

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Industrial Relations in Crisis? The ‘New Industrial Relations’ Theory and the Field of Industrial Relations in Britain

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Management of the London School of
Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

London

October 2009

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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Horen Voskeritsian

Abstract

A common feeling among the Industrial Relations community is that the field faces a crisis that challenges both its ability to address the phenomena it studies and its institutional structures. However, the literature is not clear on the reasons for this development. Some argue, predominantly in Britain, that the cause of this crisis is the penetration of Human Resource Management (HRM) or, as this trend is also known, of the New Industrial Relations (NIR) theory, in the intellectual and institutional edifice of the field. Others, however, especially from the US, believe that the reason for the inability of the field to deal with the external environment is its adherence to an old-fashioned paradigm that does not take into consideration the changing nature of industrial relations realities. For them, the solution is to incorporate the teachings of the NIR theory in the intellectual corpus of Industrial Relations. Thus, one is faced with two contradictory positions that have the same bases, namely that the field is in a critical condition and that, somehow, a theory is involved (or should be involved) in the picture. However, the discrepancy between the two theses poses important conceptual problems for the future of the field for it is not as yet clear who is to blame (if anyone) for its current situation.

It is, therefore, the aim of this Thesis to clarify the above picture. To achieve this, both the above theses will be evaluated. To do so, it is imperative to study the epistemological implications of the NIR theory for the field of Industrial Relations, and then to examine the place the NIR theory occupies in the intellectual structures of the field in Britain. Once this is achieved, the issue of crisis will be tackled in more detail to determine whether British Industrial Relations actually face the crisis that the various voices in the literature ascribe it with.

In the *Introduction* the general problem and the Research Questions of the Thesis will be discussed. Then, the *First Chapter* will set the theoretical context upon which the analysis will be based. *Chapter Two* will present the intellectual and institutional development of the field of Industrial Relations, while *Chapter Three* will be devoted to an analysis of the NIR theory. *Chapter Four* will examine the epistemic value of the theory for the field of Industrial Relations and *Chapter Five* will investigate the position that the NIR theory occupies in the British Industrial Relations fora of knowledge development. *Chapter Six* will complement the above discussion by examining the evolutionary dynamics of the NIR theory. In *Chapter Seven* the intellectual status of Industrial Relations will be examined to see whether the field faces an intellectual crisis. Then, *Chapter Eight* will analyse the dynamics of the field in Britain to evaluate the condition of the field's institutions. Finally, in *Chapter Nine*, the institutional status of the field, together with some ideas about the field's future will be further discussed, and some promising avenues for future research will be presented.

Acknowledgments

Contrary to the accepted wisdom that the PhD is a very solitary process, several people have helped me, in one way or another, to complete this project. Although it is impossible to do justice to all of those who stood by me in the past four years, it is possible to discern some people without whose support this work would not have been materialised.

First, and foremost, my supervisor, Richard Hyman, whose insightful comments helped shape my thought and development as a researcher. His support during the peaks and troughs of this process, his encyclopaedic knowledge of our subject (which proved very useful especially when I needed a reference long forgotten by people and history, or when I thought that I had discovered something new when, in reality, it long existed), his ability to direct my thoughts and make me discern the important from the trivial, were all essential elements of my learning experience.

Secondly, Zabel, Nazaret and Takvor, who stood by me from the beginning and continued to support my efforts till the last day.

Thirdly, my good friend Nazaret Kazarian, whose IT skills and endless patience during the past two years helped me solve many of the software problems I encountered in the construction of the database. His support was constant, advising me on the architecture of the Database, programming the life-saving Java algorithm and writing some of the most complex SQL statements I have ever encountered. Without his help I would still be collecting data.

Last, but by no means least, my partner, Anthea, who stood by me all these turbulent years. She was there when I was thinking of abandoning everything, pushing me and reminding me why I was doing this in the first place; she was there when I needed a friend to talk to during the nights I was struggling with the bibliography and with obscure philosophical ideas; she was there to comment on my drafts and remind me that beauty rests on simplicity; she was there to fill my days and make this process less painful. Thank you.

This research was funded by a grant from the Greek Institute of State Scholarships, whose help I gratefully acknowledge.

As always, the usual disclaimer applies.

Grammatical Note

One of the many peculiarities of the English language (at least to an external observer, whose own language does not use such grammatical forms), is the almost inevitable use of personal and reflexive pronouns. Due to their gendered nature, however, one must be careful how one uses them. Throughout the text, I have tried as much as possible to avoid the use of singular personal or reflexive pronouns, opting for the plural version instead. However, there are some cases where the use of the singular form was preferred, mainly for aesthetic reasons. To avoid any sexist language, several devices have been used by different people, the most common of which are the simultaneous use of the masculine and feminine form (e.g. *he or she*, or *himself or herself*) and the, rather peculiar, grammatical form *s/he*. I personally dislike both these conventions on aesthetic grounds. To solve the 'gender dilemma' I decided to ascribe a 'gender' to each of my chapters and alternate it from one chapter to the other. Thus, the Introduction was ascribed a feminine form, Chapter 1 a masculine one, and so on and so forth.

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Introduction

The Crisis in the Field of Industrial Relations

“The mission of universities was once unambiguously to act as bastions of critical thought, and in democratic societies they were valued as such... In Britain, as elsewhere, this critical role is under threat: from politicians who resent their policies being subject to informed scrutiny; from employers who insist on simple solutions to short-term problems; and increasingly from a new breed of university ‘managers’ who regard education as a marketable commodity to be driven not by an intellectual rationale but by the demands of ‘customers’ ... Where critical science is under attack, industrial relations is likely to be on the front line, precisely because of the centrality and sensitivity of employment issues in contemporary society ... To dismiss industrial relations as outdated is to display the narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness which has so long bedevilled British economic performance” (BUIRA 2008: 12).

Never before, in the sixty years of its existence, had the British Universities Industrial Relations Association (BUIRA) – the professional academic organisation of Industrial Relations in the UK – adopted a public stance to defend the field it represented. Not even when the Industrial Relations Research Unit (IRRU) at the University of Warwick faced the threat of closure under the attacks by Lord Beloff and the Conservative government during the 1980s (Brown 1998; Caswill and Wensley 2007), did the Industrial Relations community officially mobilise to such an extent¹. Yet during 2008-2009, BUIRA published two documents that aimed to strengthen the position of the field in the academic community and in the wider society². Why, after

¹ In the rest of the Thesis, ‘Industrial Relations’ (with capitals) will refer to the field of Industrial Relations, whereas ‘industrial relations’ will refer to the phenomena the field studies. Moreover, the word ‘Thesis’ will be used to denote the present PhD, in contrast to the word ‘thesis’, which will be used quite often in the text as a synonym for ‘position’ etc.

² The first of these was the booklet from which the opening statement was extracted, entitled “*What’s the Point of Industrial Relations: A Statement by the British Universities Industrial*

more than half a century of the field's existence in the UK (and almost a century since its appearance in the US), did BUIRA decide to take this step? The reasons behind this action have a rather long past, and a major aim of this Thesis is to shed some light on a substantial part of the story.

The event that generated the BUIRA reaction was an industrial dispute at Keele University, dating back at the early days of December 2007. The University's management, reacting to alleged falling registration numbers, had decided to close down the programmes in management, economics, and industrial relations and human resource management, and to consolidate them in a Business School, which would be smaller and narrower in its academic orientation. The Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) reacted immediately to the threat of redundancies, and organised a series of events and motions to reverse the management's decision. The combined actions of the union and the wider academic community, eventually led the management to rethink its stance and to start a new round of negotiations regarding the future of the aforementioned departments.

Anyone cognizant with the academic situation in Britain will recognise in the above situation some familiar patterns. Indeed, during the past few years various Industrial Relations departments across Britain faced a similar fate: when they were not 'liquidated', they either changed their names (incorporating into their new titles phrases like 'Human Resources' or 'Organisational Behaviour'), or merged with other departments, usually Management ones or Business Schools. For instance, the Department of Industrial Relations at the LSE – the first ever Department of Industrial Relations in the UK – became part of the mega-Department of Management in 2006. It was this changing environment that led Heery to argue that "... the rise of [HRM] poses a particular threat to IR. If IR is narrowly understood as the study of collective relationships at work, then it can be absorbed as a subfield within HRM" (Heery 2008: 351).

It seems that the field of Industrial Relations in the UK faces an *institutional crisis*. The university departments, which are responsible for the education and recruitment of the future generation of Industrial Relations scholars, are facing extinction, undermining that way the future of the field. However, many perceive the current situation not only as an institutional challenge but, primarily, as an *intellectual* one,

Relations Association". The second document would be a book with a similar title, the result of a one-day meeting in Manchester, in December 2008. At the time these lines were being written, the aforementioned book had not as yet been published (it was due for publication in September 2009).

aiming at the very heart of the field. Indeed, one can trace elements of this position in the debate between Keith Sisson, of the University of Warwick, and Mike Emmott, of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), in the mid 2000s.

Emmott's CIPD paper "*What is Employee Relations?*" (Emmott 2005), aimed primarily to serve as a guide to the basic principles of employee relations (ER), and to mark out the CIPD policy on the matter. Through interviews with Human Resources professionals, he wanted to explore their perceptions regarding the significance of ER for them and their companies. The majority of the respondents agreed on two issues: firstly, that good ER were critical for better performance and communication with the staff and, secondly, that ER focused on the relationship between the management and the (individual) employee, rather than on collective institutions (such as trade unions and collective bargaining). Emmott claimed that in an era where collective institutions were in decline, a turn towards an individualistic management of the employment relationship was necessary and inevitable. This should not come as a surprise, since Emmott was primarily interested in good (i.e. *profitable*) management, something natural for an institution that serves as the educational mouthpiece of the HR profession.

Although Emmott tried to make a scientific argument his analysis remained scientific, as it was based on a narrow reading list and on an inadequate and questionable research. The mere use of the term '*employee relations*' reveals the actual direction of Emmott's and the CIPD interpretation of reality: in contrast to *employment* relations, which perceive the relations between workers, the management and the state in their socio-economic totality, *employee* relations focus on the relationships that the managers develop (or should develop) with their employees. By definition employee relations refer to the *management* of the employment relationship, not to its study as a wider economic and political phenomenon. The difference in names may be minute, but the repercussions of the titles are immense. An Industrial Relations scholar could obviously dismiss Emmott's paper as just another attempt to promote an HRM-like discourse to a very specific audience. It is, thus, interesting that Keith Sisson devoted time and space to address these 'allegations'³.

³ Keith Sisson was the founder of one of the two mainstream British HRM journals (the *HRM Journal*) and was always closely involved with one of the most important Industrial Relations research centres in the UK (the Industrial Relations Research Unit of the University of Warwick).

In around 50 pages published in 2005 (Sisson 2005), Sisson attempted to dismiss Emmott's argumentation. In a rather apologetic response he defended Industrial Relations research, teaching, and practice against Emmott's accusations, and tried to prove the field's relevance for the HR professional. His main argument was that although the psychological interpretation of the employment relationship is important, one should not disregard its multi-dimensional nature if one wants to properly understand it (and, consequently, to control it).

Interestingly enough, although the BUIRA statement was generated by an institutional crisis it followed the same line of argumentation as Sisson's reply to Emmott. It also focused on the intellectual challenges the field faces, such as the advent of Human Resources Management (HRM) as an alternative way of dealing with employment issues, or the decline of the institutions that constituted the field's focus, and which have led some to characterise it as outmoded (BUIRA 2008: 4). Similarly to Sisson's text, the main aim of the BUIRA statement was to strengthen the position of Industrial Relations as an independent field of study and to buttress its academic and practical value.

One can observe at this point an interesting issue: although the field seems to face both an institutional and an intellectual challenge, the community's defensive actions seem to address primarily the intellectual side of the argument (although the BUIRA statement discusses the institutional side as well, its basic rationale rests on an attempt to justify Industrial Relations *intellectually*). This is not necessarily wrong; as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, the intellectual and the institutional nature of a scientific field are closely interrelated, and a change in one of them is bound to influence the other. However, and this is important, one must understand where the challenge actually comes from before embarking on any attempts to overcome it. Thus, trying to resolve an institutional challenge by focusing primarily on the intellectual side may not render the expected results, and vice versa.

This is not to say that in the case of Industrial Relations an intellectual crisis – or, at least, the feeling that such a crisis is present – does not exist. On the contrary, discussions about the state of the field and the crisis it faces (or may face), existed in the field's journals since its early years; it is in this context that the BUIRA and Sisson interventions become meaningful.

Crisis in Industrial Relations

From the mid-1950s till the late 1970s, a substantial part of the literature was concerned with the field's position in the social scientific domain (Bain and Clegg

1974; Tripp 1964). Various attempts had been made to justify Industrial Relations as a 'respectable' discipline, but they were inevitably undermined by the argument that since Industrial Relations lacked a specific theory it could not obtain a proper disciplinary identity (Aronson 1961; Hameed 1967).

One can trace the beginning of the crisis discussion in the work of this *first generation of 'crisis scholars'*. For these early Industrial Relationists, the lack of a *theory of industrial relations* posed a serious problem: without a theory, Industrial Relations could not claim to be a serious social science and, as a result, its social relevance, its ability to contribute to other fields or disciplines, and its ability to attract students and professors were undermined as well (see, for example, Aronson 1961). The quest for a *theory of Industrial Relations* became, thus, a fundamental priority for the academic community.

Dunlop's (1958) *Industrial Relations Systems* aimed to address this problem (see also Roche 1986: 3). As he had claimed in the book's introduction "the present volume presents a general theory of industrial relations; it seeks to provide tools of analysis to interpret and to gain understanding of the widest possible range of industrial-relations facts and practices" (Dunlop 1958: vii). In the years following this publication, the study of the 'rules of the system' would become a central aspect of the theoretical armoury of Industrial Relations (Behrend 1963; Clegg 1970; Wood *et al.* 1975).

During the second half of the 1980s, however, the lack-of-theory discourse was gradually abandoned. Apart from the general acceptance of Dunlop's model as a guide for both research and teaching (Adams 1993a), various other theoretical approaches had already appeared in the literature, which partly addressed the theory problem. Pluralism, Marxism, the regulation theories, or the varieties of capitalism theory, introduced a new theoretical life to the field (Kaufman 2004). However, despite the fact that the initial lack-of-theory problem seemed to have been addressed, the crisis discourse was not entirely forsaken. On the contrary, it continued unobtrusively into the 1990s and the 2000s, albeit in a different way.

For the *second generation of crisis scholars*, which appeared in the mid-1980s, the field was in a state of "profound crisis" not because it lacked theories but because it was concerned with "past traditions, ideas, and policy solutions that either no longer work or are not relevant to the workforces and economies our profession serves" (Kochan 1996: 247). The aim now was not the development of a theory, but the disposal of the existent inadequate theories and their replacement with better ones –

that would be able to address the changing social environment and be useful to the various practitioners.

A first solution to this problem was proposed in 1984 by Kochan and his colleagues. Claiming that the Dunlopian model could not explain any more the changes that were taking place in the US workplace, they suggested a turn towards the study of management's strategies and of their influence on industrial relations practices (Kochan *et al.* 1991; Kochan *et al.* 1986; Kochan *et al.* 1984). They called their approach the "Strategic Choice Theory (SCT)", because of its focus on the strategic choices of management in regards to industrial relations. As Kochan argued much later (2000), the focus on management was necessary if Industrial Relations academics were to understand the new dynamics of the industrial relations environment (see also Chapter 3).

In the following years, the SCT would serve as the basis for the development of a new theoretical approach in Industrial Relations. Combining elements from both the SCT and HRM, the 'New Industrial Relations' theory, or the 'new paradigm', as many have called it (Dunn 1990; Godard and Delaney 2000), would call for an embracement of the managerial 'mutual gains' discourse, and for the incorporation of the teachings of HRM in the field's theoretical corpus. The justification for this theoretical turn was always related to the issue of crisis. As Kaufman – one of the core proponents of this thesis – has argued in his work (Kaufman 2007a; 2007b; 2008a; 2008b), the only way to save Industrial Relations from its current intellectual demise is to broaden its paradigm towards the direction of personnel/human resource management.

Despite the continuing rhetoric about the crisis the field faces, no one has actually proven that such a crisis really exists. In a sense, everyone seems to accept this proposition as a working hypothesis upon which they base their arguments to promote their cause. It is very important to note that *all* the crisis discussions are related, in one way or another, to the issue of theory: those who claim that the field faces a crisis will use it as a lever either for the promotion of a new theory, or to argue for the need to develop one. The opposite does not necessarily stand; there are those who propose or develop a new theory without necessarily tying it to an imminent catastrophe. However, the crisis and theory issues always seem to go together. This puts a new complexity on the issue, for it is not evident why this should be the case.

If, for example, one has a new theory to suggest, one does not need the crisis discourse to accompany one's thesis. Strictly scientifically speaking, a new theory

can be presented as an alternative to an already existing one, or as a solution to an unsolved problem, and then it can be judged based solely on its intellectual merits. If the new theory is found to be better than the old one, or to answer some problems that the previous theory could not address, then it is very possible that it will be accepted as an alternative (of course, this process is not as straightforward as it is described here – see Chapter 1). The bottom line, however, is that the crisis argument has nothing to do with the epistemic value of a theory. There is no obvious scientific reason to argue that the field faces, or will face, a crisis when a new theory is being proposed, since this *does not make the theory any better*.

This simple realisation, together with the fact that the alleged crisis has not been proven to exist, places the crisis debate under a new light: the reference to a crisis can only be interpreted as an ideological mechanism, which aims to pave the ground for the easier acceptance of the proposed theoretical changes. In a sense, if one can persuade one's peers that they face extinction, one is in a better position to sell one's 'remedy'. Of course, this does not mean that the field does not, or will not, face a crisis. To argue so, however, one needs to explore in more detail the field's status before drawing any conclusions about its past, present, and future.

Focus of the Thesis and Research Questions

A scientific discipline can face two types of crisis: an *intellectual* and an *institutional* one (see Chapter 1). The former refers to the inability of the intellectual corpus of the discipline to deliver what it promises. Usually this refers to the failure of the discipline's theories to explain, understand or predict the external reality. In such cases, the need for alternative theoretical conceptualisations, or for the improvement of the existing ones, becomes evident. Conversely, the institutional crisis refers to the status of the discipline's institutions⁴ – if a journal, for example, does not attract papers, or readers, one can say that it faces a crisis of some sort. As already mentioned, the field of Industrial Relations in Britain seems to face an institutional crisis, and some argue that it may also face an intellectual one as well.

The aim of this Thesis is to investigate in detail the intellectual and institutional status of the field of Industrial Relations in Britain. More specifically, it will explore whether there are any sound empirical grounds to claim that the field faces an intellectual crisis, to evaluate the 'solution' that is proposed – i.e. the incorporation of

⁴ These are: the academic journals, the academic departments, the professional associations, the research centres, and the academic conferences. For a more detailed analysis of their role in the social organisation of science, see the next chapter.

HRM in the theoretical corpus of Industrial Relations – and to examine whether the condition of the Industrial Relations Departments poses any threat (and of what kind) to the structural coherence of the field. Contrary to the BUIRA and Sisson approach, however, it will not try to argue for the merits of Industrial Relations research as this is slightly defeatist, since the community acts as an accused party. Although the merits of the Industrial Relations approach shall be considered, they shall not, and cannot, constitute the main line of ‘defence’. If we disagree with the course the field seems to be taking, our aim shall not be to compare the field to its accuser, but to prove the accusations wrong.

To achieve the above, the analysis will be both philosophical and sociological. One of the primary aims of the Thesis will be to examine in detail the arguments that the ‘new paradigm’ proponents bring forward, and to logically evaluate them. Only in that way will the ideological nature of their approach be revealed in its totality, and will it thus be easier to be demolished. However, although the philosophical evaluation of the ‘new paradigm’ is important as a starting point, it is not adequate to fully eliminate the distorted picture of reality that it promotes. One needs to conduct an empirical investigation into the intellectual and institutional status of the field to establish whether Industrial Relations actually faces a crisis, and to evaluate the extent to which the ‘new paradigm’ approach has penetrated the field’s structures. Once this is achieved, it will be easier to discuss the present and future of Industrial Relations in Britain.

More specifically, throughout the rest of the Thesis, the following questions will be addressed:

1. *Can the ‘new paradigm’ be a viable Industrial Relations theory?*
2. *What would the consequences for Industrial Relations be if it followed the teachings of the ‘new paradigm’?*
3. *What is the sociological status of the ‘new paradigm’ in British Industrial Relations? Is it justifiable to call it a ‘paradigm’?*
4. *Was the ‘new paradigm’ ever in a trajectory of becoming an actual paradigm in British Industrial Relations?*

The above four questions aim to reveal the untenable bases of the ‘new paradigm’ thesis. The first and the second questions will examine its philosophical bases, whereas the third and the fourth will account for its empirical status. However none of the above questions address the issue of crisis; to do so, two more questions are required:

5. *What is the intellectual status of Industrial Relations in Britain?*
6. *What are the structural characteristics of the field in Britain?*

The fifth question aims to investigate the past and present of British Industrial Relations scholarship, and to determine whether the field actually faces (or faced) an intellectual crisis. The sixth question will complement the fifth by examining the dynamics of the field, and will account for its present condition.

Structure of the Thesis

To address the above questions, one requires a strong theoretical context, which will link together the epistemological and the sociological nature of the crisis. *Chapter 1* will discuss the necessary theoretical context within which the rest of the Thesis will be based. The chapter has two major foci: *firstly*, to explain the nature of the social scientific theory, and the way it is developed and, *secondly*, to present a model which will exemplify the link between a field's institutions and the development of its theories – creating, thus, a bridge between the sociological structure of a field and the abstract level of ideas.

Once the theoretical context is firmly set, *Chapter 2* will discuss the institutional and intellectual evolution of Industrial Relations, with special emphasis on the genesis and development of the field in Britain. Moreover, the various attempts to write the intellectual history of Industrial Relations will be analysed and thoroughly criticised. One of the major conclusions of the chapter will be the attestation that the historiography used thus far is theoretically problematic and partially responsible for the misconceptions surrounding the intellectual status of the field.

Chapter 3 will explore the genesis and development of the 'new paradigm' thesis. It will discuss its intellectual bases, its role in the crisis debate, and its logical structure. This will be necessary for *Chapter 4*, which will focus on the philosophical examination and criticism of the thesis. The principal aim of this Chapter will be to reveal the logical problems with the 'new paradigm' theory, and the theoretical consequences for Industrial Relations if the 'new paradigm' is to be accepted the way its proponents want.

Although the theoretical implausibility of the argument will be revealed, it is also necessary to examine whether the 'new paradigm' thesis has any actual empirical bases. *Chapter 5* will use Content Analysis to identify the extent to which the 'new paradigm' has penetrated the British Industrial Relations fora, and whether it actually constitutes a paradigm in the field. However, this method cannot address the

dynamics of the theory's development. Was the theory ever in a trajectory of becoming a paradigm? Does it face the possibility of reaching this state in the near future? To address these questions, *Chapter 6* will draw data from a prosopographical database that was created for these purposes, to examine the nature of the 'new paradigm' community.

Having disposed both the theoretical and the empirical core of the 'new paradigm' thesis, the issue of crisis will then be addressed on a new base. *Chapter 7* will look at the intellectual development and status of Industrial Relations in Britain. The major focus of this Chapter will be to show that the field is not as one-sided, nor as outdated, as the proponents of the 'new paradigm' portray it. On the contrary, it is much richer than any of its already published histories ever depicted it and, thus, in a state to intellectually resist the advent of the 'new paradigm'.

Intellectual resistance, however, is not enough; for although the field may not be facing the intellectual problems with which it is ascribed, the final decision regarding its future rests with its community. The fact that some sort of resistance to this increasing heteronomy – to use Adorno's phrase – exists, suggests that the British Industrial Relations community is not necessarily very positively inclined towards the imperialistic tendencies of the 'new paradigm' thesis. But does it have the ability to resist? Does the 'new paradigm' theory pose any real challenge to the field? *Chapter 8* will address these questions by examining the structural characteristics of the British Industrial Relations scientific community.

Finally, *Chapter 9* will deal in more detail with the kind of crisis the field faces; for it does face some crisis, albeit not the sort discussed in the majority of the literature. Having understood the real nature of the challenge, and the intellectual and sociological characteristics of the field, some ideas regarding its future, and some proposals for future research, will be discussed.

Chapter 1

Theory, Science, and Institutions: Towards a Model of Theory Development

Writing about the history and the current state of a field may not always be as straightforward as it seems. Apart from the various historiographic obstacles one usually encounters, the task becomes more complicated when the literature, although it may agree on the general state of the field, differs radically on the interpretation of the situation. Indeed, although almost everyone agrees that the field of Industrial Relations faces some sort of a crisis, and that a theory is somehow involved in the picture, the links between crisis and theory are not as yet clear. Part of the literature argues, as was discussed in the previous chapter, that the emergence and development of the New Industrial Relations theory, and all that this implies, has led the field to its current critical state. Another part, however, follows a completely opposite direction, and argues that the emergence and development of the theory was the result of the crisis the field faced, and that the acceptance of the New Industrial Relations theory by the Industrial Relations community is necessary for the field to overcome the crisis and to develop further (see the discussion in Chapter 3). Although the causal links in both cases seem clear and straightforward, in reality no one has explicitly discussed how a theory may lead to a crisis or, for that matter, what kind of crisis the field faces. Faced with the above picture, it becomes the task of the historian to clarify the situation and to question, eventually, whether any of these perceptions are, indeed, true.

The purpose of this chapter is to address the above points and to present a general framework that will reveal the actual links between theory, field, and crisis. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to clarify the nature of scientific theory, and to understand the various already existing approaches in the literature that try to explain how theory develops and changes. The first and the second section of the

chapter are dedicated to these matters. Once this is achieved, section three discusses in more detail the links between theory and field, by presenting a model of theory development that will serve as the theoretical guideline for the rest of the Thesis. Finally, in the fourth section, the notion of crisis is further elaborated, and the links between crisis, theory and field are revealed.

On Theory

“Somehow in ordinary English the term ‘theory’, has come to mean a piece of rank speculation or at most a hypothesis still open to serious doubt, or at least for which there is as yet insufficient evidence” (Rosenberg 2000: 69). Indeed, phrases like “what you say is theoretical” or “this works only in theory” create a barrier between theory and the external world, placing the term in a certain metaphysical position vis-à-vis our everyday experiences. However, although the word ‘theory’ may acquire a metaphysical, or a moral, meaning in its colloquial use, it is related to praxis *ipso facto*, since it acquires its justification and legitimacy through a direct reference to the external world, thus rendering it an indispensable scientific instrument.

The word theory is the transposition in the English vocabulary of the Greek word *theōria* (θεωρία), a compound word, comprising the words *théa* (θέα, meaning, view) and *orō* (ορώ, meaning, see). Thus, the word means *viewing something from above*, i.e. in a general way (see, on this, Hyman 1994: 167). The quest for general principles that would lead to the establishment of true knowledge about the external world was a fundamental characteristic of the Hellenistic philosophy, as the following passage from Aristotle reveals:

“But yet we think that *knowledge* and *understanding* belong to art rather than to experience, and we suppose artists to be wiser than men of experience ...; and this because the former know the cause, but the latter do not. For men of experience know that the thing is so, but do not know why, while the others know the ‘why’ and the cause” (Aristotle *et al.* 1928: 980a).

Indeed, although one may have an intuitive knowledge about something, it is only the ‘man of knowledge’ (the philosopher in Aristotle’s case) who knows why something is as it is.

Definitions aside, a theory is primarily an *intellectual construct* that aims to *understand and explain* the external world, and to *predict* future events. To achieve the above it uses laws and certain auxiliary hypotheses, which supplement and support the laws and without which the laws can not function. In the natural sciences, the auxiliary hypotheses may refer, for example, to the laws that govern the scientific instruments used in experiments. When a scientist uses a thermometer to study the

temperature of boiling water, for example, she presupposes that the thermometer is an accurate tool for the specific measurement (although this is something contested among philosophers of science; see Chang (2004), for a more thorough discussion of the topic). In the case of economics, the rational agent assumption, which governs economic research and theories, is an auxiliary hypothesis.

During the second half of the 20th century this approach to the notion of theory was challenged by Kuhn (1970a) and Lakatos (1970), who claimed that theories are not, and cannot be perceived as, independent objects but are parts of a more complex structure (for Kuhn, this was the paradigm, and for Lakatos, the research programme – but more on this in the following section). A theory, therefore, is part of a wider body of knowledge and shares common methodological, epistemological and metaphysical assumptions with the other theories belonging to this body.

At this point an interesting issue emerges: the way theory is being treated thus far does not make it a unique property of science. Religion, magic, or mythologies, also have theories with general propositions that try to explain or predict reality. What is it, then, that differentiates the scientific from the non-scientific theory? To argue that the latter is not governed by metaphysical entities (call it God, or Fairies, or whatever), does not solve the problem necessarily; for there are several philosophers of science, ascribing to a school of thought widely known as *antirealism*, who argue that part of the objects science studies are not real – thus, prescribing them a metaphysical character. The problem of drawing the limits between science and non-science is known in the philosophy of science as the *demarcation problem*, and will not be addressed in this Thesis (for an introductory discussion on the topic, see Kuhn 1970b; Lakatos 1998; Laudan 1990; Popper 2002). For our purposes, the nature of the scientific theory will be taken for granted, and science will be defined primarily sociologically and not epistemologically.

The intellectual nature of theory is, of course, its indispensable characteristic without which it would become meaningless; a scientific theory exists to enhance our knowledge about the world. Thus, one may say that the intellectual character of theory is, in a sense, its primary and most basic function. However, and this is important, although theories are constructed with the above aim in mind they are, at the same time, social and historical objects.

A scientific theory is not an isolated intellectual product. It is developed within a specific social environment – science – following the rules and standards this environment sets. Because of its dependence on the social institution ‘science’, to acquire the title ‘scientific’ a theory must undergo a process of *socialization*. An idea

in the scientist's drawer, no matter its intellectual and truth-value is not a scientific theory if it has not become available to the public domain (the public domain, in this case, is the wider scientific community). It is only through its exposure to the wider world that a theory eventually gains the title 'scientific'. In a sense, theories that remain hidden from the public (i.e. the rest of the scientists) are as if they never existed. Of course, theories may be rediscovered, especially through historical research, and enter the public domain retrospectively, something that makes them scientific *ex post*.

The social nature of theory is closely linked to its historical nature as well. To fully comprehend a theory, one must examine it with its historical nature in mind. Here an interesting issue arises: although both the natural and the social scientific theories are historical objects, the influence of this characteristic on their nature and function differs between the two. For although a natural scientific theory may have been born in a certain historical moment, its application and truth-value usually extends both to the past and to the present. Thus, Kepler's theorems for the motion of the planets apply to any historical period, before and after their formulation by Kepler in the 17th century; that is, one can learn something about the past (say, the position of the moon, or a planet, in the night of the 17th of July 486 BC), or about the future (say, the solar eclipses in 2089). However, this is not necessarily true for the social scientific theories – their historical nature, in a sense, defines their applicability. This is related to the problem of objectivity in the social sciences.

The social scientific theory has a peculiarity, which is not shared with the natural scientific one: both its subject of research and its agent (the scientist) are historical and political objects. This means that the former has the ability to interfere and consciously change its external environment in a way that the natural scientific object cannot; that is why predictions are difficult – if not impossible – in the social sciences. As for the latter, her historicity unavoidably entails a certain kind of interpretation of the subject, which cannot be totally objective without her denying her own historical nature – something impossible by definition.

It is within this context that the problem of objectivity arises. As E.H Carr said, referring to his profession, "the historian is of his own age, and is bound to it by the conditions of human existence" (Carr 2001: 19). If this is true for historians, however, it is also true for any social scientist, since she is not only governed by her historical context but she also is, much more than the historian, part of the construct she claims to study. Within this context, the quest for objectivity immediately dissolves into thin

air and what remains is only the attempt of the scientists to remain *objective* within the epistemological limits their theories impose on them.

Objectivity has occupied the work of many a social scientist since the early years of the development of the social sciences. “There is no absolutely ‘objective’ scientific analysis of culture”, Weber (1994: 535) proclaimed in the early 20th century, whereas Nagel, many years later, and writing from a completely different ideological and epistemological viewpoint, also questioned the ability of the social sciences to draw an objective picture of reality (Nagel 1994). Others (see Mandelbaum (1938), for instance), have gallantly defended objectivity for its many intellectual benefits: it makes the social scientific endeavor less precarious and less subject to uncontrollable or incomprehensible mechanisms; it establishes rationality and links the social sciences to the ‘respectable’ natural sciences and the ideas of modernity, and, above all, it establishes an undisputable authority for the theory and the scientist, an authority that claims to be beyond and above our everyday lives. Because of the many different feelings that this subject generates, and of its importance in theory formation and evaluation, it is necessary to clarify some obscure points regarding the impossibility of objectivity in the social sciences.

Firstly, it must be noted that the way the problem of objectivity is discussed in the present context does not refer to the ontological bases of the theory – namely, whether a real world, beyond our mind, exists and, if it does, whether one can gain any knowledge about it. Although this is a very important and interesting issue, it is an austere metaphysical and epistemological problem well beyond the realms of the current Thesis (for an informed discussion on the issue, see Audi (2002) and Grayling (1996)).

Secondly, although the problem of objectivity is also discussed in the natural scientific theories – usually within the context of theory-ladenness – in the social scientific case the problem is broader. Theory ladenness refers to the fact that the search for facts and data is not theory-neutral but is influenced by the intellectual limits of the theory. Although this may sound like a relativist thesis, in fact it has been supported and promulgated both by strict realists (such as Popper), and by antirealists (such as Kuhn and Feyerabend), and is the fundamental criticism against empiricism. The idea of theory-ladenness extends to the social sciences as well – the search for facts depends on the framework one uses and, as such, no research is objective, in the sense of being just the result of a simple search for evidence (and, if a theory has been constructed in such a way, it will most probably be a *bad* theory).

However, in the social sciences, the selection of facts, questions and problems, is not only influenced by the limits the theory sets, but by extra-scientific factors as well. To take a simple example, although slavery is as old as history itself (and, perhaps, even older), it became a matter of serious philosophical analysis in the 18th century – the influence of the Renaissance and of the wider socio-political environment of that period cannot be overlooked in this case. Thus, although the political philosophy of the ancient Greeks accounted for it (in Plato's *Republic*, for instance, slaves occupied the lower echelons of society and constituted its major productive force) slavery was neither a philosophical nor a political problem, in the sense it is today. It is this historical and political nature of social scientific theory that gives rise to, and justifies, the notion of *anachronism* in history – the recognition that our standards cannot (and, should not) be applied as they are, to the past.

Thirdly, the problem of objectivity does not necessarily imply that social scientific theories are, by default, value-laden. Although value-ladenness characterizes the work of many social scientists – throughout the whole range of the political spectrum – it is still possible for a theory to be ideologically neutral. Of course, since every theory is a product of its historical period, values will inevitably be part of its construction. However, in this case, the issue of value-ladenness must be understood as a *conscious* attempt to influence the formation of the theory, or the direction of the research, by encompassing an overt political orientation. Even if a theory is value-laden, this does not render it automatically wrong; on the contrary, sometimes it may provide it with additional intellectual strength. In the final analysis, however, it all depends on how the ideological elements influence the intellectual function of the theory.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the problem of objectivity does not justify the acceptance of relativism or of social constructivism. The position that theories are the products of specific sociological characteristics of their creators – be that gender, race, class, or whatever – are not only theoretically problematic but have also given rise, throughout history, to catastrophic results. Thus, the rejection of the Theory of Relativity as 'Jewish Science' in Nazi Germany was as irrational, albeit less catastrophic, as the rejection of Darwinism and Mendel's theory of genetics as a 'bourgeois' science by the Stalinist regime. In the social sciences, the acceptance of the cultural relativistic thesis has led to absurd positions such as that only women can write women's history, or only blacks can write black history, or of the *prima facie* characterization of a theory as 'suspect' because of the social background of its creator.

Although it may be true that some theories may entail some of their creators' characteristics, the influence these may have on the intellectual function of the theory should be the subject of an empirical analysis, not of an *a priori* judgment of the theory's value. The basic reason for this is that the cultural relativist theses do not provide an adequate explanation of the mechanisms that may justify their conclusions. Thus, to claim, for example, that a theory is 'gendered' because of the language it uses, does not actually mean anything regarding the theory's intellectual validity, nor does it adequately explain its rise or domination. Gender may be important for our understanding of the theory, but only as part of a wider theoretical construct that would place gender in its proper position and would reveal the mechanism through which it may actually influence the value and the development of the theory.

The lack of a proper theoretical framework from the proponents of cultural relativism or social constructivism leaves several questions unanswered. Why, for instance, is gender, or race, or religion, used as an explanatory variable? Why is it *solely* the gender, or the race, of a person responsible for the value of a theory, and not, for example, her psychological background – as many psychoanalysts claim? How are we to clarify the situation and find our way among the various traits that characterize our existence? What happens in the case when two or more traits are combined – when, for example, an immigrant black woman sociologist creates a theory? These questions remain either unanswered or insufficiently addressed, and will remain so until a strong theory appears that will place them in the right context.

The *intellectual, social, and historical* nature of the scientific theory will constitute the cornerstones of the subsequent analysis and criticism (see also Chapter 4), and of the theoretical framework that will be implemented in the rest of the Thesis. Before discussing this, however, it is necessary to review the major ideas in the literature regarding the emergence and development of theories.

Theory Choice and Theory Development

Theory choice and theory change are two alternative ways of addressing the same problem: how do scientists decide which theory to follow? And, once they have made their decision, how do theories develop and reach dominant positions in their fields? Throughout the 20th century, several schools of thought have emerged that tried to address the above questions. In general, however, two approaches have dominated

the literature¹. The first one, philosophy of science, focuses primarily on the intellectual nature of the theory, and argues that any decision regarding theory choice is based primarily on an evaluation of the theory's ability to perform adequately its intellectual functions (i.e. to understand, explain, and predict the external world). Therefore, the process of theory change and theory development can be understood by examining the ability of the theory to deliver what it promises. The second approach, sociology of science, focuses on the theory's social characteristics and examines it in relation to its wider social environment and in relation to the social characteristics of its creators leading, thus, to social constructivist interpretations of theory choice and theory change. Although both these approaches suffer from important problems one can, nevertheless, draw important lessons from their teachings. Before these are discussed, however, it is important to analyse their basic ideas.

Philosophy of Science and Theory Choice

The basic rationale of the majority of the philosophical theories is that a theory will be chosen over its rivals if it is *better* than the rest in fulfilling its intellectual mission; the difference, however, among the various approaches rests on the interpretation of 'better'². This was certainly true for the early attempts to explain theory choice. Until the late 1960s the main philosophical approaches had primarily a *normative* orientation, in the sense that they laid down specific rules of how theories *should* be chosen. As a result, they could not sufficiently explain the historical record since they used history insofar as it corroborated their epistemological criteria, and not vice versa. Thus, theory change was explained by reverting to the theory of knowledge they promulgated, and not to the actual criteria used by the historical agents. In a sense, they applied their approach to the past, not the past to their approach.

One of the first schools that tried to address the problem of theory choice and theory change was the justificationist school. Its basic idea was that a theory is true if its assumptions were *justified* by the facts (i.e. evidence) of the external world: positive instances that confirmed the theory were viewed as adequate evidence for its acceptance, whereas negative instances were considered as proofs that the theory was not an adequate construction for the explanation of reality. The lesson drawn

¹ A third approach, known as the economics of science, which tried to address the same set of questions has not gained sufficient attention in the literature. For an introduction to this alternative approach see Wible (1998).

² For a comprehensive presentation of the various philosophy of science schools see Laudan *et al.* (1986).

from this approach was that theories were eventually chosen over their rivalries because the evidence confirmed their hypotheses – theories that run contrary to the evidence were dismissed as false.

This approach was primarily a theory of choice, of action: if a scientist has to choose a theory, she must select the one that is justified by the evidence. However, this rationale was also applied in the past implying that a theory was chosen because it was justified by the evidence. Therefore, theory change occurred because a new theory emerged that was better justified than the old. This way of thinking, however, was susceptible to anachronistic interpretations, as will be discussed in the following pages.

Apart from the problem of anachronism the justificationist approach also runs into two major epistemological problems: the *problem of induction* and the *problem of the underdetermination of theory by evidence*. The former had been already discussed in the 18th century by David Hume (Hume 1993 [1777]) who argued that there was no logical ground to assume that a fact that occurred in the past would necessarily occur in the future as well, and that a theory could not be logically formulated to express such a condition. Therefore, basing predictions on an inductive process (as the justificationists did) undermined the whole theory *prima facie*. As for the latter problem, it was originally advanced by Pierre Duhem in the beginning of the 20th century, and supplemented by Quine in the 1950s – that is why it is also known as the Duhem-Quine thesis (Duhem 1962; Gillies 1998; Quine 1951). In simple terms it states that evidence is not an adequate measure for the truth or falsity of a theory, as every theory can make necessary adjustments to its background knowledge to fit the facts. As Duhem argued, if a theory comprises some laws and auxiliary hypotheses and an experiment turns out to be against the theory's predictions, one cannot know for certain where the problem lies: is it with the laws, or with the auxiliary hypotheses?³ Consequently, evidence cannot logically determine whether a theory should be accepted or rejected.

To address the problem of induction, justificationists turned to the notion of probability. Lakatos called this strand of justificationism '*neo-justificationism*' or '*probabilism*', its central thesis being that "although theories are improvable, they

³ If a theory is a set of laws and auxiliary hypotheses ($L_1 \& L_2 \& L_3 \& L_4 \& A_1 \& A_2 \& A_3$) and we have an observation which contradicts the theory then we have $\neg(L_1 \& L_2 \& L_3 \& L_4 \& A_1 \& A_2 \& A_3)$ which, by De Morgan's law, gives: $\neg L_1 \cup \neg L_2 \cup \neg L_3 \cup \neg L_4 \cup \neg A_1 \cup \neg A_2 \cup \neg A_3$. Which of these propositions shall we eliminate? Are they all responsible or only some of them? See Gillies (1998).

have different degrees of probability relative to the empirical evidence” (Lakatos 1970). Although the attempt to introduce probabilities was ingenious, the inductive structure of the argument remained in place, and the problem of underdetermination was still unanswered.

The problems of justificationism eventually gave rise to a different strand of methodological rules, known as *falsificationism*⁴. The basic theses of this approach were that all theories were *fallible* (i.e. they may be proven wrong sometime in the future) and that a theory *should* be selected if it clearly stated the rules for its abandonment once the evidence turned out to contradict its initial predictions.

Lakatos (1970) recognized three basic types of falsificationism: *dogmatic or naturalistic falsification*, according to which the scientist must search for instances that will disprove the theory, and once these are found the theory must be abandoned; *naïve methodological falsification*, which is less strict than the previous type as it allows for the repetition of experiments before establishing the falsified nature of a theory; and *sophisticated methodological falsification* (Popper’s version of falsificationism), which argued that a good theory leads to the discovery of novel facts (i.e. facts that were not predicted by its rivals) and that to abandon a theory one needs to have another theory in place to replace it with. A better theory should not only predict novel facts but should also explain some of the anomalies that were not explained by its predecessor.

Apart from the major epistemological problems that the above approaches accounted (for example, the lack of a proper rule on how many times an experiment should be repeated before deciding that a theory should be abandoned, or the fact that Popper did not seem to address the problem of underdetermination, since the Duhem-Quine argument could be equally well applied to the negative instances of a theory – if we discover a negative instance, how do we know whom or what to blame?), their major drawback was that they could not actually explain the historical record. Lakatos provided several examples from the history of science where scientists decided to overcome the problems their theories faced not by abandoning them – as the falsificationists argued – but by introducing various *ad hoc* modifications (in contrast to the falsificationists’ prescriptions), which eventually ‘saved’ the theory. As with the justificationist approach, falsificationism was, primarily,

⁴ Although Popper is regarded as the falsificationist *par excellence*, falsificationism was not created by him. For a more detailed analysis see Feyerabend (1991: 490).

a normative theory of choice, not a historical theory that could explain the development of science.

The turn away from the normative occurred in the early 1960s, with the arrival of a new generation of philosophers. Amongst them, Kuhn's pioneering work was certainly one of the most influential (Kuhn 1962). As has been already mentioned, Kuhn introduced the notion of the *paradigm*, a set of theories with common epistemological and methodological bases, which challenged the orthodox perceptions about the nature of theory (see also Chapter 4). The paradigm, according to Kuhn, defined the concept of *normal science* – i.e. of the legitimate way to conduct research in a specific historical period. Kuhn argued that within normal science, scientists were primarily concerned with the solution of *puzzles* – i.e. of “a special category of problems that can serve to test ingenuity or skill in solution” (Kuhn 1970a: 36). As long as the paradigm could address the puzzles set by the scientists, all went well; unsolved problems were either marginalized or left for the future generation to solve. However, there were instances where these unsolved problems created disturbances in the normal function of the paradigm – *anomalies*, as Kuhn termed them. For Kuhn, the existence of anomalies was the prime reason for the development of science. Although some of the anomalies could be addressed within the limits of the paradigm (for example, by proper *ad hoc* modifications), not all of them would fit this pattern. When anomalies pertained a *crisis* would emerge, which could eventually lead to the replacement of the paradigm. This process, however, was neither automatic nor instantaneous – scientists would normally hold on to their paradigm until a new one, which could address the crisis, emerged. This would lead to what Kuhn termed, a *scientific revolution*.

Compared to the two approaches already discussed, one can immediately discern some fundamental differences between them and Kuhn's approach. *Firstly*, Kuhn did not propose a normative model of theory change. On the contrary, he attempted to ‘read’ the history of science and describe the process through which theory change had actually occurred in the past. *Secondly*, his focus on history removed his approach from a purely rational interpretation – the choices of the scientists were not necessarily rational (i.e. based on the intellectual function of the theory), as Kuhn had argued:

“Individual scientists embrace a new paradigm for all sorts of reasons and usually for several at once. Some of these reasons lie outside the apparent sphere of science entirely. Others must depend upon idiosyncrasies of autobiography and personality. Even the nationality ... can play a significant role” (Kuhn 1970a: 152-3).

Kuhn, therefore, introduced a sociological element in the discussion, one that the sociological school would further expand, as will be discussed shortly.

Finally, Kuhn's third innovation was the re-introduction of the scientific community in the discussion. Kuhn did not propose a normative theory of theory choice because he thought that responsible for this were the scientists *per se*. For this point, and for the argument that sociopolitical or psychological factors could be involved in the process of theory change, Kuhn was characterized as a relativist – an allegation that he denied several times during his career.

Kuhn's approach is not without problems, as the various criticisms that were raised against his conceptualization prove (for a comprehensive criticism of Kuhn's work see the contributions in Lakatos and Musgrave (1970)). The majority of them focused on the lack of clarity that surrounded Kuhn's main terms – whether, for example, normal science actually existed (Feyerabend 1970), or the contested nature of the paradigm (Masterman 1970), or the process through which change in science actually occurred (Toulmin 1970; Watkins 1970). The most important critics of his work, however, were Lakatos and Feyerabend, who both developed alternative programmes to account for theory development.

Lakatos opposed Kuhn's 'mob psychology' – as he called it – and tried to explain scientific growth in a rational way – by developing a system which did not leave any space for the intrusion of psychosocial explanations, following in the footsteps of the earlier philosophical traditions. His main differentiation from the earlier approaches, however, was that he not only introduced some rational rules on how to select theories but also tried to explain the evolution of science from a non-normative – but still rational – perspective.

Lakatos recognized the fallibility of theories and – as Kuhn did – argued that theories cannot be judged in isolation but must be seen as parts of some broader entities, which he called *research programmes* (Lakatos 1970). A research programme comprised a *negative* and a *positive heuristic* – i.e. methodological rules that guided the scientist on what to avoid and how to proceed respectively – a *hard core* – i.e. the basic core of the research programme – and a *protective belt* – a set of auxiliary hypotheses that may be altered as many times as necessary to protect the hard core. Lakatos did not deny the existence and use of *ad hoc* hypotheses as a method to protect an existing theory; neither did he follow the Popperian falsificationist rule: both the negative and the positive heuristic may be 'metaphysical' in the Popperian sense – i.e. lack potential falsifiers.

Lakatos argued that the success of a research programme would depend firstly, on its ability to lead to a *progressive* rather than to a *degenerating* problem shift (in other words, its ability to solve problems) and, secondly, on its ability to produce *successful predictions* (and by this he meant either predictions that were not anticipated by rival research programmes or predictions that proved to be true). Eventually, a degenerating research programme would be replaced by a progressive one.

Although this may sound similar to Kuhn's notion of paradigm change, there is a fundamental difference. Contrary to Kuhn, Lakatos laid down explicit rules that stated when a research programme degenerates (whereas Kuhn was more vague on this), offering a more concise historical theory – that could be used to explain the historical record. However, and this is what differentiates him from the earlier philosophers of science, he did not set normative guidelines on how scientists should choose in cases of doubt; on the contrary, *they* should be responsible for formulating the criteria for theory choice. As he had said:

“it is very difficult to decide ... when a research programme has degenerated hopelessly Neither the logician's proof of inconsistency nor the experimental scientist's verdict of anomaly can defeat a research programme in one blow” (Lakatos 1983: 113).

The task of the philosopher (or the historian), is only to reconstruct the process of theory development based on the research programmes framework.

Paul Feyerabend was, perhaps, one of the most controversial figures in the philosophy of science. Following the historical approach in explaining theory change, he tried to understand how scientists chose between contrasting theories. Feyerabend advocated methodological pluralism and argued that science progressed because some people decided to go against the scientific norms of their era and act *counterinductively* (Feyerabend 1993). His famous phrase “anything goes” (*ibid.* 19) meant that the scientists chose whatever means available to proceed, instead of following some rational guidelines or paradigms; ‘anything goes’, therefore, was not a methodological guideline but his reading of the history of science. He also argued that ‘evidence’ was not enough to argue for the promotion or replacement of a theory. Evidence, thus, became quasi-irrelevant to the scientific enterprise, although it could certainly serve a role in an argument. This is where his pluralism entered as an explanation for theory change:

“A scientist who is interested in empirical content, and who wants to understand as many aspects of his theory as possible, will adopt a pluralistic methodology, he will compare theories with other theories rather than with

‘experience’, ‘data’, or ‘facts’, and he will try to improve rather than discard the views that appear to lose in the competition” (*ibid.* 33).

It is evident that Feyerabend did not believe that theory change depended entirely on rational grounds. Although rational argumentation does exist, and may persuade people, it is usually not enough. His reading of history revealed several instances where non-rational arguments and strategies entered the debate: propaganda, suppression, patronage and funding control, served as mechanisms for the promotion of one theory or another. Instead of the smooth and peaceful image of normal science that Kuhn had advocated, Feyerabend conceived science and theory change as a battlefield (Feyerabend 1991). It is obvious from the above that the ‘survival’ of a theory did not mean that it was necessarily better than its rivals – it only meant that the people who initially promoted it were better persuaders than their rivals.

One can understand why it is easy to characterize Feyerabend as a relativist; his thesis that “all traditions should be given equal rights and equal access to power” (Feyerabend 1991), that progress is partially irrational, that there are no strict methodological rules, or that a criterion for theory selection should be based on humanitarian and, even, aesthetic grounds, brings him very close to similar discussions in the cultural relativist camp. Although Feyerabend never denied his relativistic tendency, he was careful to clarify that his relativism was not ‘semantic’ – i.e. he did not believe that “knowledge (truth) are relative notions” – but ‘cosmological’ – i.e. that “there is a reality which encourages many approaches, science among them” (*ibid.* 519). Relativism was advocated by a different school of thought, to which I now turn.

Sociology of Science and Theory Choice

Although sociologists were always interested in the various forms of knowledge, Mannheim being a central figure in this domain (Mannheim 1960), their systematic engagement with the study of science emerged rather late in the 20th century. Robert Merton’s pioneering work certainly set the standards and directions for the future generation of sociologists of science (see Merton 1970; Merton 1973).

Science was viewed as another social institution alongside other institutions of knowledge, such as religion, magic, or the arts, and one of the major foci of these early scholars was to understand the reasons that raised science to the dominant position it occupies nowadays as an institution of knowledge creation. Apart from this general direction, however, the sociologists were also concerned with the examination of the scientific profession, of the scientific community, and of the scientific processes (Hagstrom 1965). They were primarily interested in the structures

of science, in the way ideas were circulated and promulgated within science, and communicated to the general public, or in the demographic and structural characteristics of the scientific community.

However, around the 1980s, the sociologists of science turned their attention to theory choice and theory change and tried to explain them from a socio-political perspective, introducing that way an element of irrationality in the discussion and, with it, relativism. As has been already mentioned, they perceived theories as social objects influenced by the wider socio-political forces of the society in which they were created, and by the characteristics of their creators. It must be noted that this is not necessarily a wrong approach; since theories have a historical nature it is rational to assume that extra-scientific factors may somehow influence their genesis and selection. Indeed, the characterisation of an element of the external world as a *scientific phenomenon* depends on several such factors. Although theory-ladenness or the discrepancy between experience and the predictions of the theory influence the genesis of the scientific phenomenon, social factors are also part of the picture. Especially in the social sciences, the quest of a theory may be initiated by the values of the scientist or her social characteristics. However, this does not mean that the resulting theory will necessarily be value-laden, or that it will incorporate the social characteristics of the scientist in such a way as to distort its intellectual value.

Contrary to the above, the sociologists of science claimed that theories, facts, and evidence were socially constructed and served extra-scientific targets, such as political interests. Although the relationship between the scientific community and the establishment had been discussed in the literature (see Cholakov (2000) and Silva and Slaughter (1984) for a general discussion) , to claim that a theory was chosen because of the above reasons was a step not as yet taken.

The new sociological school that emerged – known as the *Edinburgh School* as it was represented by David Bloor, Barry Barnes and their colleagues in the University of Edinburgh – claimed that all scientific knowledge is socially constructed, a position which became widely known as the *strong programme* in the sociology of science (Barnes 1974; Barnes *et al.* 1996; Bloor 1976; Brown 1989). This was opposed to the *weak programme* that was primarily interested in the classical topics of the sociology of science (the social organisation of science, the development of science etc). The main focus of the strong programme was to show that instead of the rationality principles advocated by the philosophers of science, scientists were influenced by more social reasons when selecting a theory (Barber 2000; Segerstråle 2000). Together with the social constructivists, came the cultural relativist and postmodernist

theories – and especially ‘standpoint epistemologies’ – which argued that science *and* scientific theories were inherently value laden enterprises, which replicated the dominant power relations in society.

Even though the above approaches seem to share common grounds with the Kuhnian and Feyerabendian teachings, Feyerabend had explicitly stated that “we [Feyerabend and Kuhn] both oppose [the strong programme]” (Feyerabend 1993: 271). Kuhn and Feyerabend wanted to bring science back to the scientists, and advocated a programme which would give voice to the scientists to judge the adequacy or inadequacy of their theories. To assign this attempt to another extra-scientific group, such as the sociologists or whoever might attempt an explanation of theory change from the ‘outside’, would be the same as ascribing this right to any philosopher. As Feyerabend colourfully argued “to do scientific work, one has to immerse oneself into the relevant research tradition” (Feyerabend 1991).

As has been already discussed in the first section, the major problem with this kind of sociology of science is that it does not offer a proper mechanism to explain how exactly gender, or race, or any other social or biological trait, influence the content of a theory and one’s decisions. All these approaches enter a vicious circle of functionalist explanation that cannot address the actual roots of the problem. This, of course, does not mean that scientists follow the principles of rationality advocated by the philosophers. It is highly probable, indeed, that there may be cases where irrational elements enter the decision making process.

