attributes that ensure the maintenance of stability, the certainty of order and the continuance of the status quo. Thus, for as long as citizens do not feel robbed of their property or honour through neglect of the obligations that power confers, "they remain content" (Machiavelli, [1513] 1999: 58).

In achieving the sense of loyalty and patriotism that binds a state together, paradoxically the state must create a strong and feared bureaucracy. It should be miserly in spending state funds and so avoid any attempt to adopt humane "popularist" measures that distort the delicate balance between duties and obligations. *Homo hierarchus*, in associating with and furthering this policy, would consider that their fellow citizens, who are fickle and ungrateful to those in the elite, are uncertain in their intentions. Therefore, when the elite use their power, they would invoke the maxim that, "violence must be inflicted once and for all; people will then forget what it tastes like and so will be less resentful. Benefits must be conferred gradually; and in that way they will taste better" (Machiavelli, [1513] 1999: 31).

When *homo hierarchus* accepts the Machiavellian doctrine, they are taking a pessimistic view of human nature, which necessitates a type of ethical cynicism. Thus, if it is recognised that a ruler is weak then that ruler will be despised

(Machiavelli, [1513] 1999: 47). However, if the general nature of the populace and their favoured customs can be understood, then the sovereign may easily manipulate them. Nevertheless, in this matrix, the deontological ethical base of obligation and duty remains intact as *homo hierarchus* would believe that if citizens of a state escape their benevolent servitude they would become "the prey of the first comer who seeks to chain...[them]...up again" (Machiavelli, [1518] 1969: 153). These circumstances would cause humanity to fall back into a "state of nature" where the wise rule of the most able individuals might give way to tyrannical and exploitative regimes.

**The Responsibilities of Absolute Power**

Hobbes, like Machiavelli, developed his philosophy in turbulent times. The latter experienced the religious and secular tyranny of the Italian City States whilst Hobbes grew up in the aftermath of the Spanish Armada, lived through the English Civil War then experienced the Restoration in 1660. Thus, no doubt from personal experience, he concluded that without a Commonwealth, or "Leviathan", citizens would experience "no arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" ([1651] 1996: 89). Therefore, he proposed the greater happiness of humanity through the promotion of individual self-interest as the ultimate principle of ethics thereby upgrading this notion from merely a means to a desirable end (Taylor, 1975: 47). So, whilst for those *homo economicus* who favour ethical egoism this proposition is consequential, *homo hierarchus* can embrace this concept as it is deontological in the public sphere but telelogical, or without commitment to a particular purpose, in the private sphere. Therefore, Hobbes proposes the greater happiness of humanity, through a reality where "people are purely and unavoidably egoistic which drives them to seek their own

preservation" (Gaede, 1983: 34). Thus, the sovereign should possess absolute power to ensure stability and prosperity with people choosing to give up their rights in the belief that "the power, so also the honour of the sovereign, ought to be greater than that of any, or all the subjects" (Hobbes, [1651] 1996: 128).

*Homo hierarchus* would find this theorising politically creative as it facilitates a social order where ethical behaviour is determined by people seeking to establish realistic relationships in society. However, although the deontological aspect to Hobbes ethical doctrine supports the naturalist structuralist perspective on social reality in emphasising every citizens' duty to obey the sovereign's wishes it does not influence private ethical behaviour, which should be solely established through the chosen style of interaction between people. Therefore, arising from the supreme authority of the sovereign whose laws create moral situations, *homo hierarchus* could develop consequentialist ethics in the private sphere of the family.

The role of the Church, as the traditional arbiter of behaviour, is to offer a civil religion that supports the sovereign's right to rule. In this pattern of political absolutism, criticism of the sovereign is regarded as sedition as it breaches the social contract that has advanced humanity from the chaos of the natural laws of nature.

**The Supremacy of Good Order**

The tumultuous experiences of Machiavelli and Hobbes were mirrored in the life of Burke who witnessed the French Revolution (1789–1794) and the American War of Independence (1775–1783). These events inspired his belief in a code of order and stability that had evolved through the wisdom of ages. Naturalist structuralism would also embrace Burke's prosthetic of re-inspiring politics with a religious vision (Gaede, 1983: 110) to explain the unfair distribution of resources.

Thus, as religion is the grand prejudice, using the suffering experienced in this life as a portent of rewards in the next, Burke is able to dismiss his detractors with the assertion "you think you are combating prejudice, but you are at war with nature" ([1790] 1993: 49).

Hobbes views, about the inability of human nature to aspire to ethically sensitive "higher goals," were to an extent shared by Burke in his conclusions about human discernment: "I am convinced that we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others" ([1756] 1987: 45). However, the well-ordered state, being a product of a slowly evolving and traditionally informed pattern of governance, would act as a moral mainstay as "custom reconciles us to everything" (Burke, [1756] 1987: 148). Therefore, *homo hierarchus* would envisage citizens entering into a special relationship with their society as "it is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection (Burke, [1790] 1993: 96).

**Challenges Confronting *Homo Hierarchus*.**

Therefore, arising from this analysis of deontological theories of ethical behaviour *homo hierarchus* are confronted with the challenges of addressing the following questions:

- To what extent does the development of the categorical imperative, to exclude actions that are concomitant and foreseeable with particular practices, make this principle too flexible?

- As the state must only observe its obligations to individuals in return for their adherence to their duties, might individual freedom of thought and conscience be eroded?

- Following Hobbes assertion that consequential ethics should be observed in the private sphere, does it mean that a deontological system is unable to inform individuals' everyday moral laws?

Thus, *homo hierarchus* has a distinct perspective on community and how its affairs are conducted.

## *Homo Hierarchus* on Community

To *homo hierarchus*, the individual is subordinate to the community and the community is subordinate to the state. The concept of community and the existence of community groups can thus be exploited to support the paradigm of individuals observing their duties in return for a set of obligations accepted by the state.

The following set of practical imperatives provide a clear insight into *homo hierarchus's* understanding of applied ethics in the context of the involvement of community members and community work professionals in community work initiatives.

**Human Essence.** The following propositions arise from the belief that individuals are rational beings that recognise the need for a social order that encourages them in the habit of self-control.

- The state should, as far as possible, control the supply of finance for community work initiatives thereby cementing the bond between the elite and community members.
- Initiatives taken at community level should be inspired by professional workers aiming to indoctrinate community members into a state-inspired identity.

**Individual Authenticity.** The following propositions arise from the belief that an authentic life is determined by the individual discovering their proper position in life then carrying out their duties.

- The processes undertaken to fulfil community initiatives should develop strategies of incorporation designed to quell unrest amongst citizens caused by their conscious feelings of social exclusion.

- Participation at community level should not result in community self governance but lead to community activities being incorporated into the structure of local government.

**Personal Responsibility.** The following propositions arise from the belief that the individual can comprehend good conduct, loyalty and sincerity.

- Individuals participation in community initiatives should be explained as rational behaviour in pursuit of fulfilling duties owed to the state.

- Community members should be encouraged by the state to observe the activities of their neighbours and report any instances of anti-social behaviour.

### *Homo Economicus* and Consequentialist Ethics

The social reality perspective preferred by *homo economicus* requires an agency ontology and a naturalist epistemology. As the individual has both a causal capacity to act and the discernment to objectively assess whether the likely results from their actions would have good or bad consequences, this configuration accords with consequentialist principles. Moreover, the individual would need to identify the beneficial ends from the means of their actions. Thus, "the moral value of any action always lies in its consequences, and it is by reference to these consequences that actions, and indeed such things as institutions, law and practices are to be justified if they can be justified at all" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 79).

The principles of consequentialism can accommodate various types of hedonism, or the personal pursuit of pleasure[3] as an end in itself. And the differing forms of utilitarianism,[4] which all require moral choices to be made in terms of the maximising of happiness for the greatest number of people. Therefore, arising from this description of the parameters of ethical consequentialism it is contended that *homo economicus* can locate the position of their ethical reality along a continuum.

The model in Figure 4.2 overleaf illustrates the spectrum of consequentialist attitudes, from ethical egoism, with its singular intent to promote the selfish pursuit of personal interest, to preference utilitarianism (Singer, 1993 and 1997), with its concern for people to identify right behaviour through co-operating together in negotiations between equals. So, in seeking to propose an ethical community-orientated perspective for *homo hierarchus* it could be argued that a degree of co-operative behaviour can be achieved without compromising their ideology.

**Is Selfishness a Natural State of Affairs?**

Machiavelli declared "that in constituting and legislating for a commonwealth it must needs be taken for granted that all men are wicked and that they will always

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[3] As there are different conceptions of pleasure there are varieties of hedonism thus, this school of philosophy, founded by Epicurus (341-271 BC) does not necessarily promote sensuality but rather detachment, serenity and freedom from fear.

[4] Act-utilitarianism makes moral judgements based on the likely consequences of particular acts, whilst rule-utilitarianism emphasises the importance of following rules which benefit society as a whole. Finally, preference-utilitarianism assesses the "good" arising from specific actions in terms of the judgements of all those involved.

**Figure 4.2:   The Continuum of Co-operation**

| Ethical Egotism | Act Utilitarianism | Rule Utilitarianism | Preference-Utilitarianism |
|---|---|---|---|

$\leftarrow$   **SELF-CENTREDNESS**   $\longleftrightarrow$    **CO-OPERATION**        $\rightarrow$
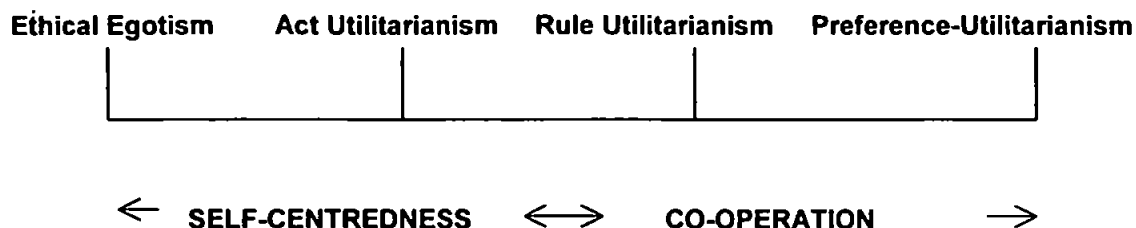
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give vent to the malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers" ([1518] 1969: 111–12). This political doctrine values poverty, as it is a desirable state of affairs that forces people to be industrious. Similarly, harsh disciplines are imposed through legislation with the expectation that this would cause citizens to behave in an orderly and productive fashion (Machiavelli, [1518] 1969: 112). However, this theorising, with its aim of ensuring a subservient population, acknowledges that people must also be able to envisage the possibility of fulfilling at least some of their desires. Such a perspective lies at the core of the political proclivities of the naturalist agency perspective of social reality, where the presence of economic freedom, achievable through a free market, can be regarded as guaranteeing adequate measures of personal liberty. However, this scenario might lead *homo economicus* to ponder whether ostensibly legitimate actions in the service of self-interest could have adverse consequences on society and, in the longer term, be unable to satisfy the demands of individual conscience.

In condemning usury, Aristotle distinguished between two types of accumulation — "one is a part of household management, the other is retail trade: the former is necessary and honourable, while that which consists in exchange is justly censured; for it is unnatural, and a mode by which men gain from one another"

([c335–322] 1996: 25). Subsequently, Epicurus upheld the simple life, counselling that restraint rather than excess was the pathway to happiness in a style of living that benefits from being devoted to friendship, freedom and thought (de Botton, 2000: 56–9). Whilst these observations concerning the moral implications arising from insatiable materialistic greed originate from Ancient Greece similar doubts were also expressed by Adam Smith in 1776. He described the endless pursuit of material possessions as a useful deception to stimulate the industrial revolution as it "rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind" ([1776] 1976: 10). However, deceptions rooted in acquisitiveness can be short lived, suggesting that the art of "cultivating contentment is therefore, crucial to maintaining peaceful co-existence" (Gyatso, 2001: 171). Therefore, the notion that selfishness is a natural human trait is not an unchallenged proposition. Philosophically, this principle seems to condemn the human race to live within a divisive social order, where for many citizens social exclusion would be inevitable. Therefore, those who adhere to a naturalist agency perspective, as ethical consequentialists, are left to consider the extent to which greater self-fulfilment can be experienced by both taking responsibility for their personal well-being and also according "due weight to the well-being of others" when judging the morality of their actions (Lucas, 1995: 152).

## The Ethical Neutrality of Market Outcomes

In making the value judgement that an action that results in the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people is morally right the proposition expresses a value-predicate — happiness — that is applied to the subject — the

greatest number of people — so, *homo economicus* accepts that ethical statements should be articulated in the terms of social aggregation and expects the value-predicate of happiness to be analysed in objective denominations that measure the extent of material well being (Taylor, 1975: 176). The need for such an instrument of measurement becomes clearer with the practical application of the act-utilitarian doctrine. This states that "the only reason for performing an action A rather than an alternative action B is that doing A will make mankind (or, perhaps all sentient beings) happier than will doing B" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 30). Thus, the naturalist agency perspective, in embracing act-utilitarian ethics, require an objective means of assessing the anticipated consequences of actions, so as to be able to determine what would constitute the greatest aggregate or accumulative happiness. Therefore, as *homo economicus* would choose to negotiate the preferred constituents of their own well-being with others, they need a suitable instrument of evaluation of social activity so that they are able to judge ethical consequences.

However, Plant (1999: 20–1) identifies three propositions that demonstrate the unprincipled nature of the market. When these are combined, they offer a convincing case for the rejection of the market's capacity to convert the abstract notions of "right" or "happiness" into synthetic statements that can be measured in terms of each individual's transactions.

The first proposition, made by Hayek (1960) and Acton (1971), maintains that a just market transaction is one devoid of coercion. As individuals enter into free exchanges, where inequalities of power are redressed through the freedom to negotiate and enter into binding contracts in the full awareness of their personal

rights and responsibilities and of the outcomes arising from their actions, such transactions cannot be deemed to be unjust.

The second proposition is that premeditation is a necessary pre-requisite for an action to be deemed unjust, which means that outcomes from self-interested market transactions cannot be unjust. Instead, the myriad number of daily transactions, which together constitute market activity, produce a spontaneous order amongst market participants that is not directed by pre-determined measures of income re-distribution (Hayek, 1978: 183).

The third proposition is, as Nozick notes, that while players in the market can serve moral imperatives "the market mechanism does not especially reward us for satisfying those desires, rather than other desires that are neutral towards or even retard those people's development" (1981: 514). Thus, as no generally agreed principles for the distribution of goods exists, there can be no moral case for the free market to answer.

Therefore, *homo economicus*, by endorsing the act-utilitarian ethical principle, are conceptualising their primary unit of social transaction — the market transaction — "as happenings outside one's moral self" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 104). By implication, then, *homo economicus* "should be willing to agree that...[act-utilitarianism's]...general aim of maximising happiness does not imply that what everyone is doing is just pursuing happiness" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 113). Instead, ostensibly rational action to maximise probable benefit can sometimes be irrational. In this case, it can perpetuate a maleficent outcome, or one that, whilst not intended, could or should have been anticipated, on a

particular social group without offering any justification that such a situation is inevitable in bringing the best results for the majority.

Therefore, if consequentialists wish to address the moral dilemma of foreseeable, adverse unintended outcomes arising from their actions they could consider the ethical consequentialism developed in Rawls theory of justice (1971), with its aim of ensuring the stability of the state. Rawls recognises that if citizens are to obey the state then a basic scheme for ordering society should include an agreement between those citizens and the state as to how that society would be conducted. These aims require a political consensus over the application of the concept of justice that extends to the details of how the principle can be morally justified. Therefore, to achieve such an understanding, Rawls proposes a hypothetical situation. In this scenario self-interested and rational citizens who are ignorant of the position they would occupy in a future society must choose the highest possible level of income and equality of opportunity for the poorest that is acceptable to all in that society. It is assumed that all participating citizens wish to pursue the greater good and would be prudent enough to realise the need for future social stability. Thus the outcome would establish not just fairness but the following principles of justice, stated in their order of priority, that underpin the structures of a just society (Rawls, 1971: 320):

> First principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. Second principle: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

These Rawlsian principles are designed to govern the manner the basic political, economic and social institutions, mould and voluntarily constrain the agent.

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Therefore, Rawls has constructed an artificial situation where citizens have co-operated with the objective of advancing their self-interest by ensuring the fairness of social outcomes. Thus, this agreement is envisaged as the product of a wide reflective equilibrium that has successfully challenged citizens to confront their values and re-assess their priorities to ensure an effective and equitable meritocracy in their own self-interest.

If *homo hierarchus* dismiss Rawl's theorising then they must face the apparent failure of market mechanisms to eradicate poverty. Although the trickle-down effect from wealth creation may lift some citizens from absolute deprivation they would continue to suffer relative imbalances in their property rights that leaves them dis-empowered relative to the affluent. This outcome reflects a desire in the marketplace to separate economic reality from social reality giving rise to the mechanical economic machine metaphor. So, instead of realising some individual's internalised desires for freedom, the marketplace presents a series of constraints that impel acquiescence to economic rationality (Bourdieu, 1998: 96). It follows that "adaptation becomes the highest goal of character formation" (Beck, 1998: 13) in the free market environment leaving those who adhere to the tenets of naturalist agency to ponder whether they should "rejoice in the market economy, but reject the market society" (Plant, 1999: 24).

**The Satisfaction of Desires through a Code of Rules**

Mill ([1859] 1989) was unequivocal in regarding utility, or engaging in the right actions that produce the greater good, as the ultimate ethical principle. However, he applied the following condition (p.14):

it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being. Those interests I contend, authorise the subjection of individual spontaneity to external control, only in respect to those actions of each, which concern the interest of other people.

Therefore, Mill has refined the doctrine of utilitarianism by recognising differences in the quality and quantity of particular anticipated pleasures. He follows the Epicurian tradition that living a good life is synonymous with maximising pleasure, but to him intellectual gratification is more important than physical sensations, and altruistic actions can satisfy individual desires. Thus, Mill's notion of rule, or restricted utilitarianism, extends beyond the consequences of a single action as it reasons that "an act is right if it conforms to a valid rule of conduct and wrong if it violates such a rule" (Taylor, 1975: 64). In this paradigm, a valid rule is one that usually can be expected to provide the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people. Certain individuals, then, may be adversely effected by the imposition of unfair advantage, however, their self-sacrifice would fulfil their wish to contribute to the general project of maximising the total good.

Therefore, rule-utilitarianism gives every indication of offering *homo economicus* a means of morally justifying individual engagement in market transactions that is precluded from the ethical doctrine of act-utilitarianism. The argument is constructed as follows. First, it is necessary for agreement amongst citizens of a country that a majority of their number benefit from the actions of individuals in the free marketplace. Subsequently, it is deemed that this principle of utility is a practical mechanism, and as such exonerates each agent from their lack of specific knowledge about the results of their intended actions. However, the creation of a legitimate exception to an act-utilitarian moral judgement does not validate the presence of fundamental differences between the moral judgements

that result from the application of the two ethical systems. Instead, it has been argued that act-utilitarianism and rule-utilitarianism are "extensionally equivalent" (Taylor, 1975: 69) as the latter supplies higher moral rules to outweigh the problematic empirical foundations of the former. In view of this, albeit contrived, compatibility it seems possible that tyrannical rules, which neglect fairness and justice, can receive corroboration through the complementary use of the two theories. This conclusion implies that *homo economicus* might, when reflecting over their ethical values and attitudes, "do better by looking at the interrelations between states of affairs and actions" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 85).

*Homo economicus* advocates the use of rational, self-interest-orientated instrumental decision-making in a social world that can be objectively described and analysed by the use of deductive and inductive reasoning. Therefore, *homo hierarchus* would be wary of any notions that suggest the formation of a social contract between citizens and the state where ethical behaviour is characterised as following predefined patterns of action that are independent from their consequences. Alternatively, what is good must be described independently from what is right, and what is right must maximise the level of aggregate goodness. Therefore, *homo economicus* would search out teleological theories of ethics, eschewing deontological principles. On this basis, the ethical doctrines of act-utilitarianism and rule-utilitarianism could be enhanced by being informed by the rationalist ethics of Gerwith (1978), who formulated a consistent and universal principle of generic consistency. His thesis centres on each individual's right to assert their control over their own assets of freedom and well being. Without the predetermined allocation of these vital assets, agents are unable to undertake

actions that prepare the way for the achievement of relevant personal goals that they see as crucial to the attainment of their full potential. By recognising this condition, each person is motivated to commit to granting everyone else the same rights over their freedom and well-being. Any denial in approving these assignations to all citizens would be irrational, as every citizen is equally justified in demanding their bestowal. Thus, Gerwith has formulated an ethical doctrine that can accommodate the social reality perceptions of naturalist agency whilst negating the tendencies within utilitarianism to encourage inequitable outcomes in relation to minorities. He has recognised that it is in everyone's self-interest to give everyone the same rights that are needed to attain their full potential. This doctrine would outlaw discrimination between agents as they, or their group, may suffer the effects of prejudice, which cannot be in their self-interest.

## Making Moral Rules to Serve Everyone

Singer (1997: 263) argues that "we can see that our own sufferings and pleasures are very like the sufferings and pleasures of others; and that there is no reason to give less consideration to the suffering of others, just because they are *other*." Therefore, this broad perspective asks *homo economicus* to empathise, in their own self-interest, with other individuals by reflection over their preferences. Thereby *homo economicus* is given a reason to focus on the effect that the unhappiness of others has on their own level of happiness. In this process, a judgement must be made about the loss of happiness that would follow from the adoption of principles that might bring personal benefit at the expense of the benefits of others. If the result is a net loss of happiness, then these must be discarded. This code is enshrined in an ideology that has become known as

preference utilitarianism, where rational moral rules substantiate the doctrine of self-interest through concern for the well-being of others on the basis that what is good for everyone is therefore, in the interests of all (Baier, 1958).

Whilst adhering to naturalist agency principles, *homo hierarchus* is proffered a credible argument arising from research carried out by Axelrod (1984), who used game theory[5] and decision theory[6] to hypothesise that it is irrational to ignore the interests of others by opting for self-interest. Axelrod's analysis of co-operation between individuals has a special relevance to *homo economicus* and the disposition they may adopt within a community setting as his quantitative research focuses on the ongoing personal interaction between subjects making preferred personal decisions (1984: 30-1). A total of 63 experts in game theory, drawn from countries around the world, made 120,000 single moves, or 240,000 separate choices, of whether to co-operate or defect in a game of iterated Prisoner's Dilemma[7]. Results were numerically graded producing an objective score reflecting the underlying strategy adopted by each participant. The winning design adopted a tactic of "tit for tat" with its clarity and comprehensibility to the other

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[5] A mathematical theory of situations that analyses human interaction when two or more players can choose different strategies. The game rests on rational choice theory, which treats people as rational, self-interested individuals with outcomes dependant on how the players rank different preferences (Blackburn, 1994: 153).

[6] This system of ideas is concerned with the choices associated with different options available in the process to a decision. The analysis pays particular attention to probability and to the cost/benefit outcomes from alternative decisions (Blackburn, 1994: 95).

[7] Two prisoners are jointly charged with a crime and are held apart. Each is given the option of confessing or not confessing. The following rules apply (Blackburn, 1994: 302):
  • If neither prisoner confesses they would each serve two years on a lesser charge.
  • If both confess both would be convicted and they would both serve six years.
  • If prisoner X confesses and Y does not, X would be released and Y serves ten years.
  • If, alternatively, Y confesses and X does not, Y would be released and X serves ten years.
Thus both prisoners are faced with a dilemma — should they respond on the basis of co-operation or self-interest?

player. Thus, the first decision taken was to co-operate on the first move and confess to the crime, subsequently the strategy entailed copying whatever the other player decided to do on each of his or her moves. So this plan was not vindictive as immediately the other player co-operates previous wrongs are forgiven (Axelrod, 1984: 122–3). Therefore, a simple discriminatory tactic not only won the first round of Axelrod's experimental game but also won the second round " which included over sixty entries designed by people who were able to take the results of the first round into account" (Axelrod, 1984: 175).

The success of "tit for tat" should inspire *homo economicus* to carefully consider the benefits of co-operation in relation to their own ethical position. The results of the experiment proved that pursuit of unbridled self-interest could be counter-productive. This leaves *homo economicus* to ponder over the tenets of preference utilitarianism and its rudimentary adherence to balancing the interests of others with personal preferences. This doctrine is supported by Axelrod's research as the results suggest that an atmosphere of co-operation, especially when applied to the free market can hasten long-term rewards that outweigh tactics of self-absorbed thoughtlessness.

Gauthier (1986) extended Axelrod's theorising into a proposition that, through the use of decision and game theory, it would be possible to build models of human behaviour that demonstrate that individuals are prepared to accept self-sacrifice. This would ensure that the happiness of others, which is as important as the happiness of the self, results from impartial moral rules. Such a vision takes utilitarian thought to the opposite end of the continuum from egotistical hedonism, (see figure 4.2), as it is now proposed that it is irrational not to accept some

restraint on individual action to ensure the maximisation of the sum total of happiness. In this context, "it seems that science does have something to say about optimal ethical rules after all. And the emerging picture is one of fairness and co-operation — not egoism — as the smart choice to make" (Pigliucci, 2001: 29).

## Challenges Confronting *Homo Economicus*

Therefore, arising from this review of the utilitarian theories of ethical behaviour *homo economicus* are confronted with the challenges of addressing the following:

- To what extent can greater happiness be experienced by taking responsibility for both personal well-being and that of others?

- Is the market, as envisaged by act-utilitarianism, fundamentally amoral, thus, requiring a supplementary social code of ethics?

- Is generic consistency ethically preferable to permitting inequitable outcomes to effect minorities?

- Can the empathetic basis of preference-utilitarianism render traditional utilitarianism defunct?

Thus, *homo economicus* has a distinctive perspective on community and how its affairs are conducted.

### *Homo Economicus* on Community

To *homo economicus,* the concept of community is irrelevant in a reality where the free market can satisfy all human needs. Therefore, community either has no place in their ontology or is regarded as denoting a superficial grouping that, whilst

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perhaps offering a superficial sense of altruistic fulfilment to its membership, has no analytical validity.

Nevertheless, whilst *homo economicus* might prefer to witness the demise of the term "community" from the social sciences their chosen perception of social reality contends with three alternative perceptions, each of which has a different opinion on this subject. Therefore, when confronted by systems of community management developed by adherents to other social reality perspectives *homo economicus* would adopt a particular rationale. These principles could be informed by Rawls theory of justice and Axelrod's research on co-operation.

The following set of practical imperatives provide a clear insight into *homo economicus's* understanding of applied ethics in the context of the involvement of community members and community work professionals in community work initiatives.

**Human Essence.** The following propositions arise from the belief that free beings can only be motivated by material reward.

- The unemployed, in return for state benefits, should be expected to provide some of the essential labour needed for community projects.

- The unemployed, in return for state benefits, should be educated into productive patterns of behaviour through their involvement as participating community members in community projects.

**Individual Authenticity.** The following propositions arise from the belief that the market is a flawless mechanism that, through contractual relationships, offers every individual the opportunity to achieve their potential.

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- The state should, as far as possible, refrain from funding community projects thereby leaving local communities to compete for finance from non-governmental organisations.

- Community projects should be solely concerned with the production of facilities and services not available through the operation of the marketplace.

**Personal Responsibility.** The following propositions arise from the belief that individuals should be held accountable for measurable outcomes.

- Funding for community projects should be linked to a measurable set of criteria.

- In achieving measurable objectives, the end should justify the necessary means.

## *Homo Sociologicus* and Virtue Ethics

The social reality perspective preferred by *homo sociologicus* requires a structural ontology and a hermeneutic epistemology. This configuration accords with virtuous actions being social rather than self-orientated, as they are understood as morally relative social constructs. Thus, *homo sociologicus* would reject the individual's attempts to distinguish between good and bad actions or observe standards of right or wrong behaviour based on the notion of duty. Instead of these objective ethical principles, the subjective notions of virtue are primary rather than derivative with their observance leading to adherents experiencing feelings of well being as valued members of their communities.

Tam (1998), in proposing an agenda for British Communitarianism, wrote of the influence exerted by Aristotle on contemporary discussions concerning moral

virtues. Aristotle's insight into human character lead him to conclude that every person's experiences were holistic, thus we all have the potential to access the sum total of available knowledge. Therefore, "all citizens can learn to behave morally and make political judgements. The virtues to cultivate and the duties to fulfil in any community...[need]...not be matters to be left to a special minority" (Tam, 1998: 19). This declaration, with its emphasis on each person's character and their capacity to choose virtues and vices, provides hermeneutic structuralism with the rudimentary foundations of its ethical approach. However, when envisaging a contemporary framework, other virtues than those recognised by Aristotle may well be included.

So, virtue ethics differs from both consequential and deontological systems, as the natural way to live is understood to be found in the dispositions that cause individuals to act in certain ways. Therefore, the concept of virtue is conceived as a means to happiness rather than just a derivative that motivates certain actions or duties. But, to nurture virtues in people requires a community to have the right laws so that certain practices can become habitual as they are re-enforced by training and education (Aristotle [c.335–322 BC] 1996: 3–4). Thus, the norms of community life act as essential mechanisms for *homo sociologicus* to promote virtue, or as Aristotle calls it "excellence." In this ethical paradigm every part of every family in a community "must have regard to the excellence of the whole" (Aristotle, [c.335–322 BC] 1996: 30) so that each person's civic function is reflected in, and benefits by, their virtuous behaviour.

**The Anatomy of Virtue**

The virtues that people cultivate might differ in interpretation in different societies, nevertheless, notions such as integrity, honesty, kindness, courteousness would usually be valued as exemplary character traits whilst obedience to community norms would be habitual. However, the provision of a list of virtue concepts fails to address the unavoidable imperative of relating these concepts to other notions of morality. Moreover, the list does not offer guidance as to the dispositions that should be included in a catalogue of virtues. Finally, *homo sociologicus* have to comprehend how they can comply with the standards necessary to achieve a virtue without referring to the results of their actions (MacIntyre, 1985: 226).

These deficiencies have lead MacIntyre to restate the original Aristotelian conception of virtue by introducing the role of "practices" into ethical theory. He defines a "practice" as "any coherent and complex form of socially established co-operative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised" (MacIntyre, 1985: 187). So, practices are disciplines, recognised and analysed collectively by members of a community, which can relate to, amongst other things, politics, economics, religion, the family and the arts. Participants in these fields would strive to achieve "standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods" by analysing their practice as being both a process and the creation of a product (MacIntyre, 1985: 190). In this duality, process is the dominant ethical element as it is here that virtue becomes apparent and is acknowledged by other community members.

When considering the anatomy of "practice" it is not possible to divorce this notion from the narrative that runs from the birth of a community member to his or

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her death. This person would be identified and would have found his or her own self-identity in interaction with others belonging to the same community. Therefore, the narrative is, for MacIntyre, in a relationship of mutual presupposition with individual intelligibility and accountability. It follows that any attempt to explain the composition of personal identity without the notions of narrative, intelligibility and accountability would fail (MacIntyre, 1985: 218). Thus, a person's moral judgements can only be understood by reference to their experiences of community, where their actions were approved or condemned according to the interpretation of moral standards that were specific to that cultural demarcation. Therefore, MacIntyre's concept of "practices" recognises moral relativism as justifying the gap that exists between what a community member does and what others may consider they ought to have done.

Whilst consequentialist and deontological doctrines provide procedures for decision making in whatever personal circumstances prevail, virtue ethics lack such specificity. Instead, individual conduct is understood as the outcome from a type of creative moral heroism inspired by community members expectations that the individual would act in what is perceived as an "admirable" fashion. So, in this tradition, it is not necessary to assess the worth of different virtues thereby leaving some questions — such as, whether prudence and temperance should always be part of wisdom? — unanswered.

As *homo sociologicus* holds that the common good in a community lies within "human interaction which transcends private advantage" (Ryn, 1978: 85), community participants must rise above the divisive and disruptive elements in their characters. It is envisaged that people would work together, inspired by the

notion of an "ethical nobility" which has elevated their aspirations beyond self-interest into the realm of working as part of a process dedicated to the achievement of societal aims and objectives agreed by their group. Just as community members discover their moral virtue in their practice, they would be taught in community settings to despise greed and admire disinterested altruism. Through steady encouragement, the apathetic community members become "virtuous" as "it enables them to join forces with others who are virtuous to mutual benefit" (Ridley, 1997: 147). However, the plan to realise this higher destiny seems to neglect the differing capabilities and desires of individuals. This state of affairs leads MacIntyre, once again, to acknowledge that people form their preferences in conjunction with their fellow citizens thus, in an autonomous consumer orientated society, it is a reasonable supposition to maintain that virtue ethics cannot be understood as a goal that can be completely attained. Such an aspiration "would presuppose the disappearance of selfish motives from the face of the earth" (Ryn, 1978: 86). Therefore, *homo sociologicus*, must embody in their virtue ethics the acceptability of pursuing, within socially negotiated, if constrained limits, personal well-being and pleasure. Furthermore, by embracing moral diversity, *homo sociologicus* must address the permissiveness within this code that can accept practices such as female circumcision, "just as long as that code can be related back to a culture that sustains it" (Lang, 2002: 25).

**Human Essence and the Acquisition of Virtue**

Virtue ethics differ from other ethical doctrines in acknowledging the relevance social settings have to the construction of individual ethical attitudes. The importance *homo sociologicus* attaches to community members finding their

intrinsic good intentions through an effective process of self-realisation exemplifies this commitment. This belief resonates with Rousseau's proposition ([1755] 1993), that people might once have lived in a natural state, uncontaminated by the artificial nature of the enlightened society, where non-competitive sociability was the norm. So, in seeking to promulgate that community members are essentially of virtuous character, *homo sociologicus* could cite the myth of the "noble savage," perhaps tracing its development through the romantic movement, which featured the philosophy of Schelling and the poetry of Coleridge. Arising from this intellectual reaction against rational explanations of social reality, creative art and the wisdom of the great religions could act as an inspiration to free people's subjective feelings and so inspire a vision of idyllic pre-industrial communities bound together in a union of "blood and soil." However, in advancing this thesis, *homo sociologicus* cannot expect unconditional acceptance from all members of a community. Thus, the issue arises of how communities can accommodate the notion of moral freedom.

Foot (1978: 202) presents the proposition that being for or against moral attitudes essentially presupposes a determinate social framework in which a community has actively created the availability of both positions. This assertion is given creditability by her description of a scenario that is devoid of any social regulation of actions. In this setting, nobody can speak out against murder, stealing or lying with any necessary authority, as nobody takes any notice of other people's acts unless they are personally affected (Foot, 1978: 204). Arising from this analysis Foot conclusion is that "moral approval and disapproval can exist only in a setting in which morality is taught and heeded" (1978: 206). Therefore, if *homo*

*sociologicus* are to make the acquisition of virtues anything other than an involuntary act community structures must facilitate the means for individuals to disapprove and democratically debate settled and dominant virtuous dispositions within their communities.

### Challenges Confronting *Homo Sociologicus*

Therefore, arising from this analysis of virtue ethics, *homo sociologicus* are confronted with the challenges of addressing the following questions.

- How can people understand their obligation to redress an issue like relative or absolute poverty when virtue ethics offers no precise guidelines?

- As virtue ethics does not give any guidance on dealing with the tragic circumstances that might have contributed to an act such as paedophilia is the only answer expulsion of the offender from the community?

- As virtue ethics do not offer a list of acts that are prohibited, then acts such as the circumcision of female children are acceptable if decreed by the community?

Thus, *homo sociologicus* has a distinctive perspective on community and how its affairs are conducted.

### *Homo sociologicus* on Community

This perspective requires a collective understanding that facilitates the social construction of virtuous principles. So, an ethical reality emerges that is distinct from both individualism and collectivism. *Homo sociologicus* regards both these contending ideologies as undermining progress towards an egalitarian society, as individualism promotes liberties at the expense of community values and their

associated outcomes, and collectivism requires acquiescence to a centralised state that suppresses any dissent through use of its absolute power. So, the concept of community is central to the ethical principles of hermeneutic structuralism as it is in this setting that community members would achieve their potential by working together in groups with democratically agreed aims.

Thus, the hermeneutic structuralist perspective on social reality would reach the conclusion that the processes within programmes of community work are very important to the realisation of their ideological vision.

The following list of practical imperatives provide a clear insight of the *homo sociologicus* understanding of applied ethics in the context of the involvement of community members and community work professionals in community work initiatives.

**Human Essence.** The following propositions arise from the belief that individuals are blessed with a natural aptitude for virtuous action.

- Communities should mediate between the individual community member and the state to facilitate both the co-operative enquiry and influence of every citizen in such matters as the formulation and implementation of social policy.

- Citizens should readily recognise their moral obligation to participate in communities so that they can fulfil their responsibilities to other community members.

- Whilst morality is relative across time, societies and individuals all good actions should be accompanied by good intentions, and the right emotions and feelings.

**Individual Authenticity.** The following propositions arise from the belief that it is only through involvement in community that community members achieve right knowledge, right speech and right conduct.

- The financing of community projects is of less importance that the development of relationships between community members, thus community processes should be of more significance than achieving community outputs or outcomes.

- The processes of work in a community setting should give a high priority to promoting egalitarianism, through initiatives like anti-discrimination and social inclusion strategies.

**Personal Responsibility.** The following propositions arise from the belief that the individual can only come to know the social world through collective dialogue that reaches a consensus about subjective understandings.

- Professional community workers should facilitate the involvement of community members in community matters, thus empowering them to enter into the collective construction of shared values and attitudes.

- Those community members who, despite attempts at re-education, deliberately and continuously break community norms should be excluded from the group.

### *Homo Existentialis* and Ethical Scepticism

The agency ontology of *homo existentialis* is constructed within each individual as an internal reality that is embodied in a subjective world of representation. Therefore, there can be no knowledge of causal capacity, as the sufficient and necessary conditions cannot exist without a perceptual world. Thus, it is axiomatic that the hermeneutic agency social reality perspective accepts that moral facts are

unknowable and thus the validity of ethical or moral claims must be denied, leaving its adherents with no choice but to embrace ethical scepticism.

The contemporary notion of moral scepticism can trace back its tradition to Pyrrho[8], who lived according to the precepts of balancing opposing opinions, or suspending opinion, with the goal of achieving tranquillity. Thus, the individual is unable to decide on the truth about moral principles, as they become conscious of a gulf between appearance and social reality. Therefore, arising from this proposition, sceptics are in a state of ethical doubt, which distances them from both those who are certain they have found the moral truth and those who claim that there is no truth at all (Lom, 1998: 8–9). This position accords with the presumptions held by *homo existentialis*, particularly the belief in the unpredictability of human behaviour, as each individual is constrained by their subjective experience of a unique social reality. Moreover, these philosophical assumptions also encompass the code of nihilism, or the belief in nothing, which results in all social purposes and allegiances being rejected.

In the absence of any valued moral code *homo existentialis* must make their own ethical judgements, such as choosing to adopt certain responsibilities or refusing to accept any duty of care towards others. In this world of undifferentiated ethical options the individual may take recourse in the philosophy of Schopenhauer ([1819] 1995) and Nietzsche ([1886] 1966), who both offer the notion of "the will," together with the writings of Heidegger ([1927] 1996) and Sartre ([1960] 1976), who explore and analyse the concept of "authenticity."

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[8] Pyrrho of Elis (365-275 BC) is the founder of Greek scepticism. However, he left no writings therefore, contemporary interpretation of his thought is reliant on other scholars. So this thesis has adopted the analysis provided in the writings of Montaigne (1533-92), with his interpretation

**Personal Responsibility and the Moral Agent**

Schopenhauer understood human essence as "will", embodied in the life of individuals as a striving desire to exist in a world of representation. However, "will" is also an idea that is a complete conception of a species. Thus, "will" in the individual is just a temporary aberration until the timeless "will" leaves the individual at their death. During the brief and useless struggle of life "a human being always does only what he wills, and yet he necessarily does it. This is owing to the fact that he already is what he wills; for from what he is all that he ever does follows of necessity" (Schopenhauer, [1839] 1999: 88). Therefore, individuals are condemned to live in a realm of desire, as human intellect is, in most respects, a slave of "will". This pessimistic vision may be alleviated through a process of renunciation, where the individual becomes reconciled to the eternal nothingness of death. Alternatively, the medium of great music and great art is recognised as being able to lift people beyond their limited individual perspective into an awareness of the universality of the "will".

Schopenhauer does not associate "will" with a divine being but instead, sees it as the source of human suffering as individuals pursue their futile purposes in a world of representation ([1819] 1995). Therefore, self-interest informs ethical behaviour with malice only restrained through individual compassion that is inspired by the suffering of the world. Thus, *homo existentialis* may hold a negative impression of "will".

However, Nietzsche offers a very different description that positively associates "will" with power. As Russell observes "both Nietzsche and Machiavelli have an

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of ancient scepticism as the distrust of the faculties and misapprehensions of humanity (Craig,

ethic which aims at power and is deliberately anti-Christian...What Caesar Borgia was to Machiavelli, Napoleon was to Nietzsche: a great man defeated by petty opponents" (1946: 729). Nietzsche indicted the herd-instinct as the deliberating source of power amongst humanity that renders individuals weak but the collective strong. The group engages in social compromise that encourages continual moral censure leading Nietzsche to answer his question — "How is man to be maintained?" — with the response — "How is man to be surpassed?" ([1883] 1967: 326). Nihilism is the outcome of an indifference to creativity, encouraged by hypocrisy and the fear of condemnation encompassed in Zarathustra's [9] statement — "sombre is human life, and as yet without meaning: a buffoon may be fateful to it." However, he then asserts, "I want to teach men the sense of their existence, which is the Superman, the lightening out of the dark cloud — man" (Nietzsche, [1883] 1967: 75). The notion of the Superman is a challenge to the boldness of humanity. It is proposed that people should strive to suppress their desires for a timid virtuous conformity in a safe and well ordered society. Through this process, each person can overcome the fallacy of the human condition: as Zarathrustra declares in the proclamation "my suffering and my fellow-suffering — what matter about them! Do I strive after *happiness*? I strive after my *work*!" (Nietzsche, [1883] 1967: 364).

For those that adopt this single-minded pathway, Nietzsche, in the three essays that constitute the "Genealogy of Morals" ([1887] 2003), applauds their noble character in determining their own values after rejecting the ethics of duty, that

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2005: 864).

[9] Zarathustra is the hero of Nietzsche's best-known work –*Thus, Spake Zarathustra* ([1883] 1967).

parade as a disguise for obedience. They have left the herd, variously labelled as groups, communities or tribes, recognising it as the social unit that has become dominated by leaders that claim to represent a higher authority, such as the divine right of Kings. By this means, leaders of the herd have promulgated notions of good and evil rendering individuals weak, humble and slavish in their dependence on their masters. So, Nietzsche demands a denial of slave ethics with their inherent self-deception that causes individuals to identify the desirability of particular acts as they further the common good. Instead, people should re-discover the Ancient Greek doctrine of noble ethics, which values pride, boldness and self-affirmation. By adhering to these notions, which are free of any moral system, the individual must search for the meaning of their existence even if that meaning leads to the repudiation of any possibility of human improvement. As "man will sooner will nothingness than not will" (Nietzsche, [1887] 2003: Pt 3, 28).

Inherent in this rationale is Nietzsche recommendation, to those who embrace *homo hierarchus* and *homo sociologicus* beliefs, to evaluate their values and exercise their prerogatives of choice by discovering their "will to power" (Nietzsche, [1883] 1967: 164). This abstract construct can overthrow the language of obedience and fulfil Zarathrustra's proposition that "even in the will of the servant found I the will of the master" (Nietzsche, [1883] 1967: 165). If "will" is exercised the notion of nihilism, in its traditional format, may assume a category that describes a transitional stage of human awareness as logocentric beliefs in social distinctions, meanings and the dichotomy that distinguishes truth from falsity begin to fade. As individuals realise that their existing ethical frameworks of good and evil have maintained a system of domination of the majority, then new

meanings may emerge for the world-affirming human being. So, the social reality perspective of *homo existentialis* allows its adherents to choose to use the positive force of the will to inspire its ethical preferences thus overcoming preordained constraints imposed by conscience. Adherents might also consider the implications of Heidegger's concept of "vulgar" conscience, or the misrepresentation of this emotion through the attribution of guilt, that leads to the development of the concept of authenticity.

Heidegger ([1927] 1996) provides a theory of self-consciousness where the notion of "being"[10] or *sein* is distinguished from *dasein*[11] or the "being-in-the-world" that characterises human self-consciousness. As *dasein* is thrown into the world it "not only has the inclination to be ensnared in the world in which it is and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light; at the same time *dasien* is also ensnared in a tradition which it more or less explicitly grasps" (Heidegger, [1927] 1996: 65). Thus, pre-established norms of behaviour and social conventions in a world of representation distort the conscience that renders the individual resolute in their own responsibility by placing an assumed guilt on those that deviate from social values. Therefore, Heidegger rejects the guilt-laden notions of "vulgar" conscience and calls for individual authenticity, whereby conscience can reveal the true self to the individual.

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[10] The notion of "being" is separated by Heidegger into what constitutes an arena of human concerns and interests and the things that happen to be found in that setting. Thus, the concept of community personifies the concerns of its members however its tools, such as applications for funding, personnel records and premises only become "meaningful" when they have a "being" in that community setting (Craig, 2005: 354).

[11] Heidegger distinguishes between the arena's of human meaning and the entities that inhabit these spaces. Hence, he differentiates between entities and human beings as the latter are dasein or "the place of meaning" in their capacity to understand what is described as "the ontological difference" between entities and human concerns and interests (Craig, 2005: 354).

For Sartre ([1960] 1976), the notion of authenticity is fundamental to people's need to make choices throughout their lives in the full awareness that they can create all aspects of their characters. Sartre, in his description of the terms of association that guide the dynamics between individuals within a group, does offer the following rudimentary guidelines for a practical basis of ethical conduct:

- When individuals pledge themselves to a group, this solemn agreement "should be defined as everyone's freedom guaranteeing the security of all so that this security can return to everyone as his *other-freedom*" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 428). This implies that individuals' should internalise a primary concern — to ensure that the results of their actions do not diminish the free will of other individuals.

- Sartre ([1960] 1976: 599–600) asserts that "everyone comes to everyone, through the community, as a bearer *of the same essentiality*. But, at the level of the degraded group, the individual, in his exteriorised terrorist negation of his own freedom, is constituted as inessential in relation to his function." Thus, when decisions are being made by the group each person's particular talents and right to express their will must be paramount in an inclusive structure that places an equal value on the opinion of all.

- Sartre ([1960] 1976: 374) argues that individuals in a pledged group can facilitate the totality of reciprocities amongst other members. Therefore, they have a duty to ensure that each person has the maximum number of options available when they wish to express their free will.

These three imperatives all promote respect for the individual's viewpoint, which crystallises around the discipline of ensuring that there is freedom for every person to fully believe in, and express, their own opinions.

## Ethical Scepticism and its Consequences

*Homo existentialis* would accept "that there are no moral *truths;* that there is no moral *knowledge*, that in morals and politics all that we can ultimately do is to *commit* ourselves" (Bambrough, 1979: 14). Thus, objective ethical reasoning propositions offered under the naturalist structuralism and the naturalist agency social reality perspectives are rejected. Emphatic differences of opinion would also occur between ethical sceptics and adherents to the doctrine of ethical virtue concerning the ethical embodiment of individualism with the predominance it gives to utility and natural rights. However, these disagreements should not obscure the extent a level of ambiguity exists within the sceptical paradigm, which prevents the ideology from being pre-emptively dismissed for promoting indifference and inclinations of intolerance and selfishness. Whilst some sceptics may adhere to the passive philosophy of Pyrrho, possibly verging on the apathetic in their search for tranquillity, others would be pro-active in establishing their ethical code in the context of continual reflection prior to affirming their expressions of belief. The latter practitioners undertake an arduous task in pursuing the goal of achieving perfect personal authenticity, which can ensure that their scepticism is firmly placed in the here and now. Such a positioning reflects *homo existentialis* discomfort with passive belief systems as "it is in the everyday world of space and time that moral decisions are made and moral struggles take place" (Walsh, 1972: 29).

After contemporary ethical sceptics have divorced themselves from the search for tranquil docility, by implication they are now intent on promoting each person's fundamental right to exercise their free will. Therefore, they would reject any notion that accepts indifference to social outcomes, as each person must accept total ownership of the consequences of their social behaviour in their constant striving to be authentic. This vision contrasts sharply with some of the principles adhered to by *homo sociologicus*, which might well encourage the traits of humility and modesty amongst members of a particular community. In recognising these dispositions as virtuous characteristics community leaders neglect to remember that if these "virtues" are attained then such a modification of behaviour might produce a compliant populace that can be exploited by a tyrant. In a similar fashion *homo existentialis* would find solace in obedience to the laws and customs of their society, however, such an unquestioning compliance may produce a scenario that encourages oppression and exploitation by an elite. Therefore, the proposition arises as to whether some degree of pro-active scepticism might be a necessary ingredient in both these ethical formulations.

Ethical sceptics find themselves in "an inherently unstable category" (Lom, 1998: 9), where personal responsibility to both others and to the self must act as a mediator against the notion that no behaviour is forbidden. So, for *homo existentialis* the process of exercising individual free will is an onerous, and lifelong, punishment. However, in adhering to this approach, that requires every situation to be analysed in depth, people can help themselves to avoid the danger of taking "a rosy view of our moral attainments,...[as]...the rosiness would gradually infect our view of the world" (Hughes, 1973: 110). Thus, *homo*

*existentialis* is able to evade the ethical complacency, motivated by self-satisfaction, that can limit the extent of a person's compassion. Furthermore, in a similar fashion, "to unequivocally claim that scepticism naturally leads to illiberality fails to acknowledge that scepticism can as logically radically open possibilities of action as well as restrict them" (Lom, 1998: 10).

Therefore, *homo existentialis* cannot claim to follow an ethical doctrine that offers a universal code for the redemption of humanity. But rather, through the mechanism of a strong defence of personal freedom, this code attempts to ensure that no individual acts in a manner that contravenes his or her underlying pre-disposition. Thus, moral principles are understood as fluid, flexible, sometimes ambiguous and only effective after individual justification.

## Challenges Confronting *Homo Existentialis*

Therefore, arising from this examination of ethical scepticism, *homo existentialis* are confronted with the challenges of addressing the following questions.

- Whether the optimist's view of human nature is correct, and we can rely on the majority of ethical sceptics choosing to live in harmony with others rather than tyrannising them?

- As sceptics would always exercise doubt about ethical behaviour, should each new situation they encounter be subject to an examination of their authenticity before action is taken?

- As achieving the will to power involves ensuring the primacy of individual self-interest at the expense of co-operation and compassion, does this unrestrained doctrine contradict the importance attached to the notion of respect for each individual?

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- Is the longing for love an element within individual authenticity, and if so does this imply an individual's need for deep human relationships?

Thus, *homo existentialis* has a distinctive perspective on community and how its affairs are conducted.

### *Homo Existentialis* on Community

This perspective holds that the individual can only learn about their reality through introspection. Thus, the concept of community, and the work carried out to further this connection amongst individuals, "is qualitatively stronger and deeper than a mere association" (Craig, 2005: 132). Furthering community can only take place under the control of co-operative participants who have achieved free and unfettered association held together by mutual respect. Thus, in this fundamentally non-hierarchical way of thinking, acting and relating to other people, *homo existentialis* would adopt the following list of applied ethical imperatives regarding community matters.

**Human Essence.** The following propositions arise from the belief that individuals are recognised as free, unique beings that choose who and what to make of themselves.

- Professional community workers should seek to facilitate co-operative participation in community work initiatives but they should not attempt to impose an external agenda on individual community members.
- Attempts to achieve a common purpose amongst community members should be regarded as eroding individual autonomy.

**Individual Authenticity.** The following propositions arise from the belief that moral truths are unknowable so individual's moral beliefs are just matters of personal taste.

- The processes and outcomes from community work should be distanced from state and economic power to ensure that individual community members can maintain control over their own lives.

- As each new community project should seek to satisfy individual needs, forward planning should be avoided.

**Personal Responsibility.** The following propositions arise from the belief that human behaviour is unknowable and unpredictable.

- The imposition by funding bodies of conditions attached to the financing of community projects is unacceptable.

- The process of community work should be more important than the generation of outcomes.

## Conclusion

The four ethical frameworks detailed in Figure 4.1 all provide guidance that leads to discrete ethical propositions applicable in particular relational situations. These propositions then become subject to an evaluation by people informed by their preferred interpretations of human essence, individual authenticity and personal responsibility. So, resulting from this process, an individual formulates the basis upon which he or she approves, disapproves or dismisses as irrelevant, any actions taken. The adherents to each of the four social reality perspectives each hold distinctive ethical positions in a particular relational situation:

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- *Homo hierarchus* believe in the predominance of the causal efficacy of social structures that renders the individual powerless to contest unjust and harmful behaviour, insisting on loyalty and duty to what is the right action for the common good.

- *Homo economicus* prefers a moral code that is the product of moral facts grounded in scientific explanation of the consequences of action taken, which enables them to determine what is a good action. Thus, people who ignore these moral tenets when they enter into contractual arrangements would lose the trust of the market and diminish their utility.

- *Homo sociologicus* prefer to discover their ethical principles through a process of shared democratic discussions within their community, with the social norms that emerge becoming valued virtuous character traits that, if continually repudiated by a community member, would result in his or her eventual expulsion from the group.

- *Homo existentialis* deny the validity of abstract moral principles preferring to adopt ethical positions in particular relational situations that are fluid, flexible, sometimes ambiguous and only pertinent after individual justification, which means that all frameworks of rules and regulations devised to govern human action would be repudiated.

Emerging from the contending ethical principles is a set of contending ideologies. Chapter 5 addresses these ideological perspectives. Therefore, it is concerned with the political convictions that fundamentally divide the opinions of citizens in western liberal democracies.

# 5

# Contending Ideological Perspectives

Just as there are fundamental divisions between the adherents to the four contending social reality perspectives there is fundamental disagreement over their human nature presumptions and their preferred ethical principles, and thus it is inevitable that there are contending ideological perspectives (see Figure 5.1).

Each of the contending ideologies have either implied or categorical views about opposing political doctrines and it is by exploration of these specific doctrines that the foundations of suppositions about both grounds for agreement and difference can be developed. So, on this basis, rudiments of the contending ideological convictions, or the essence of their political commitment, are explored to facilitate discrete assessments of the contending roles of the state, the market and the community. In this context, it is acknowledged that there is a broad spectrum of ideologies globally that can be associated with social reality perspectives, but the focus here is the prevalent ideological preferences within western liberal democracies.

**Figure 5.1:** **The Ideological Foundations of the Contending Social Reality Perspectives**

| | | Epistemology | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Naturalism** | **Hermeneutics** |
| **Ontology** | **Structuralism** | **Naturalist Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, **best** knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which structures exercise power over agency, which makes human behaviour predictable.<br><br>*Ideology:* collectivism *Homo hierarchus* would favour collectivist ideologies, such as conservatism, corporatism or Marxism, all of which share inherent notions of hierarchy and the superiority of an elite. | **Hermeneutic Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world, **best** knowable only as it is socially constructed, with people's action being determined, and made predictable, by their collective interpretation of this reality.<br><br>*Ideology:* communitarianism *Homo sociologicus* would advocate the supremacy of the collective that is enshrined in the body of thought known as communitarianism that embraces the values of the German Romantic Movement and British Idealism (see notes 1 and 2). |
| | **Agency** | **Naturalist Agency:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, **best** knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which people are agents of their actions, with their behaviour made predictable by their unconstrained self-interest.<br><br>*Ideology:* liberalism *Homo economicus* would favour liberal ideologies embodying the theories of classical liberalism and neo-liberalism, which reflect their imperatives of freedom of the individual to maximise their utility in a minimalist state free from unnecessary interference from structural impediments | **Hermeneutic Agency:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world that is **best** knowable as what people believe it to be, with agency constrained by their subjective perceptions of social reality, which makes human behaviour unpredictable.<br><br>*Ideology:* anarchy and nihilism *Homo existentialis* would favour differing conceptualisations of anarchy and nihilism, which can embody his or her internal struggle to determine a meaning and purpose for life. |

*Source:* Dixon and Dogan, 2003a

## *Homo Hierarchus*: A Collectivist-Élitist Perspective

The objective of the governing elite is to exercise control over community organisations so that they can achieve their maximum utility, through productive and reproductive capacities, to serve the state. As Pareto observed, achieving this goal is a delicate matter thus, the "governing classes frequently merge a problem of maximum utility *of* with maximum utility *for* the community" ([1902] 1966: 254) as they attempt to ensure subservience and stability. If such a strategy succeeds then elite groups, and subservient classes, would fulfil the *homo hierarchus* vision of social life.

### Rationalisation of Community Organisations

Scruton's opinion about the value of community initiatives would be shared by *homo hierarchus* namely, that without adequate control, the majority of community members would be afflicted with blatant "sanctity, intolerance, exclusion, and a sense that life's meaning depends on obedience, and also a vigilance against the enemy" (cited in Miller, 1999: 177). Therefore, community initiatives should, to the greatest extent possible, be based on authoritative edicts that can be understood as "the rational co-ordination of the activities of a number of people" (Schein,

1980: 15). In these plans of action, voluntarism would be used by the state as a source of cheap labour, facilitated by the unemployed accepting training places on community projects as part of their search for employment. Furthermore, funding would be rigorously monitored to ensure that paid workers focus on explicit objectives that have been systematically broken down into standardised and simplified tasks (Brooks, 1999: 113). So, the chosen style of community management would reflect the key features of a rational approach to work with functions divided and allocated before being re-combined "through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility" (Schein 1980: 15). Local government professionals, skilled in disciplines such as town planning, public health and social work, would use their technical and administrative expertise to instruct community members in the best way to achieve their objectives. Their role would be presented as having been constructed from logical or common sense legality (Thompson, 1990: 61). Furthermore, the professionals involved would welcome the opportunity to be involved in community initiatives as "an expansion of power means more office positions, more sinecures, and better opportunities for promotion" (Weber, 1968: 911).

In this bureaucratic regime, *homo hierarchus* would anticipate that the effects of Homans (1951) exchange theory would also further their cause. This model proposes that individual community members would only co-operate with their neighbours to the extent that they would mutually benefit from the interaction and they would avoid contact with people of different status who are unable to assist in the furtherance of their interests.

By recognising the bureaucratic doctrine of organisation and methods for the formulation of community work initiatives, lead by professionals, *homo hierarchus*

would deliberately be willing to exclude, or pay little attention to, human emotions and values that have not been a product of expert deliberation (Etzioni, 1993: 1068). Emotions are regarded as secondary to instrumental tasks in a process where it is assumed that groups of people are malleable, and sometimes the exclusion of minorities in a locality may be desirable.

Alternatively, the wish of *homo hierarchus* to be seen to have achieved the full participation of all sections of the community in their affairs seems to necessitate that working relationships should be regularly reviewed and re-negotiated to avoid entrapment in a dogmatic unresponsive framework. In this context *homo hierarchus* would be mindful of Schumpeter's observation that "wants are nothing like as definite and...[peoples]...actions upon these wants nothing like as rational and prompt" (1987: 257) as the demands for standardisation and regulation require. Thus, *homo hierarchus* would continue to maintain that good community management must focus on community members complying with imposed policies and practices. If this strategy were adopted then an appropriate *espirit de corp* would develop, fostering community loyalty and commitment (Dixon and Dogan, 2003a: 465).

*Homo hierarchus* would draw comfort from the notion that the outcomes that arise from "the analysis of political processes is largely not a genuine but a manufactured will" (Schumpeter, 1987: 263), which can be regarded as the product of the existing political state of affairs. Therefore, they would be unperturbed by exhortations demanding the adoption of democratic egalitarian processes made by *homo sociologicus* to individuals and groups. Although *homo sociologicus* proselytise the benefits of "the creation of an exclusively therapeutic experience" through local people defining their values, aims and objectives

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(Hoggett and Miller, 2000: 361), *homo hierarchus* believes that community members would find that their predominant inclinations favour an imposed framework of scientific social regulation.

Thus, *homo hierarchus* has an unwavering belief that collectives can be manipulated, although social entrepreneurs might attempt to harness liberating forces through collaborative activities that produce flat rather than hierarchical management structures. So, whilst the social entrepreneur's "language is caring, compassionate and moral" (Leadbeater, 2000: 213) those who support the existing centralised state bureaucracy consider that any contentious issues, included on community agendas, can be controlled by financial regulation and monitoring. A notion made plausible by the precognition that community members would ultimately acquiesce to the wishes of the predominant social order.

The naturalist structuralist social reality perspective is "premised on human behaviour being predictable on the basis of rational thought constrained by hierarchically determined values and beliefs" (Dixon and Dogan, 2003a: 465), which leads inexorably to reliance on the state's capacity to anticipate and control outcomes contrary to the elite-determined common good[1] that are a result of the existence of the active and democratic political communities envisaged by *homo sociologicus*. However, *homo hierarchus* does not extend this degree of comfortable self-assurance towards the concept of spontaneous market order that is favoured by the self-interested *homo economicus,* as they expect to exercise their right of choice to belong to, or opt out from, community obligations. Moreover, this type of individualistic, autonomous behaviour is understood as presenting a

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[1] This notion of the "common good" takes the view that those who are not members of an elite do not have "the expertise, nor the time, nor the inclination to be active participants in the policy subsystem" (Sabatier P.A. and Jenkins-Smith H.C., 1993: 223).

danger to social unity, or the common bond that each citizen has with society, which is sacred to the maintenance of law and order.

Because the naturalist structuralist social reality perspective embraces rules and regulations that govern all aspects of an individual's life, the *homo hierarchus* vision of the social world is the antithesis of the *homo existentialis* struggle to be free from the trivial in the serious business of living. Thus, *homo existentialis* would recognise the need for freedom when freedom is defined as a "release from unreality" (Wilson, 1956: 30) through individual insights into personal self-realisation. This arduous journey demands that the individual makes a critical analysis of all prevalent norms of behaviour. It questions their being and purpose in a seemingly unreal world that denies the instincts and urges that can raise the consciousness of individuals beyond the superficial. For those who never undertake this journey, the hermeneutic agency social reality perspective entails the adoption of apathy towards what is understood as an unknowable social reality. Therefore, *homo hierarchus* would perceive *homo existentialis* as the purveyor of the unpredictable, pursuing a dangerous anarchist doctrine.