Moreover, any theory of theory choice that is also a prescription on how scientists think runs the risk of becoming automatically anachronistic once applied to the past. The rules of thought that these approaches provide (for example that a scientist chooses a theory for such and such reasons) may be valid for the era in which they were built, but not necessarily for the distant past. What one must eventually search for, are the real motives and principles behind the selection of theories – and although one may speculate about them, one cannot apply a ready-made theory of mind. The only way to discover them is through proper historical research.

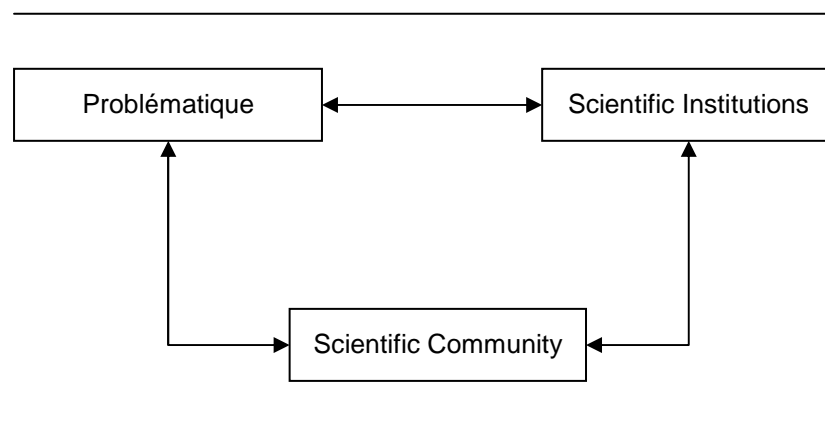
The Internal Circuit of Science

Although understanding theory-choice may be a precarious intellectual exercise, understanding the advancement and development of a theory may prove a less complicated task, once set on the right grounds. As was discussed in the previous section, the issues of theory choice and theory development were interlinked in the philosophy of science literature, since the rules that applied to the former also applied

to the latter. The basic problem with this approach was that, until the era of Kuhn, the theory was primarily examined from its intellectual standpoint. Although this is certainly not mistaken, it is insufficient once we try to understand the *process* of theory growth. For as was explained in the first section, the theory is not only an intellectual construct but a social object as well, since its creation and development take place within a specific social environment. Thus, to fully understand the way a theory develops and reaches a point of dominance it is imperative to understand the mechanics of the aforementioned social environment.

The *Internal Circuit of Science* (ICS), depicted in Figure 2.1, shows the basic components of a scientific field, and the interrelationships between them. It is called 'internal' because it focuses on the internal processes of science, without accounting for any externalities. This does not mean, of course, that such externalities do not exist. On the contrary, external influences are important in several ways: for example, in influencing the selection of research topics or research questions – especially through the allocation of funding to specific directions – or in influencing the economic sustainability of the institutions. In some cases it may even be the case that external influences may also determine the outcomes of research. However, since the development and evaluation of knowledge generally rests on the scientific community, the above factors are not examined in the present Thesis.

Figure 2.1
The Internal Circuit of Science



It must also be clarified at this point that the ICS does not explain *how* scientists choose a theory or *how* a theory is (or should be) criticised – this is something that is taken for granted in the model. The model only explains *how a theory develops* once it is accepted by the scientists. Before analysing the processes of the ICS, and its

relevance for the Thesis, it is necessary to explain in detail the characteristics of its major components.

The Scientific Community

Central to the ICS is the scientific community, around which the other components revolve. Although proto-communities of 'scientists' existed since the 15th century (Gascoigne 1992), the first bodies with a specific disciplinary orientation were formed in the second half of the 19th century, firstly in continental Europe (especially in Germany) and later in Britain and the USA (Cahan 2003b). Until then, the existing communities were still inseparable from the grander genres of natural philosophy and natural history, since the formation of the natural sciences, as we know them today, began at the end of the 18th century (see the various contributions in Cahan (2003), especially Bensaude-Vincent (2003), Buchwald and Hong (2003), Richards (2003); also, Cohen (1994) and Gascoigne (1995: 575))⁵. The role of the proto-communities in the development of science cannot be ignored, since their efforts to promote this new way of thinking led to an exponential increase in their size (Gascoigne 1992) and, eventually, in the formation of the disciplines as we know them today.

The members of these proto-communities not only comprised 'scientists' – i.e. scholars who taught in the university and were involved in research – but also numerous 'amateurs' – people who may not have had a formal university education or who were engaged in research in their free time – and by several patrons – wealthy individuals who were interested in scientific developments (and sometimes were amateur 'scientists' themselves) and who would sponsor the activities of the communities, individuals or societies (Gascoigne 1995; Shapin and Thackray 1974). However, from the 19th century onwards, the scientific community became more professional by the implementation of standards its members should follow if they were to be considered as such.

To become a scientist one had to gain an accreditation by one of the community's institutions – the university. This involved the acquisition of a degree, which ascertained that its holder had gone through a process of education and had learned the 'trade' of science. Nowadays, the most usual degree of this type is the PhD, which shows that its holder is able to perform research and advance the knowledge of her field. As science became more professionalized during the 19th and, especially,

⁵ The term 'scientist' entered the English language in 1834 (Cahan 2003b: 296).

the 20th century, the possession of this degree became even more important⁶. This structural change eventually led to the gradual disappearance of the amateurs and patrons from the science's internal structures. Patrons continued to exist, but their presence was external to the process of theory development and formation even though their patronage could (and does) influence the direction of research.

The scientific community, therefore, functions like a guild – to become its member, one has to go through an 'apprenticeship', and once this is completed, one will gain the right to exercise the 'trade'. Similar to a guild, the scientific community also provided – and still provides – social support to its members to help them promote their interests, and "to advance [their] individual careers and group needs" (Cahan 2003b: 293). Moreover, as the recognised body for the creation and promotion of scientific knowledge, it sets and preserves the standards of the profession and, perhaps most importantly, defines the nature of its 'trade': it is the scientific community that sets the limits of what is and what is not scientific; anything that does not conform to the rules of the community is not part of science.

Although any PhD holder may be considered a scientist in the broad sense, one is not automatically a member of the *academic community* – this specialised subset of the scientific community that is primarily responsible for the training of the future members of the community and for setting the standards in the field. To be regarded as part of this sub-group, one has to actively participate in the field's institutions (see the next section). Thus, scientists who leave the sphere of institutionalised science and join other spheres, such as industry or government, are not considered as members of the academic community, since their activities may not be any more related to the advancement and the creation of knowledge. Although these scientists may conduct research in private laboratories, for example, their research will only become part of the scientific canon if it goes through the process of socialisation described in the first section. If this research is, indeed, communicated to the rest of the community, the person who publishes it can be regarded as member of the academic community, since she participated in one of its institutions. Thus, the above definition allows for people to be considered as members of the academic community even if they are not employed by universities.

Following a similar rationale, the *national academic community* consists of all the scientists who work in a specific country (and not the people who are citizens of the

⁶ It is, of course, still possible, although quite rare, for someone to be a member of the scientific community without holding a PhD.

country – an Italian working in France may be an Italian citizen but since her work is conducted in France, she is a member of the French scientific community). The criterion for the inclusion of a scientist in a national academic community is economic: it depends on the employment relation that the person has with the community's institutions.

Although the existence of a scientific community is taken for granted by most researchers, there are some who believe that the notion per se is a neologism with no substantial meaning. Knorr-Cetina (1982), for instance, dismisses the notion of the community as a sociological construction that denotes something that does not exist or is not recognised by the scientists themselves – a “taxonomic collective” as she calls it. According to her research, knowledge production is not confined in the small communities of scientists. On the contrary, since it requires the support of extra-scientific institutions, scientists must operate in other spheres as well to promote their research and justify their existence, what she calls ‘transepistemic communities’. This is an important criticism, although, in my opinion, mistaken, primarily for two reasons.

Firstly, although Knorr-Cetina is right when she argues that scientists cannot operate on their own, I cannot see why this is contradictory to the notion of the scientific community as another social category. Secondly, if one characterises the scientific community as a ‘taxonomic collective’, the same can be said for the majority of the sociological terms – class, or nation being only some of them – leaving, thus, the sociological taxonomic vocabulary susceptible to the problems of methodological individualism (see Kincaid (1994) for an important criticism).

The Scientific Institutions

Science as we know it today could not exist without its institutions. The institutions were partly responsible for the professionalisation of science, and their importance rests on the fact that they are the places where the socialisation of the theory takes place and where the future of the theory rests. If a theory, a research or an idea does not appear in any of the institutions (and, especially, in the scientific journal) then it is not regarded as scientific knowledge – it is a supposition or a personal opinion but not socially acceptable knowledge. Moreover, the scientific institutions set the intellectual limits of a field or a discipline. The content of a journal, for example, defines the nature of the discipline to which it refers. There are five major scientific institutions: the *academic department*, the *academic research centre*, the *professional scientific association*, the *academic conference*, and the *scientific journal*. All of them perform different functions within the Internal Circuit of Science,

and all of them are necessary for the advancement of knowledge and the sustainability of the field.

The University, the Academic Department, and the Academic Research Centre

Historically, the university was the first scientific institution to be developed, in 12th century France and England. From its early foundation, its purpose was to educate the public and to create the conditions for the development of knowledge. Although one can argue that the idea of the university goes back to antiquity – in Plato's Academe and Aristotle's Lyceum – the medieval universities were different as they offered socially organised knowledge, of a non-ad hoc character: students had to enrol to a degree, to read specific courses, to be evaluated and, from the 13th century onwards, to be awarded degrees (Peterson 1997).

Departments, on the other hand, at least as they are now perceived, are a very modern invention. Although some of the first universities had Colleges intended as hospices or halls of residence, they were not concerned with the teaching of specific subjects *per se* (Haskins 1923: 26-7). Only later did they become “normal centres of life and teaching, absorbing into themselves much of the activity of the university” (*ibid.* 27).

Despite the further departmentalisation of knowledge in the beginning of the 18th century, which created the need for more specialised professors, the focus of the university remained the dissemination of knowledge and not its development – knowledge was produced, in a sense, independently of the university structures, in private laboratories or under the patronage of wealthy individuals. It was at the end of the 19th century that the modern research-oriented university first emerged (Rothblatt and Wittrock 1993: 342) and with it the notion of the academic science, which “entailed a break with previous types of academic and intellectual discourse [and] entailed ... new social identities for scientific practitioners, separating amateurs from ‘serious scholars and scientists’” (*ibid.* 342).

The modern university promotes both research and education through its structures. The *academic department* is concerned with the dissemination of knowledge, it constitutes one of the most important links the scientific community has to the rest of the society, since it is the place where people irrelevant to science and its formalisations learn about it, and it is also the primary medium through which the future generation of scientists is being recruited. If it was not for the academic department, the community would not be able to regenerate and sustain itself. On the other hand, the *academic research centre* is the university's forum for the creation of

new knowledge. Through its structures research is being developed, while at the same time the new members of the community are being introduced to the tools of the trade (via the various PhD and post-doc placements).

The Professional Scientific Association

It may be in the university where the future scientists are born, but it is their professional bodies that set the arena for their achievements. The professional scientific association, a body created by and for the scientists to promote scientific research and the main principles of the field, is almost as old an institution as the university. Although unofficial meetings of scholars have been recorded in the early 17th century, an organised institution did not exist until 1635, when the first professional academic association was founded in France – the Académie Française (Brown 1967). In England, although Oxford was the centre of a society of scholars who gathered to discuss issues of interest, it was not until 1660 that the first scientific organisation, the Royal Society of London, was established for the promotion of scientific knowledge (Lyons 1944; Stimson 1948).

The professional scientific association still remains one of the fundamental places where social networks are developed, ideas are exchanged and science is promoted. Moreover, the existence of a professional association renders authority to a field, since it is an official institution where the scientific enterprise is materialised, the scientific community is represented and the wider society may turn to for advice. No matter how important the above, the major feature of the scientific association is its involvement in the promotion of the scientific ideal, especially through the foundation of journals, and the organisation of scientific conferences.

The Scientific Conference

The scientific conference is a forum initiated, primarily, by the professional scientific association, although exceptions do exist (conferences, for example, may be organised by journals, or university departments, or research centres). The modern conference, with its many streams, workshops, plenary sessions etc., is a creation of the 20th century, although professional associations were known for holding meetings of their members to discuss specific topics of interest. Papers were presented, discussants existed and the floor was open to discussion and commentaries. However, these meetings were usually small and lasted an evening or, at most, a day (Stimson 1948).

The academic conference serves primarily two roles; firstly, it is a place for networking, where academics can discuss in person, meet their colleagues and

develop possible alliances for conducting future research. Secondly, it is the place where ideas are initially tested. In a conference, scientists can observe whether their research is accepted by the community or whether there are any problems with their approach. From that feedback they will be able to elaborate and further develop their work before presenting it officially to the most public of science's public domains – the academic journal.

The Academic Journal

While an inclusive history of the academic journal still waits to be written, it is largely accepted that the first publication which resembled today's journals was the *Philosophical Transactions*, supported (but not published) by the Royal Society. Founded in 1664/5 by Henry Oldenburg, the first secretary of the Royal Society, it was the first official forum for the development of science where several authorities of the time published their research findings and their ideas promoting, thus, the fruitful exchange of opinions and the initiation of discussions throughout Europe (Stimson 1948: 65 ff.)⁷. The foundation of the journal, as a forum where scientists could present their ideas, would prove fundamental for the development of science in that early period. Although communication between scientists did exist in the form of letters, it was confined to the small network they had developed, and their ideas were scarcely, if ever, available to the wider community. The journal, however, changed this as it ensured a wider dissemination of knowledge.

The modern academic journal may not be predominantly published by Professional Associations (although there are plenty of exceptions)⁸, and it may be primarily a commercial product, in the sense of being published by specific publishing houses, but it still retains the basic features of that first publication: its prime aim is the publication of research that will enhance the development of scientific knowledge, it still is the scientific community's fundamental instrument of communication, and the forum where discussions take place and ideas are advanced. Apart from the above functions, the journal served another, equally important, role since its conception: it

⁷ Although a French journal, the *Journal des Sçavans*, preceded the publication of the *Transactions* by three months, it did not manage to survive for long, thus making the *Transactions* the oldest scientific journal in the world.

⁸ Many American Professional Associations publish their own journals, which are usually considered the top journals in their respective fields; the *American Economic Review* of the American Economic Association, or the *Academy of Management Journal*, of the Academy of Management, are only two of many such examples. It must also be noted that journals are published by academic departments or universities – in the field of Industrial Relations, for instance, the *British Journal of Industrial Relations* is such an example (it was originally an LSE journal and when the Department of Industrial Relations was founded, it was directly associated with it).

guaranteed and established the copyright of the idea. Since journal papers are gifts to the community, as Hagstrom (1965) has rightly argued, the scientists usually place immense importance to the recognition of their work. Once an idea is published under one's name, therefore, the copyright is properly established.

The academic journal is, undoubtedly, the most important institution of science. Since it is the primary forum where knowledge is developed (and where knowledge is expected to be developed) it serves the all important role of defining three fundamental aspects of scientific life: (1) Knowledge per se, (2) Science and (3) the Discipline (or the Field of Study). In a sense, journals are legitimating mechanisms; since they are the world-wide accepted forum for the promotion of knowledge they instantly define knowledge – what appears in a journal means that it is knowledge, since the community responsible for knowledge creation has judged it as such. Moreover, it also defines science – a result of the social nature of science. Finally, it is the benchmark for defining the discipline to which it belongs – the content of a journal tells us what the members of the discipline regard as part of their endeavours.

The Problématique

Apart from the scientific community and the institutions, a field requires something that will tie the above together and provide them with meaning and a justification for their existence; this role is performed by the *problématique*. The *problématique* refers to the wider set of problems that the community recognises as the main focus of research and the reason for its differentiation from adjacent communities. Usually, the development of a new community starts from the identification of some problems that are not explicitly addressed by other communities and can form the bases for the development of a new field of study.

The *problématique* performs three main functions: firstly, as already mentioned, it demarcates the field from adjacent ones; secondly, it helps attract new members in the community; and, thirdly, it provides the bases upon which the future generation of scientists will be trained. Theory, of course, is not absent from this process, since it is through a specific theory (or theories) that the *problématique* acquires meaning and substance. In a sense, the theory informs the *problématique* – it defines it, it sets the limits for its development, and it guides the scientists on how to address it.

The reason the above functions are not ascribed to theory, as the literature in the previous section did, but rather treat theory as a supplementary instrument in the ICS is that, in the social sciences, the use of theory *per se* as a mechanism for the demarcation of the various fields is very problematic. Although it may be possible for

a field to have a paradigmatic theory – in the way envisaged by Kuhn – this is certainly not the same as in the natural sciences (that is why Kuhn argued that his conceptualisation cannot be transferred to the social scientific world without severe modifications). Even the most axiomatic of the social sciences – Economics – does not have a single paradigm, but rather a set of approaches that are regarded as orthodox (or mainstream), in contrast to the various heterodox schools (Landreth and Colander 2002; Lee 2009).

The use of the term *problématique* may better explain the formation and sustainability of the various fields as sociological entities, since it provides its members with a common interest – no matter how this interest is approached. Obviously, the drawing of strict demarcation lines between fields is almost impossible, for in the majority of the cases adjacent fields will share common interests – both in their foci and in their theories; but this is not a special characteristic of the social sciences, since the natural sciences also share this feature (physics, for instance, shares both theories and research foci with chemistry, especially in the study of the micro cosmos). It is not the existence of clear boundaries that makes a field, but rather the existence of a nucleus, of a hard core, which is not completely shared with other fields, that defines its individuality.

As with every product of the human intellect, the *problématique* is not stable in time, nor could it possibly be. On the contrary, it is subject to changes, some times minor, others major, depending on the forces that create it in the first place. It is to these that I now turn.

The ICS Function

As can be seen from Figure 2.1, all the elements of the ICS interact in some way; central to the Circuit is the scientific community, which creates and supports the *problématique* and the institutions of the field. Without a stable core of members, no field would be able to survive for long. The community, moreover, is the creator of the most important product of the scientific field: its theories. As mentioned in the first section, the main intellectual aims of the theory are to understand, explain and predict the external world. Since for each field the limits of the external world are the limits of its *problématique*, theory is the vehicle the community uses to address its *problématique*. However, the relationship between the two is not monotonic – theories also create the *problématique* or, rather, reshape and redefine it. This kind of reciprocity is characteristic of all the ICS elements.

The community may create the institutions but, as previously mentioned, the institutions help to regenerate the community – through the training of the future generation of scientists, or the attraction of new members to their ranks. Moreover, the institutions are linked to the problématique in two different ways. Firstly, they are the media through which the community addresses the problématique. As has been already mentioned, a theory becomes scientific once it becomes socialised; this socialisation takes place through the institutions, especially through the academic journal and the academic conference. However, the institutions are not passive in this process – and this is the second way they are linked to the problématique. For a theory, or a research, has to pass the scrutiny of the community before being accepted as legitimate knowledge; and the key actors in this process are the institutions' gatekeepers – the journal editors or the conference organisers – and the journal reviewers.

The literature on refereeing and the role of the gatekeepers is quite substantial in the sociology of science (see, for example, Armstrong 1997; Beyer 1978; Blank 1991; Campanario 1993; 1996; 1998a; 1998b; Campanario and Acedo 2007; Crane 1967; Crane 1972; Deaton *et al.* 1987; Hamermesh 1994; Smigel and Ross 1970; Stinchcombe and Ofshe 1969; Zuckerman and Merton 1971). In the ICS context, the role of the gatekeepers and the referees is obviously very important, for these two bodies determine, firstly, the future of a theory and, secondly, the direction of the field. If a theory does not manage to pass this first line of scrutiny, it will never gain access to the community and, thus, will never be able to develop. Moreover, the decisions of the gatekeepers influence the image of the field both to its community and to the people outside it. Depending on their choices, new members may be attracted and old ones may be lost. Thus, although it is up to the wider community whether a theory will flourish or perish, the gatekeepers are primarily responsible for the initial socialisation of the theory.

From the discussion thus far, it must be becoming clear how a theory eventually develops. It firstly needs to persuade the gatekeepers and the reviewers of its value⁹; and then, it must attract as many followers as possible. After becoming socialised, a

⁹ It is implied here that the intellectual value of the theory will guide the decisions of both the gatekeepers and the reviewers. This is usually true, but there is a considerable amount of research which shows that reviewers and editors have rejected some successful theories (Campanario 1996; Campanario and Acedo 2007; Gans and Shepherd 1994). However, as will be also discussed in more detail in the rest of the Thesis, the rules one applies to the evaluation of a theory having the benefit of hindsight, may not be the same rules that the editors or referees of the past have also applied. Rationality is also susceptible to anachronism – as the discussion in section two of this chapter has revealed.

theory may follow three possible routes: it may return to obscurity, it may flourish and gain a dominant position in the community, or it may become departmentalised.

A theory becomes departmentalised once it is confined to the edges of the field and manages to attract enough followers who will form their own subgroup within the wider community. Depending on the internal processes of the subgroup, the departmentalised theory may lead to a schism in the field. A theory may follow this path for several reasons. Firstly, because of the decisions of the gatekeepers: if the followers of the theory see that they are not accepted by the existing fora, they may decide to gradually distance themselves from the current orthodoxy and either form a subgroup or separate communities outside the limits of the field. Secondly, it may depend purely on the decisions of the theory's followers: they may decide, for example, (for reasons that have nothing to do with their acceptance by the wider community) that it would be better for them to separate from the field. Whether a field will experience this situation depends on the quality of the theory, on how strong its followers adhere to it, on whether the community follows a pluralistic theoretical approach, and, of course, on the balance of benefits and losses for the 'rebels'.

Similarly, a theory will flourish if it manages to attract enough members around it, who will support it through their work (the opposite must happen for a theory to perish)¹⁰. However, how can one distinguish a moderately growing theory from a departmentalised one? The answer lies in the fora. The departmentalised theory will not appear in the mainstream journals, i.e. the ones with the higher impact, the higher ranking and the most readers. On the contrary it will appear in second- or third-rated journals, or in specialised journals created especially for the purpose of discussing the theory. Moreover, its representation in the major conferences or organisations will be minimal (as a percentage of the total papers presented). A moderately growing theory, on the contrary, will still be able to gain access to the major communication channels of the community.

The ICS does not only account for the process of theory development but also reveals the relationship between a theory and the field. As already mentioned, the theory is everywhere, behind every element of the ICS. It is the product of the community, it is used to address the problématique, and it is spread via the institutions of the field. Conversely, the theory interferes with the elements of the ICS as well. It may be able to challenge the problématique, it may change the way the

¹⁰ In Chapters Five and Seven, the conditions for the development of the theory will be analysed in more detail.

community thinks and perceives the world, it may lead to the creation of new institutions. A theory may raise the field to the eyes of the wider society – if it leads to a big discovery – or it may lead to its flourishing by attracting new members from adjacent fields. In the same way, it may lead to the destruction of the field, especially if it splits the community, or if the theories developed within the community are weak and cannot fulfil their intellectual function. Indeed, the theory may be responsible for the fate of the field, as it may elevate it to higher echelons or plunge it to a deep crisis; but the theory is certainly not solely responsible for this.

Crisis, Theory and Field

Bad news always makes good headlines; but in many cases they may exaggerate reality. As it will become evident in Chapter 3, when the ‘new paradigm’ thesis will be analysed in more detail, the notion of crisis is used in an ambiguous way in the literature, leaving it, thus, open to misinterpretations. According to the OED, a crisis is:

“A vitally important or decisive stage in the progress of anything; a turning-point; also, a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent; now applied especially to times of difficulty, insecurity, and suspense in politics or commerce”.

Indeed, a crisis usually leads to changes – either for the worse or for the better, this we cannot know in advance – and this is why one must be careful how (and when) one uses the term. As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, a field can either face an *intellectual* or an *institutional* crisis (or a combination of both). The concept of the ICS can help us better understand the meaning and the content of these two types of crisis.

As its name suggests, an *intellectual crisis* refers to the products and the tools of the scientific field. In other words, for a field to face such a crisis any of the following must take place: either the theories of the field are not able to perform their functions – i.e. to explain, understand, predict or describe the phenomenon that the field studies – in which case, the field becomes redundant as it cannot fulfil its mission; or the field’s focus becomes dated – i.e. the phenomena the field studies have either ceased to exist, or have radically changed without a parallel change to the field’s directions, or have become obsolete due to theoretical developments either inside or outside the field.

An *institutional crisis*, on the other hand, targets the social organisation of the field and, more specifically, its institutions and scientific community. As was described in the ICS, the scientific community is central for the functioning, existence and

development of the field, since it controls and defines its institutions, its theories and methods, and its problématique. Thus, a field faces an institutional crisis if, *firstly*, the community is not able to attract new members and, therefore, regenerate itself; *secondly*, when the community is not able to sustain its existing members; and, *thirdly*, when the institutions of the field face a crisis. For example, the journals or the conferences may not attract papers, the membership in the professional associations may decline or may not be renewed, the academic departments may not attract students or may face closures, or the sources of funding may dry up¹¹. As a result, the community becomes slowly marginalised both in the wider scientific world and in the society, and runs the risk of disappearing altogether. Moreover, the crisis may lead to a split within the community, which may eventually lead to the break up of the field.

A crisis may be generated by both endogenous and exogenous factors. The former concern the function and structure of the field *per se* – i.e. they are located within the boundaries of the field. The latter, on the contrary, refer to factors outside the field. For instance, the inability of the field to attract new members is an endogenous factor, whereas the curtailing of funds by the government is an exogenous factor. Exogenous and endogenous factors may depend on each other – for example, the government may decide to cut funding (exogenous factor), because the research produced by the field is dated (endogenous factor). As must be obvious, the correct recognition not only of the type of crisis but of its roots as well, will influence the strategy to address it. It is, therefore, imperative to understand how to identify each type of crisis.

An *exogenous intellectual crisis* may arise if a new theory enters the field from the outside – i.e. from a different field – and challenges not only the dominant approaches in the field, but the bases of the problématique as well. If the new theory attracts enough supporters to question the existing approaches then one may say that there is an intellectual crisis. One must be very careful, however, how one treats the word ‘crisis’ in this case; for, although a new theory may introduce a *change*, it may not necessarily create a crisis (in the sense of radically altering any of the ICS components). An exogenous intellectual crisis may also occur if the field’s

¹¹ Funding is vital in many different ways. Apart from the obvious fact that without funding proper research cannot be conducted, the curtailing of funds may hurt a field in another way: if university libraries face budget cuts for whatever reason, they may decide not to renew their subscriptions to journals that may be the ‘voice’ of a specific community, undermining that way their place in the wider journal market and subsequently influencing their ability to attract papers and readers.

problématique ceases to exist and the field does not manage to adapt to the new reality in such a way as to sustain its structure and *raison d'être*. An *endogenous intellectual crisis* is very similar in its consequences to the exogenous one, the only difference being that it is initiated by the members of the community.

In a similar way, an *exogenous institutional crisis* is the result of external forces acting on the institutions of the field, challenging its existing structures and functions. Such forces are usually political and economic; for example, decisions by governments to cut funds, decisions by universities to close or merge departments, falling rates of students etc. An *endogenous institutional crisis*, on the other hand, is the result of internal realignments in the discipline; for instance, as mentioned previously, the field may not be able to regenerate itself through the attraction of new members, or its current members may start breaking away from it, or they may not support the institutions of the field etc.

Within this spectrum, any talk of a crisis must clarify both the type and the roots of the crisis. And, as is apparent, any such investigation must start by firstly examining the intellectual status of the field, and then the structural characteristics of its community. Obviously, the stronger the community, the more able it will be to resist any attempts to alter its existing structures. Furthermore, if there is a general feeling that a crisis is imminent due to specific reasons, one must be able to investigate whether there is, indeed, a cause for alarm. In the rest of the Thesis, the above theoretical framework will be implemented to examine the extent of the challenge the New Industrial Relations theory poses to the field of Industrial Relations in Britain, and to explore whether the field faces a crisis, or may face one in the near future. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to understand the nature of both the field of Industrial Relations and of the New Paradigm Thesis. To these issues I now turn.

Chapter 2

The Institutional and Intellectual Development of Industrial Relations as a Field of Study

Scientific fields, like every social construct, are always in a constant process of change. Their structures and intellectual contents are being adjusted to new realities, sometimes faster, at others slower; but it is certain that every field will undergo a certain type of transformation during its history. Industrial Relations is not an exception. To better appreciate the field's current condition it is necessary to examine the development of its institutional and intellectual characteristics, for only through a proper understanding of its history will we be able to evaluate the present and draw meaningful lessons for the future. It is the purpose of this chapter to achieve this goal.

The consequent analysis will be based on the Internal Circuit of Science schema described in Chapter 1. The first section will examine the institutional genesis of the field, whereas the second will focus on its intellectual formation. Although there is considerable literature on the history of the field, the general approach it follows differs radically from the one adopted in the present Thesis. Thus, the third, and last, section is devoted to the critical evaluation of the existing histories of the field.

The Institutional Development of Industrial Relations

"How can we account for the paradox of more and better-trained social scientists failing ever more glaringly to explain social reality?", Baran and Sweezy wondered in the introduction of their *Monopoly Capital* in 1966; and their answer was more than clear:

"Part of the answer no doubt lies in plain opportunism. Who pays the piper calls the tune, and everyone knows who the payers are and what tunes they prefer. In a capitalist society, an effective demand will always call forth its own supply" (Baran and Sweezy 1970: 15-16).

If the above is true for economics or sociology, it is also doubtless true for Industrial Relations as well. The history of the field's genesis, firstly in the US and later in the UK, is full of instances where endowments, or support, from private benefactors helped the formation of university departments that would deal with the industrial relations problems of the time. Obviously, the definition of an 'industrial relations problem' was (and still is) a highly contested issue. A strike was a 'problem' for the industrialist or the state, but not necessarily for the trade unionist; the organisation of the workers by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was a problem for the capitalist, the state and the early American Federation of Labor (AFL), but not for the Negro worker who was excluded from the wider social, political and economic nexus of the US society (Zinn 2003: 31 ff.).

It was within a highly class contested environment that the field of Industrial Relations was born, in the early 1920s US. Although many argue that the roots of the field extend in the 19th century (and especially in the work of the Webbs), one must be careful how one treats the historical record. Indeed, the work of the Webbs can be regarded as fundamental in setting the bases for the further intellectual development of the field but to argue that the Webbs were the progenitors of the field is not only anachronistic but a distortion of the historical reality as well.

It is anachronistic because the selection of who is to be regarded as the father (or mother – in the case of Beatrice) of a field is conducted by later generations of scientists who choose their 'parents' based on the relevance of the latter's work to the contemporary scientific research problems. And it is a distortion of the historical reality because the Webbs were not the first who addressed 'industrial relations' scientific problems (using this term when referring to that past is also an anachronism). Kaufman (2004: 33), for example, refers to the existence of a literature from 1854, dealing with the problems between capital and labour. If one also takes into consideration the rich socialist literature of the early 19th century (the work of Marx and Engels is, of course, the most prominent in that tradition), one can see that some of the scientific problems that Industrial Relations researchers study even nowadays were of central concern throughout the 19th century (especially the working and living conditions of the workers, their wages and overall terms and conditions of employment, the role of the Trade Unions, the State and the capitalists in framing and influencing the above etc.)¹.

¹ The above does not imply that the role of the Webbs was negligible. However, a comprehensive intellectual history of the early literature on labour problems still waits to be

Apart from the arbitrariness of selecting the work of the Webbs as the starting point of the field's *intellectual* development, this choice also suffers from another important problem: although the Webbs did study phenomena that would later become part of the Industrial Relations research agenda, they did it in a non-institutionalised context. For the Webbs, the study of Trade Unionism, and of Industrial Democracy, was integral to their Fabian programme, as was also the study of the welfare state, for example, or their stance towards colonialism. Thus, although one may rightly argue that research relevant to the current Industrial Relations programme existed in that period, the claim that the Webbs were the parents of the field (something that implies *an intention* to establish either a field or a proto-field) is an over-reading of the historical record.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, to classify the research on specific problems as part of a field or a discipline, one needs something more than mere intellectual interest in the study of certain phenomena; one needs institutions that will provide for two things: firstly, the means for the further development of knowledge and, secondly, the means for the dissemination of this knowledge to the wider community. Five such institutions were identified in the previous chapter: the academic department, the academic journal, the research centre, the professional association, and the academic conference. Only if one or more of these institutions are in place can we meaningfully refer to the existence of a field or a discipline, otherwise we can only talk about an interest in the study of a phenomenon (which usually takes place in the confines of another discipline).

Having clarified the above, the actual starting point of industrial relations as a field of study can be located in the early 1920s US, when the first Industrial Relations Departments and Units were founded in US universities (Kaufman 1993: 45 ff.). The characteristic of these departments was that they were primarily concerned with the study of business oriented topics – such as remuneration, employee promotion and recruitment etc. – while some of them were run by people who had, or would have, an illustrious career in industry as personnel directors. Kaufman (1993: 46) mentions the case of Clarence J. Hicks who established five Industrial Relations Units – one of them in Princeton University with a grant from Rockefeller – before becoming

written. It is interesting to note that, to the best of my knowledge, the first reference to the Webbs as the field's progenitors is in a 1974 paper by Bain and Clegg (Bain and Clegg 1974). Could it be that Clegg selected the Webbs because of the many common intellectual characteristics they shared? Could it also be that the eventual propagation of this belief had something to do with the great influence Clegg had in the field?

Standard Oil's personnel manager. With a payer such as Rockefeller, the tune the Units played can be easily imagined².

It would require another twenty-seven years for the first professional association of the field to be established, and for the publication of the first scientific journal (the *Industrial Relations Research Association* (IRRA) and the *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (ILRR) were both founded in 1947), and another thirty years until the first PhDs in Industrial Relations were awarded (according to Kaufman (1993: 65) “[o]nly two universities in the 1950s offered a PhD degree in industrial relations, Cornell and Wisconsin”). In general, the post-World War II period saw Industrial Relations flourish in the US – both in the academic and the research level of institutionalisation.

Although in the US the first bases for the development of the field were already present since the 1920s, in the UK the field's development did not occur until the 1940s. One would expect the field's institutionalisation to have progressed at a quicker pace in the land of its 'progenitors'. It is noteworthy to mention that when Sidney Webb, together with other Fabians, founded the London School of Economics in 1895 a department of industrial relations – or anything similar – was not established (Caine 1963; Dahrendorf 1995). Although courses on topics that would be included in the field's curriculum in later years were being offered at the LSE – Sidney Webb himself, for instance, taught one of them (entitled “Problems of Trade Unionism”, taught in the Economics Department) – they were, nonetheless, scattered around the School (for example, in the Commerce and Industry, the Social Science and Administration, the Economics, Law, or the Politics and Public Administration departments). Industrial Relations-related study acquired a more concrete status only in the mid 1950s, with the establishment of a degree on Trade Union studies in the Politics and Public Administration Department (LSE 1895-2004).

The establishment of a Department of Industrial Relations at the LSE had to wait until 1964 but even before that Chairs in Industrial Relations studies had already been established in three universities around the country in the 1930s – in Leeds, Cardiff and Cambridge – by an endowment provided by the industrialist Montague

² In another book, Kaufman (2004) presents Rockefeller Jr. as an 'enlightened' individual, who was 'born again' after his contact with William Lyon Mackenzie King, and became the “most influential American spokesman and supporter” of progressive labour management (2004: 88). What he does not tell us, however, is that the 'progressiveness' promoted at all levels of the American society at that period (early 1920s) was a result of the IWW militancy. Social (and managerial) reforms were needed to suppress the tide of the rising proletariat and preserve the system. As Theodore Roosevelt often told industrialists: “social reform was truly conservative” (quoted in Zinn 2003: 70).

Burton. As in the US, the Chairs had a very practical and pragmatic orientation: Montague Burton was primarily interested in creating “peaceful relations between labour and capital in industry” (Lyddon 2003: 95), and not so much in the development of a concise body of knowledge of a purely academic nature. In contrast to the US, however, where independent Units had been established in the Universities, the British Chairs were still parts of already existing departments.

The field’s institutionalisation in Britain was further advanced in 1950 with the establishment of the *British Universities Industrial Relations Association* (BUIRA), which aimed to establish industrial relations “as an academic subject of university standard” (Berridge and Goodman 1988: 163). The foundation of BUIRA was decisive in bringing together academics from around the country, and in forming the first scholarly community of Industrial Relations in the UK. Although different opinions regarding the organisation’s orientation did exist, the common interest in the promotion of the academic study of industrial relations and in the disentanglement of the subject from its applied past (as a tool of training future personnel directors or trade unionists, see Berridge and Goodman 1988: 163-164), undoubtedly helped the creation of a stable basis for the development and establishment of a concrete field. Indeed, the first UK academic journal of Industrial Relations was founded in 1963 – the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*³.

At around the same time, an important intellectual trend in British Industrial Relations developed in Oxford, which would dominate the theoretical discussions in the years to come. The fundamental texts of the ‘Oxford School’ of Industrial Relations were published in between the 1950s and 1970s by Allan Flanders (Flanders 1964; 1965; Flanders and Clegg 1954) and Hugh Clegg (Clegg 1970; 1976; for an overview of the Oxford School see Clegg 1990). Although the work of the Oxford School, in general, was very important in shaping the future intellectual orientation of the field, one must be careful how one treats its existence. Clegg (1990: 1) reminds us that the study of industrial relations in Oxford began in 1949 with the appointment of Flanders as a Senior Lecturer in Industrial Relations, and was further promoted at Nuffield College through a research grant for the study of industrial relations. However, although Nuffield would become an important intellectual centre for the development of Industrial Relations, by bringing together important figures of the British Industrial Relations scene, such as Alan Fox, William McCarthy or Richard

³ It must be noted that the BJIR was never linked to the BUIRA. From its foundation it was an LSE journal (in 1964 it was officially linked to the newly formed Department of Industrial Relations).

Hyman (then a PhD student, supervised by Clegg) – although the latter was never a member of the ‘Oxford School’; see Hyman (1994) – Industrial Relations never achieved a departmental status in Oxford.

This advancement had to wait until the establishment of the *Industrial Relations Research Unit* (IRRU) in the newly formed University of Warwick, in 1970. The Unit was established by Clegg with the support of the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) and attracted the majority of the Oxford academics dealing with industrial relations. In 1970 the second British academic Industrial Relations journal – the *Industrial Relations Journal* – was also born. From then onwards, the field’s institutionalisation followed an exponential growth, with new departments being formed around the country, and with the two British journals and the BUIRA attracting an increasing number of academics in their ranks⁴.

In the rest of the English-speaking world, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand followed the US and UK trends: professional associations and research centres emerged, the subject was taught in the universities, initially as a specialist course within already existing departments and later on in specialised Industrial Relations departments, and academic journals dedicated to the study of Industrial Relations appeared – the Canadian *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* was founded in 1945 and the Australian *Journal of Industrial Relations* in 1958 (Kaufman 2004).

Although the field developed rapidly in the Anglo-Saxon world, its fate in continental Europe was completely different. The study of Industrial Relations (wherever it existed) remained largely constrained within the existent academic domain. In the case of France, for example, some of the traditional issues discussed in the Anglo-Saxon Industrial Relations context are addressed in the general subject of *sociologie du travail*, which shares some common themes with Industrial Relations but also differs in substantial points (see Almond (2004) for more details). Thus, if one is to account for the development of industrial relations-related studies in Europe,

⁴ Many authors (Ackers 2007; Hyman 2007; McCarthy 1994) point out that the development of the field in the UK was also advanced because of the involvement of various key Industrial Relations academics in public policy (the involvement of Clegg, Flanders, Fox and McCarthy in the 1968 Donovan Commission is the most common example, but not the only one). After the advent of the Thatcher government, however, this involvement deteriorated, and was once again resumed when the New Labour government took office, in 1997 (predominantly with the involvement of various Industrial Relations academics in the Low Pay Commission). Although this is a very important instance in the wider history of the field, it is not very much related to the issue of institutionalisation – as I have discussed, the primary push for the creation of departments (or Units, in the US case) came from private interests, and the state was very much involved in the further expansion of the field in the 1970s, through the SSRC. Although it may be interesting to explore the possible link between Clegg’s participation in the Donovan Commission, and the formation of the IRRU, this will not be pursued in this thesis.

one can only talk of partial institutionalisation. Indeed, as Hyman (1995) and Kaufman (2004) mention, research centres with an interest in labour studies did emerge in various European countries (such as the *Istituto per il Lavoro* in Italy, or the *Institut de Recherches Économiques et Sociales* in France), and three non-UK Industrial Relations journals were also founded (the Swedish *Economic and Industrial Democracy* in 1979, the Italian *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations* in 1984, and the German *Industrielle Beziehungen* in 1994), but specialist academic departments devoted exclusively to the study of Industrial Relations did not, and do not, exist in any other European country⁵.

The Intellectual Development of Industrial Relations

Although the gradual institutionalisation of Industrial Relations in Britain during the 1960s shows the determination of the field's proto-community to establish Industrial Relations in the social scientific world, no discussion about the field's development would be complete without a consideration of its problématique. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to dismiss two common misconceptions that have been present in the literature on theory, and seem to constantly replicate themselves: the issue of the lack of theory in Industrial Relations, and the perception that theory is, primarily, 'locally' applicable.

The first of these misconceptions dates back to the early steps of the field's development, and was linked to the attempt of the early Industrial Relations academics to establish the field on strong disciplinary bases (Aronson 1961; Flanders 1965; Hameed 1967). As has been already mentioned in the Introduction, a belief existed among the early Industrial Relations scholars that the field could not attain a respectable position among the rest of the social sciences if it did not have a theory of Industrial Relations. The starting point for this discussion was the claim that Industrial Relations research was predominantly empiricist in focus, interested in fact-gathering instead of the creation of theories to explain or understand these facts (Marsden 1982). Aronson claimed, for instance, that "having eschewed theory for empiricism, we are helpless in the face of pragmatic problems" (1961: 34), echoing the now classic Dunlopian declaration that "facts have outrun ideas. Integrating theory has lagged far behind expanding experience" (Dunlop 1958: vi). Indeed, Dunlop (1958) aimed to address this concern by providing a general theory of industrial relations.

⁵ It is interesting to note that in March 2008, the Italian *Istituto per il Lavoro* was liquidated due to fund cuts from the Government.

Although the above argument survived, in one way or another, until well into the 1980s, Hyman had already addressed its a-logical nature as early as 1975, when he argued that:

“... a theory is not something divorced from and opposed to action; without theory men *cannot* act, for a theory is a way of seeing, of understanding, and of planning. The real world is so complex, it comprises so many phenomena, relations and events that we can make sense of it only by focusing on some aspects and ignoring others. We generalise from those elements of social life with which we are familiar, and seek to interpret and explain the unfamiliar in the light of these generalisations. We make predictions about the future course of events, and in the light of these we choose one course of action rather than another. In every case we are organising and selecting on the basis of some principles, some analytical framework: and it is precisely this which is meant by theory. Those who glory in their pragmatism and insist that they are immune from theory are simply unaware of their own preconceptions and presuppositions” (1975: 2, emphasis in the original).

This position was further exemplified in his later work (Hyman 1994; 1995). Indeed, as was also mentioned in the previous chapter, to claim that a theory is absent from any empirical research is impossible, due to the theory-laden nature of fact gathering. In other words, although an explicit theory may not be readily obvious when one conducts empirical research, it is nevertheless always implicit, even if the researcher is unaware of it (the slavery example given in the previous chapter is of relevance here as well; the same can also be said for the early Industrial Relations problems). Thus, although one may rightly argue that early Industrial Relations research had an empiricist and inductive orientation – i.e. it was governed by the belief that facts will reveal the nature of the world, and will eventually lead to the development of a theory – it is misguided to believe that a theory was not present even at the time of fact gathering, or that a theory was not produced after it. It may not have had the characteristics of a deductive theory, which firstly predicts and then waits for the empirical validation of its predictions, but this is the general problem with the inductive approach anyway (see the discussion in the previous chapter).

The second misunderstanding is not as explicitly stated in the literature as the previous one, but it is rather implied in several researches, as will become evident in the last section. Its main premise is that the validity of some theories is only local (in geographical terms) rather than universal – i.e. not every theory can be applied to every country or society. Indeed, although this may be true for many social scientific theories (obviously, an analysis of capitalism is pointless in a hunter-gatherer society, as is the discussion of theories of collective bargaining in environments where this institution does not exist), in general a theory (or, at least, a *good theory*) should be universally relevant and applicable.

In other words, if the object of the theory is present in different locations then a theory should have a universal appeal. US capitalism may be different from the German or the Italian one but the problems generated in each case *because of* the existence of this system *should* be able to be analysed by a rather general theory. Whether this is achieved, or not, is an epistemological matter to be addressed by the theorists. To claim, however, that a theory is only applicable in one context and not in another, although both contexts share some common characteristics, can either mean that the theory is inadequate and should be abandoned, or that the person making this statement has not properly understood the nature of the theory. The latter problem is, of course, more easily solvable than the former. A theory needs to be general: having ‘theories’ for each and every situation is both impractical and meaningless, for then we could – theoretically – argue for the formulation of an almost infinite number of theories and no knowledge about the world could ever be formulated, since everything will be dependent on the continuously changing nature of the atom⁶. The implications of this realisation will become more evident in the next chapter.

To return to the initial point about the intellectual development of the field, as has been already discussed the *problématique* is not stable in time. On the contrary it changes as new ideas, new phenomena, or new research priorities emerge. Industrial Relations experienced this kind of change, and throughout the field’s short history its *problématique* has been altered in three different ways.

As mentioned previously, the initiative for the gradual institutionalisation of the field came from the realisation among policy makers (both in government and in business) of the seriousness of the Labour Problem as a potential source of instability for the existing social order. It was around this issue that the early scholarship in Industrial Relations revolved. As Kaufman (1993; 2004) argues, the immediate interest of the scientific community was to address the concerns of the establishment regarding the deprivation of the workers and the socialist challenge, which became ever more serious and real in the aftermath of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Managing discontent at the macro-political level, and controlling workers at the micro-enterprise level (to render them both more productive and subservient to the managerial will) characterised the literature of the time.

⁶ The term is used not in its physical sense, but in its lexicographic sense: atom means something that may not be separated into further components (from the Greek *ά-τομο* – something that cannot be split).

Although this was an important feature of the early field in the US, the situation in the UK drifted towards a different, but not radically diverse, direction. The post-World War II settlement between Capital, Labour and the State, and the problems it generated⁷ shifted the focus from the general nature of the Labour Problem to the concern about the institutions and the rules that governed the system of Industrial Relations. In this context, the work of Flanders and Clegg would shape the British scene for the years to come.

This trend was by no means a British invention. In the US, Commons had argued since the 1930s for the study of the system that produced the social problems related to the Labour question, and had advocated the introduction of voluntary collective bargaining and the creation of “tripartite state-level industrial relations commissions that would be ‘above politics’ and lay down mutually agreeable employment standards in industry” (Kaufman 2004: 86). And Dunlop’s (1958) seminal book would further enhance the interest in the system and its actors, as the Trade Unions, the Employers and their Associations, and the State would be known from then onwards. The focus on institutions and their functions would continue to dominate the field for the years to come (for the influence of the focus on the rules of the system in Industrial Relations scholarship see also Roche (1986)).

However, in the 1990s, the field’s *problématique* would be redefined once more, to include all aspects of the employment relationship (Edwards 1995a; 1995b). The opening-up of the field reflected the rising interest in the micro-processes of employment and a growing literature, which did not immediately fall under the auspices of institutional analysis, emerged – the focus on equality, gender, management practices, or the individual worker are some examples of this genre. Although this kind of research existed even in the pre-employment relationship period (Goodrich’s (1920) work on the Frontier of Control can be considered as such an early example), it was in the 1990s that the field would redefine itself upon these bases.

Although the field’s *problématique* has been altered thrice, the changes did not represent a radical break from the previous traditions. The literature is still concerned with the social inequalities and problems the workers face (albeit not necessarily in the same way as in the early years of the field), and the study of the major actors of the system continues unobtrusively (being also supplemented by the study of the

⁷ I.e. the *scientific* problems, the research opportunities.

supra-national actors that emerged after the two World Wars – namely, the International Trade Union movement and the ILO, and the European Community).

The intellectual links between the problématiques are also evident in the continuity of the theories applied to the study of the various foci. Despite the changes in the research orientation, many theories that were built during one period or another continued to influence and inform Industrial Relations scholarship. It is to their examination that I now turn.

Contrary to the thesis that Industrial Relations lacked a theory, the field is characterised by a multi-theoretical tradition. Kaufman (2004) offers a comprehensive analysis of the various theoretical strands that dominated the literature in both sides of the Atlantic, and a detailed analysis of them is, therefore, unnecessary. However, some important points deserve to be mentioned.

According to Kaufman, the field's early scholarship tried to address the Labour Problem from an economic perspective – although not by following the traditional economic orthodoxy of the day (i.e. neo-classical economics) but by turning to the teachings of institutional economics. At the same time, the slow rise of the Human Relations School started to infiltrate the US Industrial Relations scene, something quite in accord with the quest of the policy makers for harmony and industrial peace. Although the 'traditional' Industrial Relations figures would resent its influence, the uneasy waltz of Human Relations (and, later, of Personnel Management) with the institutionalists would continue until the late 1960s, when the former split from the mainstream Industrial Relations body.

In Britain, as has been already mentioned, the most coherent theoretical approach was advocated by the 'Oxford School' of Industrial Relations, represented by Clegg and Flanders and their version of pluralism. With its focus on the reconciliation of interests between the workers and the employers, and its advocacy of the use of collective bargaining as a means to promote industrial peace and democracy, pluralism would dominate and shape the face of British Industrial Relations for the years to come (Ackers and Wilkinson 2003; Clegg 1990). Undoubtedly, this trend was further assisted by the appearance in the US of Dunlop's *Industrial Relations Systems*, which would become the definitive guide for research and teaching in the field (Adams 1993a).

Pluralism, however, soon faced its critics, who promoted a more radical interpretation of the industrial relations reality and brought back to the picture the issue of power – long forgotten (or purposefully overseen?) by the existing

scholarship. The most prominent figure in the radicalisation of Industrial Relations is Richard Hyman, who in a series of papers and books in the 1970s, severely criticised pluralism and proposed a Marxist interpretation of industrial relations (Hyman 1971; 1972; 1974; 1975; 1978). It must be noted that in the mid-1960s, an apostate from the pluralist camp, Alan Fox, had also converted to a more radical direction (see Fox 1966), but eventually Hyman was the one who introduced a more structured and systematic analysis of the industrial phenomena from a Marxist perspective.

During the 1980s and 1990s the field would benefit from a multitude of theoretical conceptualisations coming from diverse disciplinary backgrounds – one can mention here the influence of labour economics, especially in the quantification of research (Strauss and Whitfield 2008; Whitfield and Strauss 2000), or the short-lived passage of the labour process theory through the field's institutions. Kelly's (1998) introduction of mobilisation theory in the theoretical corpus of Industrial Relations gave a new impetus to the field, whereas Ackers' neo-Pluralism (Ackers 2002) aimed to rejuvenate the main pluralistic teachings. And, of course, one must not forget the rather constant presence of a managerial/HRMist literature in the fora, which partly gave rise to the crisis debate and which now claims a bigger role in the field – but more on this in the next chapter.

The multi-theoretical nature of the field went hand-in-hand with its multi-disciplinary nature. It is not only that the majority of the theories present in Industrial Relations either come from – or are inspired by – other disciplines, such as economics, sociology, politics, law, psychology and management studies, but also that many Industrial Relations researchers come from these disciplines. The common reference of this heterogeneous group of scholars is their interest in the study of the field's problématique⁸.

The multi-disciplinary nature of Industrial Relations brings to the surface an important debate regarding its place in the social sciences – namely, whether Industrial Relations is a field or a discipline. As may be observed, throughout the text 'Industrial Relations' has been referred to as a field, not a discipline. Therefore, before proceeding, it is necessary to justify why this is so.

The place of Industrial Relations in the social scientific world preoccupied the work of many an academic since the early stages of its development. During the first years

⁸ Although Industrial Relations is multi-disciplinary, it is wrong to perceive it as just a loose combination of diverse individuals. All these people share some common characteristics, both theoretically and structurally, and they are tied together by the field's institutions and its problematic. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

of the field's existence, academics who debated the disciplinary bases of Industrial Relations treated the words 'discipline' and 'field' synonymously (see, for example, Tripp (1964) and Bain & Clegg (1974)). Their intention, however, was to justify the independent existence of Industrial Relations within the social scientific domain. To do so they concentrated on two important aspects: on the field's subject-matter and on the theories used to approach the said subject-matter, and tried to show that these were unique, or that industrial relationists should strive to make them unique (see, for example, Laffer (1974)). The subject-matter and theory topics would become fundamental cornerstones in all the discussions for or against the disciplinary nature of Industrial Relations for the years to come. Dabscheck (1983) and Winchester (1983), for example, tied the future of the discipline to its various theories whereas Kochan (1998), although he admitted that Industrial Relations shared its interest in labour and employment issues with other disciplines, also argued for the uniqueness of its approach due to its normative (i.e. theoretical) foundations.

Industrial Relations, however, was not viewed by everyone as a discipline. Some regarded it as a discipline-to-be whereas others claimed that it cannot become a discipline and that it is better to treat it as a field of study. Strauss and Whitfield (1998), for example, although sympathetic to the treatment of Industrial Relations as a discipline claimed that it could not use this title until it had developed a *theory of Industrial Relations*. Behrend (1963) and Adams (1993a) also identified with this view – they both regarded the development of an explicit Industrial Relations theory as the mechanism for the elevation of Industrial Relations to the disciplinary status. The fundamental problem with Industrial Relations was not necessarily the lack of theory but the lack of a theory – a unified construction that would be able to address the Industrial Relations phenomena.

The multi-theoretical and multidisciplinary nature of Industrial Relations was the primary reason for others, like Aronson (1961), Hyman (1989; 1995; 2004) or Muller-Jentsch (2004), to oppose the disciplinary treatment of the field. Hyman, for example, argued that although “we certainly require theory *in* industrial relations, it is neither possible nor desirable to pursue a self-contained theory *of* industrial relations” (2004: 267, emphasis in the original). Lacking, thus, a systematic theory, the subject could never attain the status of a discipline.

Although for the early scholars of the field its multi-disciplinary and multi-theoretical nature undermined its respectability vis-à-vis the rest of the social

sciences, in fact the existence of different theoretical and disciplinary strands yields certain theoretical and structural benefits.

It must be acknowledged at this point that the worries of the early Industrial Relationists were not totally unjustified, since the existence of several different (and sometimes conflicting) orientations may not necessarily help the future of the field, as it is more susceptible to influences that may alter its core nature. However, as will be elaborated in Chapter 8, one may turn the situation on its head, and view it as an opportunity for the field to conduct more qualitative research and to provide better solutions to its problems; for a field with a multitude of approaches is, by definition, more open and flexible, than a closed discipline.

One must also not forget that there is no actual intellectual justification for the various disciplinary segregations. On the contrary, disciplinary demarcations are sociological constructs, and usually depict the politics of the academic community – the call for ‘respectability’ by the early industrial relationists is a case in point (on this see also Hyman 1994). There is no epistemic reason whatsoever to believe that a unitary orientation (as the disciplines are usually *imagined* by the ones outside them) will yield more respectable results from a pluralist field.