**The Maintenance of the Status Quo**

The existing social power structure is secure if its only challenge comes from pluralism particularly when social movements are in their initial stages of development, as emerging issues can be ignored by policy makers (Parsons, 1995: 136). However, even though the hermeneutic structuralist social reality perspective can be associated with a predominantly communitarian approach, which does not promote equal access to resources, it can also be affiliated to a

**Figure 5.2: Paulo Freire's "Praxis" Cycle of Action-Reflection-Action**

3. problem posing and
critical reflection

2. pulling in analysis

1. Joining with others
in a renewed cycle

4. increasing self-esteem
and desire for education

7. economic/structural change

5. awareness of oppression

6. shared experience leading to empowerment
and COMMUNITY ACTION

beginning with pressing needs
or starting where the people are
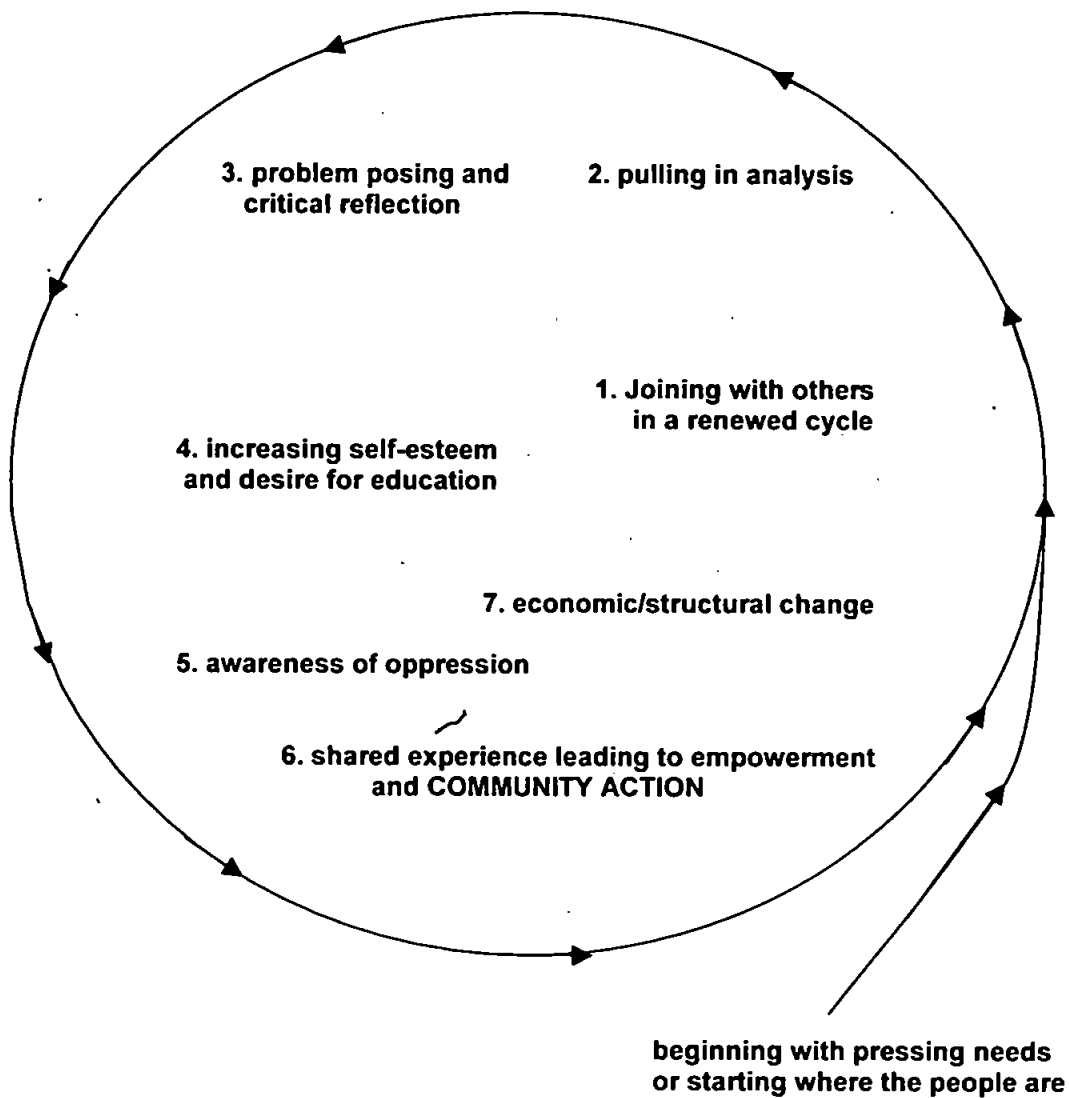
Source: Derived from Freire 1996: 64-7

radical alternative doctrine rooted in the tradition of community education and the Marxist analysis of class conflict.

*Homo hierarchus* would be strongly opposed to the use of community action that is not endorsed by the élite to achieve permanent political and economic change, especially if the theoretical foundation of this process recognises and accommodates the complex nature of society. So, the synergy of Freire's pedagogy (1996) with Gramsci's cultural variation on Marxist economic determinism (1971), which describes how change can be initiated at the micro level in communities before it takes effect at the macro level of capitalist relations (Popple, 1995: 101-2), offers an unacceptable means of social engineering.

The process proposed by Freire can be illustrated as a cycle (see Figure 5.2) where community members coalesce into groups to address common needs (1996: 64–7). In this scenario, the professional community worker "would work with but never on" (Freire, 1985: 40) people by offering generative themes for group reflection. These generative themes might consist of case studies, commentary, photographs, films or even plays. However, whatever the medium *homo hierarchus* would be strongly opposed to the use of community action that is not endorsed by the élite to achieve permanent political and economic change, especially if the theoretical foundation of this process recognises and accommodates the complex nature of society. So, the synergy of Freire's pedagogy (1996) with Gramsci's cultural variation on Marxist economic determinism (1971), which describes how change can be initiated at the micro level in communities before it takes effect at the macro level of capitalist relations (Popple, 1995: 101-2), offers an unacceptable means of social engineering.

# Figure 5.3: Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony

RULING ELITE

(Hegemonic Class)

FORCE                                    CONSENT

POLICE                  THE MIDDLE STRATA                  MEDIA

                        (professionals paid to assist      TRADE UNIONS

ARMY                    the ruling elite and ensure        POLITICAL PARTIES

JUSTICE                 subordinate groups compliance)     COMMUNITY GROUPS

                        CHURCHES, MOSQUES, ETC.

POPULAR DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE

SUBORDINATE GROUPS
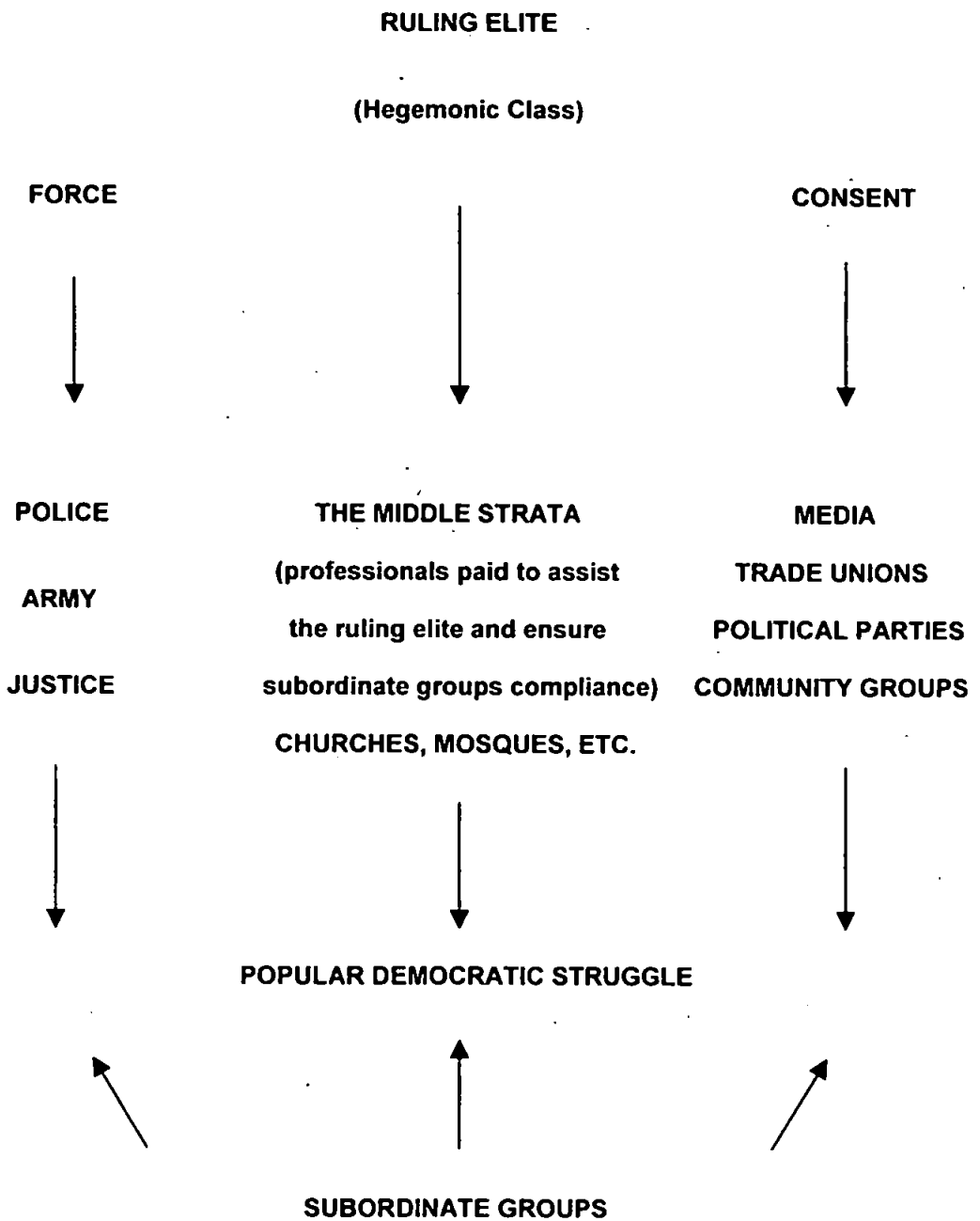
Source: Derived from Gramsci, 1971

Gramsci's theory of hegemony complements Freire's use of education as a weapon for social change. As Gramsci observes, "collectivity must be understood as the product of a development of will and of collective thought attained through concrete individual effort and not through a process of destiny extraneous to individual people" (1985: 401). Thus, there is no revolutionary aspect to change but instead, it occurs as a gradual process achieved by individuals' active role in the fields of ideology and politics. In this struggle dominant groups rule subordinates by consent and coercion (Gramsci, 1971) as illustrated in Figure 5.3, where ideology is used to bind social structures together. In this nexus it is impossible to precisely identify where power lies in society as "the people themselves are not a homogeneous cultural collectivity but present numerous and variously combined cultural categories which, in their pure form, cannot always be identified within specific historical popular collectivities" (Gramsci, 1985: 195). Thus, organic intellectuals, or those individuals that arise from their own class and become aware of the necessity to awaken it to its economic, social and political functions, would understand that there are opportunities to inspire change that would benefit their own subordinate group. Therefore, subordinate groups would challenge the status quo by mobilising collective action in an ideological struggle (Gramsci, 1971: 5–6). Moreover, newly formed social movements would challenge the supremacy of dominant ideas and beliefs in all aspects of civil society.

After digesting this sequence of events, *homo hierarchus* would have cause to feel some anxiety about their political aspirations being systematically undermined by the activities of a minority who embrace *homo sociologicus*. This is a serious matter as, although *homo economicus* and *homo existentialis* cause concern by advocating increased individual autonomy by promulgating libertarian notions, it is

apparent that the perspective of homo sociologicus might encourage pro-active involvement in devising community strategies for permanent social change. This action threatens to overturn the economic, social and political power of dominant hegemonies. Therefore, alleged errancy that could be inherent amongst *society's beings* creates anxieties about unstoppable and transformational social modifications.

### Homo Hierarchus on the Contending Views on Community

*Homo hierarchus* would perceive fundamental flaws in propositions about community that are grounded in the other social reality perspectives, and would have difficulty in recognising any. commonalties about community with the adherents to any alternative social reality perspective. This is because of their affinity with the fundamental roots of elitism. If the status and privileges arising from the existing order are explained as natural phenomena, then the existing status quo must be perceived as permanent.

### Homo Sociologicus:

- The creation and bonding together of a group mentality within inefficient communities, where behaviour, unconstrained by hierarchically established social norms, is based on unrealistic idealism, which can result in the state having to keep dangerous ideas unacceptable to the ruling elite off the democratic agenda.

- The commitment to relocation of power through a radical political strategy at the community level has the unacceptable intent of permanently changing the existing social order.

### Homo Existentialis:

- The acceptance of the notion of voluntary sociability and individual self-determination that supposedly flourishes, thereby threatening the existing social order, if the state is precluded from intervening in community organisation and affairs.

### Homo Economicus:

- Placing faith in a spontaneous social order, based on contractual relationships, threatens social unity and cohesion because it can lead to a competitive meritocracy.

### Homo Hierarchus on the Role of the State, Market and Community

Homo hierarchus holds a discrete and coherent vision of the role of the state, the market and the community.

**On the Role of the State.** Homo hierarchus would accept the following propositions about the role of the state:

- The state should extend its capacity to control the lives of its citizens wherever and whenever possible.

- The state should exercise extensive powers, as it is exercising a benevolent paternalism over the lives of its citizens.

- The state should ensure that a rigorous code of law and order is imposed on its citizens, as it is the only body that can recognise and implement the means of achieving the common good.

- The state should refrain from permitting its citizens the right to access information about its decisions and actions, as the complexity and nuances

contained within this material make informed analysis impossible to those who were not involved in the decision-making and action-taking processes.

**On the Role of the Market.** *Homo hierarchus* would accept the following propositions about the role of the marketplace:

- The unbridled competitive pursuit of self-interest through the mechanisms of the free market should be constrained, as it presents a challenge to the common good and weakens traditional social bonds that help maintain the ruling élite.

- The state should intervene in the regulation of the market to ensure that citizens are protected from the outcome of market transactions that may be adverse or that they may not fully comprehend.

- The market should not be trusted with the equitable delivery of essential public services, which are socially and politically necessary to sustain the common good.

- The unbridled market can create a group of wealthy, self-motivated, individuals who have no allegiance to, and might even challenge the power of, the ruling élite.

**On the role of community.** *Homo hierarchus* would accept the following propositions about the role of community:

- Community members should make collective decisions that preserve national social unity and cohesion.

- The bond between the citizen and the state should be more important than community members' loyalty to their communities.

- Those who lead communities should be professionals who have the expertise, experience and judgement needed to ensure the preservation of the common good.

- Community should be just another part of a nation's social order so if community members fulfil their duties to their communities the state will accept its obligations to these communities.

- Community members should be willing to volunteer for unpaid work in their communities provided that this work sustains the social order.

- Community decision-making should seek to avoid risks.

- Management of community affairs should be about managing for rational process.

### *Homo Economicus:* An Individualistic Liberal Perspective

*Homo economicus*, argues for the preservation of the competitive free market unfettered by unnecessary collective interference.

### Communities and the Imposition of Values

When *homo sociologicus* promote the concept of community an emphasis is placed on the collective obligations and responsibilities of people within a community group to work for the achievement of collectively agreed_aims and objectives (Etzioni, 1995b: 9; Oaks, 1998: 97; Glendon, 1998: 113 and Conner, 1998: 129). However, Reiman is concerned about this assertion as, he insists "to be real, community must be voluntary, it must be a free expression of shared commitment" (1994: 30). This proposition is also reflected in Hayek's contention that "common ends are imposed upon all that cannot be...more than the decision of particular wills" (1976: 32). So, the necessity for community values to form in a

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space that facilitates expression free from coercion is paramount. In this context Hayek regards the threats and manipulations of unscrupulous parties as eliminating "an individual as a thinking and voluntary person...[making them]...a bare tool in the achievements of the ends of another" (1960: 20–1). Clearly, Hayek holds a reductionist perspective towards community, which renders it subservient to his agency ontology. Thus, community "must arise in just the space that liberalism protects" (Reiman, 1994: 30). And *homo economicus* understands good community management as being devoid of conformity, rooted in freedom of choice and acknowledging a spontaneity that rejects any belief in pre-planned organisational structures that undermine "the foundation of the moral and political in freedom" (Hayek, 1960: 72). So, "rather than being contrary to community, liberalism is its precondition" (Reiman, 1994: 30) as, in such a setting, by promoting individual freedom the autonomous construction of morality is possible. This process can then evolve into the individual possessing the capacity to select their freely chosen responsibilities.

Whilst individualism may offend the collectivist, as the doctrine implies a diversification of interests that complicates the common good, nevertheless Hayek maintains his notion of reductionism by insisting that the "existing factual order of society exists only because people accept certain values" (1978: 21). This premise substantiates a particular notion of community by acknowledging that people would associate with each other, and that this outcome can be welcomed by *homo economicus*, provided it is what people are really inclined to do. Similarly, liberal ideologies reject any notion that a community should influence another community about its accepted values. Orthodoxy of any form is acceptable to its committed

acolytes but freedom to choose prevents this conformity being forced on others (Reiman, 1994: 31–2).

In aiming to enhance the common good *homo economicus* would wish to improve "as much as possible the chances of any person chosen at random" (Hayek, 1976: 129–30). Such a precept is difficult for *homo hierarchus* to accept as they place an emphasis on stability and on hierarchy in taking actions; which would preserve the expediency of the few. So, Hayek warns of the inevitability "that freedom can be preserved only if it is treated as a supreme principle which must not be sacrificed for particular advantages" (1973: 57). Thus, for *homo economicus*, the liberty of the individual must be maintained by constant vigilance against the erosion of choice through the devaluation of the capacity to choose and the resultant inhibition of freedom.

*Homo hierarchus* would approve of dominant hegemonies imposing their will over what constitutes acceptable behaviour for the citizens of a nation state. This policy, which would result in community matters being conducted through limited and delegated powers granted from a central authority, is attacked by Rand (1957, 1965 and 1966). She has a vision of superior individuals, directed by a Nietzschean will to power, combating the opposing power of hegemonic oppression by exercising their own authenticity. Such an objective individual will reject all subjective beliefs by accepting reality as objectively knowable. Therefore, in seeking happiness, altruism is rejected in favour of rational judgements that demand obedience to a respected and honoured authority. Thus, service and subservience to the state, or some community project, is regarded as contravening the inalienable rights of rational beings. Therefore, participation in community schemes can only occur if the individual is adequately rewarded for their efforts.

**Initiating the Necessary Legality for Community Interventions**

From a liberal perspective, Friedman concludes that "the consistent liberal is not an anarchist" (1962: 34). Thus, the self-interested *homo economicus* can recognise a strand of commonality with *homo hierarchus* over a role for the state in maintaining a viable social order. Therefore, the making of laws — and this process is as relevant to community matters as is central directions from the state — must cohere with an established, albeit minimal, body of legal rules. This legislation would contain both implicit and explicit directives that underpin the imperative to maintain the objective of regulating human conduct so that it is conducive to sustaining law and order. This complex undertaking is not deemed to be the business of the citizen. Therefore, Hayek declares that the common will is irrelevant to such a task; the appropriate rules are discerned, not proclaimed, as a result of work to "improve a system of rules which are already observed" (1973: 96).

The belief in centralised decision-making, even restricted to regulations concerning standards of safety, differs from the principle that places the community in a position of subsidiarity in relation to the state, a fundamental article of belief for *homo sociologicus*. In this nexus, legality is determined by the participation of community members, through a democratic decision-making process that takes place in a community setting. These decisions are then incorporated into policies that are adopted by politicians.

So, Hayek's exclusion of the common will in determining what he understands as necessary state operations, implies that the traditional morality of western civilisation should be binding on those who are intent on preserving constitutional government, while leaving no capacity for moral relativism between different

communities. In making this proposition Hayek 's neo-liberal agenda requires him to reject a critical element that is central to the world view held by *homo sociologicus*. However, this rejection is inevitable as, to fulfil *homo economicus's* perception of reality the imposition of a specific national code is essential for the provision of a foundation for an advanced liberal order. Such a code would act to underpin free competitive "private initiatives and enterprise…[by using]…the whole aggregate of libertarian institutions of law" (Hayek, 1978: 190). Therefore, *homo economicus* would make the state subordinate to the requirements of the market system, but would find it unacceptable for the state to be subordinate to communities.

Hayek's observation that social relationships are cemented together through the notion of contract that governs market transactions is axiomatic to *homo economicus* (1973: 35–54, 1976: 142 and 1979: 158). In this scenario unfettered competition becomes a procedure of discovery "where through the existence of a spontaneous order irrational and imperfect people can achieve a variety of "different individual purposes not known as a whole to any single person, or relatively small group of persons" (Hayek, 1978: 183). Thus, as the individual, unfettered by state regulations, arranges to buy or sell goods or services a model of desirable social arrangements is created where general opinions must give way to individual judgements. Here, Hayek seems to be resurrecting the work completed by John Stuart Mill, who argued that the general opinion reflected the views promulgated by a minority of highly influential members of the population. This state of affairs helped to perpetuate oppression by a tyranny of the majority, as people become reluctant to differ from what was widely accepted as the truth (Mill, [1859] 1989: 87–8). So the market, with its characteristics of individualism

and individual liberty, produces the circumstances that determine that "individualism is a social theory" (Kukathas, 1989: 216). However, if the standards of ethical behaviour and accountability adopted by the market are to be changed, and then regulated by decision-making made in communities, there is a fundamental difference between *homo economicus's* position and the principle of overall community control advocated by *homo sociologicus*. This dichotomy is mirrored by the acceptance of the former of the contemporary preponderance of Tonnies *gesellschaft,* or an associational urban society where relationships are fleeting, instrumental and centred on self-interest. Alternatively, *homo sociologicus* would cling on to notions of community, described by Tonnies as *geimeinschaff,* as offering a continuing traditional and natural state of affairs unaffected by urbanisation (Popple, 1995: 2).

Hayek's recommendations for the organisation of community relationships, whilst promoting the free market, do not present an obvious challenge to *homo hierarchus* in view of their belief in dilatory capitalism. They would place their reliance on the actions of elite policy makers who would perpetuate business monopolies and the inefficient use of resources. Such inactivity would result in capitalism being "transformed into a political organisation which...[conceals]...its nature by speaking the language of business, *competition, free enterprise* and the like" (Lasswell, 1948: 214). However, *homo existentialis* can recognise the notion of spontaneous order as forming part of their commitment to "the maximum involvement of...[each citizen]...in political affairs (Cross, 2001: 3). This acknowledgement reflects the market's recognition of individual autonomy by providing a setting that can mediate for the needs and wants of the individual

within the collective whilst avoiding the erosion of personal freedom to external institutions.

Libertarianism, with its emphasis on individual rights, takes a *laissez-faire* view regarding the best legal framework for community matters and is suspicious of any role for the state beyond upholding rights to life, liberty and property (Friedman and Friedman, 1980: 55). Thus, it is accepted that "in a free society people may contract into various restrictions which the government may not legitimately impose upon them" (Nozick, 1974: 320). Here, Nozick is both maintaining, like Rand, the vision of *minarchism*, and its belief in a minimalist state whose only civic function is to protect property rights, whilst also addressing the matter of the formation of specific communities. He approaches this duality by contending that, provided a society is ideologically libertarian and laissez-faire "individual communities within it need not be" (1974: 320). Therefore, it is acceptable for community members to decide on their own preferred arrangements through discussions, which may even prevent dissenting parties from opting out of the collective. This apparent loss of freedom is not properly addressed by Nozick who, rather weakly, states that "he cannot see...his...way clearly through these issues" (1974: 323). However, *homo sociologicus,* would find this relaxed attitude to community bonding divisive and potentially destructive for their project. Their paramount concern is to create and maintain strong, cohesive community structures that possess purposeful social power that can be exercised to achieve social inclusion. Thus, *homo sociologicus* is not coerced into a commitment to the collective but instead, feels impelled, through notions of obligation and altruism, to contribute to community endeavours. So, in constructing his argument, Nozick fails to develop a credible space for *homo economicus* to conduct a dialogue with

*homo sociologicus,* concerning the matter of negotiating the autonomous development of their own vision of community. Instead, it seems that this process would be fraught with disagreements over *homo economicus's* wish to make their own decisions about accepting community responsibilities, an acceptable code of morality, and to make altruism an adequate motivator for community action.

Perhaps the best elaboration on the libertarian principle, which envisages different structures for the state and community based endeavours, is provided by Friedman and Friedman in their description of the Israeli system of kibbutz farms. The critical element within these communities is that "everyone is free to join or leave" (1980: 175). This makes the intentional wish to contact into or depart from the collective an essential feature of the organisation, and in so doing, also affirms a general precept that can be applied to other examples. Quite simply, whilst state powers must be restricted community matters can be left to individual choice but the individual must never be deprived of that right to choose.

## Community and its Operational Aims

Generally, *homo economicus* supports a distinction being drawn between the public and private spheres of life, with communities conducting their political discourses in the public realm and private beliefs (such as religious and ethical preferences) disembodied from state practices. For instance, Locke writes about the result of giving up an absolute arbitrary power to a governing body as placing people "into a worse condition than the state of Nature" ([1688] 1988: 359). Central to this principle is the recognition that as long as "minorities accept and become assimilated into the political culture of the community, they should remain free to live the way they like" (Parekh, 1999: 110). This premise was supported by Rawls,

in his analysis of liberal constitutionalism, by his assertion that it could offer "the possibility of a reasonably harmonious and stable society" (1993: xxiv–xxv). However, such a bifurcationist approach is unacceptable to homo hierarchus, who hold the view that the élite should be driven by the need to attain favourable power balances within communities by employing strategies devised for "winning over or neutralising the indifferent or hostile" (Lasswell, 1948: 38). So, from their perspective, the division of public and private realms becomes part of an opposing strategy that can be circumvented by superior knowledge and planning. The rejection of this division is shared, albeit for another reason, by *homo sociologicus*, who are convinced of the necessity to subsume individual self-identity into a comprehensive set of community principles that can result in a collective consensus about the common good. This leaves *homo economicus* looking for common ground with *homo existentialis*. But *homo economicus's* conviction that potentially disruptive elements of identity should be designated to a private arena, whilst individuals' rational economic choices should be promoted in the public sphere, contradicts the concern felt by *homo existentialis* about the denial of individual authenticity. As, if this emotional imperative is ignored, then the opportunity for the development of a holistic individualised, ethical sensibility that can secure high standards of individual ethical conduct would be lost (Widder, 1995: 29).

*Homo economicus* can agree with *homo hierarchus* and *homo sociologicus*, that the everyday operations of community organisations can, by the means of the self-reflection they inspire, "maintain or restore patriotism and morality among the people " (Rousseau, [1755] 1993: 150). So citizens can become more moral through social interaction with other community members, but these moralistic

outcomes would vary in accordance with the perception of reality embraced by each individual social actor. However, this still leaves *homo economicus* and *homo existentialis* in a fundamental disagreement over the notion of individuals learning their values from each other, as *homo existentialis* would insist that each individual should make their own values for themselves.

## *Homo Economicus* on the Contending Views on Community

*Homo economicus* would perceive fundamental flaws in propositions about community that are grounded in the other social reality perspectives.

### *Homo Hierarchus*:

- Communities must maintain the status quo because this can help sustain a stable law-abiding society that is conducive to market transactions, but this policy might not stimulate market activity.

- The effects of the market can be mitigated by collective regulation, so as to achieve desired outcomes, but at the expense of economic efficiency.

- The state continues to maximise control over citizens' values, attitudes and behaviour because it does not acknowledge the separation of the public and private spheres.

### *Homo Sociologicus*:

- People become the victims of moral coercion as they conform to the dominant values of their community because they are manipulated into agreeing with community leaders.

- Community members wrongly reject rational self-interested judgements in favour of altruism because they believe that the pursuit of self-interest can only fulfil their own aspiration rather than those of their community.

- The emphasis on cultivating moral relativism in communities erodes commitment to a centrally imposed legal framework designed to facilitate the state's subordination to the requirements of the market.

- Community is intolerant of the alternative ideology of the market because it must be inclusive and cannot tolerate dissenters who renounce community membership.

- The private sphere is rejected as it impedes the assimilation of differing ideological and cultural self-identities into communities, which means that individuals are constantly indoctrinated with the predominant values and attitudes of community norms.

### *Homo Existentialis*:

- Their affirmation that there can be no benefit in, or capacity for, learning any code of praxis or morality from others threatens the conduct of market transactions.

*Homo economicus* would, however, also recognise commonalities about community with adherents to the other social reality perspectives.

### *Homo Hierarchus:*

- The maintenance of a framework for law and order should be the responsibility of a professional élite, because citizens do not have the expertise to construct such a code.[2]

- Education from others can stimulate self-reflection that may maintain and enhance morality because individuals can learn about themselves as the interact with others.[3]

### *Homo Sociologicus:*

- Education from others can stimulate self-reflection that may maintain and enhance morality because individuals can learn about themselves as they interact with others.

### *Homo Existentialis:*

- The belief that the spontaneous order created by the market and its rejection of the tyranny of the majority provides a sound system that offers freedom of choice unfettered by state restrictions.

- The spontaneous order of the market favoured by anarcho-capitalists, provides an opportunity for maximum involvement in a process of egalitarian wealth creation.

- Individuals can contract into or out of community, or ignore it altogether, as they wish, which means that the individual determines their behaviour through intentional acts.

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[2] Whilst there may be agreement over the need for a framework of law and order constructed by an elite nevertheless *homo economicus* would expect this code to be minimalist whilst *homo hierarchus* would extend the framework to ensure preservation of the status-quo.

### Homo Economicus on the Role of the State, Market and Community

*Homo economicus* holds a discrete and coherent vision of the role of the state, the market and the community.

**On the Role of the State.** *Homo economicus* would accept the following propositions about the role for the state:

- The state should refrain from interfering in the private lives of citizens as they pursue their interest in maximising their own pleasures.

- The state should only impose a legal code on citizens that is restricted to ensuring that individuals do not harm other individuals, thus stimulating citizens to embrace the primacy of individual contractual relationships.

- The state should ensure that, as a fundamental tenet of its operation, it does not interfere in the mechanisms of the free market.

- The state should minimise the cost of government administration by endeavouring to use the mechanisms of the free market, which are more effective and efficient than centralised bureaucracies.

**On the Role of the Market.** *Homo economicus* would accept the following propositions about the role of the marketplace:

- The market should provide knowledge that allows individuals to know whether their actions produce beneficial results for themselves and no harm to others.

- The market should facilitate the creation of individual wealth through stimulating individual self-motivation.

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[3] For *homo hierarchus* the processes of self-reflection should result in adherence to the existing social order whilst *homo economicus* are concerned with the development of the individual's capacity to exercise informed choice.

- The market should facilitate buyers and sellers to negotiate in a setting where individual ability and motivation are the only criteria for success.

- The market should offer a better set of outcomes for individual citizens than other means of distributing scarce resources, because it does not tolerate inefficiency or ineffectiveness.

**On the Role of Community.** *Homo economicus* would accept the following propositions about the role of community:

- Community projects should be managed to enhance individual well being.

- Community should be considered as a collection of self-interested individuals.

- If self-interested individuals agree to form themselves into the fictitious notion of "community" then any sacrifices they make should result in their individual benefit exceeding the cost incurred.

- Community decisions should be about managing risks based on individual rational self-interest.

- Management of community affairs should be about managing for outcomes.

### Homo Sociologicus: A Communitarian Perspective

This perspective utilises, as its primary tool of analysis, the concept of community and how this setting inspires and develops a particular understanding of the nature of community members and their human identity. Thus, they are concerned with maximising concentration of power in community institutions and voluntary regulatory frameworks so as to empower community members.

## The Encumbered Self

Whereas *homo sociologicus* recognise the need to permit the development of individuality in their vision of social unity, *homo economicus* accept that people would, in their own self-interest, commit to a set of common values. However, this apparent synthesis between the two perspectives should not obscure the deep differences that exist. Thus, *homo economicus* comfortably affiliates with the neo-liberal notion of the minimalist state, as it is the right of people, as far as possible, to be unencumbered by values that are associated with specific social roles. Alternatively, this belief can be contrasted with the communitarian commitment to "deep community" where individuals live a good life by enacting out what is commonly accepted as the good in the roles they inhabit (Delaney, 1994: viii–ix).

*Homo sociologicus* thus argue that people are encumbered selves, aware of the structural constraints and opportunities that they have inherited from their cultural experiences and cannot, even when exercising their full capacity for self-determination, divorce this awareness from their deliberations over their aims. Sandel (1992) gives support to this proposition by maintaining that people can only be unencumbered by personal attachments and commitments if such a consciousness harmonises with their moments of deepest self-understanding. At this level of awareness, it is questionable whether existing aspirations can be freely substituted for different aims as this implies that no particular aim is constitutive of the self. Furthermore, self-identities would be formed without the presence of strong convictions giving each person the capacity to substitute revised values and attitudes thoughtlessly (Sandel, 1992: 23). Therefore, if people are to focus on what they are to become, perceiving themselves with different aims, this would, as Sandel concludes, result in the "liberal self...[being]...left to

lurch between detachment on one hand, and entanglement on the other" (1992: 24). Thus, the unencumbered self is an unsustainable entity, struggling with conflicting reasoning over the recognition of whom to become against the social meanings of who they are. Thus, each person would find it necessary to continually question their social roles but, as no values are attached to these roles, such an evaluation is problematic. Alternatively, as *homo economicus* continues to maintain that freedom to choose is the only value of importance, so, social roles should be judged on the benefits they bring. But, for *homo existentialis* this seems an empty argument as it falsely portrays our motivations — free choice is not an end in itself.

The argument for an encumbered self accords with the *homo hierarchus* perspective that community members should be told what their aims should be in fulfilling their obligations to the hierarchical social order. Furthermore, *homo existentialis*, albeit in a subtle manner, accept the self as encumbered with the powerful and persuasive notion of individuality. For instance, Godwin describes individuality as consisting primarily of "exercising the powers of ...understanding... which is the key to the application of reason and co-operation" (cited by Ritter, 1980: 35).

**The Common Good**

The *homo sociologicus* vision of the common good is altogether more intricate than the contending dispositions. They would stand united in their support of the rudimentary communitarian opinion that a society, where individuals maintain a constant discourse about their rights whilst neglecting their collective responsibilities and obligations, would encourage social exclusion and discord
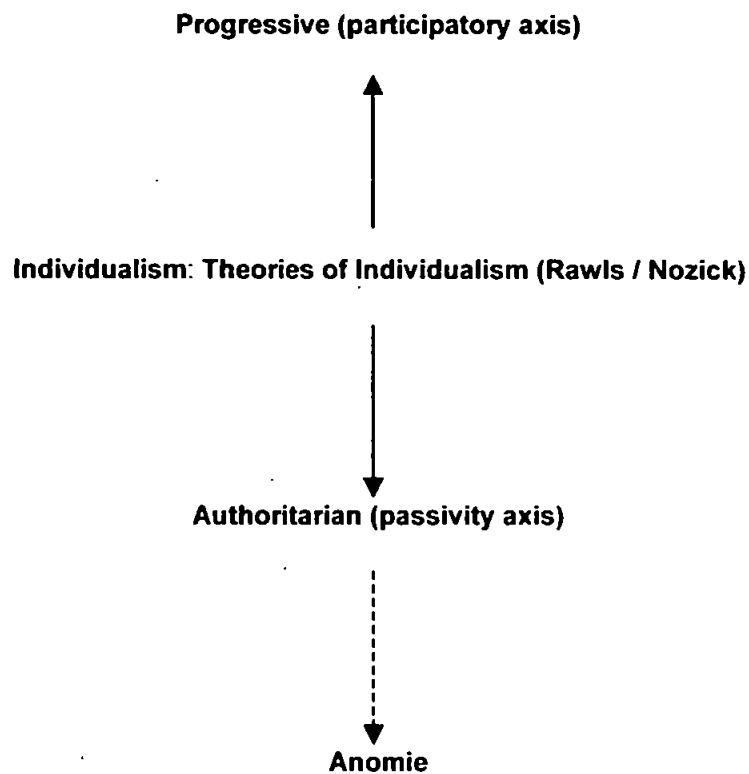
(Tam, 1998: 121, Etzioni, 1995b: 9, Parsons, 1995: 53 and Hughes, 1996: 17). In contradistinction the means of determining the common good, or the public interest, is a relatively straightforward task for *homo economicus, homo hierarchus* and *homo existentialis*. The former would embrace the principles of utilitarianism, which requires the formulation of public policy to be underpinned by the proposition that morals and legislation should be based on achieving the greatest happiness for the greatest number (Bentham, [1789] 1982). Achieving this aim necessitates individuals monitoring their actions to ensure that they augment their utility or their greater happiness. Thus, the market provides the perfect setting for the maximisation of personal utility that results in *homo economicus's* understanding of the common good. *Homo hierarchus* would find an accord with the civic republican notion of the common good being the subordination of all sectional interests in society to the interests of the majority. Of course, the ruling élite are the only group capable of interpreting the interests of the majority so those interests can only be pursued if the hierarchical order remains in place. Finally, *homo existentialis* would have no opinion about the common good. The notion, at its best, is a trivial, irrelevant and inauthentic construct and, at its worst, an attempt to coerce individuals to subjugate their will to an incomprehensible delusion.

*Homo sociologicus* would reject the traditional method of positioning political ideologies along a left to right wing continuum. Instead, a new figuration (see Figure 5.4) has been created with a vertical instead of a horizontal axis. Theories that promulgate individualism are placed at the centre of the line below which a scale of regression exists that can accommodate increasing levels of authoritarianism. This scale, measuring the control exercised by dominant

hegemonies, finally moves to the notion of anomie, or a state where some apathetic *homo existentialis* would feel disengaged from the social and political processes.

The progressive axis in Figure 5.4 is drawn above the central point and reveals the extent that the concept of citizen participation in civic affairs is promoted by the theory of the state preferred by *homo sociologicus* (Tam, 1998: 40–1).

**Figure 5.4: Rights and Responsibilities**

**Progressive (participatory axis)**

↑

**Individualism: Theories of Individualism (Rawls / Nozick)**

↓

**Authoritarian (passivity axis)**

⋮
↓

**Anomie**

*Source:* Derived from Tam, 1998

Thus, theories of justice that refect *homo economicus* principles, as exemplified by Rawls (1971) and Nozick (1974), would be rebuffed by *homo sociologicus* due

to their emphasis on individual liberty, the necessity for the state to "provide a framework for members to choose their own values and ends" (Arthur, 1998: 356) and the universalistic claims for certain values. For Tam, the combination of these three notions produces an anarchic power distribution that leads to a lack of social cohesiveness as individual self-interest takes precedence over the common good through a disintegration of the spirit of community (1998: 48).

The question that arises for *homo sociologicus*, is what direction has this theorising taken their ideological commitments? They have rejected the post-Enlightenment, post-Romantic self that subscribes to a autonomous subjective self, in favour of accepting the individual as a unequivocal social being. In this paradigm, the self exists as an accumulation of the various interactions it experiences with others. Thus, who a person is becomes determined by who a person knows and the communities to whom a person has allegiances. This visible web of relationships, that can be mapped and evaluated, identifies an individual's status and prospects in an environment where the person is public and so the public is personal. Thus, *homo sociologicus* would dismiss any suppositions that individuals are asocial creatures and, instead, would believe that people are shaped by their relationships and social experiences (Driver and Martell, 1997: 29). These interactions, which contibute to the common good, take place in community settings so the conception of community, defined by Etzioni (1995b: 119–22), as including all types of social groups, is fundamental to this strand of thought. Although, for some commentators, Etzioni's definition neglects the necessary evaluative meaning and ideological determinism that is necessary to provide a testable academic construct, nevertheless *homo sociologicus* would

generally regard this notion as significant as it promotes the importance of group formation and maintenance.

In this scenario, *homo sociologicus* would not be disheartened by Tonnies conclusion that modern urban society creates selfish individuals who conduct their affairs by fleeting instrumental interpersonal relationships (cited in Popple, 1995: 2). Instead, they would quote the alternative viewpoint expressed by Durkheim and Hobhouse (cited in Tam, 1998: 220–1) that independent thought, essential for individuals to commit to community action, is more likely in a modern technological society. Provided restrictions are not placed on the evolvement of human autonomy there would be a neutral, gradual movement towards greater social cohesion. Therefore, for *homo sociologicus,* individuals are naturally communal, and collaborative, reaching a fuller understanding of themselves as essential components in the creation of the common good only in the context of community involvement.

As illustrated by Figure 5.4, *homo sociologicus,* as adherents to the reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism, would actively criticise adherents to the other social reality perspectives for their failure to understand that normal human relationships can only be achieved through a process of identification and association that takes place in the community. The good life is a product of the common good and thus unattainable for *homo economicus* as they prioritise rights rather than responsibilities. Furthermore, those community members who choose passivity instead of participation, would be enveloped by the authoritarianism favoured by *homo hierarchus,* whilst *homo existentialis,* in searching for authenticity achievable through their individual free will, are regarded as having consigned themselves to meaningless social exclusion.

## The Social Contention

Etzioni is uncompromising in his belief that the primary objective for any community is for its members to commit "to a set of shared values, norms and meanings" (1996: 155). This translates into an emphasis on values that accord with the hermeneutic structuralist social reality perspective. Whilst coercion is rejected as a means of achieving the expected standards of morality, nevertheless it is anticipated that education and persuasion in the development of reasoned and virtuous action would appeal to the *better natures* of community members (Etzioni, 1998: xxxvi). However, there is no admission here of a majoritarian plaform. In fact, universality is denied in the declared aim, which is "to avoid tight networks that suppress pluralism and dissent" (Etzioni, 1995b: 122). Thus, Waltzer (1992) envisages this goal being reached through the involvement of numerous different communities, each functioning in a democratic and socially inclusive manner, and, as a consequence of interrelations with each other, preserving a common social bond that can accommodate aspects of diversity such as ethnicity, gender, age and so on.

Taylor (1991) also defines the shape of a better society in terms of a configuration of community units, each with a particular identity. This proposition champions multiculturalism and moral relativism in a paradigm that can develop and exercise each community member's capacity for self-determination. Hence, the circumscribed political sphere preferred by *homo economicus*, which is confined to issues such as defence and the maintenance of law and order, is regarded as heralding "a fragmented society...where...members find it harder and harder to identify with their political society as a community" (Taylor, 1991: 117). The result of this situation would be a diminution of personal freedom as

community members are deprived of their involvement in exercising the "instruments of common decision" (Taylor, 1985: 208). Thus, Taylor perceives that, as freedom arises within a society manifesting in its culture its members can collectively express a fuller freedom as they contibute to the determination of the future shape of their society (Taylor, 1985: 208).

*Homo sociologicus* understand that community members' beliefs originate at the micro level, and relate to distinct groups. This conviction directly challenges the commitment, held by both *homo hierarchus* and *homo economicus*, that universal priority can be given to a particular set of values (Driver and Martell, 1997: 29).

However, if these relative ethical principles are to be discovered, a shared forum is necessary and a method of communication needs to be established through which differing options can be evaluated. This level of organisation would require one or more people to express their dominance by leading others in organising a meeting, formulating its agenda and making use of its outcomes. Thus, as dominant community members take charge, *homo existentialis*, who wish to exercise their dominance purely to explore their own being, remove themselves from a situation that does not relate to their perceptions of the world (Wilson, 1956: 298).

It is also probable that *homo hierarchus* would distance themselves from the position adopted by *homo sociologicus* as the instigator of a mode of critical public debate amongst free and equal human beings that transcends the inequalities of power as this might present an uncomfortable challenge to the existing social order. For instance, communicative rationality as described by Habermas (1968,

1971)[4] fits the *homo sociologicus* specification but, as the model regards public opinion as its ultimate source of reality, there is scope here for a community consensus to be subverted to the wishes of dominant hegemonies.

The difficulty in achieving a decentralised state is not underestimated by *homo sociologicus,* particularly the desireability of the growth in new forms of economic organisation (Waltzer, 1992: 106). As illustrated in Figure 5.5, the *homo economicus* vision of extending the free market cannot be part of the answer as it is condemned by Tam as having a detrimental effect "on the economically weak" (1998: 153). Instead, new forms of associational democracy are championed that can promote "self-government through voluntary associations" (Hirst, 1997: 32). The principle of government through subsidiarity is central to this notion with community activists operating "non-profit financial institutions and co-operative firms" (Hirst, 1997: 32). Such a structure would legitimise *the homo sociologicus* political agenda by placing the concept of community in a central role in the formulation and implementation of social policy. But this framework cannot be reconciled with the *homo economicus* imperative of unfettered free market capitalism.

### *Homo Sociologicus* on the Contending Views on Community

*Society's being* would perceive fundamental flaws in propositions about community that are grounded in the other social reality perspectives.

### *Homo Existentialis:*

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[4] Habermas contends that it is through discussion in an ideal speech situation, which has as its objective the achievement of a consensus, that the contested status of truths, rightness and sincerity can be resolved.

Figure 5.5: Herrmeneutic Structuralism's Paradigm for Policy Making

Market

Ethical Dimension

Co-operatives

Mutual Organisations

Religious Organisations

Voluntary Agencies

Charities

COMMUNITY    Accountability

Professional Associations

Individual Experts

Academics

Colleges, Universities

Subsidiarity

State
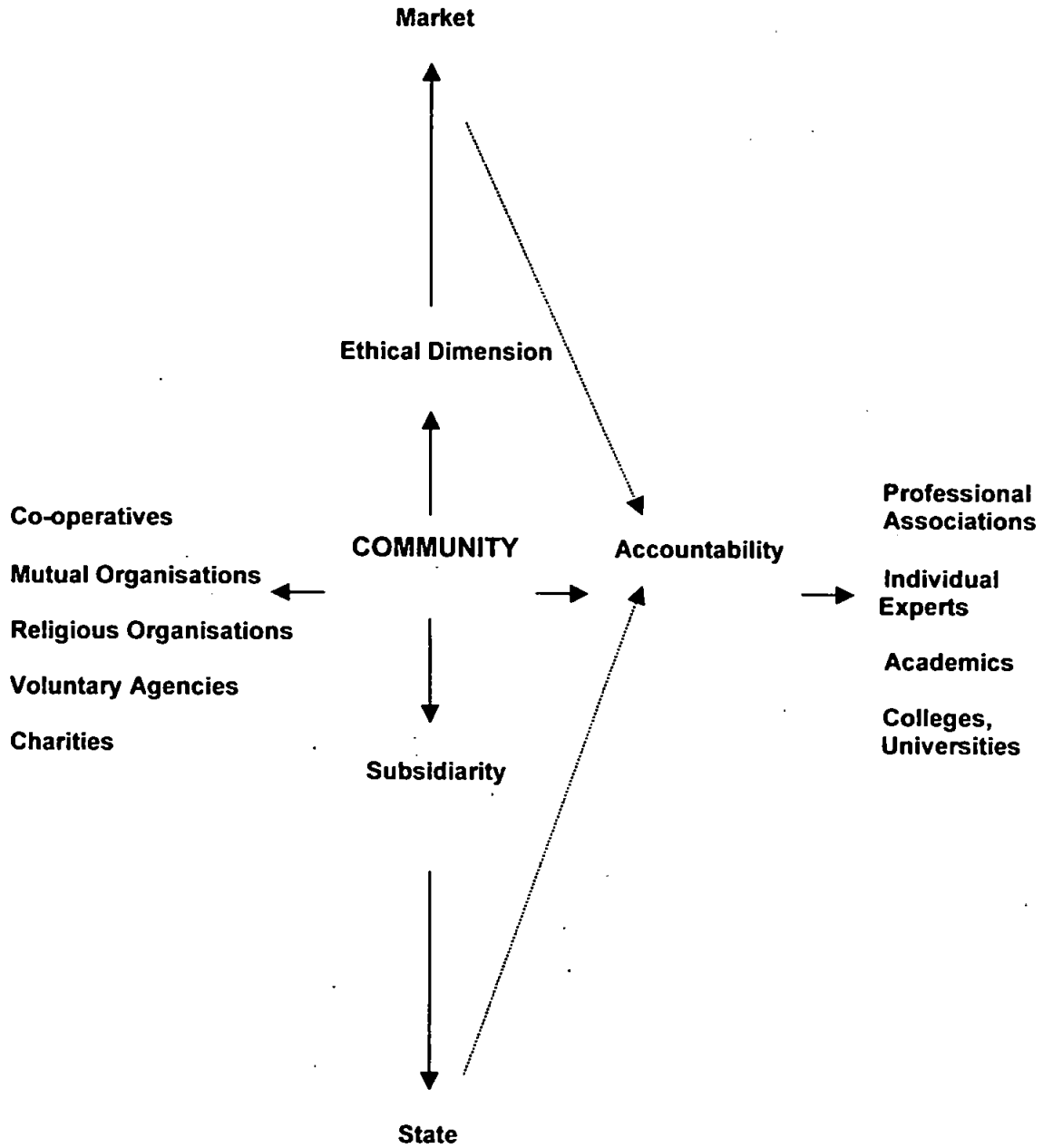
Source: © 2005 Sanderson

- Because their notion of the encumbered self is restricted to the self's own authenticity and because the responsibilities and obligations to other community members is denied, community members would not experience the deep and purposeful contentment that comes from accepting their accountability and duties to other community members.

- By treating individual free will as paramount, whilst dismissing the matter of social interaction as irrelevant, the individual is consigned to senseless exclusion from community and thus is deprived of the fulfillment that is made possible through meaningful community engagement

- Whilst anarchic community acknowledges the interdependency of its members in a world of scarcity, it denies the importance of community groups in the effective delivery of local governance, which means that community members are deprived of the empowerment that results from effective control over their own affairs.

### Homo Economicus:

- Because *homo economicus* advocate the unencumbered self, which is understood as an empty confused entity suffering from a lack of clear social aims, values and beliefs, community members are encouraged to deny the value of their responsibilities to others.

- Because *homo economicus* places an emphasis on rights, whilst neglecting responsibilities, they deny community members who are naturally social and collaborative the opportunity to reach their potential.

- Because a resticted circumscription of the issues concerning the political sphere would fragment society then community members would be deprived of the sense of identity that comes with collective decision-making.

- Complete reliance on the negative freedom of the market would disempower individuals particularly as new forms of stakeholder achieved by such organisational types as mutual societies, and co-operatives, can offer individuals more positive[5] freedom.

### *Homo Hierarchus:*

- Because the self, encumbered by the self-centred aims of the dominant hegemonies, has been denied the necessary autonomy for growth into a complete, empowered organism, then individuals will never experience the contentment of true fulfillment.

- As community organisations must comply with universal values, then community members would neglect the importance of recognising ethnic diversity and moral relativism.

- The opinions of dominant hegemonies would assume a tyrannical dimension because community members would be denied the provision of democratic forums for egalitarian community debates.

*Homo sociologicus* would however, also recognise the commonalities about community with adherents to the other social reality perspectives.

### *Homo Existentialis:*

- The liberty of individuals and their communities, free from state coercion, is of mutual importance, although the proposed strategies for delivering this outcome differ.

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[5] Positive freedom is the freedom of thought to act on your own behalf, therefore, its advocates perceive it as achievable if people are freed from such impediments as the tyranny of poverty or ignorance. Alternatively, achieving negative freedom is to be liberated from the intentional coercion of social and cultural forces that impede individual action (Berlin, 1969).

### Homo Economicus:

- Human autonomy is an important shared aim even though progress towards its achievement, and its eventual outcome, is viewed differently.

### Homo Hierarchus:

- The pluralist notion of policy making, as the outcome between competing propositions, is mutually accepted.[6]

### Homo Sociologicus on the Role of the State, Market and Community

Homo sociologicus hold a discrete and coherent vision of the role of the state, the market and the community.

**On the role of the state.** Homo sociologicus would accept the following propositions about the role of the state:

- The state should devolve its authority to the level of community thus, through the principle of subsidiarity, community members would play an essential role in the formulation of public policy.

- The state should deliver public services to communities in partnership with community members.

- The state should embrace the diverse values and beliefs that are developed by community members at the community level.

- The state should promote the notion of social inclusion by ensuring that its social policies offer all individuals a stake in society.

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[6] In this context it is important to note that homo hierarchus, with their imperative to preserve the status-quo, would endeavour to control and manipulate the issues that appear on the democratic agenda.

- The state should not display overly authoritarian tendencies as these would be unwelcome because they constrain community members from fully participating in their communities.

**On the role of the market.** *Homo sociologicus* would accept the following propositions about the role of the marketplace:

- The outcome of transactions that result from the unfettered free market are perceived as inherently unfair, as they favour those who have the expertise and resouces to exploit such transactions.

- Only a regulated market is able to address potential risks to the well-being of community members, as preventative action is precluded by the need to maintain profitability.

- The operation of the unfettered market represses the economically weak by re-inforcing the power of economic elites thus increasing social exclusion.

- The market should be regulated by the state in partnership with communities so that it can bring the benefits of market transactions without the risks of economic exploitation.

**On the role of community.** *Homo sociologicus* would accept the following propositions about the role of community:

- Community members should make collective decisions based on a group consensus that avoids individual personal risk.

- Community members should invite opportunities to make voluntary sacrifices that contribute to progression towards their community's shared aims.

- The notion of "community" is the rudimentary underpinning of society and it should provide a social entity that can offer the "good life" to its members.

- The individual community member should find a profound satisfaction in reaching a consensus with other community members over their shared values, attitudes and opinions.

- Community decision-making should be about minimising agreed risks.

- Management of community affairs should be about managing for inclusion.

## Homo Existentialis: An Existentialist Perspective

The pervasive pressures exerted both by social structures and by the competitive, and sometimes exploitative, nature of the market on *homo existentialis* can leave him or her in a state of anomie, although, they do have alternative responses to the challenges wrought from their preferred values, opinions and attitudes that make them stand outside the social order.

### Mystical and Intellectual Outsiders

If an individual concludes that knowledge can only be gained through personal experience, it is axiomatic that this experience and any knowledge so gained cannot be fully shared with others. Therefore, such individuals behave in ways that are ultimately unpredictable as they each define their own reality. Thus, *homo existentialis* would reject structural causation together with the possibility of identifying definitive causes and the likely consequences of social action. However, this condemns them to either accepting that life has no point or undertaking the stuggle to bring meaning to their existence. Those inclined to the former position would reject all ideologies as exploitative and coercive as they understand that people are unable to take control of their own lives. But those accepting the latter position would pursue their ultimate reality, whether that is

along a hermitical path of mysticism or the adoption of an intellectual doctine of commitment to the search for authenticity.

Nietzsche was a mystic and a prophet to the extent that what he "wanted to do was start a new religion" (Wilson, 1956: 145). He wrote that the hardest knowledge to acquire is self-knowledge as people make value judgements about what is good and evil (Nietzsche, [1887] 2003). However, as they begin to understand the factitious nature of morality, recognising it as the herd instinct in the individual, they can begin to sense·a will to life as our consciouness becomes more acute, more aware that goodness is not inherent in particular actions. For Nietzsche the moments of awakening, when his consciouness was expanded by an experience offering "the sudden intuition of pure Will, free of the troubles and perplexities of intellect: an intuition which was a release from the 'thought-riddled' nature" (Wilson, 1956: 126) became his motivation to search for his fundamental goal — even beyond the will to power; the will to love life.

The extension of the individual's consciousness into an authentic domain also pre-occupied Heidegger. Thus, *dasein*, or the human entity in all its ways of being, readily accepts an inauthentic existence as it takes up a secure "home" in this world. However, if authenticity is to arise from this condition then the individual must assume a state of anxiety. Here *dasein* has no home just a disturbing awareness of the need to search for meaning (Heidegger, [1927] 1996).

However, the issue that confronts the *existential outsider* is why they should forsake the comfortable doctrine of apathy to start an unpredictable, and possibly purposeless, journey of discovery based on relatively ethereal concepts of mystical revelation. There is no systematic critique of politics and social life in this pilgrimage, just the proposition that the human mind has capacities that

inauthentic existence renders unknowable. However, whilst the social reality perspective of *homo existentialis* might be associated with the notions of the mystical hermit consideration is now given to the potential commitments that might be embraced by the intellectual existential outsider.

Sartre's conceptualisation of existentialism can be used to provide a framework that can re-constitute the apathetic individual as a purposeful entity who becomes able to identify with the political ideology of anarchism. Thus, this theoretical construct is rooted in a practical praxis that reflects contemporary considerations. This relevance to people's lives has been accomplished by effecting the removal of anarchy's traditional optimism about the innate goodness within human nature and leaving the emphasis on what individuals can make of themselves. This means embracing existentialism. Thus, the shortcomings and commonalities *homo existentialis* detect in the other contending reality dispositions can be critically explored under the headings of liberty and solidarity. However, the distinction between anarchists, who believe that an anarchist society should reduce, or even abandon, rights to private property (Kropotkin, 1987 and 1995; Bakunin, 1990; Chomsky, 1989); and anarcho-capitalists, who accept inequalities of wealth as an inevitable consequence of individual freedom (Rothbard, 1973; Friedman, 1973) is maintained.

**Liberty**

*Homo existentialis* has the distinctive characteristic of being fundamentally anti-authoritarian, an attitude that is best understood as an abhorrence of the threats and coercion that represent an inherent part of state domination. It is only through the creation of a non-authoritarian society that it becomes possible for each

individual to be treated with proper dignity and respect. As this higher level of inter-personal relations sociability would be encouraged to flourish, thereby creating circumstances where free co-operation between individuals can be realised in the absence of dehumanising exploitation. Therefore, "society must become, like nature itself, an organic, integrated community. Human beings can only realise their personhood, their individuality in the fullest sense, through non-dominating interaction" (Clark, 1984: 28). But this vision of freedom demands distinct social arrangements, such as the decentralisation of policy making, concensual decision-taking, the elimination of discrimination and the capacity of citizens to exercise complete freedom of thought and expression (Clark, 1984: 130). So *homo existentialis* choose to advocate a rigorously reflexive form of self-governance where "the individual integrates himself into the group and the group has its practical limit in the individual" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 524). This maxim goes to the heart of a position, which rejects the concept of democracy, as the people in a community cannot be "as an entity distinct from the individuals that compose it" (Woodcock, 1986: 30). Thus, the majority cannot suppress the minority in a social structure where the aim is to make "aristocracy universalised and purified" (Woodcock, 1986: 31), through a robust declaration of the nobility of each free citizen.

The notion of direct participatory democracy, with its emphasis on inclusive egalitarian debate, is rudimentary to the understanding of community from the perspective of *homo existentialis*. This unconditional endorsement might sometimes entail the necessity for community members to compromise on their opinions after education and persuasion. However, *homo existentialis* would consider that a consensus of opinion is necessary, arising from what Sartre calls

"an agreement of minds" ([1960] 1976: 531), with unity that is achieved by mutual concession dismissed as representing a subtle but persuasive form of manipulation that erodes liberty. Furthermore, it is apparent that there can be little common ground between *homo existentialis,* with their strongly held views on anti-authoritarianism and centralised control, and *homo hierarchus.* This antipathy is exemplified by the former's distrust of the type of social order that *homo hierarchus* create, which they conclude inevitably encourages human imperfections, as those elevated above others are pre-destined to abuse their power (Morland, 1997: 12–3). Moreover, whilst anarchists are encouraged by *homo economicus's* attitude towards restricting the power of the state, they nevertheless disagree with their supposition that a society without a minimalist government that can enforce contractual relationships would collapse into chaos.

Whilst the particular type of organised groups recognised by Sartre offer a pattern of complex interdependence to the authentic individual ([1960] 1976: 584) nevertheless these units can still provide *homo existentialis* with a political platform that rejects structural causality and preserves the capacity of the individual to define their own reality. Therefore, they can be adopted as a central tenet to the *homo existentialis* political articles of faith. Thus, the diametrically opposite notions of "authority and autonomy are reconciled and incorporated in a acephalous co-operative" (Edwards, 1997: 65) that can ensure individual freedom from harm. Therefore, absolute liberty must be defined as being conditional upon a minimum set of communally agreed behavoural norms. However, this belief in the essential nature of association, and its expected outcomes, does not reconcile *homo existentialis* with what they would regard as the intrusive paternalistic enclave inhabited by *homo sociologicus.* In this group, *homo existentialis* would feel that a

comprehensive, morally prescriptive, code of values and attitudes would, by necessity, be imposed on community members.

*Homo hierarchus* chooses the vehicle of the state to impose moral standards on citizens. Anarchists understand this action, whilst disguised under the pretence of preserving social unity, to be the imposition of oppressive manipulative power motivated by the wish to preserve existing social relations, therefore, they would vehemently oppose such a strategy. However, there is an accord between anarchists and neo-liberals over the necessity for maximising negative social freedoms, although this unanimity ceases with the *homo economicus* reliance on the power of democratic government to enact these measures.

## Solidarity

The anarchical purist has, throughout the twentieth century, been prepared to adopt a pragmatic attitude towards working with mass movements. For instance, anarcho-syndicalism played a part in both the Spanish Civil War and Italian politics, prior to the advent of the Italian fascist state, through the International Workingmen's Association. Whilst this organisation included many people who were only interested in improving their economic and social conditions the structure was underpinned by libertarian ideals (Woodcock, 1986: 223–5). Thus, *homo existentialis* would envisage the paradox of a demarcated concept of solidarity, where respect for the sancity of individual opinions and the individual's right to determine their own values is fundamental in the linkage of the individual to the unknowable and unpredictable "structures of society" (Ritter, 1980: 29–30). Furthermore, this incongruous linkage assumes a particular significance in the task of preparing and acting on strategies that ensure a challenge is mounted on

the power of elites by organisations based on the principles of voluntarism, equality and subsidiarity. Therefore, *homo existentialis* can support the contention, made by *homo economicus,* that mutual aid is a voluntary, and so desireable, expression of personal responsibility. Thus, it is the way that jointly consumed goods should be distributed, in a worthy, but nevertheless unpredictable, form of service delivery. However, as the importance of initiating, and maintaining, compliant community groups committed to their state-approved virtuous outcomes is a central theme in the doctrine of *homo sociologicus,* there can be little common ground with adherents to the other social reality perspectives on this matter.

The notion of solidarity is closely interlinked with equality. However, the latter concept does not receive universal approval with *homo existentialis* as those who can associate with the ideology of anarcho-capitalism envisage very different social outcomes from those anarchists that oppose property rights. Bakunin for example, regarded equality as a necessary state of affairs for the achievement of freedom. Furthermore, he states that "political equality can be based only on an economic and social equality" (1953: 156–7). Therefore, the logical conclusion is that "people must rid themselves of the sourge of work which benefits capital and big business" (Bowen, 1997: 168) and instead, develop business propositions, founded on mutual, cooperative and voluntary models, whereby citizens would work together with their rewards benefitting both the community and themselves. Thus, solidarity strengthens liberty by avoiding capitalist exploitation, where workers become "*mere inert things* who relate to other workers through competitive antagonism and to *themselves* through the 'free' possibility of selling that other thing, their labour power" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 156). In this world vision, scarcity would not exist and so hegemonies would be deprived of their means of

domination. This aim, where a change in social relations would be enduring, accords with *homo sociologicus* who aspire to confront and change oppressive hierarchies through the flows of cultural reality that wash through society. Therefore, libertarianism may be united with democratic socialism in a struggle that recognises the capacities of both agency and structure.

Alternatively, anarcho-capitalists would accept the defence of the free market offered by Hayek and Freidman, but they would be critical of what they perceive as a compromise with hierarchy whereby the police, the judicial system and the armed forces all remain under the control of a democratically elected government. Instead, their "preferred vision of acephalous society" (Edwards, 1997: 31) provides the following mechanisms:

- Legal judgements are made in a system where all actions relate to property rights.

- Recognition that there can be no crimes without victims or no defendant without a specific plaintiff.

- Judgements must always take the form of financial restitution substantiated by possible consumer boycotts.

In this system, a private police force would enjoy financial benefits that would encourage the proper performance of their duties, and a comprehensive legal code could be developed in much the same manner as the evolution of English Common Law. Furthermore, with the removal of the machinery of the traditional nation state, wars would cease to be viable propositions. Thus, *homo existentialis* who adopt the anarcho-capitalist perspective would refute charges from both *homo economicus* and *homo hierarchus* that their society would be enveloped in

violent chaos and instead, they criticise both these social reality perspectives for letting the state retain the means to initiate violence.

### *Homo Existentialis* on the Contending Views on Community

*Homo existentialis* would perceive fundamental flaws in propositions about community that are grounded in the other social reality perspectives.

### *Homo Economicus:*

- Their unnecessary reliance on a minimal state or small government, to stop society descending into a state of chaos deprives individuals of the liberty that is their inalienable right.

### *Homo Hierarchus:*

- The use of threats and coercion (including state-sponsored violence) is an undesireable constraint on individual free will.

- The proposition that some people are born to rule and others to follow denies many citizens the right to determine their own destiny.

- By the use of the machinery of government to achieve artificial compromises between the state and its citizens, individuals are impeded in their wish to develop their own will and determine their own future.

### *Homo Sociologicus:*

- Their belief in participative democratic mechanisms that act as a means of achieving social equality, through a process of what would inevitably be weak compromises between citizens, is a delusion that denigrates the unique nature and purpose of every individual.

- The notion that community can collectively decide on the group's values and attitudes is paternalistic and denies the individual their right to non-participation.

*Homo existentialis* would however, also recognise commonalities about community with adherents to other social reality perspectives.

## *Homo Economicus:*

- Communities should accept the necessity for a minimal set of positive freedoms to uphold the concept of "freedom from harm."

## *Homo Sociologicus:*

- The desire, held by some radical adherents to the reality perspective of hermeneutic-structuralism, to bring capitalist scarcity to an end, through realising a permanent change in the inequitable distribution of goods, would be approved by anarchic existential outsiders who wish to reduce property rights.

## *Homo Existentialis* on the Role of the State, Market and Community

*Homo existentialis* holds a discrete and coherent view of the role of the state, the market and the community.

**On the Role of the State.** *Homo existentialis* would accept the following propositions about the role of the state:

- The state should not seek to promote the common good as it is unknowable, which means it will have to use illegitimate authority to exercise sometimes benign but often manipulative and cocercive power to constrain the liberties of the individual.

- The state should ensure that delivery of public services take place at the local level of community, where voluntary expressions of personal responsibility, which are the result of individual reflection, can provide a system of mutual aid.

- The state should not offer its citizens any ideological vision, as this can only consist of unknowable pre-suppositions and unworkable collective aims and objectives.