The word ‘imagined’ was used advisedly in the previous sentence, for sometimes it is the assumption of the disciplinary supremacy that guides social scientists to call for the reconstruction of their fields on disciplinary foundations. However, even the most axiomatic of the social sciences – Economics – ‘suffers’ from many of the problems that Industrial Relations also face (for example, the lack of a unified approach or agreement on several issues), without experiencing the benefits outlined previously. If, on the other hand, the discussion about the benefits of the discipline versus the field is based on a comparison with the natural sciences, one must be very careful how one makes this contrast.

The situation in the natural sciences differs radically from the social sciences, primarily because of the historical and political nature of the latter’s object and subject (see the discussion in the previous chapter). Although there are disciplines in the natural sciences, and different theories in every discipline, all of them are, in a certain extent, in accord regarding their basic assumptions about the nature of reality. Einstein’s theory of relativity builds upon the Newtonian paradigm – it does not totally dismiss it (as is the case with Keynesian and classical economics, for instance). Every physicist will use the basic Newtonian principles when studying problems in mechanics, or electromagnetism. Similarly, a dialogue exists (or can be established) between, say, chemists and physicists, regarding the nature of the micro cosmos. No

chemist will disagree with a physicist about the applicability of quantum mechanics in the study of the molecule and the atom.

In the social sciences, however, the situation is quite different. For the various social scientific disciplines usually differ in their assumptions about the nature of their object – and although some of them share common principles (as is the case between sociology and anthropology, for instance), a complete understanding between social scientists proves to be impossible if it is confined within the limits of their disciplines. Thus, although some political scientists accept the rational agent model as a true approximation to reality, the majority of the social scientists would have serious disagreements with their economics colleagues about the nature of the self. And so on and so forth, for many other cases.

The multi-disciplinary nature of a field, on the other hand, allows for the better study of a situation, since scientists from various disciplines try to establish a dialogue based on some common problem, *with the view of possibly learning* from each other. Undoubtedly, a sociologist can learn a lot from an economist and vice versa, but if their respective disciplines are closed to external influences this communication is crucially undermined, and eventually depends on *ad hoc* circumstances and the good will of the parties. The existence of fora, however, which allow the emergence of an intellectual pluralism, encourages the creation of bonds between distinct communities. “A proper understanding of the employment relationship thus needs to be multi-disciplinary”, as Edwards (1995b: 5) rightly argued.

It is with the above beliefs in mind that the issue of crisis in Industrial Relations, and the influence of the New Industrial Relations (NIR) theory on the field, will be examined. The rest of the Thesis will be devoted to the evaluation of the NIR theory and to the examination of the field’s current state by taking into consideration its theoretical and institutional character, as previously described. Yet attempts to write the intellectual and institutional history of Industrial Relations exist in the literature since the 1990s. It is, thus, necessary to examine in more detail this literature, as there are considerable conceptual and methodological differences from the approach that will be followed in the next chapters.

Notes on the Field’s Historiography

Although some research on the social and intellectual history of the field had been conducted before the 1990s (see, for example, Berridge and Goodman 1988; Clegg 1990; Gennard 1986), it was Kaufman’s work that initiated the interest in the more

systematic study of the field's past (Kaufman 1993; 2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2005). Despite the criticism that he has received regarding his historiography (Kelly 1999), or the interpretation of the facts and the reading of the historical reality (Ackers 2006), the significance of his work cannot be contested.

During the 1990s and 2000s several other authors published on the field's history (without this implying that they were influenced, in any way, by Kaufman's work). Hyman's (1995; 2004) work on the development of the field in Europe is of considerable importance in this respect. More recently, Frege (2001; 2003; 2005; 2007) has also tried to shed some light on the disciplinary and intellectual formation of Industrial Relations in Europe (especially in Britain and Germany), as did Almond (2004) with his study of France.

As has been already mentioned, the majority of these authors traced the institutional development of the field to the different socio-political circumstances that prevailed in the countries of origin, at the time of the field's genesis. Thus, the labour problem, and the interest for its solution, led to the development of the field in the US (Kaufman 1993), whereas the post-World War II settlement between Labour, Capital and the State, with the emergence of the welfare state and the support to the institution of collective bargaining, raised a new series of policy concerns that supported the proper institutionalisation of Industrial Relations in Britain. The logic of the argument is that once a social situation has been identified as an important enough social problem to mobilise the interest of policy makers and of social scientists, and a country has the resources to study it adequately, then a field will start to emerge (it is not necessary that it will reach a proper level of development but, nevertheless, the first steps towards this direction will be made).

Although this argument may explain the situation in countries where the field managed to develop, it does not adequately account for the non-development of the field in other countries that might have faced the same conditions – as Hyman has argued time and again, the field of Industrial Relations is predominantly an Anglo-Saxon invention (Hyman 2004). Frege tried to address this theoretical gap by drawing upon the different European state traditions – which might have influenced the formation of the field. In my opinion, all these studies could have benefited from a more thorough examination of the internal dynamics of the newly established scientific communities and the links of their 'leaders' with the establishment, instead of solely focusing on the role of the external environment. In general, however, their sociological direction is on the right tracks. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the attempts to explain the field's *intellectual* development.

Frege has been in the forefront of this research. Her analysis regarding the intellectual development of the field starts from the same bases as the institutional one – i.e. from the recognition that different countries face diverse socio-political conditions, which give rise to specific policy concerns and research issues. However, she brings into the picture a further assumption, namely that different countries have diverse research traditions. The argument then claims that the combination of the above accounts for the emergence of different intellectual trends in different countries – Germans favour the hermeneutic approach due to their national research tradition, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxons who lean towards empiricism.

The argument draws upon the social constructivist tradition of theory development (see Chapter 1), since it regards the development of theory as a result of some sociological factors, quite distinct from the theory's intellectual value. Although social factors may be responsible for the original emergence of a theory, to claim that its eventual success in the field depends on these factors is far fetched. Apart from the general epistemic problems that the sociological interpretation encounters (see Chapter 1), Frege's thesis also faces some important conceptual problems that undermine its explanatory validity.

The cornerstone of the argument rests on the term 'research tradition'. By this, one may refer to two different things: the way research is conducted (i.e. the methodology), or the way the world is perceived (i.e. the epistemology). Although there is some research regarding the differences in, and the development of, methodology in different countries (see, for instance, Whitfield and Strauss 1998; 2000), Frege tries to address the wider epistemological perspective as well. Thus, she refers to an "Anglo-Saxon research style" (2005: 181) and argues that a difference between the German and the Anglo-Saxon scholarship is that the Germans "are more inclined to place their research into wider theoretical framework than their US counterparts" (Frege 2002: 873), implying that the Anglo-Saxon scholarship lacks a substantial theoretical basis (replicating, that way, the 'lack-of-theory' thesis discussed earlier). For Frege, these conceptual differences have their roots in each country's national intellectual traditions.

However, to argue that way is misleading, since the use of the noun 'national' begs, in a sense, the question. What is 'national' ultimately? When Frege, for instance, argues that the Germans' interest in theory has its roots in the (German) hermeneutical tradition or that the Anglo-Saxon concern with quantification emanates from (British) empiricism, she accepts in an *a priori* manner the dominance of one tradition that appeared in a country in a specific historical moment, over all the others

that preceded it and followed it. If one wants to account for theory development, however, merely identifying the theory's intellectual skeleton is not enough. For one must consider why, from the vast pool of theoretical developments these specific ones were eventually followed.

Even if this issue is addressed, however, the characterisation of a tradition as 'national' remains problematic. How is one to understand this word? The only legitimate way to understand it is to equate it with 'dominant'. Obviously, throughout history, several ideas have emerged in every geographical context – however not all of them were successful, in the sense of influencing the intellectual formation of theories. Only those that dominated managed to achieve this. Even so, the discussion about dominance is, in my opinion, equally problematic for it also begs the question. For the purpose of the argument, however, I will accept the above description as true, only to give meaning to a rather meaningless term. Within this context then, one must, firstly, actually prove that hermeneutics or empiricism, are indeed 'national', or dominant, traditions in one country and, secondly, enquire why they influenced the intellectual formation of Industrial Relations.

Trying to achieve the first task, however, leads to some interesting problems. The geographical justification, which recognises a theory as national based on the place it was born, is not adequate, exactly because the majority of the intellectual traditions are usually shared between countries. This is even more so in the modern era, with the internationalisation of the scientific community and the development of better communication between scientists. The almost unconstrained movement of scientists across borders makes the use of the term 'national research tradition' even more difficult. If we accept that a research tradition is identified with its members – the scientists, or the philosophers, who develop the ideas that constitute the 'tradition' – then before using the above term one must be able to clearly answer a fundamental question: who, in the final analysis, belongs in a 'national research tradition'?

Would Wittgenstein and his work, for instance, be regarded as part of the British or the Austrian tradition? Although he was born and educated in Vienna, his major work was conducted in Cambridge. To which tradition did Marx belong to? A young Hegelian in Trier, he developed his later work in the British Museum, London. An answer to the above questions depends, of course, on the categorisation principles one uses: is a tradition 'national' if it was born or developed in a specific country, or is the nationality of the tradition identified with the nationality of its creator (if it is meaningful to talk of a creator). No matter which principle is chosen, both lead to practical problems. Marxism, for example, has spread all over Europe; France,

Germany, Britain, Italy, Russia, to name but a few, were countries where substantial Marxist literature was developed – is Marxism a ‘national research tradition’ for any of these countries?⁹ Frege seems to regard the nationality of the authors as a good classificatory principle (Frege 2001) but does not provide any plausible theoretical justification for this. Until such a justification is developed, the nationality argument cannot be used as an explanatory variable.

Even if such a theory emerged, however, Frege’s rationale remains problematic at a deeper philosophical level, since a closer examination of the thesis reveals an essential problem with its logic: as the argument is structured, the conclusion cannot be justified by the premises, no matter their truth value. An example will demonstrate the fallacy of the argument: assume that a country has strong and adversarial trade unions; also assume that the ‘national research tradition’ of the country is empiricism. Does this mean that the combination of those two will give rise to Pluralism? And if not, how can one explain the emergence of Pluralism (if it has indeed emerged)? Theoretically, the initial conditions (research problem and research tradition) can give rise to numerous different theories. This is a consequence of the underdetermination thesis described in the previous chapter (Laudan 1990: 48). It is, thus, theoretically possible for other theories to have emerged from these initial conditions; the fact they did not does not have to do with the research tradition or the social problems this country faced but, firstly, with pluralism’s intellectual value and, secondly, with the internal functioning of the community that gave rise to the theory.

Conclusion

Although it is generally believed that the early roots of the field of Industrial Relations can be traced back in the late 19th century, one can meaningfully talk about a ‘field’ from the time its first institutions appeared – initially in the US of the 1920s and then in the UK of the 1950s. It was around that time that a community began to be formed around some common problématique – the Labour Problem and its consequences, or the system of industrial relations, its institutions and the rules that govern it – that eventually developed into a coherent body of researchers, with their own professional associations, journals and academic departments.

⁹ The development of different forms of Marxism in the above (and other) countries might be also ascribed to the different linguistic structures of each country. Indeed, the expression of abstract ideas may be easier under the French or German syntactic structures, than in English.

The common theme that characterised the intellectual endeavours of all the people who passed through the field, at one point or another, was their concern with the general topic of work and employment. And whether it was the Labour Problem or the employment relationship, or whether the outcome of the research would call for an “abolition of ‘industrial relations’ as it exists today through working-class struggle” (Hyman 1975: x), or would serve the employers, one could argue that the balance between applied and purely academic research was equally distributed. Therefore, in contrast to other social scientific fields, and contrary to its early legacy, Industrial Relations managed to become a field that could generate research useful for any party in the employment relationship; and, at the same time, to form and retain an identity that aimed to achieve something beyond and above the narrow interests of its possible ‘clients’ – namely, to explain and understand the phenomenon ‘labour’. The same, however, cannot be said for another field, which came to be regarded as a possible menace to the Industrial Relations edifice: Human Resource Management.

Chapter 3

Anglo-Saxon Industrial Relations and the Emergence of the New Industrial Relations Theory

Intellectual pessimism seems to characterise the field of Industrial Relations since its early steps. As was discussed in the Introduction, one can discern two generations of scholars who have claimed that the field faces a crisis in order to argue for, or to promote, some kind of theoretical changes in the field. In the 1950s and 1960s the major request was the development of a theory of Industrial Relations as it was thought that without such a theory the field would not be able to flourish. In the 1980s onwards, however, the crisis discourse changed. Instead of asking for a theory of Industrial Relations, the new generation of crisis scholars called for the development of better theories in Industrial Relations; for many, the 'solution' was a turn towards the HRM and the management literature, which was deemed necessary for the field to survive in the new social realities with which it was faced. The latter approach gave rise to the 'New Industrial Relations' (NIR) Theory, which has been characterised by some as a 'new paradigm' (see the Introduction).

Although this trend had predominantly US roots, it soon crossed the Atlantic and started influencing the British Industrial Relations scene; contrary to their American colleagues, however, many British academics were alarmed by the implications of this new trend. Indeed, whenever they explicitly discussed it, most of them did not necessarily support its incorporation in the field (despite the fact that many NIR-related papers appeared in the various British fora of knowledge production – see Chapter 5), and considered its advance as potentially problematic for the field.

The NIR theory, therefore, is linked to the issue of the field's crisis in two different ways: in the first place, the predominantly American literature considers it as the solution to the intellectual stagnation of the field, whereas in Britain many regard it as the cause of the field's current critical condition. Faced with these two contradictory

approaches, it becomes imperative to understand how they are, in reality, linked to the fate of the field – is NIR theory a menace or a saviour? In this context, it is important to repeat that although almost everybody regards the field as facing a crisis, no one has actually proven that such a crisis exists (or has discussed in detail its nature). For the time being, this important element will not be further pursued – its discussion will have to wait until Chapter 7. However, it is necessary to examine in detail the nature of the NIR theory, since it will help us to better understand and evaluate its place in the wider intellectual corpus of Industrial Relations.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the NIR theory and its development in Industrial Relations, and to discuss in more detail the two contradictory theses regarding its role in the field. In section one, the basic characteristics of the NIR theory will be presented, whereas section two will discuss its intellectual development. Section three will then examine the two theses about the position of NIR in Industrial Relations. Finally, in the concluding section, the various questions that emerge out of this discussion will be considered, and will act as guidelines for the succeeding chapters.

The Nature of the New Industrial Relations Theory

Although the expression ‘new industrial relations’ can be traced back to the mid-1970s, it did not always have the same meaning as its modern version. For instance, when Hill (1976), Winchester (1983), or Rojek (1984), talked about the emergence of the ‘new industrial relations’ they referred to the Marxist critique of the orthodox pluralist industrial relations theory, which was conducted primarily by Hyman. The phrase acquired its modern meaning in the mid-1980s, but it was not always evident whether it referred to the theory or the praxis of industrial relations. Thus, Kochan and Piore (1984) introduced the term to describe a set of practices they observed in the employment environment, such as employee involvement or direct participation, or the inclusion and consideration of industrial relations in the business strategy. In a similar vein, Wood (1986) used the phrase to describe the changes that had taken place in the wider society, such as “the decline in union membership, the declining role of collective bargaining, the conscious attempt to undermine Trade Unions, the increasing importance of ‘high tech’ industries and Greenfield sites, the increasing need for a ‘responsible flexible’ worker”, and in the workplace, through the implementation of HRM policies such as “gain-saving schemes, profit-sharing and fragmented bargaining”, and the “increasing use of co-operative strategies” (Wood 1986: 23). Wood argued that the latter techniques aimed to replace the traditional industrial relations institutions – especially trade unions and collective bargaining.

Likewise, when Roche (2000) proclaimed 'the end of new industrial relations', he was referring to the aforementioned employment strategies and to the extent of their use in the workplace.

During the late 1980s – early 1990s, however, the phrase 'new industrial relations' was used to describe a new theoretical approach, or a new ideology, for the handling of industrial relations problems (both practical and scientific). Thus, London (1989-90) argued for the development of a 'new cooperative ideology' (i.e. the 'new industrial relations'), which denied the existence of class conflict and of antagonistic institutional interests. This ideology emerged as a response to the dissatisfaction that "segments of the business community and industrial relations analysts had ... with [the] industrial pluralist ideology, and ... sought in recent years to supplant this older ideology with the new paradigm of workplace cooperation" (London 1989-90: 484). From then onwards, apart from its function as a phrase to describe some phenomena of the external world, the term also acquired an epistemological nature, since it was portrayed as a theoretical alternative to an already existing approach.

In a nutshell, the 'new industrial relations' theory made co-operation, performance, mutual gains, and the silent marginalisation of traditional industrial relations institutions, its major research foci. To study these issues, it applied a micro-perspective influenced primarily by the teachings of psychology and HRM, as will be shortly discussed. The NIR theory, therefore, does not only promote a new research orientation, but brings with it a new theoretical approach to the study of the above phenomena. Around the 1990s, the discussions about this specific approach became much more vociferous in the literature, compared to the earlier periods. Dunn (1990), for example, talked of the NIR as a 'new paradigm' in Industrial Relations, and so did Kochan (1996: 260), who argued that "a new paradigm emerges" that combined both the micro- (i.e. HRM-oriented) and the macro- (i.e. political and sociological) perspective in the study of the Industrial Relations phenomena (see also p. 77 ff.). Furthermore, in 2000, Godard and Delaney (2000) argued that a new paradigm was emerging in the US Industrial Relations, according to which "new work and human resource management (HRM) practices have replaced trade unions and collective bargaining as the core innovative force in IR" (Godard and Delaney 2000: 482). In this context, HRM did not only refer to the HRM *practice* but to its theoretical body as well. Apart from the role it prescribed to HRM, a fundamental characteristic of the 'new paradigm' was the belief that management had become too important an influence in industrial relations not to be granted a more central focus in the literature.

It must be noted that the ideas supported by the NIR theory (i.e. the focus on the micro-level and the use of the psychological-related framework) had already existed in the Industrial Relations literature in one way or another. The importance of the NIR theory, therefore, did not rest that much on the novelty of its arguments, but on its use as a rhetorical device to promote these arguments. The use of the word 'new' (*new industrial relations* or *new paradigm*) was supposed to act as a mental trigger for its acceptance by the wider Industrial Relations community. Before, however, discussing the actual effects this had on the community, it is necessary to examine the intellectual development of the NIR theory and its intellectual links to the field of Industrial Relations.

The Intellectual Development of the New Industrial Relations Theory

Although the interest in the proper management of labour has its roots in the early 20th century (George (1968); see also Webb (1971) for an early treatise on management), the actual foundations for the development of modern HRM would be laid in the inter-war years, with the development of the behavioural approach to management. It was the emergence of the Human Relations School in the 1930s, through the work of Mayo and his colleagues at the Hawthorne plant of General Electrics which placed greater emphasis on the social and psychological processes in the workplace (Wren 1979). The introduction of notions such as groups and motivation, which would be further developed by later organisational psychologists such as Maslow, Herzberg, or Vroom, partly replaced the mechanistic focus of Taylorism by a psychological interpretation of the labour process (Whyte 1987).

In the years to come, the general rationale of the Human Relations School would be slowly incorporated into the Personnel Management function, traditionally concerned with the issues of employee selection, training, or remuneration. The actual breakthrough, however, in the use of psychology by management would come with the transformation of Personnel Management into Human Resources Management.

Under HRM the employees acquire a new identity in the workplace; they are not viewed any longer as costs that need to be minimised, but rather as resources, or assets, that can be developed and can be integrated in the enterprise's value chain (Kaufman 2001). Although Kaufman (2001: 340) traces the roots of the phrase 'human resource' in the work of Commons, to argue that he was one of the first initiators of this approach would be an anachronism. HRM is the last link in a long tradition of changes in managerial thought, and in its current form can be traced to

the early 1980s (Legge 1995). The core ideology of HRM promoted a newly-formulated American Dream as the new social utopia (Guest 1990; Martinez Lucio and Simpson 1992), in accord with the socio-economic climate of the early 1980s (the rise of neo-liberalism in the Anglo-Saxon world, and the baby-boomers generation, certainly helped promote the individualistic message of HRM).

Despite its promises for personal development and the provision of better working conditions to the employees, HRM is, first and foremost, a managerial technique with the ultimate aim to serve the shareholders' interests (Bacon 2003). Its main concern is to increase employee performance and commitment, leading to the development of various practices known as High-Commitment Management, and to promote flexibility at all levels – in wages, working hours, or job descriptions (Delaney and Godard 2001; Guest 1987; 1990).

However, as Ackers and Wilkinson (2003: 17) have rightly argued, “it is possible ... to see efficiency and cooperation as worthwhile issues to explore without having a managerial intellectual agenda; to study management without studying for management”, and it is at this point where the first link between HRM and Industrial Relations starts to develop. Indeed, the kind of research described by Ackers and Wilkinson characterised many of the writings of the early Industrial Relations scholars – such as Flanders, for instance – who examined the factory and the management from a non-managerial perspective (Flanders 1960; 1964). Moreover, the sociology of work and the sociology of organisations continue to produce research that satisfies the above conditions. Efficiency, productivity and cooperation are not necessarily outside the sociological or the Industrial Relations canon; the fundamental problem is that once they are studied within the HRM context, they are automatically ascribed a managerial orientation.

For to achieve its aims, HRM tries to integrate the employees in the organisational structure, and to promote the enterprise as the “locus of industrial relations activity” (Martinez Lucio and Simpson 1992: 175). Indeed, the ‘mutual gains’ ideology of HRM aims to replace “solidarity with other workers and citizens (the culture of the welfare state) ... by “loyalty” and “collaboration” with the firm” (*ibid.* 174). As an advanced version of Personnel Management, HRM serves by definition the managerial concern for the control of the employee. As Lewin (1991: 87) has said, in his otherwise apologetic stance towards HRM:

“the fundamental purpose of HRM ... is not to protect employee rights. There is, of course, a substantial literature which argues that personnel departments arose and exist ... to protect employee rights in business organisations. Yet

while such an argument may be historically valid ... HRM [is primarily conceptualised as] a positive contributor to business performance”.

A similar argument was made by Kelly and Kelly (1991: 26), who argued that HRM does not only aim to change behaviour but to alter the underlying attitudes of the workers towards the company – the ‘them’ and ‘us’ class struggle discourse is replaced by a ‘them’ and ‘us’ attitude towards competitors.

This practical orientation of HRM defines its theoretical nature as well. Indeed, the fact that HRM is primarily a managerial technique is depicted by the theoretical assumption of a *unity of interests between Capital and Labour* and the *marginalisation of conflict*¹. However, this is not a reading of the empirical reality; on the contrary, it is an *a priori* conceptualisation that guides the direction of HRM research and policy. However, as Geare *et al.* (2006: 1192) notice, the assumption of unitarism:

“reveals a paradox in HRM writings. This is because HRM appears both to believe that unitarism already exists and yet at the same time, to see itself as the means to achieving unitarism, with the primary goal of HRM being the achievement of empirical unitarism”.

Unitarism, therefore, acquires an ideological character: it is, in a sense, a target that HRM must reach and, at the same time, a guiding theoretical and policy principle.

To achieve unitarism, HRM focuses on a behavioural/psychological interpretation of the workplace. Although the focus on psychology is not problematic *per se*, it is the context in which, and the way it is, applied that makes its theoretical orientation one-sided. Since the primary target of HRM is to address specific problems in the workplace, which are defined as such by the management, the questions the HRM theory will ask, and the way its theoretical tools will be implemented, are by definition managerially-laden. In other words, the theoretical direction of HRM is defined primarily by the practical needs of its subjects, and not vice versa. HRM, thus, has not managed to surpass the boundaries of its ‘applied’ nature, and to explain reality without the need to tie its existence to the service of management. It is this characteristic that has led Legge (1995) to argue that HRM is, in fact, a ‘rhetoric’ that aims to serve the managerial needs. Indeed, the ‘right to manage’ is in the forefront of the HRM agenda, together with the attempt to marginalise the influence of the

¹ Since capital and labour share common interests, the appearance of conflict is an abnormality caused by inefficient management and inadequate communication. The immediate corollary of this assumption is that the management can, through proper mechanisms, resolve the conflict without the need for external assistance – such as trade unions or governments.

trade unions in the workplace through such practices as individualised payment schemes, quality of life initiatives, direct participation, or personal development schemes.

Although the HRM research and teaching has its own scientific fora of development, part of the organisational behaviour (OB), and later on, HRM rationale has existed in the Industrial Relations literature since its early years. As mentioned already, Ackers and Wilkinson (2003: 17) identify the link between Industrial Relations and HRM; once the principle that management is to be studied as part of Industrial Relations is accepted, it is rather difficult to completely control the direction of research. Thus, although a strictly managerial piece may be more difficult to be published in an Industrial Relations journal, a partially managerial piece may easily find its way to the pages of a journal (as is well known, publications tend to adapt to the environment in which they will appear). As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, the Industrial Relations literature (both in the US and in the UK) always published research that conformed to the epistemic values of OB and HRM – and it was this fact that helped the development of the NIR discourse.

For example, as early as 1969, Williams and Guest (1969) had advocated a psychological interpretation of conflicts in the workplace, echoing the approach that HRM would follow in later years. Guest was one of the prime supporters for the development of an HRM perspective *in* Industrial Relations. Although he did not publish exclusively in Industrial Relations journals, he promoted the psychological interpretation of the employment relationship (Guest 1987; 2004), and when he presented his work in mainstream Industrial Relations fora, the focus was predominately HRMist (Guest *et al.* 2008; Guest and Conway 1999; Guest 1991; Guest *et al.* 2003; Guest and Peccei 1994). In a similar vein, Heller (1993) and Purcell (1993) argued for the inclusion of the behavioural approach that characterised HRM in Industrial Relations. Kochan (1993) also promoted the idea that HRM – both as a practice and a theory – could address various industrial relations problems, although it was not sufficient by itself (see also Kochan 1996). Others, such as Lewin (1991), urged Industrial Relations academics to contribute as soon as possible to the HRM literature (see also Bigoness 1991).

Although the HRM approach was a fundamental influence for the development of the 'new industrial relations' theory, it was not the only one. The emergence, in the mid-1980s, of a theoretical position in the Industrial Relations literature, known as Strategic Choice Theory (SCT), would also play a central role in the theoretical advancement of the 'new paradigm'.

The SCT appeared as a response to the theoretical pressures that the field of Industrial Relations was facing during the 1980s. According to the initiators of the theory (Kochan, McKersie and Cappelli 1984), the Dunlopian model was not suitable to address the various political, social and economic changes in US industrial relations, such as the development of new work practices, of alternative forms of work organisation, of HRM, and of the declining influence of the Trade Unions and the state in industrial relations. As a result, the above authors argued, Industrial Relations was in danger of becoming marginalised both in the scientific and the policy world; to avoid this possibility, the SCT proposed a change of direction that would lift the field out of its stagnation.

Kochan and his colleagues argued that since management appeared to be the principal actor behind the changes that were observed in the workplace, Industrial Relations scholars should turn their attention to its study, and more specifically, to the study of its strategies and their influence on industrial relations. As they argued, the identification of “the parties’ strategic choices will help to complete the systems framework and to explain many of the anomalies noted earlier” (Kochan *et al.* 1984: 22). Strategic choices were formulated at three different levels within the enterprise: at the micro-level, by the immediate supervisors and the rank-and-file, at the meso-level, by the middle management, and at the macro-level, by the higher executives. To have a complete picture of the strategic decision making and of its influence in industrial relations, it was fundamental to study all three levels.

The call to the Industrial Relations community to study management practices in more detail had already been made in 1983 by Purcell, who had claimed that “we know little about the process of management and the way in which management initiatives are formulated and carried through” (Purcell 1983: 2), and proposed a further examination of “the management styles particularly in the behavioural aspects of co-operation or conflict, trust or distrust” (*ibid.* 11-12). Kochan and his colleagues acknowledged the fact, but argued that Purcell’s focus was primarily on the bargaining level, while they advocated an examination of all the three levels mentioned previously (Kochan *et al.* 1984: 23-4).

The innovation of Kochan and his colleagues did not rest on their call to turn the community’s attention to the study of management, but on the theoretical approach they promulgated (since, as already mentioned, the study of management practices and their influence on the workplace was already the focus of early industrial relations research). That literature, however, did not follow the specific epistemological and methodological focus that Kochan and his collaborators advocated – i.e. the use of

behavioural theory and of the tools of business administration and negotiation analysis.

The intellectual content of the SCT was influenced by a classic 1965 collective bargaining text, *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations*, (Walton and McKersie 1965), which approached the study of negotiations from a behavioural/organisation studies perspective. As Kochan had argued (1992: 292), this book constituted a major influence on his work, and one can clearly trace this in his writings (see, for example, Kochan 1980b; 1980c). Even before the publication of the SCT, Kochan had called for further attention to be paid on the study of the organisation's behaviour, to explain changes at the macro-level (Kochan 1980a). The behavioural focus also became an integral part of the SCT: Kochan *et al.* (1985), advocated the introduction of a behavioural science perspective to the study of the Industrial Relations phenomena and promoted a psychologism, similar to the one used by management studies and Organisational Behaviour (on this issue see also Godard 1997). The justification for their decision rested on their belief that industrial relations theory and practice would benefit from this intellectual turn:

“Many IR scholars have traditionally assumed that the time-tested institutions and practices associated with collective bargaining are the most effective means of managing *the* diverse interests that exist in employment relationships. This has led to substantial resistance among some researchers, and some practitioners, to the introduction of behavioural science concepts and strategies for reforming collective bargaining in workplaces. Yet, managers are using an increasing amount of behavioural science in both union and non-union workplaces. Thus, industrial relations researchers and practitioners need to examine how these concepts and strategies affect and interact with existing institutions used to govern employment relationships” (Kochan, McKersie and Katz 1985: 523-524).

Apart from the promises for the theoretical rejuvenation of Industrial Relations, the SCT also promoted several policy recommendations. For instance, Kochan and Piore (1984) argued for an integration of industrial relations to the wider business strategies, and for the advancement of a mutual gains ideology through, primarily, the use of direct participation and HRM policies (Kochan 1993). The theoretical and applied links between HRM and SCT are not only evident in the policies they encompass. Both focus on a behavioural interpretation of the employment relationship where the management is the prime strategic actor, and the role of external institutions – such as trade unions or the government – in managing industrial relations is either unnecessary or peripheral. Yet contrary to the HRM, the SCT did not advocate anti- or non-unionism (see, for example, Kochan, Katz and McKersie 1991: 112). The policy proposals of the SCT (mutual gains, direct

participation etc.), are in accord with the liberal ideology of the American middle-classes that strive for a conflict-*less* industrial relations environment where the right to manage is not contested. The hope for this reality is not only manifested in policy recommendations but also in the way the external world is perceived, something evident in the NIR theory as well (see also Chapter 4).

The Place of the New Industrial Relations Theory in the Field of Industrial Relations

The unitarist perspective inherent in the NIR theory does not necessarily constitute a challenge for the field; indeed, one can view the NIR programme as just another perspective among the many that characterise the field. How exactly is it connected to the issue of crisis then? As already mentioned, crisis enters the discussion in two different ways. For some, the ideas and directions of the NIR theory are perceived as a danger to the field, since they constitute a radical break from the established intellectual edifice; others, however, claim that the field is already facing a crisis and that the incorporation, and further promotion, of the NIR theory is necessary to overcome this situation.

The proponents of the first interpretation come, predominantly, from the UK. As has been already mentioned in the Introduction, the discussions about the future of the field in Britain have concentrated on the influence that the development of HRM theory has both for the intellectual and the institutional future of the field. In an early paper about the emergence of the 'new paradigm' in Industrial Relations, Dunn (1990) argued that the language used by the 'new industrial relations paradigm', and its promises to practitioners and students, conveyed the optimistic message of co-operation and personal advancement, which was more easily accepted by the new generation of managers than the language of 'trench war' of the 'old industrial relations'. In an era of opportunism and rising individualism, the 'new industrial relations' sounded more attractive than the jargon of conflict and struggle. Dunn's analysis must not be read as supportive of the NIR theory; on the contrary, his text sounds a concern about the future of the traditional Industrial Relations scholarship, and can be seen as an early warning of the consequences that the 'new paradigm' may have for the field. Although his thesis was criticised by Keenoy (1991), who argued that Dunn had misperceived the place and importance of the 'new industrial relations paradigm' in the UK Industrial Relations literature, he did not dismiss it altogether. Indeed, as was discussed in the previous section, HRM-like research was present in the field since its early days. However, and this is important, Dunn's paper is the first concise attempt to raise awareness about the influence of the NIR theory

on the field. No matter if elements of this kind of research could be found in the literature, it is the recognition that they may have negative effects for the established orthodoxy that makes Dunn's position interesting. Thus, although the reality may not necessarily conform to his interpretation (as Keenoy argued), it is the belief in the existence of such a reality that concerns us here. In the course of the 1990s and the early 2000s, the optimism of HRM/NIR would find its way in the structure of the universities and lead to important changes in the institutional structure of British Industrial Relations (see Chapter 9), causing the BUIRA to issue a statement about the future of the field (see the Introduction).

At the opposite end of the spectrum from the above interpretation rests the US version about the role of the NIR theory in the field. As was mentioned in the previous section, Kochan had already promoted the need for a turn to the managerial since the mid-1980s. Contrary to the British, however, the Americans used the crisis argument as a lever for the promotion of the NIR theory. Kochan, for instance, was one of the first to officially express this sentiment, when he claimed that the field faces "a profound crisis", and that there is a need to change to sustain and further develop it (Kochan 1996: 247). Yet the actual breakthrough in this strand of the literature came with the work of Bruce Kaufman who, apart from building upon the crisis argument, also introduced a historical element to the discussion, which would prove as important for the justification of his position as the crisis discourse. Indeed, by bringing history in the picture the NIR thesis acquires a historicity, making it, thus, easier for the community to accept it as a possible alternative to the existing theoretical approaches.

Since 1993, when he published the history of the development of Industrial Relations in the US (Kaufman 1993), Kaufman had argued that personnel management and human relations were part of the initial industrial relations canon. However, it was in the 2000s that he explicitly linked together the issues of crisis, history and the incorporation of HRM in Industrial Relations (Kaufman 2007a; 2007b; 2008a; 2008b). His major starting point was the 'discovery' of the 'Core Principle of Industrial Relations', which held that labour is not a commodity but has a human face; based on this premise, the policy aim of Industrial Relations was to solve the 'labour problems' that afflicted the capitalist society through the advancement of a co-operative climate between the workers and the employers. To create this climate, Industrial Relations used "a series of institutional reforms meant to humanize, stabilize, professionalize, democratize and balance the employment system" (2007a: 25), by recognising that "the firm, through management fiat and HRM policy (possibly

modified by government regulation and/or union negotiation) closes the terms of the wage/employment bargain" (*ibid.* 10).

Based on this historical reconstruction, he then claimed (Kaufman 2008b) that Industrial Relations was characterised in its early years by a paradigm, which he called the 'Old Industrial Relations (OIR) paradigm', that was "centred on the employment relationship and included both union and non-union sectors and personnel/human resource management and labour-management relations" (*ibid.* 314). This paradigm was broader in its conception than the 'Modern Industrial Relations (MIR) paradigm', which only focused "on the union sector and associated topics, such as collective bargaining, labour-management relations and national labour policy" (*ibid.* 315).

Kaufman then went on to combine very skilfully the crisis argument with the historical discussion. As he claimed, the narrower focus of the MIR paradigm is responsible for the crisis the field faces at the moment. Thus, the logical conclusion is to broaden the field's intellectual horizons by including in its theoretical corpus the HRM teachings. However, this should not alarm us, since it is just a return to the OIR paradigm. In a sense, for Kaufman, the incorporation of the HRM/NIR teachings in the corpus of Industrial Relations is not only a sound scientific decision, but a historical inevitability as well².

To recapitulate, the NIR theory is being treated in two different ways in the Industrial Relations literature: one strand, which draws its supporters primarily from Britain, regards the NIR framework as responsible for the challenges the field faces, and seems sceptical of the theoretical breakthroughs the theory promises; the other, however, views the NIR theory as an important theoretical alternative, which must be incorporated in the field to save it from its current demise. The only common point between these strands is the crisis discourse – for the former the NIR theory causes the crisis, whereas for the latter it is the only remedy.

Before examining in detail their empirical and theoretical content, however, it is necessary to clarify two important points regarding the nature of the above theses. Firstly, it must be stressed that both the above positions are not based on an empirical reading of reality but are, rather, beliefs held by their proponents. It is a belief that the field faces a crisis – but not certain knowledge (i.e. *a justified true*

² It is interesting to note that Kaufman never uses the word 'new' in his argument. In that respect, he diverges from the course that the other proponents of the NIR theory follow; his main target is to not to portray the NIR as something new, as something totally innovative, but to prove its historical ties with Industrial Relations.

belief); it is also a belief that the NIR theory is responsible for the current status of the field. However, the statement that the turn to HRM will save the field is not a belief but rather an opinion, which is attempted to be justified on scientific grounds.

Secondly, it is imperative to understand what both positions mean by ‘paradigm’, for it is not always evident how the term is used. In the context it is used, one may interpret the term in three different ways: one way would be to treat it in the same sense as in the philosophy of science literature – i.e. as signifying the existence of a dominant theoretical approach (see Chapter 1). Under this light, the claim that the NIR theory is a ‘new paradigm’ would imply that it has a dominant position in the Industrial Relations literature and that it is the approach followed by the substantial majority of the scientific community; for instance, Kaufman’s treatment of the word is close to this interpretation (although it is rather problematic – see Chapter 4). The second interpretation, which is less strict than the above, would be to regard the NIR theory not as the dominant approach, but as one of the important theoretical strands in the field, which has managed to gain some prominence during the last years. Godard and Delaney, for example, follow this route when they claim that:

“While it may be premature to conclude that this new paradigm constitutes a *fundamental shift* in the field of IR away from its postwar focus on labor institutions, there can be little doubt that the paradigm represents a challenge to this focus” (2000: 483, my emphasis).

A third interpretation, which is neither theoretically nor empirically interesting, is to treat the term as equivalent to the term ‘theory’. However this interpretation is rather unlikely, for the term ‘paradigm’ brings with it certain semantic connotations that place it to a higher cognitive scale than the term ‘theory’. Indeed, to simply say that the NIR theory is just a new theory is quite different from saying that the NIR theory is a new paradigm. Any idea can be a theory; but only few theories can be paradigms. It is upon this difference that both strands base their discourse and justify their existence. For a crisis cannot be caused by a ‘common’ theory; it requires something stronger, something that leads to change. This target can be served only by the paradigm.

Conclusion

Although the attempts to introduce the theories and practices of HRM in the intellectual corpus of Industrial Relations are not very new, the importance of the latest discussions about the appearance of a ‘new paradigm’ in the literature rest on the link between the ‘new paradigm’ and the state of the field. The emergence of this new trend has not been accepted or perceived in the same way by the Industrial Relations community. Thus, there are those who believe that the NIR theory harms

the field, as it introduces a mentality that is not in accord with the existing intellectual and institutional structures, and those who view the turn towards the teachings of this theory as the only solution to the problems the field faces.

At a time when the value of the field of Industrial Relations is being contested, it becomes imperative to examine the above theses in more detail, and see whether they can be of any use for the present and future of the field. What is the position of the NIR theory in British Industrial Relations? Can it indeed claim a paradigmatic place in the field? What would the implication of this be? Are the opponents of the 'new paradigm' thesis right in arguing that the NIR theory hurts the field more than it assists it? And, perhaps most importantly of all, is the field of Industrial Relations in a crisis, as both positions argue?

Within this context, the rest of Thesis aims to examine in detail the theoretical and empirical status of both these arguments. The starting point will be the theoretical argument of the, predominantly, American position – that the NIR theory is a solution to the field's problems. Once the implications and the theoretical value of this thesis are evaluated, it will become imperative to question the empirical validity of the belief that the NIR theory is a paradigm. The results of this analysis will help us better address the issue of crisis, which will be further elaborated in Chapters 7 and 8. Only then will one be able to properly discuss the current condition of the field of Industrial Relations in Britain, and to draw some conclusions about its future.

Chapter 4

The Theoretical Validity of the New Industrial Relations Theory

Although the notion of crisis has not been empirically substantiated in the literature, one must take it into consideration if one is to fully understand the NPT. As with all the discussions about theory in the Industrial Relations literature, in the case of the NIR theory the reference to a crisis functions primarily as an ideological justification for the easier acceptance of the thesis that the field needs to adopt one or the other theory (see Chapter 2). The total dependence of the 'new paradigm' thesis (NPT) to the notion of crisis makes the argument vulnerable *ex ante*, for if it can be shown that the alleged crisis does not exist (or, at least, not to the extent purported by the NPT proponents), the bases of the thesis will be irrevocably shattered (see, also, Chapter 8). However, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the NPT argument can stand on its own, without the need to revert to a supposed crisis to support it. It is for this reason that a thorough analysis of its logic is necessary; for although one may try to dismiss it by showing that a crisis does not exist (thus rendering its rationale untenable), its theoretical proposals can still function independently once the argument is slightly modified.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the theoretical validity of the NPT argument and, more specifically, the claim that the incorporation of the NIR theory in the Industrial Relations theoretical corpus can act as a 'saviour' for the field. The notion of crisis will be accepted as a working hypothesis – not an empirical reality – unless otherwise mentioned. This assumption will not influence the succeeding criticism but, on the contrary, it will strengthen it since it will reveal its inherently problematic structure and will show that the use of an ideological claim about a 'crisis' cannot serve the argument's purposes.

To achieve the above, the NPT will be re-formulated as a logical argument and its premises will be analytically examined to see, firstly, whether they can be

theoretically justified, secondly, whether they can be empirically justified and, thirdly, whether they serve their logical function within the wider argument.

The Logical Structure of the NPT

As was discussed in the last chapter, the main NPT argument can be briefly stated as follows: the field of Industrial Relations faces a crisis; responsible for this crisis is the field's narrow theoretical and research corpus; thus, to overcome the crisis, the field needs to turn towards HRM, to expand its theory and research. The justification for the acceptance of the argument rests primarily on two bases. The first is epistemic: the incorporation of the HRM teachings in Industrial Relations, through the NIR theory, will help the field intellectually. The second, however, is propagandistic. Apart from the use of crisis as a persuasion mechanism, the NPT also uses history. As, we have seen, Kaufman is the main proponent of this approach, and the introduction of a historical element in the argument serves to create the necessary links between the NPT and the not-so-distant past of the field. By arguing that the NPT is, in reality, nothing new in the field, he tries to justify the acceptance of the thesis based on the wisdom of the older generation of Industrial Relationists – if they considered it worthwhile, why should not we, seems to be Kaufman's rationale.

In reality, Kaufman does not make one but two arguments, with the conclusion of the first serving as a premise for the second (see, especially, Kaufman 2008b). The first argument aims to establish the reason for the crisis in Industrial Relations:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| IR has had two paradigms, the OIR and the MIR paradigm | (1) - Premise |
| The OIR paradigm was eclipsed | (2) - Premise |
| The MIR paradigm is narrower than the OIR paradigm | (3) - Premise |
| The social environment has changed | (4) - Premise |
| <hr/> | |
| ∴ IR faces challenges as the MIR paradigm cannot address the new social environment | By (2) & (3) & (4) |

Once the problem is identified, the second argument offers the solution:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| IR faces challenges as the MIR paradigm cannot address the new social environment | (5) - Premise |
| The OIR paradigm is more encompassing than the MIR paradigm | (6) - Premise |
| <hr/> | |
| ∴ Return to the OIR paradigm to address the new social conditions | By (5) & (6) |

In the rest of the chapter, the validity of each of the above premises will be examined to see whether the final conclusion can be logically supported by the way the argument is stated.

The Epistemic Validity of the NPT

First Argument: The Roots of the Crisis in Industrial Relations

Premise 1: "IR has had two paradigms, the OIR and the MIR"

Kaufman's innovation in the formulation of the NPT was the historical dimension he introduced to the argument. Building the intellectual history of the field, and revealing the links that HRM had with the past of Industrial Relations, he paved the way for the easiest acceptance of the NPT. Kaufman has been characterised as the leading figure in the intellectual history of the field, and the bulk of his work on this subject rightly earns him the title. Since 1993, with the publication of his first book on the history of US Industrial Relations (Kaufman 1993), he continuously contributes to the historical reconstruction of the theoretical developments in the field (Kaufman 2004).

Kaufman's core position is that the field of Industrial Relations was characterised by two major intellectual strands. Until 2004, he referred to them as the Institutional Labour Economics (ILE) and the Personnel Management (PM) schools, which defined Industrial Relations in its early years. Around the 1960s a schism occurred between the two approaches, which saw the PM school leaving the field and following a different trajectory within the broader discipline of management studies (Kaufman 1993).

Since 2007, however, Kaufman's thesis has been slightly altered; the two schools were replaced by a new terminology that used extensively the notion of the paradigm. Thus, Industrial Relations were characterised by two paradigms, the Old Industrial Relations (OIR) Paradigm and the Modern Industrial Relations (MIR) Paradigm. The OIR paradigm was broader than the MIR paradigm since it included in its research corpus the study of management and of the non-union sectors, and its theoretical direction was not restricted only to economics or sociology, but incorporated psychology as well. Although Kaufman's two versions do not differ at all in their content, the new terminology is broader and more robust than the older, since it uses a term (the paradigm) that has strong semantic connotations. The paradigm denotes a unity within, and a common direction of, the Industrial Relations community, and does not restrict the intellectual borders of the field by identifying it only with two theoretical schools.

The theoretical and paradigmatic duality of the field that Kaufman advocates constitutes the basis of the NPT. If it can be shown that this Premise is unsound, then

the whole argument becomes unstable as well. Indeed, as various authors have argued, the validity of the Premise suffers from various empirical problems.

In an early critique of Kaufman (1993), Hillard and McIntyre (1999: 76) argued that his historical explanation was void of the “political and class context that crucially shapes the fortunes and impact of academics, especially those engaged in the study of capital-labour relations”. As a result, they argue, Kaufman follows a linear interpretation of history and disregards the influence of the wider political context in shaping the ideas and in influencing the changes in the theoretical directions of the field. Although it is true that Kaufman is silent on the politics that characterised the post-war US society, especially regarding the influence of the Cold War in the universities (Kelly 1999), it is not completely accurate that his approach is totally a-political. On the contrary, his open identification with the principles of enlightened management, which were promoted in the inter-war period by J.D. Rockefeller Jr., and his support for the welfare state reveal a liberal political orientation.

Hillard and McIntyre’s most interesting critique rests on their argument that “Kaufman constructs a history of IR that favours his interpretation of [the field’s] crisis. He seems to read back from the politics of his reform proposal to a description of a crisis that validates that politics” (1999: 79). This is an important methodological point that questions Kaufman’s interpretation of the facts. For example, they disagree with Kaufman’s reading of the treatment of PM by the IRRA in the 1960s, according to which,

“the ILE-dominated IRRA ‘corrupted the original meaning and spirit of the term *industrial relations* by its refusal to give equal representation to the members and viewpoints of the PM school’. This view of the original meaning is held only by Kaufman and, perhaps, disgruntled PM scholars of the post-war era. The core beliefs of this (and other) generations of institutional labour economists were then, and always have been, antithetical to those who subscribed to the belief that labour markets are fair and that only ‘progressive management’ is needed to improve the lives of workers” (1999: 82).

In a similar vein, Ackers (2006) argues that Kaufman’s *Global Evolution of Industrial Relations* (Kaufman 2004), suffers from a misinterpretation of the historical record, especially regarding the role of the IIRA and the history of Industrial Relations in Britain. According to Ackers, the ILO and the IIRA were given too central a place in Industrial Relations history, something that probably had to do with the fact that the book was commissioned by the ILO; secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Ackers attacks Kaufman’s position that British Industrial Relations were heavily influenced by the theoretical advancements that were taking place in the US. As he states, “British IR has never been a branch of US IR” (Ackers 2006: 98), and “[w]hile the formative

Oxford school may have drawn some of their ideas about “rule-making” from Dunlop, I would wager that a far more important direct influence was the work of the Webbs” (*ibid.* 99). Indeed, Flanders’ review of Dunlop’s *Industrial Relations Systems*, shows that although the former was, in general, supportive of the latter’s project he, nevertheless, was also quite sceptical about it – especially regarding the treatment of ideology (Flanders 1960).

Apart from the above criticisms, however, the NPT suffers primarily from two important problems. The first concerns the treatment of the term ‘paradigm’, and the second regards the historiography upon which the historicity of the NPT is being built. Both these problems are interconnected, and an answer to the former also addresses the latter.

The NPT is the culmination of a series of attempts to revive the scientific and policy position of Industrial Relations through the introduction of a new theory in the field. However, as was the case with almost all the previous attempts for the theoretical revitalisation of the field, the NPT treats theory primarily as a demarcation instrument. The interest in introducing the NPT in the theoretical corpus of Industrial Relations lies, primarily, in differentiating the field from the rest of the social sciences and in ascribing to it a social and political ‘usefulness’ that, for the NPT proponents, it lacks thus far. The historical dimension of the NPT, which Kaufman introduced in his work, aims exactly to reinforce this position. In other words, Kaufman’s discussion of the two paradigms does not only sketch the intellectual history of the field, but is also used as a tool to define the intellectual character of the field and to differentiate it from adjacent disciplines.

Unfortunately, Kaufman’s attempt to recreate the history of the field suffers from the way he treats the term ‘paradigm’. His main focus is not the theory (or theories) that characterised the field but, rather, the *object of research*: the two paradigms are distinct primarily because of their different foci on the external world. As he has claimed, the OIR paradigm “was centred on the employment relationship” (Kaufman 2008: 314), whereas the MIR paradigm is “centred on the union sector and associated topics” (Kaufman 2008: 315). However, marginalising the role of theory, and focusing explicitly on the object of research, undermines the aim of differentiating the field from the other disciplines, since *the object of research is not enough, per se, to define (and identify) a field or a discipline.*

As is usually the case both in the natural and the social sciences, two or more fields may share their research object. For example, labour economics share their interest on trade unions, or strikes, with Industrial Relations; cultural anthropology

shares its interest in myths with sociology, etc. Bringing theory into the picture, however, helps us address these issues more completely; for a different theory will pose different questions, and will interpret and approach the research object quite distinctively.

To characterise a field as having two paradigms solely because of their different research foci, without any reference to the role of theory, is incomplete. Moreover, in the case of Industrial Relations, it poses a severe problem, which the second generation of the crisis scholars (see Chapter 2) had identified since the 1980s: it does not take into consideration the multi-theoretical and multi-disciplinary nature of the field. To bring under a common umbrella the various theoretical traditions that existed – and still exist – in Industrial Relations, solely on the grounds of their research orientation, is not only mistaken but totally disorientating as well. Marxism and Pluralism, for example, were both concerned with the study of trade unions and collective bargaining, but to claim that they belong to the same paradigm is not only mistaken, but void of any intellectual content as well.

Even if one accepts Kaufman's treatment of the 'paradigm', his reconstruction of the field's history suffers from an important methodological constraint. As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the identification of a paradigm in a field is not a straightforward matter. While Kuhn introduced the term, he did not provide adequate ways to measure it and identify it; and if in the natural sciences the problem may not be so grave, in the social sciences, with the multitude of intellectual traditions, the identification of a paradigm becomes even more complex. Since the main sociological characteristics of the paradigm are its dominant position in the field and the existence of a community that will nurture it and advance it, they must be taken into consideration in any attempt to identify, or establish the existence of, a paradigm (see Chapters 5 and 6). Unfortunately, the method that Kaufman uses to identify the paradigms is inadequate to justify their actual existence, as his historiography is a *history of elites*, which does not (and cannot) paint the general picture of the field.

Kaufman's reconstruction of the major intellectual trends in the field is primarily based on the work of the 'fathers' of Industrial Relations, such as Commons, Perlman or Dunlop in the US, and the Webbs, Clegg, or Flanders in the UK. By concentrating only on the elites, however, Kaufman identifies the field – the community – with some prominent individuals. The fact, however, that *some* people in the community thought and acted in a specific way, does not prove the *dominance* of their decisions. To identify a paradigm, and the extent of its dominance, it is necessary to adopt an

alternative historiography, one which will look at the way the majority of the field's community approached reality.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, such an alternative historiography should be based on the study of the 'common scientist' – not only of the prominent figures in a field. Since the 'common scientists' constitute the field's community they inevitably influence and define the field's nature, despite them not being as famous as their more eminent colleagues. By examining in detail their intellectual decisions, one can understand the nature of a field and draw aggregate conclusions about its direction and the development of its theories. Thus, without disregarding the influence of the elites, history from below aims to restore to their proper place the common people who have also contributed in shaping the past.

To recapitulate, the premise that the field of Industrial Relations has had two paradigms is both theoretically and methodologically problematic. The two paradigms cannot serve their role within the wider NPT argument since the object of research is not enough to draw the limits of a field; nor does Kaufman actually prove that the two paradigms existed as such. The first premise is thus, a theoretical oversimplification of the Industrial Relations research reality, with no actual empirical substance.

Premise 2: "the OIR paradigm was eclipsed"

The second premise of the argument claims that the OIR paradigm was ousted from the field in favour of the narrower MIR paradigm. This is a position Kaufman holds throughout his work (1993, 2004) – i.e. the suggestion that the split in the traditional (or original) Industrial Relations field occurred because some Industrial Relationists did not accept the PM school. As he claims (Kaufman 2008: 318): "...management and the practice of HRM ... were slowly shunted to the theoretical and ideological sidelines ... partly because of ... Dunlop and Kerr's antipathy to human relations, organisational behaviour (OB) and HRM"¹.

Again, this Premise faces the same methodological problem as the previous one: the fact that Dunlop or Kerr were hostile to human relations and organisational behaviour *does not* and *cannot* explain a general trend. If the managerial theoretical direction was ever omnipresent in Industrial Relations, and if it left the field, the

¹ It must be pointed out that there are important differences between Human Relations (HR) and HRM, despite the fact that the latter is, indeed, influenced by the former. HR is more psychological in nature than HRM. Also, it is worth reminding that Dunlop or Kerr could not be antithetical to HRM, since HRM emerged in the 1980s (they could, however, be antithetical to HR or Personnel Management). For a criticism of the nature and policies of HR see Baritz (1960) and Bendix (1974).

reasons for this transition must be pursued at a different domain: on the course that the majority of the researchers in the field followed, on the role of the field's gatekeepers (journal editors and fund allocators), and on the social stratification of the field. To make such a claim, Kaufman must first prove the existence of an OIR paradigm, and then to establish the process through which the transition from the one state of affairs to the other occurred.

Apart from this constraint, however, the main problem with Kaufman's rationale is that he does not consider the fact that, maybe, the split was initiated, supported, and advanced by the "PMists" themselves because of their own (narrow) interests. The way he treats the historical record victimises the PM school and the OIR paradigm, in an apparent attempt to justify their restoration to the Industrial Relations theoretical corpus.

Premise 3: "The MIR is narrower than the OIR" and Premise 4: "The social environment has changed"

Premises 3 and 4 constitute the core of the first argument. By arguing that the MIR paradigm cannot adequately explain the changing social environment, Kaufman makes an epistemological argument: in effect he links the fate of a field to its subject-matter, and he, perhaps unwillingly, introduces a theory of knowledge development. The rationale of his thesis is simple and straightforward: a field exists because it studies a specific phenomenon; if the phenomenon ceases to exist (or ceases to be as important as it used to be), and the field does not change its focus, then the field will suffer; if, on the contrary, it manages to adjust to the new situation, it will flourish (this is the second part of the argument, which will be discussed shortly).

Within this context, Premises 3 and 4 become supplementary to each other: the characterisation of the MIR paradigm as 'narrow' does not rest only on its comparison to the OIR but becomes meaningful only when it is combined with Premise 4. Thus, it is the changing social environment, and the inability of the MIR to address it that renders it 'narrow'. For if it could address the changing social conditions then the discussion about narrowness would not be justified (of course, one could still argue that the MIR is narrower than the OIR, based on a one-to-one comparison of the content of the two paradigms, but then the reference to the changing social environment would have been pointless). To examine the validity of the two premises, one can follow two different routes: either to accept them as theoretically true, and question their empirical basis, or to dismiss them as theoretically problematic.

Let us, for the moment, accept Kaufman's dualistic classification and adhere to the characteristics of the MIR paradigm: that its focus is the study of conflict, of trade unions, of collective bargaining, and of labour-management relations in general (Kaufman 2008: 320-22). Kaufman's major thesis is that the subject matter of the MIR paradigm has been eroded in recent years due to the changes in the external environment:

"... the severity of labour problems and capital-labour conflict in recent years is much reduced ... union movements in most countries noticeably began to shrink, governments turned towards neo-liberalism and market deregulation, and the study of HRM/OB boomed in business schools" (Kaufman 2008b: 334)

Thus, according to his theory of knowledge development, since the subject matter of the MIR paradigm faces a crisis, the paradigm will be challenged as well. As the above passage is stated, however, it is not logically possible to reach this conclusion for three reasons.

Firstly, if one examines the main principles of the MIR paradigm one will realise that the description of the external world in the above quotation is not necessarily antithetical to its main focus. This brings to the surface the fundamental problem with Kaufman's analysis: the lack of an explicit reference to theory. One may be interested in trade unions, or labour-management relations, but *how* one approaches one's object may differ radically among individuals. Claiming, therefore, that conflict has been 'reduced' is not necessarily an empirical observation, but a theoretical position as well, generated by a certain theoretical viewpoint. Notice that the use of the verb 'reduce' is in the passive voice, implying the absence of action: one can question this syntax and vocabulary and use a very different word, such as 'suppressed'. Instantly, the sentence acquires a very different interpretation: the 'reduction' is not semantically portrayed as something natural or obvious, but as a result of specific social processes involving power and conflict. As such, it could still be studied by the MIR paradigm, since its focus is the study of conflict, trade unions and labour-management relations. The same can be argued for all the other 'changes' in the external world.

Secondly, one can doubt the extent, or even the reality, of the changes that Kaufman discusses. Can it be claimed that there is, indeed, a reduction in the conflict between capital and labour? The increase of anti-union policies around the world, the victimisation of trade unionists, and the suppression of the basic labour rights, among others, point to the opposite. Likewise, the 'shrinkage' of the trade unions is a condition that had characterised the Anglo-Saxon world but various researches

reveal that this trend has now been stabilised and it is even possible to discuss union revitalisation (Heery *et al.* 2003; Hurd *et al.* 2003). Moreover, alternative forms of trade unionism, such as social movement unionism, become influential in countries where the traditional union structures have been eroded, as in the USA. And although the rise of neo-liberalism is a valid point, the literature on the varieties of capitalism reminds us of the complex political reality and the very interesting problems it still poses to the Industrial Relations specialist.

Thirdly, Kaufman identifies as the source of Industrial Relations the results of a phenomenon instead of the phenomenon *per se*: Industrial Relations gains its justification from the economic system that gave rise to the phenomena the field studies – capitalism – and not from the consequences of this system (such as the employment relationship, or the trade unions). In a sense, we are able to research the employment relationship because something called ‘labour’ exists – a social notion that acquires its meaning only within the economic system that generated it. Since, then, the system that justifies the existence of Industrial Relations is still present, it is misconceived to argue that Industrial Relations faces a challenge *because of* its subject matter. This last point is related to the Premises’ core theoretical problem.

As already mentioned, the claim for the narrowness of the MIR paradigm becomes meaningful only in conjunction with Premise 4 and with a theory of knowledge development which argues that the erosion of the paradigm is dependent upon the erosion of its subject matter. Kaufman’s fixation with the subject-matter stems from a positivist interpretation of theory (and field) development: since the subject matter is the set of the phenomena the field addresses, and a phenomenon is a set of facts perceived as a singularity, his thesis can be read as arguing that there is some problem with the facts the MIR paradigm studies. However, since facts are created by a theory (see Chapter 1) the theory’s potential to produce new facts must be addressed in any discussion about the intellectual fate of a field. Simply arguing that the subject-matter has been eroded is incomplete, for the ability of the theory that generated the said subject-matter to re-define it, to extend it, or to create something new, has not as yet been considered. In this case, therefore, it would be necessary to examine in more detail the theoretical status of the ‘MIR paradigm’; this cannot be done, however, since Kaufman is both silent and unclear regarding its theoretical basis and value. His only criticism is that the MIR paradigm is ideologically laden.

Ideology seems to be Kaufman’s criterion to judge the value of a theory: ideologically driven theories are inferior to non-ideologically driven ones. However,

this is not a robust enough criterion to condemn a social scientific theory for two reasons: firstly, it must be shown – and not to be pre-supposed – that the *knowledge* produced by the theory is also ideologically laden; for example, one may have an ideological interest in studying union revitalisation, but this does not necessarily mean that the results of the research will lean towards one side or the other. Secondly, it is very difficult to condemn *a priori* a social scientific theory as ideological since, by their very nature, social scientific theories involve a political element (see Chapter 1). The social scientific problems are not just ‘out there’ waiting to be perceived as problems; they are both *created* and *perceived* as such by the social scientists. Thus, the initial characterisation of an element of the external world as a ‘problem’ is inevitably political, since it is informed by the observer’s social and historical context.

Kaufman is not devoid of ideology either, as the following passage reveals:

“The birth of IR as an academic/vocational subject area was primarily motivated by public and corporate concern over the deteriorating state of employer-employee relations in the early 20th century. This deteriorated state, *manifested by maladies* such as large-scale violent strikes, high turnover and absenteeism, and the growth of militant trade unions and socialist political parties, was known at the time as the Labour Problem” (2008: 324, my emphasis).

The characterisation of violent strikes, absenteeism, militant trade unions or socialist parties as “maladies” or “problems” that require a “solution”, is obviously informed by a specific political programme and is, thus, also ideological.

As the argument is set, then, it is not possible to logically justify the conclusion that Industrial Relations faces problems because it cannot address the external environment. *If* Industrial Relations is in crisis, it is not proven that the crisis has intellectual bases, as it has not been shown that the existing theoretical approaches are inadequate to account for the external reality. Therefore, the second argument becomes redundant by definition, since its first premise is problematic, and the NPT is rendered logically unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to examine it in more detail as it raises some interesting scientific and political features.

Second Argument: The Solution to the Crisis – Premises 5 and 6

The second argument starts with the conclusion of, and a more advanced version of Premise 3 from the first argument, and argues that a return to the OIR paradigm is necessary for the field to address the new social reality and to become once more scientifically rigorous and useful to society:

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| IR faces challenges as the MIR paradigm cannot address the new social environment | (5) - Premise |
| The OIR paradigm is more encompassing than the MIR | (6) - Premise |
| <u>∴ Return to the OIR to address the new social conditions</u> | <u>By (5) & (6)</u> |

As the previous analysis showed however, the truth-value of Premise 5 is problematic, questioning, thus, the validity of the final conclusion.

Even if, however, one assumes, for the sake of argument, that the argument's Premises are unproblematic, it is still difficult to support its final conclusion, since the way it is structured does not necessarily lead to the proposed solution. Notice that apart from two premises, the second argument also depends on two auxiliary hypotheses: that the breadth of the OIR paradigm can indeed address the alleged challenges, and that the OIR paradigm is the best available solution. Thus, to argue that a return to the OIR paradigm is the solution to the field's problems, one must firstly prove that, compared to all the available alternatives, the OIR paradigm is indeed the best choice. Kaufman, however, does not follow this path. The complete absence of any reference to theory, and to theory comparison, undermines any attempt to build science on concrete bases since the 'challenges' Kaufman refers to can be theoretically addressed by many different social theories. Apart from this logical problem, however, it is still doubtful whether Kaufman's 'solution' can indeed be considered as such. Kaufman asks to integrate HRM in Industrial Relations (Kaufman, 2008: 315). What does this mean, however, and what implications does it have for the field?

As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, HRM is primarily a managerial technique. Although it tries to understand various organisational phenomena and to offer solutions to practical problems, its research is primarily guided by its usefulness for management. Industrial Relations, on the other hand, is a broader social science. Although many of its practical problems may be guided by the concerns of the various industrial relations actors, the evolution of the field from its early days till nowadays has rendered it the status of a social science disengaged from the needs and wants of the establishment. Hyman's radical work, for instance (Hyman 1974; 1975; 1978; 1984; 1989), placed the field into a new position within the social scientific disciplines. This is one of the fundamental differences between HRM and Industrial Relations, which makes any attempt to reconcile the two problematic.

Apart from this problem, however, there is a fundamental theoretical obstacle as well: the focus of HRM on the psychological undermines the societal direction of

Industrial Relations. As Hyman (1996: 189-90) has argued, “[t]he societal focus is abandoned with the shift to HRM. Academics embrace the role of servants of power, suppressing attention to the conflicting interests which underlie the world of work and employment”. Although someone may argue that the two may co-exist without ever coming into contact, this questions the necessity of incorporating HRM into Industrial Relations. For if the two do not supplement or help to advance each other, what is the point of bringing them together under a common umbrella after all? The existing situation, with the two fields occupying their distinctive space within academia, serves this purpose perfectly well.

On the other hand, the claim that a dialogue between the NIR theory and the existing theories in Industrial Relations is possible does not take into consideration the important philosophical problems that emerge. Although the co-existence of the two approaches within the Industrial Relations scientific fora is a possibility, it must be clarified that this is a sociological and not an epistemic issue. Whether the Industrial Relations community will accept the NIR research depends on the decisions that the members of the community and its gatekeepers will make. Strictly scientifically, however, a theoretical dialogue between the two approaches is highly improbable.

The fundamental problem for the realisation of this attempt is known in the philosophy of science as the *problem of incommensurability*. In order for two theories to enter into a dialogue and to complement each other, a common language must be created between the two perspectives. As Kuhn (1970) and Feyerabend (1993) have argued, however, the construction of such a language is improbable because theories do not operate in a vacuum. The set of laws and auxiliary hypotheses that define them rests on certain methodological, epistemological and ontological assumptions that characterize the whole system in which the theories operate; and these assumptions change when a new theoretical body is generated and replaces the existing one. As Sankey (1993: 772) argued: “translation ... fails because the meaning of such terms is determined in relation to other terms of the interdefined set. Terms which are defined within an integrated set of concepts cannot be translated in piecemeal fashion into an alternative complex in which the necessary conceptual relations do not obtain”. The different perceptions and approaches to the world by scientists operating in different theoretical traditions led Kuhn to argue that they ‘work in different worlds’ (differences of this kind constitute what Kitcher (1982) calls ‘observational’ and ‘methodological’ incommensurability). No matter if these semantic

differences are total, partial or local², the fact remains that different theories – belonging to different theoretical bodies – will have at least some elements in their language that will not be translatable to the language of the competing theory.

An example will demonstrate this point: a term that is shared between Industrial Relations and HRM is the notion of the employment relationship. Yet the understanding of this term differs fundamentally between the two approaches. With its focus on the psychological, HRM denounces by default any macroscopic interpretation of the employment relationship. This does not mean that the employment relationship does not have a macroscopic nature, but that it is irrelevant for the HRM research. It is not, thus, peculiar that HRMists and OBers refer to psychological contracts and not to the socio-economic basis of the employment relationship (Coyle-Shapiro 2004).

It must be clarified at this point that the proposal of the NPT to open-up the research focus of Industrial Relations to new directions, is not objectionable *per se*. New research foci always create opportunities for knowledge development and for a better understanding of the social world. However, even if we accept the NPT's research agenda, it is not necessary to accept its theoretical approaches. For all the questions raised by the NPT can be answered with different theories, which will not render Industrial Relations an instrument in the hands of management.

Conclusion

The NPT argument could have been just another attempt to introduce a new theory in the field, if it did not promote the apocalyptic message that the field will perish if it does not adopt its main thesis. Although theories appear (and disappear) quite frequently in every social scientific field, it is rather unique to see them irrevocably tied to some ideological mechanisms. The use of fear and history for the promotion of one's ideas is a classic instance of propaganda. Since, however, science is about knowledge production, it is imperative to examine the NPT free of its propagandistic cloth, and see whether it can add any intellectual value to Industrial Relations.

It is important to note that the NPT argument does not necessarily need the existence of a crisis to promote itself. Indeed, one can accept and support its main

² The initial incommensurability thesis (also known as 'strong' incommensurability) argued that the whole language of the new theory was untranslatable into the language of the old. In subsequent years, Kuhn modified his original position by first claiming that incommensurability could be *partial* (that is, only parts of the new language are untranslatable in regards to the old) and later on that it could be *local* (restricted, that is, in very specific domains of the language); see also Sankey (1993).

premises without any need to refer to an imminent catastrophe; one can simply introduce it as an alternative theoretical postulate, which may complement the existing theories in the field. It was the purpose of this chapter to examine in detail the value of the NPT for the field of Industrial Relations, without questioning, at this point, the empirical validity of the crisis argument.

Thus, leaving the crisis discussion aside, the preceding analysis showed that the NPT argument is problematic, both theoretically and logically. The main drawbacks of the position are its insufficient – and in many cases, mistaken – interpretation of the historical record, and the existence of logical gaps in the structure of the argument that, inevitably, question the validity of its conclusions. If the NPT positions were to be accepted by the Industrial Relations community, they would not ‘save’ the field but, on the contrary, they would lead to a fundamental re-interpretation of its core values and to its eventual absorption by the field of HRM or the wider field of Management studies.

Having, thus, discussed the untenable theoretical bases of the arguments of the NIR theory proponents, it is necessary to investigate in more detail two further features of the NIR theory discussion, which are shared both by its proponents and its opponents; namely, the beliefs that the NIR theory is a paradigm (or it may become one) and that the field of Industrial Relations faces a crisis. The next chapter, and Chapter 6, will tackle the first issue, whereas Chapters 7 and 8 will investigate in more detail the crisis claims, to see whether there is any future for the field of Industrial Relations in Britain.

Chapter 5

New Industrial Relations Theory and the Field of Industrial Relations in Britain

Although the NPT suffers from serious theoretical problems, the intellectual value of the NIR theory is not necessarily problematic in its own accord. Indeed, HRM may be possible to teach one something about the external world – or, at least, about that very specific part of the external world which it examines. Although HRM has been severely criticised in the literature (see Chapter 3), the aim of the analysis in the last chapter was not to examine the internal intellectual coherence of the HRM or the NIR theory (i.e. the laws and hypotheses that govern their theoretical structures), but rather to evaluate them in the context of Industrial Relations. HRM may be the most brilliant theory and research approach in the world but its focus, methods and structure *do not* offer any substantial extra knowledge to the Industrial Relations edifice – at least substantial enough to justify its characterisation as a ‘paradigm’ – *nor can it* offer such knowledge without fundamentally altering the nature of Industrial Relations.

The above realisation, however, cannot address the perception common among the Industrial Relations community that the NIR theory is a ‘new paradigm’ and that it is, somehow, responsible for the crisis in the field. To evaluate the empirical substance of this thesis we must leave the realm of philosophy and engage into an in-depth sociological examination of the NIR theory and of the community that follows it. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the term ‘paradigm’ may be interpreted in two different ways. The first interpretation would be quite strict and would imply that the NIR theory has achieved a dominant theoretical position in the field. The other interpretation, less strict and closer to the intentions of its proponents, would treat the ‘paradigm’ as denoting that the NIR theory has an important position in the field but not a paradigmatic one in the Kuhnian sense. A third interpretation – that of treating the ‘paradigm’ as synonymous to ‘theory’ – is not theoretically interesting and will not be further pursued.

The present chapter will be mainly concerned with two broad questions: firstly, is the NIR theory a paradigm in British Industrial Relations and, secondly, if it is not, what is its status? To address these issues, the chapter is organised in three sections; the first section examines and critically evaluates two methods from the sociology and history of science, which can be used to identify a paradigm. Once this is achieved, the second section describes in more detail the methodology and the research design followed in the chapter, whereas section three discusses the place of the NIR theory and research in the field of Industrial Relations in Britain.

Identifying a Paradigm

Although Kuhn introduced the term 'paradigm', he did not provide an adequate way to identify it. His research concentrated on the development of ideas in physics using the case study method, a favourite approach among philosophers of science. From Hempel to Feyerabend and beyond, the study of theory development was based on the in-depth examination of a specific episode from the history of science. Although this is a very important method, which accounts for the various details in the evolution of ideas, it also suffers from various problems, especially from the fact that it does not necessarily take into consideration the influence of an idea on the wider scientific community, since it concentrates on the intellectual production of a scientific elite. However, if one wants to understand the place of an idea in the scientific community one needs to study in detail the *extent* to which this idea has actually penetrated the field, and the way it did so. To this end, several methods have been developed in the history and sociology of science, known as *scientometrics*.

Scientometry is the general name given to a set of methods that primarily aim to measure scientific growth. As Kragh (1987: 182) argues, scientometry does not qualify as an independent discipline, although in recent years, with the development of technology and of more sophisticated mathematical methods, scientometrists have been organised in a small community with its own specialised journal (*Scientometrica*). As its name suggests, scientometry is a quantitative approach to the study of science; it measures several indexes regarding scientific growth and development, such as the number of scientists in a field, the number of journals, books and articles, the number of scientific societies, the number of PhD students and the type of research they conduct, or the collaborations and links between scientists, in order to explain the evolution of a discipline, a field or an idea.

This type of research is not new. Merton used several of the above techniques in his 1938 work (see Merton 1970), while de Solla Price had already set the bases for

the quantitative study of science as early as 1963 (de Solla Price 1963; 1965), a year after the publication of the first edition of Kuhn's *Scientific Revolutions*. Since then, the development of scientometric research followed a steady growth, and various ideas introduced by de Solla Price (such as the notion of the *Invisible College*) have been thoroughly pursued in the literature (for example, Crane 1972; Edge 1979; Gascoigne 1992; Knorr-Cetina 1982).

Although the quantitative analysis of science may provide interesting information about the development of a field or an idea, it nevertheless suffers from various problems, both technical and conceptual. For example, the basis for the conduct of any quantitative research is the operational definition of the various elements to be researched. Thus, although the terms 'scientist' or 'scientific journal' may be defined quite strictly nowadays, this is not necessarily so for the past (Pyenson 1977; for a history of the term 'scientist' see Stimson 1948). The most important problem with the quantitative measurements, however, is that they do not account for any qualitative changes in the history of science. Measuring the number of papers published in a journal, for example, may be an interesting exercise but does not tell us much about the content of the papers. Thus, if one's purpose is to study the evolution of an idea, mere counting may not lead anywhere. On the contrary, one needs to examine the content of the papers together with some other dimensions, such as the influence a paper had (or has) on the scientific community, or the way the paper treated an idea.

If a theory is influential it will be followed by a substantial amount of scientists. The term 'substantial', of course, cannot be defined precisely – but if one looks at the historical record one may be able to discern a tendency towards the acceptance of the theory's teachings. However, an influential theory is not necessarily a paradigm. It may very well be a theory *within* a paradigm. If we claim to have a new paradigm in hand, then the examination of the historical record must reveal a growing tendency towards the total acceptance of the theory in the scientific fora. How can one measure this acceptance? How can one know, that is, *if* and *when* a theoretical position has gained a paradigmatic status?

The publication of the *Science Citation Index* in 1962, gave rise to a method known as *citation analysis*, which tried to address – among other things – the above questions. As its name suggests, citation analysis aims to analyse the citations and references used in a paper, to understand how this paper is linked to other papers in a field. Through this analysis, the proponents of the method claim, one can understand the evolution of scientific disciplines, fields, theories or groups (Griffith *et al.* 1974; Moravcsik and Murugesan 1975; Small and Griffith 1974). Apart from a

purely descriptive or explanatory role, citation analysis can also have a predictive function as it can be used to help us identify the appearance of a new research area (Meadows and O' Connor 1971). Leydesdorff and Amsterdamska (1990), moreover, have argued that apart from understanding the cognitive organisation of science (i.e. the way ideas develop and spread in the community), one may also use citation analysis to understand the social organisation of the scientific communities. Finally, Porter (1977) has claimed that citation analysis can be used as a policy instrument to evaluate papers and scientists. Indeed, the Impact Factor of the various journals – a major policy tool for universities and government agencies – is calculated based on citation statistics gathered by the *Science Citation Index*.

The basic theoretical assumption of citation analysis is the hypothesis that one cites or references a paper that has *influenced* one's work (Cole and Cole 1972; MacRoberts and MacRoberts 1989). Thus, a citation by author A of author B's paper represents the acknowledgement by A of the influence B had on A's work. As an operational definition, this assumption can justify the claims that citation analysis can be used to map disciplines or identify new growth areas. Indeed, if one can identify the first paper (or papers) of a scientific area then, by counting the citations these papers have received in consequent researches, and by taking into consideration that one cites if one is influenced by a paper, one can actually understand the spread and influence of an idea in a community.

Even if we assume that this assumption is correct (which is not necessarily so, as will be shortly discussed), the notion of 'influence' has not been adequately addressed in the citation analysis literature. Garfield (1963), correctly argues that the researcher must differentiate between *influence* and *impact*. *Influence* is much wider than *impact*, since it refers to a set of cognitive influences on the author, ranging from the general conceptualisation of the research problem to the methods used to address it. Although, undoubtedly, some citations do influence an author, to argue *prima facie* that *all* citations do so is fallacious.

To understand this point better, one has to consider the various roles that citations serve within a document. As Dieks and Chang (1976: 249) argue:

“Authors who are giving references always have to choose from a number of considered papers; whether a given paper is cited or not depends on all kinds of personal factors, and this introduces a random element in the total number of citations”.

Indeed, Kaplan (1965: 181-183) identified six social functions a citation may serve (apart from its intellectual function that is): it may be a “device for coping with problems of property rights and priority claims”, reaffirming that way the “underlying

general norms of scientific behaviour” and “coping with the maintenance of the imperative to communicate one’s findings freely as a contribution to the common property of science”; it may also confer “intellectual and scientific respectability on the paper” (especially if the cited author is a well known authority in the field); or, it may “record indebtedness”, meaning *social* indebtedness to a person who may have helped the researcher either in the current paper or in the past (a very good example is the references that supervisors usually get from their PhD, or ex-PhD, students); finally, it may be a way for a scientist to “curry favour with an influential colleague or pat a close friend on the back by citing his works”, irrespective of any intellectual or other kind of indebtedness.

Seen within this spectrum, it becomes evident that any citation analysis must account for these characteristics. The problem, however, is that their measurement is very difficult. A possible way to identify these trends would be to ask the scientists themselves – either by using a questionnaire or by interviewing them – as Chubin and Moitra (1975) propose. Although this approach has been followed by Leydesdorff and Amsterdamska (1990), their questionnaire did not address these sensitive issues; and although one could argue that a better questionnaire is always possible to be constructed, Chubin and Moitra (1975: 426) remind us that there are other important problems in such an attempt as, for example, the fact that “the candour and recall of authors may be lacking ... rendering such data impressionistic, selective and self-serving”. And obviously, the problem becomes totally unsolvable if the author is deceased. In a sense, proper citation analysis (i.e. one which will take into consideration the above criticism) can only be an exercise of the present – not the past.

Even if one momentarily disregards the social functions of citations, and focuses on their intellectual role, the analysis must also take into consideration several other elements. ‘Influence’, for example, must be better qualified before being further pursued. As it is treated in the literature, ‘influence’ carries with it a positive connotation: saying that one has been influenced by a paper, implies that one has been *positively influenced*, in the sense that one has developed one’s line of thinking and research building upon the cited paper (using, that is, the cited paper in a positive way). However, as is quite often the case, one may use a citation in a negative manner.

Moravcsik and Murugesan (1975: 88) were the first to point out that a proper citation analysis must take into consideration not only the number of citations but *the way they are used in the text as well*. In their paper they separated citations in four

broad types: *conceptual* versus *operational* citations (the former refer to the use of a concept or theory, whereas the latter to the use of a tool or a technique); *organic* versus *perfunctory* citations (a citation is *organic* if it is indeed needed for understanding the text, whereas it is *perfunctory* if it is “mainly an acknowledgement that some other work in the same general area has been performed”); *evolutionary* versus *juxtapositional* citations (i.e. does the paper built upon the citation, or is it an alternative to the ideas promoted in the citation?); and, finally, *confirmative* versus *negational* citations – a citation being the former if it is accepted as correct by the paper, and the latter if it is considered wrong. They also identified a special type of reference, which they called a *redundant reference* (1975: 90) – i.e. a situation where “a reference is made to several papers, each of which makes the same point. In such cases, from a strictly scientific point of view, reference to one single paper would be sufficient, and the multiple reference is made mainly to ‘keep everybody happy’ on the game of priority hunting”.

Building on the work of Moravcsik and Murugesan, Chubin and Moitra (1975: 426-7) further categorised the *confirmative* (called in their paper ‘*affirmative*’) citations into *essential* or *supplementary* (the former referring to a research that is central to the citing paper, and the latter referring to a research that contains a finding or an idea with which the author agrees, without however being central to the author’s argument), and the *negational* citations into *partial* or *total* (a citation is *partially negational* when the author disagrees with some aspects of the cited paper, whereas it is *totally negational* when the author completely disagrees with the citation).

For these authors, the treatment of a citation in the text influences the results of the citation analysis research. Indeed, it is theoretically possible for two papers to have, more or less, the same citations and reference lists but to treat their subject in a totally opposite manner. If this is the case, one cannot obviously place these two papers in the same genre and argue that they form a sub-discipline or a sub-group in science. Classical citation analysis cannot account for these instances, because it does not take into consideration the qualitative nature of citations. The solution proposed was an improved version of citation analysis, called *content citation analysis*, according to which the researcher must actually read the papers and note how the citations are treated. This method, however, has two limitations: firstly, it cannot be applied to a large number of papers (taking into consideration that time and money are scarce) and, secondly, as MacRoberts and MacRoberts (1989: 345) have argued, it is not implied that reading the text will necessarily reveal the way the

citation is treated; to do so, one has to ask the author – but then one is once more faced with the problems previously discussed.

MacRoberts and MacRoberts (1989) have also argued that the acceptance of the basic assumption of citation analysis (that authors cite the works that influence them), generates some further problems. They claim that formal and informal influences are not cited, and that although acknowledgments may exist in a paper, these are not taken into consideration when conducting a citation analysis, nor can one safely assume that the author has acknowledged all the help that he received. Formal and informal interaction are important in the development of a scientific field or of an idea, and their disregard from citation analysis calls for a different kind of research – one that will be based on interviews or on a proper archival research of correspondence etc.

Since the purpose of the present chapter is to discover the status of the NIR theory in British Industrial Relations, it would be possible to implement citation analysis and map the various interactions among papers and authors. However, as the above discussion has shown, this is a doubtful exercise. Moreover, citation analysis research implies that the researcher can easily recognise the papers for his analysis. For example, to map the development of HRM-like research in the field of Industrial Relations one needs the papers which will be used for the analysis. However, in this case, these papers are not readily available and need to be discovered.

Furthermore, citation analysis focuses on the development of an idea *per se* – however, if one wants to explore the status of an idea in a discipline, one has to examine its place in the said discipline. This means that one has to go beyond the small set of papers that deal with a specific theory, and examine their influence on the wider community. To do so with citation analysis would require immense amounts of time and money, something that is not always available.

Fortunately, this problem can be overcome if one considers that if a theory occupies a paradigmatic position in a field then evidence of this must be present in the field's various fora of knowledge creation and promotion – i.e. in the journals, conference proceedings, and working papers of research centres. A true paradigm would penetrate the whole spectrum of research in the field: its methods and its focus on social reality, its justifications, its theories and its underlying assumptions about the nature of the external world would be extensively used by the community. The aim of the rest of the chapter is, firstly, to investigate whether the NIR theory is an actual paradigm and, secondly, in the case it is not, to examine whether there is any

evidence that could support the idea that a new paradigm is being developed (i.e. if a *trend* exists towards the creation of a new paradigm).

To examine whether a theory occupies a paradigmatic position in a field, one needs to measure the extent at which it has penetrated its intellectual fabric. If a theory is, or is becoming, dominant it is expected that the majority of the research published and pursued in the field's fora will follow the principles of the paradigm. Before exploring the influence of the theory, however, one needs to identify the papers that use this theory. To achieve this target, content analysis will be used. Although there are various definitions of content analysis, Krippendorff's (2004: 18) definition is the most concise: "content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful material) to the contexts of their use" (for a wider variety of definitions see Neuendorf (2002: 10)).

Content analysis is preferred over citation analysis as it focuses explicitly on the context of a text, thus helping to identify the NIR theory papers, and can also address the problem of incommensurability – i.e. the fact that some notions may be shared between competing theories but may not necessarily have the same meaning (see Chapter 4). Once the papers are identified, it will be possible to examine the dominance of the NIR theory in the British fora of Industrial Relations.

Methodology and Research Design

The presence of a paradigm is evident both in the knowledge production and in the knowledge dissemination institutions of science: both research and teaching are dominated by the paradigm's principles. However, research advancements always precede teaching modifications. A paradigm needs to be firmly established before being taught to the new generation of scientists. Thus, it is logical to concentrate on the knowledge production institutions of science and see whether a 'new paradigm' has emerged or is emerging. As has been already mentioned (see Chapter 1) there are three major knowledge production institutions in science: the academic journal, the academic research centre, and the academic conference (which is usually organised by a professional association).

In Britain there are four major industrial relations journals: the *British Journal of Industrial Relations* (BJIR), the *Industrial Relations Journal* (IRJ), the *European Journal of Industrial Relations* (EJIR) and the *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* (HSIR). The journal *Employee Relations*, although it seems close to the field of Industrial Relations, covers topics that are more related to the Personnel Management/HRM function – its title as well (*Employee Relations* rather than

Employment Relations) has a more managerial essence. Also, the journal *Work, Employment and Society* (WES), though it covers Industrial Relations-related topics, it is published by the British Sociological Association thus making it detached from the mainstream Industrial Relations institutions¹. For these reasons, the above two journals are not included in the analysis. Similarly, the British HRM journals (the *International Journal of HRM* (IJHRM) and the *HRM Journal* (HRMJ)), although they were founded by academics closely related to the field of Industrial Relations (Michale Poole founded the former and Keith Sisson the latter), they were not included in the survey. Since the focus of the research is the examination of the development of the NIR theory in the field's institutions, it was necessary to draw a demarcation line between the institutions that belong to Industrial Relations and those which do not; for analytic and practical reasons the line was drawn on the basis of the various institutions' titles. Thus, the HRM journals are treated *ipso facto* as an HRM institution and are, therefore, excluded from the analysis².

The professional association of Industrial Relations in Britain, which also organises an annual conference, is the *British Universities Industrial Relations Association* (BUIRA), founded in 1950 with the aim of establishing "industrial relations as an academic subject of university standard" (Berridge and Goodman 1988: 163). A second Industrial Relations Association in Britain – the *Manchester Industrial Relations Association* – is not included in the research because, firstly, it is not purely academic in nature and, secondly, it has a local rather than a national character.

Regarding the research centres, the situation is slightly more complicated. In Table 5.1 the various British Industrial Relations-related research centres are presented:

¹ Although it would be interesting to examine the relationship of the WES to the field of Industrial Relations, this is a task for a different type of research. The present focus is on the influence of the NIR theory on the fora of Industrial Relations.

² Although it may be argued that HRM in Britain is just an intellectual strand of Industrial Relations, it must not be forgotten that this is only a hypothesis and that no actual research has ever been undertaken to examine the actual intellectual and institutional links between the two fields. Even if these links are shown, however, HRM in Britain can be treated as a separate field since it has its own institutions and community.

Table 5.1

British Industrial Relations-related Research Centres

| Title | University |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <i>Industrial Relations Research Unit</i> | University of Warwick |
| <i>Work and Employment Research Centre</i> | University of Bath |
| <i>Centre for Research in Employment Studies</i> | University of Hertfordshire |
| <i>Centre for Employment Relations Innovation and Change</i> | University of Leeds |
| <i>Working Lives Research Institute</i> | London Metropolitan University |
| <i>Employment Research Institute</i> | Edinburgh Napier University |
| <i>Centre for Employment Studies Research</i> | UWE |
| <i>Institute for Labour Research</i> | University of Essex |
| <i>Institute for Employment Research</i> | University of Warwick |
| <i>Oxford Institute for Employee Relations</i> | Oxford University |

Although all of them seem to be oriented towards the academic study of Industrial Relations, some of the titles are misleading. For example, the *Work and Employment Research Centre* of the University of Bath and the *Oxford Institute for Employee Relations*, have a clear HRM/PM orientation directed primarily towards practitioners (i.e. managers and policy makers), whereas the *Institute for Employment Research* of the University of Warwick is more directed towards Labour Economics. The *Institute for Labour Research*, on the other hand, was a short-lived temporary project funded by the Leverhulme Trust, whose operation was ended in 2002. Thus, none of the above was included in the analysis.

Moreover, the *Centre for Research in Employment Studies*, the *Centre for Employment Relations, Innovation and Change*, the *Employment Relations Institute*, and the *Working Lives Research Institute*, although they focus on the academic study of Industrial Relations, do not produce their own research papers. All the research conducted by their members appears in academic journals, books, or edited collections³. For this reason, they have also been excluded from the analysis. Thus, there remained two research centres that were originally established for the study of Industrial Relations, and produced their own working papers: the *Industrial Relations Research Unit* (IRRU) of the University of Warwick (the oldest and most established Industrial Relations research centre in Britain), and the *Centre for Employment Studies Research* (CESR) of the University of the West of England.

It was decided not to include books in the analysis. Their technical manipulation would be very difficult and the results of their analysis would probably not change the

³ The *Working Lives Research Institute* started publishing its own research papers in 2008; however, this year was not included in the data analysis.

picture drawn by the analysis of the aforementioned fora. This is because frontline research takes place in the institutions mentioned previously, and the content of the books is usually informed by the discussions taking place in the journals or the conferences. However, the book – and especially the textbook – would have been taken into consideration if the focus of the research were the institutions of knowledge transmission (i.e. the university department), and the way Industrial Relations is being taught to the future generation of scientists.

The content analysis focused on every scientific text produced by all of the above institutions and took place between January and May 2007. It covered the period from 1963 (the foundation year of the BJIR) till December 2006.

Since the purpose of the research was to identify the *number* of the ‘new paradigm’ papers published in the above institutions, it was necessary to create a lexicon and set some rules to identify the NIR theory papers. Although content analysis lexica (such as the Harvard-IV or the Lesswell Dictionaries) are available either online, or are part of content analytic software, they could not be used for the purposes of the research because of three reasons: firstly, their function is restricted in identifying the way words are used in a text (for example, whether they are used in a positive or negative manner); secondly, they do not necessarily include words relevant to the present research; and, thirdly, they cannot account for the problem of incommensurability.

Although the way a word is used in the text is important for the research, the existing lexica focus on very specific grammatical and syntactic uses of a word and become both dysfunctional and pointless. The second problem is an issue of design: since the present research is quite specialised, it was necessary to create a specialised lexicon. The third problem, however, is more complicated since it is a theoretical issue and will influence the quality of the results: in constructing the lexicon, one must take incommensurability into consideration and select one’s words having this criterion in mind. If this issue is not addressed, the research may yield distorted results.

To create a lexicon, one must firstly identify the source of the lexicon’s words. Although this sounds simple, the choice of the initial pool of words may prove quite complicated and is usually arbitrary. A simple solution would be to analyse the papers by Godard and Delaney (2000) and Kochan (2000), which include the phrase ‘new industrial relations paradigm’. However, these texts constitute a very small sample and they cannot be regarded as representative of the ideas treated in the NIR theory papers. Another solution would be to use the reference list of the above two papers

as a source. But this approach poses two problems: firstly, many of the references used are not NIR papers and, secondly, the attempt to discern which papers from the reference list are NIR papers would constitute a kind of a content analysis based on a subjective interpretation of these papers' nature.

To overcome this obstacle, I decided to go beyond the Industrial Relations fora; since the main theoretical direction of the NIR theory is informed by the HRM theory, the HRM journals could constitute the lexicon pool. A search for the words "human" and "personnel" at the electronic journal library of the LSE yielded the following journals (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2
Initial HRM Journals

| |
|--|
| Human Performance |
| Human Relations |
| Human Resource Development Quarterly |
| Human Resource Development International |
| Human Resource Management |
| Human Resource Management Journal |
| Human Resource Management Review |
| Human Resources |
| International Journal of Human Resource Management |
| Personnel Journal |
| Personnel Review |
| Personnel Psychology |

Source: LSE Library

Next a criterion had to be established to identify the papers that would be used to construct the lexicon. I thought that the most cited papers in the HRM journals would contain a large amount of HRM words/expressions. Of course, they would not include the whole spectrum of the vocabulary of HRM, but they would have enough words to denote the main focus and discourse of HRM. The aim, thus, was to identify these highly cited papers and content analyse them to create the lexicon. I also thought that the most highly cited papers, of the most highly ranked HRM journals, would provide a much better pool of words.

Journal ranking is calculated by the *ISI Web of Knowledge* with the use of the Impact Factor index, which shows the number of times the specific journal was cited in articles worldwide during the past year. The Impact Factor only includes information for the journals subscribed to the *ISI Web of Knowledge* database. Thus, it may be possible for the impact factor of a journal to be higher than the one provided by the Organisation (as it could have been cited by articles not included in the Database), but it cannot be smaller.

All the citation statistics for the social sciences are compiled by a specific service of the *ISI Web of Knowledge*, the *Social Sciences Citation Index* (SSCI). Although the SSCI includes journals from a vast number of social scientific disciplines, unfortunately it does not include a HRM category; thus, the list of the HRM journals had to be recreated from the Management, Economics and Applied Psychology lists. The resulting list of HRM journals and their Impact Factors is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3
Impact Factors of the HRM Journals

| Journal Title | Impact Factor | Country |
|--|---------------|---------|
| Personnel Psychology | 2.392 | USA |
| Human Resource Management | 1.855 | USA |
| Human Performance | 1.333 | USA |
| International Journal of Human Resource Management | 0.503 | UK |
| Personnel Review | 0.315 | UK |
| International Journal of Manpower | 0.085 | UK |

Source: Adapted from the *ISI Web of Knowledge*. Data retrieved in January 2007.

As can be readily observed, the SSCI does not include all the journals that were retrieved from the LSE Library. This is not a big loss of information however, since many journals in Table 5.2 do not have a strict academic orientation as they are directed to the HR practitioner rather than the HR academic. The most highly cited journal in Table 5.3 is *Personnel Psychology*; its content, however, focuses on the applied psychological study of human behaviour in the organisation, rather than the HRM function. It was, thus, excluded from the analysis. Instead, I focused on the top US HRM journal (*Human Resource Management*) and the two UK journals (*International Journal of Human Resource Management* and *Personnel Review*). Although these journals were not highly cited, they are of special interest since they are published in Britain (and may show the aspects of the HRM literature that the British audience values).

Having identified the three journals, I conducted a citation research at the *ISI Web of Knowledge* which identified the most cited articles in the above journals. I selected the top five papers from each journal and content analysed them using the Concordance software (Watt 2004). This software was chosen because it is designed to conduct a *Key-Word-In-Context* (KWIC) analysis. As its name suggests, the KWIC technique does not examine the word independently of the rest of the text, but allows

the researcher to view the word within the context in which it appears. As Weber (1985: 44-47) argues, the KWIC technique has two positive characteristics:

“First, KWIC lists draw attention to the variation of consistency in word meaning and usage. Second, KWIC lists provide systematic information that is helpful in determining whether the meaning of particular words is dependent upon their use in certain phrases or idioms”.

Because the researcher can examine the context in which a word appears one can also address the problem of incommensurability. Thus, instead of just identifying a word, and counting the number of its appearances in a paper, one is also able to examine its actual usage in the text and to decide whether its meaning resembles, or differs, from other cases. In a sense, the KWIC method ascribes a qualitative element to the research that would otherwise have been absent if a simple quantitative approach had been followed. The results of this process are presented in Table A1.1 of Appendix 1.

Some of the words derived from the previous process had more than one meaning in the English language, and were used in different ways in the texts. To identify their precise meaning an HRM dictionary (Ivanovic and Collin 2003) and a dictionary of Business (Isaacs *et al.* 1990) were used. Table 5.4, presents all the words with more than one meaning, together with their interpretations.

Table 5.4
Words with more than one Interpretation

| Word | Meaning |
|-----------------|--|
| Management #1 | The process of directing or running a business |
| Management #2 | A group of managers or directors |
| Business #1 | Work in buying or selling |
| Business #2 | A commercial company |
| Business #3 | Affairs discussed |
| Organization #1 | The way of arranging something to work efficiently |
| Organization #2 | A group or institution |
| Service #1 | The work done by an employee |
| Service #2 | The business of providing help |
| Control #1 | The power or ability to direct something |
| Control #2 | The act of restricting or checking something |

Moreover, many of the words in the Initial HRM Lexicon were seldom used independently; instead, they were parts of *expressions* with a specific meaning for the HRM theory. For instance, although the word ‘organisation’ could be encountered as such, it usually appeared as part of an expression, as in ‘*organisational change*’. I was, thus, confronted with two different genres of words. The first included all the words that could stand on their own, and that presumably had a specific meaning for the HRM literature, and the second included all the expressions. Although one can

understand the importance of the expressions for the HRM discourse, the situation is more complicated regarding the single words. Some of them, such as the word 'commitment' for example, could be used outside the HRM literature as well, making, thus, their interpretation rather dubious. Thus, it was necessary to further categorise the single words and examine whether they had any theoretical meaning for HRM.

To account for this problem, I used an HRM textbook (Bratton and Gold 2007) and the two dictionaries mentioned previously. Looking at the book's index and the dictionary entries, and comparing them with the words of the Initial HRM Lexicon, I tried to understand their meaning for HRM. As a result, the words were categorised in three different sets: the first set included the words that were theoretically meaningful for the HRM theory. The second set included the words that only acquired meaning as part of an expression; I called them 'common', because some of them could also be found in Industrial Relations texts but acquired a special HRM meaning as parts of expressions. Finally, there were some 'irrelevant' words – i.e. words that did not have a special theoretical meaning either as part of expressions, or as individual words.

After these clarifications, I calculated the number of *pure appearances* or *net frequencies* of the words and expressions, to avoid counting twice, or thrice, the same word. In the case of words the *net frequency* refers to the instances that a word appears on its own, and not as part of a specific meaningful HRM expression, whereas for the expressions, the *net frequency* refers to the instances an expression appears on its own, and not as part of a larger expression (for an example on how the net frequencies were calculated, and for the results of these calculations, see Table A1.2 and Table A1.3 in Appendix 1).

The words and expressions in Tables A1.2 and A1.3 were further separated in the *HRM* and the *General Management (GM)* categories. Although all these words appeared in HRM papers, the GM ones are 'borrowed' from the Management discourse, to which HRM also belongs (i.e. they can also be found in non-HRM texts that belong to the broader GM genre). However, their meaning and usage is not different from the way HRM treats them. Thus, the words "commitment" or "strategy" have the same theoretical meaning no matter if they appear in an HRM or Strategy paper. The reason for this distinction was methodological: while HRM and GM are strongly linked, there was the possibility that the GM character of HRM would not be transferred in the Industrial Relations journals. In other words, the kind of HRM that appears in Industrial Relations journals may be completely different from the one that appears in pure HRM journals.

Based on the above results, the final HRM Lexicon was constructed by selecting the top five words and expressions from each category, in terms of their net frequencies, as can be seen in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5
Final HRM/NIR Lexicon

| Word | Category |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Firm | GM/HRM |
| Employees | GM/HRM |
| Customer | GM/HRM |
| Organization #2 | GM/HRM |
| Strategy | GM/HRM |
| Performance | HRM |
| Downsizing | HRM |
| Quality | HRM |
| Empowerment | HRM |
| Human Resource | Expression |
| Job Satisfaction | Expression |
| Competitive Advantage | Expression |

As can be observed there are only four HRM words and three Expressions. This is because the word “Resources” (the top word in the HRM category) is depreciated since it is included in the expression “Human Resource”; following the same rationale, the expressions *Human Resource Management* and *Human Resource Practices* were not included because they were covered by the expression *Human Resource* (i.e. a search for *Human Resource* would also include *Human Resource Management*).

Some of the words in Table 5.5 have a rather general nature. Indeed, words such as ‘Firm’ or ‘Employees’ or ‘Performance’ may be encountered in many different types of papers – for instance in Management, PM/HRM, Industrial Relations, Labour Economics etc – and one may argue that they are not unique to the HRM discourse. Indeed, this is true; however, Table 5.5 does not include *unique* HRM words (i.e. words that the HRM discourse does not share with any other discourse), but the most frequently used words in HRM texts. Obviously, it would be mistaken to categorise a paper as belonging to the NIR theory simply because it used the word ‘Performance’ or ‘Firm’. Moreover, it must be noted that the generality of the lexicon allows for a rather ‘generous’ interpretation of reality. In other words, the final results of the analysis may include papers that belong to the margins of the NIR theory. The implication of this will be discussed in more detail in the last section. For the moment, it is necessary to establish some rules that will be used to identify the actual NIR theory papers.

Identifying the NIR papers

Although the words included in the lexicon constitute a necessary condition for the characterisation of a paper as belonging to the 'new paradigm', they are not a sufficient one – i.e it was possible for a paper to include the above words and not to belong to the 'paradigm'; it all depended on the treatment of the words by the paper. Therefore, a paper was identified as belonging to the 'new paradigm' if it used the words/expressions of the lexicon in a *positive manner*, either in a theoretical discussion or for the conduct of research. A *positive manner* meant that the paper was subject to any of the following rules:

1. It accepted the words/phrases as legitimate, and they were followed, or preceded, by words that connoted a positive stance towards them.
2. It built its research or theory on the words/phrases, and tried to advance either them, or the ideas stemming from them.
3. It did not criticise them.
4. When it criticised them, it did not wish to abolish them, but to advance them.
5. It described a social situation through them.
6. The above description of reality was the opinion of the author, and not a citation or a reference to the work of somebody else.
7. In the case of a citation, or a reference, the paper embraced the citation or the idea behind it, and did not try to condemn it or abolish it. The following matrix shows all the possible combinations that might have existed regarding the treatment of citations:

| Citation | Attitude towards Citation | Attitude towards NIR |
|----------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| P | P | P |
| P | N | N |
| N | N | P |
| N | P | N |

P: Positive
N: Negative

8. The research focused on the micro-level (enterprise/organisation) and not on the wider society (meso/macro level).

To identify the NIR papers in the British Industrial Relations fora, a four-step process was followed:

Firstly, all the BJIR, IRJ and EJIR volumes available in the electronic databases of the LSE library were searched, using the words/expressions of the Lexicon. The search engines examined the titles, the abstracts and the main body of the papers,

but could not identify whether the words were used in a positive or a negative manner. Thus, this step resulted to a set of papers that used the Lexicon's words but may not necessarily have been NIR papers. When electronic records of the papers were not available (as was the case for the first three volumes of the BJIR (1963-1965) and for all the volumes of the HSIR) the research was manually conducted, starting from the second step.

The purpose of the second step was to identify the usage of the words. For this reason the titles and abstracts of the texts were examined in detail and were checked for *positive*, *negative*, or *ambivalent* connotations (i.e. usages that could not immediately be categorised as *positive* or *negative*), in relation to the words. I kept the positive ones, eliminated the negatives, and transferred all the ambivalent papers to the third step.

For all the ambivalent papers, a full-text research was conducted, which resulted to positive, negative and ambivalent (now termed 'irrelevant') papers. As in the second step, the positive ones were kept, and all the others were eliminated. In the fourth, and final, step all the positive papers from the previous three steps were added together to return the final number of the NIR papers.

For the IRRU and CESR research papers, and for the conference papers of BUIRA, the exact same process was followed, starting from the second step. In the case of BUIRA, it was not possible to retrieve any data for the years after 1982. All the BUIRA archives are kept in the Modern Records Centre of the University of Warwick, which, unfortunately, did not have any conference proceedings records after 1982. Moreover, BUIRA does not have an online database with its previous conferences, and the BUIRA secretariat did not keep any records of this type. Thus, the BUIRA data cover the period from 1952 (when the first annual conference took place) to 1982.

The Status of the NIR Theory in British Industrial Relations

The quest for the status of the NIR theory in the British fora of Industrial Relations revolves, mainly, around two broad questions: firstly, whether the NIR theory indeed occupies a paradigmatic position in the field and, secondly, if it does not, whether there is a trend towards occupying one. The results of the content analysis for the four British Industrial Relations journals, presented in Table 5.6, show that although the NIR-related research was present in two of the four journals since their foundation, its overall appearance in the pages of the journals cannot justify its characterisation as a paradigm. Although a rising tendency for the publication of NIR

papers can be observed in the BJIR from 1993 onwards, on average the NIR papers occupy 9.5% of the journal's space (in the 1963-1992 period the relevant percentage was 5.8%, whereas during 1993-2006 it rose substantially to 17.5%).

The appearance of NIR papers in the IRJ, on the other hand, seems to follow a stable pattern throughout the whole period, covering 6% of the journal's pages (in the 1970-1992 period, for instance, the coverage was, on average, 6.5%, whereas in the post-1993 period it decreased to 5.2%). It is interesting to note that the two major Industrial Relations journals do not seem to follow a common direction towards the acceptance of the NIR theory in their ranks – while the NIR theory is much better represented in the BJIR from the 1990s onwards, the IRJ follows an opposite direction. This discrepancy between the two leading journals is a first sign of the inability of the NIR theory to rise above the marginal place it seems to occupy in British Industrial Relations. The peripheral nature of NIR becomes more obvious when one examines the remaining two journals (the EJIR and the HSIR), which seem to be totally uninfluenced by its teachings (the EJIR had published only one NIR-related paper in 2005, whereas the HSIR none). Of course, this is largely attributed to the specialised nature of these journals, which does not seem to conform to the general theoretical orientation of the NIR.

It must be noted here that the NIR-related papers appearing before the 1980s technically concern pro-NIR, or proto-NIR, research. In a sense they are the papers that prepared the ground for the easier acceptance of the NIR research during the late-1980s, early-1990s. Their presence in the journals shows that the PM/HRM tradition is not estranged from the Industrial Relations curriculum but that it always occupied a rather peripheral role in the general theoretical and research corpus of the field, without ever managing to overtake the rest theoretical approaches.

At this point, one may argue that although the NIR research does not occupy a dominant place in British Industrial Relations, a tendency to do so can be observed – at least in the BJIR. Indeed, for the 1993-2006 period the NIR papers always occupied more than 10% of the journal's space (with only two exceptions – 1997 and 2002), a quite unique trend in the history of the BJIR. However, one must be careful how one interprets this trend. For although the BJIR seems to be more open towards NIR research than the rest of the journals, one must not forget that it is only one of the many British Industrial Relations fora. Moreover, as will be discussed in more detail in the next Chapter, the tendency of a theory to rise depends, primarily, on the nature of the community that supports and promotes it – it is thus premature, at this point, to make any such inference.

Table 5.6
Total and NIR Papers in the British Industrial Relations Journals

| Year | Total Papers | | | | | NIR Papers | | | | | NIR papers (%) | | | | |
|------|--------------|-----|------|------|-------|------------|-----|------|------|-------|----------------|------|------|------|-------|
| | BJIR | IRJ | EJIR | HSIR | Total | BJIR | IRJ | EJIR | HSIR | Total | BJIR | IRJ | EJIR | HSIR | Total |
| 1963 | 20 | - | - | - | 20 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 5.0 | - | - | - | 5.0 |
| 1964 | 22 | - | - | - | 22 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | 9.1 | - | - | - | 9.1 |
| 1965 | 21 | - | - | - | 21 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | 9.5 | - | - | - | 9.5 |
| 1966 | 17 | - | - | - | 17 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 5.9 | - | - | - | 5.9 |
| 1967 | 23 | - | - | - | 23 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | 8.7 | - | - | - | 8.7 |
| 1968 | 22 | - | - | - | 22 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | 9.1 | - | - | - | 9.1 |
| 1969 | 21 | - | - | - | 21 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | 9.5 | - | - | - | 9.5 |
| 1970 | 24 | 10 | - | - | 34 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 4.2 | 20.0 | - | - | 8.8 |
| 1971 | 20 | 18 | - | - | 38 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 10.0 | 11.1 | - | - | 10.5 |
| 1972 | 27 | 19 | - | - | 46 | 0 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 0.0 | 5.3 | - | - | 2.2 |
| 1973 | 21 | 19 | - | - | 40 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 4.8 | 10.5 | - | - | 7.5 |
| 1974 | 22 | 18 | - | - | 40 | 0 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 0.0 | 11.1 | - | - | 5.0 |
| 1975 | 27 | 20 | - | - | 47 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 3.7 | 10.0 | - | - | 6.4 |
| 1976 | 26 | 22 | - | - | 48 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 3.8 | 4.5 | - | - | 4.2 |
| 1977 | 27 | 25 | - | - | 52 | 0 | 3 | - | - | 3 | 0.0 | 12.0 | - | - | 5.8 |
| 1978 | 25 | 23 | - | - | 48 | 1 | 0 | - | - | 1 | 4.0 | 0.0 | - | - | 2.1 |
| 1979 | 27 | 24 | - | - | 51 | 1 | 0 | - | - | 1 | 3.7 | 0.0 | - | - | 2.0 |
| 1980 | 25 | 29 | - | - | 54 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 8.0 | 6.9 | - | - | 7.4 |
| 1981 | 23 | 36 | - | - | 59 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 4.3 | 5.6 | - | - | 5.1 |
| 1982 | 25 | 22 | - | - | 47 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 4.0 | 4.5 | - | - | 4.3 |
| 1983 | 20 | 24 | - | - | 44 | 3 | 2 | - | - | 5 | 15.0 | 8.3 | - | - | 11.4 |
| 1984 | 21 | 36 | - | - | 57 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 9.5 | 5.6 | - | - | 7.0 |
| 1985 | 19 | 25 | - | - | 44 | 0 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 0.0 | 4.0 | - | - | 2.3 |
| 1986 | 21 | 26 | - | - | 47 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 9.5 | 7.7 | - | - | 8.5 |
| 1987 | 24 | 26 | - | - | 50 | 0 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 0.0 | 3.8 | - | - | 2.0 |
| 1988 | 22 | 29 | - | - | 51 | 2 | 0 | - | - | 2 | 9.1 | 0.0 | - | - | 3.9 |

| Year | Total Papers | | | | | NIR Papers | | | | | NIR papers (%) | | | | |
|-------|--------------|-----|------|------|-------|------------|-----|------|------|-------|----------------|------|------|------|-------|
| | BJIR | IRJ | EJIR | HSIR | Total | BJIR | IRJ | EJIR | HSIR | Total | BJIR | IRJ | EJIR | HSIR | Total |
| 1989 | 20 | 23 | - | - | 43 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 10.0 | 4.3 | - | - | 7.0 |
| 1990 | 23 | 23 | - | - | 46 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 4.3 | 8.7 | - | - | 6.5 |
| 1991 | 33 | 20 | - | - | 53 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 4 | 9.1 | 5.0 | - | - | 7.5 |
| 1992 | 26 | 24 | - | - | 50 | 0 | 0 | - | - | - | 0.0 | 0.0 | - | - | 0.0 |
| 1993 | 32 | 25 | - | - | 57 | 7 | 3 | - | - | 10 | 21.9 | 12.0 | - | - | 17.5 |
| 1994 | 28 | 25 | - | - | 53 | 4 | 1 | - | - | 5 | 14.3 | 4.0 | - | - | 9.4 |
| 1995 | 38 | 25 | 18 | - | 81 | 7 | 2 | - | - | 9 | 18.4 | 8.0 | 0.0 | - | 11.1 |
| 1996 | 25 | 25 | 19 | 14 | 83 | 5 | 0 | - | - | 5 | 20.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.0 |
| 1997 | 28 | 27 | 15 | 13 | 83 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 7.1 | 7.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.8 |
| 1998 | 26 | 24 | 14 | 11 | 75 | 4 | 2 | - | - | 6 | 15.4 | 8.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8.0 |
| 1999 | 22 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 82 | 4 | 0 | - | - | 4 | 18.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.9 |
| 2000 | 25 | 28 | 16 | 13 | 82 | 4 | 3 | - | - | 7 | 16.0 | 10.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8.5 |
| 2001 | 23 | 29 | 15 | 10 | 77 | 3 | 2 | - | - | 5 | 13.0 | 6.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.5 |
| 2002 | 30 | 30 | 15 | 10 | 85 | 1 | 0 | - | - | 1 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.2 |
| 2003 | 33 | 30 | 16 | 10 | 89 | 7 | 2 | - | - | 9 | 21.2 | 6.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 10.1 |
| 2004 | 30 | 34 | 16 | 10 | 90 | 3 | 2 | - | - | 5 | 10.0 | 5.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.6 |
| 2005 | 30 | 31 | 19 | 11 | 91 | 13 | 0 | 1 | - | 14 | 43.3 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 0.0 | 15.4 |
| 2006 | 31 | 32 | 15 | 12 | 90 | 7 | 1 | - | - | 8 | 22.6 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8.9 |
| Total | 1095 | 936 | 193 | 129 | 2207 | 110 | 52 | 1 | - | 151 | | | | | |

The picture does not look very different in the case of the Research Centres, as one can observe from Table 5.7. The NIR-related research is almost absent both from the IRRU and the CESR – the IRRU had published some NIR-related papers in the 1980s and early 1990s, but none since then.