- The state should not presume that individuals want a stake in its society.

- The state is not the only means of providing an enforceable legal framework for contractual relationships.

**On the the role of the market.** *Homo existentialis* would accept the following propositions about the role of the marketplace:

- The market, which may appear inhospitable and exploitative, should offer the individual the opportunity to enter into an unfettered contractual relationship with another individual, premised on the right of either party to withdraw from the transaction.

- The market should not demand that participants in transactions conform to social norms of behaviour, for its only caveat should be that players accept the discipline of contractual regulation.

- The market should not be subject to human manipulation, which may result in devious, disrespecful transactional behaviour.

**On the role of the community.** *Homo existentialis* would accept the following propositions about the role of community:

- Community members should not seek to improve collective agreements, as it is not possible to understand how other people think.

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- Community members should not deny the validity of apathy, because individuals who cannot influence the outcomes of community are justified in being apathetic.

- Community, which represents another unavoidable mechanism of contol over individual liberty, should not demand individual sacrifices unless it can offer reciprocal benefits.

- Community decision-making should be incremental so as to minimise risk.

- Management of community affairs is just about managing for survival.

## Conclusion

This Chapter has analysed the ideological values and attitudes of *homo hierarchus*, *homo economicus*, *homo sociologicus* and *homo existentialis* and found that each of these perspectives has a discrete and coherent set of beliefs in respect of the role of the state, the role of the market and the role of community. Nevertheless, each of the actors adhere to perceptions of social reality that are flawed as they are unable to accommodate contending dispositions.

Thus, *homo hierarchus* would be convinced that only an unchallenged élite can determine the best course for society. Alternatively, *homo economicus* have complete faith in the mechanism of the market and its ability to offer improved social conditions to all. However, *homo sociologicus* has a fundamentally different vision, rooted in the setting of community, where human altruism can flourish and inspire the individual to accept responsibility for the well-being of the collective. Finally, *homo existentialis* is wary of any form of organisational engagement. They perceive the state as ultimately malevolent and community as a notion that should

be treated with caution. Furthermore, the market, although it offers unfettered contractual relationships, can be subject to human manipulation and exploitation.

As this thesis is concerned with the management of community the next Chapter describes and analyses an empirical investigation into the cognitive congruence of a small cohort of community practitioners.

# 6

# The Cognitive Consistency of Community Practitioners: An Empirical Investigation

This Chapter explores the way a small cohort of community practitioners think about community and community engagement. Their preferred socialisation, as community practitioners, encourages them to understand community as a social construct. Therefore, their premise is that people have the desire and capacity to engage with their communities. Moreover, they understand community as an aggregation of the desire and capacity of people to participate in community discussions, from which shared meanings emerge, through the processes of group engagement. This conception of community engagement also accords with the core principles of those community practitioners who have renounced communitarianism as offering a consensual or pluralist agenda that fails to bring about permanent social change. However, whilst they may express a preference for the radicalism — within the theorising of Freire (1985, 1996) and Gramsci (1971, 1985) — this allegiance still leaves unchallenged their fundamental hermeneutic-structuralist social reality disposition in a community setting.

The objective of this chapter is to ascertain whether this cohort of community practitioners is cognitively consistent, holding a set of compatible cognitions about

community, when they comprehend social reality in a community setting. This investigation into the cognitive consistency[1] of these practitioners arises as a result of the affect of cognitive dissonance[2]. This experience may begin with surprise at an unexpected outcome of events then can create an emotional state that results in high levels of stress and anxiety that may encourage absenteeism and possibly resignation.

The research programme is designed with the individual community practitioner as its unit of analysis making any generalisations an inappropriate research objective. Thus, this approach offers a better understanding of how, rather than why, individuals form values, attitudes and opinions in the relational setting of community.

The quadripartite divide on social reality perspectives, identified and conceptualised in chapters 2 to 5, sustains an intellectual divergence concerning the concept of community and the purpose of community engagement. This suggests that an attitudinal investigation can demarcate a community practitioner's particular view of the social world in which he or she conducts his or her professional affairs. Moreover, it is through acknowledging, understanding and challenging the profession's current interpretation of its mission that community workers can begin to address the issue of accommodating contending perspectives on community reality for the purpose of enhancing community engagement.

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[1] But, as Festinger (1957) found, the evidence that disproves existing beliefs may, counter intuitively, initially reinforce an individual's faith in those beliefs making them embrace a "rhetoric of intransigence" (Hirschman, 1991: 168).

[2] An individual may experience disillusionment where the cumulative effect of belief dis-confirming evidence serves to dis-confirm or disprove beliefs so initiating a state of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957). Thus, this can be understood as "the emotional state set up when two simultaneously held attitudes or cognitions are inconsistent or when there is a conflict between belief and overt behaviour" (Reber, 1995: 134).

## Research Methodology

Methodology can be understood as including the researcher's decision about what to research and the perspective that is adopted towards the creation and testing of theories. It also addresses the criteria that determine the method for collection and interpretation of data (Brunskell, 1998: 37).

Scientific empirical[3] research is concerned with describing, explaining and predicting objective or material phenomena guided by evidence obtained through systematic and controlled observations (Punch, 1998: 28). However, whilst the social sciences adopt the same approach as the natural sciences the complexity of the human condition makes it more difficult to achieve an inter-subjective agreement about the subject of study (May, 1993: 4). For instance, different perspectives towards social enquiry occupy various positions along a continuum. These positions ranges from the absolutist understanding that any approach which fails to achieve both objectivity and truth is to be rejected to a relativist[4] position that doubts whether there is absolute truth at all (Blaikie, 1993: 212). This polarity is manifest through an analysis of the scientific components of the three traditions of the approaches known as positivism, interpretivism and critical theory.

### Positivism

A positivist approach upholds the supremacy of scientific knowledge in the belief that through dispassionate observation of specific material social facts researchers are able to offer true explanations provided that their evidence includes no logical or empirical contradiction (Neuman, 1994: 60). However, an

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[3] The concept of empirical research is defined as the observation of something or the impact of something (Punch, 1998: 28). The term is often used interchangeably by commentators with the term "data."

explanation must be repeatedly replicated[5] to ascertain whether the findings can be falsified. In its purest form, positivism maintains that research should be completely objective and value free thereby occupying a position at the extreme of absolutist understanding (Neuman, 1994: 61). However, many contemporary adherents to the positivist model would not defend this extremely deterministic position (Punch, 1998: 50) although still recognising that the strategy produces covering laws about the way humans behave (May, 1993: 5).

Positivists embrace quantitative[6] research as part of a statistical methodology that has the objective of offering an explanation of the differences that have been observed in values acquired from various units of analysis. The reasoning employed requires a search for regularities within the available statistics, which may reveal how the values of different variables relate to each other (Alsuutari, 1998: 58). In this context critics note that positivist approaches ignore "the differences between the natural and social world by failing to understand the meanings that are brought to social life" (Silverman, 1998: 82). However, most researchers using quantitative techniques, whilst considering that they undertake scientific exploration, do not accept this assertion as they are not aiming to produce scientific laws but, instead, sets of cumulative generalisations through the analysis of data (Silverman, 1998: 82).

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[4] Relativism, in relation to the research findings from a particular study, is the notion that "the representativeness is unknown and probably unknowable, so that the generalizability of such findings is also unknown" (Bryman, 1988: 100).
[5] The hypothetico-deductive approach is used to try to refute hypotheses by continued attempts at falsification. This is known as demarcation criterion, as the more a theory is quoted the more falsifiable it becomes. Testing should be as demanding as possible to ensure that only the best explanations will survive (Blaikie, 1993: 144–45).
[6] Quantitative research can be defined as "a methodology that uses numerical data to reach its findings. Thus any statistical techniques for the collection and analysis of material; any transformation of human behaviour into the form of numbers" (Silverman, 1998: 94–95) achieves this classification.

The quantitative research process begins with the construction of a hypothesis[7] that is the result of a strategy of logical deduction from a prior theoretical scheme (Bryman, 1988: 21). This statement is then operationalised[8] then data collected by such methods as a survey, structured observation on predetermined schedules and analysis of the content of discourse (Silverman, 1988: 81). Measurements from the variables will then be used to produce statements of correlation before induction is employed leading to findings that either confirm the initial hypothesis or require its rejection or modification (Layder, 1993: 19).

Outputs from this research strategy tend to exceed descriptive generalisations about the available data. Nevertheless, researchers may be reluctant to comment beyond the specific determinable relationships that seem to exist between certain variables resulting in possible causal relationships about phenomena being omitted from research reports. (Layder, 1993: 28). Furthermore, within quantitative research, all subjects belong to a distinct group within the population and the geographic boundaries selected for a study determines the extent that generalised findings apply (Alasuutari, 1998: 58). Therefore a subset of potential evidence is needed from the available data to validate that the sample is representative (Ragin, 1994: 27).

Thus, the positivist research paradigm examines a limited range of material or objective variables over a restricted time-period thereby conveying "a view of

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[7] A hypothesis can be defined as " an untested statement of the relationship between concepts in a theory...or simply that part of a theory subject to empirical test" (Williams and May, 1996: 198).
[8] Operationalisation is "deciding how to translate the abstract...into something more concrete and directly observable" (de Vaus, 1996: 19). For instance the notion of deprivation has a social dimension that converts into a sub-dimension of social isolation, which then has operational definitions in such measures as (1) number of friends; (2) contact with family; and (3) contact with neighbours.

social reality which is static in that it tends to neglect the impact and role of change in social life" (Bryman, 1998: 101). Furthermore, (Bryman, 1998: 102):

> there is a tendency for quantitative researchers to view social reality as external to actors and as a constraint on them, which can be attributed to the preference for treating the social order as though it were the same as the objects of the natural scientist.

Therefore, this research paradigm places the burden of explanation on individual-level characteristics that are statistically associated with various forms of group behaviour and not on any unobservable processes related to the interaction of individuals within groups. This position accords with the *homo hierarchus* assumption that the social engagement circumstances are objectively knowable by the application of deductive and inductive reason, and that he or she has little capacity to determine how he or she conducts these relationships, because of the necessary impact of structural influences on his or her wishes, desires, beliefs, or will power. Alternatively, *homo economicus* would only embrace a weak form of positivism as whilst they presume that he or she conducts his or her interpersonal relations in a set of social engagement circumstances that are objectively knowable by the application of deductive and inductive reason, he or she has the capacity to determine how he or she conducts these relationships. This is because his or her interpersonal relationships are the product of his or her wishes, desires and beliefs, or will that is enabled or constrained by his or her physiological, neurological and psychological make-up.

## Interpretivism

Interpretivism is founded in idealism,[9] which gives priority to the meanings arrived at by human agents through their own experiences and in their interaction

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[9] Idealism is a doctrine that, although taking many forms, has the common theme that reality is fundamentally mental in nature and what we call the external world is a creation of the mind. Thus

with others (Williams and May, 1996: 59). Some versions of this approach place it at an extreme relativist position as "it is not possible for a researcher to stand outside history or become detached from culture" (Blaikie, 1993: 212). However this does not imply that the world is unreal but rather that there is not an immediate relationship between reality and our perceptions. Therefore, sensory data is interpreted through each person's mind (Williams and May, 1996: 60). Moreover, multiple interpretations of human experience leads to interpretative theory that may include "informal norms, rules or conventions used by people in everyday life" (Neuman, 1994: 64). In contrast to positivism, values are recognised as central to the research process, so they should be made explicit and each treated with equal importance (Neuman, 1994: 66).

Interpretivists embrace qualitative[10] research with its origins in hermeneutics, relativism and idealism that result in the approach sometimes being referred to as an interprevist paradigm. Thus, the perspective focuses on "subjective meanings, definitions, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of specific cases" (Neuman, 1994: 318). Therefore, data will be narrative, verbal or textual employing research traditions such as ethnography[11] or grounded theory[12]. This scenario enables social theory to accord with our everyday experiences (May, 1993: 29), as the researcher interprets the shared meanings individuals create together in a process

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it is opposed to the naturalistic belief that mind itself is exhaustively understood as a product of natural processes. "this does not mean that idealists claim that there is no real world but that we can never directly perceive the real world" (Williams and May, 1996: 198).

[10] Qualitative research can be defined as "a methodology that privileges material drawn from non-quantitative sources. Thus any work in the social sciences that collects and analyses its material in the form of conversations; written or recorded responses to questions; sections of books, reports or newspapers; attitude tests; focus group discussion and so on. A methodology that focuses on the texture and the value qualities of its data" (Silverman, 1998: 11).

[11] Ethnography can be defined as "describing a culture and understanding another way of life from the native point of view" (Neuman, 1994: 333).

[12] Grounded theory recognises that theory construction begins with a set of observations (descriptive) and moves on to develop theories of these observations. It is also called grounded

of socialisation that brings understanding to their reality. Thus, the imperative of appreciating social context is a critical characteristic of the qualitative approach (Neuman, 1994: 319), permitting tentative understandings, sometimes called hypotheses to be formulated then possibly explored in relation to other data. Therefore, the qualitative process employs deductive reasoning but it is sometimes criticised as being a-theoretical in view of qualitative researchers' distaste for comparing findings from one context with another and thereby discouraging the development of theory (Bryman, 1988: 86). However, such critics seem committed to the belief that we can find generalities in social life that makes the study of individual's values and attitudes of lesser importance than the identification of explicit propositions about group preferences and norms of behaviour.

Therefore, this research paradigm recognises that the social world must contain a multitude of subjective truths, which render the notion of objective truth paradoxical, and thereby problematic (Warnock, 1979: 8–9). This position accords with the *homo existentialist* assumption that he or she conducts his or her interpersonal relations in a set of social engagement circumstances the meaning of which he or she individually constructs in the process of his or her search for self-identity and self-fulfilment. Furthermore, he or she has the potential to determine how he or she conducts these relationships because he or she can draw the power of will from immediate personal experience. If the struggle for this authenticity proves too much personal relationships can be afflicted with a tendency towards fatalistic self-referentiality. Alternatively, *homo sociologicus* would only embrace a weak form of interpretivism as he or she conducts his or her

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theory because it is based on observations — not simply armchair speculation (de Vaus, 1996: 11–12).

interpersonal relations in a set of social engagement circumstances that are socially constructed by a process of discourse. During this process, he or she has some capacity to determine how he or she conducts these relationships. However, this autonomy becomes subordinate to the outputs and outcomes of the discourse as it socially constructs meaning about and collectively interprets the social roles of self and others in a collective reality.

**Critical Theory**

This approach also rejects any attempt to separate facts and values for critical theory, unlike positivism; reality cannot be uncovered by the stringent application of scientific techniques of enquiry to determine the objective truth (May, 1993: 28). Instead social reality is understood as mis-leading, hiding oppression and requiring the assiduous researcher to attempt to uncover conflict possibly through intentionally motivating participants in a research project to reflect on issues of power and domination (Neuman, 1994: 67). On the absolutist/relativist continuum critical theory can fall between the two perceptions of reality with truth "not a matter of evidence from observation...[but achieved through consensus]...founded on reason...[inspired by]...open and equitable critical discussion (Blaikie, 1993: 213). Alternatively, a pragmatic view of truth in relation to reality has begun to feature in the reasoning of some critical theorists, who accept as true theoretical propositions that axiomatically require action to address an issue of oppression (May, 1993: 45).

Therefore, this research paradigm recognises that social relationships are conducted in a set of social engagement circumstances that are socially constructed by a process of discourse. However, unlike the strong form of interpretivism, it is recognised that these engagement would lead, following

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discussion, to a group consensus about the social roles of self and others in a collectively understood reality. Thus, *homo sociologicus* can fully embrace the tenets of this research approach.

## Adopted Methodology

When writing about the effects of governmentality Foucault (1991) observed that an individual become the way he or she is identified and the way he or she identify themselves. No dominant potency dwells within this paradigm — instead a variety of powerful, sometimes discrete and sometimes mutually dependent, influences play on the psyche with singular intensities. So, each individual's knowledge and the meaning he or she give to his or her lives is the consequence of strategies of power that lead to the notion of power and knowledge being replaced by "power-knowledge" (Sheridan, 1980: 162). Within this scenario, the pragmatism of Charles Peirce offers an epistemological and ontological foundation that provides a distinction between truth and reality (Mounce, 1997: 42). Here, the meanings that a subject attaches to his or her social world are, to an extent, sanctioned through the discourses that result from the interaction with people that surround them. Moreover, by adopting suitable research techniques, this truth can be explored however ultimate reality remains an existence independent of human inquiry.

Therefore, adoption of a pragmatic standpoint leaves the notion of quantitative and qualitative approaches, as separate scientific methods for particular types of investigation, open to question. Instead, the methodological challenge undergoes a fundamental metamorphosis into the question of how to apply an appropriate mix of techniques in a manner that can appropriately address the theoretical underpinnings of the research question, where the individual is the unit of analysis.

In this context, there is an imperative to focus on the exploration of existing data, which can be the result of deductive reasoning, to develop hypotheses that relate to a person's experience instead of attempting a process with a limited aim like the falsification of existing knowledge. Furthermore, this observation can be substantiated through the commonalities between the epistemological approaches of quantitative and qualitative methods. Both methods recognise that there is more than one way to approach reality and, in view of the fallible nature of all inquiry, conclusions drawn can only be tentative. Whilst qualitative research relies on language and quantitative research on statistical computations to break down data neither seems able to offer a pattern which supplies a complete picture of the subject. Arising from the conundrum this thesis endeavours to incorporate some of the benefits of quantitative analysis with the meanings that people attribute to their experiences so that the research findings are informed by the particular connotations selected by the respondents.

**Investigating a Community Practitioner's Perceptions**

It is necessary to begin by emphasising the associational nature of the four perceptions of social reality. Each one constitutes a prism through which the social world can be described, understood and judged. Therefore, all that can be established is whether a person who adopts a particular social reality perspective does so consistently in particular relational situations so as not to be in a state of cognitive dissonance. Thus, the proposition that can be tested is:

**Whether the epistemological and ontological premises that underpin community praxis, which give rise to a set of values and attitudes that are compatible with the principles of community praxis, are adhered to consistently by community practitioners in a community setting.**

A small sample of community practitioners was chosen to participate in this project, for the purpose of ascertaining their cognitive consistency in relation to community matters. This opens the opportunity of possible future research into the implications of cognitive dissonance for community practitioners and their employers, which is beyond the scope of this project. It should be pointed out that the results of this investigation neither validate or invalidate the logical foundations of the four contending social reality perspectives, which are grounded in the deductive logic of the epistemological and ontological dichotomies evident in the philosophy of social sciences.

**Causality**    When designing a small survey the possible causal relationships between variables,[13] can be stated in a hypothesis.   In a complex model, this would include an independent variable,[14] a dependent variable,[15] and a control variable, [16] with the former being the cause and the dependent variable the effect. In this detection of cause and effect, the research design can also include a control variable that is suspected of having an influence on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (David and Sutton, 2004: 143).

In a search for causes or consequences the researcher needs to ask the following questions (de Vaus, 1996: 31):

- What am I trying to explain?

- What are the possible causes? ˙

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[13] A variable is "a concept, often but not always quantitatively measured, that contains two or more values or categories that can vary over time or over a given sample (for example age, gender), in contrast to a constant, the value of which remains fixed and never varies" (Bailey, 1987: 474).
[14] In an asymmetrical relationship the independent variable that can effect changes in the dependent variable "but cannot itself be affected by changes in the dependent variable" (Bailey, 1987: 465).
[15] "A variable in an asymmetrical relationship that is affected by the independent variable, but cannot in turn affect it" (Bailey, 1987: 462).
[16] A variable which is held constant to see whether it has an affect on the relationship between two variables (Bailey, 1987: 462).

- Which causes will I explore?

- What are the possible mechanisms?

However, the research proposition in this thesis does not extend to an explanation of the cause of community practitioners' values and attitudes in a community setting. Instead, its focus is on the specific issue of whether community practitioners are cognitively consistent in a community setting. Thus, in what is best described as a research nexus rather than a research paradigm, the four ontological and epistemological perspectives are explored as categories that have implications for the individual community worker.

Empiricists might still object to the omission of variables such as age, gender and education from any questionnaire. They could assert that these measures and categories could, through a process of correlation, offer an explanation of why subjects might adopt specific attitudes in particular circumstances.

The goal for this thesis however, is not to provide causal explanations but to produce a better understanding of community members' attitudes towards community engagement. Whilst it is acknowledged that personal characteristics of individuals are integral to these relational settings the intent arising from this small exploratory study is to tease out the implications that arise from the consistency or inconsistency of community practitioners. The claim for the resultant data is that it contextualised the dynamics of community engagement and underpins future ideographic explanations that practitioners may wish to pursue in their own particular localities.

**Measuring a Community Practitioner's Cognitive Coherence**

Questionnaires are "undoubtedly the most widely used form of data collection in social-psychological research" (Manstead and Semin, 2001: 100). By

incorporating the psychometric response scale developed by Likert (1932) respondents can identify their chosen level of agreement in relation to a particular statement. Through this medium self-reporting measures can be employed that facilitate the collection of data that can effectively identify individuals' attitudinal perceptions in specific relational situations. However, these responses tend to be highly context dependent so, respondents will draw on their own experience and inferences about the notion of "community", based on the most accessible, cognisable perceptions in their consciousness at the time they complete the questionnaire (Schwarz and Sudman, 1992; Sudman, Bradburn and Schwarz, 1996; Tourangeau and Rasinski, 1988).

However, this impediment to effective measurement is mediated by restricting membership of the sample to experienced community workers — so respondents should be able to access information from their memories about the particular relational situation of community. All the participants, through the nature of their employment, are steeped in community rhetoric and practice, so alternative and inappropriate information that might be called upon if these questions were posed to the uninitiated, does not present a potential problem. In a similar vein, an irresolute judgement, made as a result of ambivalence to one question, which then has an affect on the answers to subsequent questions, should be avoided (Stapel and Schwarz, 1998).

Some of the potential respondents might, however, not engage in a systematic consideration of their previous experiences about community matters as they prefer to base their answers to questions on the way they perceive they should behave in certain specific conditions (Jones, 1979). In these circumstances, the

logic of triangulation[17] suggests that apparent inconsistencies in an individual's adherence towards the values, attitudes and beliefs underpinned by a particular perspective on social reality should be treated with caution unless they assume a commonality in the aggregated responses made by the total sample.

Community practitioners responding to this survey could exercise a third option as a means of making an evaluation about a community issue. They could examine their feelings and arrive at an answer to a question based on their emotional reactions (Schwarz and Clore, 1988). Thus, they might dismiss some communitarian ideological themes as naïve in that they perpetuate a social reality based on altruism. Therefore, it is again apparent that it is preferable for an analysis of these research findings to concentrate on computing the number of consistent and inconsistent answers instead of focussing on the particular reality dispositions favoured by each respondent.

**Limitations of Likert Scales**

Likert Scales invite some criticism, specifically from the assumed perceptions of the respondent. There is concern that this person is (1) asked to abandon all notions of what the researcher seems to want to find; and (2) asked to accept that the divisions between the points on the scale of agreement to dis-agreement is psychometrically equal.

As regards bias, if individual community practitioners in the sample deem it socially desirable to respond to a question in a particular way then that attitude is part of that person's cognitive consistency towards community issues. However, a more serious issue concerns non-response to the questionnaire, which might

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[17] Triangulation usually demands more than one method of investigation, and thus, more than one type of data. However, its logic also applies to the problem of respondents making inconsistent answers in questionnaires (May, 1993: 130).

suggest that a significant number of community practitioners, with differing attitudes, have consciously chosen to abstain from involvement in the programme (de Vaus, 1996: 73).

The results from Likert Scales are treated as ordinal data, which involve some kind of ranking but no basis for measuring the amount of difference between the ranks (Rose and Sullivan, 1996: 18). Therefore, there is a danger that respondents may not allocate a uniform extent of agreement or disagreement between the categories. This will then be exacerbated when arithmetic values are allocated to each category as the summative totals can lose some of their discriminatory power.

Therefore, when measuring community workers' cognitive coherence with a questionnaire that employs Likert Scales it is important that only suitably experienced community workers are included in the sample population. Thus, they would have had time to reflect over their role and its aims and objectives. However, whilst Likert Scales in the context of this inquiry can accommodate a respondent's wish to provide a socially desirable answer nevertheless the bias of some community workers, who do not return a completed questionnaire, is a significant limitation within this methodological approach. Furthermore, the summative totals attached to the various categories might be imprecise due to differing values being apportioned by participants.

**Selecting a Suitable Sample**

The process began with the selection of six community organisations based in different locations throughout Cornwall. These chosen organisations all have a mission to implement community based programmes, financed through substantial public funding, and therefore employ experienced staff who are tasked to deliver

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specific community-orientated outputs and outcomes. They can be categorised as follows:

- Two community development organisations, both registered as charities, with community workers, all on contracts between one and three years, engaged in various projects including community enterprise, community transport, mental health, social inclusion, village halls, voluntary sector forum and research.

- A housing association, registered as a charity, that provides supported housing to the homeless, women escaping domestic violence, people who have been in prison, people with mental health problems and young people leaving care. The association employs community workers on a full-time basis through a mixture of central government and statutory agency funding. Their role is focused on issues of client empowerment and partnership working.

- A housing association committed to encouraging members of minority groups in communities to play a role in the management and development of their homes and neighbourhoods. This association employs its community workers on a full-time basis.

- Two community regeneration teams within district/borough councils. Members of these teams are on short term contracts (some only a year in duration) and have the task of developing partnerships between communities, public agencies and the private sector that can undertake projects funded by the European Union and the UK Government.

With differing agendas, these organisations provide an opportunity for the sample to include community workers with differing aims and objectives, and differing conditions of employment.

A letter was sent to each organisation requesting participation in a survey of community practitioner's values, attitudes and moral principles in relation to

community matters. Subsequently, tentative agreements were received, from all the parties although concern was expressed about the time it would take for hard working members of staff to be involved in any protracted research activity. Therefore, a discussion took place with a senior manager in each organisation concerning the proposed course of action. It emerged that these managers preferred the blank questionnaires to be sent to them for distribution to their staff. On this basis, they agreed that only their experienced community practitioners would complete these questionnaires.

The preparatory arrangements for the programme substantiate the assertion that each respondent would be familiar with the rhetoric and theoretical underpinnings of community issues and capable of exercising their choice in a process where they need to comprehend and respond to a series of community orientated evaluations. Axiomatically, it was then possible for the wording in the questionnaire to be devised for knowledgeable respondents.

No information was requested about such matters as the age, gender and previous experience of the participants. Moreover, in keeping within the parameters of the proposition that is to be tested, concerning the philosophical consistency of community workers, completed questionnaires were not sorted into their organisation of origin.

**Justifying the Sampling Procedure** In accordance with the particular requirements of the research proposal a homogenous sample was selected for this research. This non-probability sampling technique was appropriate as the target population all had to be experienced community workers and some

managers of the community projects that supplied subjects for the research[18] were unwilling to provide a list of all their members of staff that complied with the required participant profile. Thus, it was not possible to adopt a process of stratified random sampling[19] as a list of the complete sampling frame was unavailable. In this scenario it was necessary to accept that a "quota sample," which was representative only in number, was the best possible method in the circumstances that the research was undertaken.

**Questionnaire Design**

In designing a questionnaire, the researcher needs to consider a number of issues. These matters extend from practical considerations to the more demanding process of operationalisation.

It was decided to limit the questionnaire to five pages (see Appendix 1) as anything longer could become demoralising to the respondent. Nevertheless, even with this restriction on space, thirty expresses of an attitude or opinion is necessary to complete the form thus providing enough data for some meaningful conclusions.

Obviously, it is important for the researcher to consider if the chosen sample are likely to possess the knowledge and experience to have an opinion on the matters addressed in the questionnaire, (Moser and Kalton, 1971: 310). This consideration is closely linked with the way the questions are worded, their specificity; whether

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[18] Only eight organisations were identified as employing community workers in Cornwall as the time the research was undertaken in January to April 2004. Thus, it was necessary to reach agreements with the participants on their terms or risk a sizeable reduction in the available sample.

[19] This procedure would involve the compilation of a list of a "strata" which shares a particular characteristic of the population as a whole (professional community workers). Then a proportionate sampling in that strata is undertaken where the people selected for the sample "reflects the relative numbers in the population as a whole - for instance if there are an equal number of males and females in the community of community workers then there should be equal numbers in the sample chosen to be participants in the research project ( Robson, 1993: 138).

the language used is ambiguous or vague. Thus, axiomatically, the question arises as to **what extent are the statements that confront the participants are sufficiently concrete in their constituent elements so as to qualify as operational statements?**

## Real World Research[20]

If operationalism features as a key component in the design of a research programme then the theoretical and empirical levels of the research proposition and hypothesis are merged leaving the conceptual level of the programme as an outgrowth of the empirical level" (Bailey, 1987: 56). The advantage of this approach is that it reduces the possibility of measurement error through a process of development, called by De Vaus (2001) "the ladder of abstraction." In this process, the concepts central to this thesis, naturalist structuralism, naturalist agency, hermeneutic structuralism and hermeneutic agency need to be carefully defined. These definitions should be underpinned by a clearly stated rationale. This can sometimes draw upon existing analysis but, in the nature of this thesis where existing research is not available, will require development by the researcher.

Thus, statements and questions that are used in the questionnaire are derived from the conclusions drawn in Chapters 2 to 5. However, in a departure from De Vaus's "ladder of abstraction," the dimensions for measuring the definitions of the concepts were selected as a means of reaching a set of descriptions for each of the four concepts based on rigorous deductive logic. Therefore, strands of thought that synergistically combine to produce a unified set of philosophical, political and

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[20] The notion of "Real World Research" was coined by Professor Colin Robson to describe a study, often undertaken by a practitioner-researcher, that is practical and designed to provide a better

ethical principles associated with either naturalist structuralism, naturalist agency, hermeneutic structuralism or hermeneutic agency have been clearly and precisely applied to a series of issues relating to community. For instance, question 6 in Section one of the questionnaire asks the respondent to select their preferred statement about ethical conduct. Therefore, the nominal definition of the concept is "ethics" and in Chapter 4, the dimensions of this concept have been examined through the processes of deontological, virtue, consequential and sceptical ethical frameworks. This examination results in sub dimensions about what each framework regards as good, or bad, right or wrong. Subsequently it became possible to produce operational definitions that clearly describe differing beliefs about moral activity. However, it is acknowledged that these indicators, used in the innovative context of this thesis, cannot be compared to other research findings. Therefore, the assumption that should be made about this study is that it is not based on "the usual scientific task to the solution of a problem or resolution of an issue" (Robson, 1993: 452) but rather the introduction of some flexibility into specialised techniques for an enquiry that seeks to provide an understanding rather than an explanation of some particular dynamics that affect the notion of community.

In embracing the rather grandiosely entitled concept of "real world research" it is recognised that its premises are viewed as methodologically flawed by those who champion what might be called "proper research." For instance Boehm notes that "much 'real world' research is messy – uncontrolled variables abound, predictor and criterion measures interact, alternative hypotheses cannot be ruled out; standard statistical measures cannot be applied without massive violation of

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understanding of a problem in a specific context. It is based on the premise that it may help solve a problem or throw light on a particular issue. (1993: 450).

assumptions (1980: 498). This highlights difficulties that may be encountered by secondary analysts who view the issue of community practitioners' cognitive consistency "from different perspectives and with different philosophies and ideologies, so the secondary analyst may sometimes be dissatisfied with the original investigator's questions (Weisberg *et al.*, 1996: 180).

Therefore, in recognition of reliance on deductive logic in the operationalisation of the statements in the questionnaire this research programme needs to be regarded as ideographic and able to inform the development of a theory of community participation rather than nomothetic with the power to generalise (Bryman, 1988: 100).

Arising from this critical discussion of the process of operationalisation adopted for the research a second question needs to be addressed. This concerns **the extent that the statements used in the questionnaire and their constituent elements unambiguously reflect the abstractions they are intended to reflect?**

## Heuristic[21] Rules of Inference

Concern over whether respondents would find that statements in the questionnaire were ambiguous lead to consideration of heuristic rules of inference. These assert that a person's desire to make sound judgements will motivate him or her to adopt a systematic heuristic process (Chen and Chaiken 1999, Chaiken *et al.*1989). This is facilitated by each of the four social reality paradigms providing a logical basis that enables a person to make sound judgements about the meaning of what other people say and do when he or she reflects on the activities

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[21] Derived from the same Greek root as *Eureka* its meaning is to discover "knowledge or solve problems "using rules which involve essentially a process of trial and error. An item of information or a rule in the process is sometimes known as a heuristic for that problem." (Gregory, 1987: 312).

taking place in a particular relational situation — premised on all the actors involved thinking and acting as if they are cognitively consistent in the way they comprehend a relational situation. In the process of formulating such judgements, a person under the heuristic-systematic model of persuasion (Bohner *et al.* 1995, Chen and Chaiken 1999, Chaiken *et al.* 1989), seeks to balance the conscious, systematic processing of social information (the scrutinising and integration of all potentially relevant information in the forming of a particular judgement) (Chaiken *et al.* 1989) with the effortless processing of social information. Thus, heuristic clues, being information in a relational situation — whether linguistic or behavioural (non-verbal) (Eagly and Chaiken 1993) — enable the latter.

Generally, a person's desire to make sound judgements motivates him or her to adopt systematic processing, but as a set of heuristic rules of inference — decision making rules-of-thumb or the heuristic — begins to crystallise and are then validated and internalised, then the heuristic process becomes more dominant, which can enable judgements to be quickly and effortlessly formed from available heuristic clues in the social arena (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Therefore, the judgement maker becomes cognisant of the available heuristic clues as he or she has reflected over the values, attitudes and opinions in the formulation of attitudinal judgements that inform or guide his or her action. However, whether the decision making capacity of the individual are sufficient for making sound judgements depends on the capacity of that individual to garner the heuristic clues accurately and comprehensively, to bring the heuristic readily and accurately to mind in response to the perception of those heuristic clues and to know when enough information has been collected and processed. This will give that individual confidence in the soundness of his or her judgement dependent on (1) the personal importance and relevance of the judgement made and (2) the

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personal accountability of the judgement made (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Tversky and Kahneman 1973 and 1974).

Of course, in following this line of thought to its conclusion, the danger of reification (Whitehead, 1925) exists as a social reality perspective such as naturalist structuralism becomes concrete. Thus, an adherent to that perspective becomes personified and thereby more than a role-playing actor in a particular situation. This, may result in individual intentions, or determinations to act, becoming confused with "a prediction on the part of the respondent" (Sapsford, 1999: 105).

Heuristic rules of inference underpin the rationale that lies behind the construction of the statements in the questionnaire. It is proposed that the sample of community practitioners, who have extensive knowledge and experience of community issues, can make sound judgements based on the heuristic clues provided. On this basis this discussion now turns to an examination of the way the heuristic clues were constructed. It also, whilst considering the matter of possible ambiguities in the construction of statements, addresses a third, related question, concerning the design of the questionnaire. This involves **the extent that the abstractions embedded in each statement were discrete and thus able to discriminate between respondents' distinctive social reality perspective.**

Utilising the theory of heuristic inference each of the 48 variables in the questionnaire contains heuristic clues that are associated with one of the four perceptions of social reality. This scenario permits each of the social reality perceptions to be fully addressed through the inclusion of four distinct sets of indicative propositions on the questionnaire, each set containing six questions and six statements. Thus the eventual construction of a single index of perceptual

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consistencies, which can be attributed to each perspective on social reality, is facilitated in the design of the programme.

The questions containing the 24 statements are included in Section two of the questionnaire with, as a prelude, respondents being asked to select the proposition that **best** characterises their attitude from a number of listed alternatives in Section one. These multiple choice questions are designed to reveal the respondent's chosen social reality disposition in relation to human nature, facts, the social world, community, decision-making and ethics. Therefore, they offer an opportunity to analyse whether the respondents have chosen to adhere to the logic of a consistent perspective on social reality or whether a repeated and regular pattern of inconsistency is apparent. However, following best practice here by making the statements as short, simple and specific as possible proved challenging (Hague, 1993: 66–67) particularly when devising statements in Section one concerning human nature, facts and the social world. These are abstractions with complex dimensions, for instance they need to contain distinct heuristic clues that distinguish an association with either the causal capacity of structure or agency (see Appendix 1). The following example clarifies the manner of their construction:

- Statement 1b requires the individual to "constantly strive for the right knowledge, the right speech and the right conduct." Therefore, the clue is compliance with a social structure that shapes and constrains the individual.

- Statement 1c requires the individual to follow "conformity to norms, imposed by a social order, that determines both how they should live and encourages them in the habit of self-control." Therefore, the clue is conformity that is imposed by structure through the mechanisms of the social order.

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Moreover, implicit within these two philosophical positions more clues are necessary to act as heuristic devices for respondents to distinguish between the process of objective explanation or subjective understanding:

- Statement 1c begins with the assertion that "individuals are rational" and can "rise above their feelings and passions." Therefore, the clue is the demotion of feelings as secondary to a factual code of behaviour — "good conduct, loyalty and sincerity." Thus, as the objective is conjoined with the structure then statement 1c is associated with the social reality perspective of naturalist structuralism.

- Statement 1b begins with the assertion that "individuals have a natural aptitude for virtuous actions." Therefore, the clue is promotion of a feeling, virtue, as a fundamental element in human nature. Thus, as the subjective is conjoined with structure then statement 1b is associated with the social reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism.

Alternatively, statements 1a and 1d offer the following heuristic clues:

- Statement 1a affirms individuals as "essentially free beings" who "continuously pursue their own pleasure." Therefore, the clue is freedom as the individual is born unconstrained by any structural restraints.

- Statement 1d affirms the individual as "essentially unique beings, free, through acts of their own will." Therefore, the clue is the attainment of freedom through an individual's pro-active attempts to rise above inauthentic restraints.

Furthermore, implicit within these two philosophical positions are clues that distinguish those who associate with the process of objective explanation or subjective understanding:

- Statement 1a asserts that individuals "seek liberation from the interference of others." Therefore, the clue is that the behaviour of others follows a rational basis (their own self-interest). Thus, as the objective is conjoined with agency, then the statement 1a is associated with the social reality perspective of naturalist agency.

- Statement 1d asserts that individuals "through acts of their own will...choose who and what to make of themselves." Therefore, the clue is the autonomous outsider — alienated from others and unable to accept objective rules for developing successful relationships — destined for a lonely search for meaning throughout life. Thus, as the subjective is conjoined with agency, then statement 1d is associated with the social reality perspective of hermeneutic agency.

Thus, informed by the theoretical concept of heuristic devices, all statements in the questionnaire were constructed with the aim of providing respondents with indicators that discriminate between differing social reality perspectives. Moreover, by pursuing this aim, it is considered that ambiguity, within the constituent elements that form the abstractions portrayed for the respondents, has been, as far as possible, addressed. In part, this aspiration has been supported by the decision to avoid statements with a negative in them as they are more difficult to fully comprehend (Hague, 1993: 67).

The multiple-choice questions are listed below, with sets of variables grouped under the headings of each of the four perspectives on social reality. All of these questions are established on the fundamental ontological and epistemological premises that constitute the philosophy of social science and offer appropriate indicators to respondents. Thus, it is contended that a cognitively consistent

respondent would respond identically when completing the questionnaire on more than one occasion.

**The Questionnaire: Section One**

*Multiple choice questions that reflect the homo hierarchus associational relationship with the principles of naturalist structuralism.* To recapitulate, in choosing this disposition, *homo hierarchus* are presupposing an objective social world, explained through the use of deductive and the inductive scientific methods, with social structures exercising causal capacities over human agency thus making human behaviour predictable. In this social reality perspective, an élite with a socio-political will govern compliant citizens with both groups bound together in an established pattern of duties and obligations. Thus, a consistent *homo hierarchus* would agree with the following statements:

1. Human Nature

b) "Individuals are rational and recognise that they can rise above their feelings and passions by striving for good conduct, loyalty and sincerity. This can only be made possible through conformity to norms, imposed by a social order, that determines both how they should live and encourages them in the habit of self-control."

2. Facts

b) "A fact is a statement that has been verified by experts using reason and the scientific method."

3. The Social World

a) "I consider the social world to be objective and knowable, and one in which social forces mould human behaviour."

4. Community

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a) "Community is just another constituent of the hierarchical social order."

5. Decisions

d) "I make personal decisions on the basis that they decide what we should think."

6. Ethics

d) "The end of moral activity lies in an individual finding her or his station or position in life and then carrying out its duties."

*Multiple choice questions that reflect the homo economicus associational relationship with the principles of naturalist agency.* To recapitulate, when choosing this disposition, *homo economicus* presupposes an objective social world, explained by the inductive and to a lesser extent the deductive, scientific methods. Here structure is reduced to nothing more than collections of autonomous individuals as agents are in control of their own behaviour, which is made predictable through its unconstrained self-interest. In this social reality perspective, the free market is the predominant mechanism of government with the state having as small a role as possible. Thus, a consistent *homo economicus* would agree with the following statements:

1. Human Nature

a) "Individuals are essentially free beings who seek liberation from the interference of others as they continuously pursue their own pleasure."

2. Facts

a) "A fact is a statement that I believe because it helps me work out how to produce beneficial results for myself, after all matters are considered."

3. The Social World

c) "I consider the social world to be objective and knowable, and one in which individual intentions mould human behaviour."

**4.** Community

b) "Community is a fictitious body of self-interested individuals."

**5.** Decisions

a) "I make personal decisions on the basis that I decide what I will think."

**6.** Ethics

a) "The moral rightness of an action can best be judged by the goodness of its consequence, hence the end justifies the means, which makes such an action intrinsically good."

*Multiple choice questions that reflect the homo sociologicus associational relationship with the principles of hermeneutic structuralism.* To recapitulate, in choosing this disposition *homo sociologicus* presupposes a subjective social world understood as it is socially constructed, with human behaviour being determined, and thus made predictable, through the collective interpretation of social reality. In this social reality perspective communities are the primary unit of a system of governance that places a premium on individual participation and cultural relativism that can achieve shared attitudes and values. Thus, a consistent *homo sociologicus* would agree with the following statements:

**1.** Human Nature

b) "Individuals have a natural aptitude for virtuous actions as they constantly strive for the right knowledge, the right speech and the right conduct."

**2.** Facts

d) "A fact can only be validated through discussion with others, because only then can there be the appropriate mutual understanding of what is meant by a factual statement."

**3.** The Social World

c) "I consider the social world to be subjective and knowable through understandings that result from discussions with others, thus, individual behaviour is determined by how people collectively interpret reality."

4. Community

d) "Community is a collective committed to engaging in discourses that build shared values and attitudes amongst its membership."

5. Decisions

b) "I make my personal decisions on the basis that I have, with other community members, collectively decided what I will think."

6. Ethics

b) "As there is no single true morality across time, societies and individuals a moral act is one where a good action is accompanied by good intentions, and the right emotions and feelings."

*Multiple choice questions that reflect the homo existentialis associational relationship with the principles of hermeneutic agency.* To recapitulate, in choosing this disposition the *homo existentialis* presupposes a contested social world, understandable only as what people believe it to be. Thus, human behaviour is unpredictable, as human agency is constrained by individuals' subjective perceptions of social reality. In this social reality perspective the individual must constantly guard against coercion and manipulative from untrustworthy collectives. Thus, a consistent *homo existentialis* would agree with the following statements:

1. Human Nature

d) "Individuals are essentially unique beings, free, through acts of their own will, to choose who and what to make of themselves."

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**2. Facts**

c) "There is no such thing as a fact, for nothing is knowable with absolute certainty."

**3. The Social World**

b) "I consider the social world to be unknowable, thus, human behaviour is unknowable and therefore, unpredictable."

**4. Community**

c) "Community is another instrument of potential or actual external control."

**5. Decisions**

d) "I make personal decisions on the basis that they decide what I must think."

**6. Ethics**

c) "Moral beliefs are just matters of personal taste because moral truths are simply unknowable."

**The Questionnaire: Section Two**

The multiple choice questions are followed by 24 propositions that invite the respondent to indicate whether he or she strongly agrees, agrees, disagrees or strongly disagrees with each statement by use of the Likert Scale illustrated in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1: The Likert Scale used in the Questionnaire**

| *Strongly agree* | *Agree* | *Disagree* | *Strongly disagree* |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

**Ratings**        **-2**            **-1**            **+1**            **+2**

By emulating the process used for Section one operational definitions of the dimensions and sub dimensions of the deductive enquiry in Chapters 2 to 5 enable each question to be fundamentally associated with one of the four perspectives on social reality. For instance, the first proposition states that "Communities should make decisions that preserve national social unity." The underpinnings of this notion are well documented in Chapter 5 as the concept of naturalist structuralism is examined through the dimension of hierarchy. This leads to a sub-dimension of the ethereal bond that exists between the élite and the citizen that assumes an operational definition in the heuristic clue of "preserving national social unity."

The second statement in Section two refers to communities making decisions based on group consensus avoiding individual risk. The heuristic clue is the rejection the causal capacity of agency and the subjective notion of group consensus. Thus, this statement can be associated with the social reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism.

The fifth statement in Section two refers to collective understandings being impossible amongst community members, as nobody can know another person's thoughts. The heuristic clue is the rejection of structure and the rejection of all objective thought, as there can be know no explanation for another person's actions. Thus, this statement can be associated with the social reality perspective of hermeneutic agency.

The seventh statement in Section two refers to understanding of members of a community only being possible is they are regarded as "a collection of self-interested individuals." The heuristic clue is again the rejection of structure but here this is tempered by an acceptance of objectivity as the notion and parameters of self-interest can be explained and accepted amongst like-minded individuals.

**The use of Likert Scales in the Questionnaire** The process of developing a series of Likert Scales usually begins with the selection of a large number of items, each relating to a set of specific circumstances that inspire an attitude ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement. These items are then tested to determine patterns of agreement and disagreement. After the results from this system of selection have been analysed, by using a rating scale such as that illustrated in Figure 6.1, the extent that the score for each given item correlates with the total score is assessed. At this point, those items that correlate weakly with the total score are disregarded, leaving the final questionnaire to offer a smaller set of highly relevant variables for testing to ascertain the underlying attitude.

As this research is underpinned by an ontological and epistemological framework that is logically irrefutable, as epistemologically, knowledge can only be objective or subjective and ontologically structures have causal capacity (of some degree) or they do not, preliminary testing to exclude irrelevant variables is unnecessary. Furthermore, it was decided to exclude the option of "undecided" from the Likert Scales, as this programme is designed for a sophisticated sample that, in their chosen role of employees capable of achieving the expectations of their employers, would have reflected on and reached individual conclusions about the questions posed in this research.

The 24 propositions in the second part of the questionnaire are each listed below the rubric of their designated perspective on social reality. Thus, each of the four headings determines and exemplifies the principles that are reflected in its nominated propositions.

**Statements that reflect adherence to naturalist structuralism.** This disposition accepts that the concept of community is just another constituent within the hierarchical social order.

1. Communities should make decisions that preserve national social unity.

4. National loyalty is more important than loyalty to your local community.

10. Communities should be lead by community members with proven expertise and experience.

13. Community is just another part of the nation's social order.

17. If community members observe their duties to their communities then the state should accept its obligations to these communities.

20. If community plays its part in maintaining the social order then community members should be willing to make voluntary sacrifices on its behalf.

**Statements that reflect adherence to hermeneutic structuralism.** This disposition accepts that community is a collective that can renew a sense of moral authority and thus, bring well being to its members as they share their ideas and values.

2. Communities should make decisions based on a group consensus that avoids individual personal risk.

6. Making voluntary contributions and sacrifices to the shared aims of our community is desirable.

9. Community is a social entity that can empower activists in community matters to achieve the "good life" for all community members.

14. A personal commitment to discussing ideas and values with other community members should be valued.

**16.** Individual community members will benefit from being involved in collectively making group decisions.

**23.** Community members can understand their community or a community through consultation with other community members.

**Statements that reflect adherence to hermeneutic agency.** This disposition perceives community as just another instrument of potential or action control over human autonomy.

**5.** Collective agreements amongst community members are impossible, as we cannot know how other people think.

**8.** As individuals cannot influence community outcomes apathy towards community is justified.

**12.** Community just represents another unavoidable mechanism of potential or actual control over the individual.

**15.** No individual sacrifices should be made for the community unless benefits can be expected in return.

**19.** As the social world cannot be known and understood then community decisions can only be based on risk minimisation aspirations.

**21.** Management of community affairs is just about management for individual survival.

**Statements that reflect adherence to naturalist agency.** This disposition perceives community as an unthreatening, but purposeless, fictitious group of individuals.

**3.** All community projects should be managed to achieve measurable improvements to individual well being.

7. A community can only be understood as a collection of self-interested individuals.

11. Community members only make voluntary sacrifices to their community if their personal potential benefit exceeds any costs incurred.

18. Community organisations are fictitious as they only exist as a network of relationships amongst self-interested individuals.

22. Community members should be only interested in maximising their material well being when making decisions in community settings.

24. Community decision taking should be concerned with supporting people in the pursuit of their rational self-interest.

## Results from the Questionnaire

Sixteen completed questionnaires where returned from six different community organisations in Cornwall representing a 32% response rate. The results from the questionnaire were analysed based on highlighting the philosophical consistencies and inconsistencies of the responding community practitioners. The use of the statistical computations of the arithmetic mean[22] and the standard deviation[23] helped in attaining this objective as it became possible to make meaningful comparisons between aggregated individual scores.

Observations are made by reference to the Figures and Tables that feature in this Chapter and Appendix 6.1. Each of these Figures reflects the extent that each respondent agrees or disagrees with the reality perception of a particular methodological family. This has been achieved by aggregating the scores on the Likert scale for each respondent then graphically representing the totals in a

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[22] A familiar measure of central tendency the mean is the sum of all values of each observation of a variable divided by the total number of observations.

histogram. Thus in Figures 6.2 overleaf, and Figures 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3 the total score is shown on the horizontal axis and the number of individual respondents who have attained that score is shown on the vertical axis.

The statistics in Table 6.2 on page 264 provide the number and percentage of individual respondents who adhere to a particular reality perspective in relation to human nature, facts, the social world, community, decision making and ethics.

When interpreting the results it is recognised that the limitations of Likert Scales, the small sample and the relatively low response rate for a survey of this design must influence the credibility afforded to the results.

## Philosophical Consistencies

When community practitioners adhere to the social reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism they embrace a social world where the concept of community assumes a critical importance in all aspects of social life, a scenario in stark contrast to the vision of community associated with the three alternative social reality perspectives. Therefore, it could be expected that community practitioners would maintain a consistent preference for the values, attitudes and opinions that underpin the statements and questions associated with hermeneutic structuralism. On this basis the results from Section one revealed the following consistencies (see Table 6.2):

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[23] Standard deviation measures the dispersion of scores around the mean. Thus, a distribution, by computing the square root of its variance, can be compared to another set of scores.

# Categorical Preferences for Contending Social Reality Perceptions

**Figure 6.2 Aggregated scores for responses to all statements that adhere to the hermeneutic structuralist perspective on social reality**



Std. Dev = 1.96
Mean = 5.6
N = 16.00

Total H.Structuralism
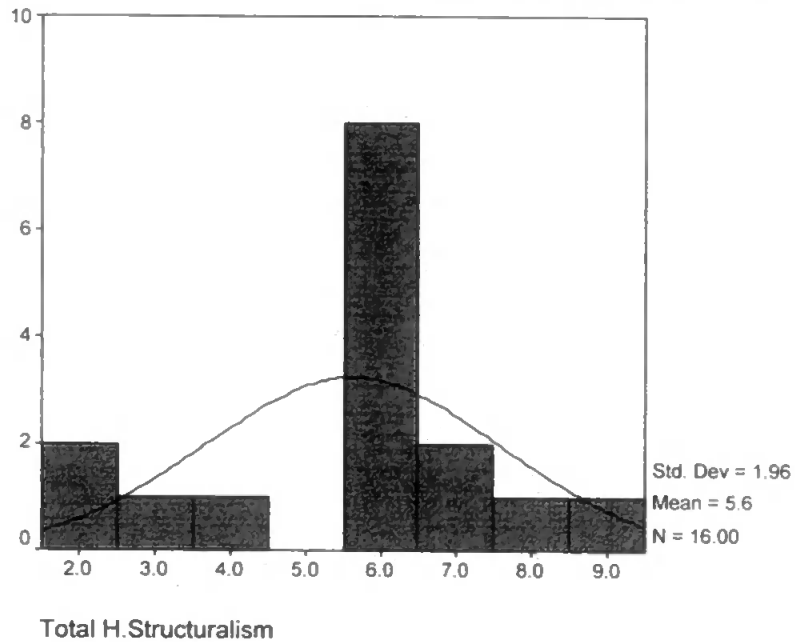
**Table 6.1 The responses made to each statement that adheres to the hermeneutic structuralist perspective on social reality[1]**

| Question No. | (2) Strongly agree | | (1) Agree | | (-1) Disagree | | (-2) Strongly disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 2 | | | 11 | 69% | 5 | 31% | | |
| 6 | | | 14 | 88% | 2 | 12% | | |
| 9 | | | 15 | 94% | 1 | 6% | | |
| 14 | 4 | 25% | 12 | 75% | | | | |
| 16 | 4 | 25% | 11 | 69% | 1 | 6% | | |
| 23 | 5 | 31% | 11 | 69% | | | | |

| | Mean | Std Dev. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 0.38 | 0.96 |
| 6 | 0.75 | 0.68 |
| 9 | 0.87 | 0.5 |
| 14 | 1.25 | 0.45 |
| 16 | 1.13 | 0.72 |
| 23 | 1.31 | 0.48 |

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[1] All percentages in Table 6.1 have been either rounded up or down as appropriate.

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**Table 6.2 Preferred adherence (*homo sociologicus, homo hierarchus, homo economicus,* and *homo existentialis*) to a certain perspective on social reality in relation to human nature, facts, the social world, community, decision making and ethics**

| Options | *Homo Sociologicus* | | *Homo Hierarchus* | | *Homo Economicus* | | *Homo Existentialis* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Human Nature | 1 | 6% | | | 15 | 94% | | |
| Facts | 7 | 44% | 1 | 6% | 6 | 37% | 2 | 12% |
| The Social World | 1 | 6% | 3 | 19% | 11 | 69% | 1 | 6% |
| Community | 15 | 94% | | | 1 | 6% | | |
| Decision Making | 15 | 94% | 1 | 6% | | | | |
| Ethics | 4 | 25% | 10 | 62% | 1 | 6% | 1 | 6% |

- Fifteen respondents (94%) chose the philosophical definition of community that is the preferred choice of *homo sociologicus* (Section one: 4d). This statement recognises the concept of community as a collective that is committed to building shared values and attitudes amongst its membership through the medium of discourse. Fifteen respondents (94%), chose the understanding of decision-making embraced by *homo sociologicus* (Section one; 5b). This notion is encompassed in the realisation that collective decisions, made by a consensus of community members, will be the basis of individual's personal choices concerning their decisions about community.

An identical rationale has been applied to the results from Section two of the questionnaire, thus consistency, in adherence to the social reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism, is apparent as follows:

- Table 6.1, measures responses to statements that reflect the principles of hermeneutic structuralism. Here all individuals in the sample either strongly agreed or agreed with propositions 14 and 23. Both these statements concern the necessity for consultation and discussion amongst community members and with community groups. Therefore, they contain the sample's endorsement of the conversation-saturated nature of the community environment.

- The theme of consultation and discussion also features in proposition number sixteen and Table 6.1 shows that, with only one exception, the sample either strongly agree or agree that community members benefit from involvement in group decision-making.

- Table 6.1.1, that reflects attitudes towards the principles of naturalist structuralism, has the sample either in disagreement or strong disagreement over the notion expressed in Question 4 that national loyalty is more important

than loyalty to your local community. There is also a strong majority (over 80%), that reject the propositions (1) that communities should endeavour to preserve national social unity; (2) that communities should be lead by those members who are qualified to do so and (3) that the concept of community is just another part of nation's social order.

- Table 6.1.2 measures responses made to statements that reflect the principles of naturalist agency. Here there is total disagreement with the notion that community members should only be interested in maximising their own material well being when making decisions in community settings. Furthermore, apart for one positive response, fifteen respondents rejected the proposition that community organisations are fictitious as they only exist as a network of relationships amongst self-interested individuals.

- Table 6.1.2 also reveals that fourteen respondents (88%), are in disagreement with the notion that voluntary sacrifices for communities only occur when personal potential benefit exceeds any cost incurred.

- Table 6.1.3 measures responses made to statements that reflect the principles of hermeneutic agency. Here there is a unanimous rejection of proposition numbers 5, 8 and 12 with the statements 15, 19 and 21 only receiving sparse support. Thus, our community workers overwhelmingly reject *homo existentialis* suspicion over the dynamics of community involvement.

- The histogram that features in Figure 6.2 reflects a positive mean of 5.6 compared to the negative means of –2.5 (naturalist structuralism), -3.8 (naturalist agency) and –5.5 (hermeneutic agency). Therefore, this statistically justifies the general perception of an aggregated score that favours the social reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism.

**Philosophical Inconsistencies**

Unexpected responses from participants cause inconsistencies in the pattern of results. However, in emulating the parameters applied in relation to philosophical consistencies, minor statistical aberrations are treated with caution. Moreover, data is only used to substantiate assertions when the results are conclusive. Thus, the following observations relate to the values, attitudes and opinions of the sample of community workers when they expressed a pronounced adherence to a reality perception other than that of hermeneutic structuralism. On this basis the results from Section two reveal the following inconsistencies (see Table 6.2):

- Fifteen of the respondents (94%) chose the definition of human nature that accords with *homo economicus's* preferred social reality. This option recognises individuals as autonomous beings actively seeking their freedom from others in order that they can pursue and maximise their own pleasures. This left only one respondent embracing the proposition that human beings have an essential aptitude for virtuous action, which accords with hermeneutic structuralist principles.

- Eleven respondents (69%), of the sample, considered that the social world was objective and knowable, and one where individual intentions would mould human behaviour facilitating individual autonomy and individual self-determination, neither of which accord with hermeneutic structuralist principles.

An identical rationale has been applied to the results from Section two of the questionnaire, thus inconsistency, in adherence to the social reality perspective of hermeneutic-structuralism is apparent as follows:

- Table 6.1.1 shows thirteen respondents (81%), in agreement, and two (12%), in strong agreement with the deontological proposition that if citizens observe

their duty to their community then the state should accept its obligations to this community. Thus, only one respondent rejected this naturalist structuralist statement.

- Table 6.1.2 has ten respondents (62%), in agreement with the naturalist agency principle that community projects should be managed to achieve measurable improvements in individual well being.

**Reflections over the Design of the Research Programme**

Before analysing the implications arising from the research data, it is necessary to reflect on some specific aspects in the design of the programme. This evaluation of the judgements made during the construction of the programme begins with the reflexive conversation, which underlies the chosen method of sampling.

**Sampling.** Not collecting data on the personal characteristics of individual respondents might seem negligent when personal characteristics of individuals may play a part in the construction of the values, attitudes and opinions that they may adopt in a particular relational situation. Certainly, it would be interesting to correlate such variables as age, gender and locality with how individuals felt about community reality. However, any research programme is relevant to its contextualisation in what can loosely be termed "the real world." If a project is innovative and attempts to address issues that have been neglected (and it is the function of this thesis to do exactly that) then the exploration of the conundrum will demand an exploratory piece of research that paves the way for more elaborate and intricate studies. Quite simply the researcher must begin somewhere and if this neglects issues of age, gender and income then, nevertheless, some progress

has been made on establishing some broad principles that can act as stimulants for further investigation.

Obviously, with limited time and a very limited budget, practicality rather than preference drove the chosen sampling procedure; the alternative strategy of stratified random sampling is certainly preferable when conditions prevail that permits its execution. The researcher could then have embraced a process, which would also have allowed the possibility of scientific proportionate selection in relation to gender, age; and income. However, the gatekeepers prevented this strategy. Thus, as is often the case in social research programmes pragmatism supersedes notions of academic experimentation.

**Selection of Variables.** Undoubtedly the results from the study suggest that further research may need to accommodate additional variables such as age, gender and education. However, it is contended that this should not result in a methodology that explains individual's associating with particular social reality perspectives. This distaste for generalities, drawn from causal explanations, is recognition of the complexity of human nature and the dangers of attributing too great a significance to the Dixon and Dogan typology.

**Operationalisation of the Abstractions.** It is accepted that the concept of "real world research" may lack academic purity but this thesis is intended to offer practitioners a set of tools that can enable a better understanding of community member's social reality perspectives rather than an inflexible set of techniques that offer a limited generalisation about community dynamics. Nevertheless, the apparent departure from De Vaus's "ladder of abstraction" is significant in that the recognised techniques for social research have been circumvented and therefore, any implications drawn from the data must be treated with some degree of caution.

**Statements in the Questionnaire – Ambiguity and Distinctiveness.** This investigation into the cognitive consistency of community practitioners involves the application of heuristic theory, whereby word cues are used to identify social reality dispositions. Of course, heuristic judgements are conditional upon the importance and relevance of decisions and the degree of personal accountability they engender. Thus, they too must be regarded with some degree of caution. Nevertheless they offer a means of measuring attitudes rooted in academic theories that recognises the process of heuristic inference as a valuable determinate in assessing individual choice.

Obviously, whilst heuristics may aid the respondent, the statements must offer the necessary clues. This is, by necessity, a process open to the subjectivity of the researcher as he or she constructs statements that they think will be specific, meaningful and concise thus enabling the respondent to easily reach a concrete decision about its acceptance or rejection. Therefore, in acknowledgement of this scenario it is recognised that a degree of ambiguity may enter the questionnaire and some statements may not be as discriminate between social reality perspectives as necessary.

Finally, after reflection, the research would have benefited from a number of follow-up unstructured interviews where results could have examined by respondents to ascertain how they felt about the possibility of experiencing a state of cognitive dissonance. Would they: (1) Accept or deny the possibility of cognitive dissonance? (2) Assume a "rhetoric of intransigence"? (3) Acknowledge that belief dis-confirming evidence might adversely affect their effectiveness as a community practitioner. Similarly, the research programme would have benefited from the triangulation available through employment of the alternative approach of ethnomethodology. This would have facilitated careful observation of individual's

behaviour, in a community setting, over a period of time considered adequate to deliver uncontrolled responses. Unfortunately, such a strategy was beyond the financial resources available for this project.

## Implications Arising

A community practitioner who perceives human relations from the reality perspective of naturalist agency understands the social world as an objective domain that can only be explained by reference to the rational choices made by individuals in pursuit of what they wish, desire, believe or will. Apart from one respondent, each participant holds this position which is incompatible with the socially constructed domain of hermeneutic structuralism where social reality can only be understood by reference to people's shared interpretation of that reality. Yet, contemporaneously, each community practitioner sees the concept of community as a construct collectively committed to a discourse that promulgates shared values and attitudes.

Thus, in this scenario, each respondent to the survey vigorously subscribes to the supposition that collective discourse should lead to consensual decision-making but also agrees with the proposition that people see the social world objectively as naturalist knowledge retains supremacy over any notions that rely on the social construction of knowledge. Therefore, decisions must be made by the collective but ethically the results of these agreements are judged by deontological premises of duty and obligation between the élite and the governed, thereby recognising that compliant communities should be looked after by the state.

If a community practitioner accepts the premise that people are self-interested then community might becomes a vehicle for that practitioner to influence the

decisions of others through sometimes protracted sessions of discourse. These exchanges may be justified by the individual community practitioner, as, in furthering his or her own utility, he or she would wish to maintain the concept of community as having a pre-eminent political importance. This degree of significance is corroborated by community members voluntarily offering their time and resources to the collective without any regard to their own material well being. Therefore, the individual community practitioner will judge the ethical merits of his or her community by the degree of community loyalty and obligation that he or she can engender for his or her specific community projects.

Individuals completing the questionnaire would seem inclined to manipulate community outcomes to ensure that they adhere to state policies. In this scenario, inclusive community discourse might be welcomed but the community practitioner renders any opinion peripheral if it deviates from the intentions of the state hierarchy that have been clearly enunciated in a series of knowable objective outputs and outcomes. This inclination, that causes an individual community practitioner to digress from the principles of hermeneutic structuralism, might have its origins in the tensions between his or her personal ideological preferences and the ethos that is inherent in his or her contract of employment. Thus, the pursuit of individual personal well being features as the metaphorical foundation that supports the results of the survey.

As a small sample dictates that the survey can only be exploratory, and the results indicative, it is recommended that further research be undertaken to investigate the proposition that professional community practitioners may be inclined to adopt what they perceive as the expected values, attitudes and behaviours of their chosen career whilst they retain strong personal preferences for the principles of naturalist structuralism or naturalist agency.

So that individual community practitioners are offered an improved understanding of the curious and demanding dynamics that affect their daily encounters with community members, where the challenge of opting for advocacy or facilitation is a enduring issue, it is useful to return to the fundamental precepts that describe the way that attitudes are constructed and may change in differing relational situations. This re-framing of the survey results utilises the notion that citizens will adhere, in any particular relational situation, to one of the four contending perceptions of social reality and thus clearly illustrates what may be understood as the community practitioner's dilemma.

Drawing on Olli's three conceivable models of the individuals (1995 and 1999), described in Chapter 3, it is proposed that the community practitioners who responded to the questionnaire share a set of resolute meanings about the discursive nature and purpose of community work. Whilst the wide ranging questions about social reality included in the questionnaire provide contradictory results in relation to both ontological and epistemological distinctions, examinations of the options chosen in the statements concerning community reveals a common understanding of its communicative nature. Nevertheless, the results, within the parameters of the relational situations that occur within each community practitioner's professional experiences, does not validate the proposition that each member of the sample of community practitioners is a predominately coherent. For instance, a single-minded *homo sociologicus* would not accommodate the strong *homo hierarchus* belief that, through the maintenance of the existing social order, it is expected that the ethereal bond between the state and its citizens can be sustained by the maintenance of a reciprocal commitment to certain responsibilities. Thus, the state should observe

its obligations to its unlimited number of communities if those community members both accept and fulfil their community duties.

A fundamental inconsistency became apparent when the principle of maximising individual utility, which is embraced by *homo economicus* as an essential tool in the achievement of individual well being, was largely accepted by each respondent community practitioner as a creative force that would offer some benefits to the community group in its search to find solutions to improve its social relationships.

So, guided by these results, it is necessary to move beyond the confined and determined circumstances that would feature a coherent community practitioner, who can comfortably associate with the principles of hermeneutic structuralism and is confident in expressing either rejection or indifference towards the other three contending philosophical perceptions of reality. Alternatively, it seems more relevant to consider whether individual practitioners have already accepted and employed a sequential series of attitudes towards the community work nexus. From this standpoint a practitioner would choose hybrid notions that selectively, in specific relational situations, exact specific principles from the social reality perspectives of naturalist structuralism, naturalist agency or hermeneutic agency to further his or her logically self-justified pursuit of his or her cause (Olli, 1999: 60). Thus, each practitioner adapts to a new set of values and attitudes on the basis that these revised status and role relationships can further the benefits he or she can gain in a particular situation. Without doubt, the metamorphosis of each individual is given more credence by his or her wish to implement plans of action that will achieve the objectives and move towards the aims that form part of his or her contract of employment.

However, if an individual community practitioner can re-evaluate his or her beliefs to maximise the potential returns possible from a specific situation and temper his or her concerns over job security, then he or she may be empowered to undertake a process of positive reflection. So, it can be argued, that far from a sequential shared meaning system sufficing the demands of contemporary community, the community practitioner should consider adopting the role of the synthetic individual who can accept profoundly different ways of describing, analysing and judging his or her social world. This scenario might offer the expansive boundaries that can provide the elusive goal of inclusive participatory communities. Community development rhetoric can then embrace the four contending social reality dispositions that are at the centre of this project. Therefore, informed by the findings from this empirical research, the proposition is advanced *that the individual community practitioner, in formulating his or her core beliefs, values and attitudes, should give serious consideration to adopting the disposition of a synthetic social realist.* If individual community practitioners can accept the challenge of this transformation then it is likely that they will achieve better results when handling the ambiguities and the inevitable conflicts and misunderstandings that arise from community engagement. However, the type of reflexive skills needed for the individual to embrace the synthetic model have been omitted from the agenda for training that forms part of the latest European Declaration on the development of a thriving civil society through the mechanisms of community development.

This Declaration requires further examination as, in its language, it presents a certain set of ideas as typifications and thus, objectivates, through the taken-for-granted reality of its authors, a natural order for communities throughout the European Union (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

# The Budapest Declaration[24]

A group of 130 community practitioners, researchers, policy-makers, and representatives from government, civil society organisations and community groups from 33 countries across the European Union and beyond met in March 2004 to consider the challenge of building civil society in Europe through community development. In the preamble to the published declaration (International Association for Community Development, Combined European Bureau for Social Development and Hungarian Association for Community Development, 2004) they requested that "the EU, national, regional and local governments — as appropriate — to commit themselves actively to build a socially and economically inclusive, diverse, environmentally sustainable and socially just society".

This precursor sets the style of the Budapest Declaration and its assumption that there is a broad consensus across Europe about the manner that community development initiatives can be organised, and that their anticipated success will inevitably benefit civil society. Indeed, as the prospect of social benefits is a certainty, the second clause in the document suggests that "all national governments should consider the appointment of a Minister with specific responsibility for creating and implementing community development policy, by 2006." Furthermore, "that Minister should have a cross-departmental remit."

To achieve successful community development thirty recommendations were included in the text of the agreed statement. These endorsements have been examined to gauge the extent that they address the following four imperatives.

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[24] The full text of the Budapest Declaration can be found on website

**(1) Developing the responsibility of the community for local initiatives:**

Proposition 5 requires that learning and training needs for each community should be "developed from the 'bottom up'." However, this should reflect a core curriculum of lifelong learning about active citizenship and critical reflection. Additionally, training should build on "local skills, resources, strengths and needs, and recognising issues of gender, cultural diversity, sustainable development and inclusion; in short, offering 'access to diversity and diversity of access'." Arising from this training process, Proposition 14 requires that the "EU and national policies should provide incentives to rural communities to mobilise their members and their resources to address local problems, strengthening their capacities to do so. Furthermore, Proposition 26 states that "Local communities should be recognised as active and legitimate partners in the development of plans, structures and policies for local economic development."

**(2) Improve "partnership working" to ensure better delivery of welfare services:**

This issue is dealt with in Proposition number 8: "To promote ownership and mutual commitment, an active dialogue should be fostered between research and practice involving all stakeholders; this will require a greater degree of reflectiveness on the part of researchers as to how their skills can be made available to local communities."

**(3) Improve participation in consultation about and management of community initiatives:**

The declaration directly mentions the issue of participation on three occasions and indirectly once. Proposition 3 asks regional and local authorities to publish and implement "annual action plans which outline the relevant special measures including investments, monitoring and evaluation of community development in facilitating effective citizen participation." Then, under the heading of "Research", Proposition 7 states that the process of research should become "a vehicle for participation." Subsequently, Proposition 16 states that "all people in areas subject to regeneration should have the right to participate at every stage in its regeneration and future." Finally, Proposition 29 states "that community development has a critical role to play in engaging people in increasingly diverse communities through inclusive methods."

**(4) Mobilising community involvement in local economic development:**

Proposition 24 states that "Every national action plan — including plans to combat poverty and social inclusion — should be required to include a section, which addresses the role of the social economy and local community economic development."

Whilst it would be churlish to suggest that the Budapest Declaration was agreed in anything other than good faith, its superficiality can encourage the "myopic" practitioner. Such a practitioner might well consider that, provided local organisational structures are in place and messages of support issued by central and local government, high levels of pro-active participation amongst community members would be the inevitable result.

The emphasis on a consensual approach to community development, based on questionable assumptions, is adopted by the declaration, and this raises some obvious concerns. The typification of "community," by both government and

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practitioners, as a collective unit of social analysis fails to recognise the importance of the individual in the cultural reconstruction that is being driven on by the rolling back of the welfare state throughout western liberal democracies. Thus, the expected dynamic within communities, created by the wholehearted involvement of its members, neglects the increasing prevalence for individuals to exercise their own preferences that are in contradistinction to collectivist solutions.
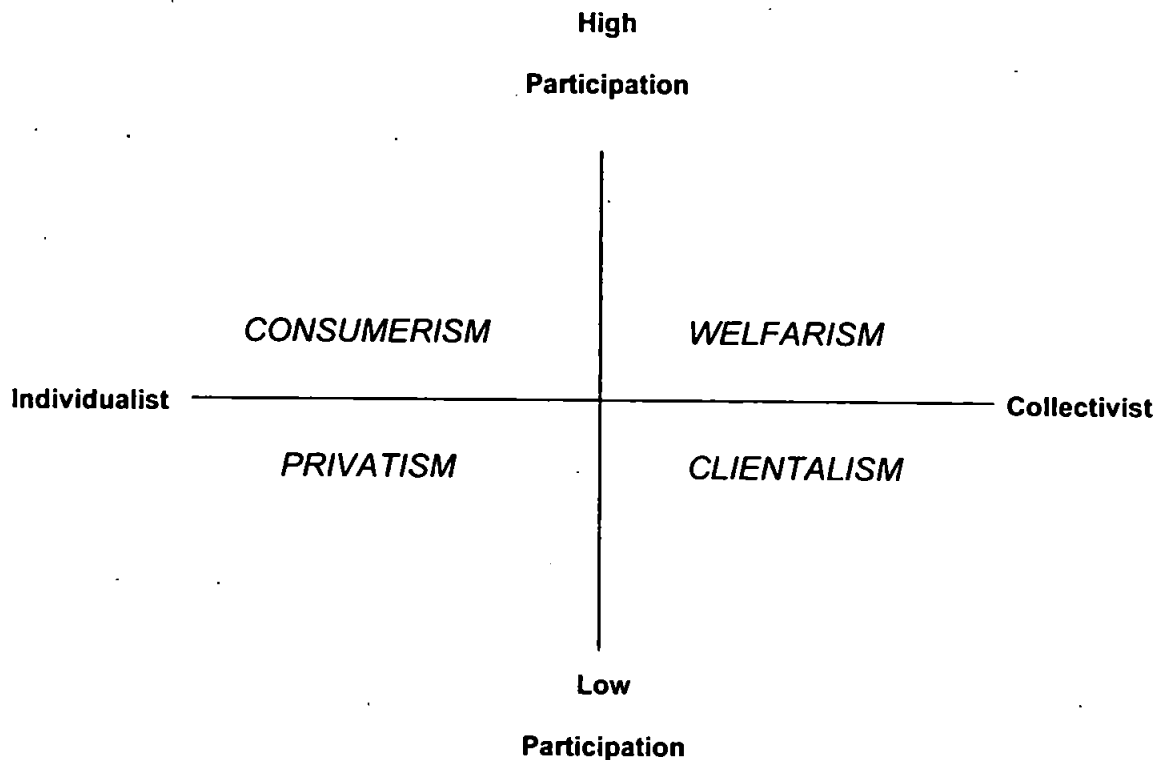
The dilemma that results from a failure to accommodate differing perspectives on social reality that exist in a community setting is well illustrated by Baldock and Ungerson's (1996) study into peoples' attitudes to the provision of care. This research identifies a typology of values and attitudes, or cultural "habits of the heart" (Baldock and Ungerson, 1996: 28) that can be associated with people's social reality dispositions (see Figure 6.3).

*Welfarism.* This is the approach to welfare delivery that would attract *homo sociologicus,* as it is collectivist and accommodates high levels of participation by stakeholders in its policy formulation and implementation. Community practitioners, whether they adopt a consensual, pluralist or radical approach to their work would aim to coalesce community members around what they perceive as shared needs being satisfied through the maximisation of benefits. To achieve this end, community practitioners would assist in building the capacity for educational awareness and activism within community groups.

Partnerships of statutory and voluntary agencies would also be promoted through a strategy of collaborative community development that is working towards the objective of permanent social change by increased social inclusion and improved social justice. Those community practitioners and community members who take the view that social change is only possible through conflict

may also advocate non-violent direct action as a means of furthering the common cause of a community or communities.

**Figure 6.3: A Typology of Modes of Welfare Delivery**



High
Participation

|                | CONSUMERISM | WELFARISM    |              |
| Individualist  |             |              | Collectivist |
|                | PRIVATISM   | CLIENTALISM  |              |

Low
Participation

*Source*: **Baldock and Ungerson 1996: 29**

Partnerships of statutory and voluntary agencies would also be promoted through a strategy of collaborative community development that is working towards the objective of permanent social change by increased social inclusion and improved social justice. Those community practitioners and community members who take the view that social change is only possible through conflict may also advocate non-violent direct action as a means of furthering the common cause of a community or communities.

Therefore, paradoxically, *welfarism* lies at the core of the Budapest Declaration. However, its reliance on a consensual approach by government bodies and community organisations seems misguided, given the problems government would encounter if it supports a sequence of social interactions that, as pointed out by Baldock and Ungerson (1996: 32) will, if enacted by a large number of different groups, rapidly overwhelm the available resources of the public sector.

*Clientalism.* This approach would attract the hierarchical *homo hierarchus* and the apathetic *homo existentialis* whose pre-disposition is to accept whatever seems inevitable. Thus, welfare is distributed on a traditional basis favouring the deserving working class. A safety net would be offered to those who suffer unexpected loss of employment. However, pressure would be exerted to ensure their return to the workplace as quickly as possible. Similarly, medical care would be dispensed by a hierarchy of professionals who are understood to know best, and social workers can apply considerable legislative powers against any citizen who is deemed to have broken acceptable norms of conduct.

The results from this mode of welfare delivery are reflected in the problems haunting contemporary public services. For instance, citizens suffer long waiting lists for essential hospital operations, entitlement to services is both difficult to ascertain and may require considerable persistence before it is forthcoming. Furthermore, there is uniformity in provision that labels individual priorities as unimportant.

It is inevitable that *welfarism* will find few friends amongst those socially competent enough to join with others to negotiate better outcomes or those who can take full responsibility for their own well-being. Nevertheless, community

members who believe that the state is obliged to take care of its respectable duty bound citizens, and ensure that the lumpenproletariat are disinclined to challenge the established social order, will recognise *welfarism* as offering a stability and security that is lacking in alternative methods of delivery.

*Privatism.* This is an unconditional acceptance of the efficacy of the marketplace and its contractual relationships between buyers and sellers. This would be attractive to the self-interested *homo economicus.* However, Baldock and Ungerson (1996) dismiss this approach to welfare delivery as inapplicable for the distribution of scarce resources. They maintain that, as service availability becomes restricted to the attainment of bottom-line profit, social exclusion and dissatisfaction can become endemic. Nevertheless, those who have the capacity to subscribe for private health care plans or private education for their children fully embrace the market mechanism as offering recognition of their financial acumen.

Baldock and Ungerson (1996: 31) describe people who encounter privatised welfare provision as confused, annoyed and often frightened by their experiences. However, it may be argued that, although even if many experience negative feelings about this mode of service delivery, some might be empowered by its lack of ambiguity, condescension and the freedom of choice offered.

*Consumerism.* This approach to the delivery of welfare services places an emphasis on active consumer engagement, an active rather than passive response from stakeholders to the quality and quantity of service provided. This would be attractive to self-interested *homo economicus* and to *homo existentialis* with anarcho-capitalist inclinations. Community practitioners could facilitate this mode of delivery by introducing mechanisms into the community paradigm that

encourages the involvement of individuals who have previously dismissed community as an irrelevant or insignificant concept.

To achieve this type of welfare delivery there must be a workable community-based social framework that is robust enough to adapt to identifiable individual and group preferences. In this scenario, the community practitioner must accept the notion that their community's cultural properties are reflected in the various strands of situational logic employed by its members towards a certain set of circumstances. These properties can also be a tangible outcome from socially restraining or liberating influences that can possibly trace their inception to a combination of the consistencies and incompatibilities of life within a specific area. Therefore, as recognised by Baldock and Ungerson (1996: 17), the attainment of a consumerist approach that can cater for both individual and group preferences alongside the various objective and subjective demands of consumers is a cultural rather than financial obstacle.

## Conclusion

In this Chapter, the results from empirical research reveal a significant gap between the holistic rhetoric of community proselytisers and the social reality perspectives chosen by a small cohort of community workers in a community setting. Participants have revealed inconsistencies in their attitudes towards the relational situation of community that suggests that their commitment to the values, attitudes and beliefs embraced by hermeneutic structuralism is, in part, a façade. Behind this screen a community practitioner might choose to maximise his or her personal utility, possibly through compliance with hierarchical decision making. Thus, the practitioner faces a community dilemma that can lead to

cognitive dissonance, which may in certain cases result in voluntary withdrawal from a community setting.

Furthermore, the extent that the notion of inclusive community participation is challenged by the four contending social reality perceptions that adopt particular ideological expectations in relation to a differing modes of welfare delivery is apparent from Baldock and Ungerson's typology. Therefore, arising from this scenario, it is proposed that community practitioners should change direction and focus on accommodating contending perspectives on community reality.

Pursuit of the aim of achieving inclusive communities could profitably begin with Proposition 7 in the Budapest Declaration, which states that "research should be as much a tool for communities as for policy makers." This pertinent observation challenges the myopic practitioner to re-evaluate the methodology employed in researching the needs of a community so that they can be understood as expressing an "essential *unity* as seen from a *diversity* of perspectives" (Ravn, 1991: 98). This reflexive process must consider how suitably robust and durable symbiotic relationships can be developed with adherents to contending social reality dispositions so that inclusive communities with high levels of community participation become possible.

Therefore, in the next chapter a new logic is offered. This is, in part, inspired by innovative ontological and epistemological conflation constructed with the assistance of the seminal work of Bhaskar (1978 and 1979) on transcendental and critical realism; and of Archer (1989, 1995, 2000 and 2003) on analytic dualism and morphogenesis, but fundamentally the result of the fresh theoretical insights provided by the Dixon and Dogan framework of contending perspectives on social reality. In this context, confidence in the capacity of the framework as a holistic devise capable of explanation and prediction of human behaviour is enhanced if

the presumption of cognitive consistency is maintained. This, however, does not deny the validity of the framework and its capacity to elicit a re-conceptualisation of the community paradigm. Such a re-conceptualisation can offer a means of reconciling the ontological and epistemological dichotomies through an informed strategy for the management of community.

# Appendix 6.1

## Categorical Preferences for Contending Social Reality Perceptions

**Figure 6.1.1 Aggregated scores for responses to all statements that adhere to the naturalist structuralist perspective on social reality**
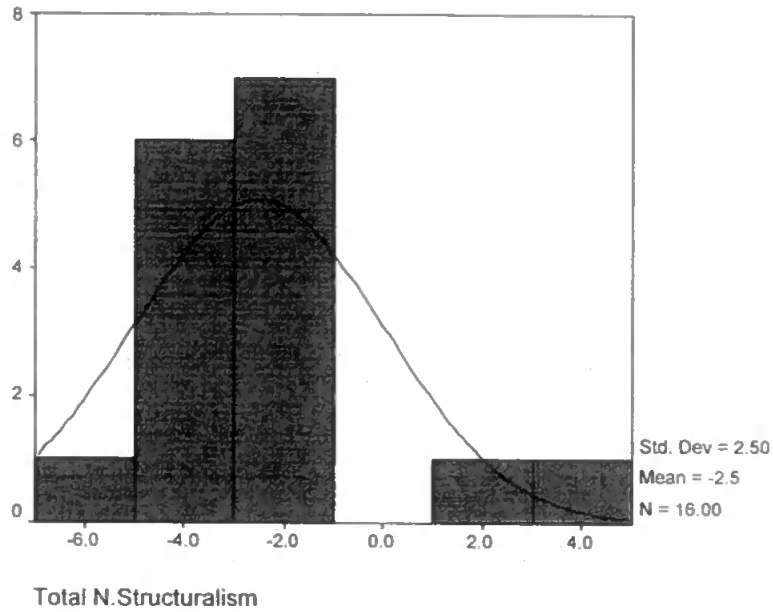


Std. Dev = 2.50
Mean = -2.5
N = 16.00

Total N.Structuralism

**Table 6.1.1 The responses made to each statement that adheres to the naturalist structuralist perspective on social reality [1]**

| Question No. | (2) Strongly agree | | (1) Agree | | (-1) Disagree | | (-2) Strongly disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percen |
| 1 | | | 2 | 12% | 12 | 75% | 2 | 12% |
| 4 | | | | | 14 | 88% | 2 | 12% |
| 10 | 1 | 6% | 2 | 12% | 12 | 75% | 1 | 6% |
| 13 | | | 1 | 6% | 13 | 81% | 2 | 12% |
| 17 | 2 | 12% | 13 | 81% | 1 | 6% | | |
| 20 | | | 9 | 56% | 7 | 44% | | |

| | Mean | Std Dev. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | -0.87 | 0.81 |
| 4 | -1.13 | 0.34 |
| 10 | -0.63 | 1.03 |
| 13 | -1 | 0.63 |
| 17 | 1 | 0.63 |
| 20 | 0.13 | 1.03 |

[1] All percentages in Tables 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3 have been either rounded up or down as appropriate.

**Figure 6.1.2 Aggregated scores for responses to all statements that adhere to the naturalist agency perspective on social reality**



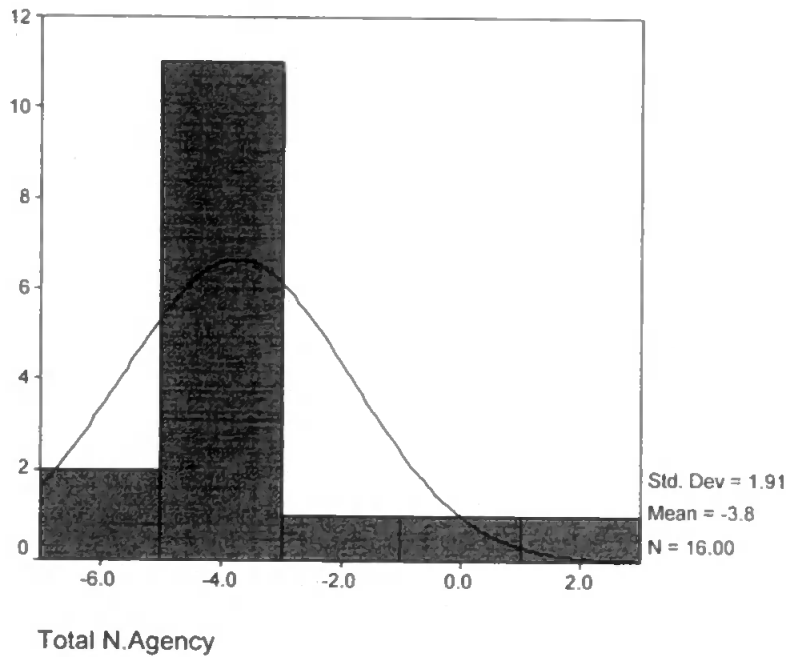Std. Dev = 1.91
Mean = -3.8
N = 16.00

Total N.Agency

**Table 6.1.2 The responses made to each statement that adheres to the naturalist agency perspective on social reality**

| Question No. | (2) Strongly agree | | (1) Agree | | (-1) Disagree | | (-2) Strongly disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 3 | | | 10 | 62% | 6 | 37% | | |
| 7 | | | 3 | 19% | 13 | 81% | | |
| 11 | | | 1 | 6% | 13 | 81% | 1 | 6% |
| 18 | | | 1 | 6% | 15 | 94% | | |
| 22 | | | | | 10 | 62% | 6 | 37% |
| 24 | | | 5 | 31% | 11 | 69% | | |

| | Mean | Std Dev. |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0.25 | 1 |
| 7 | -0.63 | 0.81 |
| 11 | -0.81 | 0.75 |
| 18 | -0.87 | 0.5 |
| 22 | -1.38 | 0.5 |
| 24 | -0.38 | 0.96 |

**Figure 6.1.3 Aggregated scores for responses to all statements that adhere to the hermeneutic agency perspective on social reality**



Std. Dev = 1.75
Mean = -5.5
N = 16.00

Total H.Agency

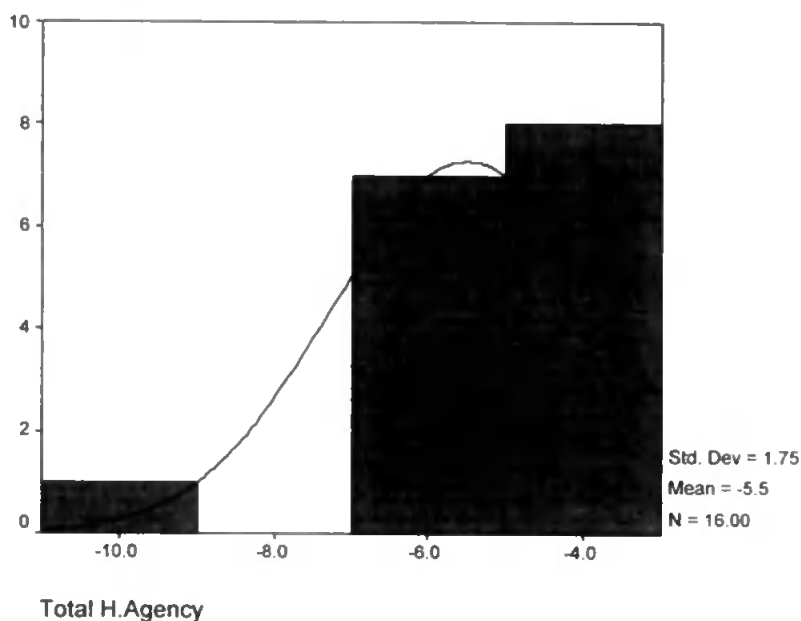**Figure 6.1.3 The responses made to each statements that adheres to the hermeneutic agency perspective on social reality**

| | (2) Strongly agree | | (1) Agree | | (-1) Disagree | | (-2) Strongly disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Question No. | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percen |
| 5 | | | | | 14 | 88% | 2 | 12% |
| 8 | | | | | 10 | 62% | 6 | 37% |
| 12 | | | | | 16 | 100% | | |
| 15 | | | 1 | 6% | 15 | 94% | | |
| 19 | | | 4 | 25% | 11 | 69% | 1 | 6% |
| 21 | | | 3 | 19% | 11 | 69% | 2 | 12% |

| | Mean | Std Dev. |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | -1 | 0.63 |
| 8 | -1.38 | 0.5 |
| 12 | -1 | 0 |
| 15 | -0.87 | 0.5 |
| 19 | -0.56 | 0.96 |
| 21 | -0.75 | 0.93 |

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# 7

# Accommodating Four Contending
# Perspectives on Community Reality

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Society is only like itself and the basic task is to conceptualise how ordered social forms have their genesis in human nature, just as social beings have their genesis in social forms (Archer, 1995: 167).

As the four contending perspectives on community reality are based on mutually incompatible premises, if a style of community management exclusively operates informed by only one perspective on social reality then it is inevitable that some community members would feel isolated and alienated from community initiatives. Thus, adherents to communitarianism, in seeking to proselytise their doctrine, face emerging ethical antagonisms over what human actions are good or bad, right or wrong, or virtuous or shameful (Dixon, *et al.*, 2006). In this scenario communitarianism, as an operational strategy for managing the human aspects of community, denies the validity of *classical, evolutionary* and *processual* strategies as part of a policy of management that can lead to enhanced community and individual outcomes.
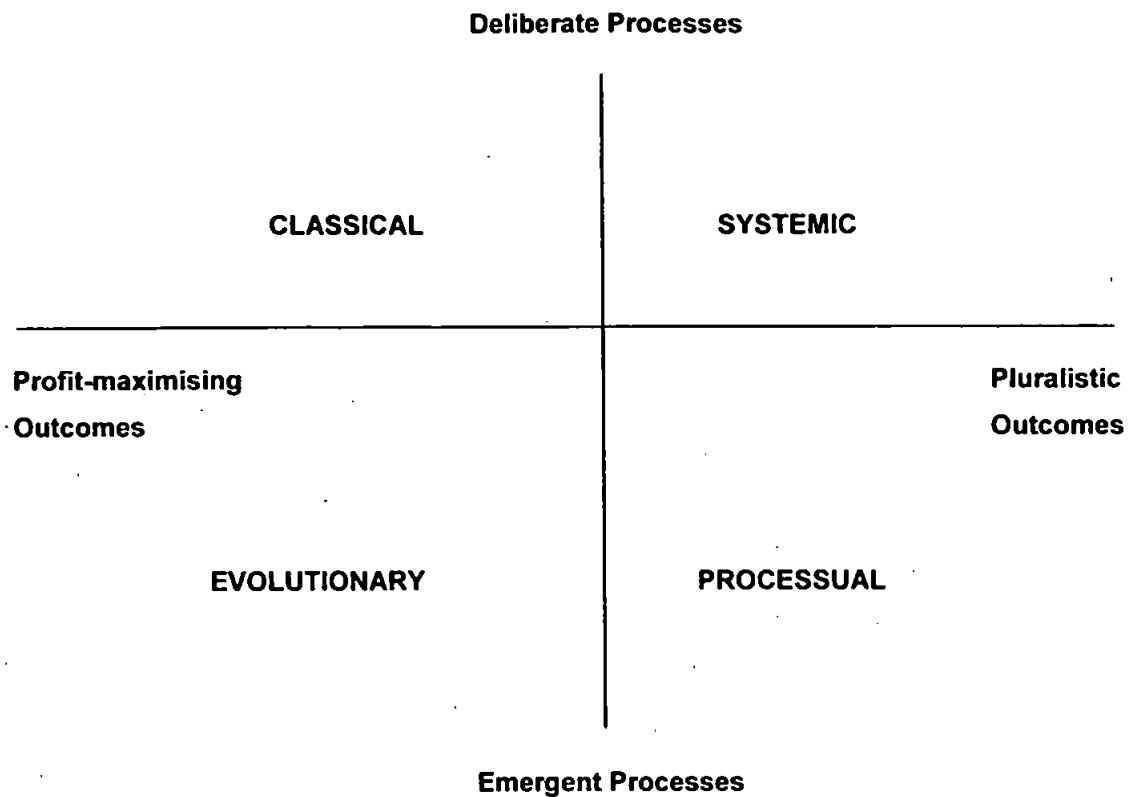
Figure 7.1 depicts Whittington's typology of operational strategy that offers the choice of a fourfold methodological division between the differing means of

managing resources in a dynamic community setting with the aim of fulfilling the expectations of community members. These competing means of achieving goals can be understood as strategic benchmarks in the demarcation of approaches to human resource management (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002: 213). The four strategic models correspond with Dixon and Dogan's typology of perspectives on social reality.

**The Classical Operational Strategy:** This is based on the premeditated endeavours of senior managers who are committed to ensuring the survival of the community organisation. These professionals remain aloof from the everyday skirmishes that characterise the interaction between lower-order players in the hierarchy. And, the concepts of discipline and obedience are portrayed as essential features in this elitist approach to achieving goals through rational decision-making, made on the basis of skill and experience (Whittington, 1993: 15–17). This approach is consistent with the principles of naturalist structuralism.

**The Evolutionary Operational Strategy:** This is based on the notions of efficiency and effectiveness, as the competent community organisations are able to deliver on their aims and objectives, and thus survive, whilst the poor performers cease to exist. Thus, in response to emergent factors, the issue to be confronted is how should a community organisation adapt to the changing demands of the external environment, whilst retaining its viability to achieve given outputs and outcomes and also enhancing its entrepreneurial profile to improve its

**Figure 7.1:     Whittington's Typology of Operational Strategy**

Deliberate Processes

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| CLASSICAL               | SYSTEMIC         |

Profit-maximising                                    Pluralistic
·Outcomes                                             Outcomes

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| EVOLUTIONARY            | PROCESSUAL       |

Emergent Processes

*Source:* Derived from Whittington, 1993

chances of further adaptation. This approach is consistent with the principles of naturalist agency.

**The Processual Operational Strategy:** This is based on the notion that community members are "too limited in their understanding, wandering in their attention, and careless in their actions to unite around and then carry through a perfectly calculated plan" (Whittington, 1993: 4). Thus, the community organisation employs a strategy of incrementalism in a pattern of small changes that are reactive to emergent factors, rather than proactive to the external environment (Lindblom, 1979). In this paradigm, intuition would be paramount as a means of decision-taking as community organisations are recognised as existing in a climate

of tensions and contradictions. This approach is consistent with the principles of hermeneutic agency.

**The Systemic Operational Strategy:** This approach encompasses the communitarian perspective under which operational strategy is based on the prevalent cultural and institutional interests that are discerned from the dominant norms of society. Thus, a strategy would be legitimised by a group consensus that offers management a culturally acceptable means of authenticating their decisions and actions. This approach is consistent with the principles of hermeneutic structuralism.

The Dixon and Dogan typology, with its four perspectives on social reality, is thus clearly reflected in the categorisations used in Whittington's typology of operational strategies. This demonstrates that, although there has been an understanding of a quadripartite approach to human resource management, this understanding has manifested in the four operational strategy styles being regarded as discrete rather than fundamentally inter-related approaches that, together, provide a holistic approach. Thus, it is proposed that the promotion of the communitarian code of community morality that underpins the systemic operational strategy cannot be easily reconciled with other legitimate beliefs that underpin alternative operational strategies.

### Distrust Arising from Alternative Codes of Community Morality

Communitarians, as adherents to *homo sociologicus*, are imbued with the moral necessity of engaging with other members of their community. So, through univocal and transparent discourse, all participating citizens can jointly affirm their shared social norms that designate certain human actions as either virtuous or shameful. So, by this process, there is a discernible commitment to an agreed set

of principles about what is in the best interest of those who have embraced a communitarian's understanding of social reality. This course of action leads to an ordered, recurrent pattern of social behaviour that can be understood as originating from a set of interpretations derived from shared culture, language and practices that create primary principles rather than a moral code that is derived from the exploration of consequences or a set of categorical imperatives.

When proselytising their ethical beliefs, communitarians would be particularly concerned about the moral code adopted by *homo economicus*. This is because these community members advocate the concept of the unencumbered self, which communitarians perceive as an empty confused entity that suffers from a lack of clear social aims, values and beliefs, they actively deny the fundamental moral underpinning of human responsibility towards others.

Communitarians also distrust what they understand as the arrogant and absolute denial by *homo hierarchus* of community members' capacity to make an informed and practical choice concerning their own moral code. Because of this blind obstinacy, the self becomes encumbered by the selfish and authoritarian aims of dominant hegemonies and is thereby denied the capacity for growth into a complete, empowered organism.

Finally, communitarians are suspicious of the paramount concern of *homo existentialis* for their ethical and ideological authenticity that, they feel, verges on the self-indulgent. As *homo existentialis* have treated community organisations and institutions as irrelevant endeavours, communitarians have come to distrust their motives that seem centred on the senseless exclusion of their adherents from meaningful and righteous community engagement.

Thus, there are communitarian misgivings concerning the moral and ideological attitudes of *homo hierarchus, homo existentialis* and *homo economicus*. However,

these misgivings are comprehensively mutual and flourish as a *quid pro quo* between those human actors who, in maintaining their particular and alternative perspective on social reality, contribute to the formation of a complex paradigm of distrust that totally encompasses all four quadrants of social reality perception. Therefore, in this on-going configuration of distrust, it is imperative that those participating in community initiatives should accept that their function is to listen to, acknowledge and reconcile this quadripartite community discourse. However, the question arises as to the formulation and possible application of a theoretical framework that can inform community praxis in this challenging setting.

## Holistic Management

The notion of holism is the focus for this Chapter, as the ontological dichotomy of structure and agency is revisited. This is on the basis that, firstly, the reduction of the agent to an entity who is constrained and moulded by structural forces, is a disputed explanation of social reality; and secondly the recognition that structure is nothing more than the outcome of actions taken by individuals, precludes the axiomatic belief that the social world can be interpreted through the one-dimensional activities of agency intention (Archer, 2000: 87). Therefore, the potential for the predominance of either structure or agency seems to have been circumscribed through the reliance of their advocates on simplistic unilateral narratives that fail to adequately address the widely held perceptions about the complexity of social stability or social change.

Downward and upward conflation[1], based on either the predominance of structure or the ascendancy of agency, make it impossible to unravel the

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[1] Archer describes upwards conflation as social theorising "where the 'solution' to the problem of structure and agency consists in rendering the latter epiphenomenal. Individuals are held to be 'indeterminate material', which is unilaterally moulded by society, whose holistic properties have complete monopoly over causation, and which therefore operate in a unilateral and downward manner" (1995: 3). The contrary standpoint is known as downwards conflation.

constitutive interplay of structure and agency, which assumes a subtle interdependence that renders analysis of the influence they exert on each other inconclusive. Therefore, if any progress is to be achieved in the aim of providing community workers with an explanatory framework that can enhance their understanding of the complex dynamics of community reality, it becomes clear that a methodology is required that can provide greater delineation. Thus, in the search to comprehend and address community problems, the argument must proceed beyond conflationary theorising to notions of critical realism[2] and analytical dualism[3].

This Chapter highlights the important aspects of Bhaskar's (1978 and 1979) work on critical realism that inspired Archer (1989, 1995, 2000 and 2003) to develop the notions of morphogenesis[4] and morphostatis[5], which lie at the heart of analytical dualism. The concepts of structural and cultural emergent properties, which are the primary distinguishing features in this theoretical approach, are identified and their purpose clarified. Then, the essential aspects of Archer's work act as a metaphorical foundation that can guide a programme of community research towards an innovative interpretation of the interaction between

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[2]  Critical realism developed from Bhaskar's writings and has become a movement that claims "that causal laws state the tendencies of things grounded in their structures, not invariable conjunctions, which are rare outside experiments. Therefore, positivist accounts of science are wrong, but so is the refusal to explain the human world causally. Critical realism holds that there is more to 'what is' than 'what is known', more to powers than their use, and more to society than the individuals composing it. It rejects the widespread view that explanation is always neutral — to explain can be to criticise" (Craig: 157).

[3]  Archer describes analytical dualism as "the guiding methodological principle underpinning non-conflationary theorising." Thus, in this methodology, "explanation of why things social are so and not otherwise depends upon an account of how the properties and powers of the 'people' causally intertwine with those of the 'parts' as linkages between different strata are examined for their interplay (Archer, 1995: 15).

[4]  Archer (1995: 75), citing Walter Buckley, *Sociology and Modern Systems Theory* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967) describes morphogenesis as referring to "those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system's given form, structure or state" (p. 58).

[5]  Archer describes morphostatis as processes, in a complex system that tend to preserve a system's form, structure or state (1995: 75). Thus, it is directly opposed in its nature to morphogenesis.

community members with contending reality dispositions. The utility of these constructs is enhanced by the employment of the social reality perspectives of naturalist structuralism, hermeneutic structuralism, hermeneutic agency and naturalist agency, which can each assume a direct associational relationship with agents at the micro level of community. In this complex interaction it is recognised that the individual's view of the world can be better understood by applying Olli's (1995 and 1999) three models of individual interpretative freedom.

The problem of objectivism and subjectivism — caused by its division into explanation or understanding — is also addressed in this Chapter in acknowledgement of the synergistic interaction between these arbiters of knowledge being essentially a psychological rather than philosophical issue. This has particular ramifications for the community worker who needs to confront other people's ideas and practices in the right way.

Finally, following this theoretical exposition, a framework is constructed that can help the community worker to conduct a reflexive research programme, in partnership with community members, that may create a degree of unity in a community through the recognition and accommodation of the diversity of perspectives towards social reality. This model has been placed in an existing programme of empirical research that can offer examples on how the empirical knowledge about a community can be augmented and enhanced through the application of the principles of emergent properties, which facilitate an improved understanding of community realities. Because of this enhanced awareness, community workers can employ techniques of mediation that could achieve improved community outcomes.

# The Problems of Ontological Conflation

## Peirce's Pragmatism

The ontological dichotomy between structure and agency may be summarised by reference to comments made by Charles Sanders Peirce. His re-appraisal of truth and reality lie at the heart of the observation "that what is more wholesome than any particular belief is integrity of belief, and that to avoid looking into the support of any belief from a fear that it may turn out rotten is quite as immoral as it is disadvantageous" (Peirce, [1877] 2005). This assertion accords with Peirce's rejection of the exclusivity of empiricism or rationalism and his case for the complementary use of both the inductive and deductive methods of reasoning. In this paradigm there is an absolute belief in the essentiality of individual cognitive processes coupled with the necessity to subject the results of these endeavours to systematic rigorous testing that, whilst not producing truths, can offer the best possible interpretation of reality. Thus, the deductive processes that are a pivotal element in the a. priori knowledge that contributes to the acceptance of structural forces are held by Peirce to owe their elaboration to a posteriori reasoning. As the latter moves from effect to cause, it is readily identifiable with the capacity of agents to exercise their autonomy. Therefore, Peirce's pragmatic maxim constructs conceptualisations in a framework of understandable practical action.

Compliance with Peirce's stipulation causes problems for both upward and downward conflationists. Thus, Machiavelli ([1513] 1999 and [1518] 1969), from the structuralist position of an upward conflationist, consistently links power with responsibilities. However, how citizens would interpret the bond of duties and obligations between themselves and the state may differ from the real conditions in which they live. For instance, in pursuit of the imperative of maintaining stability and cohesion, deontological ethical principles might be disregarded in favour of

expedient solutions to social problems. This gap between reality and abstract theorising was emphasised by Althusser (2001) who, whilst recognising structural causality as a particular synergistic combination of a society's political, ideological and economic systems, nevertheless insisted that this structural modelling was theoretical and could only be understood in the terms of theoretical analysis. Thus, structure becomes an ideation that reflects the plans and aspirations that have originated in individuals' thoughts and behaviour over a period of time. If these abstract forces are to enter the realm of realism then they require the intentional or unintentional mediation of agency. Thus, the concept of conflation denies its fundamental precept, as it becomes dependent on action taken by agents in a complex two-dimensional process.

Hayek, from the agency position of a downward conflationist, recognises the supreme importance of rational actors maximising their utility in a setting where individual freedom has its own justification. Indeed he proceeds further than other neo-liberals by rejecting any notion of agents voluntarily joining a group to further their individual self-interest ([1966] 1984). Therefore, he questions Adam Smith's concept of the market's *invisible hand* that legitimises transactions through the maintenance of codes of integrity and honesty. This leaves autonomous a-social agents to identify their own morality through a process of personal self-discovery. For Hayek, this journey is not fraught with the danger of corruption, instead he is confident that people would voluntarily accept rules of engagement that ensure the continuation of effective market mechanisms. Thus, all state interference is regarded with suspicion, as outcomes are inevitably unpredictable and interfere with the delicate balance of the market mechanism.

Archer (1995: 200), however, challenges the contentions of the downward conflationist pointing out that "because of the pre-existence of those structures

which shape the situations in which we find ourselves, they impinge upon us without our compliance, consent or complicity." This is clear in our birth, as people are born through the auspices of a medical organisation; the way we learn a language, not out of choice but out of necessity; and our stock of cultural capital, which can bring either the benefits or drawbacks of rich or poor parentage. On this basis, Hayek's rational agent has assumed a wide range of values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour prior to their recognition of their own autonomy. Therefore, upward conflationists, in a similar fashion to downward conflationists, are faced with a two-dimensional scenario that restricts the freedom of the individual.

**Giddens's Structuration Theory**

In following a path of central conflation Giddens perceives structure as being founded on "systems of generative rules and resources" (1976: 127) that belongs to a virtual order that is subsequently reproduced by human agents across space and time in the actual order or social system. In this duality between structure and agency (Giddens, 1977: 132-3 and 1984: 29) individuals are, first, confronted with *signification*, or the different types of communication or interaction in a situation. Secondly, they encounter *domination* that arises from the power exercised by certain actors over other people and resources. Thirdly, levels of *legitimation* are experienced. These reflect the values and attitudes adopted by communities that may have resulted in moral and evaluative rules. In interaction with these three elements, individual agency may be limited through a person's modality or the extent of their knowledge and reflexivity.

Structuration theory yields some interesting relationships between concepts but lacks the semantics to offer meaningful empirical knowledge. It may assist the community worker to recognise the restraints felt by certain community members

but offers no deeper understanding of the origins of their perceptions about community structures.

## Bourdieu's Site Ontology

Bourdieu's (1976 and 1990) theoretical concepts of *field* — a bounded realm of activity, for instance education, politics and the family — *habitus* — the practical awareness of people in a *field* of activity that generates actions and bestows meanings — and *the doxa* — an experience that often produces unquestioning acceptances of objective structures as though they were natural — offers a site ontology that is instructive but is limited in its ability to clarify the conditions for social transformation.

Bourdieu's notion of *field* leads to a series of site ontologies where a differentiation can be applied to the variable social contexts in which individual's consciously and subconsciously internalise their self-identity through their relationships with others. The material or ethereal assets that are at stake in a *field* can be designated as possessing various types of capital. Thus, Bourdieu (1984: 64-80) refers to a person's cultural capital that facilitates aesthetic judgements between types of music and literature.

A link is made between a *field* of individual practices and the concept of *habitus*. This is a complex notion that reflects Bourdieu's rejection of both downward and upward conflation and his concern to focus on agent's practices of self-domestication. Jenkins (1992: 76) provides a succinct description of the concept as composed of a set of dispositions "which include a spectrum of cognitive and affective factors" that induce people to act and behave in particular ways in specific situations. The emphasis here is on social mediation, or the practices that take place between agents rather than those initiated by agents. This leads Bourdieu to introduce "the *doxic* experience" (1990: 20). This construct is not

regarded as having a permanent unanimity but it seems that an individual must experience a reflexive process, most likely as a result of specific historical circumstances, before they would alter their internalised practices.

Bourdieu's complex array of social phenomena does lack specificity so this model of social reality results in an incomplete methodology to guide empirical investigation. Therefore, there is a need for an approach that can disaggregate the complexity of central conflation.

**Systemism**

Systemism asserts "that overall social change is the effect of a myriad of individual actions occurring within systems (structures) and that social (structural) change can be triggered by environmental, biological, economic, political or cultural factors — or a combination of either" (Bunge, 1998: 274). So, social systems are explained in the context of individual actions and the positioning of those actions in a social frame of reference that analyses such notions as cohesiveness, stability and progress that can be accepted as systemic. The biological metaphor of society as an organic whole is regarded as neglecting the issue of power within and around social networks but a systemic approach is capable of accommodating the idea of a set of human interrelationships bound together by a complex variety of power systems. Therefore, systemism, when accepted as an ontological element, can also accommodate the inevitable manifestation of social conflict and change by providing a definitive description of social facts, and thereby revealing how social reality can provide restraints and opportunities for individuals (Bunge, 1996: 264–5).

The relevance of adopting a realistic approach towards the complexity of interests in the social system is well illustrated by government's failure to formulate and implement appropriate social policies for multidimensional fields of human

activity. The environmental is inviolably linked to the bio-psychological and this impenetrable association is replicated in the relations these fields have with the cultural, economic and political.

So the ontology of systemism, whilst accepting that the agency of individuals is mediated by social factors that are irreducible to the individual level, nevertheless avoids a prescriptive framework for social research that ordains precepts that become a definitive map of social facts. Thus, the standpoint of generating a programme of social investigation that is governed by the necessity to fit either an ontology of structure or agency is avoided by resorting to a perception of the nature of society that can guide rather than determine research. This position has been substantiated through a process that identifies and defines the essence of natural reality in the terms of emergent properties. It is then argued that the crux of this analysis can be replicated in relation to the social sciences thereby determining that its disciplines centre on objects of study that possess identical properties to those of the natural sciences (Bhaskar, 1978). In this paradigm, social emergent properties are the product of actions of individuals but become structural entities that can, in turn, exert causality on agency although these agents still retain the power to alter structural influences. This fundamental assertion has been advocated by the school of critical realism (Bhaskar 1978, Archer 1989; 1995) as representing a methodological configuration that fully recognises the capacities of agency and structure in a complex interplay of social reproduction and transformation. As Archer observes, "one of greatest of human powers is that we can subjectively conceive of re-making society and ourselves. To accomplish this entails objective work in the world by the self and with others" (2000: 315).

## Social Science and Emergent Properties

To pass beyond the restrictive boundaries that encircle the various guises of conflationary theorising, it is necessary for those working in a community setting to question their basic philosophical assumptions. Therefore, perhaps only through a period of personal reflection over the shortcomings of conflationary theory, can the community worker accept a new social scenario.

This new setting would embrace the benefits of experiential models of community engagement, including a dialogical and participatory agenda that requires a high level of flexibility and intellectual competence from community workers.

## Bhaskar's Transcendental Realism and Critical Naturalism

Bhaskar demands acceptance of a new ontological understanding of science. He refutes claims made by empiricists that scientists can only observe correlations between variables and instead advances the philosophy of science known as transcendental realism. This recognises that objects of investigation possess mechanisms which may only be understood as they produce perceivable, and possibly unexpected, outcomes (Bhaskar, 1978). So, this scientific paradigm recognises that experimentation "proceeds by a dialectic of 'applied rationalism' and 'technical materialism': a historical process of mutual adjustment between theory and experiment" (Bhaskar, 1979: 43). Bhaskar (1978) also argued that transcendental realism was applicable to the social world and developed the concept of critical naturalism, which recognises that structures make possible human agency and structures in turn are reproduced by human agency. The term critical realism is an elision of Bhaskar's terminology and denotes a movement, founded on his work, that aims to unite scientific experimentation and social practices by acknowledging, as suggested in the work of Latour and Woolgar

(1979), that scientific knowledge is a social product, whilst also recognising the autonomous existence of the objects of scientific "truths". Therefore, this paradigm can provide an anti-positivist description of the nature of the natural sciences but still maintain a realist stance. This philosophical approach to the natural sciences originated in the work of Harré (1970, 1972, 1986) and Hesse (1966) with Bhaskar (1978, 1979) providing the most influential version of this method in relation to social structures.

For realists, epistemological understanding holds that a real world exists as an entity totally independent from any human knowledge or beliefs about its actuality. The observable phenomena in this world can be explained by the discovery of underlying and unobservable processes, which after further investigation may be changed depending on the extent of our knowledge. However critical realism can be distinguished from this theoretical framework as illustrated in the following propositions (Benton and Craib, 2001: 120–1):

- It is considered that all the sciences are responsible for pronouncing on the truth about the independent existence of phenomena. Arising from this evaluation knowledge can increase, on the assumption that scientific claims are accurate.

- Social processes are regarded as offering the possibility for the creation of various forms of representation beyond thought or language.

- It is accepted that the appearance of some things may be misleading, as the true character of some phenomena can only be discovered through a "critical" in-depth process.

- Critical realism is fallibilist[6], like Peirce's pragmatism, and accepts, with repeated cognition, the incorporation of new research, interpretation, and dialogue as necessary to ensure the discovery of the "truth."

Therefore, if social constructivism incorporates critical realism into its tenet then it avoids the central problem of relativism located in the fundamental incoherence of its formulation. By accepting a knowable, independent reality critical realists acknowledge that independent standards must be met in the formulation of ideas of belief and discernment, whilst relativists have no such means of exercising this essential judgement.

This process has the effect, as noted by Maturana (1991: 48), of rendering "all that makes scientific explanations operationally effective in our human practice of living is that they arise as operations in it that give rise to further operations in it and not an impossible reference to anything like an independent objective domain of reality." Thus, as individuals' experience repeated recursion to knowledge, a "generative mechanism" reformulates their praxis causing the creation of new dialogues and courses of action. Bhaskar, (1978: 113) recognises that this generative mechanism "is capable of producing a physical effect...[which is a]...real and a proper object of scientific study." Therefore, he identifies natural reality as having emergent properties that are "an irreducible[7] feature of our world" (Bhaskar, 1978: 113).

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[6] The doctrine of fallibilism maintains "that our scientific knowledge claims are invariably vulnerable and may turn out to be false. Scientific theories cannot be asserted as true categorically, but only as having some probability of being true." Axiomatically the doctrine "does not insist on the falsity of our scientific claims but rather on their tentatively as inevitable estimates: it does not hold that knowledge is unavailable here but rather that it is always provisional.

[7] A reductionist is prepared to dispense with knowledge about an entity claiming that it can be explained by another set of facts. In asserting that emergent properties are irreducible to people Bhaskar is maintaining their distinction as "objects of experimental investigation" (1979: 12).

## The Nature of Emergent Properties

Turning to the discipline of social science, Bhaskar (1979: 26) identifies the "distinct *structures* that mesh together in the field of social life" but he maintains that these "social objects are irreducible to (and are really emergent from) natural objects" so, although they can be studied scientifically, they possess properties that require a unique method of study. This is characterised by the objects of social science inquiry only appearing in open systems "where invariant empirical regularities do not obtain" (Bhaskar, 1979: 57). Therefore, Bhaskar (1979: 58) restricts the development of theories of social science to explanatory and non-predictive theorising.

Archer, when constructing her case for analytical dualism, elaborates on Bhaskar's ontological proposition that causal laws are independent from patterns of events. She recognises that "society is only like itself and the basic task is to conceptualise how ordered social forms have their genesis in human agency, just as social beings have their genesis in social forms" (1995: 167). Therefore, social forms or structures are created by agents, but these social forms then mould and constrain agents, although these agents still retain the capacity to have their own causal influence on social forms. This complex pattern of power ranges from individual opportunity to individual constraint. It is conceptualised in the concept of morphogenesis, which signals the agent's capacity to shape social relations over the transitive notion of space and time. Alternatively, morphostatis refers to the reproduction of structure, through the maintenance of the shape of a social form, again over space and time.

Bhaskar's notion of emergent properties assume a particular significance as they represent recognisable entities whose properties, following Bhaskar's analysis "are relative endurance, natural necessity and the possession of causal

powers" (Archer, 1995: 167). Thus, for example, the education system has necessary internal logical relationships between its component parts instead of undetermined influences that are of an unknown duration (Archer, 1995: 173). These relations allow the education system to exercise its unique ability to exert causal influences on its constituents rather than just combine or aggregate their powers.

Archer distinguishes between (1) structural emergent properties (SEPs), such as the emergent characteristics of the education system; (2) cultural emergent properties (CEPs), such as the doctrines of different religious and ethnic groupings; and (3) peoples' emergent properties (PEPs), which mediate the generic emergent properties through organised networks of agents, thereby reproducing or changing social forms (1995: 303).

SEPs have a "*primary dependence upon material resources*, both physical and human" (Archer, 1995: 175), whereas, CEPs operate in the world of ideas, which is similar to Popper's World Three (Popper, 1979), which is created from the contents of libraries. However, moving beyond this differentiation, Archer maintains that culture should be analysed in the same manner as structure as the "pre-existence, autonomy and durability of the constituents of the Cultural System enables their identification as entities distinct from the meanings held by agents at any given time" (1995: 179). Thus, the brilliant colours of Michelangelo's fresco, painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or Beethoven's innovative Ninth Symphony might be re-evaluated by each generation yet they remain part of a continuing common European identity. This cultural uniformity even persists despite some individuals deeming these works of art as irrelevant to their experiences in the contemporary world. However, this longevity is not immune from change as causal relationships would exist between groups at the socio-

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cultural level, or the point of integration between culture and the people, that over time, can modify existing logical relationships and introduce new ones (Archer, 1989: 143). Therefore, it is apparent that the cultural system and socio-cultural life are totally intertwined and it is through applying "the utility of analytical dualism" that their interplay can be explored (Archer, 1995: 180). With this analysis, the focus of research is on logical relationships within an emergent property "which are totally independent of what people know, feel or believe about them" (Archer, 1995: 182). Cultural conditioning moves beyond Gramsci's influential hegemonies into a realm of "*plural* generative powers and their *reciprocal influence*" (Archer, 1995: 192). Thus, the use of analytical dualism assumes what Bhaskar calls the role of an *underlabourer* guiding empirical research but not becoming its subject (Bhaskar, 1979: 24).

PEPs feature three different categories: Primary Agents, Corporate Agents and Social Actors. Primary Agents lack "a say in structural or cultural modelling" (Archer, 1995: 259). Every Agent, at birth, enters a world with pre-existing structures and immediately becomes a Primary Agent by acquiring the social stratification that can reflect a privileged or underprivileged background. "Hence Primary Agents are defined as collectivities sharing the same life chances" (Archer, 2000: 263). Therefore, these Agents would be part of specific groups that share a particular social situation but do not collectively organise themselves to achieve certain goals. However, it is important to avoid classifying them as "passive" as they may, at any time, form themselves into a new social movement (Archer, 1995: 260). In contrast, Corporate Agents have "capacities for articulating shared interests, organising for collective action, generating social movements and exercising corporate influence in decision-making" (Archer, 2000: 266). Corporate Agents consciously constitute a group with aims and objectives that extend

beyond the summation of each person's self-interest, thereby shaping the environment for all Agents. This action may result in morphogenesis or morphostatis in a confluence between the generative powers of SEPs, CEPS and PEPs. The outcomes from this process of interlocking would also reflect the interplay between Corporate and Primary Agents in the matter of sustaining or transforming the social system (Archer, 2000: 267). Finally, there are Social Actors, who "properly exist in the singular and...do meet the strict criteria for possessing a unique social identity" (Archer, 2003: 118). Thus, after reflexive deliberation about their own unique values, attitudes and behaviour, the Social Actor assumes a role that reflects their singularity. However, whilst everyone is a Primary Agent, many people are precluded from using their agency as a springboard to achieve the status of a Social Actor. For instance, these Primary Agents may discover that their employers are flouting their ethical principles but, because of financial restraints, they are unable to resign their jobs. Furthermore, whilst the parentage and social context experienced by infant Agents does not determine "the particular Social Actor an individual chooses to become...they strongly condition what type of Social Actor the vast majority can and do become" (Archer, 2000: 285).

Archer emphasises the importance of recognising that Corporate Agents and Social Actors are not necessarily different people (2000: 287). Whilst the Corporate Agent can be distinguished by their intention to address collectively interest-related problems, and the Social Actor in preserving the integrity of their identity by observing rule requirements, the Social Actor enjoys the luxury of choosing whether to belong to both groups. However, the complex dynamics at work in such a situation suggest the possibility of potential conflict between the Social Actor within a Corporate Agency Collective and other Corporate Agents.

This assertion correlates with the potential series of disagreements that have been identified as afflicting relationships between *homo hierarchus, homo economicus, homo sociologicus* and *homo existentialis.*

Therefore, as people interact, they create emergent networks that are founded on the logic of vested interest. This interest may change in differing relational situations. Thus, the elaboration of a community is dependent on the exchange transactions and power relations that exist, partly based on formal organisational roles and partly on informal relationships, as some agents/actors mediate structural and cultural outcomes.

## The Epistemological Dichotomy

The concept of analytical dualism provides a research methodology that can guide the researcher "through examining the interplay of the distinctive sets of causal powers (SEPs, CEPs and PEPs)" (Archer, 2000: 308). However, any consideration of the ontological dichotomy must also properly address the epistemological dichotomy of the objective rational elements within human consciousness and their subjective or critical counterparts.

Bhaskar rejects the designation of the "interpretation," rather than the "objective scientific explanation," of the social world to a different and solitary realm on the basis "that knowledge, irrespective of object, must be viewed as a social process irreducible to a purely individual acquisition" (1979: 145). Thus, if the choice is made to suppress hermeneutic interpretative understanding, the value of PEPs would be eroded as agents or actors have derived their subjectivity through their engagement with the social world. Therefore, the researcher should employ the epistemological synthesis of critical realism that embraces peoples' constructive dialogue, which is, to some extent, informed by empirical findings that are the result of social constructs. This approach recognises "that there are causal laws,

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generalities, at work in social life"...[but it is wrong to accept]..."the reduction of these laws to empirical generalities" (Bhaskar, 1979: 27). Instead, a fundamental principle of critical realism applies in that "the objects of our knowledge exist and act independently of the knowledge of which they are objects" (Bhaskar, 1979: 14). This assertion rejects the notion of human reason as a mechanistic means of accumulating knowledge and instead turns to the Kantian apprehension of a process that creates "the constant stimulation of fresh discovery" (Scruton, 2002: 149). Therefore, in this uncertain environment people must employ their subjectivity, which may well be socially constructed, to supplement available empirical data about objects and phenomena. Thus, knowledge about social reality can only progress through a scientific process that requires the construction and rigorous testing of hermeneutic-based hypotheses. So, there is an opportunity here for the reconciliation of the divide that has arisen between naturalism and hermeneutics (Dixon et al., 2002; 2003a, b, c, d; 2004).

This unification of the epistemological dichotomy can be enshrined in Welbourne's notion that "the concept of knowledge enters our repertoire of concepts on the back of testimony" (2001: 125). Therefore, as each person reflects on the testimony of other community members, it becomes apparent that the community is perceived in differing ways and a singular appreciation might only be a partial and imperfect interpretation of what an individual can erroneously refer to as knowledge (Welbourne, 2001: 125). Thus, critical realism presents a case for the synergism of objectivity and subjectivity and recognises that the presence of these perceptions in the agent or actor is a psychological issue that cannot be reduced to a philosophical precept.

The extent that pro-active participation flourishes amongst community members in response to community work initiatives offers an ideal yardstick to judge whether a community is a thriving or dormant entity. That a community is thriving may reflect that community workers have facilitated a process that has resulted in community members accepting the presence of differing values, attitudes and behaviour in their community. In becoming aware of the legitimacy of different perspectives, community members have recognised the necessity of reaching consensual decisions about the aims and objectives that dictate their community's agenda. Therefore, it is proposed that community workers would achieve improved outcomes by adopting analytical dualism as an *underlabourer* that can guide a programme of community research.

The resolution of the ontological and epistemological dichotomies, through analysis of SEPs, CEPs and PEPs, permits a closer and more meaningful scrutiny of the realities of community life from the diverse perspective of community members. However, if community workers are to aspire to a deeper understanding of the values, attitudes and beliefs of community members then they would also need the means to develop informed suppositions about the probable relational attitudes that individuals would adopt towards different community strategies. It is through a process of reflexive interpretation of these complex contending perspectives on social reality that progress can be made towards the goal of inclusive community participation.

**Analytical Dualism and Reality Perspectives**

Dixon and Dogan's typology of social reality perspectives is complementary to the conceptualisations offered in the domain of critical realism. The four reality perspectives do not assume any causal capacity but instead, provide powerful

associational models with enough analytical depth to adequately identify an individual's chosen ontological and epistemological preferences in any given situation. The notion of structural and cultural emergent properties, with their particular internal relationships and causal powers that pre-date any action on the part of Corporate Agents and Social Actors to transform this reality, are accepted as a social ontology that addresses the problem of the ontological dichotomy.

In a similar fashion, critical realism's understanding of the epistemological dichotomy is accepted as a simple but clear and unambiguous interpretation of epistemological reality. Therefore, in according this status to a synergistic relationship between objectivism and subjectivism the necessity of treating the philosophical dividing line between naturalism and hermeneutics as non-negotiable is alleviated. Thus, it is made possible for the Dixon and Dogan taxonomy to embrace a process that clarifies the circumstances in which community members place their experiences thereby sanctioning an opening for mediation to enter into an arena that determines choices and actions.

Having placed the Dixon and Dogan taxonomy within analytical dualism it is now necessary to combine this theorising with a managerial framework that has the capacity to conjoin the mystical notion of unity-in-diversity, within community, with and the humanism of *homo hierarchus, homo economicus, homo sociologicus* and *homo existentialis*.

**Shared Meaning Systems and Unity-in-Diversity**

The notion of unity-in-diversity is used here to describe the optimal mode of community development where community members construct a model of social reality, modulated by the wish to construct an inclusive collective that accepts the legitimacy of contending perspectives on the social world (Ravn, 1991: 102–3). This modulation would be the result of a reconstruction of community members'

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expectations about community relationships, stimulated by an educational programme focussed on understanding why community members would anticipate different outcomes from their community based on their past experiences. Such a mystical notion can be related to Olli's work (1995 and 1999), where the conceptualisation of *coherent, sequential* and *synthetic* individuals provides a means of exploring the relationship between people and their preferred system of bringing meaning to particular situations. Olli argues that the *coherent individual* would consistently support one shared meaning system in any specific set of circumstances thereby embracing an absolutism that is indifferent to contending social reality perspectives. Alternatively, *sequential individuals* adjust their shared meaning system in any given circumstance if there are perceived net benefits to be gained from this action. Finally, the *synthetic individual* would freely adopt differing ways of understanding social reality, moving freely from one shared meaning system to another by embracing relativism. Therefore, if community workers wish to facilitate community members in working towards the aim of achieving the concept of *unity-in-diversity* then they should consider adopting the position of a synthetic social realist. Through this role, there would be opportunities to empathise with contending perceptions, and these experiences can be translated into exploratory hypotheses concerning community members' exigencies.

The four social reality perspectives — naturalist structuralism, naturalist agency, hermeneutic structuralism and hermeneutic agency — offer four distinct methodological configurations, which can bring an enhanced awareness so that the community worker:

> will be committed to one or a few particular causes, will have found a special path in life that gives her a sense of unity and meaning, while fully appreciating and respecting that others may follow paths that are equally important. She takes her chosen tasks seriously and pays attention to detail;

she is attached to the task while at the same time realising that the way she does things may not be the only right way; in other words, she shows detachment as well, is ready to resign and change course if need be (Ravn, 1991: 103).