Table 5.7
Total and NIR Papers in the IRRU and the CESR

| Year | Total Papers | | | NIR Papers | | | NIR papers (%) | | |
|-------|--------------|------|-------|------------|------|-------|----------------|------|-------|
| | IRRU | CESR | Total | IRRU | CESR | Total | IRRU | CESR | Total |
| 1985 | 1 | - | 1 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1986 | 12 | - | 12 | 2 | - | 2 | 16.7 | - | 16.6 |
| 1987 | 6 | - | 6 | 1 | - | 1 | 16.7 | - | 16.6 |
| 1988 | 3 | - | 3 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1989 | 8 | - | 8 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1990 | 3 | - | 3 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1991 | 3 | - | 3 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1992 | 6 | - | 6 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1993 | 6 | - | 6 | 1 | - | 1 | 33.3 | - | 33.3 |
| 1994 | 4 | - | 4 | 2 | - | 2 | 50 | - | 50 |
| 1995 | 4 | - | 4 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1996 | 3 | - | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | 33.3 | - | 33.3 |
| 1997 | - | - | - | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1998 | 3 | - | 3 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 1999 | 1 | - | 1 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2000 | 1 | - | 1 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2001 | 3 | - | 3 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2002 | 2 | - | 2 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2003 | 4 | - | 4 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2004 | 2 | - | 2 | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | 0 |
| 2005 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2006 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 83 | 7 | 90 | 7 | - | 7 | | | |

The highest proportion of NIR papers in the journals can be attributed to the fact that the journal is a more open forum than the research centre. Contrary to the research conducted by a research centre, the research published in a journal is not subject to the restrictions that the research funding may impose on the research centre's directions. Moreover, the journal is usually more pluralistic than the research centre, since it is a forum for the whole scientific community, meaning that it must address as many theoretical and research strands as possible (something that the research centre cannot do for practical reasons) and that the papers appearing in its pages are not geographically or occupationally confined; anyone, from anywhere, can publish a paper in a journal, whereas the papers generated by a research centre are usually written by its members.

As for the BUIRA, Table 5.8 shows that the NIR (or the proto-NIR) research was under-represented in every conference (with the exception of 1982). Unfortunately, the lack of complete data on BUIRA does not allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the influence of NIR research on the association's intellectual orientation.

Table 5.8
Total and NIR Papers in the BUIRA

| Year | Total Papers | NIR Papers | NIR papers (%) |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1952 | 4 | 1 | 25.0 |
| 1953 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1954 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1955 | 5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1956 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1957 | 5 | 1 | 20.0 |
| 1958 | 6 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1959 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1960 | 5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1961 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1962 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1963 | 2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1964 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1965 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1966 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1967 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1968 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1969 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1970 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1971 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1972 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1973 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1974 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1975 | N/A | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1976 | N/A | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1977 | N/A | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1978 | 5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1979 | 5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1980 | 5 | 1 | 20.0 |
| 1981 | 7 | 1 | 14.3 |
| 1982 | 5 | 2 | 40.0 |
| Totals | 116 | 6 | |

Conclusion

To claim that a specific approach in a field is a paradigm has several implications; apart from the fact that it creates the illusion of a theoretical unity within the field, it may also give rise to feelings of insecurity – especially if the so-called paradigm threatens the existent nexus of social and intellectual relationships. Indeed, this was

the case with the NIR theory in the 1990s and the early 2000s (see Chapter 3), leading thus several people to argue that a 'new paradigm' was emerging, which could undermine the theoretical and research identity of Industrial Relations. Although some of these voices came from across the Atlantic, the belief was also sounded in Britain from many diverse sources. Interestingly enough, the 'new paradigm' discourse was closely linked to a wider discussion about a crisis in the field – which re-emerged in the mid-2000s, albeit from a different theoretical angle. As has been already mentioned, the crisis discussion has had two parts; the first dealt with the influence of the NIR theory on the field, whereas the other argued that the NIR is the solution for, not the cause of, the crisis the field faces. However, as the analysis in the last chapter demonstrated, the latter position is theoretically problematic and it cannot be logically supported. It was the aim of this chapter to evaluate the empirical content of the former.

To identify whether the NIR research constituted a paradigm in the British Industrial Relations scene, a content analysis was conducted on all the textual material of some of the field's fora of knowledge production. If the claims about the paradigmatic nature of the NIR theory were correct then one could expect to find such evidence in the journals, conferences, and research centres of the field. The research aimed to address two broad questions: firstly, whether the NIR theory was a paradigm in the strict sense (i.e. a dominant theoretical and research approach in the field) and, secondly, if it was proven not to be, whether any evidence for such a tendency existed.

The results of the research revealed that the NIR research never occupied a paradigmatic position in British Industrial Relations. On the contrary, it was always a rather marginalised theoretical strand, which never managed to rise above its peripheral position in the field. The continuous existence of NIR and proto-NIR research in the two major British journals (the BJIR and the IRJ) is evidence of the field's multi-theoretical and multi-disciplinary nature – but nothing more than that. Interestingly enough, the NIR theory seemed to be better represented in one of the two journals – the BJIR – especially after 1993. Indeed, the percentage of the NIR papers published in this journal rose significantly in relation to the pre-1993 period.

Is this tendency, therefore, evidence of a future flourishing of NIR in Britain? To argue so would be premature, since this trend was only observed in one of the field's fora; in the rest, the theory remains under-represented with no immediate signs of revitalisation. However, to be able to argue that such a tendency does not exist for certain, it is imperative to examine the dynamics of the theory. To do so we need to

turn to the study of the scientific community that supports the NIR theory, and to examine in detail its structural characteristics: is it a 'stable' community? Is there a 'hard core' which can be used to attract new members to the community? Are its members dedicated to the 'new paradigm' thesis? To answer these questions a different kind of research is required, which is the task of the next chapter.

Chapter 6

The Development of the New Industrial Relations Theory in the British Industrial Relations Fora

As must be evident by now, the NIR Theory faces several conceptual and empirical problems that challenge its position as a viable, and alternative, theoretical proposal to the existing theoretical approaches in the field. In the last two chapters, its theoretical nature and promises, and its dominance in British Industrial Relations, were questioned, revealing its untenable bases. Although the previous chapter revealed the marginal role of the NIR Theory, it did not completely address the belief that it poses a possible challenge to the field. For despite its peripheral position in the literature, it is indeed possible that the theory might, or may, be in a trajectory that could elevate it to higher levels within the Industrial Relations community.

The present chapter builds on the results of the previous one and aims to explore the dynamics of the NIR theory within the British Industrial Relations fora. More specifically, it will address two major questions: *firstly*, whether the NIR theory was ever in a trajectory of becoming a paradigm, as some of the literature claimed and, *secondly*, whether it is in a position to become a paradigm in the near future, as many in the community fear. This analysis will conclude the discussion about the nature and place of the NIR Theory in the field, and will set the bases for the discussion of the issue of crisis, which will take place in the next two chapters.

To address these questions the chapter will focus on the structural characteristics of the NIR theory proponents and on their place in, and interaction with, the wider Industrial Relations community. Through this analysis we will be able to see whether they ever occupied a position that could have led the NIR theory to a more dominant state in the field. The Chapter is therefore organised in three broad sections. The first section sets the necessary theoretical framework upon which the analysis will be based. The second section presents in detail the methodology and the tools that were

used to answer the above questions. Finally, the third section discusses in detail the structural characteristics of the NIR group and reveals its position and dynamics with the wider British Industrial Relations community.

Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter presented an approach that helped identify the existence of a paradigm based on the analysis of the texts appearing in the various scientific fora. However, the way a theory develops and the processes through which it may acquire a dominant position in a field were not discussed in detail. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the issue of theory change and theory development has occupied the work of many a philosopher and sociologist of science with inconclusive results. Yet between these two approaches a common, more realistic, ground can be found. As one cannot disregard the internal value of a theory in persuading scientists to follow it, similarly one cannot disregard the social nature and the social organisation of science as a factor that affects the choices scientists make. Indeed, as was mentioned in Chapter 1, the role of gatekeepers and of the leading scientists in shaping the form of a field cannot be underestimated. Apart from this fact, however, the development of a theory depends on some micro-processes that involve the subgroup that uses it and promotes it.

Since the place of a theory in a scientific field depends on the quantity of research generated by it, it is obvious that it also depends on the number of people who subscribe to its teachings. These people form a community of researchers whose common characteristic is the acceptance of the theory as a legitimate tool to approach the external world and to conduct research. Although some people in the community may know, or may develop stronger bonds with, each other – through collaborations, for example – this is not a necessary prerequisite for the inclusion of a person in the community, as it is not a necessary prerequisite for all people in a society to know each other or to be connected with each other, if they are to be regarded as members of the said society.

Yet although the existence of a community is a necessary condition for the advancement of a theory, it is not a sufficient one; for if the community is weak it will be difficult to promote the theory within the field. Thus, in examining the dynamics of theory development one has to examine in more detail the structural characteristics of its community and, more specifically, its *hard core* and its *new members*. The hard core comprises all those people who use the theory in their publications; in other words, it includes people who appear quite often in the various fora as supporters of

the theory. Apart from this function, however, the hard core is also responsible for attracting new members in the community, who will support, promote and develop the theory, and who will strengthen the core of the group. The existence of a strong (i.e. dense) hard core and the ability of the community to attract new members is fundamental for its future survival.

The strength or the weakness of the subgroup obviously depends on its density, and on the strategies its members employ to make themselves known in the wider community. Since the advancement of a theory is not an instantaneous phenomenon but depends on time, it is logical to argue that the community must retain its strength for a number of years. A community with a hundred members in one year and only ten in the next one is not as strong or effective as a community with hundred members equally spread throughout the same period. Thus, two important features must characterise the subgroup of any aspiring new theory: *continuity* in its membership, and *dedication* to the theory by its members.

Membership continuity simply means that the subgroup must have some stable members that will work towards the development of the theory – a person who publishes only one paper using the theory, and then disappears from the fora, or does not publish anything related to the theory ever again, cannot be regarded as part of the subgroup. The notion of *dedication* is closely related to the above idea. A strong subgroup is not only characterised by the density of its membership, but by the dedication of its members to the promotion of the theory as well. This implies, *firstly*, that the publications of the members of the group must follow the theory's rationale (i.e. they must use the theory as a means to study reality in any of their publications), and, *secondly*, that their publications must be directed to the field's fora. If a person's publications follow the theory's teachings but are not published in the field's journals (or presented in its conferences) then the paradigmatic aspirations of the theory are, by definition, eradicated; for the notion of the paradigm is meaningful only within a specific field.

Therefore, to argue that a theory is in a trajectory of strengthening its position within a field three conditions must be in place: *firstly*, a hardcore of stable members that will expand as time goes by; *secondly*, the attraction and maintenance of new members in the group; and, *thirdly*, a strong presence of the group's members in the field's fora.

It must be clarified at this point that the above conditions do not imply intentionality or planning. Although an intention and a strategic orientation from the group's members could accelerate the development of the theory, this is not a necessary

condition for its strengthening. In a sense, a theory can develop autonomously: if enough people are persuaded – for any reason – to follow it, then the tendency of the theory to gain a paradigmatic position in the community is automatically generated. It is not the purpose of this Chapter to explore why people follow a theory but rather how, once they are persuaded to follow it, the theory develops within a field.

Methodology

In contrast to the majority of historical research in the field of Industrial Relations (see Chapter 2), the focus here, and in Chapter 8, is not the famous scientists who might have shaped the directions of the field, but the ‘common scientist’, i.e. all these people who followed (and still follow) the teachings of their more prominent colleagues, and who also contribute in the creation and advancement of the field. This analytical approach is based on a specific type of historiography, known as ‘*history from below*’ (or *bottom-up history*, or *history of the common people*, or *grassroots history*).

The history of the common people has its intellectual roots in the French *Annales* School, and more specifically to the work of three of its major contributors – Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, and Georges Lefebvre – who focused on the study of the lives of the people instead of the elites (Hobsbawm 1997: 266 ff.; Howell and Prevenier 2001: 110 ff.). As Hobsbawm (1997: 267) argues, “[m]ost history in the past was written for the glorification of, and perhaps for the practical use of, rulers”. In grassroots history, however, the focus is the common people, their culture, their organisations, their beliefs and politics. Bottom-up history was quickly embraced by the historians of the left, who sought to develop comprehensive histories of the various social movements or other social and culture histories (Hobsbawm 1997). In the history of science, several authors have argued that the ‘common scientist’ should be part of the various historical researches, alongside the more prestigious scientists who have shaped the form of science (Pyenson 1977).

Closely connected to the above approach, but certainly not identical with it, is a specific historical methodology called ‘*prosopography*’, or *collective biography*. According to the classic definition by Stone “prosopography is the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives” (quoted in Sturges 1983: 319). In other words, instead of conducting a full-scale biographical research for a single person, the historian focuses on several people and collects information for all of them. This method has been extensively used in the history of science to understand the development of

fields and the formation of scientific communities (Pyenson 1977; Shapin and Thackray 1974; Soderqvist and Silverstein 1994).

The approach used in the rest of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 8, is a sort of a prosopographical research, since the publication records of a group of scientists will be examined in order to understand the development of the NIR community and of the field of Industrial Relations in Britain.

The Database on the Industrial Relations Community

Conducting a prosopographical research requires the collection of information for a number of people. Since the focus of the present research is the study of the development of the Industrial Relations community and of its subgroups, it is necessary to collect relevant information about the academics that appeared in the British Industrial Relations fora. In order to identify their intellectual affiliations and, through them, the development of the Industrial Relations community and of its subgroups, it is necessary to examine in detail their intellectual orientation.

As in every type of historical research the basic problem with prosopography is the identification and evaluation of the sources. Collective biography differs from biographical research in many respects, the most important of which is the depth of the analysis. Although a biography usually examines in detail the life of its subject, a prosopographical research examines specific parts of the life of a group of individuals. The usual sources where one can find information about the personal or professional lives of individuals are the various biographical dictionaries (such as *Who's Who*), their CVs, obituaries, interviews with living relatives (or with the subjects themselves, if they are still alive), or the subject's personal records (their diaries, correspondence etc). Since the present research aimed to examine the publication records of the people who appeared in the British Industrial Relations fora – a miniscule part of their lives indeed – the type of extended research described previously was unnecessary, as all the relevant information could be retrieved from the public domain.

Obviously, the best source to collect information about a scientist's publication record is her Curriculum Vitae. However, if followed, this line of research would lead to insurmountable problems. Firstly, it would be impossible to collect the CVs of those people who were either dead, or active before the advent of the internet. Moreover, CVs are very difficult to obtain in general (even for those alive) as they are not necessarily available on the public domain, and although one could find some information in bibliographical dictionaries, these are also sparse and concern only a

small amount of people. Even if all the necessary CVs could be collected, however, their manipulation would have proven a Herculean task (at least under the time and financial constraints I faced as a researcher).

To overcome this problem, I turned to the electronic databases available at the LSE Library. More specifically, I searched three of the largest electronic databases: *Business Source Premier* (BSP), *JSTOR*, and *Swetswise*. Although through these databases the publication record of an individual could be reconstructed in detail, the way the information was presented posed important constraints on its proper manipulation. For this reason, I decided to build my own Database, which would include information derived from the aforementioned electronic sources and would be easier to handle. The Database was created in an MS-Access platform, and although this software has several technical constraints (especially in its design and in the retrieval of information), it was the only available option, both economically and practically (as it is a standard MS-Office programme and relatively easy to learn). The Database construction took four months, from January till April 2007, and the data were collected between August and October 2008.

Initially, it included all the people who had published a paper in the four British Industrial Relations journals from 1963 (the foundation year of the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*) till December 2006. Since the purpose of the Database was to assist the detailed investigation of the intellectual development of the NIR authors (as were identified by the Content Analysis), and of the British Industrial Relations community more generally, the authors in the database were firstly separated in two broad categories: the *NIR* and the *non-NIR* authors. For the former (273 individuals in total), an analytic research to retrieve their publications record was conducted in the three electronic databases mentioned previously. In the case of the latter, however, an important technical problem emerged: due to their great number (1714 individuals), a detailed analysis of their publications was impossible, due to financial and time constraints. For this reason, I decided to sample the Database and to look at specific instances in the development of the Industrial Relations community. I thus decided to research in more detail the publication profile of all the authors who appeared in the four British Industrial Relations journals in the following years: 1963, 1970, 1977, 1984, 1991, 1998, and 2005.

The choice of the years was based on the following rationale: I wanted to include information on the people who appeared in the first issue of the two oldest journals, as this would provide me with a good picture of the intellectual orientation of the initial members of the British Industrial Relations community. Since 1963 was the

foundation year of the *British Journal of Industrial Relations* (BJIR), and 1970 of the *Industrial Relations Journal* (IRJ), these years were included by default in the sample. Furthermore, the 7-year interval could also be used as a measure for sampling, since within seven years the community would be able to recruit and generate new members (since the average duration of a PhD is four years and a new PhD requires, on average, three years to produce some publications and to identify oneself with a scientific community). Thus, from the initial population of 1714 academics a sample of 519 academics, or 31% of the total population, was retrieved who would be studied in more detail.

Once the relevant years had been identified, all the BUIRA members for these specific years were also included in the Database. The BUIRA membership lists are only available in a hardcopy format in the Modern Record Centre (MRC) of the University of Warwick. Unfortunately, although information was obtained for the years 1963, 1970, 1977, and 1984, data were not available for the years 1991, 1998, and 2005, since the BUIRA records are only available until 1985. Moreover, the BUIRA secretariat informed me that these data did not exist in their archives as well (which were held at the time in Manchester Metropolitan University). Including the BUIRA members in the analysis, raised the total population of the Database to 2048 academics, and the sample population to 858 academics, or 42% of the total population. For all these authors, a detailed internet research of their publications was conducted. In Appendix 2, the research process is described in more detail.

The following example clarifies the type of information included in the Database after the completion of the research. Assume that an author – say, John Smith – had published a paper in the BJIR in 1981. His name, together with this specific publication, is included in the Database. Furthermore, suppose that the results of the previous chapter's Content Analysis have shown that this was an NIR publication. This information is also stored in the Database. From the research in *BSP*, *JSTOR*, and *Swetswise*, all his other publications, *before*, *during* and *after* 1981, were retrieved, irrespective of the journal in which he published.

It must be noted at this point that the Database does not include the complete publication record of the people appearing in it. This is because the electronic databases only include journal articles. Thus, the Database does not include any information on books, chapters in books, pamphlets, or any other type of publication that is not a journal article. This is not a big loss of information, however, for two reasons: firstly, because the purpose of this research is to examine an author's disciplinary orientation, something that can be achieved by the examination of one's

journal papers. Secondly, because as has been repeatedly discussed thus far, the academic journal occupies a very specific position in the academic community, since it constitutes the most important forum for the development and communication of new research (see Chapters 1 and 5). Hence the decision to participate in a specific type of journal can be said to characterise one's general intellectual and disciplinary identity. Moreover, the Database obviously includes *only* the articles of the journals included in *BSP*, *JSTOR*, and *Swetswise*. However, since they are three of the larger electronic databases in terms of the journals covered, one may assume that the retrieved records depict a faithful representation of an author's publication record. Consequently, although one may not have the full picture of an author's published work it is still possible to form a coherent view of her intellectual orientation.

Structural Characteristics and Development of the NIR Theory Group

As the previous chapter revealed, the NIR theory never attained a paradigmatic place within British Industrial Relations. However, the literature that argued for its development and domination did not have the benefit of hindsight that the preceding analysis had. In other words, the fact that the NIR theory has not, as yet, attained a paradigmatic thesis in the literature does not mean that it never had the opportunity to do so, or that it will not achieve it in the future. The low publication numbers may be an indication that a paradigm does not exist, but they do not constitute proof that a paradigm may not develop. To understand the dynamics of paradigm development, one has to study in more detail the characteristics of the community that identified with it during its development.

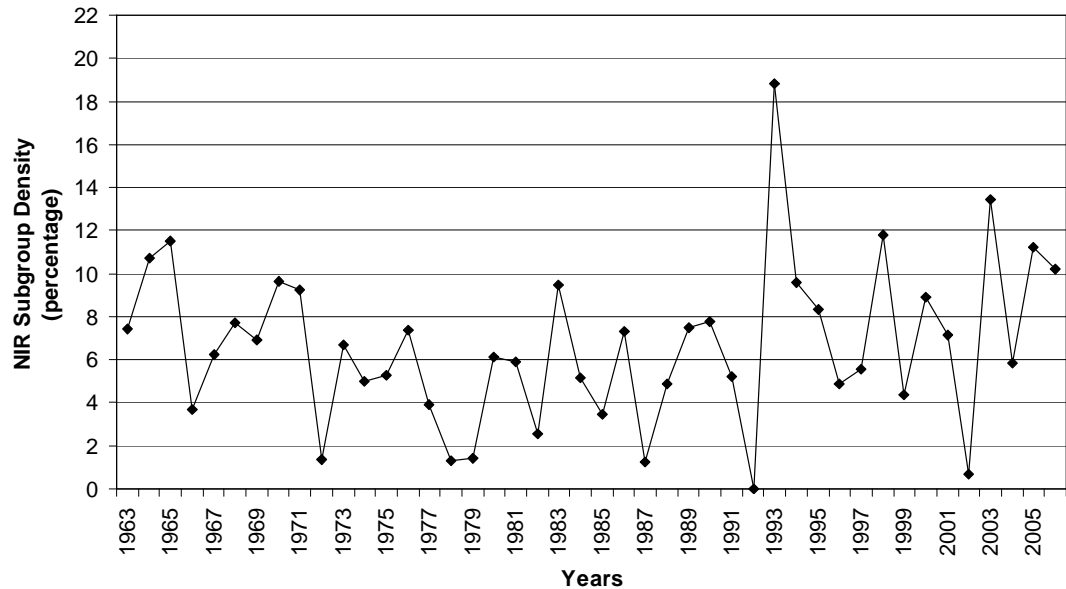
As has been already mentioned, a strong and stable community is the fundamental prerequisite for the development of a paradigm. It is, thus, logical to argue that if a tendency for the development of a paradigm existed, or exists, one should be able to observe the gradual development of a NIR community within the wider Industrial Relations field. This community will firstly form a subgroup that, as time goes by, will develop to a denser group, which will eventually dominate Industrial Relations. Of course, as we know, this is not the case as yet. However, it may be possible to detect the early steps of this process if we look closer at the structural characteristics of the NIR subgroup.

A first step is to examine the NIR subgroup's importance relative to the rest of the British Industrial Relations community. In Figure 6.1 the evolution of the density of the NIR subgroup from 1963 till 2006 is presented. The *density of the NIR subgroup* is

the number of its members each year divided by the total number of Industrial Relations authors for that year.

Figure 6.1

Density of the NIR Subgroup in the British Industrial Relations Fora (1963-2006)



As can be observed, the density of the NIR community is subject to cyclical fluctuations, consistent with the appearance of NIR papers in the relative fora, as described in the previous chapter. Each cycle lasts, on average, *1.8 years*, which, at a first glance, is a relatively fair period for the development and publication of new research on the paradigm. However, one must be very careful on how one interprets this Figure.

Firstly, it is obvious that the NIR subgroup constituted, and still does, a very small group within the wider Industrial Relations community. It reached its peak density in 1993 (18.8%), but its average density throughout the period was 6.7%. One may argue that despite the very low density of the subgroup, it may still have constituted a dominant subgroup within the Industrial Relations community. Of course, to argue so, one must have in hand the densities of the other subgroups in the wider community, something that the current research does not discuss. Even if one had this information, however, and one was in a position to argue that, indeed, the NIR subgroup was the most dominant subgroup in the community, the talk of a paradigm would become immediately redundant. For if, on average, the NIR subgroup includes 6.7% of all the Industrial Relations' community members, this means that the remaining 93.3% of the population should belong to subgroups with less than 6.7%

density. If, for the sake of argument, we consider these subgroups to be of equal density of – say – 6%, this would mean that there should be around sixteen such subgroups. In other words, the British Industrial Relations community should have had sixteen different theoretical and research schools that would be less dominant than the NIR paradigm. However, although the field of Industrial Relations is multi-disciplinary and multi-theoretical, it never attained this level of theoretical pluralism. Even if it had, it would be very difficult to talk of a paradigm, since this extreme theoretical division would render any discussion about dominance meaningless. It is, thus, safe to argue that even if empirical data about the densities of the rest theoretical schools in the field were available, the NIR subgroup was, and still is, marginalised within Industrial Relations.

Secondly, the mere existence of cyclical fluctuations attests to the non-paradigmatic nature of NIR. For, although one may argue that some time is indeed needed for a paper to appear in a journal, if the NIR was a true paradigm it would be able to generate continuous research. In other words, the subgroup would be expected either to grow every year or to remain stable. The continuous fluctuations show that the stability necessary for the development and establishment of a paradigm did not (and does not) exist.

The above conclusions are not new since they only verify, from another viewpoint, the conclusions of the previous chapter. However, a closer examination of Figure 6.1 reveals some years where one could have argued that the NIR subgroup had the tendency to develop into something more concrete. Although the annual average growth rate of the subgroup's density is a miniscule 0.7%, the constant presence of NIR academics in the various fora from 1963 till 2006 (with the exception of 1992), might have been regarded as forming the possible basis for the future development of an NIR community. Moreover, the existence of the various peaks – after a year or two of declining density – *may* mean that the existing subgroup was trying to establish itself (although unsuccessfully) as a distinct community within Industrial Relations. This brings us once more to the issue of *tendency*: was there ever (or, is there) any real tendency for the NIR subgroup to attain a paradigmatic position within Industrial Relations? To answer these questions, a more thorough examination of the subgroup's structural characteristics is required.

As has been already mentioned, the establishment of a paradigm requires the existence of a hard core of members, who will support and promote it and who will attract new members to their ranks. Moreover, the future development of the paradigm also depends on the existence of new members, who will continue to

advance the paradigm and attract future members as well. If a community cannot fulfil these two initial criteria then it is not possible to establish a concrete basis for the advancement of the paradigm. Based on the above rationale, Table 6.1 presents the New and Old NIR authors, from 1963 to 2006.

Table 6.1
New and Old NIR Authors

| Year | Total NIR Authors | New NIR Authors | Old NIR Authors | Year | Total NIR Authors | New NIR Authors | Old NIR Authors |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1963 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1985 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 1964 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1986 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 1965 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1987 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 1966 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1988 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 1967 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1989 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 1968 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1990 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| 1969 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1991 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 1970 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1992 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1971 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1993 | 19 | 14 | 5 |
| 1972 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1994 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| 1973 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1995 | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| 1974 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1996 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| 1975 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1997 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| 1976 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 1998 | 15 | 12 | 3 |
| 1977 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1999 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| 1978 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2000 | 12 | 9 | 3 |
| 1979 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2001 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| 1980 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2002 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 1981 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2003 | 25 | 20 | 5 |
| 1982 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2004 | 11 | 7 | 4 |
| 1983 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 2005 | 22 | 13 | 9 |
| 1984 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2006 | 19 | 11 | 8 |

A 'New Author' is someone who appears for the first time as a NIR author in a specific year. An 'Old Author', on the other hand, is someone who has appeared at least once in the past as a NIR author, and reappears as such in the specific year. For example, in 2006, out of the 19 NIR authors, 11 appeared for the first time as such, and 8 have appeared at least once as NIR authors sometime in the past. Having made this clarification, the above table reveals some interesting facts about the NIR community.

Firstly, up to 1986, each year's NIR groups consisted predominantly of New members. This means that the continuity required for the establishment and advancement of the paradigm did not exist. Thus, although there was a constant presence of NIR authors throughout the whole period, with occasional rise in the

subgroup's density and periods of relative continuous growth (as in the 1967-1971 years), they did not represent a consistent attempt to build something concrete. Therefore, despite the intellectual commonalities of the various authors during these years, the pattern of the subgroup's membership can only be interpreted as circumstantial, a result of arbitrary publications in the fora, with no actual plan for the development of a community with a common scope and orientation.

One many argue at this point that the years up to 1986, where a more stable membership pattern seems to appear, do not actually concern the NIR theory. Indeed, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, they can be regarded as pre-NIR publications, but they still share many common characteristics with the NIR publications, in terms of their theoretical and methodological orientations. Since, however, these years refer to a period where the notion of NIR and the movement for the development and establishment of this approach were not as yet present in the literature, the arbitrariness of the subgroup's density pattern is, in a sense, understandable.

A closer inspection of the post-1986 years, however, does not necessarily reveal a different picture from the one just presented. Although during the 1986-1989 period the subgroup seems to attain *continuity*, the number of its old members is not enough to justify the existence, or the emergence, of a tendency for the establishment of a stable paradigmatic community. From 1991 to 1994, however, the hard core of the subgroup seems to enlarge and to become more stable. Yet during the following three years this tendency is lost and arbitrariness seems to re-enter the picture, since only new members participate in the subgroup. In the years following 1998 (with the exception of 2002) a stable hard core seems to be formed – enough to justify the possible emergence of a tendency to establish NIR on more concrete bases. This trend is more evident after 2003, where the hard core is denser than in the previous years. Can one, thus, claim that, although the NIR community does not occupy a paradigmatic position in the field, the tendency to do so exists? Indeed, with some exceptions, the 1991-2006 period is characterised by a certain continuity in the development of the subgroup: there is a constant presence of the NIR approach in the fora, the subgroup seems to have a constant hard core, and it is able to attract new members in its ranks. However, to argue so would be premature, as one has to establish continuity on more concrete bases, and to examine the *dedication* of the hard core's members to the promotion of NIR as a paradigm within the field of Industrial Relations.

As has been already mentioned, *continuity* refers to the existence of a hard core of members who will appear quite frequently in the fora, with the aim to establish their theoretical approach within the field. Although continuity is a necessary factor for the establishment of a theory, it is not enough by itself; *dedication* to the goal is also important. If one appears continuously as a proponent of the paradigm, one is also dedicated to it. However, dedication – as was defined earlier – is a stricter criterion than continuity, as it calls for the researcher to define herself as a supporter of the paradigm and not as an *ad hoc* follower. Since the notion of the paradigm is only meaningful within the context of a scientific field, dedication to the paradigm implies two things: firstly, that all, or the majority, of the researcher's research will follow the paradigm's canon and, secondly, that all, or the majority, of the research will be directed within the said field. If the theory is not primarily discussed within a field but is used in a general way and is shared among various fields, we may not talk of a paradigm but only of a specific theoretical approach. Only if these conditions are fulfilled will a theory have the possibility of gaining a paradigmatic position in a field; otherwise it will just remain one of the many existing theoretical schemes.

Based on the above, the implications for the current research are as follows: although, at a first glance, one may talk of continuity in the hard core of the NIR subgroup – thus giving rise to the assumption that a tendency for the NIR to be established as a paradigm did exist (despite its eventual inability to be materialised) – one must examine in more detail the membership pattern of the hard core. How many of these members appeared frequently enough to establish an actual continuity? For example, it may be possible that an Old Author appeared only once as such, and then disappeared, something that obviously disturbs the power of the hard core. Also, it may be possible that the distance between two or three consecutive appearances is so great that does not establish either continuity or dedication. For instance, an old author may firstly appear in 1983, then in 1998 and then again in 2006, i.e. in time intervals of fifteen and eight years respectively. Obviously, this extreme time gap between appearances cannot account either for continuity or for dedication. Moreover, if the existence of a continuous hard core is established, it is also imperative to examine the dedication of its members – i.e. whether the rest of their research followed the paradigm's principles and whether it was directed in the Industrial Relations fora. For this reason, the publication record of the said individuals will be examined in detail, to see how they defined themselves intellectually.

In Table 6.2 the hard core of the NIR theory has been further separated in two broad categories: Old Authors who appear as such only once and then completely

disappear from the British Industrial Relations fora, and Old Authors who appear as such more than once.

Table 6.2
Continuity of the NIR Theory's Hard Core

| Year | Old Authors | Old Authors (App=1) | Old Authors (App>1) |
|------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1971 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 1973 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 1974 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 1983 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 1986 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 1987 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 1988 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 1989 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 1991 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 1993 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 1994 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 1997 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 1998 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 1999 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 2000 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2001 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 2003 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 2004 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| 2005 | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| 2006 | 8 | 2 | 6 |

Although until 1993 there is a hard core of NIR members, it is not stable enough to ensure the continuous reproducibility of the paradigm in a concrete manner. With the exception of 1987, the Old Authors appearing during the 1971-1991 period have no relation to the Old Authors of the past years. For instance, the three Old Authors of 1983 *are not* Old Authors of any of the previous years. They appeared as New Authors in 1970, 1981 and 1982 respectively and then again as Old Authors in 1983. After that, they disappeared completely from the NIR scene of the British fora. In other words, from 1971 to 1991 all the Old Authors are constantly recyclable – something that leads to the eventual collapse of the hard core. However, from 1993 onwards a slightly different picture is drawn, as it seems that a tendency for the development of the paradigm in more stable bases emerges. Yet a closer inspection of the statistics reveals a more pessimistic picture.

In 1993 there are two persons who have appeared more than once as Old Authors. The first of them appeared as a New Author in 1983 and re-appeared in the scene in 1986 and in 1987. The distance between the years of appearance (3 years,

1 year and 6 years) reveals a relative continuity, which is however lost in the future since this person disappears after 1993¹. The second person's appearances are more interesting: his first appearance was in 1979, and 12 years lapsed before his second appearance in 1991. From then onwards, however, he follows a very smooth path of appearances: 1993, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2004. The distances between the years of his appearance (1, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1) show the continuity and dedication of the author to the NIR approach and to its presentation in the Industrial Relations fora. Indeed, his publication record *after* 1993 reveals this more clearly. In the years following 1993, this author published a total of 25 papers in five different subject areas: *Industrial Relations* (10 papers), *Psychology* (5 papers), *HRM/PM* (3 papers), *Organisational Behaviour* (3 papers), and *Management* (3 papers). Apparently, although the author seems to define himself as an Industrial Relations person (since the majority of this publications are directed to the Industrial Relations journals), he is clearly adopting a more psychological and managerial rationale (since he participates in psychology and management related journals), which is consistent with his overall NIR orientation. It is worth mentioning that 6 out of 10 of his Industrial Relations publications are NIR papers, which further asserts his dedication to the NIR approach².

For the next seven years, however, the NIR subgroup's hard core stagnated, as the only Old Author with more than one appearance is the aforementioned 1993 author. The appearances of the New and Old Authors in between 1993 and 1999 are circumstantial, 1994 being the only exception, where another Old Author with more than one appearance emerges, after six years of absence³. Still, the relatively long distance between his two appearances and his consequent disappearance cannot support the development of NIR as a paradigm.

From 2001 onwards, the hard core of the subgroup attracts more members but, again, it lacks the necessary stability to advance the theory at a paradigmatic level. Until 2003, only one author is stable in his appearances – David Guest – whereas the rest appear in the group as his co-authors⁴. This, together with the fact that they re-

¹ This author was P.B Beaumont.

² This is David Guest, the most prominent proponent of HRM and NIR in British Industrial Relations.

³ Ray Richardson – his first NIR publication was in 1986, followed by a second appearance in 1988 and then a third, and final one, in 1994.

⁴ In 2001, Riccardo Peccei appears as Guest's co-author. Peccei appeared for the first time as a NIR author in 1993, followed by another appearance in 1994. In 2005 he re-appears in the group, without Guest however. In 2003, Guest's co-author is Stephen Hill, who has appeared as a NIR author in 1983 and in 1991, and disappears after that.

appear after a long absence from the NIR scene (7 years and 12 years respectively) and then immediately disappear, makes their presence an 'accidental' event with no real influence on the position of the NIR theory in the Industrial Relations fora.

The years 2004-2006 are more interesting for the analysis. In 2004, David Guest brings another Old Author in the hard core as his co-author (Neil Conway), who appears once more in 2006. Moreover, 2005 witnesses the emergence of one more Old Author with more than one appearance⁵. Finally, in 2006 we observe the largest concentration of Old Authors with more than one appearance thus far (6 authors in total). One of them first appeared as an Old Author in 2003 (John Benson), whereas three appeared as such in 2005 (Nicholas Bacon, Howard Gospel and Andrew Robinson), and one has appeared twice in the past with 8-year lapses (in 1990 and in 1998 –Nicholas Wilson). The fact that for the last three years there seems to be a movement of authors inside the hard core of the subgroup, together with the fact that 2006 constitutes the last year of the analysis, may provoke the question of whether we are witnessing a possible uplift of the NIR theory. Certainly, there is continuity in the appearance of the hard core members – but is there dedication from their part? To answer this, it is imperative to examine in more detail their publication orientation.

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show the publication records of the authors, *before, during* and *after* the year in which they appeared in the subgroup's hard core for a second time⁶. The columns represent the field in which the authors directed their research, not the journals or the precise topic of their paper. The first 2004 author (Neil Conway) seems to be the most committed one to the NIR theory rationale. Prior to 2004 he has four publications, two in Industrial Relations journals – and both of them NIR-related – and two in Organisational Behaviour journals. During his second appearance in the NIR subgroup's hardcore, he publishes a paper in an HRM/PM journal, and in the following years he publishes two papers, one in a Psychology journal and the other in an Industrial Relations journal; incidentally, this last paper is also a NIR paper. Although his general publication pattern supports the NIR rationale, his presence alone is not sufficient to justify the existence of a tendency for the possible establishment of NIR as a paradigm. The publication behaviour of the second 2004 author (Malcolm Warner) attests to this conclusion: prior to 2004 he has

⁵ Francis Green – his first appearance as an NIR author was in 1997, followed by a publication in 2000. The second author with more than one appearance is Riccardo Peccei, who appears as such for the third time.

⁶ Therefore, 2005 includes only Francis Green, and not Riccardo Peccei, as he appeared as an Old Author for a second time in 2001.

Table 6.3

Publication Records of the 2004-2006 Hard Core Authors *Before* the Years of their Appearance in the Hard Core

| Year | Author | Before | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------|----------------------|
| | | Industrial Relations | Organisational Behaviour | HRM/PM | Economics | Management | Public Administration | Development | History | Accounting & Finance |
| 2004 | Author 1 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Author 2 | 20 | - | 18 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2005 | Author 1 | 14 | - | 1 | 18 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - |
| | Author 1 | 7 | - | 5 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| 2006 | Author 2 | 22 | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | 2 | - |
| | Author 3 | 4 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| | Author 4 | 5 | - | - | 6 | 3 | - | - | - | 2 |
| | Author 5 | 11 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Table 6.4

Publication Records of the 2004-2006 Hard Core Authors *During* and *After* the Years of their Appearance in the Hard Core

| Year | Author | During | | | After | | | | |
|------|----------|--------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|--------|----------------------|------------|------------|
| | | HRM/PM | Economics | Industrial Relations | Economics | HRM/PM | Industrial Relations | Management | Psychology |
| 2004 | Author 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| | Author 2 | 3 | - | - | - | 4 | - | 4 | - |
| 2005 | Author 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| | Author 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2006 | Author 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| | Author 3 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Author 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Author 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

18 publications in HRM journals and twenty in Industrial Relations ones – three of which are NIR related – something that categorises him as a general supporter of the NIR rationale. However, during and after 2004 he directs all his publications outside the Industrial Relations fora. In other words, although he seems dedicated to the NIR approach, he does not seem committed to promote it within Industrial Relations. The 2005 author (Francis Green) is altogether different from the previous two: despite appearing in the NIR subgroup's hard core twice, he primarily identifies himself as an economist, since the majority of his publications prior to 2005 are directed to Economics journals, as are the ones during and after 2005.

As for the 2006 authors, four of them (Authors 1 (Nicholas Bacon), 3 (Andrew Robinson), 4 (Nicholas Wilson) and 5 (John Benson)) had not published any other paper by 2008. The second author (Howard Gospel), on the contrary, has published two papers, both of them in Industrial Relations journals and both unrelated to the NIR theory. Moreover, as can be seen from Table 6.3, the first author balances between the fields of HRM and Industrial Relations since seven of his 13 publications are in Industrial Relations journals (three of which are NIR) and five in HRM ones. Based on his development thus far, one can argue that his allegiance is split between Industrial Relations and HRM, although he seems to slightly favour Industrial Relations. The second author, on the other hand, seems clearer in his orientation: out of 28 publications up to 2006, 22 are in Industrial Relations journals (two of them being NIR), three in Management journals, while the remaining two are shared by an HRM and a History journal. Taking into consideration the two Industrial Relations publications he made after 2006, it is safe to regard him as an Industrial Relations person who is not actually committed in promoting the NIR theory within the Industrial Relations fora and only publishes NIR related research circumstantially. As for the next two authors, both seem to balance between different fields. The third author has published four papers in Industrial Relations journals, two of which are NIR, and two papers in Management journals. In a sense, he leans towards the NIR/HRM approach but, as with the first author discussed previously, he does not as yet seem to identify himself with a specific field. The fourth author seems to be oriented towards the applied economics direction (with six publications in Economics journals and two in Accounting and Finance), although he also participates in Industrial Relations and Management fora. Finally, the fifth author clearly identifies himself with the field of Industrial Relations since 11 out of 12 of his publications prior to 2006 are directed in Industrial Relations journals (and only one in an HRM journal). Although definite predictions about the future behaviour of any of the above cannot be made, their publications decisions after 2006, combined with their orientation pro-2006,

signify that the future of NIR theory in British Industrial Relations remains unstable and subject to the whim of the moment¹.

Conclusion

For a theory to establish itself in a field, the existence of a body of academics that will support it and promote it through their work is necessary. If such a body does not exist, or its coherence is unstable, then the theory will only remain marginal within the field. A stable group has two important characteristics: *firstly*, a core of members who aim to advance the theory and to attract new researchers in their group; and *secondly*, a dynamic nature, which is evident by the amount of new researchers who ascribe to the theory and continue the work of the old ones. In other words, a stable group requires *dedication* and *continuity* from its members. Without these two features a theory will be very difficult to develop.

Although the NIR theory was proven to be intellectually marginal within British Industrial Relations, the question of whether it ever had, or has, the ability to develop into something more dominant within the field still remained. As the preceding discussion revealed, however, the NIR approach never occupied a position that could elevate it to something more important within the field. From its early years till nowadays it did not manage to create a stable community that would promote it into a paradigmatic level.

Leaving the marginal nature of the theory aside, the people who published NIR research were never totally committed to the theory or to its promotion within Industrial Relations. The majority of them published an NIR paper and then disappeared completely either from the fora or from the NIR scene, leaving the theory without the necessary 'new blood' that would promote it and develop it within the field. And those who continued to support the theory did so only for a very short period, leading thus to the complete dissolution of any hard core that was trying to be formed.

¹ It is interesting to note that from the aforementioned list of NIR people several Industrial Relations academics, who initiated and promoted the development of HRM, are absent. Two such examples are Keith Sisson and John Storey: although they published NIR-related work in Industrial Relations journals in the early 1990s (Sisson 1993; Storey and Sisson 1990), the majority of their HRM work appears either in book format (Sisson 1994; Sisson and Storey 2000; Storey 1992; 2007; Storey *et al.* 2005; Storey and Sisson 1993) or in HRM journals. Sisson is an example of an Industrial Relations academic who, although he turned towards HRM, did not necessarily abandon his pluralist intellectual direction for a unitarist perspective. His public refutation of Emmott's criticism of Employment Relations (see p. 13 ff.) is a case in point.

However, in recent years, one could claim that a small revival of the NIR theory does exist – no matter how peripheral. Does this signify a new era for the theory, a possible emergence of a group that may make it more central in the field? As the analysis revealed, this is very far from being true. The New NIR authors follow the same commitment pattern as their predecessors – i.e. they either direct their research outside the field, or the NIR research is marginal in their publication portfolio, or they disappear altogether. As for the existence of a hard core, it does not seem possible that one can be formed. Both in the past, as in the present, the NIR subgroup never fulfilled the two criteria mentioned above: they were neither committed nor dedicated to the theory, to help it attain a more central role in the British Industrial Relations scene.

Where does this leave us then? Thus far, two important conclusions have emerged: firstly, that the scientific value of the NIR theory is highly contested, especially as an alternative paradigm within Industrial Relations; secondly, that it was never a paradigm and such a tendency never existed. Remember, however, that the ‘new paradigm’ argument has a third component as well. Namely that the field of Industrial Relations faces a crisis as it does not, and cannot, address the changes in the external environment. This is a fundamental assumption of the ‘new paradigm’ thesis, since it is used as a lever for the promotion of the NIR theory as a solution to the problems the field faces. Is it indeed true, however, that the field has become dated? Is it true that the field faces, or will face, a crisis in the near future, as both the NIR theory proponents and adversaries claim? It is the purpose of the next two chapters to examine in detail these accusations, starting, as always, from the intellectual side.

Chapter 7

The Intellectual Development of Industrial Relations in Britain

Although the last three chapters revealed the untenable theoretical and empirical bases of the 'new paradigm' argument, one of its fundamental assumptions has not as yet been discussed: the crisis assumption. As was mentioned in the Introduction, the belief that the field of Industrial Relations faces some sort of a crisis is not a characteristic of the NIR theory proponents; on the contrary, it is shared by many others in the field. The 'new paradigm' argument, however, ascribes a different meaning to the issue of crisis, since it uses it as the primary justification for the promotion of the NIR theory. Without the existence of a crisis, the logical structure of the 'new paradigm' argument cannot hold. Remember that the NIR theory proponents argue that Industrial Relations faces a crisis because of its narrow research orientation and its focus on declining institutions, such as trade unions and collective bargaining, which make the field dated and obstruct it from claiming its rightful position among the social sciences and in the corridors of power.

Despite the endemic nature of the crisis discussion in the Industrial Relations literature, no one has actually questioned the empirical validity of this belief. This and the next chapter are devoted to this specific task. In this chapter the intellectual state of the field in Britain will be considered, whereas the next one will focus on the institutional aspect of the crisis. More specifically, the first section will discuss and critically evaluate the already existing literature on the intellectual development of the field, to draw some methodological lessons for the consequent analysis, which will be analytically presented in the second section. Section three will then study the evolution of British Industrial Relations research, whereas section four will examine whether the field faces an intellectual stagnation or a decline. Finally, section five will address the major criticism of the 'new paradigm' proponents – that the field of Industrial Relations is dated because its research focus and theoretical approach

cannot account for the changing social environment – and will reveal that the field not only is not one-dimensional, but that it has managed to adapt to the changing social circumstances, albeit not in the way the ‘new paradigm’ proponents would like it to.

The Intellectual Focus of Industrial Relations

Although the discussions of the status of Industrial Relations theory and research can be traced back to the early years of the field’s development, an actual attempt to map the field’s research traditions had to wait until the late 1990s. Thereafter, several researches appeared that aimed to understand the development of the field’s research orientation, to compare and contrast the way the term ‘Industrial Relations’ was conceptualised across the globe (and, more specifically, across the Atlantic), and to offer guidelines for the direction of future research. A reference to these studies has already been made in Chapter 2, where the field’s historiography was discussed and its epistemological bases were criticised (see p. 65 ff.). This section, however, will focus on their methodology and on their conclusions, and will examine their major constraints; this criticism, in turn, will be used to inform the Chapter’s research design.

One of the first attempts to map the research status of Industrial Relations was a study by Whitfield and Strauss (2000). Their main starting points were the various assumptions in the literature regarding the direction of Industrial Relations research. In a previous paper (Strauss and Whitfield 1998) they had argued that the field used both inductive and deductive methods to approach its subject and that, depending on the country, one method was favoured over another (Germany and Britain, for example, leaned more towards inductivism, whereas the US applied more deductive methodologies). Moreover, the questions studied in the literature were usually problem-oriented and had policy implications and ethical components. In 2000 they argued that various scholars believed that Industrial Relations research was abandoning its inductive approach for a more deductive one, a move that was interpreted by many as a turn away from policy-oriented research to a more scientific approach¹. The aim of their research, therefore, was to investigate the empirical truth of this assumption and to establish whether a methodological and epistemological change had indeed occurred in the field. To do so, they conducted a content analysis of the papers of six major Industrial Relations journals for the years 1952, 1967, 1982, 1997: two were American (*Industrial Relations (IR)* and *Industrial and Labor*

¹ Whitfield and Strauss do not question whether this naïve assumption has any actual meaning – why, for example, is policy oriented research inductive and not deductive?

Relations Review (ILRR)), two were British (the *British Journal of Industrial Relations* (BJIR) and the *Industrial Relations Journal* (IRJ)), one was Canadian (the *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations*), and one was Australian (the *Journal of Industrial Relations*). Their empirical results corroborated the opinion that there was, indeed, a shift from the inductive, qualitative and policy-focused research towards a more deductive, quantitative and theory building one (*ibid.* 145). As they claimed, the reasons for this shift could be attributed to “a desire among some IR researchers to gain greater respectability among their academic peers” (*ibid.* 147).

Following on their footsteps, in 2001 Frege explored the national patterns of Industrial Relations research by comparing the intellectual traditions that characterised US and German scholarship (2001). Through a content analysis of the German journal *Industrielle Beziehungen* for the years 1994-1999, and a comparison of her results with “common characterisations of current US research” (*ibid.* 869), she aimed to reveal the cross country variation in the organisational, methodological, theoretical and ideational traditions of Industrial Relations research, and to show that “IR research is not determined by the subject-matter but is socially constructed and continuously reinvented” (*ibid.* 868). Her analysis revealed that the German scholarship put greater emphasis on institutions, used institutional and action theoretical approaches, and followed the hermeneutical tradition, which was supplemented by a qualitative type of research with an extensive use of case studies. The Americans, on the contrary, focused more on management practices and the micro-level, and they approached their subject from a micro-perspective, through rational choice theory or behavioural and socio-psychological theories. Their method was positivist and it was primarily based on surveys and quantitative analyses (*ibid.* 877).

In 2005, Frege published another research (Frege 2005; see also Frege 2007), which aimed to examine whether a convergence was taking place between the Anglo-Saxon model of research and the Continental European one². This time she decided to actually analyse the Anglo-Saxon scholarship, before comparing it and contrasting it to the German. Her content analysis focused on two US journals (ILRR and IR), on two UK journals (BJIR and IRJ) and on the *Industrielle Beziehungen*. She studied two distinct time periods: 1970-1973 and 1994-2000 – the gap was to allow for the generations of researchers to change. During the codification of the papers,

² It is interesting to note here that Frege calls this the ‘convergence hypothesis’, which is a very dubious theoretical construct.

she decided to focus on four variables: the nationality of the authors, their professional affiliation, the research topic, and the research methodology. Each paper was then categorised as belonging in one of the following three categories: Industrial Relations, Human Resources, and Labour Markets; she also classified the papers as being either international or national.

Her results showed that the US journals balanced between the above three categories, whereas the UK and German journals were leaning more towards Industrial Relations. Interestingly, in the 1970s, the US journals covered more Industrial Relations topics than during the 1990s, where Labour Market topics were more dominant. In the UK, on the contrary, Industrial Relations remained dominant during both periods. She also argued that in the 1970s, the BJIR focused more on Human Resources topics, on collective bargaining and on the labour market, whereas the IRJ was more interested in industrial democracy issues.

The early 2000s saw the emergence of two more studies regarding the type of research that characterised the field. Jarley *et al.* (2001) focused explicitly on the field's state in the US, by analysing the papers of the ILRR, the IR, the *Journal of Labor Economics*, the *Journal of Human Resources*, the *Labor Law Journal* and the *Journal for Labor Research*, for the 1986-1995 period. The papers were categorised as belonging to one of the following three categories: Unions & Collective Bargaining, Labor Market and Other. Their major finding was that the first of the three categories was the most dominant one, followed by the second and then the third. Similarly, Mitchell (2001) also focused on the US, and he is the only author who included in his sample the Conference Proceedings of the *Industrial Relations Research Association*, together with papers from the ILRR and the IR. He examined two periods (1962-1963 and 1997-1998), and he categorised the papers in 21 categories. His major finding was that the research regarding trade unions declined from one period to another, although the topic retained its dominance during both periods.

As is obvious from the above, the picture regarding the intellectual orientation of the field is not very clear. This is not only a result of the different methods, samples, and chronological foci of the researches, but of a series of problems regarding their methodology. None of the aforementioned researches, for example, provided a proper theoretical justification for the creation of their lexicon. The lexica were usually the result of intuitive understandings of the texts, something that subjected them to a high degree of subjectivity. As a consequence, all the categories used were very broad and general, and the results might have failed to capture significant changes in the intellectual orientation of the field.

Moreover, the samples and the timeframes used were not adequate to support the conclusions of the papers. The majority of the researches focused on two time periods (except from the Whitfield and Strauss (2000) study), which were usually twenty to thirty years apart; the justification provided was that the authors wanted to control for the change of generation. However, an *academic generation*, if this term can be used, is different from a natural one. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, a new academic generation enters the academic fora approximately every seven years. Since the new generation may bring a change in the way the field is conceptualised – both theoretically and methodologically – a thorough study of the change of ideas in a field must take this into consideration. A great gap between the observations may not be able to account for the subtle, or major, changes in the field. If, then, one wants to investigate the intellectual development of a field, three issues must be kept in mind: *firstly*, that the content analysis must have sound theoretical bases; *secondly*, that if it is difficult to study all the papers in the field, one must select a sample which will take into account the possibility that new ideas, or research topics, may emerge and disappear at a fast pace; and *thirdly*, that although the journals constitute the most important forum for the exchange of ideas, other fora, such as research centres and academic conferences, also play a very important role in the formation of the field's intellectual identity.