Thus, the unity and diversity principles, that are enshrined in *unity-in-diversity*, become mutually inclusive complementary experiences that are fundamental precepts to enjoying the good life. In this scenario, as community workers embrace the role of synthetic social realists, the concept of shared meaning systems undergo a rudimentary revision as they start to experience a new holistic meaning system that offers a comprehensive means to improve community relations.

**Community Elaboration**

*Homo sociologicus* expects community structures to be elaborated through the process of deliberative and participatory democracy[8] that enables the achievement of consensual decision-making amongst community members. As the presence of four contending social reality perspectives over-shadows such a proposition, the notion of consensual decision-making is replaced with one of modulated decision-making. This categorisation is underpinned by two theoretical assertions. The first is derived from personal construction theory (Kelly, 1955). This supposes that everyone tries to anticipate events in a way that confirms their own constructs, opting to use subjectivity to substantiate objective truths and bring about the meaning that is preferred or liked. Therefore, the individual has the freedom to choose whichever meaning they prefer in their own domain, where alternative constructivism can be applied to previous, contemporaneous or future events. So a series of organised constructs can be built into a system and one or more

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[8] Deliberative democracy is imbricated with participatory democracy. Both concepts place an emphasis on deliberation, inclusiveness and egalitarianism (Hendricks and Zouridis, 1999:126; Sanderson, 1999) and so resonate with the communitarian perspective of a social order that values communal bonds.

systems used to make predictions that can subsequently be evaluated for accuracy.

Olli's plausible models of the individual correspond to Kelly's framework, especially the notion that individual's social reality perspectives would be the result of tight and loose constructs. Thus, the coherent individual has a regularly used set of super-ordinate constructs, whilst the sequential individual, for the purposes of gain, and the synthetic individual, for the purposes of communality, base their constructs around the construction processes of others. However, personal construct theory avoids becoming a tautology of Olli's models through its emphasis on the necessity for collective social reality and individual's personal reality to be considered together. Consequently, individuals are more than just observers of an independent universe, as the realities within their meaning system becomes inseparably linked to the realities of others.

The second theoretical assertion is established in Rickman's notion that experience is not inscribed on an empty slate but absorbed into interlocking and expanding contexts. So, problems and failures arise not merely from lack of intelligence or the absence of current information but from ignorance of the context (Rickman, 2005: 29).

Therefore, all three of Olli's plausible models, as they sit within Kelly's framework, need to absorb the crucial notion of context, into which they are then able to place their prior values, attitudes and opinions. This stage of deliberation is crucial in the attainment of modulated decision-making as, through its logical precepts, it questions the concept of impermeable constructs, thereby creating a space for reconsideration and reconciliation. So, the stage is set for the community worker to positively utilise the Dixon and Dogan typology in a process that can

lead to a recognition of the value and legitimacy of alternative perceptions of social reality.

## Integrating Contending Social Reality Perspectives, Critical Realism and Analytical Dualism: A Community Research Case Study

This design for a research programme is based on a model that features the theoretical underpinnings of community elaboration, so it is important that the anticipated outcomes create their own particular paradigm and thus avoid the danger of the researcher placing these issues in preconceived categories that have arisen from deductive reasoning. A tautology would result from the mistake of employing preconceived categories, with the research only capable of verifying that certain uncontested general principles exist. Therefore, the envisaged programme supplements existing empirical research, which is either quantitative, qualitative or an amalgam of both methods. But, it is a prerequisite that existing investigations would have reached some unambiguous conclusions about the dynamics that exist in the Town that is the object of the research.

The Wadebridge Town Plan[9] will be used as an example of how this project's theoretical base can inform and enhance community practice. The results of the public consultation that shaped the issues and solutions in the Plan enables the identification of the community's generic and specific structural and cultural emergent properties. Following this process of classification the roles of Corporate Agents and Social Actors are recognisable and conditions of their interaction with cultural emergent properties understood enabling the tendencies towards morphogenesis (transformation) or morphostatis (reproduction) to be explored.

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[9] A full report of the findings in Wadebridge Town Plan can be obtained from Wadebridge Library or viewed on the North Cornwall District Council website – www.ncdc.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1267

Wadebridge is a small market town in North Cornwall with a population of approximately 6,000 people. The surrounding area is a popular holiday destination, so Wadebridge suffers from the tensions of a declining rural economy that is dependent on the vagaries of seasonal trade. Moreover, due to recent escalating house prices, the cost of local housing accommodation is increasingly beyond the financial capacity of local people resulting in resentment towards wealthy "incomers" who are often investing in second homes.

The process of consulting the community took place in 2002 when 3,500 houses and businesses in the locality received a copy of a questionnaire. Subsequently 1,066 completed survey forms were returned, representing a response rate of 30%. After analysis, the results were presented at an open exhibition in Wadebridge Town Hall, and community members were invited to review the issues identified and comment further on priorities for the town. The final town plan was drawn up to reflect the outcomes from this process.

**Generic and Specific Emergent Properties**

The generic structural emergent property (SEP), which emerged from the plan was the development of the rural economy. This lead to four discernible specific structural emergent properties that draw upon individual and group social opportunities, bargaining and negotiating power: employment opportunities; accommodation issues; retail services and, finally, public transport services. So, each possesses logical relationships within its component parts that can constrain or enable the activities of agents.

The generic cultural emergent property (CEP), which featured in the plan was the future identity of community members as citizens of a small town in Cornwall. This draws upon past experiences of interacting with others, which has then influenced future expectations. In turn, this generic property leads to three specific

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CEPs that can enable or restrain agents: attitudes towards tourism; attitudes towards issues of community safety and, attitudes towards the adequacy of healthcare facilities.

Whether, over time, morphogenesis or morphostatis take place in relation to the specific structural emergent properties would depend on the relationships between Corporate Agents and Social Actors that can change cultural and structural forms.

## Agents and Actors

All citizens who live in Wadebridge are its Primary Agents but some, through their conscious commitment to community groups, other voluntary groups, private business or government are also Corporate Agents. In a similar fashion, all Social Actors are Primary Agents and some may also be Corporate Agents. In this scenario, the interaction between Social Actors and Corporate Agents is particularly informative as the Social Actor's vested interests may place that person in a position of conflict with some Corporate Agents. This can arise when a local entrepreneur seeks to increase the number of holiday "lets" in the town thereby increasing the tourist trade and reducing the amount of available accommodation for local people. Not only does this cause a sense of hopelessness amongst young people who cannot find a place to live, but also the general cultural resentment against all "outsiders" increases. Furthermore, Social Actors may exercise choice through use of economic power that is beyond less wealthy agents. Therefore, the interaction of Social Actors and Corporate Agents in relation to specific cultural and structural emergent properties can result in a host of sometimes conflicting values and attitudes. This situation might also be repeated in the networks of social relations that exist between primary and corporate agents where the believer in the status quo or the apathetic citizen may dismiss the corporate activist as naïve.

Whilst the application of Archer's theory of analytical dualism is informative nevertheless, in isolation, it does not offer community workers insights into how they can improve their praxis. Therefore, to address this omission, the Dixon and Dogan philosophical framework is combined with analytical dualism to create a synthesis that clearly demonstrates how these separate elements can combine into a community management model for improved community outcomes.

Figure 7.2 begins its cycle by contemplating the beliefs of the individual community member about what is true and what has the capacity to give causation. Thus, as contending reality perspectives are understood their adherents as — *homo hierarchus, home economicus, homo sociologicus* or *homo existentialis* — can be recognised as having a particular viewpoint when they are in a relational situation involving community matters. So, community members, as either Primary or Corporate Agents and, in some cases Social Actors, decide (1) whether they can have any effect on any emergent properties; (2) whether they wish to re-enforce structural and/or cultural emergent properties; or (3) whether they want to change structure and/or cultural emergent properties. Therefore, in accordance with Archer's theorising, causal capacity can exist in the essence of agency, structure and culture, and this complex and subtle effect is mediated by agency as Corporate Agents and Social Actors choose to interact with structural and cultural forms. In this scenario, mediation can illuminate the specific community context by providing community members with differing types of knowledge that give validity to alternative community perspectives thus encouraging a modulated style of decision-making that can accommodate new ideas.

The social outcomes that arise from the action taken by community members will lead to actual ethical results. These results may produce cognitive dissonance

Figure 7.2: Analytical Dualism, Social Reality Perspectives and Community Members

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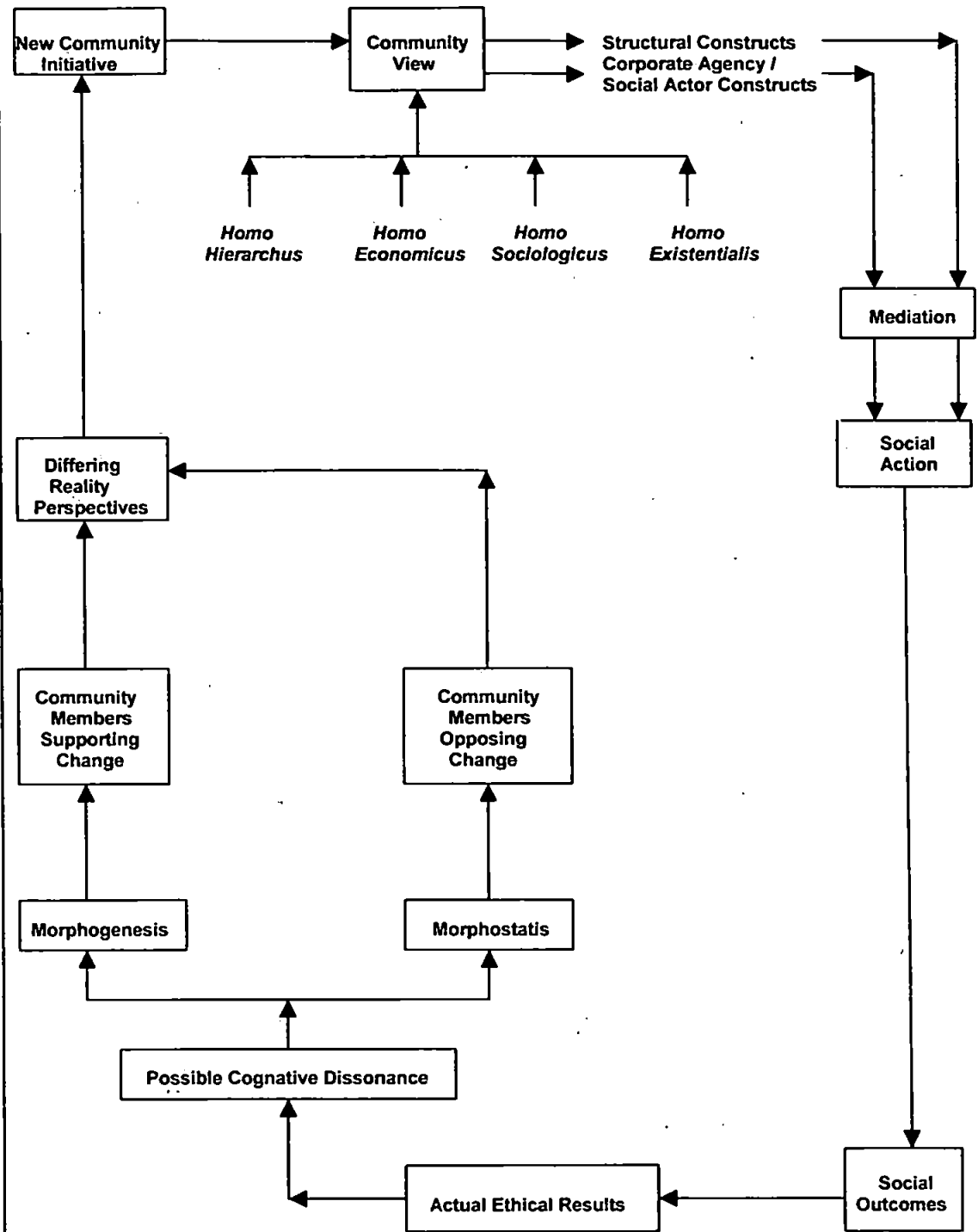
and thereby create circumstances where individuals reflect over the outcomes from the mediation process. Following this introspection community members might, once again, consider their values, attitudes and opinions and either engage with the means of social change (*morphogenesis*) or support the status quo (*morphostatis*). The cycle recommences when new community initiatives cause community members to again consider their preferred perception of community.

## A Case Study of the Model for Managing Community

The Wadebridge Town Plan, used here as an example, concluded its process of consultation with the presentation of the results of the survey to members of the community. At this point, as people expressed their views about the results, and informed by the interaction taking place between particular networks of Corporate Agents and Social Actors, the community worker can invite differing proponents to take part in a supplementary research programme. These invitations would be extended on the basis that every community member's opinions and constraints have total legitimacy. Thus, the views of the duty-bound *homo-hierarchus*, the self-interested *homo-economicus*, the conversation saturated *homo sociologicus* and the possibly apathetic and perhaps suspicious *homo existentialis* are all treated with identical respect as "the particulars of exactly what is to be accepted and embraced" in the envisaged inclusive community remain to be decided (Ravn, 1991: 106). It is likely that distrust will deter some, particularly the apathetic, from engagement however for some adherents to all four social reality perspectives discussion about their personal social interpretations in a supportive and respectful setting would be meaningful.
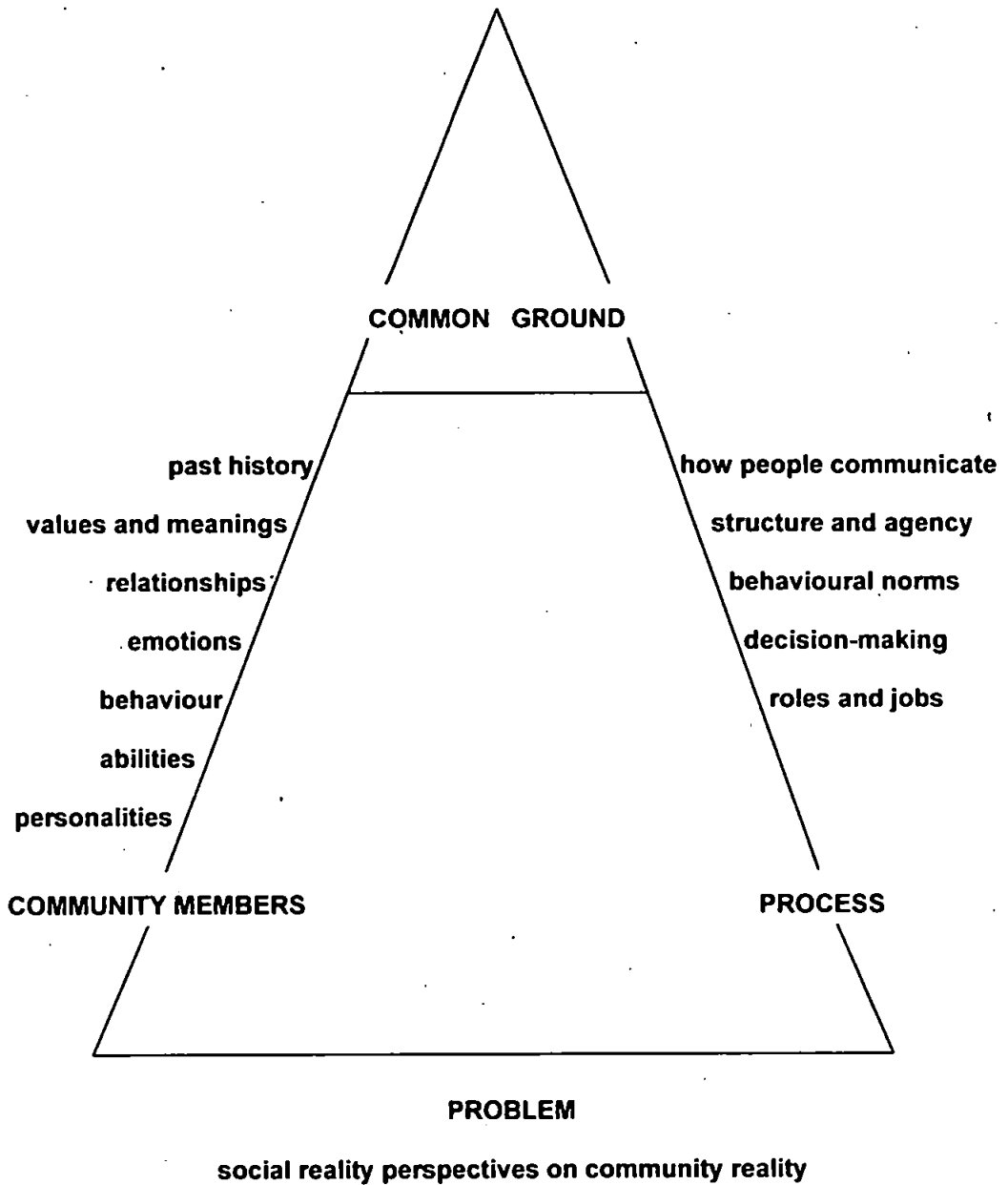
The research programme would feature the following three stages.

**Stage 1:** The participants would be asked to consider a theory for an improved community. This could be called a "transformative theory," as it would contain the idealisations of community members (Ravn, 1991: 107). This exercise could be addressed through unstructured interviews with the data recorded on qualitative software like N5, which facilitates the dissemination of text to the extent where similarities and differences are apparent.

By ascertaining the commonalities between selected idealisations the community worker can then allocate community members to groups that share particular values and attitudes. These groups should be flexible enough to permit individual ideational movement but would also have a clear understanding about the use and capacity of the notion of community to achieve well being.

**Stage 2:** The community worker would then contextualise the community's reality from each of the four social reality perspectives, thus highlighting the necessity of reconciliation between the differences in idealised community visions. As a first step, community members would be made aware that this consensus building requires communication and understanding between groups, so proponents of differing viewpoints would need to recognise that it may be advantageous to change their ways of interacting with others. This is important as the differing community idealisations can leave participants doubting whether there can be a solution to the contending perceptions of reality. As illustrated In Figure 7.3, this level of community conflict creates a triangle that, at its extreme, produces a wide gap between community members and the processes that guide interaction with others. However, as the diagram suggests, reconciliation lies in the "common ground" at the apex of the triangle. All the contending community groups and individuals have their point or position so it is necessary for community workers to delve beneath these obvious elements of contention. Thus, Archer's analytical

# Figure 7.3: The Conflict Triangle

COMMON GROUND

past history

values and meanings

relationships

emotions

behaviour

abilities

personalities

how people communicate

structure and agency

behavioural norms

decision-making

roles and jobs

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

PROCESS

PROBLEM

social reality perspectives on community reality

Source: Derived from Beer and Stief, 1997: 14

dualism, when synthesised with the Dixon and Dogan typology of social reality perspectives, helps to reveal how, through an educational process, both those committed to structure, and those committed to agency, can recognise collective concern about general community well being. Similarly differences of emphasis over objective and subjective knowledge can be interpreted as individual psychological preferences, which must be accepted as an inevitable facet of humanity rather than a source of conflict.

**Stage 3:** The pattern of a structured mediation session between two conflicting community groups divides into four discrete, but inter-linked sections.

- **Opening Statement:** The community worker sets out the purpose of the mediation between the two conflicting groups. Then the community worker must explain his or her role as a facilitator in the process of the participants resolving their own conflict. In this context he or she would be informed by Whittington's typology, Figure 7.1, that recommends a processual or intuitive style of behaviour that can enable opposing factions to incrementally agree on small changes to their position. In this context, it is also necessary to confirm that the four contending social reality perspectives will be used to help comprehend the dynamics that develop between the participants. So, in this paradigm, the community worker adopts a position of neutrality and impartiality by providing a process that allows community members to consider their intent towards the aim of creating *unity-in-diversity* in their community.

- **Statements of Idealisation:** Both groups need to relate their version of idealised community outcomes with the community worker acting to encourage detailed comment by building empathy with all the participants.

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- **Open Discussion:** This part of the mediation process has the objective of re-defining the differences between the two groups. In this process, the community worker, drawing on the detailed operationalisation of each of the four perspectives on community reality, summarises the values, attitudes and opinions held by each set of protagonists. Then, as the opposing parties offer further information about their interests and needs, the common ground that exists between their positions will become clear. The existence of this common ground then stimulates modulated decision-making as the community worker re-frames and summarises each step that takes the process forward.

- **Constructing an Agreement:** As commonalities become apparent the incremental process of enlarging the common ground between the two parties requires increased reliance on modulated decision-making. Thus, it is inevitable that a point will be reached where the opposing groups are impermeable to further creative thinking. At this juncture, the community worker should accept that some level of conflict may continue but, at this stage, it cannot be resolved through mediation. Therefore, the worker would then formally summarise what has been agreed between the conflicting parties and how these agreements can be incorporated into community strategies.

Completion of the stages of mediation precludes social action, the resultant social outcomes and the actual ethical results from those outcomes. Thus, community members might experience cognitive dissonance as they consider unintended ethical outcomes and, after reflection, could change their reality perspective on community before the cycle in Figure 7.2 commences again.

# Conclusion

Community workers must acknowledge that low levels of participation in community initiatives are, at least in part, due to their failure to accommodate the contending perspectives on community reality that exist amongst community members derived from contending perspectives on social reality. The model for managing community offered here, with its use of the techniques of mediation and reflexivity, does not claim to be a design that inevitably lead to community utopia. Indeed, there is no correct means of formulating and implementing community strategies that would ensure the wholehearted commitment and involvement of all community members. Instead, professional community workers and members of communities need to face their community realities and endeavour to collectively produce suppositions that will require further reflexive interpretation.

In the community work paradigm conflict is endemic so it should be openly addressed as it is only through the toleration of acceptable levels of disagreement that all community members can feel that they play a meaningful part in their community's development. Therefore, there can be no justification for avoiding constructive discourse that advocates principles that might challenge the collective. Instead, this style of engagement should be encouraged, as it is only through directly addressing contending values, beliefs and attitudes that modulated decision-making can lead to more inclusive communities.

John Stuart Mill, in his landmark essay *On liberty* recognised that any organisation is only as good as the value that is placed on the diverse individuals that compose it. The risks inherent in neglecting the notion of *unity-in-diversity* are captured by Mill:

a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes – would find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished (Mill, [1859] 1989: 115).

# 8

# Conclusion: Managing Community through a Multifaceted Model

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"The world is a looking-glass, and gives back to every man the reflection of his own face."

W.M.Thakery, *Vanity Fair*

Throughout this Thesis it has been argued that professional community practitioners need to critically reflect on their praxis if they aspire to facilitate community initiatives that are "a liberating and progressive force" (Popple, 1994: 24). Underlying this assertion is the apparent neglect in much of the mainstream community work literature of the effects of individual's differing and contending perspectives on social reality that lead to particular values, attitudes and beliefs in relation to their membership of a community. Therefore, Chapter 1 provides an extensive critical discussion about the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of working in communities with the active participation of community members. This discussion, which draws on key writers and explores the dynamics of community engagement, provides the context for subsequent discussion and analysis. This utilises the Dixon and Dogan typology of social reality perspectives as a tool to assist practitioners in examining both their own practice and that of

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community members. Through this framework it is possible to explore the everyday consequences of individuals adopting one of four contending epistemological and ontological dispositions.

Bertrand Russell described philosophy, in the very wide sense, as "something intermediate between theology and science" ([1946] 2000: 13). Thus, the discipline permits speculation over matters where knowledge is unascertainable, whilst also appealing to human reason rather than the pronouncements of an élite authority (Russell, [1946] 2000: 13). However, when this wide understanding of philosophy's subject matter is replaced by the confines of the philosophy of social science then the reflexive practitioner can focus on a logical epistemological division between naturalism and hermeneutics and a logical ontological division between structure and agency. These dichotomies, founded on differing understandings of the notion of truth, are substantiated in Chapter 2 as being underpinned by philosophical thought that extends back to Ancient Greece. Moreover, following this analysis, it is then possible to categorise the assertions and conclusions of some notable philosophers as belonging to either a school of (1) rationalism; (2) empiricism; (3) social constructivism or (4) existentialism. For example, thinkers such as Machiavelli, whose Prince is concerned with being powerful, not good, and Hobbes, who believed that political power could be legitimately acquired by force as well as consent, affirm the social reality perspective of naturalist structuralism and its adherent, the duty bound *homo hierarchus*. Alternatively the philosophy of Locke, in its belief that people must consent to the powers of government, and John Stuart Mill, who was concerned to preserve the liberty of the individual from the tyranny of the majority, affirm the social reality perspective of naturalist agency and its adherent, the self-interested *homo economicus*. In contradistinction to these schools of thought, social

constructivism enters into the later work of Wittgenstein, as he is concerned with the language games played by people during discourse. Here, individual subjectivity elicits responses that do not depend on explicit rules but instead construct a variety of meanings inspired by individual creativity. Moreover, Latour argues that the outcomes of scientific experiments cannot be separated from the social interaction of scientists and other actors involved in a research project. These observations affirm the social reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism and its adherent, the conversation saturated *homo sociologicus*. Finally, existentialists such as Sartre and Heidegger can unite around the proclamation that existence proceeds essence in a world where anxiety, terror and loneliness are people's natural emotions and it is the manifestation of individual bad faith that causes evasion from this inevitable circumstance. Therefore, this affirms the social reality perspective of hermeneutic agency and its adherent *homo existentialis*.

The seeds of this Thesis germinate in Chapter 2, then flower in the following three Chapters as the extent of the principles underpinning the Dixon and Dogan typology of social perspectives become apparent. Thus, as people form attitudes, developmental psychology identifies five elements in an individual's personality, each are discrete yet totally inter-related, which, subject to their pre-dominance would motivate individuals to associate with one of the four social reality perspectives. This notion is then synthesised with Olli's useful and perceptive theorising on the provision of three plausible models of the individual. These models offer an insight into the degree that some people may adhere to a particular social reality perspective whilst others may change their epistemological and ontological beliefs in different relational situations. Moreover, whilst a person's disposition, whether coherent, sequential or synthetic, is not a permanent

characteristic it is likely that only an event of considerable personal significance would initiate change through a process of deep personal reflection.

The subject of ethics is considered from what is perceived as good and what is perceived as bad, what determines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and how individuals should relate to their fellow citizens, their community and the state. The consequences of contending perspectives on social reality are four distinct ethical frameworks, each of which has total ethical legitimacy other than an inability to accommodate contending ethical beliefs. Therefore, individual adherence to an ethical code may even assume the quintessence of a pre-ordained proclamation, as personal moral imperatives are preferred to moral alternatives. Moreover, as an extension of this paradigm, the contending ethical standards of *homo hierarchus, homo economicus, homo sociologicus* and *homo existentialis* are then associated with four discrete sets of ideological values and attitudes. Thus, each of the four perspectives on social reality reveal a coherent and discrete set of beliefs in relation to the role of the state, the role of the market and the role of community.

At this point the theoretical analysis and synthesis undertaken in this Thesis has resulted in the construction of four contending, unambiguous perspectives on social reality. Furthermore, it has been asserted that, as individuals encounter relational situations, they would either consciously or sub-consciously choose a particular social reality perspective to guide what attitudes they adopt in these circumstances. However, the indicative, exploratory empirical research conducted with a group of community workers in Chapter 6 found that instead of embracing, as expected, the social reality perspective of hermeneutic structuralism the majority of these professionals perceive human relations as existing within the terms of the naturalist agency perspective on social reality, perhaps reflecting their

own pecuniary interest in the preservation and enhancement of their contracts of employment. Furthermore, whilst the proposition that community should be an arena of democratic discourse that results in shared values and attitudes was fully supported nevertheless it was also recognised that deontological premises of duty and obligation should exist between community members and the state thereby establishing that compliant communities should be looked after by the state. Therefore, a paradox is posed by the participants in the research — they advocate a fundamental tenet of communitarianism but believe in rational choices made in a social reality where individuals choose to believe facts because these facts result in their benefit. Moreover, well meaning community orientated pronouncements such as the Budapest Declaration may fail in not only neglecting the probable presence of contending perspectives on social reality amongst community members but also in the assumption that those working in communities are all committed to the social reality of *homo sociologicus*. Thus, the challenge facing community practitioners can also exist at a personal level as well as in the conduct of complex relationships with some community members, who may see little point in community initiatives.

Chapter 7 draws together the strands of thought in this Thesis, which lead to the following conclusions. Firstly, there have been calls for community workers to reflect over their motivation (for example see Holman, 1994 and McCulloch, 1997), however these exhortations focus on the individual's commitment to a specific set of values, thus a socialist creed, a feminist outlook or an anti-racist agenda can be promoted as fundamental underpinnings to community praxis for the professional practitioner. Whilst the anti-discriminatory initiatives implemented at community level since the nineteen seventies are undoubtedly praiseworthy, nevertheless, the same credibility cannot be extended to those advocating a specific ideology that

would exclude those community members who are not its adherents. Indeed, suggesting that community practitioners should wholeheartedly embrace certain political attitudes so they can become the type of person suited to working in a community setting leads to the paradoxes faced by the practitioners surveyed for this Thesis. Therefore, instead of those working in communities adopting a ritualised role that supposedly would legitimise their presence in the social structure of a community (Manning, 1992: 133), it is recommended that they should explore their praxis through the dynamics and expected outcomes of Figure 7.2. Thus, they should provide community members with a morally defensible disclosure of their personal values, attitudes and beliefs that gives due respect to these community members "as persons with knowledge, understanding, feelings and interests who come together in a shared educational process" (Margetson, 1998: 39). In this scenario, the Dixon and Dogan typology provides a framework that enables the community practitioner to describe, in the beginnings of a language of *communicative rationality*, exactly what community members can expect from a new epistemology of practice as he or she feels freed from the need to maintain an ideological façade.

Secondly, the synthesis of transcendental realism and analytical dualism offers a new way to contextualise knowledge that accommodates the divide between objectivity and subjectivity and structure and agency without conflating any of the constituent parts. Here, different types of knowledge can be evaluated in a community context as the ideas, beliefs and practices of *homo hierarchus, homo economicus, homo sociologicus* and *homo existentialis* are opened up "for an infinite regress, a recursive movement of ethical and moral reflection that has no ultimate foundation" (Ravn, 1991: 105). Obviously, the challenge for the community practitioner is to effectively engage with *homo hierarchus, homo*

*economicus* and *homo existentialis,* a dilemma that cannot be underestimated. However, in this complex paradigm, progress might be made through the recognition that individuals are entitled to pursue their own legitimate understanding of social reality. When engaging with others is built on a fundamental respect for difference then constructive *unity-in-diversity* may be achieved. In aspiring to propagate this notion of mutual respect the community practitioner could critically examine the traditional relationship of contractual accountability that exists between himself or herself and his or her management group. This group, although usually consisting of a majority of local people, is often totally reliant on a local authority for its funding, thus it can be driven by a technical rationality that relies on the maximisation of outcomes and the minimisation of costs. Therefore, this structure might inherently reflect a naturalist structuralist perspective on social reality. Thus, the practitioner might need to seek to supplement this agreement through an informal contract with all community members that, in its basis of honest reflection over differing but equally legitimate opinions and constraints, can lead to a sense of renewed capacity for social interpretation.

Thirdly, achieving the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to be an effective community practitioner can be described as a rail journey where passengers decide on their own embarkation point. This analogy usefully illustrates the dilemma for those practitioners who, whilst possibly strongly committed to anti-discriminatory praxis, might fail to observe the complexity of each individual's contending social reality perspectives as they left the train well before its destination. Thus, practitioners might express attitudes such as "I know my people" or "I know which buttons to press to achieve my aims" that render community initiatives as attractive only to a minority of the members of a

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community. This approach will frustrate policy makers as they aspire to use community as a means of delivering inclusive social policies. Therefore it seems desirable that a rudimentary re-evaluation and revision of the training curriculum for community practitioners should take place.

Finally, it should be remembered that community members are volunteers and, as such give freely of their time and effort to contribute to their fellow citizens well being. In this context the findings of an American Survey conducted by Snyder and Clary (1995: 111–124) into motivations for volunteering and giving are salutary:

- Values — for some volunteers the action of volunteering satisfies deeply held beliefs about the importance of altruism (the social reality perspective of *homo sociologicus*).

- Understanding — for some volunteers the action of volunteering helps a person to understand their own motivations, comprehend why they wish to serve others and why a particular organisation assumes an importance in this paradigm (the social reality perspectives of *homo hierarchus* and *homo sociologicus*).

- Career — for some volunteers the action of volunteering helps them to learn new skills and thus achieve better job prospects or chances of promotion (the social reality perspective of *homo economicus*).

- Social — for some volunteers the action of volunteering is about creating more social contacts and meeting people (the social reality perspective of *homo sociologicus*).

- Esteem — for some volunteers the action of volunteering helps to raise an individual's self esteem as they feel that they are undertaking a virtuous act (the social reality perspective of *homo sociologicus*).

- Protective — for some volunteers the action of volunteering might assist a person to escape from pessimistic feelings of guilt and loneliness (a strand of the social reality perspective of the *homo existentialis*).

Therefore, it is apparent that people volunteer for a variety of reasons that accord with differing perspectives on social reality. Thus, self-interest is present, as well as altruism, leading managers, in the wider voluntary sector, to have a use for the Dixon and Dogan typology as a reflexive framework in the management of their staff in a similar fashion to that of community practitioners in the facilitation of community members.

At this time of unprecedented individual autonomy, where success often hinges upon the capacity of the individual to understand and accommodate their superiors, peers, subordinates, clients, customers and suppliers, the words of the first great political scientist, Machiavelli, ring true "he who would wish for success must act in unison with the times" ([1525] 1898: 512).

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# Community Workers
# And Community Reality

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. The results will be used in a PhD thesis that has the aim of contributing to the development of the theoretical understanding of managing community.

This research is being conducted under the auspices of the Sociology and Social Policy Group, School of Sociology, Law and Politics at the University of Plymouth and is supervised by Professor John Dixon (01752 233274). Thus, in compliance with the University's ethical code of research, the source of all answers will be treated as strictly confidential.

The following questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section asks you to select your preferred choice from a number of statements. The second part of the questionnaire consists of twenty-four propositions. For each of these items please select an appropriate response from a set of categories constructed along a continuum from agreement to disagreement. There are no correct answers and your replies should be based on your initial reaction to the content.

Once again *thank you* for your assistance with this project.

Alan Sanderson (01208 812610)

# SECTION 1.

This section is concerned with ascertaining your preferred philosophical position in relation to the following statements. Please tick the appropriate box that corresponds with your chosen answer.

1. Human Nature.
a) "Individuals are essentially free beings who seek liberation from the interference of others as they continuously pursue their own pleasure."
b) "Individuals have a natural aptitude for virtuous actions as they constantly strive for the right knowledge, the right speech and the right conduct."
c) "Individuals are rational and recognise that they can rise above their feelings and passions by striving for good conduct, loyalty and sincerity. This can only be made possible through conformity to norms, imposed by a social order, that determines both how they should live and encourages them in the habit of self-control."
d) "Individuals are essentially unique beings, free, through acts of their own will, to choose who and what to make of themselves."

| a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |

2. Facts.
a) "A fact is a statement that I believe because it helps me work out how to produce beneficial results for myself, after all matters are considered."
b) "A fact is a statement that has been verified by experts using reason and the scientific method."
c) "There is no such thing as a fact, for nothing is knowable with absolute certainty."
d) "A fact can only be validated through discussion with others, because only then can there be the appropriate mutual understanding of what is meant by a factual statement."

| a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |

3. The Social World.
a) "I consider the social world to be objective and knowable, and one in which social forces mould human behaviour."
b) "I consider the social world to be unknowable, thus human behaviour is unknowable and therefore unpredictable."
c) "I consider the social world to be subjective and knowable through understandings that result from discussions with others, thus individual behaviour is determined by how people collectively interpret reality."
d) "I consider the social world to be objective and knowable, and one in which individual intentions mould human behaviour."

| a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |

4. Community.
a) "Community is just another constituent of the hierarchical social order."
b) "Community is a fictitious body of self-interested individuals."
c) "Community is another instrument of potential or actual external control."
d) "Community is a collective committed to engaging in discourses that build shared values and attitudes amongst its membership."

| a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |

5. Decisions.
a) "I make personal decisions on the basis that I decide what I will think."
b) "I make my personal decisions on the basis that I have, with other community members, collectively decided what I will think."
c) "I make personal decisions on the basis that they decide what I must think."
d) "I make personal decisions on the basis that they decide what we should think."

| a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |

6. Ethics.
a) "The moral rightness of an action can best be judged by the goodness of its consequence, hence the end justifies the means, which makes such an action intrinsically good."
b) "As there is no single true morality across time, societies and individuals a moral act is one where a good action is accompanied by good intentions, and the right emotions and feelings."
c) "Moral beliefs are just matters of personal taste because moral truths are simply unknowable."
d) The end of moral activity lies in an individual finding her or his station or position in life and then carrying out its duties."

| a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |

# SECTION 2.

This section is concerned with your attitude towards the general aims of community organisations and responses to initiatives from community members. Please put a tick in the box of your choice.

1. Communities should make decisions that preserve national social unity.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |

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2. Communities should make decisions based on a group consensus that avoids individual personal risk.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

3. All community projects should be managed to achieve measurable improvements to individual well-being.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

4. National loyalty is more important than loyalty to your local community.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

5. Collective agreements amongst community members are impossible, as we cannot know how other people think.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

6. Making voluntary contributions and sacrifices to the shared aims of our community is desirable.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

7. A community can only be understood as a collection of self-interested individuals.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

8. As individuals cannot influence community outcomes apathy towards community is justified.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

9. Community is a social entity that can empower activists in community matters to achieve the "good life" for all community members.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

10. Communities should be lead by community members with proven expertise and experience.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

11. Community members only make voluntary sacrifices to their community if their personal potential benefit exceeds any costs incurred.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

12. Community just represents another unavoidable mechanism of potential or actual control over the individual.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

13. Community is just another part of the nation's social order.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

14. A personal commitment to discussing ideas and values with other community members should be valued.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

15. No individual sacrifices should be made for the community unless benefits can be expected in return.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

16. Individual community members will benefit from being involved in collectively making group decisions.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

17. If community members observe their duties to their communities then the state should accept its obligations to these communities.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

18. Community organisations are fictitious as they only exist as a network of relationships amongst self-interested individuals.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

19. As the social world cannot be known and understood then community decisions can only be based on risk minimisation aspirations.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

20. If community plays its part in maintaining the social order then community members should be willing to make voluntary sacrifices on its behalf.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

21. Management of community affairs is just about management for individual survival.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

22. Community members should be only interested in maximising their material wellbeing when making decisions in community settings.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

23. Community members can understand their community or a community through consultation with other community members.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

24. Community decision taking should be concerned with supporting people in the pursuit of their rational self-interest.

| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

## thank you for taking part in this project

# IMPROVING PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP:
# PHILOSOPHICAL DISPOSITIONS
# AND SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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# Abstract

Successful leaders in the public sector must satisfy the, often contending, aspirations of the state, the private sector and civil society as well as their people and the end-users. This paper, therefore, argues that such a complex leadership paradigm must be addressed through a philosophically coherent and holistic approach to leadership, one that can facilitate practitioners' understanding of values, attitudes and behaviours that form an appropriate leadership style in specific relational situations. This assertion is realised by application of the paradigm of philosophical dispositions developed by Dixon and Dogan. This provides a taxonomy that, through a process of deductive logic, draws upon both historic and contemporary thought in the philosophy of the social sciences' dichotomous perspectives on epistemology (naturalism and hermeneutics) and ontology (structure and agency) to develop four contending philosophical dispositions (methodological configurations): (1) naturalist structuralism, which underpins the obligation-driven *homo hierarchus*; (2) naturalist agency, which underpins the self-interested (free-riding) *homo economicus*; (3) hermeneutic-structuralism, which underpins the conversation-saturated *homo sociologicus*; and (4) hermeneutic agency, which underpins the *existential outsider*. These philosophical dispositions act as perceptual filters through which people receive and interpret information about how the social world, and the organisations within it, works and how other people behave in it and thus give rise to conflicting perceptions on what constitutes "good" leadership. Therefore, senior civil servants who find themselves in a particular politico-administrative situations where only one of four methodological families can provide them with a way of satisfactorily describing and explaining their socio-political and organisational world are confronted with the leadership challenge of devising strategies that can accommodate a variety of contending epistemological and ontological imperatives. Thus, leaders must learn to vary their leadership approach by taking informed leadership stances, depending on the politico-administrative and organisational contexts in which they are situated, whilst maintaining their own ethical integrity. This situational approach to leadership can be effectively evaluated by reference to experience. The paper concludes by offering a number of hypotheses for public sector leaders that can guide their selection of the most appropriate leadership qualities and skills in specific relational situations.

## INTRODUCTION

> When we say we want more leadership in the public sector, what we are really
> looking for is *people who will promote institutional adaptations in the public
> interest.* Leadership in this sense is not value neutral. It is a positive espousal
> of the need to promote certain fundamental values that can be called *public·
> spiritedness* (OECD, 2001: 15

Stogdill's (1950: 3) timeless and classical defined of leadership — as an influencing process
aimed at setting and achieving goals — goes a long way in explaining why good leadership is a
critical determinant for organisational effectiveness, especially in times of rapid change. The
delivery by public agencies of cost-effective services presents senior civil servants with leadership
challenges as they contend with structural adjustments, politico-administrative reforms and new
managerialist agendas in a world that is more open with dynamic global environments and
technological pressures (Dixon and Kouzmin 2003 and 2004, Dixon et al. 2004a and b, Kouzmin et
al. 2001). Indeed, the nature of the public sector is increasingly changing, with greater emphasis
being placed by governments on the management of public resources and organisational
performance; and with greater expectations being held by not only more-aware users but also other
stakeholders — even service providers — all of whom pose serious leadership and organisational
challenges.

Senior civil servants must now deal with the 3Es — economy, efficiency, effectiveness. Thus,
they are confronted with ever rising expectations about the organisational imperatives of, among
others, flexibility, responsiveness, de-regulation, commercialisation and even privatisation, which
have place dynamic demands on leadership imperatives: subordinate needs and aspirations,
executive and political imperatives, market demands, IT advances, reality of dispersed knowledge,
and global economic shifts. Any discussion on public sector leadership should include components
that are based on process, context, and evaluation, all of which are influenced by how leadership
problems and issues are describe, explained, understood, judged and addressed. The subject of
leadership is at the centre of an intense debate among researchers, teachers and practitioners,
one that generates emotive and evocative undertones that add to the public sector's already long
list of paradoxes (Dixon et al. 2004). At the heart of this leadership discourse are sets of
contending and incompatible judgments about the ultimate constituents of social reality and how
they can be known. Thus, how leaders choose to interrogate their socio-political and
organisational reality depends on their philosophical disposition.

## A PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

People in leadership roles in the public sector have selective screens through which they
receive knowledge of how their socio-political and organisational world works and how other people
behave in them. These provide the value-oriented means by which they order occurrences so as to
give clarity of meaning to what would otherwise be an anarchic stream of events. These selective
screens "operate through inclusion and exclusion as homogenizing forces, marshalling
heterogeneity into ordered realms, silencing and excluding other discourses, other voices in the
name of universal principles and general goals" (Storey 1993: 159). They have both cognitive-
rational (objective meaning) and communicative-rational (normative meaning) dimensions, which

intermingle to produce an assumptive world: a "cognitive map of the world out there" (Young 1979: 33). The result is a hierarchically structured sets of leadership beliefs, values and norms that they construct as a result of their interaction with their internal and external environments, which can be categorized as immutable core values, adaptive attitudes, and changeable opinions (Parsons 1995: 375). How such leaders interrogate the socio-political and organisational reality in which they operate as civil servants, and so build their assumptive world, depends, then, on their epistemological predisposition (their contentions about what is knowable, how it can be known, and the standard by which the truth can be judged) and their ontological predisposition (their contentions about the nature of being, what can and does exist, what their conditions of existence might be, and to what phenomena causal capacity might be ascribed) (Dixon 2003, Dixon and Dogan 2002, 2003a, b, c, d, 2004).

Epistemological predispositions relate to people's contentions about what is knowable, how it can be known, and the standard by which the truth can be judged (Hollis, 1994). They can be based on naturalist propositions, whereby social knowledge must be grounded in objective material phenomena and must take the form of either analytical statements derived from deductive logic or synthetic statements derived from inductive inference. Or they can be based on hermeneutic propositions, whereby social knowledge rests on subjective interpretations, derived from cultural practice, discourse and language, generated by acts of ideation that rest on intersubjectively shared symbols, or typifications that allow the reciprocity of perspectives.

Ontological predispositions relate to people's contentions about the nature of being, what can and does exist, what their conditions of existence might be, and to what phenomena causal capacity might be ascribed (Hollis, 1994). They can be based on the structuralist proposition that "social structures impose themselves and exercise power upon agency. Social structures are regarded as constraining in the way they mould people's actions and thoughts, and in that it is difficult, if not impossible, for one person to transform these structures (Baert, 1998: 11). Thus, action derives from social structures. Or they can be based on the agency or individualist proposition that "individuals have some control over their actions and can be agents of their action (voluntarism) enabled by their psychological and social psychological make-up" (Parker, 2000: 125). Thus, action derives from individual intention.

From these epistemological and ontological dichotomies emerge four methodological families — see the Dixon-Dogan model in Figure 1 (Dixon 2002, Dixon and Dogan 2002, 2003a, b, c, d, 2004) — each of which provide a set of lens through which the nature of their socio-political and organisational world is perceived. These differing perceptions represent, logically, the only possible ways of describing and explaining that reality. They are the foundations of people's assumptive worlds, which enable them to frame appropriately the reality they encounter (Rein and Schön 1993), thereby becoming the prisms through which they perceive and analyse their socio-political and organisational world.

**Insert Figure 1 here**

## A PHILOSOPHICAL TAXONOMY OF "GOOD" LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Each of the methodological families identified in Figure 1 supports a coherent set of public interest perceptions and governance philosophies, enquiry methods, leadership practices and behavioural presumptions. Each, then, offers its adherents a set of "good" leadership practice

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propositions. Each, however, is fundamentally philosophically flawed. In other words, leaders who deny naturalist or hermeneutic epistemology will be unable to deal with management issues that stem from the excluded epistemology. Similarly, the denial of structuralist or agency ontology will make them unable to deal with leadership issues that stem from the excluded ontology.

**The Naturalist-Structuralist Perspective**

Public sector leaders who are predisposed to a naturalist-structuralist philosophical stance perceive the social world to be a knowable objective reality, which they would characterize as a (hierarchical) social order based on positional authority, expressed through orderly differentiation (Dumont 1970). As obligation-driven *homo hierarchuses*, they would be favourably disposed towards the proposition that the public interest is knowable and can be promoted and protected — and, thus, society is governable — but only if there is continuity between the past, present and future, which can only be preserved by the societal governing elites — in which they are prominent — who have the society's common good at heart and who thus can best articulate public interest propositions to be promoted and protected by them using the much coveted power of the state (Dixon 2002).

They would have a disposition towards a public agency that has a bureaucratic orientation (Weber [1915] 1947), and is characterised by high complexity, high formalization and high centralization (Burns and Stalker 1961), and with a primary concern for inputs and getting the process right. This they would be inclined to picture (Morgan 1986) as a machine or a brain. Their inclination would be to engage in the top-down bonding, through the fostering of an appropriate *espirit de corp*, with an insistence on hierarchical obedience and organisational loyalty (Burns 1966, Burns and Stalker 1961, Radner 1992, Taylor [1911] 1947). It would have a decision-making process that presumes decisions are the product of institutional activity using functional-analytic analysis to generate a set of objective facts, which are used to make satisfycing decisions (Simon 1960) that produce incremental change. In terms of Thompson's (1967) decision-making strategies matrix, they would prefer computational decision-making strategies, because they are inclined to be certain about both outcome preferences and their beliefs about cause-effect relations.

*Homo hierarchus* leaders, with their orderly hierarchical differentiation perceptions (Dumont 1970), would be sympathetic to Herzberg's (1966) presumptions of the 'Adam' conception of human nature, and to McGregor's (1960 and 1967) Theory X human nature assumptions. They would anticipate that dissatisfaction at work is, in terms of Herzberg and others' (1959, see also Herzberg 1966) job hygiene work environment factors, because of working conditions, status and security. Their respect for rules and regulations would make them particularly sensitive to the procedural justice achieved by the methods used to determine remuneration, a key status indicator (Adams 1965, Greenberg 1987). They would believe that people can best be motivated by the organisational satisfaction of their material and psychological needs. The needs they would focus on would be Maslow's (1970), physiological, safety (security), social (affiliation) and esteem needs; Ardrey's (1967) identity, security and stimulation needs; Adler's (1938) power needs; White's (1959) competence needs; and McCelland's (1961, see also McCelland et al. 1953) achievement, power and affiliation needs. Their underlying motivational presumptions are that people have a set

of valued personal material and psychological needs that are knowable by them and can be satisfied through work. Their psychological contracts with people would be designed on the presumption that they exercise legitimate, expert and knowledge power (Boulder 1990, French and Raven 1959, Hales 2001), and that people are predominantly calculative, and thus would make quite explicit claims on the rights and obligations of the organisation in terms of the needs that would be met in return for services rendered (Handy 1976: 41). All people would be expected to have a work commitment, in Morrow's (1983) terms, based on the value they place on their organisational loyalty, which would achieve a weak form of Etzioni's (1961) remunerative-calculative organisational engagement.

The leadership style of *homo hierarchus* would be parental (Nichols 1986), within a benevolent-authoritarian or consultative type of leadership system (Likert 1961 and 1967). This style is characterized by Hersey and Blanchard's (1969 and 1993) high relationship and high task behaviour pattern, which broadly corresponds with Blake and Mouton's (1982 and 1984) team leadership style. In terms of Tannenbaum and Schmidt's (1957) leadership behaviour continuum, it involves them making and announcing decisions. The focus of leadership is thus on explaining decisions, providing opportunities for clarification, and monitoring performance, thereby ensuring control.

The *homo hierarchus* leaders' approach would, thus, involve the application of a hierarchical command-and-control process that permits them to determine and police what are acceptable (desirable) or unacceptable (undesirable) behaviours in terms of the desired organisational outcomes. They would thus build an organisational culture that emphasizes role, supports compliance and permits little questioning of the rules and orders once they have been given by a legitimate authority (Bardach and Kagan 1982). This would support a club culture, whereby strong leaders have power and use it (Handy 1979). The appropriate control mechanism would be external control, given the weaker coercive influence of needs-satisfying motivators. This would involve both formal and impersonal rules relating to inputs (about recruitment, qualifications and experience), processes (as technical methods and procedures) and outputs (as performance measures and standards); and informally transmitted values (as organisational ethos or philosophy) achieved by direct supervision in the form of personal monitoring and work surveillance (Hales 2001: 47-48).

"Good" public sector leadership would, thus, be perceived as being *process driven*, with a focus on compliance. Thus, they would ensure that organisational policies and practices are implemented that give minimal discretion to subordinates. Administrative processes would be strictly controlled by rules and regulations that define who should complete a task, how and when it should be done. Control would be exercised *ex ante* (Feldman and Khademain 2000: 150). This is premised on human behaviour being predictable on the basis of rational thought constrained by hierarchically determined values and beliefs, with organisational commitment presumed to be both to correct procedures and to superiors.

## The Naturalist-Agency Perspective

Public sector leaders who are predisposed to a naturalist-agency philosophical stance philosophical stance would consider the social world to be a knowable objective reality, which they would characterize as an aggregation of individuals, each of whom interact, exercise their freedom

of choice and establish contractual relationships. As self-interested *homo economicuses*, they would be favourably disposed towards the proposition that the public interest is knowable and can be promoted and protected—and, thus, society is governable—but only when the societal governing elites' role — including their own — is, essentially, limited to defining, protecting and enforcing property rights by means of a managerialized (that is, privatised and contracted-out) and de-politicised civil service in a hollowed out state (Dixon et al. 2004).

They would be favourably disposed towards a public agency that has an entrepreneurial orientation (Mintzberg 1989), and is characterized by low complexity, low formalization and low centralization (Burns and Stalker 1961, Hague 1978), with little or no techno-structure, but a significant degree of horizontal and/or spatial sub-unit differentiation (Williamson 1985 and 1986), and with a primary concern for outputs and outcome. This they would picture (Morgan 1986) as a living organism or in a state of flux and transformation. Their inclination would be to ensure that decisions should be taken closest to the point where the need for such decisions arises. It would have a decision-making process that could become consultative when necessary, and which uses instrumentally rational analysis, premised on the self-interest motivation of all actors, to facilitate optimal decision-making. In terms of Thompson's (1967) decision-making strategies matrix, they would prefer judgmental decision-making strategies, as they are inclined to be certain about outcome preferences, but uncertain in their beliefs about cause-effect relations. Thus, they would be willing to operate at the edge of competence, by dealing with what they do not yet know using an integrative approach to problem solving that challenges established leadership practices by going beyond received wisdom (Kanter 1984 and 1989).

*Homo economicus* leaders, with their rational economic man perceptions (Schein 1980), would be sympathetic to Herzberg's (1966) 'Adam' conception of human nature, and would thus presume that people are concerned predominantly with satisfying their safety, security and inter-personal relations needs. They would also be attracted to McGregor's (1960 and 1967) Theory X human nature assumptions: that people are essentially indolent, unambitious, self-centred; are indifferent to organisational needs and prefer to be directed so as to avoid responsibility; and are gullible. So, they would accept Barnard's (1938: 159) proposition that "incentives represent the final residue of all conflicting forces in organisation" and that people are rational agents who respond to inputs (such as instructions) in systematic ways and can best be motivated by financial incentives (see also Bushardt et al. 1986, Clark and Wilson 1961, de Grazia 1960, Whyte 1955). They would anticipate that dissatisfaction at work is, in terms of Herzberg and others' (1959, see also Herzberg 1966) job hygiene work environment factors, because of money, status and security. Their sense of competition would make them particularly sensitive to remuneration equitability in terms of the distributive justice outcomes achieved (Adams 1965, Greenberg 1987). Their underlying motivational presumption is that people respond only to financial incentives. This is because they presume that people value financial reward as a means of satisfying their material and psychological needs, the most important of which are Maslow's (1970) physiological, safety (security) and esteem needs, and Riesman's (1950) and Packard's (1959) prestige needs (see also Furnham 1984, Porter and Lawler 1968); that people can justify their efforts only in terms of those rewards; that people do not anticipate that any increased individual performance will become a new minimum standard; and that organisational performance can be measurably attributed to an subordinate's work contribution (Handy 1976: 25). Their psychological contracts with people would

be designed on the presumption that they exercise resource, reward, economic or exchange power (Boulder 1990, French and Ravan 1959, Hales 2001), and that people are calculative, and thus would make quite explicit material rewards that would follow the rendering of service. This would be expressly incorporated into principal-agent contracts. People would be expected to have a work commitment, in Morrow's (1983) terms, based on their careers, which would achieve Etzioni's (1961) remunerative-calculative organisational engagement.

The leadership style of *homo economicus* leaders would be that of a developer (Nichols (1986), within a consultative leadership system (Likert 1961 and 1967). This style is characterized by Hersey and Blanchard's (1969 and 1993) low relationship and low task behaviour pattern, and broadly corresponds with Blake and Mouton's (1982 and 1984) impoverished leadership style. In terms of Tannenbaum and Schmidt's (1957) leadership behaviour continuum, it involves leaders defining limits and followers making decisions. This facilitates subordinate autonomy by appropriately delegating decision-making and implementation responsibility.

The *homo economicus* leaders' approach to leadership would, thus, involve creating incentives (rewarding of desirable behaviours) and disincentives (punishing of undesirable behaviours), which are embodied in performance-reward contracts. They would thus build an organisational culture that is focused not only on task, whereby leadership is regarded as solving a series of task-related problems involving the adjustment, redefinition and renegotiation of individual tasks (Handy 1979), but also on supporting *quid pro quo* exchanges between individuals. The control mechanism they would institute would thus be self-control (under the self-determined coercive influence of material incentives). This involves the modifying, repressing or inhibiting of behaviour to conform with a set of "internalized rules and norms of behaviour relating the processes (methods of work) and outputs (standards) and internalized values relating to the ethical conduct of those carrying out the work itself" (Hales 2001: 47). They would expect this to induce instrumental compliance (Etzioni 1961) with the organisational rules and procedures from people, on the basis of their economic calculation of the net compliance benefits.

"Good" public sector leadership would, thus, be perceived as being *results driven*, with a focus on performance. Thus, such leaders would seek to improve results by relying on a decentralised authority distribution, so as to expand the ways in which work is conducted, with people expected to use their devolved authority to achieve leadership-established targets, and with control being exercised *ex post* (Feldman and Khademain 2000: 150). This is premised on human behaviour being predictable on the basis of self-interest. Thus, people are presumed to be instrumental, applying functional-strategic rationality to make purposive and predatory decisions on the basis of their own self-interest. organisational commitment can, thus, only occur if it is personally profitable.

## The Hermeneutic-Structuralist Perspective

Public sector leaders who are predisposed to a hermeneutic-structuralist philosophical stance would consider the social world to be a subjective social reality, knowable only as it is socially constructed, which they would characterize as a collection of communities of interest with which individuals voluntarily engage. As the conversation-saturated *homo sociologicus,* they would be favourably disposed towards the proposition that the public interest is knowable and can be promoted and protected—and, thus, society is governable—but only if it is assumed that society's survival, stability and wellbeing depend on sophisticated and subtle interpersonal interactions

taking place between interest groups and the societal governing elites — in which they play a pivotal role — on the basis of a sense of mutual trust and a shared commitment to an agreed set of public interest propositions that they have helped build up and that they then work to promoted and protected.

They would have a disposition towards a public agency that has a missionary orientation (Mintzberg 1989), and is characterized by low complexity, low formalization and low centralization (Burns and Stalker 1968, Hague 1977, Mintzberg 1978), and a primary concern on process, as much as goals and end-states. This they would picture (Morgan 1986) as a political system, or a configuration of cultures. Their inclination would be to empower groups of people to take responsibility for their own work design and performance. Their organisation would have a decision-making process that is collegial, harmonious and trustworthy, and that involves the application of critical rationality in its continual striving to unearth the collectively determined sensible and practicable good, achieved by a group consensus through discourses on contestable values and standards. In terms of Thompson's (1967) decision-making strategies matrix, they would prefer compromise decision-making strategies, as they are inclined to be uncertain about competing outcome preferences, but certain in their beliefs about cause-and-effect relations.

*Homo sociologicus* leaders, with their *social man* perceptions (Schein 1980), would be sympathetic to Herzberg's (1966) presumptions of the 'Abraham' conception of human nature, and would thus presume that people are concerned predominantly with satisfying human needs of understanding, achievement, and psychological growth and development. They would also be attracted to McGregor's (1960 and 1967) Theory Y human nature assumptions, which are that people find work as natural as rest and recreation, can assume responsibility, are not resistant to organisational needs if they are committed, can be creative in solving organisational problems, and are willing to direct their behaviour towards organisational goals. They would anticipate that dissatisfaction at work is, in terms of Herzberg and others' (1959, see also Herzberg 1966) job hygiene work environment factors, because of working conditions, status and security. Their sense of collegiality would make them particularly sensitive to remuneration equitability issues, both with respect to the distributional justice outcomes achieved and, perhaps more importantly, to the procedural justice achieved by the methods used to determine remuneration (Adams 1965, Greenberg 1987). They would believe that people can best be motivated by setting goals (Locke 1968, Locke and Latham 1990) to which they can make a commitment. Their underlying motivational presumption is that people want to share responsibility for goal setting (House and Mitchell 1974) because there is a congruence between individual and organisational goals. This enables an organisation to meet people's needs, the most important of which are Maslow's (1970) social (affiliation or acceptance), esteem and self-actualization (distinctive psychological potential) needs, Ardrey's (1967) identity, security and stimulation needs, Alderfer's (1972) existence, relatedness and growth needs, and McCelland's (1961, see also McCelland et al. 1953) achievement, power and affiliation needs, and Herzberg and others' (1959, Herzberg (1966) achievement, recognition, Their psychological contracts with people would be designed on the presumption that they exercise personal, referent and normative power (Boulder 1990, French and Ravan 1959, Hales 2001), and that people are cooperative, and thus would be premised on the idea that people tend to identify with organisational goals, which they pursue creatively in return for just rewards. People should thus be given more voice in their selection and more discretion on the

choice of goal-achievement strategies (Handy 1976: 41). People would be expected, in Morrow's (1983) terms, to have a work commitment based on the value they place on work as an end in itself, on their absorption and involvement in their job, and on their organisation and sectional interest loyalties, which would achieve Etzioni's (1961) normative-moral organisational engagement.

The leadership style of *homo sociologicus* leaders would be that of a coach (Nichols 1986), within a participative-group type of leadership system (Likert 1961 and 1967). This style is characterized by Hersey and Blanchard's (1969 and 1993) high relationship and low task behaviour pattern, which broadly corresponds with Blake and Mouton's (1982 and 1984) country club leadership style. Under this leadership style the production of outcomes is incidental to the lack of conflict and good fellowship. In terms of Tannenbaum and Schmidt's (1957) leadership behaviour continuum, it involves leaders permitting followers to function within the limits they define. The leadership focus is thus on sharing ideas and facilitating group decision-making, thereby empowering individuals.

The *homo sociologicus* leaders' approach to leadership would, thus, involve inspiring a sense of performance consciousness in the form of a mutually agreed set of high performance expectations. Communicating a values-driven performance philosophy would do this by stimulating and facilitating the necessary behaviour change by empowering people to become creative risk takers and innovators. They would build an organisational culture that would be centred existentially on the person, such that the organisation would be perceived to exist in order to help people achieve their personal goals (Handy 1979). Peters and Waterman (1982) have argued that communicating a values-driven performance philosophy can be achieved by means of *leadership by wandering around* (see also, Peters 1994). The appropriate control mechanism would be mutual control, involving the group enforcement of behaviour norms relating to inputs (as standards of recruitment to the group), processes (as work methods), outputs (as performance standards), and values (as ethical standards) (Hales 2001: 47). The expected response induced would be compliance because of moral commitment (Etzioni 1961).

"Good" public sector leadership would be would, thus, be perceived as being *inclusion driven*, with a focus on building capacity to achieve results. Thus, leaders would encourage people, as well as perhaps members of the general public and other relevant organisations, to work together towards the achievement of results over which they may have little direct influence. This they would seek to achieved by increasing subordinate engagement with the organisation, which they would see as a product of decentralising authority, and emphasising empowerment, teamwork, and continuous performance improvement. Leadership control is accomplished by the way they implement participation (Feldman and Khademain 2000: 150). This is premised on human behaviour being predictable on the basis of group-constructed understandings. Thus, people are presumed to be cooperative by nature; ever willing and able to construct the mutual understandings that form the basis for reasoning, what Gergen and Thatchenkery (1998: 26) describe as "communal negotiation, the importance of social processes in the observational enterprise, the socio-practical functions of language, and the significance of pluralistic cultural investments in the conception of the true and the good." They are thus presumed able and willing to engage in critically reflective, intersubjective communications, in order to gain understanding in a group context (see also Cooperrider and Srivastra 1987, Reason and Rowan 1981, Gergen 1994).

This means that, because discourse occurs in an open environment characterized by broadly diffused transformations (Bakhtin 1981, Foucault 1978), patterns of human activity are ever dynamic, at times incrementally, sometimes disjointedly (Gergen and Thatchenkey 1998: 28). Thus, people' organisational commitment is to those with whom they share common values and a common vision.

**The Hermeneutic-Agency Perspective**

While those who are predisposed to a hermeneutic-agent philosophical disposition, which, as Goffman ([1959] 1990) notes, embraces a wide range of behaviour, would deny the possibility of an objective social reality and, therefore, the predictability of social action. They would, thus, presume themselves to be incapable of describing, analyzing and understanding (let alone changing) social reality with any degree of certainty. They would consider that no experience can be fully shared by two individuals. All that is knowable, then, is what is in a person's own field of contemporaneous consciousness, which cannot be escaped — "I am my world" (Wittgenstein ([1922] 1961: 5.63), "the world is my idea" (Schopenhauer [1818 and 1844] 1969: 1). In this world, individuals simply exist. It is up to them not only to decide their own fate, for which they alone are responsible, but also to define their own identity, or essential characteristics, which they do in the course of living out their lives in the most authentic and fulfilling way possible (Heidegger [1927] 1967, Nietzsche [1986] 1966, Sartre ([1946] 1973). As sceptical *existential outsiders*, they would presume the public interest is unknowable, because of capriciousness and uncertainty, and thus cannot be intentionally and instrumentally promoted and protected. Nevertheless, society is still governable, but only if the societal governing elites permit them to exercise of the coercive power of the state so as to enables elites to govern as they see fit.

They would have a disposition towards a public agency that has a bureaucratic orientation (Weber [1915] 1947), and is characterised by high complexity, high formalization and high centralization (Burns and Stalker 1961), and with an obsessed with control. This they would picture (Morgan 1986) as a psychic prison or an instrument of domination, with organisational processes that give rise to "low-cooperation, rule-bound approaches to organisation. Their inclination would be to ensure that their public agency can accommodate ambiguous, mutually reinforcing, perceptions of its intent, understanding, history and organisation (March and Olsen 1976). They would never resolve organisational conflicts, organisational uncertainties would always be avoided, and organisational solutions would inevitably be shortsighted and simplistic. This is because they perceive decision-making processes are dominated by the unknowing and the untrustworthy, which means that policy, because of the limits of human cognition, can only be the product of garbage can-like decision processes (March and Olsen 1976). This is described by Cohen and others (1972: 2) as "a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they may be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they may be answers,' and decision makers looking for work."

*Existential outsider* leaders would be sympathetic to Herzberg's (1966) presumptions of the 'Adam' conception of human nature, and to McGregor's (1960 and 1967) Theory X human nature assumptions. They would certainly believe that people would be generally dissatisfied with Herzberg's and others' (1959, see also Herzberg 1966) job hygiene work environment factors, particularly policies and administration, supervision, working conditions, money, status and

security. Their cynicism and distrust would make them particularly sensitive to the issues of equity of remuneration, both in terms of the distributional justice outcomes achieved and the procedural justice achieved by the methods used to determine remuneration (Adams 1965, Greenberg 1987). So to them compliance occurs only because of fear of punishment that would diminishes people's capacity to meet their physiological and safety (security) needs (Maslow 1970). Their underlying motivational presumptions are that people have to be sufficiently fearful of punishment to ensure compliance, and that they have the power to punish. Their psychological contracts with people would be designed on the presumption that they would exercise coercive, physical or threat power (Boulder 1990, French and Ravan 1959, Hales 2001), and that people would comply explicitly with the rules to avoid punishments (Handy 1976: 40). People would be presumed to have no work commitment, which would result in Etzioni's (1961) coercive-alienative organisational engagement.

The leadership style of *existential outsider* leaders would be that of a driver (Nichols 1986) within an exploitative-authoritarian type of leadership system (Likert 1961 and 1967). This style is characterized by Hersey and Blanchard's (1969 and 1993) low relationship and high task behaviour pattern, which broadly corresponds with Blake and Mouton's (1982 and 1984) task leadership style. In terms of Tannenbaum and Schmidt's (1957) leadership behaviour continuum, it involves leaders making decisions and announcing them. This involves leaders providing specific instructions and closely supervising work performance, thereby ensuring dominant leadership. They would thus build an organisational culture that emphasizes power, and reinforces the authority of a superior over people, so supporting a club culture under which strong leaders would be permitted, if not expected, to exercise power (Handy 1979).

Their approach to leadership would involve hierarchical command-and-control, with the expected response being alienative compliance (Etzioni 1961), born of the fear of force, threat and menace. The expected control mechanism would be external control (Hales 2001: 47), particularly by means of random direct supervision. This could encompass the "contrived randomness" mode of control with hierarchical accountability (Hood 1998: 64-68, see also Rose-Ackerman 1978), "dual key' operations (that is, several people needed to commit funds or other resources, or separation of payments and authorization) with an unpredictable pattern of posting decision-makers or supervisors around the organisation's empire" as well as "random internal audits" (Hood 1998: 65).

"Good" public sector leadership would be perceived as being *survival driven*, with plausibility as the basis for reasoning, involving a Weickian-like sense-making process (Weick 1995). Thus, they engage in non-rational, inspirational-strategic reasoning because they consider validity, truth, and efficiency to be irrelevant. They would act on the presumption that what the organisation is capable of doing can only be establish by trial and error, which means that its goals can only evolve from action. Learning can thus only be achieved only by trial and error. Technology is always unclear. And who is involved in what is ever changing, because participation is fluid. This characterizes March's (1988 and 1994) organized anarchy (see also Cyert and March [1963] 1992, March and Olsen 1976 and 1989). Their underlying premise is that human behaviour is unpredictable, because agency is defined by subjective perceptions of social reality. What an individual believes to be real is, in fact, reality.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP PRAXIS

Senior civil servants who find themselves in a particular leadership situation where only one of four methodological families seems to provide them with a way of satisfactorily describing and explaining their socio-political and organisational world are confronted with the leadership challenge of devising strategies that can accommodate a variety of contending epistemological and ontological imperatives. These deliberations can be guided by the philosophical taxonomy presented, beginning with the supposition that people only adopt one disposition in all leadership (relational) situations they encounter. For instance *homo hierarchus* (naturalist structuralist) leaders who demands hierarchical obedience and organisational loyalty in order to address *politico-administrative* imperatives that demand that they determine and police what are acceptable (desirable) or unacceptable (undesirable) behaviours, may well become (1) *homo economicus* (naturalist agent) leaders when addressing *market* imperatives that require, for example, the acceptance and accommodation self-interest motivations; (2) a *homo sociologicus* (hermeneutic structuralist) leaders when addressing *organisational* imperatives that require, for example, the behaviour changes that follow the empowering of people to become creative risk takers and innovators; or (3) *existential outsider* (hermeneutic agent) leaders when they are confronted with imperatives they cannot analyse and understand (let alone address) with any degree of certainty, necessitating the use of non-rational, inspirational-strategic reasoning that holds validity, truth, and efficiency to be irrelevant. The extent that a person's leadership values, attitudes and behaviour (1) remain consistent; (2) are willingly but superficially adapted to meet particular needs in particular leadership situations; or (3) are capable of accommodating radically different status and role relationships in different leadership situations becomes a matter for specific empirical investigation (Olli 1995 and 1999). Similarly, in any leadership (relational) situation, the level of conviction that an individual feels towards his or her chosen philosophical disposition will vary, possibly subject to the extent of their familiarity with the circumstances that prevail and the subject matter being addressed. However, throughout these psychological processes, philosophical precepts will continue to mediate each person's access to, and understanding of, their social reality. Thus, a leader's practice will benefit from comprehending the possibilities of synergy between contending dispositions.

### The Ontological Proposition

The contention here lies between structure and agency. Quite simply, the committed individualist concludes that structure has no causal capacity — human actions derives from the intentions of "lone, atomistic and opportunistic" individuals (Archer 2000: 4); whilst the committed structuralist believes that people are nothing more than "society's beings" — merely Durkheim's "indeterminant material" — human actions are constrained and moulded by structural phenomena (Archer 2000: 19). These polar views are not substantiated by the historical and contemporary philosophical theorising that underpins the Dixon-Dogan paradigm of philosophical dispositions, as they fail to adequately explain the complexity of human society (Archer 2000).

Alternatively other academics have proposed various types of central conflation (such as, Bourdieu 1998, Giddens 1984 and 1993, Schatzki 2002). Thus, elaborate site ontologies, featuring social reality as a contingent mesh of practices and material orders, have been constructed. Alternatively, the proposition has been offered that individuals (agency) and social structures

(structure) are interdependent in a relationship of duality therefore constitutive to each other. However, both of these constructs do not have the explanatory power to explain the following two propositions: "that, (1) structure necessarily pre-dates the action(s) which transform it, and, (2) that structural elaboration necessarily post-dates those actions" (Archer 1995: 168). Therefore, the notion of analytical dualism, which is advocated by the school of critical realism (Bhaskar 1979, Archer 1989 and 1995), provides the social ontology that is both relevant and explanatory to the art of public sector leadership.

The vertical axis in Figure 2 can measure the extent of ontological elaboration amongst adherents of all four philosophical dispositions. This scale is assessed from observations that keep structure and agency analytically separate. Following this separation it is the "the conjunction between the two elements which...[furnishes]...the key to structural stability or change" (Archer 1989: xv). For the modification of structural factors (morphogenesis) structural emergent properties must be produced by an organisation, which exert causal influences on social interaction. This would be, for instance, the case when politic-administrative reform seeks to change in the method of public services delivery from the bureaucratic model to the managerialist model. In addition, causal relationships should also exist between groups and individual agents, arising from a process of social interaction, that can elaborate upon the configuration of the organisation by modifying and introducing new structural relationships (Archer, 1995: 168). Without these dynamics the existing organisational structure will just be reproduced (morphostasis). Thus, the ontological proposition has now been developed into a framework that can enable public sector leaders to take account of every stakeholders' potential role in the elaboration of organisational structure.

**Figure 2 about here**

### The Epistemological Proposition

It has been argued that the objective or "purposeful rational" elements within organisational environments have subsumed the subjective or critical aspects of human consciousness (Habermas 1970 and 1971). It is proposed that this suppression of hermeneutic understanding will alienate people from an organization. Thus, public sector leaders should employ an epistemological synthesis of transcendental realism, which enables them to embrace constructive arguments that are offered without fear of retribution, based on both empirical and emotional judgments (Bhaskar 1979). This approach recognizes "that there are causal laws, generalities, at work in social life but it is wrong to accept...the reduction of these laws to empirical regularities" (Bhaskar 1979: 27). Therefore, when leaders offers factual knowledge they must also acknowledge the inherent unreliablity of the underpinning empirical observations in a paradigm where "the objects of our knowledge exist and act independently of the knowledge of which they are the objects" (Bhaskar 1979: 14). In this uncertain environment, people must be empowered to employ their subjectivity to supplement available empirical data about social phenomena. Thus knowledge can progress through the construction and rigorous scientific testing of hermeneutic-based hypotheses. So, there is the potential here for the reconciliation of the divide between naturalism and hermeneutics. This unity can become enshrined in the notion that "the concept of knowledge enters our repertoire of concepts on the back of testimony" (Welbourne, 2001: 125). Therefore, thoughtful leader who utilises the components of transcendental realism, can encourage

testimony in the belief that all people will grow to recognise the value of subjective opinions as differing points of view become apparent.

The axis of objective/subjective synergism featured in figure 2 has now become relevant to all four philosophical dispositions. Therefore, it is proposed that, in conjunction with the axis of ontological elaboration, leaders can map the present degree of organisational harmonisation amongst their stakeholders before, during and after implementing a strategy for change.

The acceptance of this synthetic philosophical stance generates two serious epistemological and ontological challenges for those engaged in public sector leadership. First, it requires them to be philosophically reflective, and thus able not only to identify their own and others epistemological and ontological predispositions. Second, it requires them to understand and accept the strengths and weaknesses of the contending methodologies for their performance as leaders. In essence, this requires them to embrace the following leadership propositions, which are discrete yet totally inter-linked.

First, adept public sector leaders would be epistemologically and ontologically sophisticated enough to accept that what constitutes "good" leadership is an essentially contested concept, clarifiable through constructive discourse. Thus, they would actively seek insights into what might work in particular leadership situations. There is, for example, no justification for avoiding constructive discourse in open forums, as this engagement is an essential means of judging strength of feeling. Open, constructive discourse must been seen as normal, even if it has the propensity to create conflict, and as essential to the creation of creative opportunities for leaders to engage with those holding contending philosophical perspectives to understand and find solutions to problems and issues. Only then can they anticipate the reactions of people to particular solutions, which can then form part of a critical path analysis, thereby making expectation management an integral part of process by which problems and issues are defined and their solutions are formulated, evaluated and implemented. And it is only when inter-personal conflict is frankly addressed — reflecting a tolerance of acceptable levels of disagreement — that all stakeholders can feel some ownership of eventual solutions.

Second, adept public sector leaders would be sceptical of any empirical generalizations or testimonial assertions about the causation and consequences of, and solutions to, problems and issues. There is no "correct" solutions to problems or issues. Detailed analysis can only produce at best suppositions that require further reflexive interpretation to deepen understanding. Indeed, the "best" solution cannot be a compromise between opposing opinions that is unsatisfactory to all, as such scenarios reflect the actions of leaders who have ceased to lead. Identifying satisfactory compromise solutions requires leaders to engaging in acts of ideation with those who hold different philosophical dispositions and thus have different understandings of problem causation and solution. This would allow the necessary perspectives reciprocity needed for a reflexive interpretation to emerge that would ensure an appropriate contextualization of meaning in terms of problem or issue causation and "best" solution.

Third, adept public sector leaders would learn how to comprehend and evaluate the intended meaning of the contending arguments based on a diversity of epistemological and ontological perspectives. They would settle in their own minds competing epistemological and ontological truth-claims with consistency and without recourse to intentional activities and motivated processes that enable self-deception or self-delusion. They would thereby confront unpleasant truths or issues

rather than resort to the mental states of ignorance, false belief, unwarranted attitudes and inappropriate emotions (Haight 1980). They would accept that the best outcomes that can be expected from constructive discourses are sets of achievable aspirations, implementable strategies, and tolerable levels of hostility and organisational disharmony to ensure the attainment of specified goals. They would, thus, view "good" leadership as an iterative process that involves learning-by-doing and learning-from-experience about what is the right thing to do and how to do things right.

## CONCLUSION

The configuration of epistemological and ontological perspectives that gives rise to a set methodological families offer incompatible contentions about what is knowable and can exist in the world in which public sector leaders conduct their affairs. Thus, they have incompatible contentions about the forms of reasoning that should be the basis for leadership thought and action, and about how people behave or are prone to behave in given situations. Each of them is, however, fundamentally flawed because of underlying epistemological and ontological premises are fundamentally flawed.

The broad conclusion drawn is that "good" public sector leadership requires leaders:

- to recognize the limitations of their cognitive map of politic-administrative and organisational reality, thereby avoiding epistemological and ontological arrogance;
- to seek out and engage with those who disagree with their cognitive map of that reality;
- to treat all knowledge claims sceptically, accepting that there are multiple standards by which they could be justified, particularly if they come from any ascendant epistemic community (whether founded on naturalism or hermeneutics); and
- to settle competing epistemological and ontological asseverations with consistency and without recourse to the self-deception or self-delusion that permits them to avoid unpleasant truths.

Their challenge is to accept Barrett (1958: 247) proposition that "the centuries-long evolution of human reason is one of man's greatest triumphs, but it is still in process, still incomplete, still to be."

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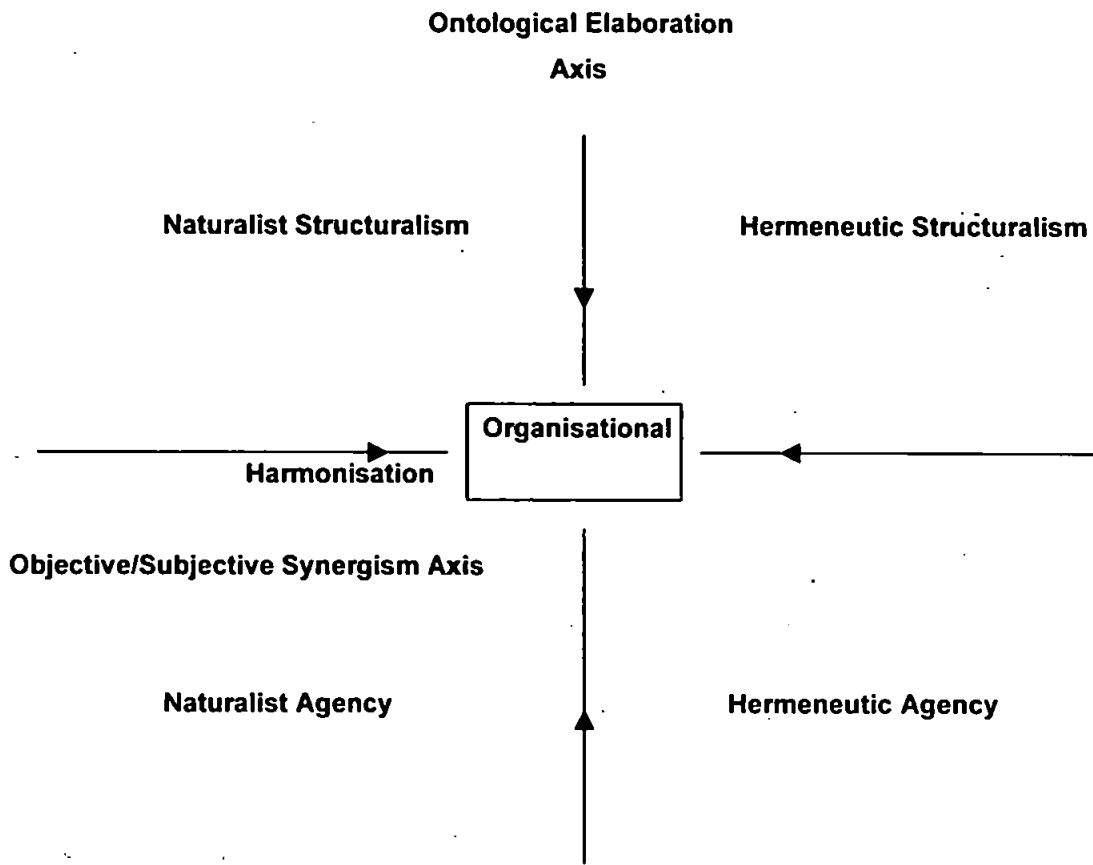Nichols, J. R. (1986), "Congruent Leadership." *Leadership and Organisational Development Journal*, 7 (1): 27-31.

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**Figure 1: Epistemological and Ontological Underpinnings of Contending "Good" Public Sector Leadership Propositions**

| | | Epistemology | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Naturalism | Hermeneutics |
| **Ontology** | Structuralism | **Naturalist Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which structures exercise power over agency, which makes human behaviour predictable.<br><br>*"A good public agency should have a bureaucratic orientation with a primary concern for inputs and getting processes right, thus good public sector leadership should be process driven, with a focus on compliance."* | **Hermeneutic Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world, knowable only as it is socially constructed, with people's action being determined, and made predictable, by their collective interpretation of this reality.<br><br>*"A public agency should have a missionary orientation, with a primary concern for process, as much as goals and end-states, thus good public sector leadership should be inclusion driven, with a focus on building capacity to achieve results."* |
| | Agency | **Naturalist Agency:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which people are agents of their actions, with their behaviour made predictable by their unconstrained self-interest.<br><br>*"A good public agency should have an entrepreneurial orientation with a primary concern for outputs and outcomes. Thus good public sector leadership should be results driven, with a focus on performance."* | **Hermeneutic Agency:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world that is contestably knowable as what people believe it to be, with agency constrained by their subjective perceptions of social reality, which makes human behaviour unpredictable.<br><br>*"A public agency should have a bureaucratic orientation with a primary concern for control. Thus good public sector leadership should be survival driven, with plausibility the basis for reasoning that makes sense of situations as they arise."* |

**Figure 2: Leadership and the Philosophical Dispositions**

**Ontological Elaboration**
**Axis**

Naturalist Structuralism                    Hermeneutic Structuralism

┌─────────────────┐
│ **Organisational** │
**Harmonisation**  └─────────────────┘

**Objective/Subjective Synergism Axis**

Naturalist Agency                    Hermeneutic Agency

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# COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITARIANISM:

# A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION

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# COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITARIANISM:

# A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION

## Abstract

This paper draws upon contemporary perspectives in the philosophy of the social sciences to identify four contending perceptions of community. It then locates the communitarian perspective, within this framework, so as to explore the limitations of its epistemological and ontological premises. Communitarians claim to understand the dynamics of an "authentic community." They maintain that enlightened citizens, experiencing this spontaneous social construct, will discover the futility of the liberal and existential self because both deny the significance of shared values and attitudes, and thus will realize the fundamental contradiction of this position in the light of the inherently social nature of human beings. Through increased social cohesion, arising from citizens' active participation in community discourses, authoritarianism will be constrained and mutuality, which nurtures a more egalitarian society, will be promoted. The realization of these assertions, however, must rely on communitarianism accommodating citizens' differing ontological and epistemological understandings of their social world.

Key Words: Communitarianism, social theory, community.

## INTRODUCTION

The dilemma for communitarians is that there is a gap between communitarian aspirations and community reality, in terms of community engagement. This paper identifies the foundations of that dilemma by providing a philosophical critique of the key elements of the philosophical stance known as "communitarianism," particularly its understanding of community, human nature and individual identity. In this regard, communitarianism is recognised as possessing two characteristics within its theoretical base that sustains a broad consensus amongst community theorists, activists and workers: the acknowledgement of "community" as an essential component within the formation of individual identity and as the means for citizens to achieve improved levels of personal well-being. Furthermore, democratic community forums are accepted as being a source of common agreement for the identification of social goods and their equitable distribution (Cross, 2001:1).

Etzioni (1995 and 1997) constructs his case for communitarianism around a fundamental assertion that individuals should have a key role in furnishing the needs of their neighbours. He, thus, argues that individuals, once they have met their personal responsibilities, have an obligation to promote the well-being of relatives, friends and others in the various communities to which they belong (Etzioni, 1995: 144). These include (Etzioni, 1995: 119–22) all types of social groups, such as schools, organizations, families, neighbourhoods and interest groups. This case, for the application of reciprocity in care and compassion, is a common theme in communitarian literature, as theorists (Bellah, 1995-96; Sandel, 1992; Tam, 1998) argue for a balance between individual rights and collective obligations and responsibilities.

Communitarians' acknowledge that an individual may influence another person's understanding of reality, and accept a social world conceived through the medium of group discourse. Sandel (1992: 19) pondered on the possibility of citizens being able to choose their purpose without any structural constraints from their cultural inheritance. Moments of deepest self-understanding only come if a person is unencumbered by personal attachments and commitments. However, it is questionable whether existing aspirations are an essential part of a person's self-identity without the presence of strong convictions and the capacity to substitute revised values and attitudes at will (Sandel, 1992: 23). If people do not interpret their social meanings through who they are and what they have experienced, but instead focus on who they will become, then as Sandel concludes, the "liberal self is left to lurch between detachment on one hand, and entanglement on the other" (1992: 24). Therefore, the communitarian believes, axiomatically, that unrestricted human autonomy will result in greater social cohesion. As McIntrye notes, citizens "will grow to understand themselves...only in the context of the community" (cited in Arthur, 1998: 357).

The evident gap between communitarian aspirations and community reality is a source of frustration to those who promote community as a source of intentional individual collective action. This, however, requires a reconciliation of conflicting and competing values, beliefs and attitudes held by people about community and community engagement, which is a product of their perceptions about how the social world works and how other people behave. Underpinning these competing world-views are competing

philosophical predispositions about what constitutes genuine knowledge and what gives rise to human actions. There is, therefore, an imperative for a philosophical exploration into the reluctance of citizens to participate in the affairs of their communities, even when such an involvement may achieve benefits for all members.

This paper uses a conceptual framework drawn from the philosophy of the social sciences to investigate perceptions of community, collective action, voluntary sacrifices for the collective, and apathy, so as to explore the factors that influence community-engagement decisions, and their implications for public policy. It has three objectives: (1) to identify the contending perceptions of community derived from the epistemological and ontological dichotomies embedded in social theory; (2) to establish that communitarianism is philosophically flawed; and (3) to identify the epistemological and ontological challenges facing communitarians if they are to engage, for collective benefit, with people who do not share their philosophical perspectives and ethical values.

## A PHILOSPHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY

People have selective screens through which they receive knowledge of how the social world works and how other people behave (Dixon, 2003). These provide the value oriented means by which people order events, so as to give clarity of meaning to what would otherwise be an anarchic stream of events. They have both cognitive-rational (objective meaning) and communicative-rational (normative meaning) components, which intermingle to produce an assumptive world: a "cognitive map of the world out there" (Young, 1979: 33). How people interrogate the social world, and so build their assumptive world, depends on their epistemological and ontological predispositions (Dixon and Dogan, 2003).

Epistemological predispositions relate to people's contentions about what is knowable, how it can be known, and the standard by which the truth can be judged (Hollis, 1994). They can be based on naturalist propositions, whereby social knowledge must be grounded in material phenomena and must take the form of either analytical statements derived from deductive logic or synthetic statements derived from inductive inference. Or they can be based on hermeneutic propositions, whereby social knowledge rests on interpretations, derived from cultural practice, discourse and language, generated by acts of ideation that rest on intersubjectively shared symbols, or typifications that allow the reciprocity of perspectives.

Ontological predispositions relate to people's contentions about the nature of being, what can and does exist, what their conditions of existence might be, and to what phenomena causal capacity might be ascribed (Hollis, 1994). They can be based on the structuralist proposition that "social structures impose

themselves and exercise power upon agency. Social structures are regarded as constraining in the way they mould people's actions and thoughts, and in that it is difficult, if not impossible, for one person to transform these structures (Baert, 1998: 11). Thus, social action derives from social structures. Or they can be based on the agency proposition that "individuals have some control over their actions and can be agents of their action (voluntarism) enabled by their psychological and social psychological make-up" (Parker, 2000, p. 125). Thus, social action derives from individual intention.

These epistemological and ontological dichotomies give rise to four methodological families. These represent, logically, the only possible ways of describing and explaining the social world. They give rise to philosophically coherent enquiry agendas and methods (see Hollis 1994: 19), which determine how investigations are conducted, how evidence is assessed, and how what is true or false is to be decided. They are the foundations of people's assumptive worlds, which enable them to frame appropriately the social world they encounter (Rein and Schön 1993), thereby becoming the prisms through which they perceive and analyze that world. These methodological families are captured in Figure 1.

**Insert Figure 1 here**

## COMMUNITY: DEMARCATING A QUADRIPARTITE REALITY

The methodological prisms demarcated in Figure 1 present four contending perceptions of community.

### Hermeneutic-Structuralist Perspective

Those of this philosophical disposition consider the social world to be a subjective social reality, knowable only as it is socially constructed, with people's action being determined by their collective interpretation of that reality. Adherents of this disposition embrace many interpretations of social reality, but of particular interest here are those who believe that society is based on voluntary, unranked natural groupings inspired by common objectives and shared values, beliefs and attitudes. They would presume that people conduct their affairs in a social order in which everyone belongs, negotiates their own position, and is committed. They would consider human nature to be circumstantial, a product of people's past social formations, and they would be inclined towards Aquinas's ([1264] 1974: 127) proposition that "there is in man a natural aptitude to virtuous action". Agreement on the desirability of a course of social action would follow the emergence of a values-based group consensus: "*we decide what we will think*".

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They would be predisposed to a critical rationality that emphasizes the importance of sororal and fraternal cooperation. This would involve processes in which all committed actors are empowered and enabled to make and question arguments, which make good argument and the validity of normative judgments the final authority (Bakhtin, 1981; Foucault, 1978; Gergen and Thatchenkey, 1998), involving the use of intersubjective communications to construct mutual understandings as the basis for reasoning and for reaching an agreed understanding (de Haven-Smith, 1988: 85). They would, thus, place stress on the valuative dimension of discourse. Moral acts would be seen as good actions accompanied by good intentions and the right emotions and feelings, such human qualities would be considered virtuous and socially valued as individuality traits. Thus morality is predicated on virtue ethics.

They would presume that people are willing to make voluntary sacrifices for a community, or voluntary contributions to community action, once they have been agreed to by the collective. Community, then, would be seen as a collective that places high value on commitment to engage in discourse. People's engagement with its structures and processes would be contingent upon making a moral commitment to the achievement of agreed community goals by means of agreed community structures and processes. Apathy would be unjustifiable, unless engagement is intended merely to support the established community order rather than to be real and meaningful.

**Naturalist-Structuralist Perspective**

Those of this philosophical disposition would consider the social world to be a knowable "objective reality", one that has a hierarchical social order based on positional authority, expressed through orderly differentiation (Dumont, 1970), the rules for which establish a sense of identity and provide the foundations for deontological moral arguments. They would presume people conduct their affairs in a social order in which everyone has, and knows, their pre-ordained place, although that may well vary over time. They would consider that people have a basic instinct for seeking material pleasure and avoiding pain, but their redemption comes from them conforming to the norms imposed by hierarchical social order. Agreement on the desirability of a course of social action would follow a cognitive commitment derived from rational calculations made in the context of structural processes, such as prescribed rules and procedures, would be predisposed to a rationality that is functionally analytical, although they would consider the intellect (reason and rational calculation) to be rightly constrained by structurally determined affects (values and beliefs). In addressing issues, they would search for alternatives, prioritized by their importance, urgency and values contestability, which would give rise to satisfactorily efficient and effective solution (Simon, 1957 and 1976).

They would presume that people are willing to make voluntary sacrifices for a community, or voluntary contributions to community action, only if rational calculations suggested that such behaviour was expected by the powers that be and would minimize any threat of them being excluded from the guardianship of the collective. Community, then, would be considered just one constituent of the hierarchical social order in a knowable objective world. Their engagement with its structures and processes would be contingent upon their place in the social order, which determines their socially imposed roles. Apathy would be acceptable, for individuals can only act within the sphere of competence assigned to them, and would be taken to imply consent to the actions of the community's powers that be.

## Naturalist-Agency Perspective

Those of this philosophical disposition would consider the social world to be a knowable "objective reality", one that has a social order characterized by competition, freedom of choice, contractual relationships and consequentialist ethical propositions. They would hold that self-determining individuals decide their own social roles and that they conduct their affairs in a social context where no one has a pre-ordained place and their commitment is only to themselves. They would consider that there is biologically determined universal human nature that can be characterized as self-serving and selfish (Dawkins, 1976; Wilson, 1975 and 1978), which means that people are malleable. Agreement on the desirability of a course of social action would follow the calculation of a favourable personal material benefit-cost quotient: "*I decide what I will think*".

They would be predisposed to a formal rationality that is synoptical, teleological, and instrumental and that presumes people make purposive and predatory (rational choice) decisions on the basis of self-interest (Elster, 1985). They would place stress when looking at issues on the feasible means, which would determine not only which problems are solvable, but also which goals are worth considering, rather than on contestable objectives, the resolution of which would delay action by initiating pointless values discourses. Thus, they would subscribe to the belief that these "unexceptionable" ends (such as maximizing efficiency or material well-being) are so crucial that they inevitably justify the means used to achieve them, despite any moral or ethical risks involved.

> They would presume that people are unwilling to make voluntary sacrifices for a community, or voluntary contributions to community action, unless the personal benefits of such behaviour exceed any personal costs generated. They would be most willing to act as "free riders" in order to minimize their personal cost of community action (Weimer and Vinning, 1991: 51). Community, then, would be perceived as "a fictitious body, composed of . . . individual persons" (Bentham cited in Etzioni, 1988, p. 5). Their engagement with community structures and processes would be contingent upon the benefits of participation exceeding the costs of so doing. Apathy would be justifiable, but would also reflect implicit consent.

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Those of this philosophical disposition (Goffman, [1959] 1990) deny the possibility of an objective social reality and, therefore, the predictability of social action. All knowledge is, to them, based on personal experience and interpretations of social reality. Thus as no experience can be fully shared by two or more individuals, relations between individuals cannot provide a *definitive* explanation of their behaviour. They would thus presume that all the human actors behave in a way that is *ultimately* unpredictable, because agency is defined by each individual's subjective perceptions of social reality (Kierkegaard [1846] (1941). They would also presume themselves to be incapable of identifying any *definitive* causes and likely consequences of social action. As moral sceptics, moral opinions are matters of personal preference, which means that people have to make their own ethical choices, and thus cannot be held responsible to others for their actions.

Those inclined towards an hermeneutic-agency philosophical disposition, as Goffman ([1959] 1990) notes, embrace a wide range of behaviors, but of particular interest here are those exhibiting behavior manifesting as the absence of any desire to explain or influence events, or to hold any value commitments. To them, social order is characterised by anomie (Durkheim, 1952), normlessness, distrust (Sztompka, 1996: 38) and the existentialist proposition (Sartre, ([1946] 1973: 32) that "man is condemned to be free." At the extreme, individual autonomy would be seen as being minimal, with little scope for personal transactions. Thus, people are presumed to be unable to take control of their lives and to conduct their affairs within a social order in which everyone believes they know their place, but no one belongs or cares. In the words of Sartre ([1946] 1973: 28): "Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing—as he wills to be after that leap toward existence. Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself." Since the desirability of a course of action can never be established, agreement would only follow anticipated coercion: "*they decide what I must think*".

> They would be predisposed to nonrationality (Portes, 1972), for the canons of rationality, validity, truth, and efficiency are simply irrelevant. Thus, when considering issues they would focus on maximising opportunities for at least preventing the worst outcome or minimizing damage.

> They would presume that people are unwilling to make sacrifices for a community, or voluntary contributions to community action, unless they were coerced to do so by other people from an untrustworthy collective. Community, then, would be considered just another instrument of potential or actual external control. They would not be willing to engage, voluntarily, in any way with its structures or processes. Apathy, as a way of dealing with life's anxieties, would be fully justified on the grounds that the individual cannot make a difference.

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL CHALLENGES

The array of methodological families summarised in Figure 1 poses questions about how communitarians, who come under the rubric of hermeneutic-structuralism, can reconcile the tensions, generated by their fundamental philosophical flawed epistemology (caused by the denial of naturalism) and ontology (caused by their denial of agency) underpining their assumptive world, with those founded on the acceptance of alternative epistemology (naturalism) and ontology (agency) and thus alternative methodological families (naturalist-structuralist, naturalist agency and hermeneutic agency).

The communitarians' epistemological challenge relates to naturalist propositions about the objectivity of the social world, the appropriateness of inductive and deductive reasoning, and the need to discover the "universal laws" governing a community in order to ameliorate the human condition within it. To address this challenge requires their acceptance, first, that hermeneutic epistemology produces social knowledge of great explanatory power, but which is culturally-specific and thus subject to severe relativism, which makes prediction problematic; and second, that whilst naturalist epistemology cannot offer substantive explanation beyond correlations that demonstrates cause and effect relationships, it can predict consequences with a high degree of probability. Epistemologically reconciling 'understanding without prediction' with 'correlation with prediction' is a challenge that takes communitarians to the core of the contemporary debate on epistemology, and thus into the contentious realms of Bhasker's (1975) *transcendental realism* epistemological synthesis.

The communitarians' face two ontological challenges. The first relates to the agency ontological proposition that structures has no causal capacity. The challenge is to address explicitly, as distinct from merely denying, the agency proposition that individuals are free agents independent of structural imperatives. Naturalist-agents consider that self-determining individuals can author their lives through objective choice. Hermeneutic-agents, consider agency is defined by each individual's subjective perceptions of social reality. To address this challenge requires an acceptance of two ontological propositions. The first is that while structuralism can apparently explain the empirically strong correlations between individual behaviour and social cohort, it cannot explain outliers derived from acts of free choice. The second relates to the perception that the causal capacity of structure has a constraining, rather than empowering, influence on agency. Naturalist-structuralists consider that structures, as objective phenomena, give rise to deontological moral arguments and imperatives, and place constraints on individual actions. Ontologically reconciling 'structures are empowering' with 'structures have no causal capacity' and with 'structures are constraining' is a challenge that takes communitarians to the core of the contemporary debate on ontology, and thus into the contentious realms of contemporary post-structuration ontological syntheses (Archer 1995; Bhaskar's [1979] 1998, Bourdieu 1998).

In essence, communitarians confront an ideological threat if they address these philosophical challenges. Enhanced community engagement would require the abandonment of fundamental elements of their vision of community. They would have to integrate into their vision of community antithetical authoritarian notions (such as, theoretical (expertise-based) authority and practical (recognised *de facto* or justified *de jure*) authority); liberal values (such as, negative freedom and liberty); and existential propositions (such as, existence precedes essence in a process which recognises people as having jurisdiction over their own awareness of the purposeful possibilities of their actuality, realisable only through acts of will after personal anguish). They would have to evidence a willingness to engage not only in structural discourses that accept, for example, the expertise of the state, the capacity of the state to promote social cooperation, and the importance of deontological imperatives, but also in agency discourses that accept freedom-enhancing constraints being placed on paternalistic or moralistic interference by community structures.

## IMPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS AND THEORTICIANS

Community practitioners are regularly given cause to reflect on the singularity of the neighbourhoods where they work. These heterogeneous settings will feature a complex paradigm of diverse of opinions and attitudes, emotional reactions and sentimental attachments, which are discernible in the wide variety of social networks that exist in a specific locality (Hoggett, 1997: 15). Arising from this, the worker strives to achieve a unity of purpose amongst members of a community, so that progress towards a permanent empowerment of citizens can be achieved, in a process whereby enduring change can become a reality. Yet, as (Brent 1997: 83) points out, the concept of community is "as much about struggle as it is about unity".

So, community development theorists are left with the task of reconciling the effects of human conflict with the imperatives of establishing, and maintaining, high levels of democratic participation combined with productive networking in neighbourhoods. This gives rise to the supposition that distinctive perspectives on community and individual identity can be associated with dominant traits or tendencies within human nature and premised on the attractiveness of particular philosophical dispositions in this relational situation. All of this can contribute to convictions about the validity of an identifiable political ideology. Furthermore, such a framework is the first step towards a methodical evaluation of the internal community dynamic that can illuminate the origins of disagreements and animosity amongst neighbours, which may eventually result in synergies, or even conflation, between doctrines.

This paper, therefore, offers a way of concentrating critical thought on the implications for local governance of community members' adherence to certain commitments about what they believe exists in the

social world and the way knowledge can be gained about it. In this regard, it is pertinent to use fundamental communitarian principles, which sustain a broad consensus amongst community activists and workers, as a suitable conceptual framework for comparison with other methodological families, in pursuit of a method to demarcate the boundaries of alternative perspectives. By using this approach, the philosophical underpinnings of areas of collective politicisation can offer fresh insights into individual behaviour, for instance:

- Rousseau's observation that "peoples once accustomed to masters are not in a condition to do without them" ([1755] 1993: 33-4]) will be better understood in its application to those community members with predispositions that create a desire for a predictable world where social structures can order and control their lives.

- The likely preferences of those who place a premium on individual liberty and freedom of choice, described in Hayek's statement as those "who believe that their well-being depends primarily on their own efforts and decisions" (1982: 74) can be considered in the detailed profiling of a community.

- Relationships with community members who are apathetic, perhaps through alienation, and hostile to initiatives that appear to offer them benefits can be improved by appreciating their distinctive system of values and beliefs.

## CONCLUSION

Central to communitarianism, as a political ideology, are two presumptions. The first is that the liberal or existential self, unencumbered as they are by shared values and attitudes, are unnatural and that normal human relationships only thrive through co-operation. The second is that only through increased social cohesion, arising from citizens' active participation in community discourses, will authoritarianism be constrained. Thus, the theme of communitarians is the supremacy of community, where members, through active engagement, create a direct democracy that is united around shared core values — considered to be indistinguishable from facts — thereby constraining authoritarianism, nurturing mutuality, and promoting a more egalitarian society. If, however, human aspirations do vary, as those with alternative philosophical dispositions maintain, then communitarianism has an inherent weakness in its naïve conception of community as a social construct.

As communitarianism is premised on a particular worldview, itself premised on a particular configuration of epistemological and ontological propositions, the challenge facing communitarians is how to convince those holding other worldviews to change their minds. Meeting this challenge would take

communitarians into the realms of *transcendental realism* and *morphogenesis* (Archer 1995, Bhaskar's [1979] 1998, Bourdieu 1998), which is a journey that still needs to be mapped.

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**Figure 1: Philosophical Perspectives on Community**

| | | Epistemology | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Naturalism** | **Hermeneutics** |
| **Ontology** | **Structuralism** | **Naturalist Structuralism:** Presumes an objective social world, knowable by the application of scientific methods, in which social structures exercise power over agency, which makes human behaviour predictable. Embracing, *inter alia*, anthropological structuralism, functional structuralism, historical materialism, and linguistic structuralism. **Community:** Just another constituent of the hierarchical social order. **Community Engagement:** Willing to make voluntary sacrifices for, or voluntary contributions to a community, if it was expected by the powers that be in order to be part of the hierarchical social order. | **Hermeneutic Structuralism:** Presumes a subjective social world, knowable only as it is socially constructed, with people's behaviour being determined, and made predictable, by their collective interpretation of this reality. Embracing, *inter alia*, hermeneutic phenomenology, post-modernism, post-structuralism, and language games. **Community:** A collective that places high value on commitment to engage in discourse to build shared ideas and values regarding their community of interests. **Community Engagement:** 0Willing to make voluntary sacrifices for, or voluntary contributions to a community, once they have been agreed to by the community |
| | **Agency** | **Naturalist Agency:** Presumes an objective social world, knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which people are agents of their actions, with their behaviour made predictable by their unconstrained self-interest. Embraces, *inter alia*, rational choice theory. **Community:** A fictitious body of self-interested individuals. **Community Engagement:** Unwilling to make voluntary sacrifices for or contributions to a community, unless the personal benefits exceed any personal costs generated. | **Hermeneutic Agency:** Denies the objectivity of social reality, which is only contestably knowable as what people believe it to be, with agency constrained by their subjective perceptions of social reality, which makes human behaviour unpredictable. Embraces, *inter alia*, social phenomenology, symbolic interactionalism, dramaturgical analysis, and ethnomethodology. **Community:** Another instrument of potential or actual external control. 0Community Engagement: 1Unwilling to make sacrifices for, or voluntary contributions to a community, unless reciprocal benefits from an untrustworthy collective are expected |

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# MANAGING IN A PARADOXICAL PUBLIC SECTOR

# ENVIRONMENT: THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE OF

# AMBIGUITY

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## ABSTRACT.

It is apparent that the strategies seeking to achieve an innovative modernisation of the public sector can create a paradoxical public management environment if they establish a hybrid organisational form. Such a organisational form is conceived when the architects of administrative reform seek to combine elements of (1) the neo-liberal market-driven model of public administration, set within a minimalist, or hollowed-out, state content to presume that the public interest is knowable only as the revealed market preferences. And its antithesis, (2) the entrenched Weberian bureaucratic model, set within a coercive state that presumes it can determine, protect and advance the public interest. Such modernisation reforms embody the tensions between the agency ontology of the neo-liberal market-driven model of public administration, on the one hand, and the structuralist ontology of the Weberian bureaucratic model on the other. Administrative reform so designed creates paradoxes that leave the public agencies strategic leadership struggling to make sense of self-contradictory and incongruous management situations. This dilemma results in public managers, and their staff, striving to design and implement organisational strategies that is enigmatic.

This paper identifies nine paradoxes that encompass a number of issues. These include contentions over (1) the imperatives of efficiency, effectiveness and economy as against equity; (2) the desired control to be exercised by public managers over programme design and implementation; (3) the just and effective accountability of staff in relation to their remuneration and answerability and (4) the desired culture of public agencies, which has traditionally promulgated a safe, stable and predictable employee job environment.

If a paradox is to be addressed then organisational creativity must be stimulated. In this nexus, lateral thought becomes critical. The challenge is to stimulate the art of judgement, which can only flourish through the application of the demanding techniques of reflexivity. This requires inspired critical self-evaluation and self-deprecation by those confronting the ambiguities created by the paradoxes. Therefore, a testing, but rewarding, reflexive procedure is needed to accommodate the necessary non-rational perspectives (such as Wicksian sense making, "garbage can" decision making, and "muddling through" processes), as well as rationalist approaches to problem solving and decision making.

Thus, management in an inevitably ambiguous public arena must become the prerogative of those with creative insights and the capacity for rigorous analysis and evaluation, for only they can cope with ambiguity and indeterminacy. In this scenario, it will be necessary to foster leaders who are prepared to devote themselves to a career that demands that they be capable of perpetual transfiguration and optimal opportunism, and able to oscillate, as necessary, between contending ontological and epistemological beliefs. Following this proposition the paper concludes with a vision of future leaders of a public sector characterised by indeterminacy and ambiguity of goals and indefinability of the public interest in terms of outcomes and outputs.

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# INTRODUCTION

At the heart of what has become an almost global administrative reform discourse (Peters and Savoie 1998) there are contentions about what constitutes good public management. Each contention is grounded in conflicting and competing values, beliefs, and attitudes about how the world works and how other people behave. The battles fought — and to be fought — over administrative reform are, at a fundamental level, a battle over the appropriate role of the state in the determination and protection of the public interest. The contending perspectives can be characterized as a dichotomy: the traditional hierarchical model (grounded in structuralist ontology that presumes social structures mould people's actions and thoughts) and the neo-liberal managerialist model (grounded in agency ontology that presumes individuals have some control over their actions and can be agents of their actions) (Dixon, Sanderson and Tripathi 2004). Both have intellectual legitimacy, and are readily internally coherent, given acceptance of their underlying philosophical and value premises. These philosophical and value underpinnings have been described and analysed elsewhere and will not be developed here (Dixon, 2003; Dixon and Dogan 2003; Dixon and Kouzmin 2003; Dixon, Davis and Kouzmin 2004; Dixon, Sanderson and Tripathi 2004; Dixon and Dogan 2005 forthcoming). It is to thus nature of these contending models that we now turn (Dixon, 2003; Dixon and Dogan, 2003), as a precursor to a discussion of the decision risks confronting the architects of administrative reform who are seduced by neo-liberal managerialist vision of public sector. Then, the paradoxical consequences of imposing neo-liberal managerialist values and practices onto a hierarchical politico-administrative system are explored.

# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES

## The Traditional Hierarchical Model of Public Administration

The hierarchical model, which has long dominated public administration, is grounded in the hierarchical mode of societal governance (Dixon, 2003). This is premised on the presumption that the politico-administrative institutions of the state are best placed to determine, protect, and promote the public interest (conceptualised, after Lasswell (1930: 264) as displaced private interests). Thus, the only legitimate individual autonomy-social control balance is one that emerges as a product of political institutions engaging in aggregate and integrative processes to derive the "will" of the people. Once this individual autonomy-social control balance has been decided upon, the *coercive state* uses its statutory powers to design and directly deliver the public services needed in the public interest.

Essentially, public administration under this model has five dimensions: politics and policy making, implementation of the law; the delivery of public services; and governance, as the executive branch of government. Governments seek to exercise discretionary power, stressing the legitimising democratic values of representative government, and the need for political responsiveness and public accountability, through elected officials, to the citizenry. The politico-administrative dichotomy makes government responsibility for the identification of the salient dimensions of the public interest, which place constraints and obligation on public officials. They are expected to take a wider view of their responsibilities, conceptualised as a form of moral endeavour. Public officials are, thus, engaging in formulating and implementing policies that allocate resources and status and impose values in a way that is binding on society as a whole.

Public officials under this mode should be focussed on their legal obligations and responsibilities as adjudicators — their legal authorities or mandates. Their decisions and actions should be underpinned by the values emphasising due process, individual rights and equity or fairness. In this style of politico-administrative arrangements, a "good" public official is a person who considers that serving the public is a high calling, a privilege; albeit one that generated its own status and social privileges. The task of administering public bodies is a distinctive professional occupation — one that draws intellectually on the disciples of law, history and the humanities — carried out in the context of a merit-based, career service. Thus, public officials — as members of an elite in whose hands the apparatus of government is placed — provide continuity, perhaps even the wisdom of experience, as politicians come and go.

Those predisposed to the philosophies and values underpinning the hierarchical model have a disposition towards the Weberian model of public administration. This can be characterised as a collection of hierarchical organisations, under formal control by politicians, embedded with a culture that emphasises role, supports compliance and permits little questioning of the rules and orders once they have been given by a legitimate authority. So this structure reinforces hierarchical obedience, organisational loyalty and the inculcation of management values that emphasis inputs, process and risk aversion (the organisational and managerial characteristics of this model have been further developed in Dixon, Sanderson, and Tripathi 2004). "Good" public management,

then, is perceived as "managing for process", with a focus on employee compliance involving the application of a hierarchical command-and-control process that permits managers to determine and police what are acceptable (desirable) or unacceptable (undesirable) employee behaviours in terms of the desired organisational outcomes.

### The Neo-Liberal Managerialist Model of Public Administration

The neo-liberal managerialist model, which takes a more business-like approach to public administration by minimizing any distinction between the public and private sectors, is grounded in the self-governing mode of societal governance (Dixon 2003). This is premised on the public interest being knowable only as an expression of the "will" of the market — as a set of aggregated revealed market preferences — which cannot be instrumentally protected by an inherently inefficient and ineffective state (Weimer and Vining, 1992). Thus, the *minimalist state* prefers to plead the unknowability and the unprotectability of the public interest to justify privatising public services (other than those public goods that the market cannot deliver), and devolving to the judicial system the responsibility of enforcing statutory rights and contractual obligations. This task is to be pursued with zero non-compliance tolerance and full restitution as the ultimate sanction — thereby conflating the public and private interests.

Essentially, public administration under this model considers that any residual functions delivered by the hollowed-out state must be geared towards maximising efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. This requires bureaucrats to adopt private-sector approaches to the management of resources. Public management, then, is simply a less efficient form of business management; less efficient because of the inherent constraints of public ownership, such as legislative accountability.

Bureaucrats under this model should be focussed on their managerial obligation to serve customers (including politicians) at the lowest possible cost. In this style of politico-administrative arrangements, a "good" bureaucrat is a person who cost-effectively manages public resources to meet the needs of customers. Thus, public managers — an elite in whose hands the management of the residual functions of government is placed — are expected to manage resources under their control so as to achieve management-determined input and output targets at a minimum cost to government. The task of managing public resources is a distinctive professional occupation — one that draws intellectually on the disciples of economics and management — carried out in the context of contractual organizations that conduct their affairs in accordance with performance-reward contracts

Those predisposed to the philosophies and values underpinning the neo-liberal managerialist model of public administration have a disposition towards business-like provision of services by government, including public services, policy design and development services, and regulatory services. This can be characterised as a collection of organisations that have a decentralised authority distribution and a culture that is focussed on the task and reinforces the view that management is about solving task-related problems. These objectives can be accomplished by adjusting, redefining and renegotiating individual tasks. Thereby the importance of achieving organisational outputs and outcomes is reinforced through the management values of efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and risk management (the organisational and managerial characteristics of this model have been further developed in Dixon, Sanderson and Tripathi 2004). "Good" public management, then, is perceived as "managing for results", with a focus on the achievement of management-established targets at the lowest possible cost by creating incentives (rewarding of desirable behaviours) and disincentives (punishing of undesirable behaviours), embodied in performance-reward contracts This ensures instrumental compliance by employees.

### THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION
### CHALLENGES OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

The intellectual rationale for adopting the neo-liberal managerialist vision of the administrative reform lies in economic rationalism, which postulates a world view premised on the reductionism within the principles of neo-classical economics and its off-spring, rational choice theory, with its dominant concern for allocative efficiency (Kouzmin, Dixon and Korac-Kakabedse, 2002). This vision, which is the rallying point for the economic rationalists in government seeking to downsize the politico-administrative system, insists on cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness in all elements of the public sector. Therefore attention is focussed on the affordability — rather than the equitability — of budget-funded delivery of public services. In turn, this leads to a de-coupling of policy advising and regulatory functions from service delivery functions of government, a necessary precursor to their privatization. Once this privatisation process is completed, attention turns to contracting-out to the private sector as many of the remaining activities of government as possible. After this is achieved and the managerialist vision of the public sector has been successfully implemented, the product is a hollowed-out, minimalist state that is content to conflate the public and private interests.

There are, however, architects of administrative reform who, whilst captivated by the neo-liberal world-view — inevitably because it offers a way of reducing public expenditure, enhancing the performance of public agencies delivering public services, or both — reject the neo-liberal proposition of the unknowability and the unprotectability of the public interest by the state. They, thus, cling to the notion that the state must determine, protect and promote the public interest and thus seek to integrate elements of both models. They are, thus, drawn to an understanding of the role of the middle- and executive-level public official that does not conform to politico-administrative realities.

Administrative reforms predicated on the tenets of economic rationalism pose decision risks for the architects of those reforms (Dixon, Dogan and Kouzmin, 2002; Dixon and Hyde, 2003). These risks stem from the adherence of neo-classical economics to two philosophical propositions (Dixon, Dogan, and Kouzmin, 2002): neo-positivism and methodological individualism. The adherence of neo-classical economics to the naturalist epistemological principle of neo-positivism causes economic rationalists to reject hermeneutic knowledge contentions that are the product of social or individual construction (such as individual expressions of anxiety and insecurity, or collective notions of fairness, distributional justice and equity, community solidarity and social cohesion, and integration and inclusion). Because such constructions are culturally specific, subject to severe relativism and thus open to constant revision, making explanation contingent on culture and prediction problematic, the analytical framework of economic rationalism cannot accommodate such knowledge. The adherence of neo-classical economics to the ontological belief that individuals are agents of their actions, causes economic rationalists to reject the structuralist proposition that ordered social interrelationships determine human action by moulding people's actions and thoughts through structural imperatives such as patterns of obligations, duties and loyalties. The economic rationalism framework ignores such causal capacities.

0For the architects of administrative reform, these denials give rise to four decision risks. The first is that knowledge foundation of any administrative reform informed by epistemological principles of neo-positivism may be incorrect or incomplete. Predications are likely to prove inaccurate and unreliable (particularly long-term predictions, when unknowable uncertainties are presumed to be knowable as risk probabilities) because of the use of naturalist epistemological methods. This is compounded by knowledge gaps caused by the denial of hermeneutic knowledge contentions; namely the validity of emotional experiences, shared values and beliefs.

The second decision risk is that any administrative reform designed on the premise of agency ontology may not be capable of achieving its objectives. This risk derives from the principal-agent problem (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972; Fama and Jensen, 1983; Jensen and Meckling, 1976), given the incapacity of naturalist epistemological methods to identify causal relationships and agency ontology propositions to integrate structural imperatives. Central to this are two problems. Because of the uncertainty and opportunism associated with adverse selection and moral hazard, principals will not be able to specify completely and comprehensively their explicit or implicit contracts with agents, in terms of the activities, outputs and outcomes agents are expected to deliver. Further, principals will not be able to enforce the executed contracts between agents and their customers with a zero non-compliance tolerance and full restitution as the ultimate sanction.

The third decision risk is that any administrative reform that ontologically denies that agency is constrained by structure may fail because of the accountability problems generated. These problems relate to the relationship between the principal—ultimately, a collective of politicians, whom economic rationalists perceive to be inherently rent seeking with coercive power and ill-advisedly concerned with the "protection" of an unknowable "public interest" — and agents, whether managerialist public managers or private managers delivering contracted-out public services. In contention is the degree and form of public accountability that should be expected of those who take managerial decisions and actions that have a bearing on the "public interest".

The final decision risk occurs because compliance with an administrative reform requirements may not be forthcoming if the reform strategies have been designed on the premise of a rational-choice agency ontology that emphasizes motivation by material incentives. Such an approach discounts the importance to public managers of structural motivators, such as a sense of obligation, duty, and loyalty or a sense of collective solidarity, cohesion, integration, and inclusion.

Where administrative reform architects have sought to impose neo-liberal managerialist values and practices onto a hierarchical politico-administrative system that continues to adhere to the proposition that the state is best placed to determine, protect and promote the public interest, they have done so without addressing, perhaps without understanding, or even after denying, the decision risks inherent in managerialist administrative reform (Dixon, Davies and Kouzmin 2004). The result has been the creation, perhaps unintentionally but certainly inevitably, of a counter-productive paradoxical public management environment.

# THE PARADOXES IN NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT

Nine paradoxes can be identified as the outcome of administrative reform that has sought to superimpose neo-liberal managerialist values and practices onto a hierarchical politico-administrative system. Each paradox has concomitant dilemmas, anomalies, contradictions, confusions and uncertainties, which almost inevitability lead to inadequate or inequitable treatment of some stakeholders.

## Paradox 1

That public managers are expected to manage "efficiently" and "effectively", and so be accountable for the efficient and effective management of "inputs" used to produce "outputs" (which may be difficult to quantify, or even adequately conceptualise), which generate "outcomes" (which may be difficult to measure, or even adequately conceptualise), which relate to "programme objectives" (which may be difficult to articulate in mutually compatible and quantifiable terms), which must be compatible not only with "policy objectives" (which government may be unwilling or unable to articulate in quantifiable terms, and which may, themselves, be mutually incompatible, particularly in a multi-level political structure) but also with "customer objectives" (which may, also, be mutually incompatible).

## Paradox 2

That while management accountability for service delivery efficiency and effectiveness has increased public managers at best share control over service delivery design or implementation with politicians.

## Paradox 3

That while results-oriented management behaviour is encouraged, over-achievement is not adequately rewarded and under-achievement is not adequately punished.

## Paradox 4

That while more risk taking, in the context of better risk management, is encouraged at the rhetorical level, politicians and public sector auditors are reluctant to accept risk-taking behaviours that either threaten political agendas or administrative probity.

## Paradox 5

That judicial and merit review agencies are able to reverse administrative decisions, yet public managers are held accountable for performance outcomes.

## Paradox 6

That public managers are encouraged not to tolerate sub-optimal performances, even when such performances conforms to cultural norms, and any challenging of them is likely to effect personal survival within the organisation and/or to generate interpersonal conflicts.

## Paradox 7

That public managers are expected to increase both quality and productivity while at the same time decreasing costs.

## Paradox 8

That public managers are expected to meet customer needs as well as ensuring that services provide value for money and meet the performance accountability expectations of legislative, executive and judicial accountability mechanisms.

## Paradox 9

That public managers are expected to share a significant degree of decision-making power with their subordinates while being unable to devolve accountability for the consequences of any decisions made or actions taken as a result.

Dealing with these management paradoxes has become a challenge for public managers operating in this New Public Management environment. Every paradox, as vicious self referential, self-contradictory cycles need to be accommodated by being re-framed as a puzzle, a conundrum, or a complexity. Thus, they should be placed into their broader organisational or societal context, so as to diminish their apparent absurdity, contradiction or hypocrisy; or the emotional responses they stimulate should be addressed. Learning how to managing efficiently and effectively in such a

setting requires the inculcation of philosophies and paradigms that help public managers cope with ambiguity, complexity, and indeterminacy.

In an environment where paradoxes need to be re-framed, re-conceptualised and/or coped with, the usefulness of both objectivity as a basis for establishing reality and the assumed superiority of the rational approaches to problem analysis, problem-solving and decision-making must be questioned. Therefore the a-rational (as distinct from irrational or unreasonable) sentient abilities (intuition) has a role to play, especially when the subject in focus falls outside the realms of the rational (such as emotions); or is beyond the scope of rational analysis because of its paradoxicality, complexity; or unpredictability. Indeed, developing and drawing upon emotional intelligence — an individual's ability to understand and manage his or her emotions and interpersonal relationships (Goleman 1995) — is an aspect of the necessary coping strategy for dealing effectively with any emotional tensions produced by a paradoxical situation. This involves developing:

- the ability to recognize and identify your feelings, such as anger or frustration, in order to act more appropriately;
- the capacity, using psychological techniques, to deal with feelings in a productive and appropriate manner;
- the ability to managing your emotions to the extent that you can delay the immediate gratification of an impulse and can maintain a positive outlook, thereby sustain self-motivation;
- the capacity to empathise in order to be sensitive to and understanding other's feelings; and
- the ability to interact with others in a positive and productive manner.

Developing more intuitive public managers may well be the way to enable them to manage more effectively in a paradoxical management environment. This supposition is premised on the notion that intuition is the capacity to pay attention to, rather than ignore flashes of creative insight. However such insight must be subjected to rigorous evaluation in order to create a balance between the rational and the intuitive thought processes. Nevertheless this may be the key to public sector managers developing the necessary creativity and judgement to address the emotional responses stimulated by a paradox. In essence, managing ambiguity, complexity and indeterminacy required wisdom, as well as management knowledge and skills.

## MANAGING AMBIGUITY, COMPLEXITY AND INDETERMINACY

The attainment of wisdom by public managers is the secret of their acquisition of a more accurate apprehension of the true causality of organisational phenomena. This will enable them to avoid being deceived by naive consciousness, under which they treat causality as an established static fact that is superior to, and in control of, other facts. Therefore attaining wisdom involves commitment to a learning process that improves understanding of the relationship between knowledge, decisions, and action. Such wisdom must encourage both management and organisational values and perspectives to be formed, re-framed or laterally reconceptualised, in order to help make sense of the options available in relation to future courses of actions (Weick 1995). In this paradigm the basis of their selection will come under the rubric of instrumental judgment, as distinct from moral and political judgment, both of which are particularly relevant to the policy-advisory role of the public manager.

Judgment, as an irreducible part of public management, requires a capacity to place information into an appropriate, even if a somewhat paradoxical, value framework to determine how best to blend and manage contradictory demands and pressures. Thus, axiomatically, management development must put stress on enhancing an individual's capacity to make judgements. Soberingly, in the art of judgment there is no science that will help the executive better perform his or her most essential and characteristic functions. This warning notwithstanding, an effective management development process requires decision making as its primary focus, rather than the mastery of the knowledge of management techniques. This, in turn, requires the concurrent enhancement of first, the learners' ability to analyse relevant value frameworks. Secondly, the learners' cognitive processes, especially those that transcend formal logic, to explore the dialectical operations in adult thought. This begins with the spirit of inquiry, so learners must be encouraged to ask and to discover important questions and problems. Self-understanding is also an essential attribute that can only be achieved by individuals engaging in reflectivity and thereby facilitating relevant perspective transformation by making them critically aware of their own specific perceptions, meanings, behaviours and habits, especially in terms of their efficacy (discriminant reflectivity) and their underlying value judgments (judgmental reflectivity).

Managerialist-informed administrative reform has forced public managers to grapple with their own behavioural change requirements, which has left them with the expectation that they will need to become more entrepreneurial in order to survive. This has meant exploring how to become

more performance oriented and whether, to what extent and how to apply private sector management practices. Yet, traditionally, the public sector has not expected its managers to model themselves on conspicuous examples of successful private sector managers, let alone the much-publicised unsuccessful, but well-compensated, corporate entrepreneurs - although some would say that they might do well to do so.

Public agencies have come to recognise that in order to achieve the required management behaviour change they must create an environment that encourages responsible administrative action, which is not just a matter of following written procedures or rules. That responsible action is merely legally correct action is far too limiting a perspective to address adequately the normative concerns of public administration. Responsible administrative action in situations where the routine application of rules is problematic presupposes ability, and a willingness, to perceive decision choices in a way that they may be *informed* by an appreciation of rules, but not determined by them. When action is perceived as *determined* by rules, the sense of personal responsibility for that action evaporates and thus problem definition is forced into preconceived and often arbitrary categories of meaning.

The willingness of public managers to accept personal responsibility for their administrative decisions and action depends on the psychological dimensions of their personal experience and its influence on their ability to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions and actions. The creation of an environment that supports the taking of responsible administrative decisions and actions has in effect been an important priority for implementing reform. Middle and executive public ·managers have increasingly been given more freedom to act outside the postulated organisational perspectives, where those perspectives neither adequately address the management problem concerned, nor serve the needs of the service recipients, nor articulate adequate or legitimate standards limiting or enabling administrative discretion. They have increasingly been discouraged from engaging in reified thinking — that *unconscious* tendency to *apprehend* aspects of the social world through particular, typically institutionalised, categories of meaning.

How public managers should be developed depends very much on how their management and policy-development roles are viewed within an organisational setting. This, in itself, set in a context defined by the prevailing (perhaps changing) regulatory and accountability regimes. A managerialist-informed administrative reform, lamentably, seeks to give a sense of clarity about the management role of the public managers, yet that role remains both ambiguous and imprecise, the administrative reforms notwithstanding. By placing more emphasis on public servants acquiring the capacity to manage better the financial, human and physical resources at their disposal, at the expense of acquiring an intimate knowledge of the wide variety of policy decision-making processes and policy constituencies, the risk is that they may become less able, even less willing, to understand and address the complexities of the regulatory and accountability regimes, not too mention the ethical challenges created by the juxtaposition of administrative power with ambiguity, complexity and indeterminacy. All of this impact upon, if not governs, the way they must manage.

Public management has long endured the image that private management enjoys stronger management knowledge and skills. It has become almost axiomatic that there is a need within the public sector for competent and confident managers with the management and leadership capabilities required to enhance their organisation's performance within a politico-administrative environment. At one level it is acknowledged that because public agencies had long been delivering services, middle- and executive-level public managers generally have the technical and organising competencies needed to produce and distribute services within acceptable tolerance of a specified budget allocation. But these capabilities, alone, are no longer enough. Public managers are increasingly being expected to adapt to ever-changing external (policy or market) and internal (organisational) environments, which is especially challenging for those confronting the risks and uncertainties associated with commercialisation. Ultimately, the challenge to be addressed is related to the pressures that reform has unleashed for the creation of a new set of management competencies needed by public agencies, whose managers must now be:

- more outcome and performance oriented, whilst maintaining, if not improving, technical standards and service quality;
- better able to put in place the organisational and behavioural changes needed to achieve the desired level of public agency performance given the permitted degree of market orientation; and
- better able to manage scarce physical, financial and/or human resources, so as to improve productivity and service quality.