Research Design and Methodology

To investigate the intellectual development of the field of Industrial Relations in Britain, and to address the above problems, a different kind of content analysis was conducted. The primary aim of the following analysis is to identify the *research topics* discussed in the various fora. Although a broader content analysis (of the type conducted in Chapter 5), which would also account for the way the topics are addressed, would be more preferable, its conduct would require financial and time resources that, alas, were not available. However, by focusing on the topics studied in the literature, one can still understand the general direction the field followed (and follows) in terms of its research foci.

As in Chapter Five, the research examined the four British Industrial Relations Journals (the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, the *Industrial Relations Journal*, the *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, and the *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*), the BUIRA conference proceedings (up to 1982, since data are not available after this date), and the research papers published by the IRRU at Warwick and the CESR at the UWE.

Due to the great number of papers in the fora, only a sample of years were studied, starting from 1963 (the BJIR foundation year) and taking 3-year intervals up to 2005, resulting, thus, to 15 observations. After removing from the sample all the NIR papers that were identified in Chapter 5, to avoid analysing them twice, there remained to be analysed a total of 798 papers. The above timeframe provides an accurate picture of the field's research development since, if a new and interesting topic appears in between the above years, it is very probable to leave its mark in the following ones.

To map the intellectual development of the field, one can content analyse a document in four different ways: either by analysing the whole text, or by analysing the abstract, or by examining the text's keywords, or, finally, by analysing the paper's title. The first approach, although it would otherwise be the best, confronts the constraints I mentioned previously. Since the focus was to understand the general topics a paper discussed, and not the way it discussed them, to analyse the full text would not necessarily lead to better or more complete results than the other three methods.

Keyword analysis, although plausible, has several constraints, the most important of which is the *indexer's effect*. According to this, the selection of keywords (in case they are not provided by the authors themselves) is "influenced by the way in which the indexers who [choose] the keywords [conceptualise] the scientific fields with which they [are] dealing, so that the pictures which [emerge] are more akin to their conceptualizations than to those of the scientists whose work it was intended to study" (Whittaker 1989: 474). Apart from this problem, however, working with ready-made keywords (either from databases or from the papers themselves) creates another technical problem: if, as in the present case, one wants to identify the major focus of a paper, a mere examination of the keywords may not be adequate as they do not provide any qualitative information. As is usually the case, a paper contains more than one keyword; but not all of them necessarily depict the central focus of the paper. Thus, for example, a paper studying the effectiveness of strikes in relation to union power, may have three keywords (strikes, unions, power), although its primary focus is the effectiveness of strikes – 'union' and 'power' are secondary keywords that serve as supplementary to the central one. This valuable information is usually lost if one works with simple lists of keywords.

To overcome this problem, the titles of the papers were analysed and, whenever necessary, their abstracts (this was required, for example, when the title's keywords had a dubious meaning). This technique is not without its problems either. Whittaker

(1989: 477 ff.) identifies four: the *audience effect*, according to which the authors may “choose their title words deliberately in order to address a particular readership”, the existence of *‘rhetorical titles’*, which may be unrelated to the content of the actual text, the *non-standardisation of the various concepts*, i.e. the fact that “the same concept may be differently referenced in different titles”, and the possibility that a title may not refer to “all the concepts, ideas, problems, and so on, to which an article is addressed” (*ibid.* 478).

All these observations are important but not critical for the present kind of research. Indeed, an author may choose keywords to address a specific audience, but this will usually concern the way the concept is analysed or perceived by the author; the main research focus, nevertheless, remains unaffected. For instance, an author researching union power may draft different titles depending on the journal where the paper is to appear – a title accepted for *Capital & Class* may not be eligible for, say, the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. However, no matter the format of the title, if the keyword ‘union’ or ‘union power’ exists in it, one will be able to classify it accordingly. Also, although rhetorical titles may exist in other disciplines, the sample of the papers examined did not include any. Some authors may start their title with a question, a declaration, or a quote but this is usually followed by a colon and an explanatory sub-title, which contains the main keywords³. Moreover, the existence of non-standardised concepts may pose a problem for an ‘outsider’, as is usually the case with the sociologists of science who may not be experts on the fields they study. However, since I come from the ranks of Industrial Relations, I was able to address this problem whenever such words appeared (to give a simple example, I knew that ‘PBR’, and ‘Payment-By-Results’, were synonyms). Finally, although it is certainly true that a title does not contain all the concepts discussed in a paper, this is not an important loss of information for the present research, since the primary interest rests on the general focus/direction of the paper, and not on the concepts used to address and clarify the main issues.

Keeping all the above in mind, the title of the paper was broken down in six major components: firstly, the major keyword was identified – i.e. the word that constituted the primary focus of the paper – and was called *Keyword #1*. Then the secondary keyword was identified, if it existed, which was also central to the paper but usually

³ Although some papers might have had unconventional titles (like “Of Hats and Cattle: Or the Limits of Macro-Survey Research in Industrial Relations”, written by W. McCarthy and published in the IRJ in 1994), they were either not included in the sample or, when they were, it was usually easy to decipher the title and classify them accordingly.

complementary to *Keyword #1*; this was *Keyword #2*. The epithets that qualified *Keyword #1* and *Keyword #2*, or words that denoted method (such as “quantitative analysis” etc), were categorised as *Keyword #3*. Words that referred to the empirical focus of the paper, such as the countries, industries or sectors under examination, were categorised as *Auxiliary Words (Auxiliary #1, #2, #3)*.

The focus of the analysis would be *Keyword #1* and, wherever applicable, *Keyword #2*. Since, however, the amount of words belonging to the above categories was immense, *Keyword #1* and *Keyword #2* were categorised in wider clusters. Synonymous words, or words with close meaning, were placed within a wider and more encompassing cluster. The resulting 48 clusters, which constitute the basic units of the subsequent analysis, are presented in Table A3.1 of Appendix 3.

The Development of the Research Identity of British Industrial Relations

One of the core arguments of the NPT is that the field of Industrial Relations is relatively one-sided in its research orientation. With its focus on Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining, it is unable to address the changing social environment, something that questions both its scientific validity and its relevance for policy. However, the analysis of the field’s research orientation in Britain reveals a different picture. Even at a first glance, the mere number of clusters (48) signifies that the field is much broader than it is portrayed by the ‘new paradigm’ proponents. Although *Trade Unions, Collective Bargaining, and Industrial Action* are among the most important topics of research in the field, they are not the only ones: topics concerning *Training & Education, Wages & Benefits, IR Theory/Research, or Management Practices*, to name but a few, have also gained considerable attention from the Industrial Relations academic community, as is evident from Table 7.1. Moreover, as can be seen in Figure 7.1 (on page 154), the field has generally grown from 1963 till 2005. Although some periods of decline are evident (in 1966, 1981, 1987 and 1993), they do not constitute a serious challenge to the field’s pluralistic research orientation: the average growth rate of the clusters is 4% showing that, despite the challenges to its traditional topics, the field’s research appears to adjust itself to the changing environment⁴.

⁴ All the average growth rates in the chapter were calculated using the following formula:

$$r = \left[\sqrt[m]{\frac{X_N}{X_T}} - 1 \right] \times 100$$

where r is the average percentage growth rate, X_N is the value of the last variable in the series (in this case $X_N=24$), X_T is the value of the first variable in the series

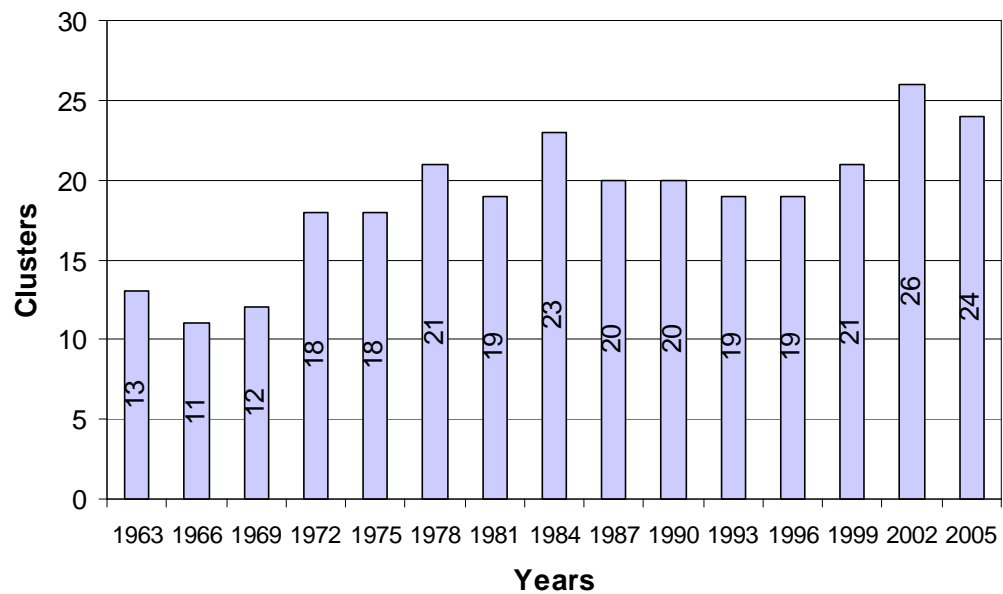
Table 7.1
Total Number of Appearances for each Cluster in the 15 Periods

| Clusters | Total Number of Appearances | Clusters | Total Number of Appearances |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Bargaining | 15 | Judiciary | 4 |
| Trade Unions | 15 | Terms & Conditions of Employment | 4 |
| Wages & Benefits | 15 | Unemployment | 4 |
| IR Theory/Research | 13 | Equality | 3 |
| Policy | 13 | Health & Safety | 3 |
| Training & Education | 13 | Legal Rights | 3 |
| Industrial Action | 12 | Production Practices | 3 |
| Management Practices | 12 | Race & Ethnicity | 3 |
| Workers Participation | 12 | Turnover | 3 |
| Industrial Relations (IR) | 11 | Workers' Control | 3 |
| Law | 11 | Alternative Forms of Workers' | 2 |
| Labour Market | 10 | Representation | 2 |
| Mediation & Arbitration | 9 | Globalisation | 2 |
| Conflict | 8 | History | 2 |
| Miscellaneous | 8 | Immigration | 2 |
| Employers & Management | 7 | Industrial Peace | 2 |
| Gender | 7 | Personnel | 2 |
| Work Practices/Types | 7 | Public Services | 2 |
| Union representatives | 6 | Social Dialogue | 2 |
| Enterprise | 5 | Worker | 2 |
| Government Regulation | 5 | Young Workers | 2 |
| Worker Types | 5 | Class | 1 |
| Discrimination | 4 | International Organisations | 1 |
| Europe | 4 | Labour-Management Cooperation | 1 |
| | | Public Sector | 1 |

Note: For an analysis of the content of the clusters see Table A3.1, Appendix 3.

(in this case $X_T=13$), and m is the difference in years (or observations) between the first and the last reading (in this case, $m=14$) (Hudson 2000: 125).

Figure 7.1
Cluster Development 1963-2005



At this point it is necessary to note that although a cluster may appear quite frequently, it may not be the most important cluster for the specific year. Similarly, clusters that may appear only twice, or thrice, in the observations may be the most frequent clusters in the year of their appearance. The *Trade Unions* and *Collective Bargaining* clusters, however, usually occupy the top-3 places every year, as can be seen from Table 7.2, making them indeed the field's major research foci⁵. But, and this is important, they are not the only ones: as one can observe, several other topics occupy the top echelons of research from one year to the next.

⁵ An interesting point, which will be further pursued in the final section, concerns the changing focus of research in the 'classic' Industrial Relations topics around the 1980s. Thus, the *Trade Unions* cluster of 1978, for example, discusses different kind of topics than the 1990 one. As we will see, this further contradicts the NPT arguments about the degenerating nature of the field.

Table 7.2
Most Frequent Clusters per Year

| Year | Topic | Frequency |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1963 | Wages & Benefits | 5 |
| | Trade Unions | 3 |
| | Policy | 2 |
| | Union representatives | 2 |
| 1966 | Trade Unions | 4 |
| | Personnel | 3 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 3 |
| | Management Practices | 2 |
| 1969 | Labour Market | 4 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 3 |
| | Bargaining | 2 |
| | Conflict | 2 |
| | IR Theory/Research | 2 |
| | Training & Education | 2 |
| 1972 | Trade Unions | 9 |
| | Training & Education | 8 |
| | Bargaining | 6 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 6 |
| 1975 | Bargaining | 5 |
| | IR | 4 |
| | IR Theory/Research | 4 |
| | Labour Market | 4 |
| | Training & Education | 4 |
| | Industrial Action | 3 |
| | Trade Unions | 3 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 3 |
| Workers Participation | 3 | |
| 1978 | Trade Unions | 9 |
| | Industrial Action | 5 |
| | Workers Participation | 5 |
| | Bargaining | 4 |
| | Government Regulation | 4 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 4 |
| | Trade Unions | 20 |
| 1981 | Workers Participation | 7 |
| | Bargaining | 5 |
| | Industrial Action | 5 |
| | IR | 7 |
| 1984 | Trade Unions | 7 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 6 |
| | Bargaining | 4 |
| | Conflict | 4 |
| | Management Practices | 4 |
| 1987 | Trade Unions | 12 |
| | Industrial Action | 6 |
| | IR | 6 |
| | Mediation & Arbitration | 3 |

| Year | Topic | Frequency |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | Workers Participation | 3 |
| 1990 | Trade Unions | 17 |
| | Equality | 3 |
| | Management Practices | 3 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 3 |
| | Bargaining | 2 |
| | Industrial Action | 2 |
| | IR Theory/Research | 2 |
| | Training & Education | 2 |
| | 1993 | Trade Unions |
| IR | | 9 |
| Bargaining | | 4 |
| Wages & Benefits | | 4 |
| 1996 | Trade Unions | 19 |
| | IR | 15 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 7 |
| 1999 | Trade Unions | 20 |
| | IR | 9 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 8 |
| 2002 | Trade Unions | 20 |
| | IR | 11 |
| | Wages & Benefits | 8 |
| 2005 | Trade Unions | 12 |
| | Gender | 11 |
| | Workers Participation | 5 |

Although one may argue that the growth in the number of clusters per year depicts the changes in the number of journals in the field, Tables 7.3 and 7.4 show that this is not necessarily true. Although throughout the period three new journals have been established, and papers from two research centres have been included in the dataset, one can see that despite the increase in the total numbers of papers per year, the growth in the number of clusters remains, more or less, stable when these institutional changes occur (1972 being the only exception).

Table 7.3

Total Number of Papers and Issues per Forum per Year

| Year | BUIRA | | BJIR | | IRJ | | IRRU | | EJIR | | HSIR | | CESR | |
|--------------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|
| | Articles | Issues | Articles | Issues | Articles | Issues | Articles | Issues | Articles | Issues | Articles | Issues | Articles | Issues |
| 1963 | 2 | - | 19 | 3 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1966 | 3 | - | 16 | 3 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1969 | 3 | - | 19 | 3 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1972 | 4 | - | 29 | 3 | 18 | 4 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1975 | - | - | 26 | 3 | 17 | 4 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1978 | 5 | - | 25 | 3 | 23 | 4 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1981 | 6 | - | 23 | 3 | 34 | 6 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1984 | - | - | 19 | 3 | 34 | 4 | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1987 | - | - | 23 | 3 | 23 | 4 | 5 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1990 | - | - | 22 | 3 | 21 | 4 | 3 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1993 | - | - | 25 | 4 | 22 | 4 | 5 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 1996 | - | - | 20 | 4 | 24 | 4 | 2 | - | 18 | 3 | 14 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 1999 | - | - | 19 | 4 | 30 | 5 | 1 | - | 15 | 3 | 14 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 2002 | - | - | 30 | 4 | 30 | 5 | 2 | - | 15 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 | - |
| 2005 | - | - | 18 | 4 | 30 | 6 | 4 | - | 18 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 4 | - |
| Total | 23 | | 333 | | 306 | | 22 | | 66 | | 44 | | 4 | |

Table 7.4
Number of Clusters and Average Growth per Observation

| Years | Clusters | Average Change (%) | Institutional Changes |
|-------|----------|--------------------|---|
| 1963 | 13 | - | |
| 1966 | 11 | -15.4 | |
| 1969 | 12 | 9.1 | |
| 1972 | 18 | 50.0 | <i>IRJ papers enter the dataset</i> |
| 1975 | 18 | 0.0 | |
| 1978 | 21 | 16.7 | |
| 1981 | 19 | -9.5 | |
| 1984 | 23 | 21.1 | |
| 1987 | 20 | -13.0 | <i>IRRU papers enter the dataset</i> |
| 1990 | 20 | 0.0 | |
| 1993 | 19 | -5.0 | |
| 1996 | 19 | 0.0 | <i>EJIR and HSIR papers enter the dataset</i> |
| 1999 | 21 | 10.5 | |
| 2002 | 26 | 23.8 | |
| 2005 | 24 | -7.7 | <i>CESR papers enter the dataset</i> |

Interestingly enough, the 50% growth in 1972 is not attributable solely to the inclusion of the IRJ in the dataset. As can be seen from Table 7.5, the IRJ contributes only *three topics* that are not discussed by the BJIR (*Mediation & Arbitration, Policy, and Miscellaneous*), whereas the BJIR discusses *eight topics* that are not discussed either by the IRJ or by the BUIRA (the BUIRA discusses only *one topic* which does not appear either in the BJIR or in the IRJ (*IR Theory & Research*)). The remaining seven clusters are shared between the three institutions.

The contributions of the new institutions in the years of their first appearance is an interesting issue, since they can reveal the influence each institution had on the general direction of the field. Whenever a new institution appeared, it contributed at least one new research topic in the Industrial Relations research corpus. However, the interesting conclusion emerging from Table 7.5 is that the new institutions also share the majority of their research topics with the already existing institutions, as can be seen from a comparison of the *'Total'* and the *'Unique'* columns. In other words, the new institutions accept the existing research topics as the legitimate intellectual foundations of Industrial Relations, upon which they base their further contributions. Especially after 1990, the relative stability of the total clusters suggests that a certain intellectual identity has been established in the field; thus, although two new journals appeared in 1995 and in 1996 (the EJIR and the HSIR), the total number of clusters did not change significantly from 1987, when only the BJIR, the IRJ, and the IRRU were present (see Figure 7.1).

Table 7.5

Total and Unique Clusters per Institution in the Year of its Appearance in the Data

| Year | BUIRA | | BJIR | | IRJ | | IRRU | | EJIR | | HSIR | | CESR | |
|------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | <i>Total</i> | <i>Unique</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Unique</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Unique</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Unique</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Unique</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Unique</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Unique</i> |
| 1972 | 4 | 1 | 14 | 8 | 9 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1987 | - | - | 11 | 2 | 14 | 4 | 5 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1996 | - | - | 7 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 11 | 3 | - | - |
| 2005 | - | - | 11 | 3 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Notes:

1. The "Total" Column shows the total number of clusters appearing in each institution in the specific year.
2. The "Unique" Column shows the clusters that appeared only in the specific institution in the specific year.

Does British Industrial Relations Face an Intellectual Stagnation?

Although the previous analysis reveals the problematic bases of the intellectual-stagnation argument, since the general increase in the total number of clusters shows that the field grows intellectually, it does not reveal the evolution of the new clusters per year. Hence, although a topic may be uniquely discussed in a new forum, it does not mean that this unique contribution is necessarily a *new cluster* in the total research corpus of Industrial Relations; it may just be an old cluster uniquely discussed by the specific institution. A closer examination of the clusters' development in the 15-years period is necessary if we are to understand the dynamic nature of the field.

As has been mentioned in Chapter 1, a field faces stagnation if the research conducted by its community cannot fulfil its intellectual functions. This is a qualitative issue about the nature of the research, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section. However, one may be able to form a first idea about the field's intellectual state by examining some quantitative indices regarding its research. Therefore, a field may be said to be developing if, firstly, it has established a stable hard core of research topics around which the majority of the research revolves and, secondly, if new research topics enter its intellectual corpus, which shows that the field is able to regenerate and redefine its limits and, thus, adjust more easily to the changes of the external environment. When the opposite situation exists, one may infer that the field faces intellectual problems. Based on the above, in Table 7.6 the relevant quantitative information for British Industrial Relations is presented.

Table 7.6
Development of the Research Clusters per Year

| Year | New Clusters | Disappearing Clusters | Old Clusters | Total Clusters | Rate of Change (%) | |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|------|
| | | | | | New | Old |
| 1963 | - | - | 13 | 13 | | |
| 1966 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 11 | - | -0.5 |
| 1969 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 12 | 0 | 0.3 |
| 1972 | 4 | 1 | 15 | 18 | 0 | 0.7 |
| 1975 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 18 | -0.3 | 0.1 |
| 1978 | 3 | 2 | 20 | 21 | 0 | 0.3 |
| 1981 | 2 | 0 | 17 | 19 | -0.3 | -0.2 |
| 1984 | 3 | 1 | 21 | 23 | 0.5 | 0.2 |
| 1987 | 1 | 0 | 19 | 20 | -0.7 | -0.1 |
| 1990 | 2 | 2 | 20 | 20 | 1 | 0.1 |
| 1993 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 19 | -0.5 | -0.1 |
| 1996 | 2 | 0 | 17 | 19 | 1 | -0.1 |
| 1999 | 1 | 3 | 19 | 21 | -0.5 | 0.1 |
| 2002 | 2 | 11 | 17 | 26 | 1 | -0.1 |
| 2005 | 0 | - | 24 | 24 | -1 | 0.4 |
| Pre-1984 | 20 | 5 | 97 | 112 | | |
| Post-1984 | 12 | 6* | 155 | 172 | | |

*Does not include the 2002 data.

The '*New Clusters*' column shows the development of the field. When the number of new clusters per year is positive, the field experiences an intellectual growth, since it addresses new research topics; when the number equals zero, the field is in an intellectual standstill, since it does not include new research areas in its corpus. As one can observe, throughout the period the field experiences a relative growth, since the number of new clusters is always positive (the only exception is 2005). However, the *rate of growth* of the new clusters is generally negative, as the '*Rate of Change*' column for the new clusters reveals, meaning that although there is growth, the number of new clusters per year increases in a slower rate than in previous years. In a sense this is natural, as one can expect a field to develop faster in the early years of its foundation, when it tries to establish its intellectual identity, than in later ones.

Moreover, if one examines the total new clusters appearing in the pre-1984 and post-1984 periods, one will observe a 40% decline¹. Does this mean that the 'new paradigm' proponents are correct and that the field is indeed facing an intellectual

¹ Remember that 1984 is the year when the second generation of the crisis scholars appeared.

decline? Not necessarily, for three reasons. *Firstly*, as already mentioned, it is natural for the number of new clusters appearing each year to decline as the field ages. *Secondly*, an examination of the rates of changes in the two periods shows that in the pre-1984 period there is a steady decline in the number of new clusters, whereas post-1984 there is stability and a relative growth. Indeed, the sum of the rate of change for the new clusters for the pre-1984 period is -0.6 , whereas for the post-1984 period is 0.8 . In other words, until 1984 the rate of growth of new clusters was declining – steadily, but still declining – whereas from 1984 onwards, the rate of growth is positive, meaning that this period experiences a slight growth. Although, cumulatively, the number of new clusters appearing in the post-1984 period is smaller than in the pre-1984 one, the rate of growth of the former is larger than the rate of growth of the latter. *Thirdly*, the examination of the new clusters is not enough by itself to support the stagnation and decline arguments; for one must also take into consideration each year's disappearing topics.

A cluster is defined as '*disappearing*' if it does not appear again in any of the observations. The number of the disappearing clusters reveals the dynamic nature of the field, since their existence shows that the field is in a process of change and redefinition of its intellectual bases, and that it responds to certain external stimuli. When the number of disappearing clusters equals zero, the field experiences *stability* (but not necessarily stagnation – it may still attract new clusters), whereas when the number is positive, it shows that the field is in a process of redefining its intellectual corpus by disposing of unnecessary topics.

It must be noted that the year 2002 is an outlier, since the number of 'disappearing' clusters is very high (11 clusters). However, one can disregard this observation from the analysis without much loss of information, since the average period between the re-appearance of a cluster from the point of its last continuous appearances is *two* observations. Because there is only one observation after 2002, there is not sufficient information to characterise the 2002 'disappearing' clusters as such.

Disregarding, thus, this observation from the analysis one can observe that, in general, there exists a rising tendency in the number of disappearing clusters throughout the period, which means that the field is in a constant process of intellectual redefinition. Moreover, the difference in the number of disappearing clusters between the pre-1984 and the post-1984 periods is not great, implying continuity in the quest for the core research subjects.

Indeed, this is more obvious by the examination of the 'Old Clusters' column. The number of old clusters per year denotes the field's intellectual maturity. Since a field needs a stable research core to define its limits, the repetition of topics throughout a period shows that the scientific community has agreed, in a sense, on the research nature of the field. The greater the number of old clusters, the more mature the field becomes. In this case, the number of old clusters grows in general, and although there are some periods of decline, they are not very substantial – as can be seen by the 'Rate of Change' column.

Moreover, the cumulative difference in the number of old clusters, between the pre-1984 and the post-1984 periods is substantially large (58 new 'old clusters' appeared between the two periods) showing that the field has established a rather important 'research core'. Interestingly enough, the rate of change of the Old Clusters is slightly larger during the pre-1984 years, implying that the field's intellectual maturation was somewhat faster during that period (the sum of the rate of change for the pre-1984 period is 0.7, whereas for the post-1984 period is 0.5). This is, again, something natural for a healthy developing field, as it shows that during its early and middle years it establishes a research hardcore; although post-1984 the rise of the rate of change is smaller than in the previous years, it shows that the field still maintains and enforces its stable core.

Thus, to argue that British Industrial Relations has declined in the post-1984 period would be premature. Indeed, although there is a decline in the total number of new clusters appearing in the literature post-1984, it does not mean that the field faces an intellectual stagnation. On the contrary, as the preceding analysis revealed, one can argue that post-1984 a stable intellectual hardcore has been established, by concentrating on specific research clusters and by abandoning others and, most importantly, new research topics have been attracted in a faster rate than in the pre-1984 years. If anything, the field appears more stable and mature, as its intellectual core is being continuously redefined by the inclusion of new topics and the exclusion of old ones. Remember, however, that the NPT argument has a *qualitative* dimension as well: although quantitatively the field does not face stagnation, its ability to address the changing social environment is not evident by the previous discussion. To see whether the changes in the field actually depict the changes in its subject matter, and whether the field has managed to adapt itself scientifically to the new social conditions, one must examine in more detail the content of the post-1984 clusters.

Industrial Relations Research and the Changing Social Environment

Although several important developments were taking place in the industrial relations environment during the field's early days, the major socio-political events that would influence the phenomena the field studies would occur during the 1980s – early 1990s. In the UK, the Conservatives began their 18-year rule in 1979, introducing policies that would change the face of British industrial relations forever. A few years later (first in 1981 and then in 1986), the EEC expanded to include in its domain the South European countries, with their peculiar social and industrial relations models, whereas the first discussions about flexible work arrangements were initiated at a European level. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet rule in 1991 gave rise to a handful of problems (both social and epistemic) that could (and, eventually, would) occupy the social scientific literature for the years to come. The changing structure of the workforce – with the inclusion of more women, immigrants and atypical workers in the labour market – posed new and interesting problems for policy makers, employers and trade unions alike. In the 1990s, the opening of the (economic) borders, and the intensification of trade and of capital mobility challenged the existing norms and practices, even in systems where a certain sort of stability was the norm. Within such a changing environment, one expects from any social scientific field at least to address these major issues and, at most, to provide adequate explanations and policy proposals to the interested parties.

The NPT argues that the field of Industrial Relations failed to do so – its outdated focus on declining institutions and the inadequacy of its theories to address the new environment steadily led the field to a decline. As we have seen, however, this is not exactly true. Throughout the 1980s, Industrial Relations is being established on more firm intellectual bases and new research topics are being discussed in the literature. Do these new topics, however, take into consideration the changes in the social sphere? Table 7.7 presents the twelve new clusters of the post-1984 period, their frequency of appearances throughout the period and the frequency of the years in which they appeared.

Table 7.7
New Clusters in the Post-1984 Period

| Cluster | Frequency of Appearances | Frequency of Years' Appearances |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gender | 21 | 7 |
| Work Practices/Types | 12 | 7 |
| Europe | 12 | 4 |
| Production Practices | 5 | 3 |
| Social Dialogue | 5 | 2 |
| Legal Rights | 4 | 3 |
| Worker | 4 | 2 |
| History | 3 | 2 |
| Globalisation | 2 | 2 |
| Young Workers | 2 | 2 |
| Class | 1 | 1 |
| Public Sector | 1 | 1 |

If we disregard the *Class* and *Public Sector* clusters, which appeared only once, we can observe that Industrial Relations research turned towards the greater examination of notions such as *Gender*, *Work Practices*, and *Europe*, incorporating into its body the changes that were taking place in the mid-1980s. The *Work Practices* cluster, for instance, refers to topics that are related to various work types, such as flexibility, part-time work, working from home, and with the organisation of employment, such as team-working. Moreover, the fact that the specific cluster is spread almost evenly throughout the post-1984 period reveals the continuous interest of the community to these newly adopted and emerging practices that characterise the modern workplace. One can argue similarly for the *Gender* cluster, which was absent in the pre-1984 period, but has become an important addition to the Industrial Relations literature thereafter, sounding the changes in the workforce constitution that were observed at that time. The impact of the EC/EU policies on industrial relations and on the new member states and the social processes at the EU level are also evident in the literature, with the *Europe* cluster appearing 12 times, from 1996 till 2005 inclusive.

The increasing interest in European topics is closely related to one of the most important methodological changes in the post-1984 period: the development of comparative research. Although comparative studies existed in the Industrial Relations literature since the 1960s and 1970s, with Dunlop's *Industrial Relations Systems* (Dunlop 1958) and Clegg's *Trade Unionism under Collective Bargaining* (Clegg 1976) being the standard reference of the day, comparative research was totally underrepresented in the UK Industrial Relations fora (until 1981 only one

comparative paper was published in the BJIR in the census years, see Table 7.8). From 1984 onwards, however, comparative papers figured prominently in the major journals (the BJIR and the IRJ) and, from 1996 onwards, in the EJIR.

Table 7.8
Frequency of Comparative Research Papers

| Year | Forum | | | | | Total |
|------|-------|-----|------|------|------|-------|
| | BJIR | IRJ | EJIR | HSIR | IRRU | |
| 1963 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1966 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1969 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1972 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1975 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1978 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1981 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1984 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1987 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1990 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1993 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 1996 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 1999 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| 2002 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| 2005 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 15 |

Indeed, although the IRJ and the EJIR share the same number of comparative papers from 1996 onwards (with 1999 being the only exception), the EJIR has a higher density of comparative papers than the IRJ, as Table 7.9 shows.

Table 7.9
Density of Comparative Papers in the IRJ and the EJIR

| Year | IRJ (%) | EJIR (%) |
|------|---------|----------|
| 1996 | 20.8 | 27.8 |
| 1999 | 3.3 | 33.3 |
| 2002 | 10.0 | 20.0 |
| 2005 | 16.7 | 27.8 |

The growth of comparative research may be attributed to a number of factors, such as the increasing importance of the European Union, the rise of globalisation and the influence of the multinational capital on national industrial relations institutions. Moreover, the quest for best practices made the study of different industrial relations systems imperative.

Another way to see whether the field has kept up-to-date with the changes in the external environment is to examine the evolution of the content of the clusters that

appear both in the pre-1984 and the post-1984 periods, and the secondary keywords with which they are related. Since space is limited, only the most popular clusters in Table 7.1 will be analysed, namely *Bargaining*, *Trade Unions*, and *Wages & Benefits*.

Bargaining

The *Bargaining* cluster includes terms such as ‘collective bargaining’, ‘negotiations’, ‘bargaining group’, or ‘union deals’ and refers to the nature, processes and content of collective bargaining, both at the national and industry level. As can be seen in Table 7.10, *Bargaining* was always present in the years under consideration, but it was not always at the top ranking of its year, although on average it occupied the top-3 positions in the fora.

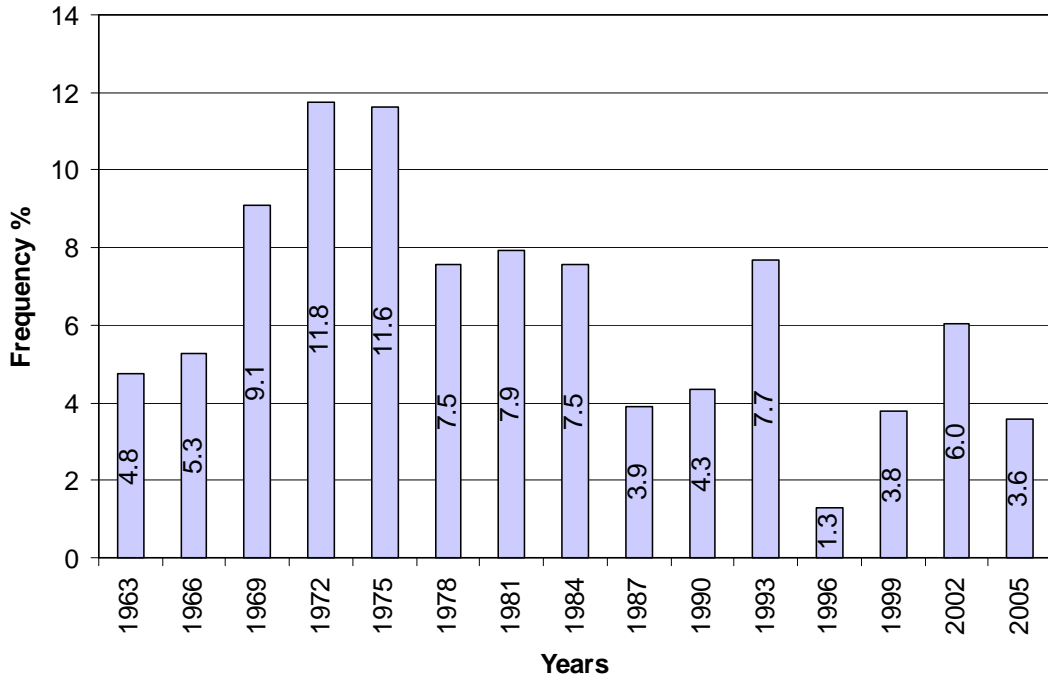
Table 7.10
The Evolution of the *Bargaining* Cluster

| Years | Frequency of Appearances | Frequency % | Ranking |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------|---------|
| 1963 | 1 | 4.8 | 4 |
| 1966 | 1 | 5.3 | 4 |
| 1969 | 2 | 9.1 | 3 |
| 1972 | 6 | 11.8 | 2 |
| 1975 | 5 | 11.6 | 1 |
| 1978 | 4 | 7.5 | 3 |
| 1981 | 5 | 7.9 | 3 |
| 1984 | 4 | 7.5 | 3 |
| 1987 | 2 | 3.9 | 4 |
| 1990 | 2 | 4.3 | 3 |
| 1993 | 4 | 7.7 | 3 |
| 1996 | 1 | 1.3 | 8 |
| 1999 | 3 | 3.8 | 6 |
| 2002 | 5 | 6.0 | 5 |
| 2005 | 3 | 3.6 | 5 |

As one can observe from Figure 7.2, the cluster’s coverage throughout the period has steadily *declined* at an average rate of 2% per year. At a first glance, then, the overall evolution of the cluster seems to contradict the ‘new paradigm’ assumption that Industrial Relations research focuses on collective bargaining, at the expense of other topics, at times when the specific institution deteriorates. Indeed, if we examine the pre-1984 and post-1984 periods, we will see that during the former the cluster *grew* on average at a rate of 9% per year, whereas it *declined* during the latter at a rate of 10% per year. This steep decline in the post-1984 period may be attributable to the fact that the topics included in the cluster were not of relevance anymore. However, to make such an inference, one has to examine in more detail the way the

topics of the cluster were actually studied. Table A3.2 in Appendix 3 shows how the content of the *Bargaining* cluster evolved throughout the period; it includes the primary words of the cluster, and the secondary keywords with which the former are combined.

Figure 7.2
The Evolution of the *Bargaining* Cluster



During the pre-1984 period, the *Bargaining* cluster was primarily focused on the examination of the relationship between collective bargaining and wages. In a period when Trade Unions pushed for higher wages and conflicts were an inseparable part of the industrial relations reality of the day, a focus on the role of bargaining in wage determination, on the process of bargaining, and on the means to achieve industrial peace through mediation and arbitration is not surprising. It is interesting to note that during that period two papers were concerned about reforms in bargaining, one in 1969, and the other in 1981.

As is well known, however, the advent of the first Thatcher government in 1979 radically changed the British industrial relations environment, and the increased importance of Europe and of globalisation in industrial relations influenced the policies and directions of the industrial relations actors. These changes should be depicted in the literature, in one way or another, to claim that Industrial Relations research is up-to-date with, and addresses, the current events. Indeed, in the post-

1984 period the literature is increasingly concerned with the changes in bargaining, such as the decentralisation of collective bargaining, its overall decline, the attempts to reform it, or its future².

An interest in globalisation and Europe is also evident in the literature, albeit not in the extent that one would expect it to be, considering their importance for industrial relations. Both of these topics are discussed in 2002 and 2005, showing that the new generation of Industrial Relations scholars is concerned with the implications of these phenomena for the industrial relations processes. A new phenomenon that is also addressed in the literature is social movement unionism; a 2002 paper examines the process of negotiations between the employers and the 'Justice for Janitors' movement in the USA.

Although, in general, the coverage of the *Bargaining* cluster in the literature declined during the post-1984 period, the research topics discussed addressed the fundamental changes in the social environment, and were not restricted to the pre-1984 agendas. This shows that even if an institution declines, it can still generate interesting scientific problems that can be addressed by the existing approaches, without the need to radically alter the nature of the field or the existing theories.

Trade Unions

The *Trade Unions* cluster includes words synonymous to trade unions or to unionism, words that refer to specific types of unions (such as the post-entry closed shop), and words that concern trade union processes, such as Union Democracy, Union Organising, Union Membership, or Union Recognition. Similarly to the *Bargaining* cluster, the *Trade Unions* cluster appears throughout the observation period but, contrary to *Bargaining*, the *Trade Unions* topics were, and still are, the most dominant research topics in Industrial Relations. As is evident from Table 7.11, only in three, out of fifteen, cases has the cluster occupied a lower ranking than the first one.

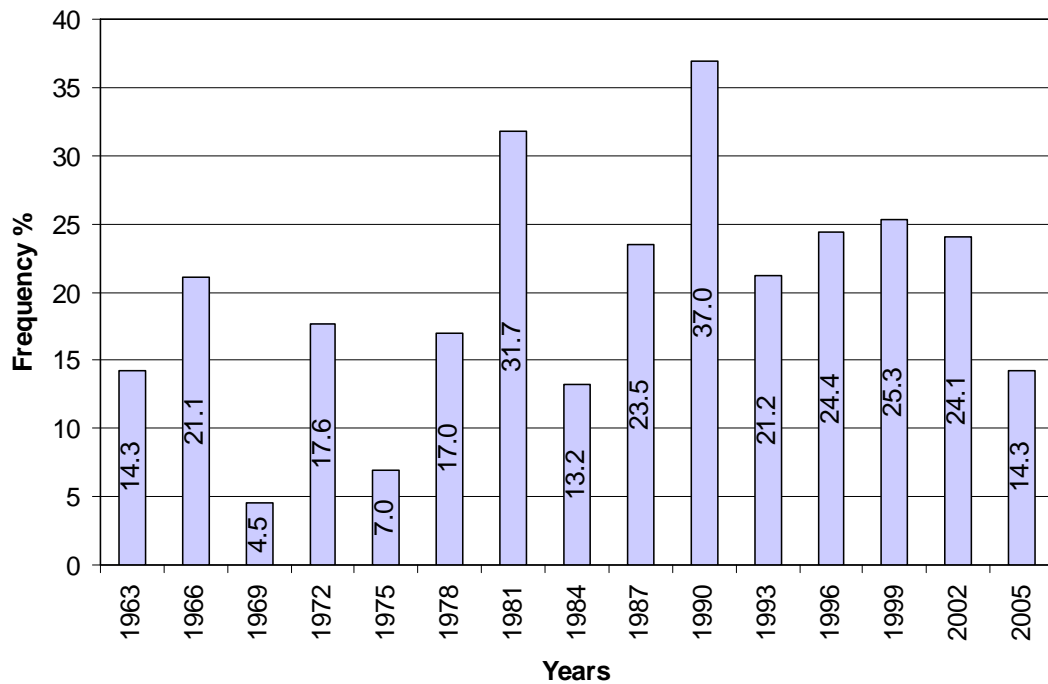
² One must note here the importance of the WIRS/WERS datasets, which helped promote a broader and more quantitative study of the various industrial relations practices and phenomena.

Table 7.11
The Evolution of the *Trade Unions* Cluster

| Years | Frequency of Appearances | Frequency % | Ranking |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------|---------|
| 1963 | 3 | 14.3 | 2 |
| 1966 | 4 | 21.1 | 1 |
| 1969 | 1 | 4.5 | 4 |
| 1972 | 9 | 17.6 | 1 |
| 1975 | 3 | 7.0 | 3 |
| 1978 | 9 | 17.0 | 1 |
| 1981 | 20 | 31.7 | 1 |
| 1984 | 7 | 13.2 | 1 |
| 1987 | 12 | 23.5 | 1 |
| 1990 | 17 | 37.0 | 1 |
| 1993 | 11 | 21.2 | 1 |
| 1996 | 19 | 24.4 | 1 |
| 1999 | 20 | 25.3 | 1 |
| 2002 | 20 | 24.1 | 1 |
| 2005 | 12 | 14.3 | 1 |

Despite the overall reign of the cluster in almost every year of the sample, its coverage seems to follow a rather cyclical path, as one can observe in Figure 7.3. Interestingly enough, the various fluctuations in the cluster's appearance eliminate each other's effect and the cluster does not seem either to grow or to decline throughout the period. If one examines the pre-1984 and the post-1984 periods, however, a slightly different picture emerges; during the former period, the cluster experienced an average annual growth of 14%, whereas during the latter, the growth rate was much smaller – at 1%. This discrepancy in the growth rates is attributable to the steep declines in the coverage of the topic in 1969 and in 1975, and the steep rises in the following years; in the post-1984 period, on the contrary, the development of the cluster was much smoother (1990 being the only exception), albeit less steep.

Figure 7.3
The Evolution of the *Trade Unions* Cluster



The development pattern of the *Trade Unions* cluster is very interesting, for its cyclical behaviour seems both to substantiate and, at the same time, to refute the thesis that Industrial Relations research focuses on the study of declining institutions. As is well documented in the literature, the decline of Trade Unions occurred in the post-1979 period – the ‘winter of discontent’ and the advent of the Thatcher government may not be the only reasons for the decline, but have certainly helped to accelerate its pace. Thus, if the argument of the ‘new paradigm’ proponents is correct, one would expect the coverage of the cluster during the Thatcher period either to grow or to remain stable. However, the situation is unclear; for, one can observe both a steep increase and a steep decline of the topic’s coverage during the first years of the first and second Thatcher administration (1981 and 1984), and a relative growth thereafter. Although the growth may seem to corroborate the ‘new paradigm’ argument, the decline in 1984 does not necessarily refute it. For despite the fact that the cluster covered only 13.2% of the publication space in 1984, it was still ranked first in the topics discussed in the fora.

To examine the validity of the ‘new paradigm’ thesis, one needs to approach it in a different way. *Firstly*, it must be noted that an immediate corollary of the ‘outdated research’ argument is that Industrial Relations research may sacrifice the study of

other topics in favour of the 'outdated' ones. However, the 1984 case seems to refute this position. For although the *Trade Unions* cluster is ranked first, its low coverage rate reveals the variety of research topics studied that year – 23 topics in total were discussed, with a mean frequency of 2.3 appearances per topic. Although the *Trade Unions* cluster constituted the most frequent topic of the year (7 appearances), the distribution of the topics is quite smooth (SD = 2.0). Similar conclusions can be drawn for the following years, when the cluster's coverage grows once more (see Table 7.4). *Secondly*, and more interestingly, the refutation of the 'outdated research' thesis comes from questioning the meaning of 'outdated'. As has been repeated throughout the thesis, and as the *Bargaining* cluster analysis revealed, to argue that the fate of the field is tied to the fate of its research subject is theoretically problematic, since new research problems may emerge from a changing situation. Indeed, an examination of the cluster's content reveals the adaptation of the research to the changing social conditions.

Table A3.3 in Appendix 3 reveals the multiplicity of topics discussed under the *Trade Unions* cluster. In the post-1984 period, the *Trade Unions* cluster adopts a different research orientation than in the pre-1984 years confirming, thus, the ability of the research community to re-define its subject and to focus on the new challenges and problems that trade unions faced.

During the pre-1984 period, the literature was primarily concerned with the examination of the various types of Trade Unions, such as unions for white collar employees, or public servants, and with trade union growth. Other important areas of research were the membership, structure, or internal democracy of the trade unions. Apart from this technical, and rather descriptive, orientation however, the literature on the topic remained rather underdeveloped. In the post-1984 era, however, the cluster experienced an exponential growth, in terms of its content. The research abandoned its descriptive role and began to actively engage in the theoretical and practical problems that unions faced as a result of the wider social, political, and economic changes in the world. Topics like trade union recognition, the decline of membership and ways for its revitalisation, trade union organising and trade union strategies, were discussed and actively researched.

Apart from the aforementioned topics, the research began to examine in more detail the responses of the trade unions to various managerial practices – of particular focus here were the union avoidance strategies. Moreover, the issues of labour movement and union decline figured prominently in the list of published papers, whereas the concerns of many a policy-maker on the influence of unions on

effectiveness and productivity were also depicted in the literature. An interesting strand of research focused on the impact of new technology, and especially of the internet, on union practices and policies. Although the pre-1984 topic of types of trade unions was not abandoned, it was clearly marginalised. The interest, however, on internal democracy and the structure of the trade unions continued to exist.

Wages & Benefits

The *Wages & Benefits* cluster includes all the words that are synonymous to wages or salaries, and words that are related to specific payment systems (such as Payment-By-Results, Performance-Related-Pay, or piecework). It also includes words that refer to wage institutions or processes, such as 'wage systems' or 'wage agreements'. As Table 7.12 reveals, the cluster usually occupied the top-3 positions every year, averaging in the 3rd position, together with *Bargaining*.

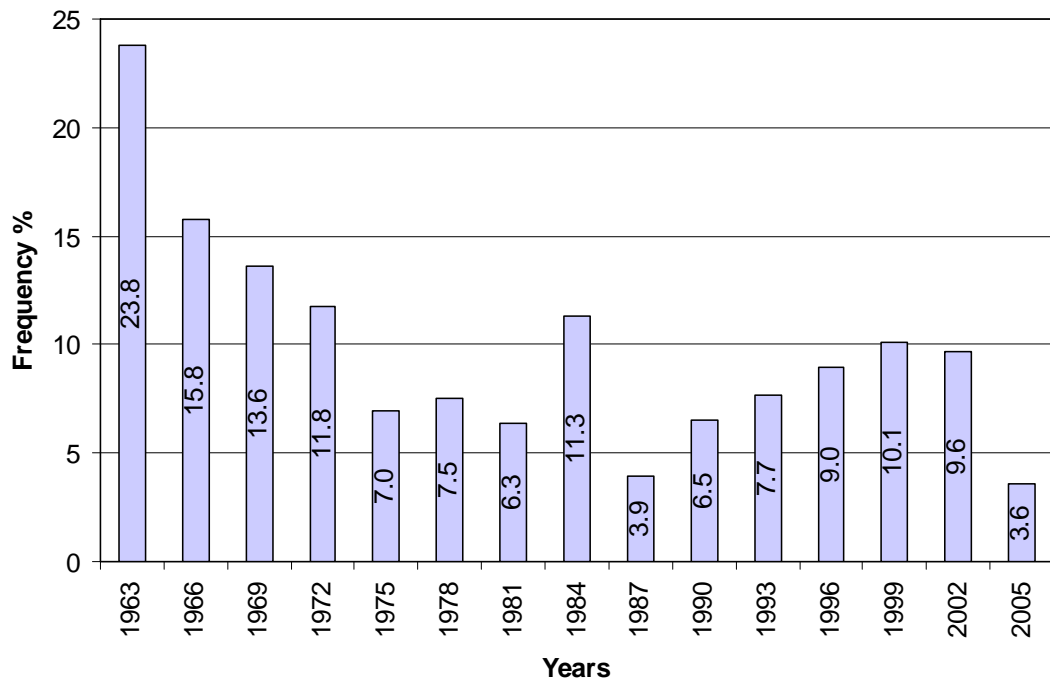
Table 7.12
The Evolution of the *Wages & Benefits* Cluster

| Years | Frequency of Appearances | Frequency % | Ranking |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------|---------|
| 1963 | 5 | 23.8 | 1 |
| 1966 | 3 | 15.8 | 2 |
| 1969 | 3 | 13.6 | 2 |
| 1972 | 6 | 11.8 | 2 |
| 1975 | 3 | 7.0 | 3 |
| 1978 | 4 | 7.5 | 3 |
| 1981 | 4 | 6.3 | 4 |
| 1984 | 6 | 11.3 | 2 |
| 1987 | 2 | 3.9 | 4 |
| 1990 | 3 | 6.5 | 2 |
| 1993 | 4 | 7.7 | 3 |
| 1996 | 7 | 9.0 | 3 |
| 1999 | 8 | 10.1 | 3 |
| 2002 | 8 | 9.6 | 3 |
| 2005 | 3 | 3.6 | 5 |

In Figure 7.4, one can observe the very interesting evolution of the cluster: although in 1963 it constituted the majority of the published research and occupied the first place in the topics discussed, it steadily *declined* in the consequent years, on an annual average rate of 13%. However, an examination of the pre-1984 and the post-1984 periods shows that the decline during the latter period is not as steep as during the former (20% versus 15% respectively). Obviously, this difference is attributed to the moderate rising tendency the cluster experienced in the 1987-1999 years.

One must be careful not to interpret this decline as a lack of interest on the topics of wages. For although they occupied less space in the literature, the *Wage & Benefits*-related topics were still part of the top-3 topics of discussion, implying that the Industrial Relations community retained its interest on the issue of remuneration while, at the same time, expanded its intellectual horizons by including more research clusters in the fora. As in the previous cases, however, the real changes in the conceptualisation of the *Wages & Benefits* topic can only be understood through a thorough examination of the cluster's content; Table A3.4 in Appendix 3 contains all the relevant information.

Figure 7.4
The Evolution of the *Wages & Benefits* Cluster



During the pre-1984 period, the *Wages & Benefits* cluster focused simply on the issue of wage determination and on the type of wages that may exist in an industry or a workplace, although some papers discussed the nature of different payment systems. Although the above topics were retained in the literature in the post-1984 period, Table A3.4 in Appendix 3 shows that the content of the topics discussed under this cluster was considerably enriched. The post-1984 papers began to examine the issue of wages in conjunction with the issues of equality and gender. This depicts the structural changes that were observed in the labour force during the 1980s, when more women and immigrants joined the workforce. The study of the

above topics together with *Wages & Benefits* reveals both the ability, and the readiness, of the Industrial Relations research community to address the sociological and economic changes that were taking place in the external environment.

Conclusion

According to the NPT, the field of Industrial Relations is (or will be) in crisis because of its focus on deteriorating institutions (such as Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining), and its inability to address, and adjust to, the new social realities. Obviously, the NPT considers the crisis to be intellectual – that is why its ‘solution’ is intellectual as well. However, as was the case with the rest of its assumptions, the crisis argument has no basis in reality.

Firstly, in the case of Britain, the field of Industrial Relations has grown substantially in terms of research topics covered, since its early years. If it was facing a crisis or a challenge, one would not expect it to attract researchers who would devote a substantial amount of energy and time to publish in its fora. Apart from its quantitative development, however, the field has also developed qualitatively, as the content of its topics has changed and has adjusted to the new societal reality. Secondly, one cannot claim that the field is stagnating intellectually – i.e. that it does not address new problems or new research areas. Throughout its history some of its old research topics disappeared completely from the literature, whereas new ones were always added in its intellectual corpus, revealing a dynamic nature quite in contrast to any stagnation belief. Thirdly, and most importantly, the research in the field seems to follow closely the various societal changes and to address them in its fora. The new clusters emerging in the post-1984 period depict the socio-political changes that were taking place in the wider social environment, something that was also evident in the analysis of the content of the three most researched clusters in Industrial Relations. This last analysis revealed more clearly the illogical nature of the argument that the field’s research focuses on deteriorating institutions, as it was shown that the study of Trade Unions or Collective Bargaining can be, and is, adjusted to the new realities. The fact that Trade Unions were declining or are not as strong as they used to be does not mean that they do not constitute sources for interesting scientific problems. To tie the fate of the field to the fate of part of its subject-matter is not necessarily logically correct.

Chapter 8

The Structure of the British Industrial Relations Scientific Community

Although the intellectual edifice of Industrial Relations seems well protected against the NPT (see Chapter 4) this does not exclude the possibility that the field may be in, or may face, a crisis. For a crisis is not only intellectual but institutional as well. Suppose, for example, that the papers published in the field's journals come from people who do not primarily identify themselves with the field, but publish in its journals for opportunistic or contingent reasons. This means that the existence of the journals depends on the publication decisions of people outside the field, who are not interested in establishing a continuous presence in it. The lack of continuity inevitably leads to a lack of sustainability, since a stable hard core which identifies itself with the field cannot be formed. As a result, the field's institutions rest on untenable bases, since their existence and continuity is dependent on, and susceptible to, the intentions of exogenous agents.

Conversely, the existence of a strong community, interested in establishing itself in the field, supports and promotes both the field's institutions and its values. Remember that, according to the Internal Circuit of Science described in Chapter 1, the scientific community is central in any field, since its work defines the theoretical and research limits of the field and differentiates it from adjacent disciplines. Therefore, any discussion about the past, present, and future of a field must start from a thorough study of its community. Although other factors, such as the influence of the gatekeepers, or of the fund-holders, play a role in defining the direction of a field, the ultimate power rests with its community.

In the following pages, the issue of crisis will be tackled in more detail through the examination of the structural characteristics of the British Industrial Relations community. The basic focus is to examine whether the field presently faces a crisis,

and whether there are any signs of an upcoming one. To answer these questions, the Chapter is divided in three broad sections. In the first section, some theoretical and methodological considerations are addressed, which establish the necessary framework for the analysis. Once this is achieved, the second section examines in detail the structure of the British Industrial Relations community by studying the development of its New and Old members and their role in the establishment and evolution of the field. The ultimate aim is to reveal the dynamics of the field and its future potential, an issue discussed in more detail in the concluding section.

Theoretical Context and Focus of the Chapter

Any talk about crises refers, either explicitly or implicitly, to the notion of power or, to be more precise, to the lack of power of the affected party to overcome its critical condition. Therefore, before exploring whether the field of Industrial Relations faces, or may face, a crisis, it is necessary to discuss in more detail the notion of a field's power. The basic problem in this discussion is the obvious fact that a field of study can be considered a fictitious social entity. Although there are institutions for the promotion of knowledge, the majority of the people participating in the field's fora – especially in its journals – may never build any social ties with each other, or actually participate in the running of any of the institutions. What links these people together is the acceptance of a certain identity that is promulgated by the field's institutions. However, one cannot argue that this identity is universally accepted; on the contrary, it is challenged throughout the history of a field and, in a sense, these challenges are responsible for the advancement of knowledge. Yet although a challenge may assist the field's development, a crisis is a more serious situation since, if it is not tackled, it will eventually lead either to a complete change of the field's nature, or to its total eradication.