In this context, the implementation challenge facing public agencies is to provide their managers with cost-effective management development.

Indeed, the efficacy of forcing public agencies to performance management pressures crucially depends on the capacity of its middle- and executive-level public managers to manage efficiently and effectively the public production processes involved, so as to achieve short-term performance and financial objectives, while simultaneously securing long-term organisational viability, perhaps

within a zero-sum bureaucratic environment. This requires them to adapt their management behaviour by integrating the management skills that enable them to be (multi) goal-directed, (multi-dimensional) performance-oriented, customer- and stakeholder-driven, and risk-sensitive resource managers in a risk averse environment, with the policy skills that enable them to be strategic policy advisors (in a fluid political landscape) and managers of a policy process that might well be well have all the attributes that Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) identified in their garbage-can theory of decision-making. To add to the challenges of management behaviour change, it inevitably all takes place in the context of major and frequent structural and procedural changes, which involves public managers accepting more responsibility for ill-specified delegated decision-making and addressing ever-changing, perhaps even contradictory political, organizational and financial imperatives with respect to service delivery, human resource and financial management. The ideal-type executive-level public managers must now be akin to Nietzsche's ([1879] 1974; [1883-85] 1968) existential *Übermensch* — the heroic superman — the incarnate will to power who challenges convention and forever seeks self-realization, for he or she must be:

- a visionary leader with energy and resilience;
- a pragmatic strategic management thinker;
- an effective persuader and communicator;
- a concensus-seeking decision-maker willing and able to make timely decisions;
- a networker capable of solving problems;
- a consummate resource manager;
- an effective coach to his or her staff and able to resolve conflicts;
- a committed life-long learner able to integrate readily new ideas and learn new behaviours; and even
- a successful entrepreneur.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

Successful public managers, as leaders in a public sector that is subject to managerialist-informed administrative reform, must satisfy the, often contending, aspirations of the state, the private sector and civil society as well as their employees and the end-users. They must deal with the 3Es — economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Thus, they are confronted with ever rising expectations about the organisational imperatives of, among others, efficiency dividends, performance management, commercialisation and contracting out, which have place dynamic demands on leadership imperatives: subordinate needs and aspirations, executive and political imperatives, market demands, IT advances, reality of dispersed knowledge, and global economic shifts.

Leadership as a subject evokes mixed reactions especially in the context of an ambiguous and changing public sector. The increasing complexity and uncertainty, the demands imposed by shared-power environment (Henton, Melville and Kimberley 1997) and inter-organisational and cross-sector partnerships necessitate leadership capability from apex to the service-delivery coal face along both lateral and vertical lines. This leadership must be capable of leading even when goals and milestones cannot be specified in advance or are ever in a state of flux. Leadership is, thus, not only about 'implementation' but the 'enactment' (Weick, 1995), or emergence (Allison and Hartley, 2000) of outcomes. This creative style of leadership requires establishing frameworks and contexts within which new developments and outcomes can be nurtured and facilitated, influenced and persuaded. This must allow scope for negotiation and consensus building while retaining elements of command and authority.

A review of recent leadership research provides some meaningful insights into the role of leadership and the implications of these roles in the modernisation and improvement of the public sector. From Stogdill's (1950) classical definition of leadership, three elements can be discerned that have formed the lynchpins of leadership research for subsequent decades: influence, group and goals (Bass, 1990). The ability of the leader to have an impact on groups, by influencing their behaviours in the direction of particular goals, has implications for performance-oriented organisations. The main challenge for public sector leadership is the ability to manage and lead in an extremely ambivalent and paradoxical realm. In this the ability of the leader to "engage in sense making on behalf of others'" and to arrive at social consensus through shared meanings (Pfeffer, 1981) assumes significance. This idea of leadership, as a set of processes for influencing employees and stakeholders, enables the unknown to be identified and addressed (Heifetz, 1994). This moves away from the traditional perception that leadership must provide solutions to problems towards leadership that seeks to *transform* dynamics occurring between individuals, groups, and organizations to find creative solutions. This brings us to the concept of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Stace and Dunphy, 1994; Heifetz, 1994; Tichy and Devanna, 1990; Dess and Picken, 2000; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Such leadership involves motivating and influencing people and shaping and achieving outcomes; what Nadler and Tushman (1989) describe as the processes of envisioning, energizing and enabling. However, the

transformational leadership research tends to overlook, by and large, the situational and contextual constraints, which Brunner (1997) describes as contextual complexity that might restrict the success and manoeuvrability of the transforming leader (Keller, 1992; Leavy and Wilson, 1994; Bryman, Gillingwater and McGuinness 1996).

A new approach to leadership emerged in the 1980s and 1990s: dispersed leadership (Manz and Sims, 1991; Sims and Lorenzi, 1992; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Kouzes and Posner, 1993; Hosking, 1988, 1991; Knights and Willmott, 1992) embracing Manz and Sims's idea of Nietzschian-like SuperLeadership (1991), and Bennington's (1997) community leadership, grounded on the proposition that dispersed leadership should involve "leading others to lead themselves" (Sims and Lorenzi, 1992: 295). Under this approach, followers are motivated to assume leadership themselves, which is, in fact, a theme that Burns had included in his 1970s perspective on transformational leadership.

Leadership is, therefore, the ability to build capacity, empower, and represent teams within organizations and stakeholders in the community-at-large, with particular emphasis on leadership empowerment processes. This is useful because the complexity and chaos of the public sector requires leaders to promote organisational learning (Weick 1976, Weick and Westley, 1999; Brunsson, 1985; Argyris, 1990; Senge, 1990; Dixon, 1994). Emergent organic leadership also requires not only improvising and leveraging small wins, as learning moments, in an arena of chaos and complexity (Weick, 1976, 1995) but also achieving a balance between influencing and persuading, negotiating and empowering, not only within the organisation but also at the cross roads of different cultures and organisations (Hartley and Allison, 2000). This also means, following Kotter (1990), that there is a need to avoid the dilemmas of an organisation being over-managed and under-led, or of a reactivist management strategy being promulgated. Getting this balance right would assist public sector organisations in their implementation of new initiatives and strategies, and their management of ambiguity and the implementation of cultural change.


## CONCLUSION

The battles fought over administrative reform are disputes between contending perspectives on the appropriate role of the state and what constitutes the essential essence of the public sector. These are battles that have long been won or lost in many Anglo-American countries. Other countries following in their path can learn many lessons from that body of experience.

The more thoughtful architects of civil service reform will recognize that they will have to engage in discourses that accepts the expertise and legitimate authority of the state, that values the legitimate knowledge of all those affected by administrative reform, and that acknowledges the importance of deontological imperatives in any society with strong collectivist traditions. Nevertheless there are, indeed, limits to downsizing of the public sector. Eventually, a government that wishes to reduce its role in society confronts a set of core responsibilities that cannot be avoided and cannot be contracted out: the judiciary and law, defence, internal security, policy advice and the framing and monitoring of contracted services. When government hits the limits of small government, ministers and their advisers will confront, once more, the issues addressed of how to structure those public functions that remain, how to manage public servants better, how to become more responsive to citizens. These are not problems that have been solved anywhere; rather, they are problems deferred, put aside while governments privatize and contract out.

The aspiration to build a responsive and cost-effective public sector that appropriately balances public and private interests is an honourable one. Yet if in so doing administrative reform imposes neo-liberal managerialist values and practices onto a hierarchical politico-administrative system that adhere to the proposition that the state is best placed to determine, protect and promote the public interest, the result is the inevitable creation of a counter-productive paradoxical public management environment. These paradoxes need to be acknowledged and addressed. The challenge is to stimulate the art of judgement, which can only flourish through the application of the demanding techniques of reflexivity. This requires inspired critical self-evaluation and self-deprecation by those confronting the ambiguities created by the paradoxes. Therefore, a testing, but rewarding, reflexive procedure is needed to accommodate the necessary non-rational perspectives (such as Wicksian sense making, "garbage can" decision making, and "muddling through" processes), as well as rationalist approaches to problem solving and decision making.

Thus, management in an inevitably ambiguous public arena must become the prerogative of those with creative insights and the capacity for rigorous analysis and evaluation, for only they can cope with ambiguity and indeterminacy. In this scenario, it is necessary to foster leaders who are prepared to devote themselves to a career in public management that demands that they be capable of perpetual transfiguration and optimal opportunism, and able to oscillate, as necessary, between contending ontological and epistemological beliefs. Thus, leadership must foster a leadership ecology that creates space for reflective thinking and consensus building, so as to allow

employees, teams, and stakeholder networks to make effective and efficient contributions to the management of ambiguity, complexity and indeterminacy.

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# ACCESSIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION:

## MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF HE IN FE

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The distinctiveness of the foundation degree can be found in the integration of the following characteristics: accessibility; articulation and progression; employer involvement; flexibility; and partnership. While none of these attributes are unique to foundation degrees, their clear and planned integration within a single award underpinned by work-based learning makes the award highly distinctive.

*Quality Assurance Agency, 2005*

## Introduction

The Accessible Higher Education — AcHE — project is an ambitious Higher Education (HE) in Further Education (FE) design and delivery initiative of the University of Plymouth Colleges Faculty (UPC), conducted in conjunction with the University of Bournemouth and supported by European Social Fund, under its Objective 3 Programme. It commenced in September 2004 and will run until December 2006, but its outcomes will be taken further under the auspices of UPC's Higher Educational Learning Partnership Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

The AcHE project's aim is to build the capacity of its 19 participating Colleges of Further Education (CFEs) across the South West to design and deliver Foundation Degrees (FDs) with a focus on the management of people and organisations involved in the provision of public services, so as to permit students to seamlessly progress from FD study at CFEs to Honours Degree (HD) study at the University of Plymouth.

### Partnership

The germ of the idea for this project emerged through experience gained from the first FD in Public Services approved by the University of Plymouth in 2002 for provision at Plymouth CFE. From the early stages of the development of this FD, hitherto unprecedented levels of co-operation and support between the Plymouth CFE and University staff in the design and approval processes, which continued through the subsequent assessment and quality assurance processes, resulted in a relatively smooth and productive formulation and delivery. The mutual support and co-operation continued and lead to the agreed design of a Stage 3 BSc (Hons) Public Services Programme and the trial of the Public Services Transition Programme to support and ease the path of FD students wishing to move into the HD programme. The AcHE project has drawn on this experience and is replicating it in the participating CFEs that have a desire to develop, design and deliver FDs in public services (embracing the uniformed public services, local government public services, health services, and not-for-profit services).

By a process of co-operation rather than competition, CFEs are encouraged to identify local niche local markets and to design and deliver an FD that will target those needs, thereby ensuring their FDs financial sustainability in a competitive educational market environment. It is hoped that this ethos will create a genuine spirit of community amongst the providing CFEs, one that will, over time and with encouragement, create opportunities for mutual support and assistance. Most importantly, the students should be able to benefit from the collaboration and

sharing of resources and collaborative thinking facilitated through the CFE networks of the Universities of Plymouth and Bournemouth.

The AcHE Team (see footnotes 1-6) is working closely with the relevant staff in the participating CFEs to understand and support their needs with respect to the design, approval and delivery of FDs.

## FD Approval Documentation and Curricula Development

This support is provided through a series of workshops with FD development teams leading up to the development of approval documentation for the sponsoring university. These workshops focus on identifying niche local market opportunities and the construction of programme aims, learning outcomes, an appropriate degree structure and module curricula. Particular attention is given to achieving the appropriate intellectual progression from Stage (Year) 1 to Stage (Year) 2; and to the drafting of module descriptions that have appropriate aims, learning outcomes (using the appropriate level descriptors), content, teaching and learning methods, and assessment.

## FD Teaching and Learning Support Material

This support is to be provided in the form of a knowledge pack that facilitates the teaching of modules, the completion of which are essential to ensure that students are equipped to meet the challenges of Stage (Year) 3 learning at HD level. Each of these knowledge packs includes a conceptual map of the subject area; textbook recommendations; supplementary reading lists; supplementary readings; sample discussion topics, case studies and class exercises; sample assessments; and guidance on how to use the knowledge packs. The subject areas that will be supported include the public sector's socio-political context, human resource management, budgeting and public sector resources, organisations; and research methods.

## Staff development activities

This support is provided by means of workshops, away days, seminars and individual mentoring, with many of the events being conducted on site at the participating CFEs. It focuses on the following four key areas:

* personal development, particularly in preparation for the teaching of Stage (Year) 2 modules;

* HE provision at University;

* programme administration; and

* module teaching, learning and assessment.

## Accessibility

AcHE's ultimate beneficiaries are students in economically disadvantaged and remote areas of the South West who might not otherwise have progressed into HE. Thus, its wider mission is to support the aims of the widening participation agendas of both the sponsoring universities and the participating CFEs and to build a community of providers of public services education that can sustain and

support the provision of high quality, vocationally relevant FDs in public services (broadly defined) for the benefit of students in the region.

## Employer Engagement

The strength that many CFEs have in developing relationships with employers is that, unlike many Universities, they can build on existing networks established through successful FE provision. Indeed, a successful FD must, first and foremost, meet employer needs, for only then can it enhance employability for its graduates. So, the AcHE project supports enhanced employer engagement by convening meetings with key employers, employer umbrella organisations and sector skills councils. This is to ensure that the development and design of FDs is fully informed by an understanding of local and regional employer needs and demands.

Employer engagement is often considered as potentially the most problematical aspect of the development and design of a FD. The usual assumption is that employers, particularly public sector employers, will be reluctant to engage in the design process and, if they become engaged, they will place little value on the academic dimensions of FD programmes. However, the experience of FD development teams that are supported by the AcHE project has shown that selected public sector employers — conspicuously those delivering uniformed public services — want to engage with CFEs to design and deliver effective FDs, with an academic content, that meet their needs. In the South West, the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary and the Devon and Cornwall Police Authority are exemplary in this regard. However, as these partnerships emerge, the challenge that must be addressed by CFEs and universities is how to incorporate identified employer needs and values into the design of a University-approved programme of study. This imperative raises issues surrounding the debate over the academic and vocational divide in FD provision. For employers, the challenge is to go beyond identifying the knowledge, skills and attributes required to *do* a particular job or task, to recognising the need for their employees to understand *the context* within which a particular job or task is undertaken and to be *problem solvers*, so that they can do the job better. Academic training develops these cognitive skills, which is an intrinsic element of study at the HE level.

In terms of the support that employers are prepared to give CFEs delivering FD programmes, the AcHE evidence supports the assertion that the greater the involvement and sense of collaborative provision in existence, the more wedded the employers will become to the qualification. The public sector employers that have participated in work-based learning activities at Plymouth CFE, for example, have also become involved in setting and facilitating action research projects as well as becoming actively engaged in some aspects of student assessment. Furthermore, the involvement of employers can mushroom across a range of subject areas in which employers have the ability to advise and also to participate in the delivery of some of the curriculum. Far from being disinterested, these employers show not only commitment but concern for the development of students in terms that demonstrate a long-term appreciation of the benefits that FD graduates can bring to their organisations.

In fact, there is a growing recognition amongst some public sector employers that FDs can provide focussed and relevant vocational and academic development for potential and existing staff. Indeed, the level of commitment of some senior public sector employees has been the most pleasing aspect of employer involvement in the design of an array of FD programmes in the region. This degree of employer involvement is evidenced by the willingness of senior management

from Devon and Cornwall Police Authority and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to become actively involved in a range of student learning activities.

However, the engagement of the local government community in the South West in the design and delivery of FDs has been rather more problematic, with the conspicuous exception of Cornwall County Council. This scenario is evident despite (1) the efforts of Government to improve the performance of local government's capacity to deliver better and cheaper local public services; (2) the Audit Commission's *naming and shaming* of poor and weak local government authorities and (3) the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's exhortations for local government to attract, retain and equip high calibre staff in all of its public services. Thus, local government has been reluctant to embrace FDs, which is evidenced by the failure of the local government community to nationally embrace the idea of establishing its own sector skills council. Unfortunately, this apparent disinterest in vocationally relevant HE provision by local government is manifest in the South West. Therefore, there is a need to build robust relationships between CFEs and local government through a shared commitment to prepare and enhance the employability of young people in the public sector throughout the region.

### Flexibility, Articulation and Progression

The reverse engineering of FDs in public services is the informing philosophy of the AcHe project. The University of Plymouth's BSc (Hons) Public Services Programme provides a one-year top up that enables FD graduates to acquire an HD. It reverses the traditional logic of a third-year study at university by offering no electives. Thus, it focuses on the key elements of public management (people management, budgeting and resource management, organisations in the public sector, and the delivery and evaluation of public services) and it has a significant research component in the form of a major dissertation. So, the FDs being supported by the AcHe Project are being reverse engineered to ensure that their graduates are equipped to meet the challenges of third-year university study. But, this does not mean a replication of the learning outcomes attained by a student completing second-year university study. Instead, it requires FD students to have the prerequisite academic knowledge, learning and research skills to make a particular transition. In essence, some 40 percent of the curricula in a FD in public service, approved by the University of Plymouth, is expected to be centred on specific prerequisite areas of knowledge and skills. The remaining 60 percent can then be focussed on meeting the identified local employers' needs and requirements.

Many successful FD students want to use their two years of HE study in FE to progress to the third year of HE study and obtain an HD. The experience of the University of Plymouth's first in-take into its BSc (Hons) Public Services Programme in 2004-05 is insightful.[7] Perhaps because they experienced only a limited transition programme, the move from college to university was affected by student uncertainties. Thus, as they pondered over the values and purposes of university, they wondered whether they would be welcome in an environment that has traditionally viewed vocational courses as failing to offer the rigor of a *proper* academic education. Therefore, we — their lecturers and tutors — had to apply reflexive practice to ensure that we adopted the best means to effectively deliver

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[7] Of the initial graduating cohort students at the Plymouth CFE's FD in Public Services, 92 percent so progressed on to the HD programme, and almost 50 percent of them graduated with Upper-Second Class Honours Degrees.

academic knowledge whilst proactively combating any subliminal, and unintentional, discrimination that malingers in the structural norms of a university. As a starting point in a process of reflexivity, we had to understand our new students' academic aspirations, learning attitudes and social behaviours in the classroom before contemplating the fundamental rules of discourse that should be applied in the learning process. We had to do this without the accumulated knowledge about a cohort of students that comes with regular exposure to them in their first and second years of study.

It is reasonable to assert that student's optimise their learning when they feel comfortable about being taught by a lecturer. But, universities sometimes pay little attention to this comfort factor, particularly in third year, when relationships between students and lecturers have been established by previous contact. Instead, there is an established, although not universal, opinion that students should take responsibility for their own learning thereby releasing teaching staff from the burden of unnecessary intrusion, so that they are able to get on with their research. However, this narrow vision of the role of the third-year module lecturer does not meet the expectations of students who have experienced both the consistent support and personal involvement offered by CFE lecturers, and perhaps the interest of employers in their progress. Put quite simply, university lecturers teaching FD graduates must be prepared to adopt a more student-centred approach to the learning process. This requires them to do more than imparting knowledge by lecturing at students in a way that demonstrates their erudition. Rather, they must adopt teaching and learning facilitation methods that are flexible enough to accommodate both individual and group learning needs at third-year university level.

Achieving a seamless transition for FD study to HD study will also place demands on CFE lecturers of Stage (Year) 2 modules. Students in their second year of FD study must be intellectually challenged by being asked to critically review and synthesise knowledge and to solve intellectual problems; to demonstrate that they have learnt how to learn and thus can become independent learners willing and able to take responsibility for their own learning; and to evidence that they have the self-management, project-management and analytical skills to undertake a supervised research project. Meeting this challenge may well involve challenging the norms of FE workload, teaching and assessment practices.

The delivery of FDs that equip students for progression to HE creates threats and opportunities for CFEs and universities. Understanding and minimising the threats and exploiting the opportunities require improved channels of communication between university lecturers and their CFE colleagues. The word colleague is used here deliberately as it engenders both the notions of empathy and collegiality that are necessary to underpin these relationships. Of course, there is no quick and easy way to achieve this aim but, what is a complex paradigm of feelings and emotions, can be positively addressed by a culture of mutual respect reinforced through both university and CFE staff meeting regularly or undertaking short-term placements in partner institutions. The AcHE Project has greatly benefited from the secondment of the manager of the FD Public Service Programme at Plymouth CFE to the team. Her presence has developed the Team's collective understanding of our shared task and lead to purposeful meetings with our CFE colleagues that have dismantled the barriers of misunderstanding. Additionally, from a student's perspective, this dialogue is evidence that the lecturers in both organisations are committed to achieving a seamless progression from FD study to HD study.

## Student Feedback

The knowledge we have acquired from our first cohort of HD students, through conducting focus groups and analysing an end of year questionnaire, has significantly informed the priorities of the AcHE Project. It is apparent that the theme of difference — between being college FD student and being university HD student — is evident to these students. This feeling was manifest in their concerns about their preparedness for HD study. First, they expressed concerns about the underdevelopment of particular skills:

- writing skills, particularly referencing and plagiarism, which they needed to write the 15,000 words of assessment;
- ability to manage a dissertation, particularly the concept of a literature search, which they needed to write their 6,000 word dissertation;
- time management skills, which they needed to meet university deadlines; and
- information technology skills, which they needed to access, analyse and present information.

Second, they expressed concerns about their lack of understanding of what HD study involves, particularly:

- the type of language used by university lecturers and their expectations in relation to students' theoretical and analytical understanding;
- the amount of reading expected by university lecturers;
- the degree of self-awareness and self-regulation university lecturers expect from third year undergraduates; and thus
- lack of self-esteem they felt in joining the third year as "university freshers".

Our respondents had not seen themselves as 'University of Plymouth' students throughout their FD studies, and they also doubted that they were 'university level' undergraduates, which their HD grades would suggest is not true. This finding is, however, not surprising, given the widening participation agenda for FD's but it needs to be addressed if large numbers of students are to be encouraged to make the transition from FDs and HDs. Whilst students were constantly told by college lecturers that they are part of a university structure, they, nevertheless, clearly did not feel it!

However, giving students a university identity from the beginning of their FD does create particular problems. The geographical spread of students across the UPC network, which extends throughout the South West, requires the University of Plymouth to provide access, through its student portal, to extensive information about both course material and social events. This endeavour needs to be supported by academic and administrative staff in partner colleges. As the AcHE Team has found, if college-based students consider themselves as part of a university structure then the more likely they are to progress. This feeling can be stimulated through positive personal contact with university staff both in colleges and during periodic visits to the university. It is also productive for university lecturers to provide input about students' action research projects and the skills centre assessment in their Work Based Learning Module.

The AcHE team have also recognised that, with the expected growth in student numbers, there is a need to formulate and implement a comprehensive transition programme. Good transition arrangements should start early and be seamless, thus it is essential that their outputs and outcomes become an integral part of FD programmes. Through this approach, the student becomes aware, from the beginning of the FD course, of the structure of their degree and the value of a natural and expected progression to Stage 3. Also the concerns that may be felt by college students about progression into a university environment can be gradually alleviated during both Stage 1 and 2.

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly, FDs will play an increasingly critical role in the years to come in improving access to HE and in offering vocationally relevant, high quality HE with HD progression for those so inclined. However, in designing and delivering effective FDs it is essential that a strong committed partnership of employers, colleges and universities be built, so as to ensure enhanced employability is an outcome, and to address the particular sensibilities and needs of this distinctive cohort of college-based HE students who wish to progress onto HD study.

As members of the AcHE Team, we have found working for the Project to be a dynamic and rewarding experience, and collectively we can recommend this model of intervention as a purposeful and productive means of furthering HE in FE and, particularly the FD ethos. We, thus, offer these thoughts on our experience to date to our colleagues in colleges and universities for their consideration, on the basis that they can inform the construction of suitable frameworks for designing and delivering, seamlessly, FDs and HDs that allow vocationally inclined students to achieve to their highest academic potential.

# Governance of the State

Editors

**Nada Korac-Kakabadse**

and

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Contribution:

# "Ethics, Trust and the Public Interest:

# The Contending Modes of Societal Governance

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# The Concept of Governance

Governance is the process of establishing the "conditions for ordered rule and collective action" (Stoker 1998: 17), derived from the Latin *gubernare* — to rule or to steer It constitutes, according to Garland (1997: 174), "the forms of rule by which various authorities govern populations, and the technologies of self through which individuals work on themselves to shape their own subjectivity". The Commission on Global Governance (1995: 2) defines it, more pragmatically, as "the sum of many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs." Biersteker (1992: 102) holds that "governance is essentially purposive and should be distinguished from order ["the presence of regularity or similar patterning"], which does not require conscious purpose or intent. Order can exist without governance, but governance requires some form of order." Kooiman (1999) identifies three "governing orders": action contingencies between different partners (problem-solving and opportunity-creating); institutional aspects (conditions); and governing principles (legislation, norms and economic development).

The concept of governance has been routinely used in the socio-political realm for several centuries, generally in Mayntz's (1993: 11) sense of "a mode of social co-ordination or order". Young (1994: ix) usefully distinguishes between *governance systems* ("social institutions or sets of rules guiding the behavior of those engaged in identifiable social practices") and *government systems* ("organizations or material entities established to administer provisions of governance systems"). Kooiman (1999: 70) defines societal (or socio-political) governance as: "all those interactive arrangements in which public as well as private actors participate aimed at solving societal problems, or creating societal opportunities, and attending to the institutions within which these governing activities take place." The United Nations Development Program (UNDP 1997: 2) defines it more narrowly as:

> the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations...Governance includes the state, but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society.

Burns (1999) describes this as organic governance. Governance, then, is the exercising of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a society's affairs, which is clearly broader than government.

Societies in all countries can be characterized by their increasing diversity, dynamics and complexity of their socio-economic, political, cultural and natural environments (Kooiman 1999, Pierre and Peters 2000), which have changed greatly from those which existed even 25 years ago. In particular, they are experiencing dynamic processes of economic and social differentiation, which have made them "institutionally rich" (Streeck 1991: 27). This has changed the role of governments as they seek to respond to the governance challenges of this new world, which Moran (2000: 11) identifies as "distrust, fear of risks, consumerism, legalism and democracy". In recent decades governance has thus achieved a new level of prominence for four fundamentally interrelated reasons (Alcentara 1998, Kooiman 1999, Majone 1997, Miller and Rose 1990, Pierre and Peters 2000, Rhodes 1996 and 1997, Stoker 1997). Weller et al. 1997). First, there has been a growing awareness that governments are not the only crucial actors in addressing major societal issues. Secondly, it has become widely accepted that patterns of state-society interaction can no longer be considered static and unilateral. Secondly, traditional and new modes of state-society interactions are needed to tackle these issues. Thirdly, governing arrangements and mechanisms necessarily differ not only for levels of state-society interaction but also by sector. Finally, and concomitantly, many governance issues are inter-dependent and/or become linked. Governments are now confronting the challenge of determining how best to identify, protect and promote the public interest in a world that is becoming increasing diversity, dynamics, inter-dependent and more complex.

# The Public Interest

The concept of the public interest draws upon three traditions of political thought: *utilitarianism* (the proposition that the wellbeing of society should be the overriding goal of public policy, thus social action is right if it maximizes social wellbeing by, in Benthamite terms, achieving the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people [Bentham [1789] 1970, Mill [1863] 1968]), *civic republicanism* (the proposition that the different interests that exist in civil society should be subordinated to the interests of all those in that society); and the *general will* (the outcome when citizens make political decisions for the good of society as a whole rather than for the good of a particular group, [Rousseau [1762] 1973]). It has two distinct formulations: the *common interests* of people as members of the society (Gross 1964: 522); and the *aggregation of the private interests* of those effected or likely to be effected by a collective action (Apperley 1996b). It overlaps the concepts of the *common or collective good* (the good that is commonly or collectively shared by a

group of persons that cannot be disaggregated [Reeve 1996b]). It stands in contradistinction to *private interests*. Indeed, Lasswell (1930: 264) conceptualized the *public interest* as displaced *private interests*: "the displacement of private affects upon public objects. The affects which are organized in the family are redistributed upon various social objects such as the state."

## Government as the Trustee of the Public Interest

What constitutes the public interest *is* a matter of politics. Political institutions seek to derive the "will" of the people ascertained through aggregative processes — political campaigns and political bargaining — and integrative process — deliberation between politicians and those they seek to govern. Riker (1982: 238), however, following in the footsteps of Adam Smith ([1776] 1977) and Kenneth Arrow (1954), has pronounced that governments do not — and cannot — know the "will" of the people.

Determining what is in the "public interest" involves societies, through political mechanisms, making judgements — informed by the societal public discourses on the contending desired societal responses to perceived societal problem-solving and opportunity-creating scenarios — about the way individuals and collections of individuals want manage their common affairs. This, inevitable, involves governments making judgements on the appropriate balance they should strike between furthering *self-interested individual autonomy* — promoting *positive freedom* — and upholding *public-interested collective control* — constraining *positive freedom* to promote *negative freedom*.

*Positive freedom* (Berlin 1969, Goodin 1982) is the freedom to take control of one's life, which can be identified with Rousseau's notion of moral self-government. It is having the ability to do, choose and achieve outcomes — optionality — attained by empowerment, which is inherently a collective, rather than an individual, pursuit. This is based on three premises (Hyde and Dixon 2001). The first is that all individuals have capacities or latent, but desirable, qualities. The second is that *positive freedom* consists of the realization of these capacities, which may therefore be conceptualized, in the broader sense, as individual autonomy. The third is that social conditions are the decisive influence on the realization of these capacities.

*Negative freedom* (Berlin 1969, Goodin 1982) is freedom from control, interference or exploitation, which can be identified with the Hobbesian idea of the absence of constraint or obstacles. It is the right of self-determination — autonomy — the absence of external constraints on individual action. This is also based on three premises (Hyde and Dixon 2001). The first is that individuals require the private space to identify appropriate personal goals and ambitions. The second is that personal goals and ambitions have value only if they are freely chosen. The third is that voluntary action—choice and personal responsibility — enables individuals to meet important spiritual needs.

That the state still has the dominant role in matters of societal governance is axiomatic (Peters 1998). Once a government has determined, in the context of designing an appropriate societal response to a perceived societal problem-solving and opportunity-creating scenario, the appropriate balance between *self-interested individual autonomy* and *public-interested collective control* that is in the "public interest", it can choose to use — or not to use — its coercive power to protect and promote its perception of the "public interest". The outcome of this choice decision has profound implications for the precise nature of the collective action — if any — that is put in place to manage a society's common affairs (Kooiman 1993 and 1999, Peters 1996 and 1998, Peters and Savoie 1998, Rhodes 1997). The state, of course, has "the ability to make people...do what they would not otherwise have done" (Allison 1996: 396), but, as Flathman (1980: 6) contends, "power as distinct from episodic uses of raw force and violence — is impossible in the absence of values and beliefs shared between those who wield power and those subject to it."

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## Governmentality

Foucault's ([1978] 1991: 18–19) concept of governmentality — "the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self" — focuses on the two poles of governance — the governed's response to the processes of those who seek to govern them (Dixon 2003). Whether this response is one of compliance or antagonism depends upon how they justify, to themselves and to others, the limitations that they tolerate being imposing upon them in the "public interest". This crucially depends on the level of trust that prevails between them.

## Trust

In a socio-political system, trust exists in so far as its members act according to, and are secure in, the expected futures constituted by the presence of each other (Lewis and Weigert 1985). It enhances the likelihood of tolerance, co-operation, and facilitates human agency — even to the extent of personal sacrifices for the collective well-being (Sztompka 1997). It reduces systemic

complexity, by ensuring that those who seek to govern do so on the basis of shared expectations about future behaviour of all the actors engaged, thereby enabling them to design and implement policy responses to perceived societal problem-solving and opportunity-creating scenarios with more confidence that the "public interest" will be protected and promoted as a result. The basic governance function of co-ordinating socio-economic interaction is, thus, more achievable, with greater co-operation and compliance being the consequence. Fukuyama (1995: 7) expresses this point admirably: "a nation's well-being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in a society."

While there is agreement on the importance of trust, there are contending perspectives on how it can best be understood (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995, McAllister, 1995). A useful distinction can be drawn between *particularist trust* — the particular trust one person has of another person — and *generalist trust* — the general trust one person has of everyone else, individually as well as collectively in institutions. Stolle (1998: 500) argues that the extension of trust from a person's own group to the larger society occurs through "mechanisms not yet clearly understood." An even more sceptically, Rosenblum (1998: 45, 48) calls the purported link "an airy 'liberal expectancy'" that remains "unexplained". Trust, then, informs individual expectations about the future behaviour of others. Soberingly, Dasgupta (1988: 53) points out: "The problem of trust would...not arise if we were all hopelessly moral, always doing what we said we would do in the circumstances in which we said we would do it."

## Ethics

Standards of behaviour govern the lives of individuals. They fashion their self-image and represent their actuality (Hegel, [1820]: 1991: 190). They draw upon diverse ethic premises to justify what to them constitutes acceptable standards of behaviour in terms of what human actions are "good or bad", "right or wrong", or "virtuous or shameful". However, such a pattern of idealistic impulses may require moral agents to confront, or to obfuscate over, inconsistencies in their behaviour that might be the outcome of a compromise arising from the imperatives of necessity. So ethics can also be fashioned by pragmatism.

Ethics can be regarded as a self-policing mechanism, one that can stimulate self-control, motivate adherence to matters of principle, accentuate feelings and give rise to particular lines of thought. There are, however, contending ethical perspectives that can be drawn upon by individuals seeking to justify to themselves, and to others, the limitations (if any) that they are prepared to tolerate being imposing upon them by those who seek to govern them, in the "public interest". These contending perspectives are informed by contending perspectives about how people understand the social world and about how they explain other people's behavior.

### Societal Governance: Demarcating a Quadripartite Social Reality

People have selective screens through which they receive knowledge of how the social world works and how other people behave (Dixon 2003). These provide the value-oriented means by which people order events, so as to give clarity of meaning to what would otherwise be an anarchic stream of events. They have both cognitive-rational (objective meaning) and communicative-rational (normative meaning) components, which intermingle to produce an assumptive world: a "cognitive map of the world out there" (Young 1979: 33). How people build their cognitive map of a particular societal problem-solving and opportunity-creating scenario depends on how they wish to relate to those who seek to govern them in that governance setting. People can, of course, choose to construct quite different cognitive maps for different governance scenarios because they wish to have different relationships with those who seek to govern them in different governance settings. How people go about interrogating the social world informs how they describe, understand, explain and judge a particular governance setting. This depends on their epistemological and ontological predispositions (Dixon 2003, Dixon and Dogan 2002 and 2004).

Epistemological predispositions relate to people's contentions about what is knowable, how it can be known, and the standard by which the truth can be judged (Hollis 1994). They can be based on *naturalist* propositions, whereby social knowledge must be grounded in objective, material phenomena and must take the form of either analytical statements derived from deductive logic or synthetic statements derived from inductive inference. Or they can be based on *hermeneutic* propositions, whereby social knowledge rests on subjective interpretations embedded in day-to-day expressions derived from practice, discourse and language (Winch 1990). Human knowledge is, therefore, generated by acts of *ideation* (personal reflections and ruminations).

Ontological predispositions relate to people's contentions about the nature of being, what can and does exist, what their conditions of existence might be, and to what phenomena causal capacity might be ascribed (Hollis 1994). They can be based on the *structuralist* proposition that "social structures impose themselves and exercise power upon agency. Social structures are regarded as constraining in the way they mould people's actions and thoughts, and in that it is

difficult, if not impossible, for one person to transform these structures (Baert 1998: 11). Thus, social action derives from social structures. Or they can be based on the *agency* proposition that "individuals have some control over their actions and can be agents of their action (voluntarism) enabled by their psychological and social psychological make-up" (Parker, 2000: 125). Thus, social action derives from individual intention.

These epistemological and ontological dichotomies give rise to four methodological families. These represent, logically, the only possible ways of describing, explaining and evaluating the social world. They are the foundations of people's *assumptive worlds*, which enable them to frame appropriately the social world they encounter (Rein and Schön 1993), thereby becoming the prisms through which they perceive, analyse and judge that world. These methodological families are captured in Figure 1.

### Insert Figure 1 here

The methodological prisms demarcated in Figure 1 present four contending perceptions of societal governance.

### The Naturalist-Structuralist Perspective

Those who are predisposed to a naturalist-structuralist philosophical stance perceive the social world to be a knowable objective reality, which they characterize as a hierarchical social order based on positional authority, expressed through orderly differentiation (Dumont 1970). As obligation-driven *homo-hierarchus, hierarchists* would presume that people conduct their affairs in a social order in which everyone has a known place in a pattern-maintaining hierarchy: *my social role is determined by them.*

The social context for *hierarchists* is one where institutionalized, hierarchical classifications not only keep people apart but also regulate their interactions by making them subject to the control of others and to the demands of roles that are socially imposed. Life's ends are pre-selected — *I will do whatever they judge to be in my best interest* — and the means of their achievement are prescribed by others: *my priorities are determined by what they expect of me; my future concerns are determined by what they decide is important for me; and what I am committed to is decided by them.* To *hierarchists*, then, "allegiance is owed from each individual to "authority," which is to. say power conceived as legitimate and bound by responsibility" (Scruton 2001: 25). Their interpersonal relationships are governed by a set of entrenched social norms (Hart [1961] 1994, Raz 1975), which must be understood as patterns of rationally governed behaviour maintained in groups by acts of conformity (Hetcher 2004), which constitute the known and accepted rules by which people conduct themselves and their affairs.

To *hierarchists*, people are presumed to be errant, with a basic instinct for seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, but they would consider that their redemption comes from them doing what is morally right, achieved by conforming to the shared norms of a hierarchical social order that encourages in them the habit of self-control and provides norms that determine how they should live. In Hegelian terms, duty is the relationship of the individual to his state, for citizens exist for the sake of the state, their freedom "means little more than the right to obey laws" (Russell 1946: 764). Free will must be rendered as the capacity of individuals to obey prevailing social norms, thereby ensuring more orderly and mannerly behaviors, which would bring to and end the normlessness and unpredictability of the relatively random world they live. A person's moral worth is measured by the actions undertaken from that sense of duty. Life's meaning depends on doing one's duty, and meaning secures action. Who a person becomes, then, is contingent upon to whom that person is bound and obligated.

**Ethics.** *Hierarchists* would adopt the deontological ethical position (Fried 1978) that there are human actions that are intrinsically right or wrong. Their concern is with act-centered morality — *what should I do*? Their focus is on discovering ethical principles by reason (rather than by reference to empirical ("practical" or "common rational") knowledge. This gives rise to the Kantian distinction between a categorical (moral) imperative (a generalized moral judgement about human conduct — constituting a moral code of conduct — "which declares an action to be objectively necessary in itself without reference to an purpose" (Kant [1788] 1909: 38)); and a hypothetical (moral) imperative ("which expresses the practical necessity of an action as a means to the advancement of happiness…as a means to another purpose" [Kant [1788] 1909: 39]). Actions taken on the basis of categorical imperatives that make particular obligations or duties intrinsically *right* are, themselves, intrinsically *right*. Ethical propositions that emphasize duty and obligation — made *de rigueur* in their specifics by trusted authority figures — would be seen as justifiable reasons for social actions that demanded conformity with the norms settled on by the social order, for they determine how people should live by encourage the habit of self-control, thereby enabling them to be well-ordered selves (Plato [c380s] 1952). The moral considerations that bear on the rightness of an action includes promises made that must be kept, not harming others, and gratitude to benefactors (Ross 1930)

**Trust.** *Hierarchists* consider that the granting of trust must be preceded by the confirmation that those being trusted adhere to a fundamentally common set of innate moral values Moralistic trust is a feeling, as well as a judgement and a disposition to act, that binds people together (Uslaner 2002). It is based upon "some sort of belief in the goodwill of the other" (Seligman 1997: 43). It must involve positive feelings, at one pole, and negative ones, at the other, premised on a belief that no one should try to take advantage of anyone else (Silver 1989: 276). The moral dimension of trust is important because it is a statement about how people *should* behave. If people are confident that those they wish to trust, including those who seek to govern them, share a moral belief that reinforces honest behaviour, then they will trust them.

**Public Interest.** To *hierarchists*, the "public interest" is grounded in the notion of the societal "common good", as articulated by a *society's politico-administrative elite*. It can be promoted and protected — and, thus, society is governable — but only if there is continuity between the past, present and future. This can only be preserved by the *societal politico-administrative elite* — in which they must be prominent — who have a society's "common good" at heart and who can best articulate "public interest" propositions to be promoted and protected by them using the much coveted power of the state.

**Governance Mode.** *Hierarchists* would see the public sphere as being clearly demarcated from the private sphere, with the public sphere being the proper domain of the *societal politico-administrative elite*. They would be perceived as having the right to rule. They would, however, be expected to accept responsibility for the well-being of those who give them loyalty and obedience. So, government would be perceived as being benign in intent and benevolent in outcome.

*Hierarchists* would give allegiance, and be deferential, to those who govern them, because of their adherence to the principle of rational-legal authority (Weber's [1915] 1947). Under this principle, authority rests on the legality of normative rules and on the right of those elevated to authority to give commands. *Hierarchists* believe that the collective acceptance of this logical hierarchical social order, and its delegated authority structure, facilitates orderly and efficient processes. They would, in essence, prefer a strong state, a weak civil society and weak markets.

*Hierarchists* would advocate the adoption of the *hierarchical mode of governance*. Under this governance mode, individuals or organizations are subject to a set of enforceable rights and obligations designed and implemented by governments with a territorial mandate. As Mars, (1998: 8) remarks: "Hierarchy is a mode of governance characterized by a very close structural coupling between the public and private level, with central coordination, and thus control exercised by government." To protect and promote the "common good", *hierarchists* would expect government to exercise of legitimate or expert power (French and Raven 1959). So, they would accept the imposition of rules that "ask, command, demand, permit [and] caution" (*directive rules* [Onuf 1989: 86]) with a zero non-compliance tolerance and substantial sanctions. They would also expect such rules to solicit compliance on the basis of a cognitive commitment (Etzioni 1961) derived from rational calculations made in the context of structural processes (such as rules and procedures prescribed by those in or with authority) and supported, by a deontological moral code. Such compliance — as a matter of a habit —would, they believe, be the product of a sense of obligation to obey a sanctioned command from those in a superior position or with knowledge and skills; and they would expect others to do so as well.

*Hierarchists* would be attracted to a political meta-narrative that legitimises the hierarchical bonding of individuals, reinforces the supremacy of the collective over the individual in all spheres of life, and preserves authority structures. They would be attracted to the idea of guardian-style approach to government, which has its origins in Plato's *The Republic*. Plato argued that rulership should be entrusted to that minority of people who, by reason of their superior insight and virtue, are particularly qualified to govern (Hendriks and Zouridis 1999: 125). It recalls the Hegelian ideas of the state as a *spiritual entity* or, as Hennis pleads (cited in Messner 1997: 80), a state with "power to create unity," and able to act as "protector, guardian, promoter of morality...guarantor of moral standards." Thus, the state should be elitist, stable, reactive but strong, and even coercive if necessary.

**Salient Governance Risks.** *Hierarchists* face the salient governance risk that the *politico-administrative elite* are unable to sustain the loyalty of those they seek to govern because they cannot adequately protect and promote the "common good", because they cannot understand the causes or solutions to hierarchical governance problems. These have identified by Mayntz 1993 as *knowledge problems* (lack of appropriate, governance knowledge), *governance capacity* (lack of appropriate governance instruments), *implementation problems* (lack of appropriate organizational capacities), or *motivational problems* (lack of compliance by the governed). Any inability of *hierarchists* to address hierarchical governance problems would occurs either because either they are unable to understand the nature and causation of any governance problems that cannot be

analysed and explained by the application of *naturalist* methods (which can offer reasonably reliable predictions, but cannot identify unambiguous causal relationships) and/or they cannot accommodate behavior that is induced by self-interest or jointly affirmed (as distinct from entrenched hierarchical) social norms; or because their proffered solutions, which presume a *structuralist* ontology (involving demands for obedience) are unable to secure the behavioral responses required either from individuals who are no longer loyal to the powers that be, or from individuals who are not motivated by arguments grounded in hierarchical duty and obligation.

## The Naturalist-Agency Perspective

Those who are predisposed to a naturalist-agency philosophical stance philosophical stance would consider the social world to be a knowable objective reality, which they would characterize as an aggregation of pre-endowed and self-determining, albeit under socialised (Granovetter 1985: 483, 487), individuals, each of whom voluntarily interact by exercising their freedom of choice to establish relationships. As self-interested (free-riding) *homo economicus, individualists* would presume that people conduct their affairs in a social order in which no one has a place and commitment is only to one's self: *my social role is determined by me.*

The social context for *individualists* is made up of "other people" (Watkins 1968) with whom they would presume it to be appropriate to engage in fleeting instrumental interpersonal relationships. Thus, they would demand the right to maximum freedom to negotiate with whom ever they choose. Life's ends are self-determined — *I will do whatever I judge to be in my self-interest* — and the means of their achievement are knowable to me: *my priorities are determined by what I expect of myself; my future concerns are determined by what I decide is important for me; and what I am committed to is depends on what is in my best interest.* The individualist social order is dominated by two beliefs. The first is that people can author their lives through choice (Hobbes ([1651] 1962: 103). The second is that people can intentionally change their future: (Bacon [1623] 1997, Machiavelli [1513] 1977). Indeed, whether people are willing to share and collaborate with others, and so engage in collective action, depends on the strength of their belief that their material well-being is contingent upon the co-operative interdependence.

People are presumed by *individualists* to be self-determining, with the necessary hopes, beliefs and desires needed to take self-seeking actions. Free will permits individuals to choose what is best for them, only constrained by the collective in the event that it is likely to result in harm to others (Mill [1863] 1968). A person's moral worth is measured by the actions undertaken that have been personally favorable whilst either having been to the benefit others or, at least, not having been to their detriment. Life's meaning depends on one's material well-being. Who a person becomes, then, is contingent upon how well that person negotiates with others.

**Ethics.** *Individualists* would accept that the rational agent should be bound only by self-given ethical principles that originate in the exercise of reason (Christman 1989, Dworkin 1988). Thus, they would uphold the propositions of the right to self-determination of the rational agent (Kant) and of the capacity of a person to reason and acquire moral ideas (Condorset). As they seek to respond to ethical problems by means of reason they are *ethical realists.* Their concern is with act-centered morality — *what should I do*? Their focus is on establishing the facts — *moral facts* — about the actual consequences, improvements, and goodness of action that can be defined in terms of some non-moral position (such as individual pleasure or utility) — and *rules for action* that should determine what is right action *(moral realism)* (Brink 1989). Actions are judged to be *right* if they produce, or are likely to produce, good consequences (Gouinlock 1972, Meyers 1986), premised on the proposition that it is possible predict the net beneficial consequences of an action.

0Thus, *individualists* are *ethical consequentialists* in that they prefer to judge the rightness of their actions by the value of their actual, or even intended, effects in terms of producing the most good *(act-consequentialism,* or, in utilitarian terms, *act-utilitarianism),* even if this is not the intention, which, perhaps, it should not be (a precept of indirect *act-consequentialism*). Moreover, actions can also be right either if they are in accordance with the preferences of those assessing the rightness of those actions *(preference-utilitarianism)* or if they follow a set of rules general acceptance of which would best promote the most good *(rule-consequentialism* or, in utilitarian terms, *rule-utilitarianism)* (Scarre 1996, Scheffler 1988).

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**Trust.** *Individualists* consider that the granting of trust must be preceded by an assessement of the consequences of trusting others. Thus, it is reducible to a risk probability (Gambetta 1988) — the trustworthiness of the behaviour of others — as economists and game theorists have argued (see, for example, Williamson 1985) — with the dynamics of trust being reduced to probability updating on the basis of observed behaviours (Luhmann 1979, Offe 1999). Yamigishi and Yamigishi (1994) call this knowledge-based trust, which makes the decision to trust another person is essentially strategic. If people are confident that their behavioural predictions of others, including those who seek to govern them, then they will trust them.

**Public Interest.** To *individualists*, the "public interest", following Smith ([1776] 1977), is linked to individual self-interest, which is only knowable as the aggregated revealed preferences expressed in the marketplace. They would call upon Arrow's (1954) demonstration of the impossibility of rationally determining a collective preference ranking of any set of possible collective actions to refute the knowability of the "will" of the people on collective action outside the marketplace. The "public interest" can be promoted and protected — and society is governable — but only when the *societal politico-administrative elites*' role is limited to ensuring society's safety and security and to enforcing property rights. This proposition is based on the premise that the right to own private property is the most efficient way of running society (Becker 1977).

**Governance Mode.** Because *individualists* see the public sphere as a threat to the private sphere, they believe that it should be made smaller wherever and whenever possible. They also believe that the public sphere should take no intentionally instrumental actions for enhancing people's wellbeing, as it cannot know their preferences. Because the *societal politico-administrative elite* are inherently coercive, intrusive and constantly at risk of being inefficient, *individualists* believe that they must be treated with constant vigilance. This requires government to be held strictly accountable for its inputs and outcomes by means of effective public scrutiny, so as to ensure not only that any private costs incurred are both minimized and compensated by the collective, but also that the market provision of public services is maximized. Government would thus be seen to be intrusive in intent and malevolent in outcome.

*Individualists* would question whether there is any basis upon which government can claim legitimate authority, as it perpetually acts as a pedantic rent seeker (see, for example, Tilly 1990). They would tolerate government only to the extent that it ensures society's security and safety, acts as a Rawlsian agency of justice (Rawls 1971), and provides a judicial-legal framework that defines and enforces property rights, which are the subject of exchange between individuals, so permitting private ends to be peacefully pursued (Hobbes [1651] 1962, Oakeshott 1975). They would be willing to give allegiance to those who govern them and to engage with the governance process, but only so as to ensure that the balance between autonomy and control always favors the individual over the collective.

*Individualists* would advocate the adoption of the *market self-regulation mode of governance* (Polanyi 1957).Under this governance mode, individuals or organizations are subject to a set of enforceable rights and obligations embodied in negotiated contracts with a zero non-compliance tolerance and full restitution as the ultimate sanction. Thus, buyers and sellers conduct their affairs in accordance with their contractual obligations within the rules of the law of property, tort and contract. Compliance would be instrumental (Etzioni 1961), based on economic calculations of compliance costs and benefits. This means that they would find ways of minimizing, if not avoiding, any changes that involve a net compliance cost; and they would expect others to do so as well. They would prefer, in essence, strong markets, a weak civil society and a weak state.

Kooiman and van Vliet (2001: 360) see this mode of governance as subsumed under the broader rubric of self-governance: "the capacity of social entities to provide the necessary means to develop and maintain their identity, by and large, by themselves — and thus show a relatively high degree of social-political autonomy." They distinguish a *systems-* (structure-) *oriented* perspective on self-governance — *an autopoietic system*, which, drawing upon the biological metaphor of a closed living system that is self-referencing, self-organizing and self-steering, governs itself through a labyrinth of interaction processes involving the constituent members that make up its identity — from an *actor-* (agency-) *oriented* perspective — *an actor constellation system*, which draws upon internal or Eigen dynamics, where positive and negative feedback are central, to argue that a social system governs itself by means of a process of mutual stimulation between identifiable actors who are searching for mutually reinforcing or curbing behavior patterns (see also Kooiman 2000 and Kooiman and Associates 1997). Hayek (1991) talks of spontaneous, or grown, order, which stands in contradistinction to organised, or made, order.

Accordingly, *individualists* would be attracted to a political meta-narrative that advocates the individual's moral supremacy over a collective. They would believe that the collective's intrinsic coerciveness and intrusiveness inevitably result in the imposition of unnecessary constraints on *positive* freedom and individual responsibility, which generate perverse incentives and constrain market behavior. They would posit that the collective has an obligation to create opportunities for entrepreneurial exploitation. When confronted with democracy, *individualists* would be attracted to the idea of a *protective* democracy, which draws upon Locke's *raison d'être* for government: "the protection of individual rights, life, liberty and estate" (cited in Held 1987: 6). Thus, the state should be minimalist, reactive but enabling.

**Salient Governance Risks.** *Individualists* face the salient governance risk that the marketplace is unable to maximise the material well-being of consumers and producers in a society because of market failure (most notably caused by the existence of imperfect competition, public goods, externalities and information asymmetries), thereby threatening government intervention. Any

inability *individualists* to address the problems of market self-regulation occurs either because either they are unable to understand the nature, consequences and causation of problems that cannot be explained only by the application of *naturalist* methods (which can offer reasonably reliable predictions, but cannot identify unambiguous causal relationships) and/or they cannot accommodate behavior that is induced by ideational considerations (such as hierarchical or jointly affirmed loyalty and obligation considerations); or because their proffered solutions, which presume an agency ontology (involving individual material incentives and disincentives) may be ineffective because they are unable to secure the behavioral responses required either from self-interested individuals, because uncertainty, asymmetrical information, opportunism and unenforceable contracts, or from individuals who are not motivated by self-interest arguments.

## The Hermeneutic-Structuralist Perspective

Those who are predisposed to a hermeneutic-structuralist philosophical stance would consider the social world to be a subjective social reality, knowable only as it is socially constructed. Meaning thus hinges on interpretive, communicative, sense-making activities (Berger and Luckmann 1967, Geertz 1973, Schutz [1932] 1967), and is created through specific communicative events, or "conversations", which draw upon shared experience and consciousness in a particular *milieu*. As conversation-saturated *homo-sociologicus*, *enclavists* would presume that people conduct their affairs in a social order in which no one has a pre-ordained place, but everyone belongs and is committed: *my social role is determined by us*.

The social context for *enclaves* is highly participative in groups that have a negotiated order (Hood 1998: 9). Life's ends are negotiated — *I will do whatever we judge to be in my best interest* — and the means of their achievement are negotiable: *my priorities are determined by what we expect of me; my future concerns are determined by what we decide is important for me; and what I am committed to is decided by us*. Enclavists place high value on personal relationships, on being seen as trustworthy, dependable, popular, and very committed to a common ensemble of precepts, concepts, ideas and values derived from discourses. Indeed, a significant constituent of the *enclavists'* identity — their sense of who they are — is their awareness of themselves as belonging to an egalitarian social order that is based on personal authority and on voluntarism.

*Enclavists* would consider that human nature is circumstantial — a product of people's social formations: "a person is not a natural object, but a cultural artefact" (Harré 1983: 20) — shaped, in varying degrees, by culture and circumstance. It is other-referential, thereby making it informed by comparisons with the virtuousness with others. All the recognisable properties people have, therefore, come from joining in "'society's conversations'" (Archer 2000: 87). Free will can only be discovered collectively, and exercised individually only in the context of the critical collective discourse that produces a shared meaning of what constitutes "virtuous action". A person's moral worth is measured by the virtuous actions undertaken. Life's meaning depends on with whom one engages, and meaning secures action. Who a person becomes, then, is contingent upon with who that person willingly talks and interacts.

**Ethics.** *Enclavists* adhere to *moral relativism* (that there is a diversity of moral judgements across time, societies and individuals [*descriptive relativism*] and that there is no single true or most justified morality [*meta-ethical relativism*] [Foot 1978]). Their concern is with agent-centered morality — *what sort of person should I be?* Their focus is on their and other's personal conduct. They thereby adhere to the principle of *virtue ethics* — character ethics. This is premised on a moral act being one voluntarily conducted in accordance with a set of jointly affirmed social norms (about what it is to be human being seeking to realize his or her full potential) and accompanied by good intentions and the right emotions and feelings (Vardy 2003: 43-4). This ethical stance underlines the absolute superiority of the human qualities over abstract ethical principles. Not to act in accordance with jointly affirmed social norms with good intentions and the right emotions and feelings would be wrong, so justify group criticism and condemnation, even exclusion.

**Trust.** *Enclavists* consider that the granting of trust must be preceded by the building up of mutual expectations of reciprocity — goodwill (Ring and van de Ven 1992). And the symbols used to signal trustworthiness must have meaning for all involved. Such a shared meaning can only be attached to trust following participation in the intersubjective communication process that bridges disparate groups and individuals, each with socially constructed societal roles, norms, expectations (Bacharach and Gambetta 2001, Ganzaroli et al. 1999). If people are confident that they have understood the signals of trustworthiness given by those they wish to trust, including those who seek to govern them, then they will trust them.

**Public Interest.** To enclavists, the "public interest" is knowable only as an inclusive set of negotiated "categorical interests" (or "categorical goods") (Streeck and Schmitter 1991: 236). These would reflect the shared values and language that have created a social bond and a social

identity for a particular group of people — a community-of-interests — as determined through constrained, consensus-seeking group-norming and -forming values discourses. The public interest can be promoted and protected — and, thus, society is governable — but only if there is sophisticated and subtle interpersonal interactions taking place between interest groups and the *societal politico-administrative elite*.

**Governance Mode.** *Enclavists* see the public sphere as having a blurred boundary with the private sphere, which should be expanded if it conceals any unequal power relations in the private sphere. They would have a preference for the public and private spheres to work together to promote their particular "categorical interests" in the "public interest". Because *enclavists* see the public sphere, like the private sphere, as always being at risk of being amoral, if not actually immoral and corrupt, it has to be treated with constant vigilance. This would require the people to participate actively in, and give their consent to, collective decisions. Then, and only then, would the public sphere become benign and paternalistic, and a means of securing the good life for everyone. Government would, thus, be perceived by *enclavists* to be intrusive in intent but could be made benevolent in outcome. They would prefer, in essence, a strong civil society, a weak state and weak markets.

Enclavists would advocate the adoption of the *interactive or network co-governance mode of governance*. Under this governance mode, there is a co-determining, co-protecting and co-promoting of the "public interest" (Kooiman 2001, Kooiman and van Vliet 1995) by means of voluntary regulatory regimes that permit discretion and have a low non-compliance tolerance and a capacity to reward. Individuals or groups of individuals in a community-of-interests would voluntarily cede some autonomy to a voluntary governance network to which they belong, one that has "the capacity to get things done without the legal competence to command that they be done" (Czempiel 1992: 250). In return, they gain agreed common rights and acceptable common obligations. By so belonging, they share, with other network members, a collective commitment to a common set of governance values and a presumption that network interactions should be based on group loyalty, trust and reciprocity (see Alcentara 1998, Peters 1998, Rhodes 1996 and 1997). Compliance would be voluntarily, and would be contingent upon not compromising their moral commitment (Etzioni 1961) to those with whom they share common values. This means that they would find ways of minimizing, if not avoiding, any governance processes that did not promote their "categorical interests". And they would expect others to do so as well.

Kenis and Schneider (1991: 41–42) define a network as

> a relatively stable set of mainly public and private corporate actors. The linkages between the actors serve as channels for communication and for the exchange of information, expertise, trust and other policy resources. The boundary of a network is not, in the first place, determined by formal institutions but results from a process of mutual recognition dependent on functional relevance and structural embeddedness.

Streeck and Schmitter (1991: 228) talk of *interest governance*, also referred to as *democratic corporatist governance* (Börzel 1997, Kickert et al. 1997, Kooiman 1993, Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993, Mayntz 1993, Merrien 1998, Messner 1997). Laumann and Knoke (1987) identify the following forms of networks: *state-directed, concertation, pressure pluralist, clientela pluralism, parantela pluralism, industry-dominant pressure pluralism.*

Enclavists would be attracted to a political meta-narrative that bonds group members together against outsiders, and that reinforces the group's responsibility to promote their perceptions of equality, the dignity, and rights of the individual, a sense of fellowship and community, and *negative* freedom. When confronted with democracy, they would be attracted to idea of a *deliberative* democracy (Cohen 1989, Fiskin 1991), which draws upon Aristotelian proposition that a polity should enable citizens to participate in deliberative power because government emphasizes "the importance to effective democracy of fair and open community deliberation about the merits of competing political argument" (Uhr 1998: 4). Thus, the state should be inclusive, cooperative and proactive.

**Salient Governance Risks.** *Enclavists* face the salient governance risk governance risk that a co-governance mechanism is unable to negotiate an inclusive set of "categorical interests" that can be protected and promoted in the "public interest". Any inability of *enclavists* to address network governance problems occurs either because either they are unable to understand the nature and causation of any interactive governance problems that cannot be analysed and explained by the application of *hermeneutic* methods (which can offer unambiguous explanations about causal relationships, but makes knowledge subject to severe relativism, dynamic and open to constant revision, which, in turn, makes prediction problematic) and/or they cannot accommodate behavior that is induced by self-interest or hierarchical loyalty and obligation considerations; or because their solutions, which presume a *structuralist* ontology (involving jointly affirmed social norms), are unable to secure the behavioral responses either from individuals who no longer motivated by jointly affirmed social norms, or from individuals who are motivated by self-interest or hierarchical loyalty and obligation considerations.

## The Hermeneutic-Agency Perspective

While those who are predisposed to a hermeneutic-agent philosophical disposition, which, as Goffman ([1959] 1990) notes, embraces a wide range of behaviours, they would presume themselves to be incapable of describing, analysing and understanding — let alone judging or changing — social reality with any degree of certainty. They would deny the knowable of the social world as either set of objective truths derived by inductive or deductive reasoning, or as a social construct built up by discourse. To seek to share knowledge of the personal experiences of others is considered futile, as no experience can be fully shared by two individuals. They would accept that all that knowable is what is in an individual's own field of contemporaneous consciousness, which cannot be escaped — "I am my world" (Wittgenstein ([1922] 1961: 5.63), "the world is my idea" (Schopenhauer [1818 and 1844] 1969: 1). They would continually strive to deal with the real by discerning the true reality as it becomes or manifests (Zubiri [1989] 2003): "in what we do we recognise what we are" (Schopenhauer ([1839] 1999: 109); and "I am myself and my circumstances" (Ortega y Gasset [1929-31] 2002: 53). As social reality's traits are revealed, it is individually assembled on the basis of what an individual believes to be real. The social world, then, is an individual construct created in accordance with an individual's distinctive understanding of it. As sceptical existentialists, *outsiders* would presume that people conduct their affairs in a social order in which everyone has a place but no one belongs: *my social role is determined by events outside my control.*

The social context for *outsiders* is one where people see themselves as detached from a social order yet still subject to its binding prescriptions. Life's ends are transient and capricious — *I will do whatever luck and circumstance dictate* — and the means of their achievement are unknowable to anyone: *my priorities are determined by what life's trials and tribulations require of me; my future concerns are determined by circumstances and opportunities outside my control; and what I am committed to depends on what I have to do to address life's challenges.* Theirs is a reaction to existence that results in self-chosen isolationism: "there is no significance in human life beyond what humans themselves invest in it" (Davies 1992: 21).

The *outsider's* perception of human nature is self-referential. It is up to people not only to use their unbridled freedom to decide their own fate, and so determine their own destiny for which they alone are responsible, but also to define their own identity, or essential characteristics, in the course of living out their lives in the most authentic and fulfilling way possible (Heideggar ([1927] 1967). Free will involves individuals in a life-long struggle with their interpretations of other people's perceptions of them, which ameliorates their capacity to recognise their own unique consciousness and thus their supremacy over the forces of social constraint. It can only be exercised by those willing to embrace, take on and defeat life's endless cycle of trials and tribulations. A person's moral worth is self-referential. Life's meaning depends on one's self. Who a person becomes, then, is contingent upon who that person wishes to be.

**Ethics.** *Outsiders,* as *moral sceptics,* would deny that anyone can have *moral knowledge* (true moral beliefs), because they either cannot be justified or are simply unknowable. Moral beliefs (opinions) remain matters of personal taste or preference — "a virtue has to be *our* invention, our more personal defence and necessity...each one of us should devise his own virtue, his own categorical imperatives" (Nietzsche [1888] 1969: 121).

Moral conduct, for *outsiders,* is grounded in the existential ethical proposition that people should confront life's perplexities and dilemmas, which then shapes their own ethical choices, and so expresses their own moral judgements. Not to do so is wrong, justifying self-condemnation. Their concern is with act-centered morality — *what should I do?* Their focus is on their own conduct, for who are they to judge the conduct of others. Any moral statements they may choose to make, derived from their moral norms (their moral judgements) can only express their moral emotions, which reveal their moral sentiments (those of their feelings that are central to moral agency (Gibbard 1990).

**Trust.** *Outsiders* consider that the granting of trust must be preceded by personal experience with those to whom trust is to be extended. If people are confident that their experiences with another person, including those who seek to govern them, justify the extending of trust, then they will trust that person.

**Public Interest.** To *outsiders,* the "public interest" is unknowable, because of capriciousness and uncertainty, and thus cannot be intentionally and instrumentally promoted and protected. Nevertheless, society is still governable, but only if powers that be exercise of the required coercive power to govern as they see fit.

**Governance Mode.** *Outsiders* would not discriminate between the private and the public spheres, both of which they see as being unknowable, capricious and fearful realms. Neither can be trusted. Both are indifferent to people's needs. Thus, any engagement with the public sphere is pointless, as little benefit can be expected from any collective action. The governmental process would be characterised by *outsiders* as one dominated by unknowing and untrustworthy vested interests, which respect neither the truthfulness of facts nor the sanctity of abstract values. They would realistically accept that public policy is, because of the limits of human cognition, the product of garbage can-like decision processes (March and Olsen 1976). Government might, perhaps, be sometimes benign in intent, the consequences of which are unknowable, but it is inevitably malevolent in action, the consequences of which are experienced.

Since the "public interest" cannot be intentionally and instrumentally promoted and protected, then it makes no difference to *outsiders* who has the authority to exercise the power of the state. Government would be perceived by to be intrusive, perhaps benign in intent but certainly malevolent in outcome. *Outsiders* would, thus, resignedly expect to be coercively alienated any who seek to govern them. Thus, they would be unwilling to engage voluntarily with any governance process. They would prefer, in essence, a weak state, a weak civil society and weak markets.

*Outsiders* would have no preference for any particular mode of societal governance; none can be trusted to protect and advance their interests. The best they would hope for is a governance mode that ignores them, and certainly does not require their constructive engagement. Their compliance with the wishes of those who seek to govern them would be alienative (Etzioni 1961), born of fear of force, threat and menace, in the belief that the power being exercised is not legitimate. This means that they would find ways of minimizing, if not avoiding, any changes they did not agree with; and they would expect others to do so as well.

*Outsiders* would thus be attracted to a political meta-narrative that reinforces their existentialist preoccupation with the human condition and acknowledges the limitations of reason and intentionality, therefore it would emphases plausibility (rather than accuracy), sense making (Weick 1995), and non- or reversible decision-makings. They might be allured to the anarchist proposition that a society without the state is desirable, but they would certainly doubt its feasibility. They would be broadly amenable to the notion that people have no general obligation to obey the commands of the state, and this might instill in them a vague sense of hope that the state could be abolished. Their scepticism would come to the fore when they ponder on whether there could ever be a transition to some kind of stateless society that delivers social order. This is regardless of whether such a stateless society is based on natural laws and perfectionist ethics (Hurka 1993) in the classical or socialist tradition; on natural rights and egoism in the individualist tradition; or on permanent and irreducible pluralism in the postmodernist tradition (Miller 1991) Thus, the state should be non-coercive, non-exploitative and tolerant.

**Salient Governance Risks.** *Outsiders* face the salient governance risk that their disengagement from any mode of governance is unjustifiable because their denial of the knowabity of social reality, and the unexplainability of human behaviour, has led them to an unjustifiable exaggeration of the unpredictability of social action. Even if all knowledge is based on personal experience, an individual's taken-for-granted stock of knowledge (*natural attitude* [Husserl [1931] 1960]) itself is based on the expectation of reciprocity which, whilst never complete, may be so near as to provide high probability of quasi-prediction and, by implication, the possibility of quasi-structuralist causation. Thus their scepticism misguided.

## Ethical Antagonisms, Distrust and Governance

This quadripartite division of perspectives on societal governance creates tensions with societies as adherents to particular perspectives seek to establish and enhance their credibility by drawing upon specific ethical principles to determine what should constitutes an acceptable societal responses to a perceived societal problem-solving and opportunity-creating scenario. Mistrust, even distrust, can be built up in the face of emerging ethical antagonisms over what human actions are "good or bad", "right or wrong", or "virtuous or shameful".

**The Hierarchists' Ethical Antagonisms.** *Hierarchists* have an ethical need to be able to deduce their duty and obligation imperatives, which tell them which human actions are "right" or "wrong". This will enable them to be well-ordered selves conducting their affairs in a stable social order, where government is legitimately empowered to judge what is in their best interest. The moral scepticism of *outsiders* would robustly challenge the *hierarchists'* fundamental moral exigency that notions of loyalty and duty should be consistently observed throughout the nation state, for should this imperative be ignored, anarchy would certainly follow. They would be suspicious of

*individualists* and their belief that free human beings can only be motivated by material reward, as this notion fails to accommodate the need for sustaining the "common good" to maintain a stable social order. Similarly, the *enclavists* predilection towards moral relativism, and their acceptance that a moral act is one that is voluntarily conducted in accordance with a set of jointly affirmed social norms, would be distrusted because the resultant social norms cannot provide precise and stable guidelines that can inform citizens on how to understand their interpersonal duties and loyalties, and their obligations and responsibilities to the state. Thus, *hierarchists* would be distrustful of any governance perspective grounded in these alternative ethical premises.

**The Individualists' Ethical Antagonisms.** *Individualists* have an ethical need is to be able to identify the net beneficial ends achieved by self-governing individuals undertaking market transactions that they judge to be in their best interests, which tell them which human actions are "good" or "bad". This enables them to ascertain whether those personally favourable market actions produce outcomes that are, at least, not detrimental to others. Profound concerns would arise from the *enclavists'* belief in the efficacy of individuals' altruistic and virtuous actions within a pattern of mutually dependent but unconditional obligations to other members of a community-of-interest, for this denies the *individualists'* fundamental ethical precept that success for self, which follows the actions of self-interested individuals, is good unless others are harmed as a consequence. They would distrust *hierarchists'* motivation in upholding a moral code that expects individuals to discover their proper position in life and then to carry out their designated duties and obligations. Finally, *individualists* would distrust the *outsider's* affirmation that there can be no benefit in learning a code of ethics, because consequential principles enshrine individual autonomy and freedom from harm. Under these circumstances, *individualists* would be distrustful of any governance perspective grounded in these alternative ethical premises.

**The Enclavists' Ethical Antagonisms.** *Enclavists* have an ethical need is to be able to engage with like-minded others in a community-of-interest to jointly affirm social norms, which tell them which human actions are "virtuous" or "shameful". This enables them to build a moral commitment to that community, which they empower to judge what is in their best interest. In proselytising their ethical beliefs, they are particularly concerned about the ethical principles of *individualists*, which reduce their social responsibilities to not harming others. To *enclavists*, the *individualists'* unencumbered self is as an empty confused entity suffering from a lack of clear social aims, values and beliefs. This distrust is replicated in *hierarchists'* absolute denial of the capacity of a member of a community-of-interest capacity to choose their own moral code of behaviour. Thus, the *hierarchists'* self — encumbered by the self-centred aims of dominant hegemonies — is denied the capacity for growth into a complete, empowered entity. Finally, *enclavists'* are suspicious of *outsiders'* paramount concern for their own ethical authenticity, which appears like a self-indulgent myth. Because *outsiders* treat communities-of-interest as irrelevant, *enclavists* distrust a doctrine that seems to senselessly justify self-exclusion from meaningful and moral engagements with others. Under these circumstances, *enclavists* would be distrustful of any governance perspective grounded in these alternative ethical premises.

**The Outsiders' Ethical Antagonisms.** *Outsiders* have an ethical need is to be able to deny that anyone can have moral knowledge, which tell them that no human action can be judged to be "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong", or "virtuous" or "shameful". This enables them to deriving their own ethical values, attitudes and behaviour in the light of their own intentions and their interpretations of their own social interactions, thereby justifying their unwilling to engage voluntarily with any governance process that is unknowing and disinterested in what is in their best interest. *Outsiders* would profoundly distrust what they perceive as the *hierarchists'* authoritarian moral attitude that emphasize duty and obligation to the powers that be, which can be used to constrain individual free will by force, threat and menace. Whilst the principles of ethical consequentialism adhered to by *individuaslists* do not assume the same degree of determinism, nevertheless, like the pursuit of virtue by *enclavists*, they assume that individuals can use a pre-defined framework to determine their ethical beliefs. For the *outsider* this is nonsense. Under these circumstances, *outsiders* would be distrustful of any governance perspective grounded in these alternative ethical premises.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored four contending perspectives on what should constitute the "public interest" and on whether and how it can be protected and promoted. These contending governance perspectives are underpinned by ethical premises that are mutually incompatible. Adherents to each perspective would champion their preferred governance response as the most appropriate societal responses to any perceived societal problem-solving and opportunity-creating scenario. *Hierarchists* would prefer the hierarchical governance mode. They would expect

compliance on the basis of a cognitive commitment derived from rational calculations made in the context of the rules and procedures prescribed by those in or with authority — ethically underpinned by deontological duty and obligation imperative — with non-compliance being attributed to deviant behaviour. *Individualists* would prefer the market self-regulating mode. They would expect compliance to be instrumental, based on economic calculations of compliance costs and benefit — ethically underpinned by the consequential imperative of no harm to others — with non-compliance being attributable to rogue market actors. *Enclavists* would prefer voluntary interactive network governance mode. They would expect compliance on the basis a moral commitment to share common values — ethically underpinned by imperatives of virtuous behaviour — with non-compliance attributable a lack share common values. *Outsiders* would have no preference for any mode of societal governance, all of which they would consider to be unknowing and exploitative. They would expect people not comply with any governance obligation with which they disagreed — ethically underpinned by the imperatives of skepticism, with compliance attributable to the alienation-inducing fear of illegitimate force, threat and menace.

How well governments can, or, perhaps more importantly, are popularly perceived as being able to listen to listen to, acknowledge and reconcile this quadripartite governance discourse — and thus can build up trust with the adherents to the contending governance perspectives — will determine the governed's response — compliance or antagonism — to their governance processes. At stake is the governability of societies in which *hierarchists, individualists, enclavists* and *outsiders* are germinating the seeds of mutual misgivings. Over time, these misgivings might well develop into mistrust, perhaps distrust, even cynicism that is sustained by an intolerance of alternative perspectives on the collective actions that should be taken to protect and promote the public interest.

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**Figure 1.**     **Epistemological and Ontological Underpinnings of Contending Societal Governance Perspectives**

| | | Epistemology | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Naturalism | Hermeneutics |
| **Ontology** | Structuralism | **Naturalist Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which structures exercise power over agency, which makes human behaviour predictable.<br><br>*Ethics*: deontological<br>*Trust*: moralistic<br>*Public Interest*: common good<br>*Governance Mode*: hierarchy<br>*Governance Balance*: strong state, a weak civil society and weak markets<br>*Government*: benign, benevolent, should be elitist, stable, reactive but strong, even coercive if necessary<br>*Governmental Approach*: guardian-rulership | **Hermeneutic Structuralism:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world, knowable only as it is socially constructed, with people's action being determined, and made predictable, by their collective interpretation of this reality.<br><br>*Ethics*: virtue<br>*Trust*: mutual expectation of reciprocity<br>*Public Interest*: categorical interests<br>*Governance Mode*: interactive<br>*Governance Balance*: strong civil society, a weak state and weak markets<br>*Government*: intrusive, potentially benevolent (in outcome), should be inclusive, cooperative, proactive<br>*Governmental Approach*: deliberative democracy |
| | Agency | **Naturalist Agency:**<br><br>Presumes an objective social world, knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which people are agents of their actions, with their behaviour made predictable by their unconstrained self-interest.<br><br>*Ethics*: consequentialism<br>*Trust*: probability, knowledge-based<br>*Public Interest*: market preferences<br>*Governance Mode*: market<br>*Governance Balance*: strong markets, a weak state and weak civil society<br>*Government*: intrusive, malevolent, should be minimalist, reactive but enabling<br>*Governmental Approach*: protective democracy | **Hermeneutic Agency:**<br><br>Presumes a subjective social world that is contestably knowable as what people believe it to be, with agency constrained by their subjective perceptions of social reality, which makes human behaviour unpredictable.<br><br>*Ethics*: scepticism<br>*Trust*: personal experience<br>*Public Interest*: unknowable<br>*Governance Mode*: none<br>*Governance Balance:* weak civil society, a weak state and weak markets<br>*Government*: intrusive, exploitative, perhaps benign (in intent), malevolent (in action), should be non-coercive, non-exploitative, tolerant, inactive<br>*Governmental Approach:* anarchism (in theory) |

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# COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: DEVELOPING POST – BUREAUCRATIC MANAGEMENT SKILLS

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# Abstract

Public servants, who are working in a bureaucratic public sector, embrace community participation subject to carefully prescribed premises. Firstly, community organisations are instruments of policy implementation legitimately subject to state manipulation and secondly, community members should make rational decisions in pursuit of fulfilling duties owed to the state. In this paradigm, by the use of education and persuasion, communities can proselytise to their dissenting members through processes of group involvement that promote the recognised virtues that contribute to the maintenance of the existing social order. However, the increasing ineffectiveness of command-type public policy instruments has resulted in the creation of a new post-bureaucratic public management. This scenario requires policy makers to perceive the egalitarian and pro-active involvement of community members in the implementation and evaluation of public services as critical to dealing with issues of fairness, distributional justice, equity, social stability and inclusiveness.

The conundrum facing public servants is the likelihood that some community members, in the new age of post-bureaucratic management, would prefer the following alternative conceptualisations of community:

- A hierarchical model of community, under which societal common good has priority over local community interests;
- A network model of community, under which the categorical good of community organisations constitutes what is in the community's best interests;
- A market model of community, under which the revealed market preferences of individual community members has priority over local community interests;
- An anarchical model of community, under which the community interest is taken to be unknowable.

Thus, public servants aspiring to empower communities, are frustrated by differing perspectives on community engendered by community members contending values, attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, if a community empowerment programme aims to be inclusive then public servants should manage, rather than just facilitate, community initiatives. This approach demands holistic management that aims to achieve unity-in-diversity with community reality modulated by a consensus over the legitimacy of contending perspectives on the social world. Moreover, public servants, when engaging with communities should explore, reflect on and then contextualise their unit of analysis from contending social reality perspectives. Resulting from this process some common ground between contending perspectives might be discernible permitting consensus building to take place even though this may result in the dis-empowerment of existing politico-administrative powers. Therefore, public servants, delivering post-bureaucratic community management find themselves as instigators, utilising a subtle and pre-planned strategy, in an iterative process that encourages communities to play an effective role in the implementation of public policy.

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## Introduction

Public servants would understand individual initiative being restrained in a bureaucratic public sector through the imposition of "recurrent patterns of social behaviour that determine the nature of human action" (Parker, 2000:125). Thus, the objective of the governing elite in relation to community organisations is to exercise effective controls so that they can achieve their maximum utility, through productive and reproductive capacities, to serve the state. As Pareto observed, achieving this goal is a delicate matter thus, the "governing classes frequently merge a problem of maximum utility *of* with maximum utility *for* the community" ([1902] 1966: 254) as they attempt to ensure subservience and stability. If such a strategy succeeds then elite groups can legitimately manipulate subservient community members, as they become instruments of policy implementation.

Therefore, the first objective for this paper is to highlight the imperatives for the bureaucratic model of community intervention. Then, from a post-bureaucratic managerial perspective, the second objective is to examine four contending conceptualisations of community, each with a discrete understanding of community engagement, which may exist amongst community members. Finally, the third objective is to offer some recommendations to the post-bureaucratic public servant for the development of a managerial strategy to address the challenge of inclusive community empowerment.

## Bureaucratic Community Organisations

Scruton's opinion about the value of community initiatives is that without adequate control, the majority of community members would be afflicted with blatant "sanctity, intolerance, exclusion, and a sense that life's meaning depends on obedience, and also a vigilance against the enemy" (cited in Miller, 1999: 177). Thus, the bureaucratic public servant would invite community participation as an activity that carries out duties owed to the state in the maintenance of the existing social order. Moreover, community initiatives should, to the greatest extent possible, be based on authoritative edicts that can be understood as "the rational co-ordination of the activities of a number of people" (Schein, 1980: 15). In these plans of action, the state uses voluntarism as a source of cheap labour, facilitated by the unemployed working on community projects in return for state benefits.

Furthermore, funding would be rigorously monitored to ensure that paid workers focus on explicit objectives that have been systematically broken down into standardised and simplified tasks (Brooks, 1999: 113). So, the chosen style of community management reflects the key features of a rational approach to work with functions divided and allocated before being re-combined "through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility" (Schein 1980: 15). Therefore, local government professionals, skilled in disciplines such as town planning, public health and social work, would use their technical and administrative expertise to instruct community members in the best way to achieve their objectives. These experts would present themselves to the community as capable of delivering the results of logical or common sense legality (Thompson, 1990: 61). Furthermore, the public servants involved would welcome the opportunity to be involved in new community initiatives as "an expansion of power means more office positions, more sinecures, and better opportunities for promotion" (Weber, 1968: 911).

A regime of bureaucratic community management would anticipate that the effects of Homans (1951) exchange theory would underpin their aims and objectives. This model proposes that individual community members would only co-operate with their neighbours to the extent that they would mutually benefit from the interaction and they would avoid contact with people of different status who are unable to assist in the furtherance of their interests. Thus, public servants would be willing to exclude, or pay little attention to, human emotions and values that have not been a product of expert deliberation (Etzioni, 1993: 1068) as emotions are regarded as secondary to instrumental tasks in a process where it is assumed that groups of people are malleable, and sometimes the exclusion of minorities in a locality may be desirable.

Alternatively, the bureaucratic public servant does not wish to be perceived as deliberately neglecting some community members as it is necessary, for the maintenance of stability, that citizens do not feel robbed of their property or honour through neglect of the obligations that power confers. Therefore, working relationships in communities need to be regularly reviewed and re-negotiated to avoid entrapment in a dogmatic unresponsive framework. In this context the public servant would be mindful of Schumpeter's observation that "wants are nothing like as definite and...[peoples]...actions upon these wants nothing like as rational and prompt" (1987: 257) as the demands for standardisation and regulation require. However, informed by this notion, good community management must still focus

on community members complying with imposed policies and practices. Arising from this strategy, it would be envisaged that an appropriate *espirit de corp* would develop fostering community loyalty and commitment (Dixon and Dogan, 2003a: 465).

Public servants utilising a bureaucratic model of community engagement would draw comfort from the notion that the outcomes that arise from "the analysis of political processes is largely not a genuine but a manufactured will" (Schumpeter, 1987: 263), which can be regarded as the product of the existing political state of affairs. Therefore, they would be unperturbed by any exhortations that demand the adoption of democratic egalitarian processes. Although some citizens proselytise the benefits of "the creation of an exclusively therapeutic experience" through local people defining their values, aims and objectives (Hoggett and Miller, 2000: 361), the bureaucratic public servant would believe that community members find that their predominant inclinations favour an imposed framework of scientific social regulation.

However the bureaucratic model of community intervention, with its command–type public policy instruments has been acknowledged as increasingly ineffective (Kooiman, 1993; Weimer and Vining, 1997) and this inadequacy is being attributed to policy failures (Bovens and t'Hart, 1990; Bovens *et al.*, 2001; Gray, 1998; Sieber, 1981).

## Post-bureaucratic Management and Community

In seeking to resolve the increasingly constrained role of the state in direct public service provision, strategies have been employed that require a wide range of service delivery arrangements (Dixon, Davis and Kouzmin, 2004). Thus, there has been a movement from centralised to devolved (local and regional) mechanisms with an increasing emphasis on managerialised (corporatised and commercialised quasi-public), communal (private non-profit), and market (private-for-profit) provision. This latter form of delivery assumes particular importance due to the dominance of contemporary neo-liberal economic policy agendas and encompasses the desire of policy makers to impose managerialist values and practices throughout the public sector. However, by introducing the disciplines of economy, efficiency and effectiveness into the pubic policy arena uncertainties have arisen over the articulation and measurement of objectives which are often difficult to quantify (Dixon and Hyde, 2003; Dixon *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, the

policy objectives envisaged by government and those outcomes expected by community members may be incompatible with the interests and motivations of the reformed public services.

In· this new management environment policy makers perceive that the involvement of community members in the implementation and evaluation of the provision of public services is critical to dealing with issues of fairness, distributional justice, equity, social stability and inclusiveness. However, before public servants promote a new agenda of community empowerment they could prudently consider the possibility that alternative and contending conceptualisations of community exist amongst its members (Dixon, Sanderson and Dogan, 2005).

## The Hierarchical Model of Community

Community members who believe that the common good of society has priority over local community interests presume an objective social world. This world is knowable by the application of the scientific method in which social structures exercise powers over agency, which makes human behaviour predictable. Moreover, their utopia is a vision reminiscent of Plato's Republic, featuring a social order where everyone has, and is aware of,·their pre-ordained position. In such a society, an elite would exercise knowledge-based power through a sophisticated legal system that has benefited from a tradition· of tried and tested remedies. Thus, Socrates asserts that (Plato, 2000: 155-6):

> if our rulers are to be worthy of the name, and their auxiliaries likewise, then I think the auxiliaries would be prepared to carry out orders, and the rulers would issue those orders either in obedience to the letter of the law, or, in places\where we have left the interpretation of the law to them, in obedience to its spirit. 

Therefore, those community members who advocate the benefits of the hierarchical model of community take actions that can be posited as predictable as their rational decisions are taken based on prescribed rules, procedures and what strategy is best able to produce justice. These presupposed precepts lead to the development of a code that defines what actions are right and permissible, and thus what actions are wrong (Sanderson, 2006: 3). As Blackburn observes "they take us beyond what we admire, or regret, or prefer, or even what we want other people to prefer. They take us to thoughts about what is due. They take us to

demands" (2001: 60). As Kant concludes, these demands are derived *a priori* or from pure reason instead of individual experience. He insisted that for people to accept moral laws their construction must be "freed from everything which may be only empirical" (Kant, [1785a] 1998: 289). Thus, individuals do not construct their morality by considering the consequences of their actions, but, instead, discover their inherent capacity to act morally or dutifully. This process of enlightenment lies at a deeper level than that of affectation, as individual behaviour should fully comply with the intent of a duty, rather than just observe its tenets, if a person is to achieve the particular postulates of Kantian "good will." From this process of subjective awareness there arises a code of objective ethics, which accords with the thinking of the elitist in that impartial standards of behaviour are created, which can be subject to dispassionate judgement. As Kant maintains, judgement must be passed on what is right and what is wrong by the use of pure practical reason thus making morality absolute.

When a person acknowledges their moral obligations, they accept "the categorical imperative," or that moral rule that recognises that human characteristics — such as loyalty and duty — possess a discrete inherent value. This distinction is clarified by Kant in his statement that if an "action is good only as a means to something else, then the imperative is hypothetical; if it is conceived as good in itself and consequently as being necessarily the principle of a will which of itself conforms to reason, then it is categorical " ([1785b] 2003: 2). Following this assertion he proceeds to confirm the existence of "but one categorical imperative, namely this: Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, [1785b] 2003: 6). This fundamental principle is often cast into the popular saying "do unto others as you expect them to do to you" although this cliché does not fully accommodate the extent of Kant's insight.

**The Community Management Agenda**

Communities are envisaged as contributing towards the preservation of established hierarchical institutions by being diligent in combating the infiltration of community organisations by radicals attempting to cause social unrest to further their aim of liberating the oppressed. Thus, a system of duties and obligations create interdependency amongst societal members that supersedes any notions of individual liberty as state and society combine together to form a nation. The

moral imperatives that underpin this synergism transcend manipulation as they set forth beliefs, not attitudes or opinions, interpreted as the truth. Secondary associations, such as the family, the institution of marriage, the church, and neighbourhoods then reflect these values. In this scenario, society develops organically in a complex and subtle evolutionary pattern that is devoid of the uncertainties inherent within the dynamics of radical change.

Using Goodin's (2002: 583-9) alternative models, for organising mutuality and reciprocity, the hierarchical model of community management prefers the prevalence of "mutually conditional obligations" that arises from an ethereal bond between the elite and their subservient fellow citizens. Within this uniting force, subjects are required to discharge their duties to the state only if the state discharges its duties to its own subjects, with this principle applying vice-versa. Therefore, transferring welfare programmes to local democratic forums, which may be parsimonious or discriminatory, is unwise.

## The Community Engagement Agenda

Community members who prefer the hierarchical model of community management would accept the following propositions about community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** People conduct their affairs by assuming their pre-ordained position in a social order where everyone has, and is aware of, their place. Thus, an individual would desire community involvement if their pre-ordained position and/or their special skills make the hierarchical social order expect that they would so participate.

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** The position an individual occupies in the community would be contingent on their place in the social order, which would determine acceptable community roles. Those who express apathy towards any community involvement would be tolerated as they are deemed as implying their consent to community decisions made by those who are more capable and competent than them.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** It would be expected that community members would be willing to make voluntary sacrifices for their community, as this social construct forms part of the hierarchical social order, which must be

preserved by all citizens. Within community forums decision-making would reflect the will of the elite with others prepared to accept the decisions made by their superiors in the social order.

## The Network Model of Community

Community members who believe in maximising the concentration of power in community institutions and voluntary regulatory frameworks to empower community members, presume a subjective social world under which the categorical good of community organisations constitutes what is in the community's best interests. This world is knowable through its social construction, with people's actions being determined, and made predictable by their collective interpretation of this reality. Thus, the network model of community is founded on the social nature of human beings with its inclusive communities being (Tam, 1998: 31–2):

> built upon the structures involving human interactions — not just in families
> and neighbourhood areas, but also in schools, business organisations, state
> institutions, professional and community groups, voluntary associations, and
> international networks. In all cases, necessary reforms need to facilitate the
> development of citizens' attitudes and abilities as effective participants of
> inclusive communities, with the help of education, work opportunities, and
> collective protection.

All these participant groups are expected to aspire to achieve "new communities in which people have choices and readily accommodate divergent *sub*communities" (Etzioni, 1995a: 122), whilst still maintaining common values and belief systems. In this process, the unfulfilled "unencumbered self" finds that their fundamental desire to create a purposeful self-identity is only possible through relationships with other community members. Arising from this understanding, it is expected that greater social cohesion would result from unrestricted human autonomy in a process where, as McIntyre notes, citizens "would grow to understand themselves...only in the context of the community" (cited in Arthur, 1998: 357). In this paradigm, Sandel (1992: 19) has recognised that a citizen cannot choose their purpose in life without recourse to their cultural inheritance. This rich history of attachments and commitments is an essential part of an individual's·social reality but is only accessible through the medium of group discourse. Therefore, if the individual becomes deprived of community interaction they would be unable to

reach their true potential, as they are forced into a meaningless conundrum, rootless and unclear about their true vocation.

Community members who advocate network governance embrace an ethical code that can facilitate the creation by a community of a continuum of significance in matters of conformity, progressiveness and prescriptiveness (Driver and Martell, 1997: 29–32). This is not a proclamation that moral relativism between communities should go unchecked in an atmosphere of unwavering neutrality as there is a role for the supra-community, or the nation state. In this political framework the supra-community "readily accommodates subgroup differences — as long as these do not threaten a limited set of core values and shared bonds" (Etzioni, 1995a: 160). These common commitments would include the preservation of social and religious tolerance and the protection of fundamental human rights (Etzioni, 1995: 160).

The promotion of recognised virtues throughout communities is fundamental to the network model, as these principles are expected to "significantly enhance social order whilst reducing the need for state intervention in social behaviour" (Etzioni, 2000: 26). Thus, by using education and persuasion as inculcators of reasoned and virtuous action, high moral standards can be achieved in all types of communities (Etzioni, 1998: xxxvi). Coercion is excluded from this paradigm although a role is envisaged for "permissible paternalism" (Goodin, 1998: 122–3).

**The Community Management Agenda**

Mutuality, in that it embraces both reciprocity and self-interest, is an important element in the network model of community management but, whilst individual interests can be pursued, any potential excesses should be tempered by strategies of protection and mutual obligation (Selznick, 1996: 4-5). So, arising from this principle of mutualism, it becomes necessary for each community member to understand that they have "both a right and a duty" to participate in the affairs of their community (Bellah, 1995/6: 4).

In promoting the necessity for community members to participate in their communities, Etzioni argues that there is a need to confront "inauthentic democratic politics" (1968: 637). This type of government restricts societal power

for the majority to a periodic vote at an election that probably offers a restrictive choice. However, the network model seeks to stimulate the active society where there would be an emphasis on "the egalitarian distribution of power" (Etzioni, 1968: 517). In seeking to achieve this aim, the principle of subsidiarity is invoked. This asserts that a group, or groups, that are in the closest proximity to a problem should attend to its resolution, with intervention by other groups restricted to the time when support is required. So only when the family unit cannot achieve its aims should the local school, health centre, or other larger organisation take responsibility (Etzioni, 1995a: 44). Thus, state dependence becomes downgraded to the choice of last resort as active communities take control of their own destiny.

Voluntary participation by individuals in community initiatives is regarded as a praiseworthy activity. Such altruism facilitates community members to use their time and effort to help other community members without personal gain thereby fostering improved social relations. Inherent to such a strategy is an emphasis on individuals recognising their responsibilities to others through their personal faith in the beneficial effect achieved by a supportive moral and social order.

The ontological assumptions that underpins the network model is founded on "the non-reducibility and the significance of collectives, institutions, relations, meanings and so on" (Fraser, 1999: 21). Individuals do not enter a direct relationship with the state but instead local social institutions mediate in any contact with positional authority. Moreover, individual interdependence is strengthened through co-operative enquiry, or the interpretation of fundamental collective principles, that makes the values and attitudes of community members "a product of a complex interplay of people and organisations" rather than the result of directives from a governing elite (Parsons, 1995: 185).

When making network policy, a premium is placed on the understanding of emotional considerations through the conceptualisation of equity, or the treatment of people in a fair but different manner that might achieve equality in their opportunities (Blakemore, 1998: 24). Through this process community members would expect an increase in the level of participation in community governance and the incidental attribute of improved social cohesiveness.

**The Community Engagement Agenda**

Community members who prefer the network model of community would accept the following propositions about community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** It is only through engagement by the individual in their community of locality or communities of interest that they can realise they're fundamental identity and thus their purpose in life. Therefore, the individual's desire, although it may need stimulation, is inherently pre-eminent in their personal aims and objectives.

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** Every individual, as soon as they can effectively communicate with other community members, can engage fully in reaching community decisions that reflect a consensus of opinion amongst the group.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** Every individual would voluntarily engage with other community members (possibly aided by gentle persuasion) in an egalitarian and respectful way in order to develop a close and purposeful social bond. It would be expected that this bond would be underpinned by a code of values that emphasises the maintenance of social inclusion and the responsibilities held by every citizen to other community members. Thus, language would be laden with value judgements that reflect community members' mutually agreed norms of behaviour.

### The Market Model of Community

Community members who believe in the preservation of the competitive free market unfettered by unnecessary collective interference presume an objective social world. This world is knowable by the application of the scientific method, in which people are agents of their actions, with their behaviour made predictable by their unconstrained self-interest. Thus, the notion of the autonomous individual exercising rational freedom of choice resides at the core of their perception of social reality. Therefore, there is a general acceptance that all human beings are predatory and capable of making decisions based on objective knowledge that informs purposeful risk taking. In this scenario the revealed market preferences of individual community members has priority over local community interests.

Advocates of the market model can accept that individuals may visualise a good society as one in which such values as truth, honesty and justice are predominant. However, whilst these individual expectations can, when aggregated, reflect the qualities of certain abstract principles, they cannot be extended to a collective agreement about specific outcomes in particular situations. For

instance, as each individual continually experiences new circumstances that provide previously undiscovered facts about social reality it is impossible for a collective to compose a set of precise opinions that exemplifies the shared moral code of the group. Thus, defining issues of criminality through "a shared understanding of what we must guard against" (Tam, 1998: 120–1) is an unrealistic objective. Instead, individuals should choose and then implement their own consequentialist moral principles guided by the notion of undertaking good actions that would benefit the majority. These objectively knowable moral principles make extensive collective discourses about values redundant.

The market model of community accommodates active citizenship, however this is based on "the view that if citizens of a democratic society are to preserve their basic rights and liberties...they must also have to a sufficient degree the political virtues...and be willing to take part in public life" (Rawls, 1988: 272). Thus, the priority for community engagement would be to ensure that the relationships of spontaneous exchange, created by self-interested networks of individuals, is not hindered or obstructed by local sanctions or boycotts instituted by other overly zealous community members who are ideologically opposed to market mechanisms.

**The Community Management Agenda**

Community members who prefer the market model are not opposed to mutuality. However, in maximising the efficiency of actions in pursuit of self-interest, they would individually find themselves asking the question — what would I gain from this action that would benefit others? Therefore, they would feel some comfort with the ethos of Local Exchange and Trading Schemes, whereby individuals help each other on the basis of reciprocal exchange. This type of structured reciprocity is also replicated in the notion of time banks, which "record, store and reward transactions where neighbours help neighbours" (Williams, 2003: 291) making any involvement in volunteering beneficial to the participant. This informal one-to-one community involvement may incorporate self-help schemes that directly increase an individual's material well-being. Alternatively, they may accommodate a community member's altruistic motivations, which are interpreted as belonging in the private sphere, that stimulate benevolent activities such as shopping for an elderly neighbour or child minding for a single parent (Williams, 2003: 285–94).

The market model clearly distinguishes between the public and the private spheres, with family life belonging in the private sphere. This belief has been intensified by the emergence of the contemporary autonomous nuclear family where, freed from traditional cultural restraints, family life can result in both men and women developing their careers whilst sharing the obligation of parenting. Such a situation has become possible by the establishment of individual rights, particularly those concerning equality of opportunity, which have changed the, often oppressive, nature of the traditional family unit. So, any erosion of personal liberty, both through constraints placed on adults and the community's interference in the evolution of a child's personality, should be opposed.

**The Community Engagement Agenda**

Community members who prefer the market model of community management would accept the following propositions about community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** This notion is pleasant but irrelevant to the fundamental purpose in life — the making, and the preservation of, the material wealth that can offer security, peace of mind and ultimately freedom for the individual.

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** The notion of community is explained as a fictitious concept that is composed of individuals who can choose to engage in contractual relationships where they would exercise their economic power in a self-interested and self-seeking manner. Therefore, the capacity for community engagement would usually follow a material cost-benefit analysis, although community members may also choose to enter unsolicited altruistic transactions because of the benefits that might be reaped for the psyche.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** They would presume that people are unwilling to make voluntary sacrifices for a community so the processes of engagement are contingent upon the benefits from participation exceeding the costs of involvement. In this scenario, no community member has a pre-ordained position and their only loyalty is to the furtherance of their own well being.

## The Anarchical Model of Community

Community members who presume a subjective social world that is contestably knowable as what people believe it to be, must seek to understand their existence by means of their subjective perceptions. Thus, the acquisition of knowledge is only possible through personal experience reflecting the Sartrerian notion of existence proceeding essence. For instance, objects and animals possess universally recognisable characteristics that create an embedded network. But human subjects create their own essence, in a process where they are either subsumed by the compositional arrangements they encounter in their lives or they understand and utilise the potentialities of their own agency. During this lifelong journey of choice between the affirmation of individual will or acquiescence to the false constraints of determinism each person will be alone, confined within their own reality and unable to share their observations and conclusions with anyone else.

Adherents to the anarchical model of community can display apathetic attitudes towards community initiatives as they experience alienation from their fellow citizens. Alternatively, they can be committed "outsiders" (Wilson, 1956) with highly sophisticated systems of philosophical, political and ethical beliefs. Therefore, it is important to emphasise the wide cultural diversity that manifests amongst these individuals, thus avoiding the error of labelling them as a social sub-stratum or residuum, characterised as the Marxist "lumpenproletariat" (Marx and Engels, [1848] 1967: 93) or as the "underclass" (Murray et al.,1996).

Anarchical community members accept the philosophical standpoint that denies the proposition that a social context can bring meaning to life. Therefore, they dispute essentialist arguments that maintain there are some fixed essential properties that determine peoples' behaviour. Thus, they would oppose any attempt to exclude individuals from their communities after they had failed to comply with dominant values and attitudes, perceiving such action as the inevitable malevolent outcome of a collective informed by flawed philosophical preconceptions. Therefore, adherents to the anarchical model would be cautious about their involvement with community organisations. They would expect to receive benefits for any contribution made towards the work of the collective, whose actions would be considered unpredictable as community is just another instrument of potential or actual control engineered by individuals in an attempt to render people as determined automata. Moreover, they reason that the

reification of a social construct is implausible in "that there are no principles that govern the social realm as a whole" (Schatzki, 2002: 141) so any attempt to describe and analysis social reality is merely speculative ideation. Therefore, there is no acceptance of belonging to a community, making apathy an acceptable response to exhortations to "become an active citizens."

The anarchical model requires its adherents to search for a moral code that entails a personal journey of discovery, leading the individual to choose how they would conduct their relationships with others, and the norms of behaviour that are contingent on these decisions. Thus, they reject the notion of a community consensus over what is right and what is wrong or what is good and what is bad. Instead, they maintain that people must individually confront or avoid their moral dilemmas by either making their own choices or denying their responsibilities.

**The Community Management Agenda**

Anarchists expect the state to exercise coercive power over them as they identify themselves as citizens who repudiate voluntary compliance. However, they consider that such action is in contravention of their rejection of obligations and duties, which leaves them free to choose who they are, and the manner that they should behave. Therefore, devolution of a part of the state's decision-making apparatus to the community level would be welcomed as this shift of power would allow individuals to have more control over their lives. However, forward planning is pointless in a world of unpredictability, where the best decisions should be based on inspiration and the minimising of risks, with lengthy procrastination over available options being an acceptable strategy.

Joining a group is acceptable to anarchists on the basis that this action would not compromise their striving for authenticity. However, the group members would pledge themselves to the achievement of some common purpose, thus every individual would accept a reciprocity of enforcement which underpins each group member's view of themselves. As the group becomes operational, the members would then develop reciprocity of dependency. "Thus, freedom, as common *praxis*, initially produced the bond of sociality in the form of the pledge; and now, it creates concrete forms of human relationship" (Sartre, [1960] 1976: 466). The pledged group, however, accepts that no experience can be fully shared by two people. Thus, the unpredictability of human behaviour can render mutuality gullible, as it fails to move beyond reciprocity of participation in community

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organisations, thus neglecting individual agency. Moreover, the doctrine of mutuality also maintains that, in working for the common good, community members would achieve, in an unprecedented meeting of minds, an agreed understanding of community values.

The proposition that no opinion is more probable or likely than another is embraced, so, sceptical ethical principles are employed as epistemic standards, when individuals are confronted with demands that community members should readily embrace all manner of community responsibilities while, in the medium term, a moratorium should be enforced against new rights (Etzioni, 1995a: 5).

Whilst anarchists would presume that there are no certainties in their mode of reasoning they would nevertheless strive to make sense of their reality. Therefore, in this search for plausibility, if they accept some community responsibility as it appears to be the right thing to do, that decision would be the product of their own perceptions. Moreover, these responsibilities would only be accepted if they had been identified as a result of individual subjective reasoning.

### The Community Engagement Agenda

The *existential outsider* would accept the following propositions about community engagement.

**Desire to Engage in Community:** The anarchist presumes that all human actors behave in ways that are ultimately unpredictable. Thus, there cannot be any credibility in the notion of structural causation. Therefore, why engage in a collective that is incapable of understanding the causes and probable consequences of social action?

**Capacity to Engage in Community:** As the concept of community is perceived as a pointless attempt by community members to take control over a setting that is unknowable with virtually no capacity for personal transactions, then the statement "capacity to engage in community" is a contradiction in terms.

**Processes of Community Engagement:** The anarchist demands an inauthentic approach to joining a collective through a process of developing reciprocity of enforcement, that underpins each individual's pledge to a group. Thus, community groups might be coercive and manipulative as they presume that there are certainties that can inform their decision-making.

# Empowering Community: Planting the Gene of Inclusiveness

Public servants who aspire to empower communities so that they can make meaningful contributions to the implementation of social policy must aim to achieve inclusive engagement. Thus, they are inspired by the need to unify attitudes and beliefs towards new initiatives so that they can be dealt with positively rather than becoming the focus of disagreements, gossip and negativity. However, post-bureaucratic public servants encounter a frustrating conundrum — different conceptualisations of community may exist amongst community members that demand the management skills of a pragmatic enabler rather than the reactive qualities of a facilitator.

In seeking to develop holistic community management, the public servant could profitably begin by considering the network model of community. This model is unique in its assertion that the categorical good of community organisations constitute what is in the community's best interests. Thus, it underpins the preferred principles of the committed community activist — the individual community member most likely to participate in community initiatives.

The public servant would recognise the following notions as being fundamental to the community activist's doctrine:

- Individuals have a fundamental need to socialise with other human beings and can only achieve their full potential by working within collaborative groups that concur with a set of common aspirations.

- Community members must discover their shared values, attitudes, and beliefs, thereby enabling the development of a strong moral code that is necessary to redress contemporary social deficits (such as increasing criminality and inadequate parenting).

- Communities should mediate between the individual and the state to facilitate local co-operative enquiries into the evaluation of policies and to ensure neighbourhood influence over community-based service delivery.

- Communities should extol the virtue of mutuality, thereby promoting the need for high levels of meaningful participation in community decision-making processes by community members.

- It is imperative for citizens to recognise the weaknesses inherent in individualism and authoritarianism that have undermined social progress

towards an egalitarian society. Thus, the preponderance of individual rights must be redressed in favour of the duties and responsibilities owed by individual citizens to their community or communities.

These propositions clearly define the fundamental elements of strategy and objectives that should lie behind any community project but adherents to the hierarchical, market and anarchical models of community would find collaboration challenging. These challenges encapsulate the following barriers to consensus:

**The Hierarchical Model of Community**

- Community members would have to recognise community as a dynamic social mechanism capable, in its own right rather than as an instrument of the state, of bringing measurable improvements to the lives of its members.

- Community members would have to accept that the concept of community-based moral relativism would take precedence over the moral imperatives inculcated by the state.

- Community members would have to accept the notion that community has a critical role in mediating between the needs of community members and available resources of the state.

- Community members would have to accept that they have mutually dependent, but unconditional, obligations to all the other members of their community or communities.

- Community members would have to accept that the human trait of altruism could be an efficient and effective inspiration for community members to participate in the formulation and implementation of social policies that would benefit their needy neighbours.

**The Market Model of Community**

- Community members would have to accept that the social construct of community has a causal capacity, which can protect the free market for goods and services from interference by the state.

- Community members would have to accept the agreed moral code of their community despite restrictions this may impose on their individual search for objective moral truths.

- Community members would have to accept that volunteering for community

work by joining an organised group is more praiseworthy than undertaking individual action.

- Community members would have to be willing to undertake work in their communities that does not offer them the chance of material gain.

- Community members would have to agree that community values are relevant to both the public and private spheres.

## The Anarchical Model of Community

- Community members would have to accept that community initiatives can be effectively formulated then efficiently executed, and that they will make a real difference to the well being of community members.

- Community members would have to agree that the accumulated experience and understanding possessed by community members can be communicated with a personal meaningfulness that leads to a consensus about a community's essential values, attitudes and norms of behaviour.

- Community members would have to agree that community represents a means of liberation from the control of the state.

- Community members would have to agree that community members should make voluntary sacrifices to other community members on the understanding that this practice might not be reciprocated.

- Community members would have to agree that, in accepting community responsibilities, the needs of the individual would be accommodated by the community.

Therefore, a complex community paradigm confronts the public servant attempting to achieve some short-term recognition by displaying an ability to achieve community orientated public sector objectives and reassure her or his line manager of the long-term benefits of community engagement.

In this formidable and sometimes ambiguous environment, the public servant needs time and resources to research the particular contending, yet equally legitimate dispositions that exist amongst a specific community. Then, having established the existence of differing dispositions, the public servant needs to reflect on and contextualise these various perceptions. Through this process, a balanced view of the impacts and risks arising from any new initiative will become apparent together with the possibility of achieving some common ground between

community members who hold contending dispositions. Thus, some consensus building can take place if a momentum exists that emphasises openness and honesty. In this mediation process, that aims to achieve a unity-in-diversity that leads the community to recognise "a notion of freedom as being realisable only *through* commitment, and not *despite* it." (Ravn, 1991: 109), the last vestiges of bureaucratic control may have to be dis-empowered to demonstrate the real empowerment of community as a new associational form.

## Conclusion

Public servants who are required to deliver post-bureaucratic community management find themselves in the role of a pro-active instigator of community policy rather than a reactive facilitator. Thus, using their research capabilities, they need to explore the contending conceptualisations of community that exist amongst community members so that they can devise a subtle and pre-planned strategy. This strategy must accommodate the imperatives of:

- Blending together community members through an understanding of local cultures and conditions.

- Combating deliberately disruptive elements within the community by championing openness and honesty.

- Through mediation transferring management responsibilities for social policy initiatives to community members who can sustain the agreed collective principles that enable them to work together.

- Reporting on progress regularly to highlight any possible risks and issues.

- Keeping collaboration agreements between community members of contending dispositions flexible so that the scope for co-operation evolves with a changing agenda.

- Showing faith in the ability of the community to deliver by recognising incremental achievements.

- Always building on common ground, even when viewpoints seem intractable, by focussing on solutions within the community's control

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# THE APPROPRIATE ROLE OF THE STATE WITHIN THE ETHICAL PARADIGM

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# Abstract

The traditional role of the British State in determining and protecting the public interest was informed by deontological ethical principles that determined what actions were right or wrong, what constituted the concepts of good or bad. However, in seeking to achieve an innovative modernisation of the public sector, this hierarchical mode of governance has now undergone a transformation into a hybrid organisational form of new public management that seeks to combine elements of the neo-liberal market-driven model of public administration with its antithesis — the entrenched Weberian bureaucratic model.

It is proposed that lower income communities embraced sceptical tenets of morality as a bulwark against the perceived insincerity of neo-liberal conservative market orientated outcomes. Thus, they acceded to a physiological strife founded on the fundamental difference between deontological and consequential ethical outcomes. Moreover, new labour's political elite has exacerbated this ethical scepticism through a strategy of managerialism, producing an ethically ambiguous scenario causing uncertainty for all stakeholders.

In this ambivalent contemporary public arena, where efficiency and effectiveness are as important as notions of equity in the delivery of policies that are underpinned by a regulatory vision of "the public good", political leadership seems destined to cope with an indeterminacy that requires perpetual transfiguration and optimal opportunism. This inexorably leads to the risk of both overt and direct political authoritarianism at any level of government.

In the Oscar winning film "Network" Howard Beale, the mad prophet of the airwaves, exhorts his poor, disaffected and disadvantaged audience to throw open the windows of their dilapidated apartment blocks, put out their heads and yell "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!" As Americans respond in their thousands the unmistakable sense of purposelessness in an uncertain, and often malevolent society, is instantaneously apparent. These people have little faith in the integrity and sincerity of the state having witnessed ambiguity, and sometimes, rampant hypocrisy in the attitudes, opinions and behaviour of their elected representatives. They struggle to find any moral codes or sets of principles that offer a means of interpreting the issues and agendas of modern life. Of course, this bleak picture of public discontent might be designated as belonging in the realm of cinematic invention. However, as the scenario resonates with the scepticism and cynicism that pervades those in contemporary British Society who experience "the restricted citizenship of those who are poor" (Beresford *et al.*, 1999: 27), it seems to warrant more than dismissal as dramatic license.

It is probable that, as the role of the state in advanced liberal democracies has become increasingly restrained due to the ineffectiveness in both the formulation and implementation of public service policy provision (Hult and Walcott 1990, Kooiman 1993, Weimer and Vining 1997) and the policy constraints caused by fiscal controls that have arisen from the globalisation of economic supply and demand (Bovens and t'Hart 1990, Bovens *et al.*, 2001, Gray 1998, Sieber 1981) that the traditional precepts of bureaucracy had to give way to the canons of the hollowed-out state that are informed by the principles of neo-liberal doctrine. However, these clear distinctions offer an overly simplistic framework for an adequate appreciation of the particular course of events that have characterised recent policy-making by the British State. Undoubtedly a traditional bureaucracy

was challenged by neo-liberal conservative doctrines that upheld the principle of privatisation and  recognised the supremacy of the market-based economy. However, a subsequent new labour managerialist state, that accords supremacy to regulation rather than ideological conviction, has eclipsed this economic and social experiment.  Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging the differing ideological configurations, it is argued here that there has been a sustained growth in ethical scepticism caused by the belief that the state has embraced values that are unjustified, unreasonable and uncertain during the various political administrations of Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair.  In order to contextualise this assertion this paper begins by briefly reviewing the ethical foundations of the traditional bureaucratic state.

**Deontological Ethics and the Bureaucratic Model**

In this ethical paradigm the appropriate role of the state accords with deontological principles that restrain individual initiative by imposing "the recurrent patterns of social behaviour that determine the nature of human action" (Parker, 2000: 125).  Thus, bureaucratic structures that function like sophisticated machines with a clearly defined hierarchy of full-time and salaried personnel, separated from the resources that they direct,  (Weber [1904] 1976) employ their knowledge and that of their professional subordinates to exercise control over individual agency.  So, structure has assumed a causal capacity as individuals' decreed duties become objectively knowable.

Therefore, deontological ethics are concerned with what individual duties are, who has rights, and what strategy is best able to produce justice.  These fundamental precepts lead to the development of a code that defines what actions are right and permissible, and thus what actions are wrong.  As Blackburn observes, "they take us beyond what we admire, or regret, or prefer, or even what

we want other people to prefer. They take us to thoughts about what is due. They take us to demands" (2001: 60). As Kant concluded, these demands are derived *a priori* or from pure reason instead of individual experience. He insisted that for people to accept moral laws their construction must be "freed from everything which may be only empirical" (Kant, [1785a] 1998: 289). Thus, individuals do not construct their morality by considering the consequences of their actions, but, instead, discover their inherent capacity to act morally or dutifully. This process of enlightenment lies at a deeper level than that of affectation, as individual behaviour should fully comply with the intent of a duty, rather than just observe its tenets, if a person is to achieve the particular postulates of Kantian "good will." From this process of subjective awareness there arises a code of objective ethics, which accords with the thinking of the elitist in that impartial standards of behaviour are created, which can be subject to dispassionate judgement. As Kant maintains, judgement must be passed on what is right and what is wrong by the use of pure practical reason thus making morality absolute.

When a person acknowledges their moral obligations, they accept "the categorical imperative," or that moral rule that recognises that human characteristics — such as loyalty and duty — possess a discrete inherent value. This distinction is clarified by Kant in his statement that if an "action is good only as a means to something else, then the imperative is hypothetical; if it is conceived as good in itself and consequently as being necessarily the principle of a will which of itself conforms to reason, then it is categorical " ([1785b] 2003: 2). Following this assertion he proceeds to confirm the existence of "but one categorical imperative, namely this: Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, [1785b] 2003: 6). This fundamental principle is often cast into the popular saying "do unto others as you

expect them to do to you" although this cliché does not fully accommodate the extent of Kant's insight.

Pure human reason, which inspires individuals to observe the categorical imperative, was effectively tempered by Edmund Burke's political vision of the supremacy of good order. In his envisaged sequence of events, politics was to be inspired with a religious vision to explain the unfair distribution of resources (Gaede, 1983: 110). Thus, as religion is the grand prejudice, using the suffering experienced in this life as a portent of rewards in the next, Burke dismisses his detractors with the assertion "you think you are combating prejudice, but you are at war with nature" ([1790] 1993: 49). Moreover, the well ordered state, a product of a slowly evolving and traditionally informed pattern of governance acts as a moral mainstay as custom reconciles us to everything" (Burke, [1756] 1987: 148). In this schema subjects enter a special relationship with their society as "it is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection" (Burke, [1790] 1993: 96). This ethereal bond is held together with a code of deontological ethics where the elite accept their obligations to their subjects in return for the proper fulfilment of duties owed to the state and its dominant hegemonies.

Burke's prosthetic to re-inspire political dialogue had an influential and lasting effect. Its enduring relevance and effectiveness is reflected in Walter Bagehot, the Victorian constitutional expert, finding the attitude of the English working class towards authority as rudimentarily "deferential" ([1897] 1963: 235). Moreover, this observation could have been labelled quintessentially European as the masses of Germany, France and Britain enthusiastically marched to war in 1914, more than adequately demonstrating the manner that majoritarian democratic societies were able to harness the notion of patriotism through gradual, and sometimes even

overdue, concessions to their poorer citizens to ensure their compliance in an endeavour of unparalleled massacre. However, as the example of the Russian Revolution was to emphatically demonstrate, these manoeuvres were for the highest stakes with permanent social change a consequence of their failure (Hobsbawn, 1987: 164).

The inter-war years witnessed pressure on the British State "to take on greater social responsibilities and to intervene to provide direct help to the most vulnerable sections of the community" (Stevenson, 1984: 306). The further concessions made during this period were then incorporated in the institutions of the Welfare State in the 1940s. This balance of rights and obligations were to become "genuinely popular with the mass of the electorate of all classes" (Glennerster, 1995: 12) during the subsequent decades.

However, by the 1970's the notion of a political social policy settlement was disintegrating in the realities of rampant inflation, industrial strife and substantial increases in the price of oil. The traditional bureaucracy, with its deontological ethical underpinnings, appeared incapable of addressing the need for economic re-structuring thereby ushering in a decade of what was to become known as "Thatcherism". This body of thought had found some of its fundamental ethical tenets in the principles of consequentialism where free beings can only be motivated by material reward. It is in this imperative, which now informed the formulation of public policy, that the seeds of scepticism might have been sown.

**Consequential Ethics and Neo-liberal Conservatism**

In this ethical paradigm the appropriate role of the state accords with consequentialist principles that recognises that an individual has both the causal capacity to act and the discernment to objectively assess whether the likely results from their actions will have good or bad consequences. Thus, "the moral value of

any action always lies within its consequences and it is by reference to these consequences that actions, and indeed such things as institutions, law and practices are to be justified if they can be justified as all" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 79).

In making the value judgement that an action that results in the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people is morally right the proposition expresses a value-predicate — happiness — that is applied to the subject — the greatest number of people — so, neo-conservatives could accept that ethical statements should be articulated in the terms of social aggregation and expect the value-predicate of happiness to be analysed in objective denominations that measure the extent of material well-being (Taylor, 1975: 176). The need for such an instrument of measurement becomes clearer with the practical application of the act-utilitarian doctrine. This states that "the only reason for performing an action A rather than an alternative action B is that doing A will make mankind (or, perhaps all sentient beings) happier than will doing B" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 30). Thus, the neo-liberal conservative perspective, in embracing act-utilitarian ethics, require an objective means of assessing the anticipated consequences of actions, so as to be able to determine what would constitute the greatest aggregate or accumulative happiness. Therefore, as neo-liberal conservatives would choose to negotiate the preferred constituents of their own well-being with others, they rely on the mechanisms of the free market to act as an instrument of evaluation of social activity that facilitates judgements of ethical consequences.

Nevertheless, Plant (1999: 20–1) can identify three propositions that demonstrate the unprincipled nature of the market. When these are combined, they offer a convincing case for the rejection of the market's capacity to convert

the abstract notions of "right" or "happiness" into synthetic statements that can be measured in terms of each individual's transactions.

The first proposition, made by Hayek (1960) and Acton (1971), maintains that a just market transaction is one devoid of coercion. As individuals enter into free exchanges, where inequalities of power are redressed through the freedom to negotiate and enter into binding contracts in the full awareness of their personal rights and responsibilities and of the outcomes arising from their actions, such transactions cannot be deemed to be unjust.

The second proposition is that premeditation is a necessary pre-requisite for an action to be deemed unjust, which means that outcomes from self-interested market transactions cannot be unjust. Instead, the myriad number of daily transactions, which together constitute market activity, produce a spontaneous order amongst market participants that is not directed by pre-determined measures of income re-distribution (Hayek, 1978: 183).

The third proposition is, as Nozick notes, that while players in the market can serve moral imperatives "the market mechanism does not especially reward us for satisfying those desires, rather than other desires that are neutral towards or even retard those people's development" (1981: 514). Thus, as no generally agreed principles for the distribution of goods exists, there can be no moral case for the free market to answer.

However, as Plant concludes, neo-liberal conservatives, by embracing these three propositions and endorsing the act-utilitarian ethical principle, are conceptualising their primary unit of social transaction — the market transaction — "as happenings outside one's moral self" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 104). By implication, then, neo-liberal conservatives "should be willing to agree that...[act-utilitarianism's]...general aim of maximising happiness does not imply that what

everyone is doing is just pursuing happiness" (Smart and Williams, 1973: 113). Instead, ostensibly rational action to maximise probable benefit can sometimes be irrational. In this case, it can perpetuate a maleficent outcome, or one that, whilst not intended, could or should have been anticipated, on a particular social group without offering any justification that such a situation is inevitable in bringing the best results for the majority.

Therefore, if neo-liberal conservatives wish to address the moral dilemma of foreseeable, adverse unintended outcomes arising from their actions they could consider the ethical consequentialism developed in Rawls theory of justice (1971), with its aim of ensuring the stability of the state. Rawls recognises that if citizens are to obey the state then a basic scheme for ordering society should include an agreement between those citizens and the state as to how that society would be conducted. These aims require a political consensus over the application of the concept of justice that extends to the details of how the principle can be morally justified. So, to achieve such an understanding, Rawls proposes a hypothetical situation. In this scenario self-interested and rational citizens who are ignorant of the position they would occupy in a future society must choose the highest possible level of income and equality of opportunity for the poorest that is acceptable to all in that society. It is assumed that all participating citizens wish to pursue the greater good and would be prudent enough to realise the need for future social stability. Thus, the outcome would establish not just fairness but the following principles of justice, stated in their order of priority, that underpin the structures of a just society (Rawls, 1971: 320):

"First principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.

Second principle: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:

(a) To the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and

(b) Attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity."

These Rawlsian principles are designed to govern the manner the basic political, economic and social institutions, mould and voluntarily constrain the agent. Therefore, Rawls has constructed an artificial situation where citizens have co-operated with the objective of advancing their self-interest by ensuring the fairness of social outcomes. Thus, this agreement is envisaged as the product of a wide reflective equilibrium that has successfully challenged citizens to confront their values and re-assess their priorities to ensure an effective and equitable meritocracy in their own self-interest.

Therefore, if neo-liberal conservatives dismiss Rawl's theorising then they must face the apparent failure of market mechanisms to eradicate poverty. Although the trickle-down effect from wealth creation may lift some citizens from absolute deprivation they would continue to suffer relative imbalances in their property rights that leaves them dis-empowered relative to the affluent. This outcome reflects a desire in the marketplace to separate economic reality from social reality giving rise to the mechanical economic machine metaphor. So, instead of realising some individual's internalised desires for freedom, the marketplace can present a series of constraints that impel acquiescence to economic rationality (Bourdieu, 1998: 96). It follows that "adaptation becomes the highest goal of character formation" (Beck, 1998: 13) in the free market environment leaving those

who adhere to the tenets of consequentialism to ponder whether they should "rejoice in the market economy, but reject the market society" (Plant, 1999: 24).

There is no doubt that the decade of Thatcherism benefited some lower income communities. For instance, those who had paid rent for most of their lives where allowed to buy their council houses and experience the middle class benefits of re-mortgaging to buy a new car or in taking the holiday of a life-time. Similarly, lower income families could now own part of the equity of a privatised utility as previously nationalised industries were floated on the stock exchange and neo-liberal conservative acolytes promulgated dreams of a share owning democracy. Thus, many lower income families were motivated to take advantage of wealth creating opportunities as a means of embracing the virtues of self-responsibility and self-achievement in a paradigm that could lead to the realisation of their own self-worth. Nevertheless, the theoretical drawbacks of consequentialism, in the spectre of market inequalities, haunted this ideological experiment as the trickle-down effect failed to materialise and Rawl's philosophical vision remained strictly theoretical against a backdrop of a UK market driven economy suffering from high levels of structural unemployment. Therefore, the application of a dose of ethical consequentialism had rendered lower income communities bereft of the certainties that were inherent in the ethereal bond of deontological ethics. This state of affairs could have contributed to the nullification of the traditional working class virtues of patriotism, obedience and compliance and the creation of a code of uninspiring ethical scepticism where apathy and disillusion are paramount.

**The Ethical Dilemma of New Public Management**

The election of the new political elite, branded as new labour, in 1997 did not herald a return to deontological ethical premises but instead signalled the arrival of a hybrid organisational form of new public management that sought to combine

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elements of neo-liberal conservatism with bureaucratic structures. This synergism results in the state employing a diverse combination of organisations to deliver public services. These encompass traditional centralised provision to devolved provision at both local and regional level and employ a variety of organisational forms ranging from corporatised and commercialised quasi-public to private-for-profit and private-non-profit (Dixon and Dogan, 2002). This complexity reflects the desire of those formulating policy to impose managerialist values and practices on service providers resulting in a counter-productive paradoxical environment (Dixon et al., 2005). In this scenario the most problematic paradox is:

that public managers are expected to manage "efficiently" and "effectively", and so be accountable for the efficient and effective management of "inputs" used to produce "outputs" (which may be difficult to quantify, or even adequately conceptualise), which generate "outcomes" (which may be difficult to measure, or even adequately conceptualise), which relate to "programme objectives" (which may be difficult to articulate in mutually compatible and quantifiable terms), which must be compatible not only with "policy objectives" (which government may be unwilling or unable to articulate in quantifiable terms, and which may, themselves, be mutually incompatible, particularly in a multi-level political structure) but also with "customer objectives" (which may, also, be mutually incompatible).

This ambiguous public arena is offered by new labour's proselytisers as a site where civil renewal and active citizenship can take place, facilitated by a plethora of performance management targets, which are to provide a recipe for efficient, effective and economic outcomes that can be contrasted to the failed neo-liberal conservative project. However, this vision is overly optimistic as this scenario seems to offer citizens, who are dependent on equitable public policies, an ethical framework that is too weak to sustain the re-discovery of the virtuous notion of

responsibility towards the state. Instead, the question arises as to whether the exhortations of policy makers for lower income communities to participate in altruistic involvement for the delivery of public services and the governance of community affairs is fundamentally misplaced in an overly confident managerialist rhetoric (Active Communities Directorate, 2004; Blunkett, 2003, 2004; Chanan, 2003; Civil Renewal Unit, 2003, 2004, 2005; Home Office Research, 2003; 2004a, b; ODPM 2005a, b, c; Rodgers and Robinson 2005).

Furthermore, governance by performance objectives, geared to efficiency and effectiveness, throws up the challenge of how desired "outputs" and "outcomes" are achievable without overt government intervention. So, the ethically sceptical citizen, having been deprived of the deontological bond of trust with the state after suffering what could be regarded as the unprincipled nature of market transactions might have their sceptical assumptions re-enforced as the regulatory state exerts its political authority to achieve its aims and objectives. This authority perceives "society as comprised of a web of obligations, which may override individual freedom: obligations amongst individuals in communities and between the citizen and the state" (Driver and Martell, 1998: 169). Thus, the state can demand that the individual fulfil their civil duties without offering reciprocal obligations in return.

**Conclusion**

In its traditional role, the British State was informed by deontological ethical principles that decreed if the state exercised extensive power to control the lives of its citizens this power should be exercised in conjunction with benevolent paternalism. Thus, an ethereal bond existed that fostered the virtues of paternalism, obedience and compliance in lower income communities as an elite accepted responsibility for the state's decision—making and action-taking processes. However the neo-liberal conservative project, underpinned by

consequentialist ethical principles, was committed to the state refraining from interfering in the lives of citizens as they pursued their own legal pleasures. Implicit within this paradigm is the precept that the cost of government administration should be minimised by use of the mechanisms of the free market, which are more effective and efficient than centralised bureaucracies. However some citizens, in particular those on a low income, experienced the outcome of market transactions that were adverse or difficult to comprehend. Thus, it is contended that ethical scepticism grew alongside distrust of market solutions for the delivery of essential public services.

The second contention is that new labour's political elite, with their belief in the managerialised, regulatory and ethically hybrid state, have been unable to reverse the growth of ethical scepticism despite their concern to promote active citizenship and civil renewal. This may reflect new labour's constitutional radicalism, which places an emphasis on individual responsibilities rather than individual rights.

Therefore, it is appropriate that a debate should take place over what constitutes the public good. This should address the importance that society wishes to accord to the values of equity, distributional justice, community solidarity and social stability in the regulatory provision of public services. John Stuart Mill captures the risks inherent in neglecting this dialogue:

a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes – would find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished (Mill, [1859] 1989: 15).

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