The ability of the field to resist these corroding forces constitutes its power; and as is the case with power, one cannot know how powerful someone or something is unless this power is actually manifested (Dowding 1996). Following this rationale, the measurement of power becomes a difficult, even impossible, task, for two major reasons: firstly, because one has to wait for its manifestation before drawing any definite conclusions about its nature and extent and, secondly, because the actual power of someone, or something, may not only depend on objective circumstances (such as size, or knowledge, for example) but on the *will* and the *ability* of the subject to use it. This second point will not concern us for the moment and its discussion will have to wait until the next, and final, chapter. For the moment, the focus will be on the objective characteristics of power.

Although the exact measurement of power may be problematic, one may be able to say whether someone, or something, is *potentially* powerful based on an observation of the subject's external characteristics. In the case of the scientific field, one must look in three different directions: firstly, to its community, secondly, to its institutions and thirdly, to its theories.

A community is considered to be strong if it has three major characteristics: firstly, if it has enough loyal members, who identify themselves with the intellectual agenda of the field, and who work towards promoting and sustaining that agenda; secondly, if it is open to new members and ideas, and can attract people not only from its ranks but from other fields as well – openness is a necessary characteristic for a field to evolve and not to become stagnated in a vicious circle of repetitive and self-fulfilling argumentations; and, thirdly, if it has strong links to the wider society.

Moreover, the power of the community is closely linked to the power of its institutions, since they are, in a sense, defined by the community and vice versa. Those who participate in the field's journals are part of the field's community and, at the same time, members of a group of people who have published in the specific institution. The growth of the field's membership implies a growth of the field's institutions. However, and this is important, because the institutions are the material expression of an immaterial social relationship, they have the ability to actually invoke the power of the community and guide it to proper channels.

Finally, the existence of sound and strong theories that fulfil their scientific purpose and are accepted by the majority of the community, also act as intellectual bonds between the community's members. Even if a unified theory is absent, however, as is the case with Industrial Relations, a common (and, most of the time, silent) agreement regarding the field's *problématiques* can fulfil the same mission. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, the field of Industrial Relations is characterised by a theoretical and methodological pluralism, which helps it redefine itself whenever necessary. The existence of pluralism is another measurement for the openness of a field: the more open a field, the more pluralistic in its research and theories it will be. Of course, although openness may be necessary for the regeneration of a field, too much pluralism may prove detrimental for its future. Indeed, if the field does not manage somehow to control the level of pluralism, it may reach a point where the number of alternative theoretical approaches and fractions will be so great that may lead to an intellectual and institutional split. The usual control mechanisms rest with the field's gatekeepers and leading scientists, who set the directions and the research agenda that the field may follow for a period of years.

Although in Chapter 1 the nature of crisis was elaborated (see p. 48 ff.), the signs of an institutional crisis were not discussed. How are we to understand whether a field faces or will face a crisis? Before answering this question, it must be clarified that not all the participants in a field are 'loyal' members of its community – i.e. members who primarily identify themselves with the field's principles. Some people come from different disciplines and appear in the field circumstantially, whereas others may appear frequently but identify themselves primarily with another field or discipline. This kind of intellectual exchange leads to the creation of various subgroups in the field – the more open a field, the more subgroups it will have. These subgroups, however, must be peripheral to the social organisation of the field and should not constitute an important part of its identity, if the field is to retain its structural independence. In other words, although a field may be comprised of various subgroups, it must have a hard core of members that will be denser than any of the rest subgroups.

Based on the above rationale, a field faces a crisis (or may face a crisis) if any of the following conditions (or a combination of them) is in place: *firstly*, the field's hard core community remains stable, whereas the rest of the subgroups grow in membership. *Secondly*, the hard core loses members and the subgroups either remain stable or grow. Loss of membership either means that the field cannot attract new members or that it loses some of its old members, or both. In any case the density of its hard core reduces in size relative to the rest of the subgroups. *Thirdly*, the amount of the subgroups increases, while the hard core's membership remains stable, or increases at a slower pace.

The changes in the community's structure influence the field's institutions as well. For example, the field's journals may stop being the first source where a research is published, meaning that they may not be able to attract high-quality publications. Also, the shrinkage of the field's hard core will mean that it will not have the power to direct and control decisions regarding the intellectual focus of the field, or the nature and structure of its institutions. The rest of the chapter will investigate whether any, or all, of the above three conditions ever were, or are, in place in the case of Industrial Relations. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to discuss in more detail the methods used in approaching the problem.

Methodological Considerations

Despite the contested nature of the term (see Chapter 1), for the purposes of the current research a scientific community will be regarded as all the people who have

appeared at least once in any of the four British Industrial Relations journals, or were members of the BUIRA. A thorough examination of the field's community would require its study throughout the field's history; however, for reasons explained in Chapter 6, the present analysis will be restricted to studying specific instances from the history of the field, namely the years 1963, 1970, 1977, 1984, 1991, 1998, and 2005.

Although all the people who appeared in the five aforementioned fora in the above years are regarded as *prima facie* members of the Industrial Relations community, it is more correct to treat them as *loose* members of the community. This is because although they form a coherent whole, their actual relationship with the field is as yet unknown. In the rest of the chapter, these people will be mentioned as the *Total Authors* and *Total Members* of a specific year – i.e. the total number of people who, in that year, appeared in any of the four journals or were members of the BUIRA¹. Each year's Total Authors can be further split in two broad categories: the New Authors – i.e. those who appear for the first time in that year in the aforementioned fora – and the Old Authors – i.e. those who have appeared at least once in the past. Notice that although the classification of an individual as a New Author is year-dependent, this is not necessarily the case for an Old Author. For example, a year – say 1984 – may have ten Total Authors; six of them are New Authors, i.e. they appear in the records for the first time in 1984, whereas the rest are Old Authors. These Old Authors may have appeared in any of the fora any time in the past, not necessarily in the years under consideration. Thus, one of the Old Authors might have appeared for the first time in 1983 (a year not included in the years under examination) etc.

Moreover, not all the Authors appearing in a specific year are Industrial Relationists. An Industrial Relationist, or a hard core member of the field of Industrial Relations, is defined as any Author who directs the majority of her publications to the field's journals. An immediate corollary of this definition is that the field will include people who do not fit into this categorisation, and regard themselves as belonging to different disciplines. In the same way that these authors publish their research in the field's journals, or are members of the BUIRA, the Industrial Relationists may publish in journals outside the field. This type of intellectual exchange is a very important characteristic of any field. Those coming from different fields bring with them the

¹ For aesthetic reasons, in the rest of the chapter any reference to Authors will also be extended to Members, unless otherwise specified.

theories and research techniques of their science, and provide the field with a pluralistic identity. It is important to note at this point that the various subgroups are not stable, either in size or in type; there may be an exchange of members between them, and they may also completely lose some members.

Consequently, a static analysis of the authors' affiliations, and of the field's various subgroups, will not suffice. For this reason, a dynamic element is introduced in the analysis by examining in detail the publication records of the New and the Old Authors, both *before and during* their appearance in a specific year, and *after* that year. The first type of analysis shows how they identified themselves up to a specific year, whereas the second reveals whether, and how, their orientation has changed. The analysis of an author's publication record entails both qualitative and quantitative information: the various disciplines where one directs one's publications reveal the general intellectual orientation of that person, whereas the amount of papers one directs to a set of journals reveals the importance one assigns to specific disciplines.

A theoretical problem that immediately emerges concerns the classification of the various authors in respective subgroups. An intuitive method to address this issue is to categorise an author as belonging to one or another subgroup based on the amount of papers one publishes in a set of journals. Indeed, depending on the journals to which one directs one's publications, and the amount of papers one publishes in each journal, it is possible to categorise an author as favouring one or another discipline. This approach is based on the assumption that a person who identifies herself as – say – an economist, will logically direct the majority of her publications to economics journals; the same with a sociologist, a political scientist or an industrial relationist. Therefore, a person is considered to belong to one discipline or another if the majority of her publications are directed towards the journals of that discipline.

Classifying an author as belonging to one field or another is not always as straightforward as it may appear at first sight, as a person may have spread her publications equally among many different fields. To address this problem, a person was assigned a primary affiliation based on the following classification rules:

Rule 1: If Category 1 > Category 2 > ... > Category N, then Category 1 is the primary affiliation.

Rule 2: If Category 1 = Category 2 = ... = Category N, then there is no primary affiliation.

Rule 3: If Category 1 = Category 2 > Category 3 ≥ ... ≥ Category N, and if and only if Category 1 ≡ Industrial Relations, then Category 1 is the primary affiliation.

Rule 1 simply states that if a person's publications are spread between categories, then the category with the maximum amount of papers is the primary affiliation of the person. This is in accord with the assumption that a person who considers herself as belonging to a certain discipline will direct more of her publications to the journals of that discipline than to any other individual discipline. Rule 2 accounts for the case where it may not be possible to identify the primary affiliation of a person, since the publications are equally spread among the journals of different fields. In this case, the person is treated as not having a definite primary affiliation. Finally, Rule 3 constitutes the only exception to Rule 1; if there are two categories larger than the rest, but with equal numbers of publications, then if and only if one of them is the Industrial Relations category, it is considered as the primary affiliation. If, however, none of them is the Industrial Relations category, Rule 2 applies. For example, if a person has published 3 papers in Industrial Relations, 3 papers in Economics, 2 papers in Development Studies, and 1 paper in Sociology, then Industrial Relations is assigned as her primary affiliation.

The Structure of the British Industrial Relations Community

Before examining in detail the evolution of the field's various subgroups, it is interesting to look at a more general picture. Tables 8.1 and 8.2 present the Total, New and Old Members of the Industrial Relations community in the years under examination.

Table 8.1

Total, New and Old Authors in the British Journals of Industrial Relations

| Year | Total Authors | New Authors | Old Authors |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1963 | 26 | 26 | - |
| 1970 | 46 | 37 | 9 |
| 1977 | 65 | 39 | 26 |
| 1984 | 88 | 53 | 35 |
| 1991 | 80 | 42 | 38 |
| 1998 | 110 | 49 | 61 |
| 2005 | 165 | 78 | 87 |

Table 8.2
BUIRA Members

| Year | Gross Members | | | Net Members | | |
|------|---------------|-----|-----|-------------|-----|-----|
| | Total | New | Old | Total | New | Old |
| 1963 | 98 | 98 | - | 90 | 90 | - |
| 1970 | 157 | 89 | 68 | 144 | 83 | 61 |
| 1977 | 213 | 114 | 99 | 201 | 107 | 94 |
| 1984 | 265 | 111 | 154 | 248 | 105 | 143 |

The Gross Members in Table 8.2 include all the BUIRA members for a certain year. The Net Members, on the other hand, include all the BUIRA members who are not included in Table 8.1 as well – i.e. all those members who did not publish in any of the four British Industrial Relations Journals in the specific year. Thus, from the 89 New Gross Members in 1970, for example, six have also appeared in one of the two British Industrial Relations Journals, which means that the Net amount of New BUIRA Members is 83.

As can be observed, the aggregate numbers of people participating in the fora has risen steadily from 1963 to 2005. The average annual growth rate of the participation in the four journals is 36.1%, whereas the respective percentage for the Gross BUIRA members is 39.3% (40.2% for the Net Members). The numbers of people participating in the four British journals is consistent with the rising numbers of papers published in each journal throughout the period (see Table 5.6 in p. 118).

If one looks at the New Authors columns in Tables 8.1 and 8.2, one can observe a similar upward trend throughout the period both for the journals participants (the average annual growth rate of the new entrants is 20.1%) and the BUIRA Members (4.2% rise for the Gross Members and 5.3% rise for the Net Members)². The Old Authors (Members) numbers also grow throughout the period, albeit in a steeper pace than the New Authors (Members); the average annual growth rate for the journal participants is 57.4% whereas for the BUIRA membership is 50.5% (53.1%).

Although these figures show a field that seems sustainable and strong, they must be treated with caution. For as was mentioned previously, a field's community does not necessarily include people who primarily identify themselves with the field; it may include peripheral players, who come in the field coincidentally or opportunistically, or people who although they agree with the general intellectual direction of the field are

² In 2009 BUIRA had around 500 Total Members. However, the lack of any detailed archives for the 1984-2009 years makes any further analysis (in terms of New and Old membership) impossible.

tied to other, adjacent, disciplines. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the various intellectual and institutional trends that exist within the community – i.e. the actual hard core members and the peripheral players, the relationship between the two, and their role in forming and influencing the future direction of the field. To address these issues, the New and Old Members of the Industrial Relations Community will be independently examined, before any cumulative conclusions about the Industrial Relations community can be reached.

New and Old Authors

The distinction between New and Old Community Members, and their separate examination, is very important analytically, as the two groups influence the dynamics of the field in their own separate ways. Table 8.3 shows the primary affiliations of the New Community Members and the types of subgroups that appeared each year.

Table 8.3
Primary Affiliations of the New IR Community Members

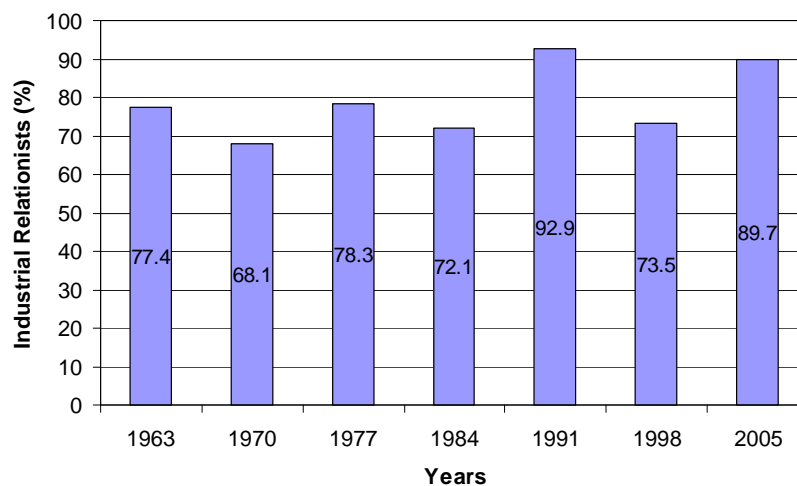
| Affiliation | Year | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 1963 | 1970 | 1977 | 1984 | 1991 | 1998 | 2005 | |
| Industrial Relations | 24 | 32 | 36 | 44 | 39 | 36 | 70 | 281 |
| Economics | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 21 |
| Unaffiliated | - | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 17 |
| HRM/PM | - | - | - | 6 | - | 3 | - | 9 |
| Management | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| Law | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | 7 |
| Sociology | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 3 |
| Public Administration | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | 3 |
| Accounting & Finance | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Psychology | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Total | 31 | 47 | 46 | 61 | 42 | 49 | 78 | |

It must be noted that the numbers in the *Total* row are not exactly equal to the sum of total New Community Members per year, as can be calculated from Tables 8.1 and 8.2. Indeed, in 1970, for example, there are 120 New Members in the Industrial Relations Community (37 New Authors and 83 New (Net) BUIRA Members), whereas the 1970 column in Table 8.3 sums up to 47. This obviously implies firstly, that not all the New BUIRA Members publish in the four Journals in the year under examination and, secondly, that many New BUIRA Members do not publish at all during that year. There are some, however, who publish in some other journals and who are included in Table 8.3. Thus, Table 8.3 includes all the New Authors for a specific year from Table 8.1 plus all the New (Net) BUIRA Members who have published at that year but

not in any of the four Industrial Relations Journals³. As one can observe, however, for the years 1991-2005 the sums of Table 8.3 equal the figures in Table 8.1 since there are no BUIRA records for these observations.

Several interesting conclusions can be drawn from the above table. Firstly, and most importantly, it seems that the majority of the New Authors are, also, Industrial Relationists – i.e. up to that specific year, the majority of their publications is directed in Industrial Relations journals (notice that they may not direct them only to British journals, but also to American, Canadian or Australian). Moreover, the numbers of the New Industrial Relationists grow on an annual average rate of 2.5%, which is not much *per se*, but it still shows that the field manages to attract to its ranks people who identify themselves with its basic principles. Figure 8.1 shows the percentage of the New Industrial Relationists per year, relative to the membership of the other groups.

Figure 8.1
New Industrial Relationists



A second important observation derived from Table 8.3 concerns the number and the importance of the rest of the subgroups that appear each year. As can be seen, throughout the period, Economists form the second most dominant subgroup in the field. Although they do not always occupy this place (in 1984, for example, the HRM/PM subgroup is larger than the Economics one; similarly, in 2005, the Sociologists and the Public Administration scholars are better represented in the field, than the Economists), they are always present in the field. Their continuous

³ To go back to the 1970 example: the 47 members in Table 8.3 are comprised by the 37 New Authors from Table 8.1 plus 10 more New BUIRA Members who published a paper in some other journal.

appearance in the fora reveals that many economists consider Industrial Relations as a field where their ideas and research are acceptable.

Although this kind of relationship reveals the intellectual bonds that the field has with adjacent disciplines, it does not *necessarily* mean that the field of Industrial Relations shares common intellectual characteristics with the discipline of Economics. Obviously, they must have some common intellectual directions, but Table 8.3 does not reveal anything about the content of the research published in the field's fora. It would be mistaken, for example, to argue that Industrial Relations has more common intellectual characteristics with Economics (or HRM/PM) than with Sociology, since the Sociology subgroup occupies the second last place in the field. The only safe conclusions that can be drawn from Table 8.3, regarding the interaction between the subgroups and the field are, firstly that each year's New Authors do not always consider themselves to be Industrial Relationists, but come to the field from adjacent disciplines because they believe that the field offers a fertile ground for the publication of their research; and, secondly, that the disciplines represented in Table 8.3 are the major 'sister' disciplines to Industrial Relations. Since they share their academics with them, they must also have some common characteristics with the field, either in their methodology, or in their theories, or in their subject-matter. This influx of academics from different disciplines reveals more clearly the pluralist nature of Industrial Relations.

Turning to the Old Authors, Table 8.4 reveals their primary affiliations for the period. As with Table 8.3, the *Total* row does not necessarily sum up to the same numbers as the relevant rows in Tables 8.1 or 8.2 for the same reasons described previously. Moreover, 1963 is not included in the Table as it is the first observation and, thus, all the people appearing in that year are automatically regarded as New Authors in the field. Finally, it must be stressed that the Old Authors comprise some of the New Authors from the past years *and* any author who has appeared in the years between the observations. Thus, the Old Authors of 1970 will include all the 1963 New Authors who also appear in 1970, together with all the people who have appeared at least once in the fora in the years between 1963 and 1970⁴.

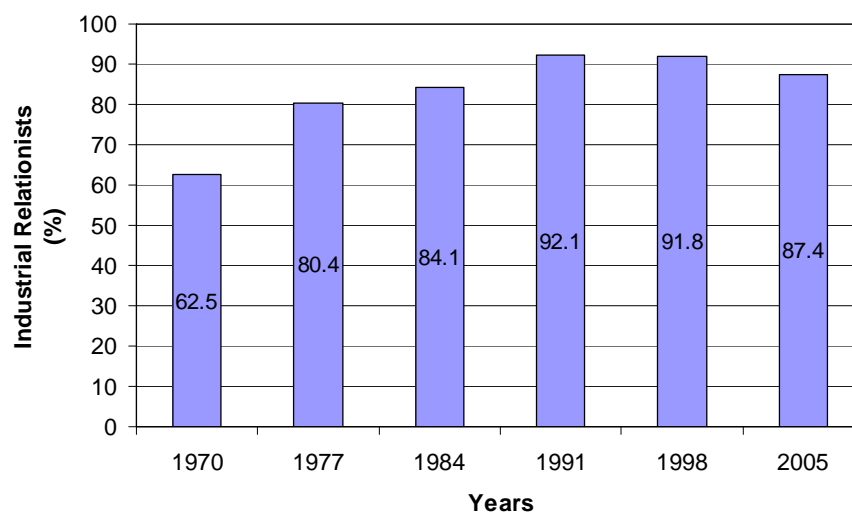
⁴ These people will come from the BUIRA ranks. For example, a 1963 BUIRA member who had not published a paper in 1963, but did so in 1964, will appear as an Old Author in 1970.

Table 8.4
Primary Affiliations of the Old IR Community Members

| Affiliation | Year | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 1970 | 1977 | 1984 | 1991 | 1998 | 2005 | |
| Industrial Relations | 30 | 78 | 122 | 35 | 56 | 76 | 397 |
| Economics | 6 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 32 |
| Management | 3 | 3 | 5 | - | 1 | 2 | 14 |
| Unaffiliated | 6 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | 10 |
| HRM/PM | - | - | 2 | - | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| Sociology | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 5 |
| Law | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 4 |
| Psychology | - | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | 4 |
| Accounting | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 |
| Education | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| History | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 48 | 97 | 145 | 38 | 61 | 87 | |

Similarly to the New Authors, the majority of the Old Authors each year are also people who identify themselves as primarily belonging to the field of Industrial Relations. Their annual average growth rate is 6.9%, significantly larger than the respective figure for the New Authors. This implies that the field not only manages to attract people but also to retain them in its ranks. In Figure 8.2 one can better observe the percentage and the growth trend of the Old Industrial Relationists each year.

Figure 8.2
Old Industrial Relationists



As one can expect from a 'healthy' field, the numbers of Old Members who belong to its hard core increase, on average, every year. Notice the relatively low percentage in 1970, the second year in the observation, which signifies that a stable hardcore is

still trying to be formed. After 1970, however, the core rises and stabilises above 85% – showing that the formed community is not only stable but strong as well.

It is also interesting to observe that the rest of the subgroups appearing throughout the period resemble very much the type of subgroups the New Authors subscribe to (see Table 8.3). Indeed, the four major subgroups are exactly the same in both cases (with HRM/PM being less popular among the Old Authors, and the numbers of Unaffiliated Old Authors to have been significantly reduced). This is very interesting as it shows continuity in the kind of people the field attracts. Although part of these figures can be attributed to ex-New Authors who became Old Authors and did not change their primary affiliations, the numbers of the New Authors cannot account for *all* the people who belong to these subgroups each year. This means that in the years preceding an observation, the field had attracted people who identified with these subgroups, supporting, therefore, the previous thesis that the field of Industrial Relations shares enough common characteristics with these other disciplines to be able to attract their members⁵.

Despite the rising tendency in the numbers of New and Old Industrial Relationists each year, it is also important to examine how many of them actually continue to publish in the field's journals, and whether they retain their affiliation as Industrial Relationists. For although in a specific year the field may have attracted some new members, and retained some old, if they do not continue to identify with the field in the future its structural dynamics will take a negative turn. Table 8.5 presents the relevant figures for the New Industrial Relationists.

Table 8.5
Affiliation Continuity for the New Industrial Relationists

| Year | Industrial Relationists | Retain Affiliation | | Change Affiliation | | Disappear | |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Authors | % | Authors | % | Authors | % |
| 1963 | 24 | 8 | 33.3 | 5 | 20.8 | 11 | 45.8 |
| 1970 | 32 | 11 | 34.4 | 11 | 34.4 | 10 | 31.3 |
| 1977 | 36 | 8 | 22.2 | 11 | 30.6 | 17 | 47.2 |
| 1984 | 44 | 13 | 29.5 | 10 | 22.7 | 21 | 47.7 |
| 1991 | 39 | 13 | 33.3 | 7 | 17.9 | 19 | 48.7 |
| 1998 | 36 | 7 | 19.4 | 10 | 27.8 | 19 | 52.8 |
| 2005 | 70 | 9 | 12.9 | 4 | 5.7 | 57 | 81.4 |

⁵ Once more, it is important to note that the present research does not reveal the nature of the similarities between Industrial Relations and the various subgroups. To do so, a very different approach would be required.

As can be seen, during almost the whole period (1970 being the only exception) the majority of the New Industrial Relationists disappear in the future – i.e. they do not publish any paper in any of the journals included in the three electronic databases where the data were drawn from. From the ones remaining, the majority continues as Industrial Relationists in all but two years (1977 and 1998), strengthening that way the hard core of the field.

It is very interesting to note that the distribution of the New Industrial Relationists who changed their affiliation to other fields follows closely the primary affiliations pattern of the New Authors in Table 8.3. Indeed as one can see in Table 8.6, the majority of the ‘leavers’ transferred to the Economics, Management and HRM/PM subgroups, whereas a considerable number remained unaffiliated to any other field or discipline.

Table 8.6
New Affiliations for the New Industrial Relationists

| Subgroup | Year | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 1963 | 1970 | 1977 | 1984 | 1991 | 1998 | 2005 | |
| Economics | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | 15 |
| Management | - | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 14 |
| Unaffiliated | - | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 11 |
| HRM/PM | - | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Sociology | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 3 |
| Political Science | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Law | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Statistics | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Psychology | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Public Administration | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Development | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 4 | |

Regarding the Old Industrial Relationists, it is also important to see how many of them retained their affiliation in the future. As can be seen from Table 8.7, there is a considerable loss of Old Industrial Relationists each year due to their complete disappearance from the (journal) publication scene. However, it is important to note that from the remaining numbers the majority continue to identify themselves with the field in the future. This means that the field manages to sustain a rather stable hard core during the period, and although some of the subgroups are being reinforced, they do not attract considerable amount of members to pose any threat to the structural coherence of the field.

Table 8.7
Affiliation Continuity for the Old Industrial Relationists

| Year | Industrial Relationists | Retain Affiliation | | Change Affiliation | | Disappear | |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Authors | % | Authors | % | Authors | % |
| 1970 | 30 | 13 | 43.3 | 5 | 16.7 | 12 | 40 |
| 1977 | 78 | 31 | 39.7 | 17 | 21.8 | 30 | 38.5 |
| 1984 | 122 | 44 | 36.1 | 25 | 20.5 | 53 | 43.4 |
| 1991 | 35 | 23 | 65.7 | 9 | 25.7 | 3 | 8.6 |
| 1998 | 56 | 36 | 64.3 | 9 | 16.1 | 11 | 19.6 |
| 2005 | 76 | 26 | 34.2 | 19 | 25.0 | 31 | 40.8 |

Indeed, as can be seen from Table 8.8, although the majority attaches itself to the four most popular subgroups (Economics, Management, HRM/PM, and Unaffiliated), their numbers are small and quite dispersed, to challenge in any way the dominance of the Industrial Relations hard core.

Table 8.8
New Affiliations for the Old Industrial Relationists

| Subgroup | Year | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 1970 | 1977 | 1984 | 1991 | 1998 | 2005 | |
| Management | - | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 25 |
| HRM/PM | - | - | 7 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 19 |
| Economics | 3 | 8 | 4 | - | - | - | 15 |
| Unaffiliated | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 13 |
| Public Administration | - | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Psychology | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 |
| History | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 |
| Accounting | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 17 | 25 | 9 | 9 | 19 | |

Since an exchange of members exists between the Industrial Relations hard core and the other subgroups, it is also logical to assume that an opposite exchange may also take place. In other words, authors who, in a specific year, may have identified themselves with a certain field may change their affiliation to Industrial Relations in the future. Table 8.9 presents the relevant information for the New Authors.

Table 8.9
New Non-Industrial Relationists who Became Industrial Relationists

| Year | Non-Industrial Relationists | Transferred Affiliation | Original Affiliation |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1963 | 7 | 1 | Economics |
| 1970 | 15 | 5 | Sociology, Economics (2), Unaffiliated (2) |
| 1977 | 10 | 1 | Unaffiliated |
| 1984 | 17 | 4 | Economics, HRM, Law, Unaffiliated |
| 1991 | 3 | 1 | Economics |
| 1998 | 13 | 0 | - |
| 2005 | 8 | 2 | Public Administration, Economics |

Although the numbers of people who transferred their affiliation to Industrial Relations in the future is not very great, the fact that such a movement takes place means that the field is in a position, throughout the whole period, to attract new members from other disciplines to its core. Once again, Economics is the key discipline, since it has the most exchanges, in terms of members, with Industrial Relations (both fields send members to each other), revealing that way the close links between the two. Moreover, it is interesting to note that some of the unaffiliated authors in 1970 and 1984 decided to lean towards Industrial Relations. As for the rest, the majority disappeared in the future, and some turned to Management, as can be seen from Table 8.10.

Table 8.10
Original and Future Affiliation of New Non-Industrial Relationists who did not
Become Industrial Relationists

| Original Affiliation | Future Affiliation | Year | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-------|
| | | 1963 | 1970 | 1977 | 1984 | 1991 | 1998 | 2005 | |
| Economics | Economics | 3 | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | - | 11 |
| | Disappeared | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| | HRM/PM | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Unaffiliated | Disappeared | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| | Management | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 4 |
| | Unaffiliated | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| | History | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Management | Disappeared | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 6 |
| | Management | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 2 |
| | HRM | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| HRM/PM | Management | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| | Education | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 2 |
| | HRM/PM | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 2 |
| | Public Administration | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Law | Disappeared | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 3 |
| | Law | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Psychology | Psychology | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| | Unaffiliated | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Public Administration | Public Administration | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| Accounting | Economics | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| | Disappeared | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Sociology | Disappeared | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 |
| Total | | 6 | 10 | 9 | 13 | 2 | 13 | 6 | |

This table shows the future directions that the non-Industrial Relationists, who *did not become Industrial Relationists*, followed in the years after their first appearance in the British fora. The *Original Affiliation* column shows the original affiliations that existed in the years under examination, whereas the *Future Affiliation* column shows

the affiliations the authors acquired after their first appearance. One can read the Table in two ways: firstly, by year. Each year column shows the total number of the non-industrial relationists who did not turn industrial relationists. Thus, in 1963, there were 6 such authors (see the *Total* row), four of which were Economists, one who belonged to the field of Management, and one who studied Law. From the four Economists, three remained as such and one disappeared, as did the Management author as well, whereas the Law author retained his affiliation. A second way to read the table is by examining the original affiliation (thus, focusing on the rows). Taking the Economics discipline as an example, throughout the period there were fifteen people who identified primarily with Economics, eleven of whom retained it, three of whom disappeared and one who changed to HRM/PM.

From the above table, one can observe some interesting facts about the intellectual behaviour of the members of the field's four major subgroups. The people who identify themselves as Economists are the most stable of all, in terms of retaining the same affiliation in the future. In the case of Management, HRM/PM, and the Unaffiliated authors, however, the majority disappear after their first appearance. Moreover, the HRM/PM authors disperse to other fields as well (Management being the most attractive). This is very interesting regarding the influence, or the power, that these subgroups have upon the wider field of Industrial Relations: if only the Economics field seems able to retain its members in a coherent core, it means that the rest of the subgroups cannot affect the processes and the structure of the field from the inside (since there is no commitment, from their part, to the fields with which they identify themselves and, therefore, it is very difficult to be mobilised so as to promote their intellectual orientations within Industrial Relations). Before reaching a general conclusion, however, it is necessary to examine the affiliation pattern of the Old Authors as well.

Table 8.11

Old Non-Industrial Relationists who Became Industrial Relationists

| Year | Non-Industrial Relationists | Transferred Affiliation | Original Affiliation |
|-------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1970 | 18 | 6 | Economics (2), Unaffiliated (3), Sociology |
| 1977 | 19 | 4 | Economics (3), Unaffiliated |
| 1984 | 23 | 2 | Sociology, Economics |
| 1991 | 3 | 0 | - |
| 1998 | 5 | 1 | HRM/PM |
| 2005 | 11 | 2 | HRM/PM, Economics |

As with the New Authors, some of the Old Authors who were not primarily affiliated to Industrial Relations joined its hard core in the following years. As one can see from Table 8.11, their numbers are not great but they still show that the field manages to attract people from adjacent disciplines. Moreover, Table 8.12 shows in more detail the future affiliation of the people who did not turn to Industrial Relations.

Table 8.12
Original and Future Affiliation of Old Non-Industrial Relationists who did not
Become Industrial Relationists

| Original Affiliation | Future Affiliation | Year | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | | 1970 | 1977 | 1984 | 1991 | 1998 | 2005 | |
| Economics | Disappear | 4 | 4 | 6 | - | - | 1 | 15 |
| | Economics | - | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | 4 | 9 |
| | HRM/PM | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Management | Disappear | 2 | 3 | 4 | - | - | 2 | 11 |
| | Management | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| | HRM/PM | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Unaffiliated | Disappear | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| | Sociology | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| | HRM/PM | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| | Accounting | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| HRM/PM | Disappear | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| | Management | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| | Unaffiliated | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| | Public Administration | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Law | Disappear | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 3 |
| | Law | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Psychology | Disappear | - | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | 4 |
| Accounting | Disappear | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 |
| Sociology | Disappear | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 |
| History | History | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Education | Disappear | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Total | | 12 | 15 | 21 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 64 |

As can be observed, in 1970 from the twelve authors who did not turn to Industrial Relations, only three continued to appear in the future – two of whom retained their initial affiliations (Management and Law), and one who transferred to the HRM/PM field. Similarly, in 1977, only two of the remaining fifteen people appeared in the future (one in Economics and one in Accounting), while thirteen completely disappeared. The picture is analogous for 1984, where seventeen authors disappeared and only four published again in the future. From 1984 onwards, however, one can see less people disappearing and more continuing to appear in the future either by retaining their original affiliation or by joining a different field, as can be seen from Table 8.13.

Table 8.13
Affiliation Distribution of Old Non-Industrial Relationists who did not Become Industrial Relationists

| Year | Non-Industrial Relationists | Transferred Affiliation to IR | Disappeared | Retained or Transferred Affiliation |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1970 | 18 | 6 | 9 | 3 |
| 1977 | 19 | 4 | 13 | 2 |
| 1984 | 23 | 2 | 17 | 4 |
| 1991 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 1998 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| 2005 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 6 |

The Industrial Relations Community

The discussion thus far reveals a vibrant and multi-disciplinary Industrial Relations community: there is continuous movement inside and outside its various subgroups, and a constant regeneration of their members. As for the community's hard core, it seems that it follows the same dynamic path as the rest of the subgroups, the only difference being its stable and continuously expanding membership. Table 8.14 presents the number of authors comprising the Industrial Relations hard core (New and Old Authors), and their percentage relevant to the total number of participants in the community each year. It also depicts the number of the other subgroups that appeared in these years. Although, in absolute numbers, the total membership of the hard core from 1991 onwards is significantly lower than before 1984, its density rises every year up to 1991 where it reaches a peak. Moreover, as the analysis of the previous section revealed, although the majority of the hard core comprises Old Industrial Relationists – something natural and expected – each year a significant amount of New Authors are attracted to its ranks, helping it, thus, to continuously regenerate itself.

Table 8.14
Industrial Relations Hardcore and Numbers of Subgroups

| Year | Total Community | IR Hardcore | | Difference | Subgroups |
|------|-----------------|-------------|------|------------|-----------|
| | | Authors | % | | |
| 1963 | 31 | 24 | 77.4 | | 3 |
| 1970 | 95 | 62 | 65.3 | -12.2 | 7 |
| 1977 | 143 | 114 | 79.7 | 14.5 | 7 |
| 1984 | 206 | 166 | 80.6 | 0.9 | 9 |
| 1991 | 80 | 74 | 92.5 | 11.9 | 2 |
| 1998 | 110 | 92 | 83.6 | -8.9 | 5 |
| 2005 | 165 | 146 | 88.5 | 4.8 | 8 |

Indeed, the hard core's membership has declined only twice throughout the period (in 1970 and in 1998) but even then its coverage was still much larger than that of the

rest of the subgroups. In general, the hard core's average annual growth density is 2.3%. The hard core's stability and dominance over the rest of the subgroups shows that, from its early years, the field had a group of loyal members who were developing an 'Industrial Relations identity', and whose numbers were never significantly reduced to levels that could undermine their position and their power within the structure of the wider community.

Although one may claim that the average growth rate of the hard core is not very significant, it must be kept in mind that such a claim implies a comparison with something else. There are only two possible such routes: either to compare the hard core with other fields' hard cores – something not attempted here – or to compare it with the rest of the subgroups in the field. Following the last point, as can be seen in Table 8.15 the Industrial Relations hard core is the only subgroup in the field that managed to retain and increase its density throughout the period, compared with any of the subgroups (the only exception being the Public Administration subgroup, whose existence, however, seems to be *ad hoc*, since it appears only twice throughout the period and has very low density levels). Moreover, as can be also observed from Table 8.15, although the average number of subgroups is 5.9 subgroups per year (with 1984 and 2005 being the years with the most subgroups), their relatively low annual density, and its general declining trend, shows that they never posed, nor do they pose, any significant challenge to the internal coherence of the community.

Table 8.15
Subgroups' Annual Densities and Average Growth Rates

| Subgroup | Densities (%) | | | | | | | Average Growth Rate (%) |
|-----------------------|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| | 1963 | 1970 | 1977 | 1984 | 1991 | 1998 | 2005 | |
| Economics | 16.1 | 9.5 | 8.4 | 5.3 | 6.3 | 3.6 | 4.2 | -20 |
| Unaffiliated | - | 11.6 | 4.9 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 2.7 | 0.6 | -44.6 |
| Management | 3.2 | 5.3 | 2.1 | 3.4 | - | 3.6 | 1.8 | -9.1 |
| Law | 3.2 | 3.2 | 2.1 | 1.9 | - | - | - | -15.6 |
| HRM/PM | - | - | - | 3.9 | - | 5.5 | 0.6 | -60.5 |
| Sociology | - | 2.1 | 0.7 | 1.0 | - | - | 1.8 | -2.9 |
| Psychology | - | 2.1 | 1.4 | 1.0 | - | - | - | -32.1 |
| Accounting & Finance | - | - | 0.7 | 0.5 | - | 0.9 | 0.6 | -3.5 |
| Public Administration | - | - | - | 0.5 | - | - | 1.2 | 149.7 |
| Education | - | 1.1 | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| History | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.6 | 0 |
| Total | 22.6 | 34.7 | 20.3 | 19.4 | 7.5 | 16.4 | 11.5 | |

Conclusion

To argue that a field is in, or faces, a crisis, means that it lacks the ability to overcome a situation that threatens its existence as an independent scientific entity. Ultimately, the notion of crisis is linked to the notion of power, since the lack of such an ability actually means that the field lacks the power to control its environment. Is it possible, however, to talk about the 'power of a field' and, if so, how can one identify it? Regarding the first issue, it is as legitimate to make such a statement as to claim that any social entity – such as a state – has power. As for the second question, the situation may prove more difficult.

As was portrayed in the previous pages, any discussion of a field's power must necessarily begin from the level of the community, as it is the one that controls and provides legitimacy to the field's institutions, which are the usual means through which the field's values and principles are being promoted and defended. Although the power of the community may be difficult to measure *per se*, one can still infer its extent by examining the community's structural dynamics. Of special importance in this endeavour is, firstly, the community's hard core, i.e. all its members who primarily identify themselves with the field's main principles, and, secondly, the rest of the subgroups that develop within the community's ranks. Their densities and mutual interactions reveal important information about the current and future state of the field.

More specifically, for a field to face a crisis one (or a combination) of the following three scenarios should occur: firstly, the density of the subgroups grows while the hard core's density remains stable, secondly, the hard core declines while the subgroups either remain stable or grow and, thirdly, the hard core remains stable while the number of the subgroups increases, covering that way a larger proportion of the field's total members.

However, as was shown, none of the above was ever the case for Industrial Relations. On the contrary, the field throughout the period examined has shown considerable stability and coherence, and although a level of pluralism exists (based on the numbers of the subgroups appearing each year), it is not as great as to threaten the existence of the hard core. Furthermore, the field's hard core experienced a steady growth, by attracting members both from outside the field's boundaries (the New Authors), and from its various subgroups. Moreover, although every year some of the Old and New Industrial Relationists left the hard core, either because they completely disappeared from the publishing scene or because they became affiliated to some other subgroup, the balance between the remaining ones

and the ones leaving, was positive, on average, for the former – implying that the hard core never experienced a period of extreme losses that could undermine its position vis-à-vis the rest of the subgroups.

Based on the above, it is evident that the field of Industrial Relations did not, and does not, face any structural problems that undermined, or that could undermine, its position as an independent field of study, nor does such a tendency exist, at least for the near future. Is this enough, however, to claim that a danger to the existing structures is not imminent? For although the community may be stable and coherent, what eventually matters when facing a challenge is the ability to act collectively. Since a scientific community is based on loose ties, the responsibility for its mobilisation rests in the hands of some of its members (usually the leading scientists) and of its institutions. Thus, the existence of strong institutions, that have the ability to set the directions a field will take, is also a necessary prerequisite for the field's sustainability.

In recent years, however, an important change is observed in one of the field's institutions in the UK. The Industrial Relations departments seem to face a crisis, since many of them are either renamed, or merged with business schools, or threatened to close altogether – the Keele case mentioned in the introductory chapter was such an example. Does this actually mean that some signs of crisis exist after all? What does it mean for the field and how can it react to this challenge? The next, and final chapter, aims to address in more detail these questions.

Chapter 9

New Industrial Relations Theory and the State of British Industrial Relations

As these lines are being written the world economy tries to recover from its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of 1929. The collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 led to a chain reaction across the world, costing millions in pounds and jobs. Although the official statistics in September 2009 show that the major Western economies start to slowly overcome the crisis, the picture is not, of course, rosy. Unemployment is still soaring, with Britain and the rest of Europe facing gradual rises with no immediate end in sight (according to Eurostat, in September 2008 Britain's unemployment rate was 6%, while in June 2009 it had reached the 7.8% level). The changes in the structure of the labour market, the rise of atypical employment within the EU, the continuous inequalities between men and women, young and old, black and white, the exploitation of immigrants and minorities in the workplace, the violation of basic human and labour rights, not only in the 'emerging economies' as the economists like to call them, but in the 'developed' world as well (the inverted commas are purposefully being used), are not just isolated incidents caused by a 'slip' of the system. They are always there, an endogenous reality of capitalism, although they are obviously much broader and pressing during the downward phase of the business cycle.

In such a climate, it strikes one as odd to claim that Industrial Relations, the field that is supposed to study many of above problems, faces a crisis. It was this paradox that initially motivated this research: how can one claim that the field and its subject-matter are dated since none of the above issues have been addressed, and new problems emerge every day? My purpose therefore was to investigate the truth of this claim, and to examine whether the arguments brought forward for its justification had any epistemic and empirical basis.

As has been repeatedly mentioned throughout the Thesis, any discussion of a scientific crisis should encompass both the intellectual and the institutional nature of a field. It is the purpose of this chapter to address this issue in more detail by drawing on the findings of the previous chapters. In the first section, the intellectual state of British Industrial Relations will be explored and it will be argued that contrary to the 'new paradigm' discourse the field did not, and does not, face an intellectual crisis. Yet as has been indicated throughout the thesis, the crisis claims may have some real bases. Since, however, these are not found in the intellectual side, they must be related to the field's institutional structure. The second section therefore will examine in more detail the status of the field's institutions, and will explore the extent and meaning of the crisis the field faces. The final section will discuss some concluding thoughts regarding the future of British Industrial Relations, and will provide some ideas about the field's possible future orientation.

The Intellectual State of British Industrial Relations

Since the major function of a scientific field is to enhance our knowledge of reality through the development and implementation of theories, any problems with its problématique, or its tools, inevitably question its ability to perform this task. Indeed, as was mentioned in the first Chapter, an intellectual crisis exists if the field's theories are unable to adequately address the problems it studies, or if the field focuses on obsolete problems. The intellectual crisis is, understandably, the most serious kind of crisis a field may face, as it targets the very roots of its existence. A field with inadequate theories, or problems, is bound to collapse, or to become marginalised, if it does not manage to change. Thus, one can appreciate the concern of many Industrial Relationists regarding the ability of the field to survive in a changing environment.

Central to all these worries about the intellectual status of the field is the role and function of Human Resource Management and, more specifically, of its industrial relations version, the New Industrial Relations (NIR) theory. As was explained in Chapter 3, one can discern two different strands in the literature. The first argued that the continuous development of the NIR theory is responsible for the crisis the field faces, as it promotes a mentality and a research orientation quite different from the 'traditional' Industrial Relations programme, leading thus to a slow but steady decomposition of its intellectual basis. The second strand, however, follows an exactly opposite direction and argues that the further development of the NIR theory is necessary for the field to overcome its current crisis – the NIR theory is not the cause but the remedy for the field's intellectual decadence. Faced with these two

radically different positions, it was necessary to clarify the situation and examine which of the two (if any) had any actual bases in reality. Both theses agreed on the fact that a theoretical construct – the NIR theory – was playing a role in the argument; however, none of their proponents had actually conducted a thorough research to establish the truth of their arguments. To address this gap in the literature, and to investigate the actual role and place of the NIR theory in British Industrial Relations, the present Thesis focused on the analysis of these two contesting theses and on the examination of the field's current status.

According to the first of the aforementioned positions, the development of the NIR theory is responsible for the field's current crisis. This thesis actually implies two things: *firstly*, that the NIR theory has a relatively important intellectual position in the field and, *secondly*, that it is in a trajectory to gain a more dominant – a paradigmatic – place in Industrial Relations. However, as the findings in Chapters 5 and 6 revealed, both these beliefs are unsubstantiated.

To examine the first of these two suppositions, a content analysis was conducted of all the articles appearing in the four major British Industrial Relations journals, of the research papers of two major British research centres and of the BUIRA conference proceedings. The rationale behind this research was that if the NIR theory is indeed important, it must be present in the field's fora of knowledge development. The research revealed a presence of NIR related research in the journals, but it also showed that it had never reached a point to justify the belief that it was, or is, a threat to the existing Industrial Relations orthodoxy. Indeed, although proto-NIR research existed in the *British Journal of Industrial Relations* and in the *Industrial Relations Journal* since their foundation, and continued to occupy a place in their pages for the following years, this only confirms, if anything, the multi-theoretical character of Industrial Relations.

Yet the fact that the NIR theory did not seem to penetrate the intellectual structures of British Industrial Relations, at least to such an extent as to justify any concerns about the field's intellectual sustainability, did not necessarily mean that the theory could not develop into something more important in the future (or that at specific points in time it did not have the opportunity to do so). To address the above issues, one has to examine in detail the intellectual dynamics of the theory. Unfortunately, the content analysis is not adequate to address this issue. Since the development of a theory depends on its ability to persuade a growing number of scientists to endorse it and use it in their research and to persuade others to follow it, one may understand whether a theory is in a developmental trajectory by examining

the structure of the community that follows it (see also Chapter 1). Chapter 6 was dedicated to this purpose.

The analysis was not concerned with the persuasion mechanisms that the theory's advocates followed to persuade others to endorse it – it did not matter why a person decided to follow the theory, but only how the theory developed once it was chosen. The theory's supporters form an atypical community that promotes the theory through its work¹. Therefore, to gain a dominant place within a field, the community must consist of a stable hard core, which will set the standards of research and will attract new members to the group. However, the attraction of new members is not enough; a continuity must be established, which will ensure that the new members in one year will become old members in the following years. Indeed, the existence of scientists who appear only once as a group member, and then disappear, cannot help in the formation of a stable basis upon which the theory will develop. Only when a stable hard core of members exists, which grows continuously with the attraction of new members, can one actually say that a theory is in a trajectory of developing into something important within a field.

However, as the results of Chapter 6 revealed, the NIR theory never fulfilled the above criteria at any point during its history. Although new members were added to the group of the NIR theory supporters, their presence was circumstantial since most of them either completely disappeared from the fora after their initial NIR publication, or changed their research orientation. Thus, the necessary continuity and stability for the development of the theory could not be established. As for the hard core, it remained weak throughout the period examined. In other words, the NIR theory was never in a trajectory of escaping its peripheral role within British Industrial Relations as it lacked (and still lacks) the necessary institutional bases to achieve this target.

The NIR theory may not be the field's menace but it is not its saviour either, as its supporters claim. As was discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4, the cornerstone of the NPT is the supposition that Industrial Relations faces an endogenous intellectual crisis because it continues to devote itself to the study of slowly eclipsing phenomena (namely Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining), and is not able to keep pace with the rapid transformations that take place in the world of work and employment. In other words, the field's problématique is becoming dated, and so are its theories and approaches. Therefore, the argument goes, to overcome this crisis the community

¹ Although in many cases actual social bonds may exist between the members of the group, it was assumed that these were not necessarily present.

needs to turn towards HRM and incorporate a wider variety of issues in its research portfolio, which will reflect the changes in the social environment.

Similarly to the first supposition, this argument is not based on a thorough empirical research that could verify the truth of its premises. Contrary to the former, however, it is not only an empirical supposition, a certain reading of reality, but a normative proposition as well, since it offers a 'solution' to the alleged problem. It was the purpose of Chapters 4 and 7 to examine the normative and empirical aspects of the argument respectively.

A content analysis of the publications in the field's fora for a period of years revealed that, contrary to the above claims, British Industrial Relations did not face a crisis and that its problématique had managed to adjust to the new societal realities. Although the subjects of trade unionism and collective bargaining were, indeed, the most dominant foci of research, they were not the only ones. New topics emerged throughout the field's history, reflecting the changes in the world of work: topics revolving around newly important institutions – such as the EU – or discussing issues of current concern – such as gender, management practices, and wages – figured prominently in the pages of the four British Industrial Relations journals, and in the research papers and conference proceedings of the IRRU, CESR and the BUIRA. One must also acknowledge the research on several other topics, such as labour markets, union representatives, or globalisation, to mention but a few, and the growth of interest in comparative research from 1993 onwards (see Tables 7.1 and 7.6 for more information). The research revealed a live and diverse field, which is usually up-to-date with the changes of its subject.

This fact became clear through a thorough examination of the three 'classic' Industrial Relations topics: *Trade Unions*, *Bargaining*, and *Wages and Benefits*. Remember that for the 'new paradigm' discourse the disproportionate focus on the themes of *Trade Unions* and *Bargaining* is the root of the crisis since, as it claims, these institutions have been facing a steady decline from the 1980s onwards². However, a closer inspection of the papers dealing with these issues revealed that the way the topics were being addressed had changed as well. Thus, although trade unions may not be as dominant or strong as they were in their heydays of the 1970s (at least in Britain), the topic *Trade Unions* reflected this change and dealt with different questions than the ones it dealt with in the 1970s and 1980s – for example, it

² Although the 'new paradigm' discourse does not claim that *Wages and Benefits* are dated issues, they were examined because they were among the most commonly researched topics in the various fora of Industrial Relations – see Chapter 7 for more details.

examined and tried to understand the changes trade unions faced in terms of their membership or their place in society etc.; similar changes were also observed in the content of the *Bargaining* and *Wages and Benefits* clusters.

The fact that the field of Industrial Relations in Britain does not face an intellectual crisis shows that the NIR discourse is based on untenable foundations. The crisis acts as a justificatory mechanism, a propaganda instrument, for the promotion of the NIR theory – without it, the argument loses its power, its messianic message. However, even if one accepted the crisis argument as true, the NIR theory would still be unable to justify itself as a ‘solution’ to the ‘problems’ the field faced.

Leaving the implausibility of the main premises of the argument aside (see the analysis in Chapter 4), if the NIR theory was to occupy the position its proponents intend it for, the result would be to alter the way the Industrial Relations problématique is perceived and eventually equate Industrial Relations with the fields of HRM and Management. Instead of saving the field, the NIR theory would lead to its total dissolution and to its absorption by the aforementioned fields. Although some argue that a dialogue between Industrial Relations and HRM can be established, the discussions in Chapters 2 and 3 showed that the intellectual gap between the two is so great that any attempt to bridge it will, inevitably, lead to the fundamental alteration of their intellectual identities. Whether this is desirable is, in the final analysis, up to the field’s scientific community to decide.

A substantial part of the Thesis was devoted in showing that the field of Industrial Relations does not face an intellectual crisis, nor is it ‘threatened’ by the rise of the NIR theory. Although HRM-related research was, and still is, present in the field’s fora, it occupies a rather peripheral role in the field’s intellectual edifice, confirming that way the field’s multi-theoretical character.

The Institutional State of British Industrial Relations

Although the field does not seem to face an intellectual crisis, one must also examine its institutional status before drawing any conclusions about its overall image. As was discussed in Chapter 1, the nature and existence of a scientific field depends on its scientific community and on its five institutions (the journal, the research centre, the academic department, the professional association and the academic conference), which define and support it. An institutional crisis, therefore, targets any, or a combination, of the above, leaving thus the field unable to regenerate itself and to promote its research. A healthy field’s community and institutions will be strong, stable and constantly developing, whereas a degenerating one’s will be decaying to a

point where the field will either cease to exist, or will become marginalised within the wider scientific context.

As was emphasised in Chapter 1, the scientific community is central in the Internal Circuit of Science (ICS) as it supports the field's institutions and addresses its problématique. Therefore, to evaluate the field's institutional status one must start by studying its community. In Chapter 8 the structural characteristics of the British Industrial Relations community were analysed, to see whether the field faced, or may face, a crisis. A major finding of the analysis was the mapping of the various subgroups that have existed in the field during its lifetime. Thus, apart from the existence of a stable, and steadily growing, hard core, the field has accommodated numerous individuals who do not primarily identify themselves as industrial relationists. Among the various subgroups appearing within the boundaries of Industrial Relations, Economics, HRM, and Management were the most prominent ones, but not that prominent to threaten the dominant position of the Industrial Relations hard core. Another interesting finding was the ability of the community to regenerate itself through the attraction of new members to its ranks, either from adjacent disciplines or from the various subgroups that operated within the field's boundaries. Moreover, although people abandoned the hard core (either by disappearing from the publishing scene altogether, or by changing their affiliations), the overall balance between new and lost hard core members was positive for the former. Based on the above, one can argue that the Industrial Relations community has managed to retain its structural superiority over the various subgroups that operated within the field's boundaries, and that it never faced any structural problems that could weaken its position within the ICS.

If, then, the community does not face a crisis, one must turn to the field's institutions for any corroding signs. As was explained in Chapter 1, the basic sign of a crisis is the inability of the fora to attract members that will contribute to their sustainability and further expansion. However, as the analysis in Chapters 7 and 8 revealed, this is not the case for four of the field's five institutions. Indeed, during the 1990s, the period where the NIR theory was supposed to expand in the field, two new British journals of Industrial Relations were launched – the *European Journal of Industrial Relations* and the *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*. Despite their rather specialised orientation (in contrast to the more general thematic of the BJIR and the IRJ), they managed to attract authors and readers and to establish themselves in the field. As for the 'old' journals, they retained their dominant position

in the field, expanded their intellectual horizons, attracted an ever increasing number of papers, and continue to constitute the point of reference for the field's scholarship.

A similar picture can be drawn both for the field's research centres and its major conference. The IRRU, for instance, continues its tradition in conducting up-to-date Industrial Relations research and attracting scholars from all over the world to contribute to its activities, whereas the relatively 'young' CESR makes its first but, as it seems, steady steps in establishing itself as reputable research centre. The major British Industrial Relations conference, organised annually by the BUIRA, continues to attract an increasing number of participants and constitutes one of the most important fora for the presentation and discussion of industrial relations research.

As for the BUIRA, the field's professional association, its rising membership for all the years that data are available shows that it can attract people interested in the field's problématique. Unfortunately, the lack of more comprehensive data on the association's membership, and its incomplete archive, make a complete analysis of its role and functions quite difficult. Future research should aim to reconstruct the archive and to examine in more detail the structural and demographic characteristics of the BUIRA's members, its role in supporting and promoting the field and its links to the wider society. That way, one will be able to form a more inclusive picture both for the field and for the organisation.

Apparently, the only institution that faces a kind of crisis is the academic department. Indeed, as has been mentioned in the Introduction, Industrial Relations departments around the country are either being renamed, or threatened with complete closure (as was the Keele case), or are being amalgamated into Management Departments or business schools (as is the case with the Industrial Relations Department of the LSE). Faced with these changes, the majority of the faculty accept their new roles – of the 'human resources management', or the 'organisational behaviour' specialist – no matter if some of them continue to do what they always did under a new name (Ackers and Wilkinson 2003)³. The important questions raised in this context are: how important are these developments for the field and how exactly can they influence it?

³ An interesting case, which shows that even if Industrial Relations studies are incorporated in a Business school they can still continue to produce research and teaching relevant to their original orientation, is the Human Resource Management Section of Cardiff Business School. In reality, the research and teaching conducted from this institution is predominantly Industrial Relations-related. However, this does not necessarily mean that the situation in the rest of the UK is similar to this case; further research is required to establish the nature of the departmental changes and their effects on the field.

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the academic department constitutes the field's mirror to the wider society, since it is the forum that attracts and trains the future members of the community; without its own departments a field runs the danger of becoming *invisible* to the future generations of students. How serious, however, is the change in titles for the future of Industrial Relations? To answer this question one has to research in more detail the nature of the change; to say that the field will suffer plainly because its departments change names is not enough. One has to study the curricula of the various ex-Industrial Relations departments and see how the actual teaching of the subject has been affected, the way teaching is conducted, and the ideas discussed in the lecture theatres and the classrooms. At the same time, it is necessary to examine the faculty structure of the new departments and compare it to the old ones, to see if any quantitative or qualitative changes have actually taken place (and to what direction).

Moreover, the dissolution of the departments does not necessarily mean that the field will face an imminent crisis. To reach this point, the whole structure of the ICS must be corroded, from the field's community to its problématique. True, the community may not be able to recruit as many members from the UK as possible (although to argue so further research is required), but one must not forget two important things: *firstly*, that many of the people who support the field's institutions in Britain are not British and have not necessarily been trained in Britain and, *secondly*, that many people come to the field from adjacent disciplines (see Chapter 8); their common ground is their interest in the field's problématique. As long as there are people interested in the subjects the field studies, Industrial Relations will be able to survive and to continue to thrive.

The Future of British Industrial Relations

Writing the history of the future is always a dubious act, susceptible to self-fulfilling prophecies and irreversible mistakes; it is, thus, not my purpose to prophesy the future of the field but, rather, to discuss some final lessons one can draw from the preceding eight chapters of the Thesis. As must be clear by now, to claim that Industrial Relations faces a crisis is largely an unfounded supposition. Contrary to some opinions in the literature, the field's subject-matter and research orientation are neither dated nor obsolete. And how could they be, since the main problems and issues it set out to study almost a century ago are still present? Nor is it possible to argue that the field faces an institutional crisis just because one of its five institutions is, indeed, in a critical position.

The fact, however, that there are important issues to be addressed, people ready to address them, and institutions to support these endeavours does not mean that the community must not seriously consider the state of and the implications from the challenges that its departments face. In my opinion, the condition of the academic teaching of industrial relations must be further researched to reveal the actual impact that the departmental mergers have on the field. Apart from this, however, it would also be interesting to examine why and how the ex-Industrial Relations departments ended up merging with Management departments and not with, say, sociology or political science departments. Obviously, part of the answer must lie with the decisions taken at the top echelons of the university's administration and with their quest for more students and funding. But is that all? What was, for example, the role of the Industrial Relations academics at the time of the changes? Could they have influenced the decision? Did they? And if not, why not? What was the role of the CIPD in the process? How did it influence the decisions and to what extent has it penetrated the curriculum? These are important questions to be asked, which will shed new light to the history of the field's development and help us better understand its current state. The strategies to overcome the problem will, of course, depend on the answer to these questions.

Obviously, a field is more powerful if it runs and controls its own departments and curricula, and is not represented as just another course among the many taught in a department. Even if the latter happens, however, it is my belief that the field will not be totally condemned; as long as it has a healthy problématique that encourages the development of new ideas and research, as long as its community retains and expands its hard core, it attracts new members and persuades them to stay in the field, and as long as the field's members are present and vocal outside the strict scientific boundaries, the field has nothing to worry about.

The fight for the sustainability of the field must, at this stage, be concentrated on two major fronts: firstly, in sustaining its presence within universities and secondly, in making itself valuable to the wider society. As was mentioned in Chapter 8, the power of the community does not only depend on its actual size but, primarily, on the will of its members to use it; the potential for the field to defend itself against external influences is there – the issue is to be able to mobilise it. The role of the BUIRA and of the field's departments is crucial in that respect. It is through their structures that a mobilisation of the Industrial Relations academics may be materialised. How this will be achieved and whom will we eventually decide to serve is something that all of us must seriously consider.

Appendix 1

NIR Content Analysis Methodology

Appendix 1 presents the details of the Content Analysis research for the identification of the NIR theory papers. For more details on how the Content Analysis was conducted, see Chapter 5.

Initial HRM Lexicon

Table A1.1 presents the initial HRM Lexicon. This table is the result of a Key-Word-In-Context (KWIC) analysis of the five most cited papers in the three HRM journals (see Chapter 5). All the auxiliary words – such as “or”, “and”, “they/them/us” etc. – were excluded from the analysis and the words appearing both in the plural and the singular were merged (for example, the word “manager” was merged with the word “managers”).

Table A1.1
Initial HRM Lexicon

| Words | Expressions | Times of Appearance |
|--------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Human | <i>Human Resource</i> | 326 |
| | <i>Human Capital Resources</i> | 23 |
| | <i>Human Capital</i> | 63 |
| | <i>Human Capital Theory</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Human Asset</i> | 6 |
| | <i>Human Resource Strategy</i> | 35 |
| | <i>Human Resource(s)</i> | 41 |
| | <i>Management</i> | |
| | | |
| Work | <i>Work Group</i> | 10 |
| | <i>Work Systems</i> | 8 |
| | | |
| Competitive | <i>Competitive Advantage</i> | 227 |
| | | |
| Management#1 | | 220 |
| Management#2 | | 130 |

| Words | Expressions | Times of Appearance |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>Human Resource(s)</i> | 41 |
| | <i>Management</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Performance Management</i> | 5 |
| | <i>Management thinking</i> | 5 |
| Resources | | 518 |
| | <i>Human Resources</i> | 326 |
| Employees | | 409 |
| | <i>Employee Satisfaction</i> | 7 |
| | <i>Employee Behaviour</i> | 4 |
| | <i>Employee Turnover</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Employee Commitment</i> | 5 |
| | <i>Employee Relations</i> | 6 |
| Advantage | | 251 |
| | <i>Competitive Advantage</i> | 227 |
| Practices | | 251 |
| | <i>HR Practices</i> | 73 |
| BPR (Business Process Reengineering) | | 191 |
| Performance | | 256 |
| | <i>Organizational Performance</i> | 14 |
| | <i>Firm Performance</i> | 10 |
| | <i>Employee Performance</i> | 3 |
| | <i>High Performance</i> | 13 |
| Firm | | 416 |
| Resource | | 231 |
| | <i>Human Resource Practices</i> | 32 |
| | <i>Human Resource Strategies</i> | 14 |
| | <i>Human Resource(s)</i> | 41 |
| | <i>Management</i> | 41 |
| Downsizing | | 206 |
| HRM | | 191 |
| | <i>Strategic HRM (SHRM)</i> | 9 |
| Empowerment | | 131 |
| Business#1 | | 137 |
| Business#2 | | 19 |
| Business#3 | | 1 |
| Job | | 167 |
| | <i>Job satisfaction</i> | 50 |
| | <i>Job Enrichment</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Job Performance</i> | 4 |
| | <i>Job Selection</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Job Design</i> | 7 |
| | <i>Job Security</i> | 12 |
| Systems | | 144 |
| Value | | 122 |
| Satisfaction | | 117 |
| | <i>Job satisfaction</i> | 50 |
| | <i>Work Satisfaction</i> | 6 |
| Organization#1 | | 83 |
| Organization#2 | | 334 |
| Organizational | | 205 |
| | <i>Organizational Change</i> | 6 |
| | <i>Organizational Learning</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Organizational Culture</i> | 15 |

| Words | Expressions | Times of Appearance |
|---------------|---|----------------------------|
| | <i>Organizational Goals</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Organizational Behaviour</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Organizational Capital Resources</i> | 4 |
| | <i>Organizational Performance</i> | 14 |
| | <i>Organizational Effectiveness</i> | 20 |
| | <i>Organizational Structure</i> | 7 |
| | <i>Organizational Memory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Organizational Commitment</i> | 3 |
| Service#1 | | 79 |
| Service#2 | | 182 |
| Capital | | 106 |
| | <i>Human Capital</i> | 63 |
| Quality | | 132 |
| Managers | | 189 |
| Control#1 | | 82 |
| Control#2 | | 25 |
| Relations | | 87 |
| | <i>Employment Relations</i> | 21 |
| | <i>Employee Relations</i> | 6 |
| Training | | 95 |
| Customer | | 341 |
| Skills | | 90 |
| Strategy | | 282 |
| Change | | 92 |
| | <i>Organizational Change</i> | 6 |
| Effort | | 78 |
| | <i>Work Effort</i> | 39 |
| Strategic | | 101 |
| | <i>Strategic HRM (SHRM)</i> | 9 |
| Productivity | | 75 |
| Outcomes | | 60 |
| Commitment | | 56 |
| | <i>High Commitment</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Employee Commitment</i> | 5 |
| Development | | 78 |
| | <i>Employee Development</i> | 6 |
| Individual | | 53 |
| Behaviour | | 48 |
| | <i>Employee Behaviour</i> | 4 |
| | <i>Organizational Behaviour</i> | 3 |
| Function | | 54 |
| | <i>HR function</i> | 30 |
| | <i>Personnel function</i> | 1 |
| Company | | 194 |
| Culture | | 89 |
| | <i>Organizational Culture</i> | 15 |
| Structure | | 77 |
| | <i>Organizational Structure</i> | 7 |
| | <i>Firm Structure</i> | 2 |
| Competition | | 38 |
| Effectiveness | | 46 |
| | <i>Organizational Effectiveness</i> | 20 |

| Words | Expressions | Times of Appearance |
|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Flexibility | | 27 |
| Participation | | 29 |
| | <i>Financial Participation</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Employee Participation</i> | 5 |
| Technology | | 74 |
| Production | | 71 |
| Corporate | | 69 |
| | <i>Corporate Culture</i> | 17 |
| | <i>Corporate Structure</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Corporate Governance</i> | 4 |
| Workforce | | 44 |
| Cultural | | 26 |
| TQM | | 25 |

Calculation of the Net Frequencies of the Words and Expressions Appearing in the Initial HRM Lexicon

Tables A1.2 and A1.3 present the Gross and Net Frequencies of the Words and Expressions appearing in Table A1.1. The following example explains how the Net Frequency was calculated: the word “human”, from Table A1.1, appears (i.e. has a frequency of) 440 times, thus making it the most frequently used word in the texts analysed. However, as Table A1.1 also shows, it is primarily found in specific expressions, such as “*Human Resource*” or “*Human Capital*” or “*Human Resources Management*” etc. To calculate its net frequency, i.e. the times that it appears as an independent word, we need to subtract from its gross frequency the frequencies of the expressions in which it appears. The result shows us that the net frequency of the word is 45 – almost 10 times lower than the original one. The same rationale applies to the expressions. For example, the expression “Human Resources Management” has a frequency of 41 in Table 3. However, it does not include the net frequency of the word “HRM” – which is equivalent to the expression “Human Resources Management”. The net frequency of “HRM” can be found if we subtract from its gross frequency the frequency of the expression “*Strategic HRM*”; this gives us a net frequency for “HRM” of 182. Adding to that the 41 appearances of “Human Resources Management”, we get a total net frequency of 223.

Table A1.2
Words in the HRM Lexicon: Gross and Net Frequencies

| Word | Gross Frequency | Net Frequency | Category (HRM/General Management) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Firm | 416 | 416 | GM/HRM |
| Employees | 409 | 384 | GM/HRM |
| Work | 369 | 351 | Common |
| Customer | 341 | 341 | GM/HRM |
| Resources | 749 | 336 | HRM |
| Organization #2 | 334 | 334 | GM/HRM |
| Strategy | 282 | 282 | GM/HRM |
| Performance | 256 | 216 | HRM |
| Downsizing | 206 | 206 | HRM |
| Company | 194 | 194 | GM/HRM |
| BPR (Business Process Reengineering) | 191 | 191 | GM/HRM |
| Managers | 189 | 189 | GM/HRM |
| Service #2 | 182 | 182 | GM/HRM |
| Practices | 251 | 178 | GM/HRM |
| Management #1 | 220 | 173 | GM/HRM |
| Systems | 144 | 144 | GM/HRM |
| Business #1 | 137 | 137 | GM/HRM |
| Quality | 132 | 132 | HRM |
| Empowerment | 131 | 131 | HRM |
| Management #2 | 130 | 130 | GM/HRM |
| Organizational Value | 205 | 127 | GM/HRM |
| Training | 122 | 122 | GM/HRM |
| Strategic | 95 | 95 | HRM |
| Job | 101 | 92 | GM/HRM |
| Skills | 167 | 91 | HRM |
| Change | 90 | 90 | HRM |
| Organization #1 | 92 | 86 | GM/HRM |
| Control #1 | 83 | 83 | GM/HRM |
| Service #1 | 82 | 82 | GM/HRM |
| Productivity | 79 | 79 | HRM |
| Culture | 75 | 75 | GM/HRM |
| Technology | 89 | 74 | HRM |
| Development | 74 | 74 | Common |
| Production | 78 | 72 | HRM |
| Structure | 71 | 71 | Common |
| Satisfaction | 77 | 68 | GM/HRM |
| Relations | 117 | 61 | HRM |
| Outcomes | 87 | 60 | Common |
| Individual | 60 | 60 | GM/HRM |
| Competitive | 53 | 53 | Common |
| Commitment | 276 | 49 | GM/HRM |
| Corporate | 56 | 48 | HRM |
| Human | 69 | 47 | GM/HRM |
| Workforce | 440 | 45 | HRM |
| Capital | 44 | 44 | HRM |
| Behaviour | 106 | 43 | Common |
| Effort | 48 | 41 | GM/HRM |
| | 78 | 39 | HRM |

| Word | Gross Frequency | Net Frequency | Category (HRM/General Management) |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Competition | 38 | 38 | GM/HRM |
| Flexibility | 27 | 27 | HRM |
| Effectiveness | 46 | 26 | HRM |
| Cultural | 26 | 26 | HRM |
| TQM | 25 | 25 | GM/HRM |
| Control #2 | 25 | 25 | HRM |
| Advantage | 251 | 24 | Common |
| Function | 54 | 23 | Common |
| Participation | 29 | 23 | HRM |
| Business #2 | 19 | 19 | GM/HRM |
| Service #3 | 3 | 3 | Irrelevant |
| Control #3 | 2 | 2 | Irrelevant |
| Business #3 | 1 | 1 | Irrelevant |

Table A1.3
Expressions in the HRM Lexicon: Gross and Net Frequencies

| Phrases | Gross Frequency | Net Frequency |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Human Resource(s) | 250 | 250 |
| Competitive Advantage | 227 | 227 |
| Human Resource(s) Management | 223 | 223 |
| HR Practices | 73 | 73 |
| Job Satisfaction | 50 | 50 |
| Work Effort | 39 | 39 |
| Human Capital | 37 | 37 |
| Human Resource(s) Strategy | 35 | 35 |
| Human Resource Practices | 32 | 32 |
| HR Function | 30 | 30 |
| Human Capital Resources | 23 | 23 |
| Employment Relations | 21 | 21 |
| Organizational Effectiveness | 20 | 20 |
| Corporate Culture | 17 | 17 |
| Organizational Cutlure | 15 | 15 |
| Human Resource Strategies | 14 | 14 |
| Organizational Performance | 14 | 14 |
| High Performance | 13 | 13 |
| Job Security | 12 | 12 |
| Firm Performance | 10 | 10 |
| Work Group | 10 | 10 |
| Strategic HRM (SHRM) | 9 | 9 |
| Work Systems | 8 | 8 |
| Employee Satisfaction | 7 | 7 |
| Job Design | 7 | 7 |
| Organizational Structure | 7 | 7 |
| Employee Development | 6 | 6 |
| Employee Relations | 6 | 6 |
| Human Asset | 6 | 6 |
| Organizational Change | 6 | 6 |
| Work Satisfaction | 6 | 6 |
| Employee Commitment | 5 | 5 |
| Employee Participation | 5 | 5 |
| Management thinking | 5 | 5 |
| Corporate Governance | 4 | 4 |
| Employee Behaviour | 4 | 4 |
| Job Performance | 4 | 4 |
| Organizational Capital Resources | 4 | 4 |
| Employee Performance | 3 | 3 |
| Employee Turnover | 3 | 3 |
| High Commitment | 3 | 3 |
| Human Capital Theory | 3 | 3 |
| Organizational Behavior | 3 | 3 |
| Organizational Commitment | 3 | 3 |
| Organizational Goals | 3 | 3 |
| Firm Structure | 2 | 2 |
| Job Enrichment | 2 | 2 |
| Organizational Learning | 2 | 2 |

| Phrases | Gross Frequency | Net Frequency |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Corporate Structure | 1 | 1 |
| Financial Participation | 1 | 1 |
| Job Selection | 1 | 1 |
| Organizational Memory | 1 | 1 |
| Performance Management | 1 | 1 |
| Personnel function | 1 | 1 |

Appendix 2

On the Industrial Relations Community Database

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the Database includes information on the publication record of two groups of individuals: those who appeared in the four British Industrial Relations Journals and had published an NIR paper, and those who appeared in the four British Industrial Relations Journals and were members of the BUIRA in the years 1963, 1970, 1977, 1984, 1991, 1998, and 2005. All the relevant information was extracted from three electronic databases, the Business Source Premier (BSP), the JSTOR and Sweetswise, using a JAVA algorithm that was able to 'read' all the relevant data and 'translate' them in MS-Access language. The use of the algorithm, apart from saving considerable amounts of time and effort, also ensured the avoidance of any human errors during the transportation process.

Data Collection and Classification

The publications in the Database concern only *full and peer reviewed, papers*. Thus, Editorials, Book Reviews, Legal Notes, or Chronicles are not included. To extract the relevant data from the three electronic databases, the following procedures were followed:

Method used for BSP

An Advanced Search was performed. All the surnames and names of the authors in the sample were entered in the search machine and a search was performed using the following criteria:

1. The "Boolean/Phrase" operator was selected.
2. Only Full Text Articles in Academic Journals were searched.
3. The Number of Pages was set to "greater than 2". That way, small editorials, book reviews etc. were excluded from the results.

Once the search returned its results two further checks were performed: firstly, a check to ensure that the author retrieved was indeed the author in the sample, and not a case of homonymy; secondly, that the retrieved record was an article and not a book review or an editorial etc. If it was any of the latter, it was erased from the records. The resulting records were inserted in the Database.

Method used for JSTOR

An Advanced Search was also performed. All the surnames and names of the authors in the sample were entered in the search machine and a search was performed using the following criteria:

1. The “Search for links to articles outside JSTOR” option was selected.
2. The journals in the following categories were selected: “Business”, “Economics”, “History”, “Political Science”, “Psychology”, “Public Policy and Administration”, “Sociology”.

The results of the search were then treated in the same way as in the BSP case.

Method used for Swetswise

As in the previous cases, an Advanced Search was performed by entering all the surnames and names of the sample in the search machine. The “Show full text subscriptions” option was selected, and all the other fields were left at their default values. The retrieved results were treated in the same way as in the previous cases.

Once all the data were in the Database, they were ‘normalised’ –i.e. any repetitive entries were erased and the journals were classified in categories. This was because the focus of the research was to investigate the intellectual *orientation* of the sample, not the specific journals in which they published.

Classification of Journals: Rationale and Method

To be able to analyse the patterns that emerge, all the journals that appeared in the entries were classified in terms of their disciplinary affiliation. The immediate problem that arose in this case concerned the classification of each journal in a proper category. An obvious way to address this issue was to look at the *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR) for the Social Science Journals in the ISI Web of Knowledge. The JCR classification scheme is presented in Table A2.1:

Table A2.1
Journal Citation Reports Classification Scheme

| Category | Category |
|--|--|
| 1 Anthropology | 29 Nursing |
| 2 Area Studies | 30 Planning & Development |
| 3 Business | 31 Political Science |
| 4 Business, Finance | 32 Psychiatry |
| 5 Communication | 33 Psychology, Applied |
| 6 Criminology & Penology | 34 Psychology, Biological |
| 7 Demography | 35 Psychology, Clinical |
| 8 Economics | 36 Psychology, Developmental |
| 9 Education & Educational Research | 37 Psychology, Educational |
| 10 Education, Special | 38 Psychology, Experimental |
| 11 Environmental Studies | 39 Psychology, Mathematical |
| 12 Ergonomics | 40 Psychology, Multidisciplinary |
| 13 Ethics | 41 Psychology, Psychoanalysis |
| 14 Ethnic Studies | 42 Psychology, Social |
| 15 Family Studies | 43 Public Administration |
| 16 Geography | 44 Public, Environmental and Occupational Health |
| 17 Gerontology | 45 Rehabilitation |
| 18 Health Policy & Services | 46 Social Issues |
| 19 History | 47 Social Sciences, Biomedical |
| 20 History & Philosophy of Science | 48 Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary |
| 21 History of Social Sciences | 49 Social Sciences, Mathematical Methods |
| 22 Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism | 50 Social Work |
| 23 Industrial Relations and Labour | 51 Sociology |
| 24 Information Science and Library Science | 52 Substance Abuse |
| 25 International Relations | 53 Transportation |
| 26 Law | 54 Urban Studies |
| 27 Linguistics | 55 Women's Studies |
| 28 Management | |

Although this classification scheme looks all-encompassing, it is not completely adequate for the purposes of the current research for two reasons: firstly, the JCR may classify one journal in more than one category (which is not mistaken, but it poses analytical problems) and, secondly, some of the categories are too broad. For example, the category "Management" includes almost all the journals of the "Business" category. Also, it does not distinguish between the various sub-disciplines of Management (e.g. HRM, Operations Research, Marketing etc.).

To address the above problems, the journals were classified in a different way. The basic starting point was the various keywords in the journals' titles. If a journal had more than one keyword, the JCR was consulted to see how it classified the journal. If it placed it in more than one category, the more specialised one was selected. The following two examples clarify the classification rationale:

E.g. 1: The journal “Policy Studies” is categorised by the JCR as 1) a Political Science and 2) a Public Administration journal. However, since Public Administration \subset Political Science, it was classified as a Public Administration journal.

E.g. 2: The journal “Gender, Work and Organisation” is categorised as 1) a Management and 2) a Women’s Studies journal. However, since Women’s Studies \subset Management, it was classified as a Women’s Studies journal.

All the Management sub-disciplines were classified as “Management”, except from the HRM and OB journals, which were assigned distinct categories. Any Business History journal was also included in the Management category. The “Industrial Relations & Labour” category of the JCR also includes Labour History journals. However, the classification followed was the one used in the Content Analysis chapter (see Chapter 5). Thus, Labour History journals were placed in the “History” class, whereas more sociological or economic journals were placed in the “Sociology” and “Economics” class respectively. Moreover, no sub-divisions were created in the “Economics”, “Sociology” and “Psychology” categories, following the rationale of the JCR (there is not a special category for “Labour Economics”, for example). For all the journals that were not included in the JCR the keyword approach described previously was followed. In cases of doubt, the journals’ respective websites were consulted and their classification was followed. Based on the above, Table A2.2 presents the journal categorisation used in the Database and Table A2.3 all the journals under each category:

Table A2.2
Journal Categories in the Database

| Category | Category |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Accounting & Finance | 13 Law |
| 2 Area Studies | 14 Management |
| 3 Development | 15 Organisational Behaviour |
| 4 Economics | 16 Political Science |
| 5 Education | 17 Psychology |
| 6 Engineering | 18 Public & Occupational Health |
| 7 Environmental Studies | 19 Public Administration |
| 8 History | 20 Sociology |
| 9 HRM/PM | 21 Statistics |
| 10 Information Science | 22 Transportation |
| 11 International Relations | 23 Women's Studies |
| 12 Industrial Relations | |

Table A2.3
Journals in the Database

| Category & Journal |
|--|
| <i>I. Accounting & Finance</i> |
| 1 Accounting & Business Research |
| 2 Accounting & Finance |
| 3 Accounting Education |
| 4 Behavioral Research in Accounting |
| 5 Contemporary Accounting Research |
| 6 European Financial Management |
| 7 European Journal of Finance |
| 8 Financial Accountability & Management |
| 9 Geneva Papers on Risk & Insurance - Issues & Practice |
| 10 Issues in Accounting Education |
| 11 Journal of Accountancy |
| 12 Journal of Accounting Research |
| 13 Journal of Business Finance & Accounting |
| 14 Journal of International Financial Management & Accounting |
| 15 Journal of Private Equity |
| 16 Journal of Risk Research |
| 17 Management Accounting Quarterly |
| 18 Risk Analysis: An International Journal |
| 19 Venture Capital |
| <i>II. Area Studies</i> |
| 1 Asian Survey |
| 2 Europe-Asia Studies |
| <i>III. Development</i> |
| 1 African Development Review |
| 2 Eastern Economic Journal |
| 3 European Journal of Development Research |
| 4 Growth & Change |
| 5 International Planning Studies |
| 6 Journal of Development Studies |
| 7 Journal of International Trade & Economic Development |
| 8 Journal of Regional Science |
| 9 Oxford Development Studies |
| <i>IV. Economics</i> |
| 1 American Economic Review |
| 2 American Journal of Agricultural Economics |
| 3 American Journal of Economics & Sociology |
| 4 Annals of Public & Cooperative Economics |
| 5 Applied Economics |
| 6 Applied Economics Letters |
| 7 Applied Financial Economics |
| 8 Australian Economic Papers |
| 9 Australian Economic Review |
| 10 Benefits Quarterly |
| 11 Brookings Papers on Economic Activity |
| 12 Bulletin of Economic Research |
| 13 Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Economics & Statistics |
| 14 Business & Economic Review |
| 15 Canadian Journal of Economics / Revue Canadienne d'Economique |

Category & Journal

- 16 Capital & Class
- 17 Challenge
- 18 Comparative Economic Studies (Association for Comparative Economic Studies)
- 19 Desarrollo Economico
- 20 Development & Change
- 21 Eastern European Economics
- 22 Econometrica
- 23 Economic Affairs
- 24 Economic Analysis: A Journal of Enterprise & Participation
- 25 Economic Development & Cultural Change
- 26 Economic Journal
- 27 Economic Notes
- 28 Economic Perspectives
- 29 Economic Policy
- 30 Economic Record
- 31 Economica
- 32 Economics of Innovation & New Technology
- 33 Economics of Transition
- 34 Economy & Society
- 35 Education Economics
- 36 Empirical Economics
- 37 German Economic Review
- 38 International Advances in Economic Research
- 39 International Economic Review
- 40 International Game Theory Review
- 41 International Journal of Social Economics
- 42 International Journal of the Economics of Business
- 43 International Review of Applied Economics
- 44 International Review of Economics & Finance
- 45 Journal of Applied Econometrics
- 46 Journal of Common Market Studies
- 47 Journal of Economic & Social Measurement
- 48 Journal of Economic Affairs
- 49 Journal of Economic Issues
- 50 Journal of Economic Literature
- 51 Journal of Economic Perspectives
- 52 Journal of Economic Studies
- 53 Journal of Economic Surveys
- 54 Journal of Economics
- 55 Journal of Economics & Management Strategy
- 56 Journal of Farm Economics
- 57 Journal of Industrial Economics
- 58 Journal of Labor Economics
- 59 Journal of Political Economy
- 60 Journal of Population Economics
- 61 Journal of Post Keynesian Economics
- 62 Journal of Socio-Economics
- 63 Journal of the European Economic Association
- 64 Kyklos
- 65 Managerial and Decision Economics
- 66 Manchester School
- 67 Metroeconomica
- 68 NBER Macroeconomics Annual
- 69 Nebraska Journal of Economics & Business
- 70 New Economy

| Category & Journal | |
|---|--|
| 71 New England Economic Review | |
| 72 New Political Economy | |
| 73 OECD Economic Studies | |
| 74 OECD Papers | |
| 75 Oxford Bulletin of Economics & Statistics | |
| 76 Oxford Economic Papers | |
| 77 Pacific Economic Review | |
| 78 PharmacoEconomics | |
| 79 Portuguese Economic Journal | |
| 80 Post-Communist Economies | |
| 81 Problems of Economic Transition | |
| 82 Problems of Economics | |
| 83 Quarterly Journal of Business & Economics | |
| 84 Quarterly Journal of Economics | |
| 85 Review of African Political Economy | |
| 86 Review of Development Economics | |
| 87 Review of Economic Studies | |
| 88 Review of Economics & Statistics | |
| 89 Review of Income & Wealth | |
| 90 Review of International Economics | |
| 91 Review of Political Economy | |
| 92 Review of Social Economy | |
| 93 Revue Economique | |
| 94 Scandinavian Journal of Economics | |
| 95 Scottish Journal of Political Economy | |
| 96 Southern Economic Journal | |
| 97 The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue Canadienne d'Economique et de Science Politique | |
| 98 World Economy | |
| 99 Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic & Social Research | |
| <i>V. Education</i> | |
| 1 British Journal of Educational Studies | |
| 2 History of Education Journal | |
| 3 Journal of Education & Work | |
| 4 Journal of European Industrial Training | |
| <i>VI. Engineering</i> | |
| 1 Building Research & Information | |
| <i>VII. Environmental Studies</i> | |
| 1 Annals of Regional Science | |
| 2 Papers in Regional Science | |
| 3 Regional Studies | |
| <i>VIII. History</i> | |
| 1 Bulletin -- Society for the Study of Labour History | |
| 2 Comparative Studies in Society and History | |
| 3 Economic History Review | |
| 4 Historical Journal | |
| 5 History and Theory | |
| 6 Journal of Contemporary History | |
| 7 Journal of Modern History | |
| 8 Labor History | |
| 9 Labour History Review | |

Category & Journal

- 10 Social History
- 11 The Journal of American History
- 12 The Journal of Economic History

IX. HRM/PM

- 1 Employee Relations
- 2 Human Performance
- 3 Human Resource Development International
- 4 Human Resource Management Journal
- 5 Human Resource Management Review
- 6 Human Resource Planning
- 7 Human Systems Management
- 8 International Journal of Human Resource Management
- 9 International Journal of Manpower
- 10 International Journal of Training & Development
- 11 Journal of Human Resources
- 12 People Management
- 13 Personnel Review
- 14 Public Personnel Management

X. Information Science

- 1 Information Systems Journal
- 2 Journal of Information Technology
- 3 Journal of Management Information Systems
- 4 MIS Quarterly

XI. International Relations

- 1 International Affairs
- 2 Journal of International Affairs

XII. Industrial Relations

- 1 British Journal of Industrial Relations
- 2 European Journal of Industrial Relations
- 3 Historical Studies in Industrial Relations
- 4 Industrial & Labor Relations Review
- 5 Industrial Relations
- 6 Industrial Relations/Relations Industrielle
- 7 Industrial Relations Journal
- 8 International Journal of Employment Studies
- 9 International Labour Review
- 10 Journal of Labor Research
- 11 Labor Studies Journal
- 12 LABOUR: Review of Labour Economics & Industrial Relations
- 13 Monthly Labor Review

XIII. Law

- 1 International Journal of Comparative Labour Law & Industrial Relations
- 2 Journal of Law and Economics
- 3 Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization
- 4 Labor Law Journal
- 5 Modern Law Review
- 6 The American Journal of Comparative Law

XIV. Management

- 1 Academy of Management Executive

Category & Journal

- 2 Academy of Management Journal
- 3 Academy of Management Perspectives
- 4 Academy of Management Review
- 5 Accounting, Business & Financial History
- 6 Across the Board
- 7 Administrative Science Quarterly
- 8 Administrative Theory & Praxis
- 9 Arbitration Journal
- 10 Asia Pacific Business Review
- 11 Behaviour & Information Technology
- 12 British Journal of Management
- 13 British Journal of Marketing
- 14 Business & Society Review
- 15 Business Ethics: A European Review
- 16 Business History
- 17 Business Horizons
- 18 Business Strategy Review
- 19 California Management Review
- 20 Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences
- 21 Columbia Journal of World Business
- 22 Competition & Change
- 23 Construction Management & Economics
- 24 Corporate Governance: An International Review
- 25 Corporate Reputation Review
- 26 Creativity & Innovation Management
- 27 Decision
- 28 Emergence
- 29 Enterprise & Innovation Management Studies
- 30 Entrepreneurship & Regional Development
- 31 Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice
- 32 European Business Journal
- 33 European Journal of Marketing
- 34 Harvard Business Review
- 35 Industrial & Commercial Training
- 36 Industry & Innovation
- 37 International Journal of Bank Marketing
- 38 International Journal of Conflict Management
- 39 International Journal of Consumer Studies
- 40 International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
- 41 International Journal of Innovation Management
- 42 International Journal of Logistics: Research & Applications
- 43 International Journal of Management Reviews
- 44 International Journal of Operations & Production Management
- 45 International Journal of Organizational Analysis
- 46 International Journal of Production Research
- 47 International Review of Retail, Distribution & Consumer Research
- 48 International Studies of Management & Organization
- 49 International Transactions in Operational Research
- 50 Irish Journal of Management
- 51 Journal of Applied Business Research
- 52 Journal of Applied Management Studies
- 53 Journal of Business
- 54 Journal of Business Strategies
- 55 Journal of Collective Negotiations
- 56 Journal of Consumer Research

Category & Journal

- 57 Journal of Contingencies & Crisis Management
- 58 Journal of Entrepreneurial & Small Business Finance
- 59 Journal of General Management
- 60 Journal of International Business Studies
- 61 Journal of International Marketing
- 62 Journal of Management
- 63 Journal of Management Development
- 64 Journal of Management Studies
- 65 Journal of Managerial Issues
- 66 Journal of Marketing Management
- 67 Journal of Organizational Change Management
- 68 Journal of Small Business Management
- 69 Journal of the Operational Research Society
- 70 Journal of World Business
- 71 Leadership & Management in Engineering
- 72 Leadership Quarterly
- 73 Management Decision
- 74 Management Review
- 75 Management Science
- 76 Management Today
- 77 Maritime Policy & Management
- 78 McKinsey Quarterly
- 79 Operations Research
- 80 Organization Science
- 81 Organization Studies
- 82 Organizational Dynamics
- 83 Public Relations Quarterly
- 84 Service Industries Journal
- 85 Sloan Management Review
- 86 Strategic Management Journal
- 87 Survey of Current Business
- 88 TAMARA: Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science
- 89 Technology Analysis & Strategic Management
- 90 The Business History Review
- 91 The Journal of Conflict Resolution
- 92 Total Quality Management
- 93 Total Quality Management & Business Excellence
- 94 University of Auckland Business Review

XV. Organisational Behaviour

- 1 Journal of Occupational Behaviour
- 2 Journal of Organizational Behavior

XVI. Political Science

- 1 American Journal of Political Science
- 2 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science
- 3 British Journal of Political Science
- 4 Brookings Review
- 5 International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science
Politique
- 6 Journal of Politics
- 7 Political Science Quarterly
- 8 Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York
- 9 The Review of Politics
- 10 Western Political Quarterly
- 11 World Politics

Category & Journal

XVII. Psychology

- 1 Applied Psychology: An International Review
- 2 Basic & Applied Social Psychology
- 3 British Journal of Psychology
- 4 European Journal of Work & Organizational Psychology
- 5 European Work & Organizational Psychologist
- 6 Journal of Applied Psychology
- 7 Journal of Managerial Psychology
- 8 Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology
- 9 Journal of Occupational Health Psychology
- 10 Journal of Occupational Psychology
- 11 Journal of Personality Assessment
- 12 Journal of Social Psychology
- 13 Occupational Psychology
- 14 Personnel Psychology
- 15 Psychological Science
- 16 Psychology Today
- 17 The American Journal of Psychology
- 18 Work & Stress

XVIII. Public & Occupational Health

- 1 American Journal of Public Health
- 2 Health, Risk & Society
- 3 Journal of Health and Social Behavior
- 4 Professional Safety

XIX. Public Administration

- 1 Australian Journal of Public Administration
- 2 Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques
- 3 Hume Papers on Public Policy
- 4 International Journal of Public Sector Management
- 5 International Social Security Review
- 6 Journal of European Public Policy
- 7 Journal of Pension Benefits: Issues in Administration
- 8 Journal of Policy Analysis and Management
- 9 Journal of Public Affairs
- 10 Policy Studies
- 11 Public Administration
- 12 Public Administration Quarterly
- 13 Public Administration Review
- 14 Public Management
- 15 Public Management Review
- 16 Public Money
- 17 Public Money & Management
- 18 Public Opinion Quarterly
- 19 Public Productivity & Management Review
- 20 Public Productivity Review
- 21 Social Policy & Administration

XX. Sociology

- 1 Acta Sociologica
- 2 American Journal of Sociology
- 3 American Sociological Review
- 4 Annual Review of Sociology

| Category & Journal | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| | 5 British Journal of Sociology |
| | 6 Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie |
| | 7 Community, Work & Family |
| | 8 Contemporary Sociology |
| | 9 Culture & Organization |
| | 10 European Sociological Review |
| | 11 Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences |
| | 12 International Journal of Social Research Methodology |
| | 13 Journal of Marriage and the Family |
| | 14 Le Mouvement Social |
| | 15 Leisure Studies |
| | 16 New Technology, Work & Employment |
| | 17 Social Forces |
| | 18 Social Problems |
| | 19 Social Research |
| | 20 Social Science Quarterly |
| | 21 Social Scientist |
| | 22 Sociological Forum |
| | 23 Sociological Perspectives |
| | 24 Sociological Quarterly |
| | 25 Sociology of Education |
| | 26 Teaching Sociology |
| | 27 Urban Studies |
| <i>XXI. Statistics</i> | |
| | 1 Journal of Applied Statistics |
| | 2 Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society) |
| | 3 Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series C (Applied Statistics) |
| | 4 Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series D (The Statistician) |
| <i>XXII. Transportation</i> | |
| | 1 Transportation Journal |
| <i>XXIII. Women's Studies</i> | |
| | 1 Feminist Economics |
| | 2 Gender, Work & Organization |
| <i>Total Journals</i> | <i>373</i> |

Appendix 3

Content Analysis of the Intellectual Development of the Field of Industrial Relations

This Appendix includes information on the Content Analysis regarding the intellectual development of the field of Industrial Relations in Britain.

Table A3.1 includes all the words that comprise the various clusters used in the analysis.

Tables A3.2, A3.3, and A3.4 show the keywords associated with the analysis of the *Collective Bargaining*, *Trade Unions* and *Wages & Benefits* clusters respectively.

For an analysis regarding the use of these Tables see Chapter 7.

Table A3.1
Word Categories

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|---|---|--|
| Alternative Forms of Workers' Representation | Staff Associations Workplace Community EWC Works Councils | |
| Bargaining | Bargaining Bargaining Group Collective Bargaining Custom And Practice Negotiation Union Deals | It includes anything relevant to collective bargaining |
| Class | Class Social Stratification | |
| Conflict | Dispute Disputes Committee Industrial Conflict Industrial Problems Resistance Union Militancy Workforce Divisions | It includes anything relevant to conflict or to conflicting situations |
| Discrimination | Age Discrimination Discrimination Sex Discrimination | |
| Employers & Management | Employer Organisation Employers Management | It includes anything relevant to employers and management |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Worker Directors | |
| Enterprise | Euro-Company Factory Multi-Enterprise Multinational Organisations Workplace | Synonyms to enterprise/organisation |
| Equality | Employment Segregation Equal Equal Opportunities Equal Value Claims Equality Harassment Inequality | Anything relevant to equality |
| Europe | EC EU Europe European Economy Europeanisation New Member States Social Europe | |
| Gender | Gender Lesbian&Gay Women | |
| Globalisation | Globalisation | |
| Government Regulation | Corporate Governance Governance Neo-Corporatism Occupational Licensing Social Contract | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| | Voluntarism | |
| Health & Safety | Accidents Injury And Death | |
| History | History Labour History | |
| Immigration | Immigration Migration | |
| Industrial Action | Collective Action Go Slow Industrial Action Stoppages Strikes Unorganised Conflict Winter Of Discontent Work To Rule | It includes anything relevant to institutionalised conflict |
| Industrial Peace | Industrial Peace | |
| Industrial Relations (IR) | IR IR Rules IR System Employment Relations Organisational Relations Labour-Management Relations Labour Relations Employment System | |
| International Organisations | ILO | |
| Industrial Relations Theory/Research | Changing Landscape IR Academic Discipline IR Behavioural Perspective IR History IR Models | Anything that has to do with IR research, theory, teaching, IR as a field |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | IR Old/New IR Research IR Teaching IR Theory Neo-Pluralism NIR Oxford School Pluralism Pragmatism Theorising Unitarism | |
| Judiciary | Industrial Courts Labour Courts Supreme Court Tribunals | |
| Labour Market | Employment Internal Labour Market Labour Demand Labour Market Labour Mobility Labour Stability Labour Supply Retirement School-To-Work Transition | Anything relevant to the labour mkt and its functions |
| Labour-Mgt Cooperation | Cooperation Industrial Morale | |
| Law | Dissability Discrimination Act 1995 Employment Act 1980 Employment Law Industrial Relations Act | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|-----------------------------|---|---------|
| | Industrial Training Act Labour Law Labour Legislation Labour Regulation(S) Legislation Order 1305 Parental Leave Directive Personnel Leave Directive Trade Dispute Act 1906 Trade Union Act 1984 Wagner Act Model | |
| Legal Rights | Freedom Of Association Human Rights | |
| Management Practices | Corporate Merger (Union) Avoidance Business System Coprorate Investment Dismissal Employment Practices High Technology Investment Inward Investment Job Regulation Lockout Management Buyouts Managerial Control Managerial Ideology Managerial Policy Mgt Function Occupational Change | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|--|---|----------------|
| | Organisational Change Recruiting Redundancy Scientific Mgt Social Responsibility Technology (Introduction Of) Unfair Dismissal Work Pressure Workers' Effort (Mgt Of) | |
| Mediation & Arbitration | ACAS Arbitration Central Arbitration Committee Conciliation Mediation Third Parties Compulsory Arbitration | |
| Miscellaneous | Human Rights Watch Report 2000 Sealife Warwick Library WIRS 1993 Work/Non-Work(Leisure) Data Bank Environment Management Teaching | |
| Personnel (refers to a collection of workers) | Labour Factor Manpower Personnel Workforce | |
| Policy | Donovan Committee EU Employment Strategy | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| | Government Policy Incomes Policy Job Creation Labour Policy Privatisation Social Policy | |
| Production Practices | Japanisation Mass Production Production Reorganisation Work Systems | Methods/practices of production |
| Public Sector | Public Sector | |
| Public Services | Employment Service Agency Public Employment Agencies Public Employment Service | |
| Race & Ethnicity | Black Workers | |
| Social Dialogue | European Social Dialogue Social Dialogue Social Pacts | |
| Terms&Conditions of Employment | Work Security Working Environment Working Hours Working Time | |
| Trade Unions | Associations Collectivism Combined Committees Democracy Labour Movement Membership Organisation Organising | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment | |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| Training & Education | Organising Campaigns Plural Unionism Post-Entry Closed Shop Rank And File Recognition Representation Trade Union Leadership Trade Union Rules Trade Unions Trade Unions Democracy Union Democracy Union Representation Unionisation Unionism Unions | | |
| | Apprenticeship Career Development EDAP (Employee Development And Achievement Programme) Education Empowerment Industrial Training Boards Low Skill School Leavers Skill Skill Development Training Vocational Education | | |
| | Turnover | Labour Turnover Quits | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| | Separation Rates Turnover | |
| Unemployment | Unemployed Unemployment | |
| Union representatives | Safety Representatives Shop Steward Trade Unionist Union Officer | |
| Wages & Benefits | Coventry Toolroom Agreement Earnings Fringe Benefits Incentives Minimum Wage Pay Pay Claim Pay Determination Pay Gap Pay Levels Pay Policy Pay System Payment PBR Piecework Productivity-Based Wages Redundancy Payments Salaries Stock Options Union Relative Wage Variable Pay Wage Adjustment | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| | Wage Agreements Wage Councils Wage Determination Wage Differences Wage Policy Wage Scheme Wage Structure Wage Systems Wage-Fixing Wages | |
| Work Practices/Types | Employment Practices Flexibility Flexible Firm Homeworking Part-Time Part-Time Employment Personal Contracts Short-Time Work Team Production Teamwork | |
| Worker | Employee Worker German Worker | |
| Worker Types | Agency Workers Maritime Labour Professionals Self-Employment Skilled Labour White Collar | Types of workers/labour |
| Workers' Control | Yugoslav Self-Management | |

| Categories | Words Included in the Cluster | Comment |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| Workers Participation | Job Control | |
| | Co-Determination | |
| | Consultation | |
| | Cooperatives | |
| | Democratic Governance | |
| | Employee Ownership | |
| | Industrial Democracy | |
| | Information | |
| | Joint Consultation | |
| | Joint Consultative Committee | |
| | Participation | |
| | Partnership | |
| EWC | | |
| Works Councils | | |
| Young Workers | Young | |
| | Youth Employment | |

Table A3.2
Content Evolution of *Bargaining*

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1963 | Bargaining | Bargaining | Wages & Benefits | Wage |
| 1966 | Bargaining | Bargaining | Wages & Benefits | Productivity Agreements |
| 1969 | Bargaining | Bargaining | Labour Market | Reform |
| | Bargaining | Collective Bargaining | | Labour Market |
| 1972 | Bargaining | Custom and Practice | Worker Types Mediation & Arbitration | Units |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Incomes |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | White-collar |
| | Bargaining | Collective bargaining | | Third-party intervention |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Change |
| 1975 | Bargaining | Bargaining | IR Theory/Research Enterprise Policy Training & Education | Flanders |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Multinational |
| | Bargaining | Negotiation | | Income Policy |
| | Bargaining | Negotiation | | Training |
| 1978 | Bargaining | Bargaining | Mediation & Arbitration Industrial Action Wages & Benefits | Compulsory Administration |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Unofficial Strikes |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Wages Devolution |
| 1981 | Bargaining | Bargaining | Wages & Benefits Enterprise IR Theory/Research | Earnings |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Multinational |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Theory |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Centralisation |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Reform |
| 1984 | Bargaining | Bargaining | Policy | Pension Schemes |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Transition |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | - | - |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | Industrial Action | Strikes |
| 1987 | Bargaining | Bargaining | Trade Unions | Union-Type Effects |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Changing |
| 1990 | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Cooperative |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Decentralisation |
| 1993 | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Contraction |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Decentralisation |
| | Bargaining | Union deals | | Single |
| 1996 | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Decline |
| | Bargaining | Collective bargaining | | Future |
| 1999 | Bargaining | Bargaining | IR | Collective Contracts |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | IR |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Reform |
| 2002 | Bargaining | Negotiations | | Justice for Janitors |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Co-ordinated |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Europe |
| | Bargaining | Collective bargaining | | Conflict Resolution |
| | Bargaining | Collective bargaining | | Decentralised |

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 2005 | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Globalisation |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | Policy | Decentralisation |
| | Bargaining | Bargaining | | Reform |

Table A3.3
Content Evolution of Trade Unions

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1963 | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Independence |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Union | | Journal |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Union Leadership | | Administration |
| 1966 | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Shop Steward Committees | | |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Union Rules | | Admission |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Affiliation |
| 1969 | Trade Unions | Union | | Representation |
| 1972 | Trade Unions | Union | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Finance |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Size |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Belongs |
| | Trade Unions | Union | Worker Types | White-Collar |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Professional |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Work |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Organisational Profile |
| 1975 | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Worker Types | White Collar |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Acceptability |
| | Trade Unions | Union | Class | Social Class |
| 1978 | Trade Unions | Shop Steward | | Organisation |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Power |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Shop Steward | Gender | Women |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Union | | |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Democracy |
| 1981 | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Worker Types | White Collar |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Concentration |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Elections |
| | Trade Unions | Post-Entry Closed Shop | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Dual-Functioning |
| | Trade Unions | Combined Committees | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | Worker Types | Skilled Workers |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | New Technology |
| | Trade Unions | Union Membership | | Free-Riders |
| | Trade Unions | Union | Worker Types | White-Collar |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | State |
| | Trade Unions | Shop Steward | | Rank And File |
| | Trade Unions | Shop Steward | | Typology |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Power |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Mergers |

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | |
| | Trade Unions | Shop Steward Union | Worker Types | White-Collar Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Union | | Democracy |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Union | | Organisation |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Unemployment | Unemployed |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Rank And File | | Factional Opposition |
| 1984 | Trade Unions | Organisation | - | - |
| | Trade Unions | Membership | - | - |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Political Funds |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | Management Practices | Buyouts |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Labour Movement | | Structural Changes |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Information Strategy |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Recession |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Technological Change |
| 1987 | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Policy |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Membership |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Labour Movement | | Crisis |
| | Trade Unions | Democracy | | Organisation |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Productivity |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Density |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Membership |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Density |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Unemployment | Popularity |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Unemployed |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Density |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Public Opinion |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Productivity |
| 1990 | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Productivity |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Productivity |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Financial Status |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Organising |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Crisis |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Member Commitment |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Flexibility |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Independent |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | |
| 1993 | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Renewal |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Membership |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | International |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Government |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Exclusion |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | International |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | International |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Membership |

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Small Firms |
| | Trade Unions | Union Recognition | | Non-Unionism |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | IR | Industrial Relations |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Strategies |
| | Trade Unions | Enterprise Trade Unions | | Typology |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Presence |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Industrial Action | Collective Action |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Coercion |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Democracy |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Transition |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Organisation |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | |
| 1996 | Trade Unions | Shop Steward Union | | Decline |
| | Trade Unions | Membership Trade Unions | | |
| | Trade Unions | Democracy Unions | | |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Restructuring |
| | Trade Unions | Union | Management Practices | Merger |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Database |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Consciousness |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Structural Development |
| | Trade Unions | Proto-Unions | | |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Mergers |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Membership |
| | Trade Unions | Collectivism | | Decline |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Solidarity |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Membership |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Organising |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Exclusion |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Amalgamation |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Union Recognition | Policy | Policy |
| 1999 | Trade Unions | Union | Public Sector | New Public Sector |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Globalisation |
| | Trade Unions | Representation | | Non-Unionism |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Merger |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Membership Retention |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Membership Turnover |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Transition |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Civil Service |
| | Trade Unions | Unionism | Public Sector | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | |
| 2002 | Trade Unions | Unionisation | | Need |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Internet |
| | Trade Unions | Organisation | | Decline |

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Trade Unions | Organisation | | Information Technology |
| | Trade Unions | Unionisation | | Adult |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Growth |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions Leadership | | Members Attitudes |
| | Trade Unions | Membership | | Fewer |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Organisation |
| | Trade Unions | Recognition | | Erosion |
| | Trade Unions | Membership | | Non-Unionism |
| | Trade Unions | Representation | Health & Safety | Health And Safety |
| | Trade Unions | Representation | | Positive Action |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Non-Market Coordination |
| | Trade Unions | Associations | | Effectiveness |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Management Practices | Teamwork |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Social Movements |
| | Trade Unions | Unionism | | Leadership |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unionism | | Master & Servants Act |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Law | |
| | Trade Unions | Organising Campaigns | | Successful |
| | Trade Unions | Membership | | Stop Joining |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Representation |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Membership |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | | Merger |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | | Post-Socialist |
| 2005 | Trade Unions | Union | | Recognition |
| | Trade Unions | Union | | Cross-Border |
| | Trade Unions | Union Recognition | Conflict | Dispute |
| | Trade Unions | Unions | IR Models | European Social Model |
| | Trade Unions | Unionism | | Cooperative |
| | Trade Unions | Trade Unions | Management Practices | Diversity Mgt |

Table A3.4
Content Evolution of Wages & Benefits

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1963 | Wages & Benefits | Wage | Wages & Benefits | Payment |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage | | |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage policy | - | - |
| | Wages & Benefits | Fringe Benefits | - | - |
| | Wages & Benefits | Fringe Benefits | | |
| 1966 | Wages & Benefits | Minimum Wage | - | - |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage | - | - |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | | Guidelines |
| 1969 | Wages & Benefits | Wage-price | | Analysis |
| | Wages & Benefits | PBR | | |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Differences | Wages & Benefits | Productivity-Based Wages |
| 1972 | Wages & Benefits | Wage Scheme | Production Practices | Organisation System |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Structure | | |
| | Wages & Benefits | PBR | | Econometric |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Councils | | Abolition |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Systems | | |
| 1975 | Wages & Benefits | Pay | | |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage | | Determination |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage | | Determination |
| 1978 | Wages & Benefits | Wages | Bargaining | Bargaining |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Adjustment | | Process |
| | Wages & Benefits | Union Relative Wage | Labour Market | Demand |
| 1981 | Wages & Benefits | Minimum wage | | Compliance |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | | |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Agreements | Public Sector | National |
| 1984 | Wages & Benefits | Wages | Public Sector | Public Sector |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wages | | Hierarchy |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | | |
| 1987 | Wages & Benefits | Wages | Trade Unions | Trade Union |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay Levels | - | - |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Determination | Labour Market | Labour Markets |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay System | | Effects |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage | | Stickiness |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wages | Gender | Female |
| 1990 | Wages & Benefits | Redundancy Payments | | Extra-Statutory |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | Equality | Equal |
| 1993 | Wages & Benefits | National Minimum Wage | Labour Market | Employment |
| | Wages & Benefits | Earnings | Bargaining | Bargaining |
| | Wages & Benefits | Piecework | Conflict | Industrial Problems |
| 1993 | Wages & Benefits | Wage Councils | | Abolition |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | Employers & Management | Director |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wages | Young Workers | Young Men |

| Year | Category #1 | Keyword #1 | Category #2 | Keyword #2 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay Policy | | Transition |
| 1996 | Wages & Benefits | Earnings | Public Sector Equality | Dispersion |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wages | | Determination |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | | Public Sector |
| | Wages & Benefits | Earnings | | Inequality |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | | Executive |
| | Wages & Benefits | Redundancy Payments | | Control |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Campaign | | |
| 1999 | Wages & Benefits | Pay | Terms & Conditions of Employment Equality | Working Time |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage | Trade Unions | Inequality |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage | | Determination |
| | Wages & Benefits | National Minimum Wage | | Unions Labour Market Institutions |
| | Wages & Benefits | Minimum wage | | |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay | | |
| | Wages & Benefits | Low pay | | |
| Wages & Benefits | Coventry tool room agreement | Origins | | |
| 2002 | Wages & Benefits | Incentives | Equality | Production |
| | Wages & Benefits | Earnings | | Inequality |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage-Fixing | Worker | Behaviour |
| | Wages & Benefits | Stock Options | | Employee |
| | Wages & Benefits | Pay determination | Wages & Benefits | Minimum Wage |
| | Wages & Benefits | Minimum wage | | Impact |
| | Wages & Benefits | Variable Pay | | Rise |
| Wages & Benefits | Wage Policy | Solidaristic | | |
| 2005 | Wages & Benefits | Minimum wage | Law | Adaptation |
| | Wages & Benefits | Wage Determination | | Regulation |
| | Wages & Benefits | Fair Wages | | Pay parity |

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